

## Perspective.

America as we know it began when mostly white people emigrated here in the 1600s. Many had fled England to Holland, and while they gained religious freedom, they could never escape poverty. Moving to America afforded them both religious and financial freedom, but waiting for them here were investors willing to build the cities and factories or pay for the farms for these immigrants to lease and work on. Many took advantage of the investor's willingness to fund them, ignorant of the costs that would later be assessed, while others chose the most challenging and dangerous path there was, which was to go West and start their lives from scratch.

The very first settlers to the North American Continent were the early humans who had migrated from other continents, leaving a high percentage of those who tried dead. However, many continued onward, determined to find what they were looking for, eventually settling in the warmer climates of what is now the southern United States, Mexico, and even Central America on down into South America.

The primarily white settlers arriving here during the 1600s settled and began forming powerful, like-minded groups. They began to assert their independence and dominance, adamantly refusing to be ruled by the British, whom they had already fled from. Most people today know what transpired from that point on. "No taxation without representation" became one of many battle cries. Battles were fought, lost, or won, and slowly, colonies formed into States, eventually becoming the first states of the United States.

Later, some of those first states refused to live by the laws of a newly formed government, and they fought a war to try to establish their sovereignty.

The people who had sought their freedom by emigrating to America were not afraid to initially fight for that freedom or to fight to protect it. Their courage was evident in the many battles and wars they were willing to fight, a testament to their sacrifices for their beliefs.

Those who become complacent with the freedoms they achieve soon find themselves challenged to defend themselves by those who have yet to achieve their full measure of freedom.

Emigration exacerbates the freedoms of the people living where the immigrants land. Those with so much that they can afford to leave it unattended become targets of those in need. From the 1960s until the 2020s, the population on Earth increased from one and a half billion to more than eight billion people. Places that were half-empty are now full, and places that were full are now overflowing. Bickering has become common. The former custom of letting others live how they want has been overridden by laws that were not always written with the best intentions.

If lawmakers have good hearts, then their intentions will be mostly good. However, there are flagrant examples of how leaders with evil hearts have acted in the extreme. Hitler, for example, told the German people, during a prolonged food shortage, that if it weren't for the Jews, whom the Nazis referred to as "useless eaters," there would be plenty to go around. The message was repeated and repeated until the majority of people finally believed it. Food was then rationed in Jewish neighborhoods, neighbors told on neighbors who they believed were Jewish, and the spiral toward extermination continued to grow.

We cannot turn back time, but imagine, if you will, a kinder-hearted person and what they might have done. A kinder leader might have peacefully reached out to his neighbors rather than inflicting war to grab what was needed forcibly.

It's true that laws are necessary. It's also true that laws have been used to discriminate. Those who wrote the laws that discriminated found nothing wrong with their laws, while those who opposed those laws found much wrong with them. New laws were passed in an attempt to level the playing field so everyone who wanted a chance at freedom could do so fairly.

But laws cannot fundamentally change people. Laws can make them behave better for fear of getting caught, but without consequences, and in some cases, severe consequences, people will continue to behave badly.

We now move to today and the past eight years. Half of the leadership during that time was by a person with an evil heart, and the other half by a person with a good heart. There is a consensus in governing that you can please half the people half the time and the other half none of the time. So, leadership is not an easy task. Especially when we add disinformation, outright lies, corruption, a lack of laws, and equal consequences not being applied. To some citizens, patriotism means Of the People, By the People, and For the People; to others, it means overthrowing the government if they're unhappy with how things are.

As voting nears, some Conservatives are saying that if they lose, there will be a Civil War.

Many white people want a return to white-controlled America and a time they believe was better. That time, a century and less ago, was only better for some white people. It certainly wasn't better for blacks, Asians, and others. Segregation was rampant. Slowly, however, as laws changed and consequences were meted out, and as the older population died, integration of other races and sexes into the male-dominated white society became more accepted and acceptable.

Old habits and ideas are difficult to change. Conservatives, while also being Democrats in some ways, are known for defending their right to keep the things that work for them unchanged.

Democrats, while also being Conservatives in many ways, believe in changing rights and laws they think need changing. There is extremism from both Conservatives and Democrats, but extremism will only work in a democracy if a majority of the people running the democracy become complacent. In contrast, an autocracy is run by a strong person who dictates how things will be to a small, inner group. Autocracies work like throwing a rock into the middle of a calm pond and watching the ripples fan out and widen until they eventually find the shore.

Autocracies are typically backed by a strong military force willing to take action against their fellow countrymen and women. The people typically become subservient to the dictator and follow him or her with anticipatory acceptance. People with intelligence who use it to question authority are often muzzled or worse.

Last for this discussion is today's social media sites. We are not allowed to read the code that dictates which news headlines go first and which don't even get a place. We are not allowed to know how or why our online data is being collected. The algorithms are closely guarded secrets to which we have no access, and the programmers who wrote the code are under strict NDAs. We're in the middle of a game for which we do not know the rules, and we are constantly distracted to look over here, over there, or at enticing pictures that pop up out of nowhere. It's not difficult to concentrate if you know that's what you're supposed to be doing, yet it's so easy to be distracted because the algorithm is intentionally trying to distract you.

Written by Peter Skeels © 7-7-2024