

THE BROKE SAMARITAN

by

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On the innumerable social angst forums the central question hovers like an abandoned orphan — where will the remedial money come from? For the daycare, homeless, drug prone, depressed and suicidal, abandoned and shut in, elderly needing extended care, severely handicapped, abused, psychotic, autistic, severely mentally challenged and identity corroded...a long and growing list.

Well, the consensus seems to be more tax surgery on stolid middle-class folk, those who would pay the lion share of such programs, despite the fact that we have never spent more of the GNP than we do today on health, education and welfare with, it appears, such unsatisfactory results. The joke about the total federal budget going to education and no one knowing how to read and write begins to lose it preciosity. It is instructive to note that flat taxing the wealthy 2% at say 60% will only run the U.S. government a few weeks. (Forbes Magazine, the last time I looked.)

Well, the number of potential taxable dollars otherwise cursorily spent is substantial. Last year according to a Wikipedia file, North Americans spent well over 2 billion dollars on chewing gum. Also, it is apparent many people have considerable discretionary income — for hair shampoo and spray, eye shadow, blush, lipstick (botox, collagen and silicon for the truly dedicated), hair dyes and rinses, perfumes, foundation creams, eyebrow masks and fillers, mascara, false eyelashes, lip oils, cleansing formulas, skin rejuvenation products, near-magic hair removers, rough skin buffers, chemical facial makeovers — an ad hoc list. How necessary is all this for human sufficiency? I can well imagine

that Donald Trump's hairdresser must be one of the most challenged hair stylists worldwide. But then he's just another cis-gender relic from that era of notational men and women. What the newly apprized two or three or four dozen human genders resort to I haven't a clue. One Facebook approved expert posits as many as 51 sexes and wants to remove the sex identity from birth certificates. Anyway, somebody's spending the money, in America about 49 billion a year on looking their best and from all reports are determined to do better. Suffice to say that most simple cold cream bar soaps wash body and hair well and inexpensively; all else is vanity, yes? One of the presumptions I've been prey to for years, proving again just how dense some mossbacks can be, yes? Anyway, 49 billion — a low ball estimate — plus the 2 billion on chewing gum and you can erect a lot of care centres and schools for slow learners like me. Converting the cheap candy and cosmetic industries into daycare and rehabilitation facilities would benefit a lot of people. So, let's turn our largely redundant and possibly extravagant cosmetic budgets into homes for assaulted spouses, transgender counsellors, the racially and ethnically abused, neglected orphans, listless addicts, the proliferating homeless, luckless vagrants and ex-cons who get short shrift at welfare shelters — fated unfortunates generally, surely that is a start. We speak, remember, of many billions of dollars a year in North America alone.

Adding to the dismay is the growing recognition that living longer may mean working longer. God forbid! Euthanasia may solve some of the burdens of senescence*, and once it attains legal sanction the social advisement for it that can't be far off, particularly where estate money is in the balance and a lingering codger holding it up — particularly if the person holding the power of attorney can decide. The West already has the burden of harbouring a historically unique, exponentially growing, aging, unproductive population. Indeed, the white European-

backgrounded race itself will be more or less extinct in a few generations if the trend continues. Babies can be so much bother.

What is slowly dawning on some academic daredevils is that comprehensive social democracy may have painted itself into a deficit corner. For the first time in history government patronage of the constitutently disadvantaged (the growth of which being a conspicuous achievement of the social democracies — where life is the least catastrophic in history**) may have come to a halt. The likelihood of paying off the debt the citizens of social democracies have accrued seems minuscule, taxes already about as high as will be tolerated by an electorate. Vide Greece, Italy, Spain, even England. Some experts think money itself will be a perishable commodity in that the current world debt is simply unsustainable (American debt alone is predicted to be about twenty trillion at the end of the Obama Presidency). Do note that the Venezuelan government, now printing truckloads of money to combat inflation, could not pay the latest bill from the company printing the money! (Instapundit.com). Currencies like Bitcoin may relieve the seismic tension for a time, but it too offers no guarantee. Therefore the whole apparatus may be tied to an endless wrangle over who is the least deserving — an interminable morality play — that echoes the egalitarian need to progressively confiscate propriety and income while admonishing the presumed lucky. All raptly moving of course. A 'passion play' with a growing expectant audience.

* The condition or process of deterioration with age; loss of a cell's power of division and growth.

** The reality of Western comfort, affluence, health, and historic freedom from assault, is meticulously detailed in Stephen Pinker's book **The Better Angels of Our Nature**. (Don't argue with me; argue with his meticulous Harvard statisticians.)