

Waco One Thousand Tutoring
Waco, Texas
January 10, 1996

Handwritten note:
Send copy
to Don
Curtis

If you are a bit uncomfortable as you perceive the state of our nation at this particular moment, I would hope at the conclusion of this little together you might be even a bit more so.

Stephen Roach, head of Morgan Stanley's economic department, said as he viewed the situation, "While worker compensation, as a share of national income, has fallen in the past three years, corporate profitability has risen dramatically. However logical any explanation for such gaps may be, there can be no mistaking of the potential backlash that might ensue from the combined forces of ongoing job losses, limited hiring, stagnant real wages, and adverse shifts in income distribution. As I see it, unless American workers begin to get their "fair" share of the productivity dividend, there is a growing risk of social and economic tension."

That is what we are here about today. De Jouvenel said, "There is a continual dying of possible futures. And two mistakes are common: to

be unaware of them while they are, so to speak, alive, and to be unaware of their death when they have been killed off by lack of discovery."

So what is reality? Increasingly, there are too few of us working to support too many who are not. And there doesn't seem to be any abatement in sight. So to repeat, what we are here for is to make certain that we keep alive the most important option of all--that of creating a society in which people can become useful citizens, contributing members to the society. There is only one answer and that is education. People have to be skillful in order to survive in this society and it all begins with knowing how to read and to write. You have heard so often and more times than you would like my own experience of reading to a youngster in Williamsburg, Virginia who didn't know how to read. Selfishly, I realized at that particular moment if that situation didn't change, he would be an economic charge to all of us in this society. If we continue to allow more Christophers to take up space in this world, our own survival becomes increasingly at risk.

What we are here about today is not to be do-gooders, but it is simply

and maturely recognize there is a problem that even the school system cannot correct without our help. We have to get serious about preserving this precious democracy of ours. There is nothing that prescribes that our democracy is one that is forever. We can make it so, but neglect and ignoring the cancer of an increasingly non-literate numbers within our society contribute to a society that presumes almost intolerable insecurity. The more this situation prevails, the higher the crime rate and the more out of control the situation becomes.
