

The sheep outnumber the lions

I've been trying, very actively, to reject the nagging notion in the back of my mind that a country of once optimistic, pioneering individualists has become nothing more than a holding pen for a flock of submissive sheep on their way to slaughter.

Of course I'm talking about America, land of the free and home of the brave, the country that gave rise to the revolutionary ideas of independence, democracy, freedom from tyranny and persecution and that provided rights to its citizens that some countries' poor folk can only dream about as they scurry for cover to avoid rebel gunfire and suicide bombers.

Strip away all the crass commercialism, the tee-shirts, the bumper stickers, the patriotic strains of 'America the Beautiful.' I'm not talking about the heroic myths we've created for ourselves, I'm speaking of the basics, those rights and values that millions of courageous people have died for over two centuries to preserve. Military men and women who've stared down death from faraway outposts and watched their friends get blown apart...those people know the America I'm talking about. They don't need a translation or interpreter to get the message that we've come to the end of the line, that we've finally reached the point where there are more passive sheep sleeping in our beds than fierce lions in our barns.

Used to be that when we Americans faced adversity or hard times, either our proud history or our leaders could rally us out of our depression. No more. Few among us know our history. Many educators suspect it is skewed, so they don't attempt to make it come alive for their students anymore. The rest of us either turn off completely or tune in to a cable channel that fills up the empty spaces with some ideologue producer's or commentator's talking points. That goes for the left AND the right.

As for our leaders, their approval ratings are so low that we're going to have to figure out a new way to measure them soon! Congress at around 15% and the President at 40-something. Hardly the stuff heroes are made of. America's true heroes (and boy have we overworked THAT word!) are those who put their lives on the line for strangers and do it without expectation of a press conference or medal. That's our military that defends us abroad and our protective services that watch out for us at home. It's also those among us who endure unprovoked and unwanted acts of bigotry, prejudice, hatred, indiscriminate violence and other abuse but who are still able to somehow grow into whole, well-balanced individuals with the capacity for forgiveness.

One of America's dilemmas used to be how to know when to turn the other cheek, when to stand its ground, when to advance on somebody else's or when to disengage without fighting. That race has been run. Our leaders have decided it for us and the score is: America zero, everybody else zero. We've run the numbers, and like a cost accountant come to the conclusion that there is no such thing as a just war and no defensible reason to secure freedom anywhere outside of our borders. Add to that our passivity and willingness to ignore repeated flagrant abuses of power in our own government without so much as a letter to our Congressman. It's as if we believe that by turning our backs on corruption - and especially evil - it will somehow skip over our house and target our neighbor's instead!

According to Edmund Burke, the only way for evil (or our resignation to America's inevitable decline) to triumph is for good men and women to do nothing. This year, 2014, must be the year that Americans reclaim their country from apathy, bad management and corruption. We must become involved and engaged. While our President intends to use HIS telephone and pen, we the people should follow his example and use OURS to hold our leaders in check by burning up the airwaves, the newspaper columns and to clog up the mailboxes of our elected representatives. It's our only chance to rescue Lady Liberty.

Author: Site Admin