

I re-watched the movie “Love Actually” recently, and once again I was truly affected by this, what in my opinion is the very best adult Christmas romantic love story. When I went to bed, I could not stop feeling inspired by this movie. I awoke after a couple hours of trying to fall into a deep sleep, with so many thoughts and emotions dashing through my mind that I knew I just had to try and remember, so that I could transfer them to an essay on paper. This happened once before when a long-time friend was near death, and it inspired me to write the very first short story I wrote several years ago, “Goodbye, Old Friend”.

What impressed me most about the stories of romantic love throughout the movie was the thought that this is what America (and indeed the world as well) needs so much more of than what has been increasingly happening particularly over the past 60 years. The America I grew up in during the 1940’s and 1950’s was a much more civil country with respect for our elders, our veterans and those still serving, and those in authority like police, firemen, teachers and our political leaders (although even then there were a few politicians who did not live up to their campaign promises and had some bad behavior). But by and large we respected the office of the Presidency, no matter if it was occupied by a Democrat or a Republican.

It has saddened me that over these past 60 years how many Americans have been increasingly caught up in behaviors that seem to be the opposite of the ideal of Love. I don’t mean just romantic love, but even more so the falling away from the concept of brotherly love. I understand that humans are not perfect and we sometimes have a tendency to think more about ourselves than of others. But this selfish attitude seems to me to have been increasingly on the rise. These days it appears to me that the attitudes of greed, “me first”, lack of respect for others, failure to compromise, even though we may disagree on any number of subjects, have become more and more the norm. Despite the increase in these attitudes and behaviors, in the end, we are all in the same “boat” (i.e. we all have a limited time in this earthly life). We all have the need to love and be loved.

So why, I ask has there become this increasing distrust of, and anger towards, others who approach life differently and entertain political positions opposite of our own? How has it transpired that so many Americans have become increasingly abusive and intolerant of their fellow Americans? These attitudes have led so many Americans away from the ideal of Love that they are seemingly desirous of disruptive and brutal behaviors, leading to hateful, disruptive thoughts, actions and alarming divisiveness, pitting one group against another.

I think most of us would truly like to understand **why** this replacing Love with such negative, divisive and unproductive ideas has become increasingly prevalent, so that we can find the cause and strive to change course and return to sharing with, caring about, and respecting our brothers and sisters. This would enable romantic and brotherly Love to lead us to happier and more fruitful lives, while we are still here. Then we can pass it on to future generations, rather than witness our future generations to continue this recent course of selfish destructive, divisive and hateful approach to their lives and their progeny.

So where do we begin to attempt to understand the course of events that have led America to where I believe it is today? One thing I am positive about – there is no single, solitary overly obvious explanation that can readily lead to our understanding. Rather I believe there has been a number of factors and events that have coalesced into the transition American culture has undergone over the last 60 years or

more. Consequently, there is no single way to fix it and allow Love to take precedence over the negative, self-destructive, divisive attitudes, ideas and behaviors that have emerged.

First, allow me to enumerate my thoughts on at least some, if not most, of the reasons for the cultural changes that have occurred that have pushed the ideal of Love toward the background. After enumerating, I will then attempt to explain my hopefully rational analysis for why I have arrived at my conclusions.

1. The education System has evolved from teaching critical thinking toward indoctrination into ideological thought, in too many courses presenting an anti-America theme, and misrepresenting historical events.
2. The rise of ever more power in the Central Government, replacing the Founding Fathers' warning in our Constitution to protect the right of the States to govern closer to their citizens, and limit the power of the Federal Government.
3. A false idea that Multi-Culturism and the attempt to remove God from our schools and government activities has taken precedence over "One Nation Under God", which our Founding Fathers' placed in the Pledge of Allegiance.
4. The movement away from encouraging immigrants to legally pursue citizenship and to assimilate and learn the English language, as all those from Europe, Asia and the Far East did through the 1st half of the 20th Century.
5. The rise of Political Correctness that has put limits on freedom of speech of some, but not others.
6. The attempt to put everyone into the same "bucket", such that no one's individuality is applauded and everyone must get the same "trophy" regardless of individual ability at every endeavor, so as not to hurt anyone's feelings, nor enable each individual to search and find their unique God-given talents.
7. The failure of our election system that continues to elect do-nothing politicians (Democrats and Republicans both) to life-long positions in the Washington Federal Establishment, where they vote to provide themselves with benefits not open to the general public.
8. The failure of the mainstream media to uphold journalistic principles, where they have allowed their personal indoctrinated ideologies to report on a biased, opinionated basis instead of a non-biased one.

Whew! That is a big list!

So, allow me to attempt to add a bit more detail to these and hopefully increase the readers' understanding of how I came up with this list.

1. Our Education System: I recently read the book, One-Party Classroom, by David Horowitz. It highlights and then presents researched details on, "How Radical Professors At America's Top Colleges Indoctrinate Students And Undermine Our Democracy". He presents detailed research on what he identifies as the 150 worst courses, a large majority taught by professors that are truly unqualified to teach the subject matter, based on their own education background. Most of these courses are in the liberal arts and sociology programs. Rather than teach using traditional critical thinking that presents more than one side of issues, enabling students to examine all sides of an issue and draw their own conclusions, only the professors personal biased opinions are drummed out to the students. Any student who thinks otherwise verbally or

on essays is treated to disdain and often lower grades. In many cases the subtle underlying bias is based on Anti-American Socialist ideology. In a lot of courses the emphasis is on only the negative aspects of our history (e.g. the issues of slavery and racism and the concept of victimization). The content totally ignores the fact that in entire history of human governance, America was the first that was founded on principles of equal rights and maximum freedom for its citizens to advance and become all they can be, based upon their unique God given abilities and talents. Limited government control over every aspect and personal undertaking was also a first in the history of governance. This is not to ignore the fact that America has not been a perfect utopian society, but it sure as hell is the best historic experiment in the right of citizens to have maximum freedom and opportunities. Given our humanness, none of us are totally pure and without imperfection, and that applies to all who have been granted with authority by the citizens.

2. Central Government Overreach: Over the past 60 years or more our central government has increasingly usurped more and more control over our citizenry, limiting State and local government regulation. This places too much power in the hands of too few electors, who are primarily focused on remaining in office and in control over the citizenry. Our founding fathers were against this because they had come from living in limited freedom and lack of control over their lives. They knew that as central government gains more and more control it becomes probable that it will lead to an aristocracy, a dictatorship, or a kingdom that begets a two-class system of those in power vs. those being ruled.
3. Multi-Culturism's War Against Religion: Actions by many of those in authority (legislators, educators, and those who espouse atheist and anti-religious ideologies like Socialism) have increasingly attempted to remove any vestige of the fact that America was founded as a Democratic Republic (emphasis on "Republic") as "One Nation Under God". I believe the clear majority of Americans still believe in the Judeo-Christian God and want the references to God continued in our schools, public places, and our federal, state and local government agencies, offices and at legislative sessions, as well as in our military and youth activities (e.g. sports, and the girl and boy scout organizations). In my experience, Jews and Christians do not have animosity toward their respective religious beliefs and practices, primarily because we all believe in and worship the same God. Recently, however, there is no such negativity espoused by the Washington establishment, the media and atheists toward the influx of Muslim immigrants, as if they are afraid of being charged with being anti-Islam. But Multi-Culturism as it is put in practice does not provide the same "hands off" on the Judeo-Christian faiths and practices.
4. Illegal Immigration vs. Citizenship: Increasingly over the past 8 years (and to a lesser extent since the 1960's), we in America have been witnessing the influx of illegal immigration (it is illegal because we have long had immigration laws that expect new arrivals to lawfully seek citizenship by following the procedure). True, we also have legal ways for people to enter via the Visa application process, under sponsorship by companies that seek people with specific educational or technical abilities. Furthermore, we have laws providing for the deportation of those entering illegally, and, in particular, illegals who commit certain crimes. The problem I have is that during

the past eight years, more than at any time prior, our federal government has been ignoring and purposely not enforcing the laws that are still in effect. I am not the only one who thinks this is an attempt by one of the political parties to guarantee that these undocumented immigrants will continue to keep that party in power, by providing free things paid for by the citizen taxpayers. I am not a heartless person and do not have a problem with allowing people from war torn and oppressive countries to come to America, but they should do so legally and go through the process of attaining citizenship. Furthermore, they should be strongly encouraged to assimilate and seek to become Americans by adopting our country's constitutional values, and not isolating themselves in enclaves, where existing citizens are excluded. Many of those arriving from Muslim countries are behaving in intolerant ways toward those of other faiths and beliefs. For example, instances of demanding the removal of public restaurant signs highlighting bacon and other foods that they object to on religious grounds. There are other anti-assimilation actions that have been reported, including demands for exceptions from general practices and procedures in our schools and public places, that are not applicable to other citizens. To me this is not the American way.

5. Political Correctness & Its Effects: You can google "political Correctness" and find a number of opinion pieces and news articles, most of which point out the negative, and potentially destructive, application of "thought training" that is directly opposed to the concept of free thought and verbal expression. Here is a link to just one such article (I recommend reading it and other search results):

<http://www.infowars.com/19-shocking-examples-of-how-political-correctness-is-destroying-america/>

Within the opening of this article is a reference to the George Orwell novel, 1984, where the totalitarian state dictates the use of "Newspeak" to limit free thought and any individuality that is different from what the "Newspeak" dictates. Any exception or alternative thinking or verbalizing is treated as "thoughtcrime". As political correctness becomes more and more indoctrinated in our citizenry, it can become increasingly like "Newspeak" in Orwell's novel. Any publication or advocacy for ideas that are counter to today's politically correct usage is railed against by our government and the lamestream media, supported by the ultra-progressive ideologues. The idea that all of us must think and speak with one voice ignores the fact of human nature, which makes us not only similar in our basic needs for safety, security, food, and love, but our individuality and freedom of thought is what makes us unique with respect to our God given talents and abilities. Not everyone is an Einstein, or an outstanding athlete, or innately talented as an artist, actor, engineer, etc. etc. It was Renee Descartes, the philosopher who is known for the concept of "I think, therefore I am".

6. Everyone Is A Winner: The attempt to put everyone in the same "bucket" is interrelated with the thought training of political correctness. We need to treat everyone fairly, but that is not the same as treating everyone equally. People are individuals and should be respected for their individuality. "Fairness" in our interactions with others does not equate to everyone as "Identical". We should be kind, courteous and polite to coworkers, friends and new people we meet in our daily lives, encourage them to express their ideas and opinions, without interrupting

and talking over what they are offering. After they finish, it is okay to express our own ideas and opinions in a respectful manner, whether we agree or disagree on a subject. We should accept everyone's right (including ours) to hold different ideas and opinions. I know that there are times when our emotions may take control over a rational discussion. We need to recognize when that occurs and attempt to understand and be sympathetic, rather than continuing to focus on what we are expressing. Sometimes we just need to feel that the other person senses that our emotions are at the forefront of our brain, and any continued rational exchange of ideas is not conducive to mutual understanding, acceptance and respect. Now this leads me to the rise in culturally treating everyone (beginning in childhood) as if everyone is so equal that there are no winners and losers in our various activities. This idea that everyone "deserves" a trophy, regardless of individual talent and contributions, has become the popular idea, and it will stop people from searching out their God given abilities. Allowing our Millennials and younger children to be constantly told that "everyone is a winner", regardless of hard work toward a goal that builds upon individual talents, builds ego inflation instead of self-confidence and self-esteem. To get passing grades or a trophy just for showing up is harmful and leads to the belief that a person deserves it, without putting forth more than a little effort to become better and better at their endeavors or at chasing a goal. Rather than this phoniness, we need to allow our children to fail and make mistakes and guide and encourage them to learn from those failures and mistakes, so that they don't repeat failing at something or repeating mistakes. The best thing parents can do for their children is to make them know that they are there for them, when those mistakes or failings happen, and that above all they will always be loved and supported in their goals and dreams. Here are links to two articles that speak to this rising cultural aberration:

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/michael-sigman/when-everyone-gets-a-trop b_1431319.html;

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/parenting/wp/2015/09/01/everyones-a-winner-and-other-lies/?utm_term=.4c8bcb3f0654.

7. Increased Power of the Federal Government: In 2013, a Gallup Poll indicated that 60% of Americans believe the federal government has too much power. A Rasmussen Poll in April 2015 reported it as 62%, but it would not surprise me if that number increased even more in early 2016. There is little doubt that central government power exceeds that envisioned at the founding of America, taking over many of the roles originally designated to the individual states. I believe this is due to ineffective legislators ensconced much too long in the Washington establishment and seeking only to be re-elected time after time. They have allowed themselves to become dependent on the financial donations and resources of political groups seeking special favors that too often are not to the benefit of the voters. A large group of political "advisors" and "consultants" became more important to our electors than the citizens and our constitution they have taken the oath to represent. While I am in favor of instituting term limits for the Senate and House of Representatives, I think it should initially be done with a "Sunshine" provision in the law, voted on by the citizens. For example, let's say that we start with three six-year terms for the Senate (18 years max for each Senator) and six two-year terms for the House (18 years max for each Representative). A sunshine provision in the law could be set to require that a new election be held by the citizen voters to continue the term limits on the same basis, or to discontinue the term limits law and return to the current case with no limits on terms.

Since it is unlikely those currently in office would enact such a law, taking away their potential life time situation and benefits, this may require a constitutional convention to put the measure before the voters.

8. Mainstream Media Bias:

The majority of Americans hold a low approval rating of the mainstream media, both Television and newsprint reporting. A Gallop poll in September 2016, reported "Americans' trust and confidence in the mass media "to report the news fully, accurately and fairly" has dropped to its lowest level in Gallup polling history, with 32% saying they have a great deal or fair amount of trust in the media. This is down eight percentage points from last year." Here is the link to the report:

<http://www.gallup.com/poll/195542/americans-trust-mass-media-sinks-new-low.aspx>.

I can remember when Radio and TV reporters reported the news in a non-biased way. There was Walter Cronkite, among the most respected TV news reporters. While he personally held some opinions that could be classified as Progressive/Liberal, he rarely expressed those opinions, when he reported the events of the day, but only when he expressed them as his personal opinion. For example, he was opposed to the Iraq War and opined so.

An October New York Post article reported in a poll that 55% of Americans think the media is biased against then Presidential candidate Trump. Here's the link:

<http://nypost.com/2016/10/19/americans-think-the-media-is-biased-against-trump-poll/>

It is apparent to me that the media has helped to foment the divisiveness, and mistrust that has permeated American society during the current times. The media has also supported an anti-religion theme. They have helped to escalate the racial tensions that today are worse than anything since the 1960's, when there were areas of some cities burned down and rioting. I recall the Watts section of Los Angeles, and the 1967 riot in Newark, when I was scheduled to start my first day of work at the home office of Prudential Insurance Company, but received a phone call to not come in. In 1967, about two dozen northern cities incurred riots in the poor, black urban areas.

By presenting one side of issues relative to race relations and in some cases misrepresenting the facts (lately called "False News") and propagating incorrect information, at times jumping to a conclusion grounded in personal bias, before all the facts are available, has become increasingly frequent in the media. It seems that today's Journalists have not been taught the Constitutional Journalist Pledge, as described in the following link from Constitution First Amendment Press Association.Org:

<http://cfapa.org/pledge/>

Here is an opinion article that suggests the top 50 examples of Liberal Bias reporting:

<http://www.westernjournalism.com/top-50-examples-liberal-media-bias/>

If we examine the history of slavery, we would learn that slavery has been a fact since early human history. America became embroiled in the Civil War from 1861 to 1865. It is a fact that slavery in America initially existed in both the North and the South, although it was more prevalent in the South due to its agricultural lifestyle, versus the industrialization of the North. Here is an interesting article on the history of Slavery. “The history of slavery spans nearly every culture, nationality, and religion and from ancient times to the present day”

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_slavery.

As for Racism, despite all the new media and educational focus on Racism, America is among the least racist countries in the world. Here is an article that identifies the most racist countries (see the map):

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2325502/Map-shows-worlds-racist-countries-answers-surprise-you.html>

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Now allow me to summarize why I was so affected by the movie “Love Actually” and why I felt compelled to write this essay. Whether or not you agree with my analysis, I truly invite you to share your thoughts and comment on this essay.

The reality of how romantic love in the movie can change human lives for the better and engender happiness led me to conclude that the cultural changes that have occurred in America are different than anything that had occurred in America since its founding. In some respects, these recent cultural changes, perhaps more than the challenges America faced since our founding, raise the specter that our country is on a declining track that could result in the end of America, as the greatest historical experiment in the governance of a free people.

America has never been a utopia and has had its less than ideal events in its history among its citizens. There was the issue of slavery, leading to the Civil War of the mid 1850’s. There have been wars that were to an extent senseless in terms of the outcomes and the loss of lives both here and in countries we fought against. Throughout our history there have been instances of politicians behaving badly and misrepresenting their electors.

But there are many instances and events that demonstrate that America has been and still is the greatest governing experiment in the history of mankind. We have the gift of a Constitution that guarantees equal rights, the most freedom of any government in history to live our lives free from excessive government control, the opportunity to do and become the best we can be, if we work hard and learn to recognize our God given unique abilities. As for wars, if it wasn’t for America entering WWII, the entire world, including America, may have come under the despotic control of Nazi Germany’s Hitler, and Japan’s Imperial Emperor Hirohito, and potentially the USSR’s dictator Stalin . I still believe that the founding fathers were God fearing men, who believed that God was instrumental in leading them to fight and win the War of Independence, and led them to coalesce on the writing of our Constitution, setting up a balance of power between the states and the Federal Government, and between the Supreme Court, The two houses Congress, and the Administration.

So, how does the concept of LOVE help us to overcome forces that divide us and cause us to disrespect our brothers and sisters? I will attempt to summarize my thoughts on this.

First, with respect to Romantic Love, I don't care if a couple is gay or straight, as long as it is a commitment to one another based on Love for one another. But whether gay or straight, jumping from one partner to another, from one bed to another, is not Love – it is a selfish desire for sexual satisfaction that is personally destructive and ultimately not beneficial to either partner, nor to overall society. True Romantic Love requires the commitment to deal honestly with the beliefs and feelings of our partners. I know it doesn't always work out, but still it requires effort and commitment from both partners.

Secondly, with respect to Brotherly Love, it is defined as a noun, the feelings of humanity and compassion toward one's fellow humans. Wikipedia defines it as "Brotherly Love in the biblical sense is an extension of the natural affection associated with near kin, toward the greater community of fellow believers, that goes beyond the mere duty in Leviticus 19:18 to "love thy neighbour as thyself", and shows itself as "unfeigned love" from a "pure heart", that extends an unconditional hand of friendship that loves when not loved back, that gives without getting, and that ever looks for what is best in others."

Here again, is a recent quote from my church program, "When we serve our neighbors in volunteering, when we share in the pain of others, when we open our resources and lives to strangers in need, we do all of this not because we have to, but out of love."

So, I believe that when we meet someone, who has a different opinion than ours, it behooves us to listen, and then instead of trying to argue for our point of view, to ask questions of the person to help us to understand why that person came to hold their opinion and feelings on the matter. If we can arrive at an understanding in our mind, then we can offer the reasons why we came to hold a different issue. If the other person can understand our "why", then we may both come to a respect for one another as fellow human beings. Then, we have the opportunity to discuss and agree upon a potential compromise that offers the best of both our opinions, given that a compromise is workable.

This approach will not always work when one of the parties is not willing to try and understand the rationale for the other's stance on the issue. Unfortunately, there are some people who have been so indoctrinated in an issue that they are incapable of critical thinking to understand another viewpoint. In such cases, it is best to respectfully disagree (without being pedantic or argumentative), shake hands, and depart without any expression of animosity.

We all need to honestly respect one another as brothers and sisters, and take heed to the quotes above and live our lives accordingly. LOVE is not only THE answer, but also the Best answer to overcome and replace the rise of divisiveness, selfishness, and lack of respect facing America today.

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Respectfully offered for comment, whether the reader agrees or disagrees in any portion of this essay. Comments and editorial suggestions are appreciated. Robert J. Chromy.