

“What man is a man that does not make the world a better place?” is from the 2005 Twentieth Century Fox film, Kingdom of Heaven, by William Monahan. The above quote could be rephrased to read “What American is an American that does not make America a better place, which makes our World a better world?” (Writer modified above quotation.)

The first half of the twentieth century was quite a bit different than the second half. And less than two decades into the twenty-first century, we are seeing even more extreme polarization of our country, like we have never known, heard, or seen before. At the end of the second world war in the twentieth century, the “Greatest Generation” accomplished the nearly impossible task of defeating not one but three AXISES of Evil Powers. Our world would be a very different world had the Allies and the American “Greatest Generation” not succeeded in winning the war.

Item #1 Unity in Make America/American Again. During the War, it was all hands turn to report for duty. And they did. Women worked in the factories at the greatest employment numbers ever. Minority enlistment and skills were needed and used to the country’s benefit. Race was less an issue, than service to country.

Item #2 Patriotism. Pride and Celebration and Love of Country and for our Veterans, and Respect and Reverence for our Flag. The Pledge of Allegiance to our flag was recited. The words “under God” was added to the Pledge. Our paper currency went through a change also, by an act of Congress. The words “In God We Trust” was put on the American money, which was, perhaps, the strongest world currency, post World War II. This was, in part, to send a message to the atheists U.S.S.R., that America was a faith-believing nation. And our faith was in God. Many religions, “One Nation Under God,” free to believe or not.

Item #3, Freedom of Choice. Of all of our freedoms, I believe personal choice is the most powerful and precious of all. With choice comes responsibility. I like what Yoda has to say, “There is Do and DO NOT. There is NO TRY.” Or in my own words, “There is ‘I did it,’ or ‘I didn’t do it,’ there is no ‘It’s not my fault.’” Some choices should be simple ones to make and do. Like one’s civic responsibility to vote. Looking at the average voter turnout in elections, ALL elections, not just federal elections, the percentage is dismal. Not only do you need to vote, one needs to be an informed voter. Learn both sides of the issue or strength and weakness of a given candidate, then cast your vote. Too many voters simply believe and vote the party line, even for their elected representatives. Both parties need to be able to express their thoughts and differing views, and be heard and not disrespected. Both sides need to be better listeners, ACTIVE listening. Negotiate—compromise, get the job done, move on, Make America/American Again for the good of the country first, for the good of all, before partisan politics muddies the water.

The “Greatest Generation” passed the torch to the “Baby Boomers” generation (1945-1965), the generation I was a part of. Both generations were not without their share of differences, hatred, violence, and everything negative one can imagine. Enter “Generation X” (1966-1980) and then the “Millennial Generation” (1981- ?).

“Unity” defeated a Communist North Korean Regime and an Armistice keeps a South Korea free and prosperous. Vietnam—a nation divided, but the warriors won the military victory as we left, peace with honor. Communist North Viet Nam violates the Paris Peace Agreement, two years after US troop departures, and North Viet Nam invades and takes over South Viet Nam, which becomes a country no more. After more than four decades, the Cold War, with the communist U.S.S.R., the Berlin Wall in East Berlin of East Germany is knocked, pushed, and pulled down and Post WWII Germany is reunited. The Soviet Union becomes Russia as its satellites broke away and regained their independence. Space achievements, political scandal, another war—GWOT—following a second attack on the Twin Towers. The worst attack ever on homeland soil, and loss of life.

Over the decades, from the greatest generation to present day, a severe deterioration in civility and professionalism has invaded our political and civil service institutions. Respect and trust is at an all time low, in my opinion. Scandal after scandal plagues the office of the president in the last three decades. News media bias and outright lies, sex scandals in Hollywood (Really? What a surprise.) Hidden funds by Congress, concealed from the public to pay off accusers of Congressional misconduct. News media didn’t escape sex scandals either. Many resignations in Congress, news media, Hollywood. Criminal charges pending investigation. When did it get so bad that honesty, civility, respect was discarded? Whenever you give up the right to think and decide for yourself. When people become complacent and uninformed they will, like sheep, follow any dictator, as long as it’s their elected dictator.

FMF”DOC”

RK BATES

1-26-2017