

# Civilization Still Scarce Commodity

CIVILIZATION that does not provide freedom for its people is a failure. A civilization that is losing freedom is headed toward failure. How does our civilization stand?

Modest gains during the past two years are reported by Freedom House, which monitors human rights. However, two out of three people around the world live under governments that deprive them of some or all political and civil rights.

Civilization has not yet failed, but oppression still prevails for nearly 2 billion people.

In the jungle, those who are strongest take whatever they need to survive under the rule of "survival of the fittest." When this rule is applied to politics, the greedy and the dishonest subjugate others to produce wealth for themselves. This is uncivilized.

Being civilized involves considerably more than a change from grabbing handfuls of food from a community pot to eating with knife, fork and napkin. Even educated people

may become uncivil.

After two centuries of progress in developing a high standard of civilization, we seem to be slipping in the United States, both politically and culturally.

Unwillingness of substantial segments of the population to assume responsibility either for their support or to make contributions to society is making it easy for ambitious persons to build strong political and economic controls.

Widespread practices of cramming the body with junk food, filling the mind with junk ideas, and neglecting the spirit are evidences of a decaying society, not an advancing one.

Anti-civilizationists force authority in any form, they resent others enjoying benefits of their industry, and they may strike, rob or kill to get what they want. Obstructionists oppose technological advancements for selfish reasons.

Civilized government decays because of excesses. Culture declines

as "educated barbarians" foster rudeness and crudeness, and homes fail as families abandon morality.

"I am convinced that civilization moves forward chiefly on the basis of ideas," says Dr. George Gallup, president of the Gallup organization. "Ideas born of knowledge and experience and a desire for a system in which individual action counts."

Loss of freedom deprives people of hope in this world and decline of religion deprives them of hope hereafter. Where both occur, as happens in atheistic totalitarian nations, the result is a society that exists without a reason for living.

"If America celebrates the year 2000 as a free nation, it will be by the grace of God, and because this present generation of young people are challenged to accept leadership roles to secure the blessings of liberty for themselves and posterity," says Dr. J. Terry Johnson, president of Oklahoma Christian College.