

# “The Nation Needs a Great Awakening”

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**By Star Parker**

RESTON, Va.—Over the years 1934–1961, British historian Arnold Toynbee published his 12-volume *A Study of History*.

Toynbee studied the rise and fall of 23 civilizations. His conclusion was that great civilizations die not from external causes but from internal causes.

They commit suicide.

Toynbee concluded, in the words of one journalist, that “civilizations start to decay when they lose their moral fiber.”

We don’t have to be great historians to know that civilizations have come and gone. Forever is not a given fact of life.

In this vein, in this political season, with the excitement of an upcoming election in which we will choose who holds the highest office in our government for four years, as well as elections for the Senate and the House, I pray for a grand national awakening.

It is the business of politicians to aspire to power, to tell us that our problems are because of the other party and to divert our attention from where it should be—on ourselves.

If we so focus, many I believe will conclude it is hard to see a future for a nation with fewer and fewer children, greater and greater government and debt, and less and less economic growth.

Per the Congressional Budget Office, growth of the U.S. population averaged 0.9 percent per year from 1974 to 2023. They project from 2024 to 2054 it will be half that—0.4 percent per year.

For a population to hold steady, to not shrink, the average fertility rate must be 2.1 children per woman. We have fallen well below this to 1.67, and CBO projects it will stay there.

The implications are an aging population, with fewer and fewer of working age and an increasing burden of the expenses of an aging population—greater retirement costs and health-care costs.

One measure of this picture is the ratio of the size of the working-age population—ages 25-64—to the size of the population 65 and above. In 1950, that ratio was over 6 to 1. In 2004, it was 4 to 1.

In 2024, per CBO, it is 2.9 to 1. And CBO projects that, by 2054, it will be 2.2 to 1.

Per Pew Research, in 1980, 6 percent of 40-year-old Americans had never been married. By 2021, it was 25 percent.

In 1980, federal debt held by the public was about 25 percent of GDP. Now it is almost 100 percent. CBO projects that, by 2054, it will be 166 percent.

Explosion of federal debt is the result of the explosion of federal spending and growth of government.

More government means more of our economy is diverted to bureaucrats and away from those who work and create. As a result, economic growth suffers.

From 1950 to 2000, per Hoover Institution economist John Cochrane, the U.S. economy grew an average of 3.5 percent per year. Now we're around 2 percent. Cochrane notes that, if from 1950 to 2000 growth was 2 percent rather than 3.5 percent, per-capita GDP in 2000 would have been \$23,000 rather than \$49,000.

CBO projects average growth rate of the U.S. economy for the next 30 years less than 2 percent per year. This, of course, means diminishing average income for all Americans

Many years ago, when I turned away from welfare and turned toward God, my guide and mentor told me that there are two possibilities—government or God.

The data show more Americans turning away from faith and church attendance, and hence they are choosing government.

We hear much rhetoric now about American democracy, but democracy is about how we choose, not what we choose. The focus of a free nation under God is about what we choose.

So I return to where I was at the beginning. A nation without children, without marriage, with expanding government and debt, is a nation, in the words of historian Toynbee, committing suicide.

I pray for a reawakening.