

Purifying Patriotism

What it truly means
to truly LOVE your country



via Scaughdt
... an (i)am publication

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“What struck me as I began to study history was how nationalist fervor -- inculcated from childhood by pledges of allegiance, national anthems, flag waving and rhetoric blowing -- permeated the educational systems of all countries, including our own. I wonder now how the foreign policies of the United States would look if we wiped out the national boundaries of the world in our minds and thought instead of all children everywhere as our own. I am certain that if we did so, we could never drop an atomic bomb on Hiroshima, or napalm on Vietnam, or drone-strike villages in the Middle East, or wage war anywhere, because wars, especially in our time, always entail extreme violence against all children.” ~ inspired by Howard Zinn

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Introduction

(July 4th, 2014)

Every year, the 4th of July comes upon us anew -- and every year we are once again the majority of Americans (and indeed the majority of citizens in almost every country on Earth) celebrate the "greatness" of the country they call their own. And, seeing as how most of these well-intended & deeply caring folks have almost certainly forgotten how damaging such patriotic zealotry has been in the past (and how dangerous it will continue to be for us & our children if left unchecked in the future), I have decided to honor both Americans & their country with this book -- doing so by reminding them herein of their country's less-than-well-known dubious past, by illuminating its relatively primitive & increasingly precarious present ... and by paying tribute to its potentially awesome future.

Having been born and raised as an American myself, and having lived for most of my life in America as an American, I can indeed personally attest to the many facets of the American culture that make the United States a truly Great Nation. AND YET, having traveled all over this amazing world and having actually lived in more than a few other nations therein -- and having lived for the last ten years of my life as a citizen of the Earth (without any binding allegiance to any one land or government), I also have access to a relatively untainted look at the parts of American society that are far less than fantastic -- indeed, the parts of America that are actually destabilizing the future of our entire species, if not all sentient life on our entire planet.

In so many respects, America is anything but the "World Leader" she once was. And yet all is not yet lost for this once Great land. Indeed, if enough of her people come together and manifest a reawakening of her latent brilliance, she well could become a trailblazer for Freedom, Truth & Justice (and maybe even Compassion) once again.

Amen ... Let it be so.



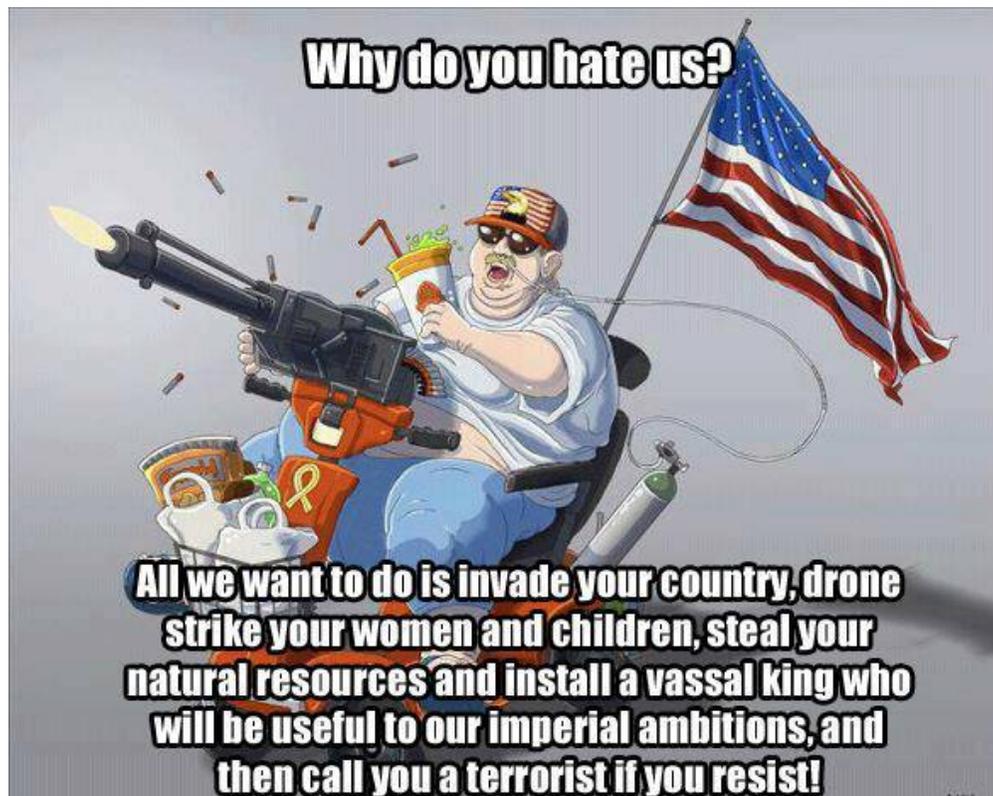
Loosing the Legacy of Liberty

Fact #01: America has earned its mixed reputation.

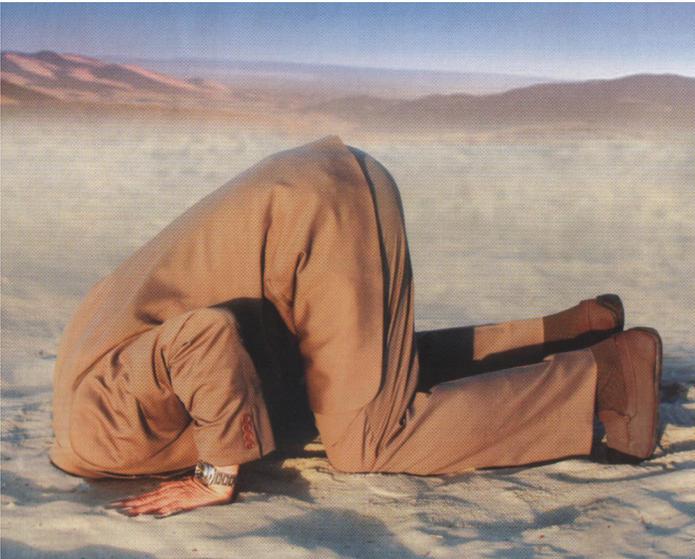
While the government of the United States has indeed been a beacon of generosity and forthrightness over the years (and while far more individual Americans have done the same, often to an even greater degree), the reputation of America remains a justifiably tainted one. In essence, no matter where I have gone or to whom I have spoken outside the boundaries of the U.S., the theme has remained remarkably consistent: Americans are loved for their openness & overall joviality, while America & its "leaders" are scoffed at, ridiculed, or even downright despised.

The average American may not understand why this is the case, and yet even a casual glance at the actions (& more frequently, the inactions) of our current government, coupled with only a slightly longer gaze at the oft-sordid tale that is American foreign policy since the days of Teddy Roosevelt, will have even the most deluded right-wing patriot comprehending the rest of the world's ire.

To be a Great Nation, a country must behave gracefully with according greatness, and -- at least for the last fifty years or so, the United States has failed to do so far more often than not.



Note that I am NOT advocating hatred towards the American government with these words; merely reminding the American people that the ship on which they sail is not nearly as pristine or as peaceful as their captains have led them to believe -- and that, should they choose to pull their heads out of the patriotic sands that still fill their ears and eyes (and hearts), there is still time to right the ship and set sail for legacies far more fitting their country's grand beginnings.



**JUST AS LOVE FOR
ONE INDIVIDUAL
WHICH EXCLUDES
THE LOVE FOR
OTHERS IS NOT
LOVE, LOVE FOR
ONE'S COUNTRY
WHICH IS NOT PART
OF ONE'S LOVE FOR
HUMANITY IS NOT
LOVE, BUT
IDOLATROUS
WORSHIP.**

ERICH FROMM

Amen ... Let it be so.

"Here is your country. Cherish these natural wonders, cherish the natural resources, cherish the history and romance as a sacred heritage, for your children and your children's children. Do not let selfish men or greedy interests skin your country of its beauty." ~ Teddy Roosevelt

"I love America more than any other country in the world and, exactly for this reason, I insist on the right to criticize her perpetually." ~ James Baldwin

"A patriot must always be ready
to defend his country against his government." ~ Edward Abbey

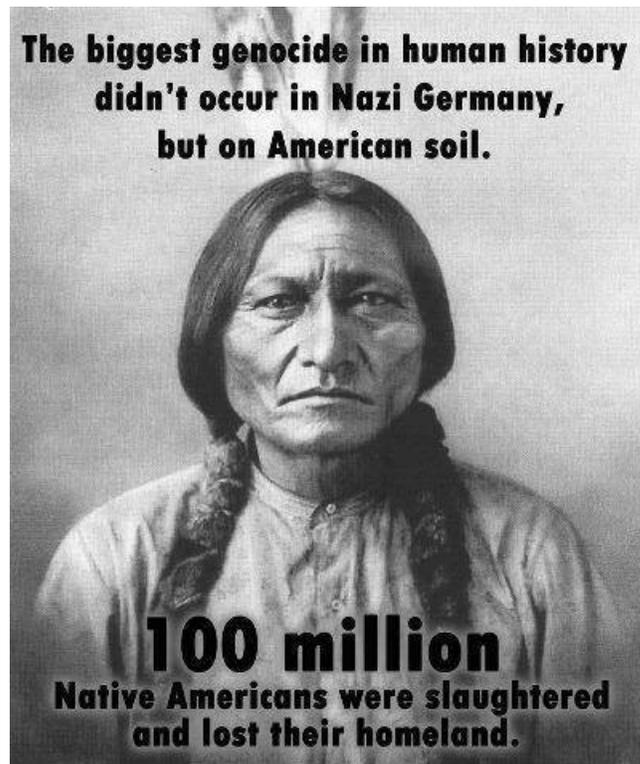
"The greatest patriotism is to tell your country
when it is behaving dishonorably, foolishly, or viciously." ~ Julian Barnes

The Home of the Braves

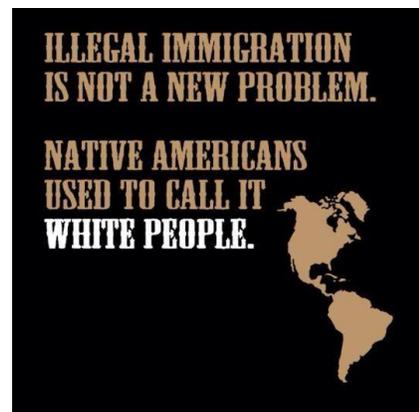
**Fact #02: America actually began as the land of the cowardly
... and the home of the enslaved.**

I will freely & joyfully admit that it is undeniably true that the United States still affords its people more freedoms than many other nations. It is also undeniably true that many an American has indeed performed many a brave deed over the course of his or her country's first 200+ years.

AND it is equally true that the many of the actions of the earliest Americans were exceptionally despicable; just as it is just as true that the early American government actually carried out one of the most widespread & the most effective -- indeed, one of the most purely evil -- genocides that human history has ever known.

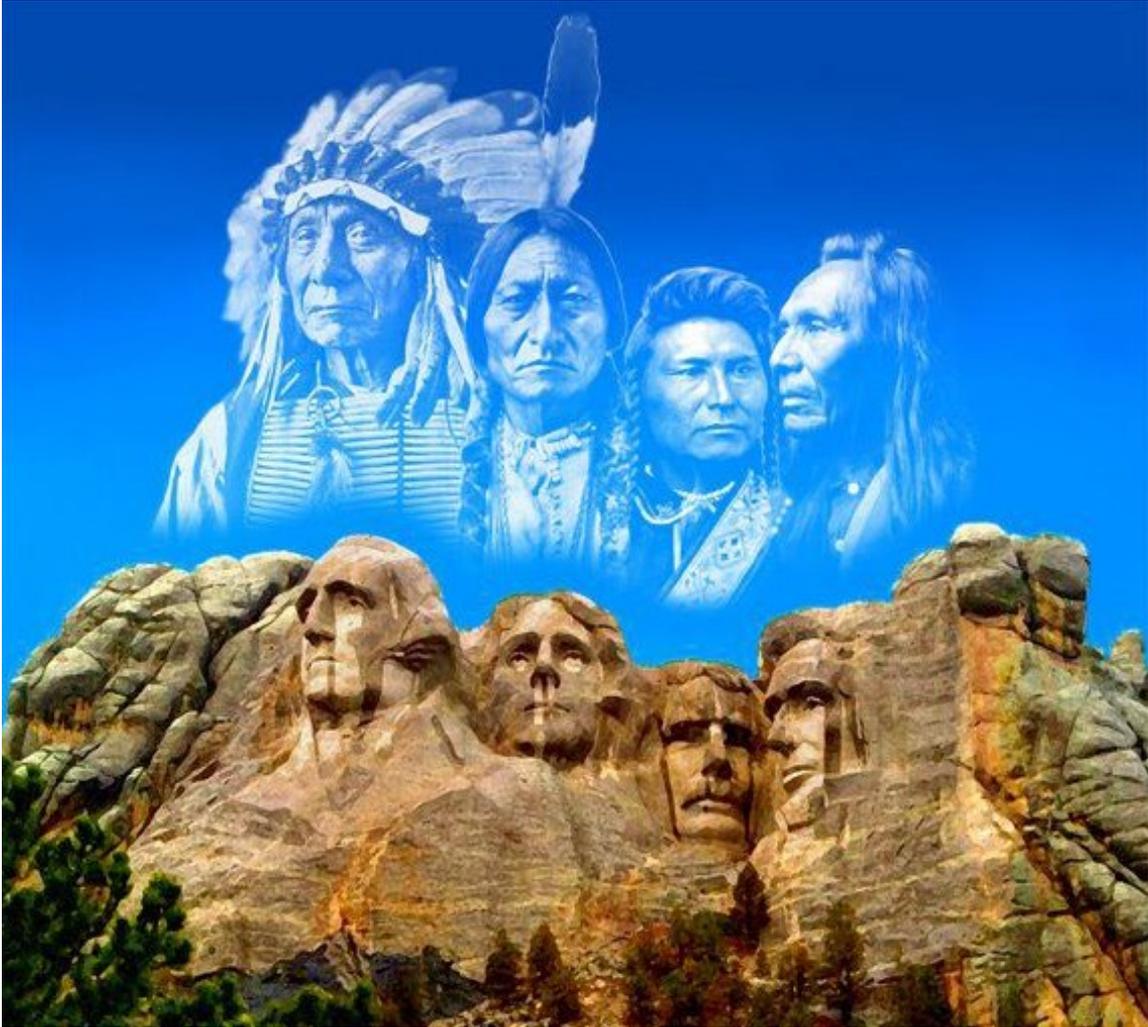


Now this is not to say that America is worse than any other country because of her less-then-noble beginnings, and yet it most certainly assures that she is no better ...



As such, it would be wise for all Americans to regularly pause and remember these inauspicious facts whenever otherwise tempted to either arrogantly criticize other nations or boisterously champion their own.

Amen ... Let it be so.



“Think of how it all started: America was founded by slave owners who informed us that all men were created equal ... [even though] the founders themselves were a small group of unelected, white, male, land-holding slave owners who also suggested their class be the only one allowed to vote. To my mind, that is what's known as being stunningly -- even embarrassingly -- full of shit.” ~ inspired by George Carlin

“To me, it seems a dreadful indignity to have Soul controlled by geography.” ~ George Santayana

Unblessed are the Warmakers

Fact #03: If Jesus was right, and God truly does Love those who make Peace, then America has a LONG way to go before being blessed by God.

"Naturally the common people don't want war; neither in Russia, nor in England, nor for that matter Germany. That is understood. But after all, it is the leaders of the country who determine policy, and it is always simple to drag the people along, whether it is a democracy, or a fascist dictatorship, or a parliament ... Voice or no voice, the people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. That is easy. All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked, and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger. It works the same in any country." ~ Herman Goering (at the 1946 Nuremburg Trials)

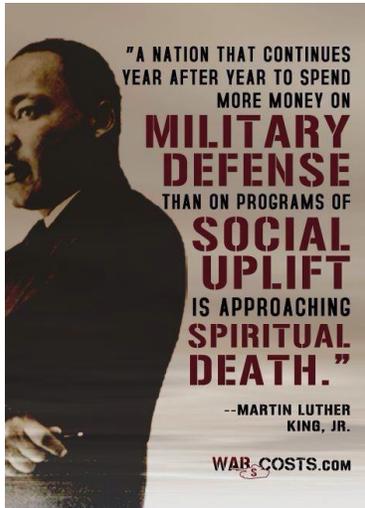
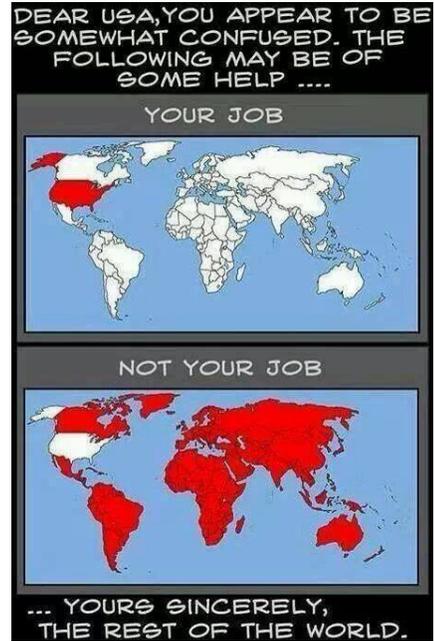
Quite disturbingly, Goering's dark beliefs about the innate gullibility of humanity have been proven consistently true in the United States -- especially over the past fifteen years ... Consider:

*Despite being one of the more violent aggressors on the international scene, many Americans actually believe that America stands for Peace ...



*Despite being by far the world's number one arms manufacturer & number one arms dealer, and despite having an overt military presence that extends to every region of the globe, many Americans actually believe that America stands for Freedom ...

US military presence overseas



*Despite allowing millions of its citizens to go without homes &/or food &/or adequate medical care &/or passable schools – while simultaneously spending billions of dollars on weapons research & military “prosperity”, many Americans actually believe that America stands for Justice.

AND YET there is still hope on the horizon, my Friends. And that hope is represented in this chapter's final image: this little girl dressed as an American and yet calling for Peace; a little girl so like almost all the other children her age all over America who want nothing more than to get along with all the other children of the world -- children who have not forgotten how to be Kind, and how to share, and how to forgive -- children who have not forgotten that Love is a verb that knows no nationality or race or gender or creed.

Amen ... Let it be so.



The Land of the unFree (part 1)

Fact #04: Despite a resounding popular opinion to the contrary, America is NOT the land of the Just.

I figure that these "anti-patriotism" (i.e. ironically, pro-Freedom) thoughts will get a bit of flak; that quite a few of you might even read them to be anti-American. It is important to note right here & now that this is NOT the case. I have nothing at all against America per se, and adore Americans to the same full-fledged degree that I adore all the other citizens of all the other countries (and all the other species) on our amazing planet.

Indeed, this book is NOT even about the United States as a concept or the America that once was and could be again. Rather, it is about patriotic fervor and the very real dangers it poses to Peace, and it is about the United States that IS today -- a country that is still behaving very poorly towards its neighbors (two words: Drone War), and a country that is still actively denying most of its citizens most of the fundamental rights promised in its own laws.

Even though we have been taught that America is all about Freedom & Liberty & Justice -- and even though the American Constitution (a truly amazing document that does indeed provide the skeletal framework for a potentially noble form of government) promises these values, it is important for any true Patriot to realize that the rights it promises are NOT being upheld; indeed, they are actually being violated to an astonishing degree.



With this in mind, please consider the following Truths ...

*Despite Barack Obama's bold statements that "We don't have a domestic spying program" and "There is no spying on Americans", the United States government is most certainly doing just that -- and has been for quite some time.

... This is not real Freedom.



*Despite the Declaration of Independence's espousal that all beings have the right to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness", homosexuals in America still cannot marry, capital offenders there are still electrocuted or poisoned, American marijuana growers are still regularly convicted, and American peaceful protesters are still regularly thrown in jail.

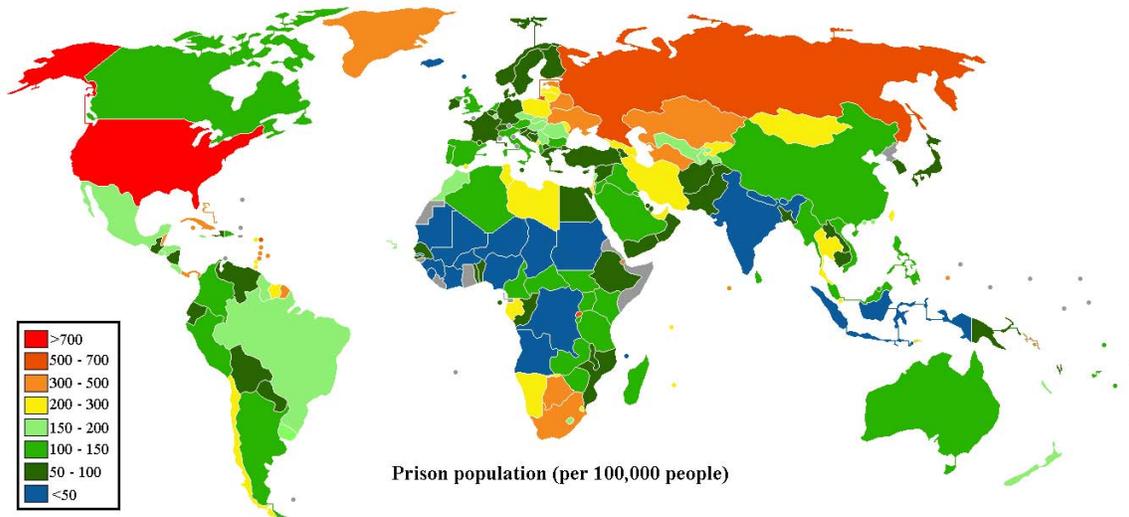
... This is not real Liberty.

LAND OF THE FREE*



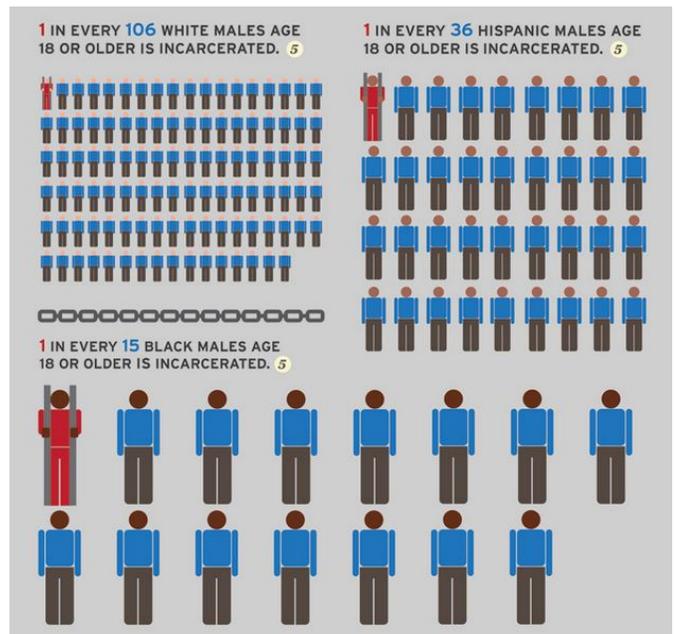
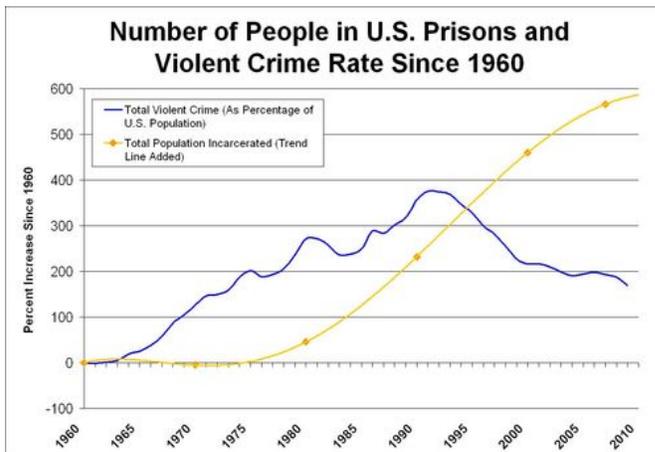
***as long as you don't:**
love the wrong person
grow the wrong plant
refuse to fund wars
cut hair without govt approval
neglect to pay your rulers

*Despite the U.S. Constitution supposedly granting every accused the right to a fair & speedy trial -- along with punishments that are not "cruel or unusual" (U.S Constitution Amendments #06 & #08), over 60% of all jail inmates in the U.S. have yet to be convicted of a crime (i.e. they are still awaiting trial).



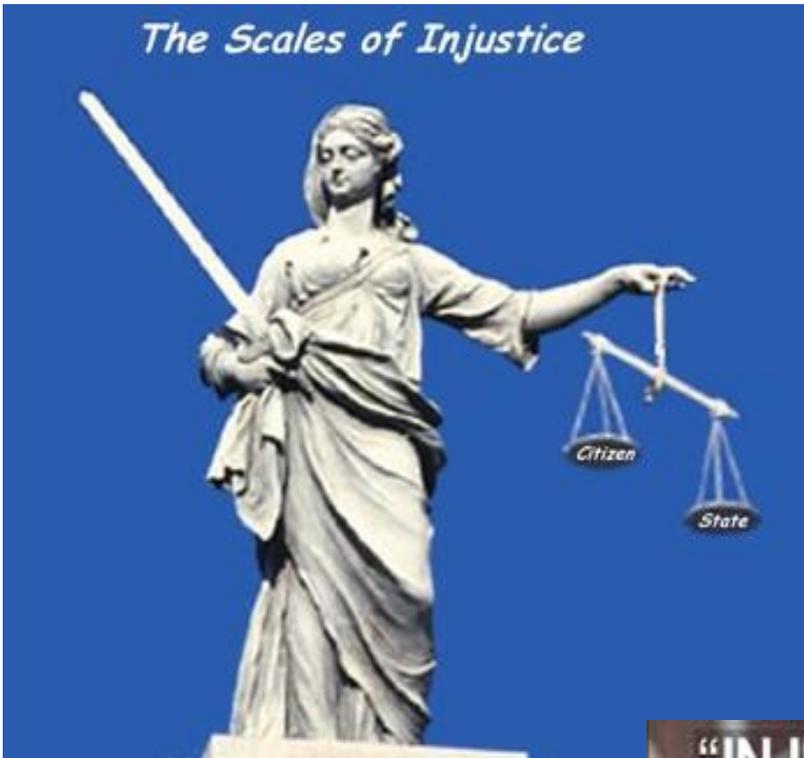
In addition, American prisons are severely overcrowded and in deplorable condition -- and they are mostly filled with nonviolent offenders &/or individuals who have been wrongly convicted (often on the basis of race). Indeed, for a country that sells itself as a defender of the innocent and a champion of justice, it is more than a bit disturbing that American prison populations continue to rise while violent crime rates continue to plummet.

... This is not real Justice.



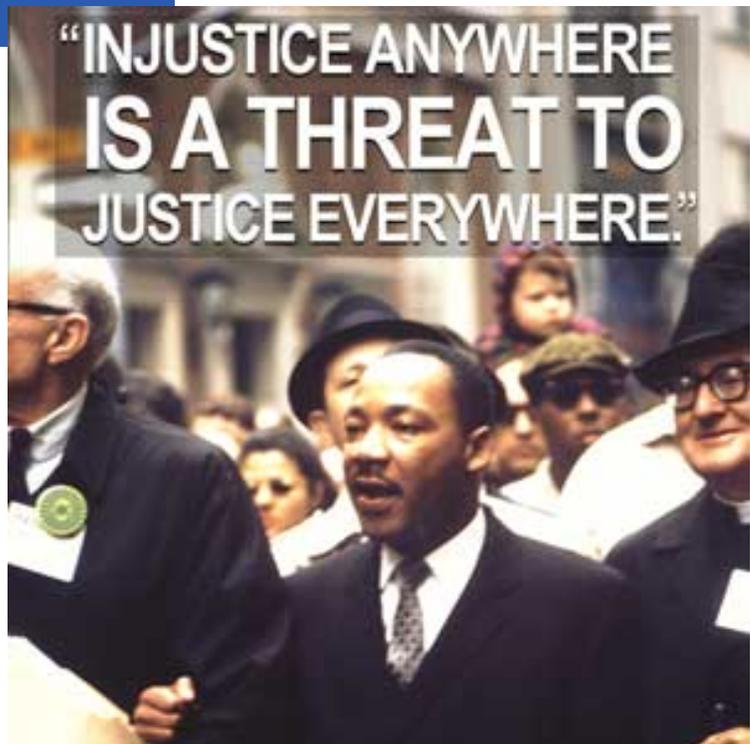
In conclusion, please note that I am NOT putting these facts out there to either "put America down" or raise other countries up. What I *AM* intending to do is wake Americans up to what is broken in their country, with the faith that they will then go forth into their communities and commence making the necessary repairs.

Amen ... Let it be so.



\“The real terrorists of the world do not meet secretly at the docks at midnight, or scream 'Allahu Akbar!' before committing various acts of violence. No, the true terrorists of our world wear 5000 dollar suits, and work in the highest positions of government, finance & business.”
~ inspired by Peter Joseph

“True patriotism hates injustice in its own land more than anywhere else.”
~ Clarence Darrow



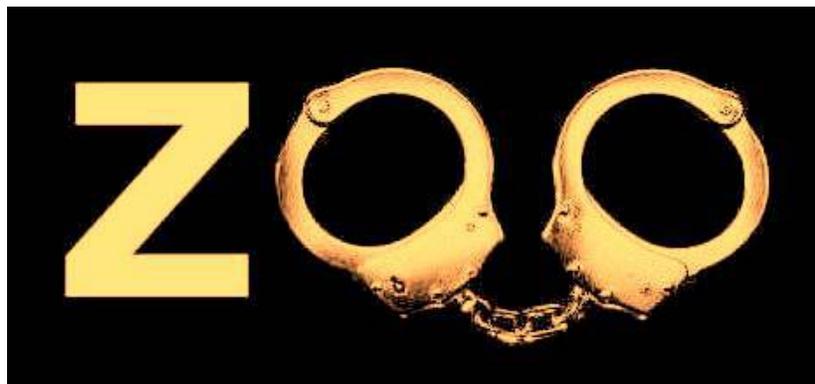
The Land of the unFree (part 2)

Fact #05: America does not even remotely resemble "the Land of the Free".

While it is true that America did finally end legalized slavery in the late 1800's, and while it is true that America did finally recognize a woman's right to vote in 1920, and while the American government did finally offer an apology (albeit one as hollow as it was tardy) in 2010 to all Native Americans for the genocidal abuses inflicted upon them from the late 1700's to the early 1800's, there remains a group of U.S. citizens who are still being unjustly incarcerated and systematically abused to this very day.



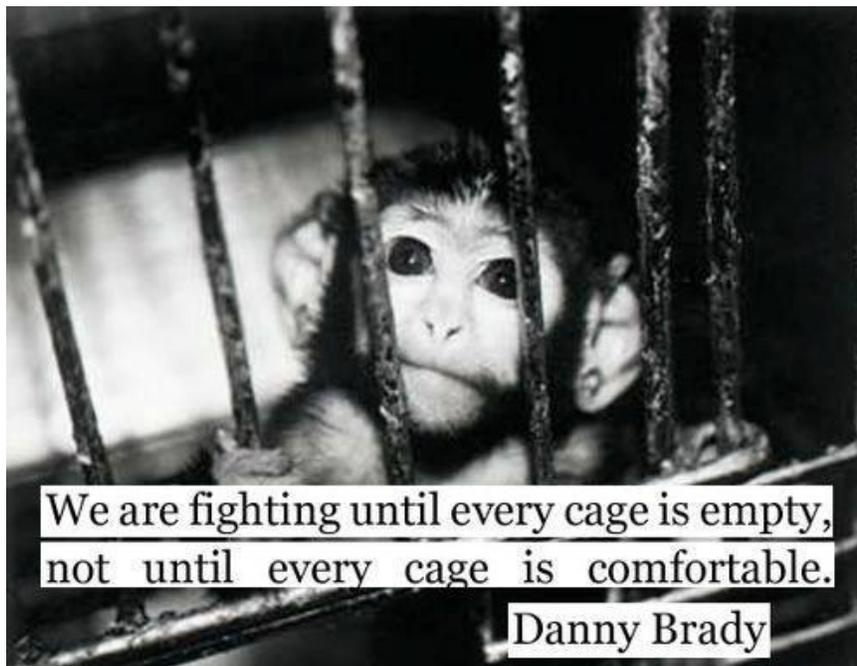
There are currently over 2000 zoos in the United States, housing upwards of one million sentient animals therein. If we are to speak frankly, most of these institutions are designed primarily to make money, doing so by showcasing imprisoned animals to a curious public who pays to see them so confined. In all but the most wealthy & well-known enclosures (there are only roughly 200 accredited zoos & aquariums in the U.S.), animal rights are completely ignored and animal welfare is mostly disavowed ...



As astounding as these figures are, they do not include the animals imprisoned in the innumerable roadside tourist-traps and small private collections that are sprinkled throughout the American landscape. When these just-as-viable beings are taken into account, some sources claim that there are more than 5 MILLION sentient animals in involuntary captivity in America alone.



Some folks believe that zoos are important sources of conservation, and yet the reality remains that few if any of those animals help captive are ever reintroduced to their natural homes. Others choose to champion zoos as wellsprings of education for America's youth. And yet imprisoned animals -- like imprisoned humans -- rarely act naturally in their tiny pens and cramped cells; meaning that zoos actually teach children how animals do NOT live & behave more than they teach them how they do.



Even worse, zoos -- on an insidiously subtle level -- do indeed teach our children several ideals that are as dangerous as the are diabolical:

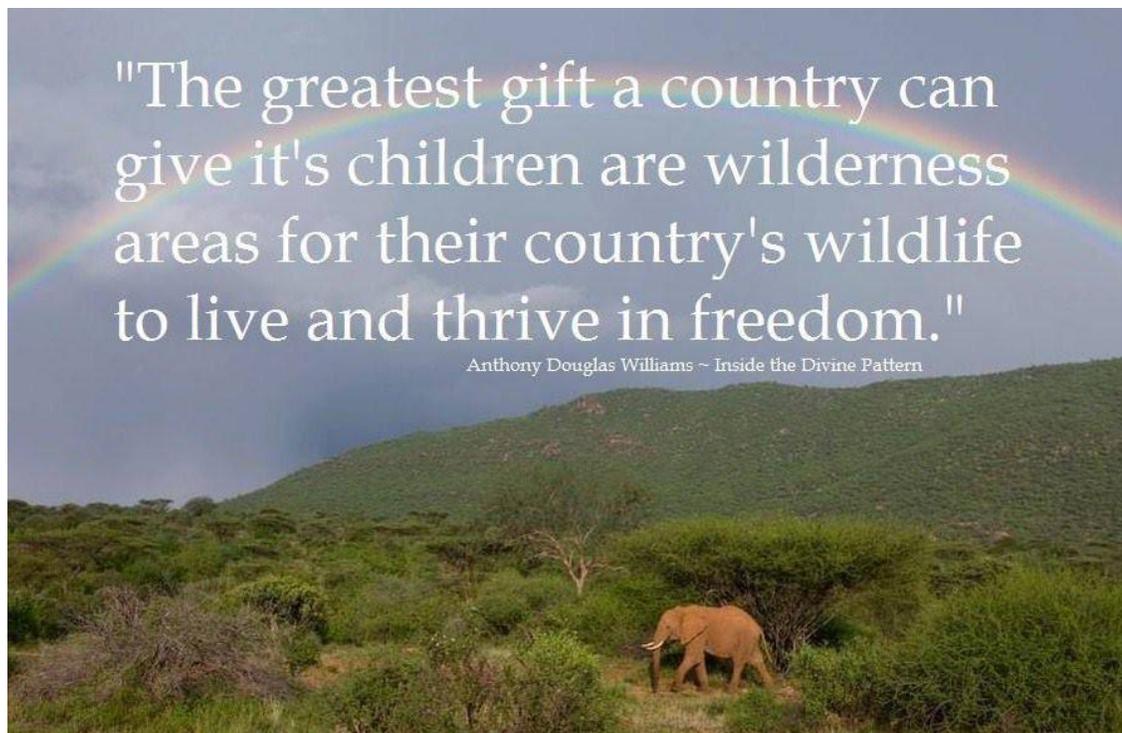
*that it is acceptable to confine another intelligent, sentient being as long as we can come up with even a lame excuse for doing so;

*that animals are "less than" us humans, and therefore that it is acceptable for us to manage their lives for them;

*and that it is acceptable to imprison animals against their will for no other reason than the beliefs that "might makes right" or "intelligence trumps compassion".

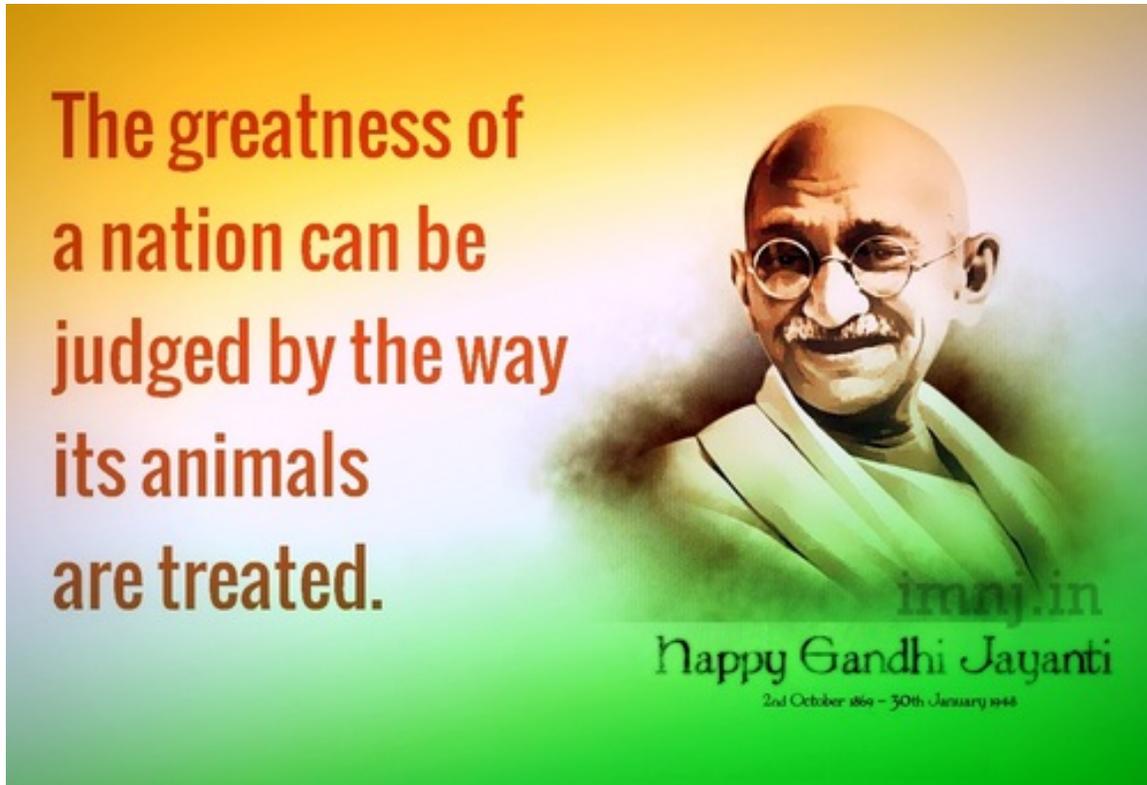


We have televisions now, my Friends, along with modern means of transportation -- both of which have enabled our children to learn all they ever need to know about animals without us having to harm or imprison them beforehand.



In conclusion, locking up innocent animals for our mere entertainment encourages indifference, callousness and a patent lack of respect for life itself. And for all of you fans of American Liberty out there, I would simply remind you of the following Truth: Denying other sentient beings their Freedom erodes both the purity & the power of your own ... So please feel free to go forth today and be a true Patriot -- by boycotting (or better yet, actively protesting) your local zoo.

Amen ... Let it be so.



"Sometimes people hold a core belief that is very strong. When they are presented with evidence that works against that belief, the new evidence cannot be accepted. It would create a feeling that is extremely uncomfortable ... And because it is so important to protect the core belief, they will rationalize, ignore and even deny anything that doesn't fit in with the core belief." ~ Frantz Fanon

"Freedom is the oxygen of the Soul." ~ Mosh Dayan

"Caged birds accept one another,
and yet flight is what they long for." ~ Tennessee Williams

A Christian nation or nation of Christians?

Fact #06: At least according to America's founding fathers, the United States was never intended to be a Christian nation, and therefore to this day still isn't one.



"I beg you will be persuaded, that no one would be more zealous than myself to establish effectual barriers against the horrors of spiritual tyranny ... Of all the animosities which have existed among mankind, those which are caused by a difference of sentiments in religion appear to be the most inveterate and distressing, and ought to be deprecated." ~ George Washington

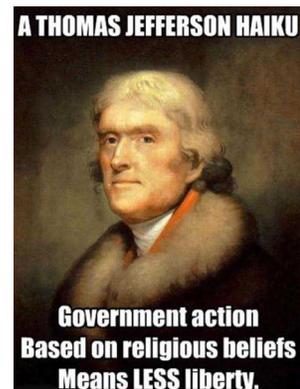
"In every country and in every age, the priest has been hostile to liberty. He is always in alliance with the despot, abetting his abuses in return for protection to his own ... Christianity neither is, nor ever was a part of the common law ... Question with boldness even the existence of a God; because, if there be one, he must more approve of the homage of reason, than that of blindfolded fear." ~ Thomas Jefferson

"I hold that in this country there must be a complete severance of church and state." ~ Teddy Roosevelt

"The Bible is not my book nor Christianity my profession." ~ Abraham Lincoln

"The government of the United States of America is not in any sense founded on the Christian religion." ~ John Adams

"I have found Christian dogma unintelligible." ~ Benjamin Franklin

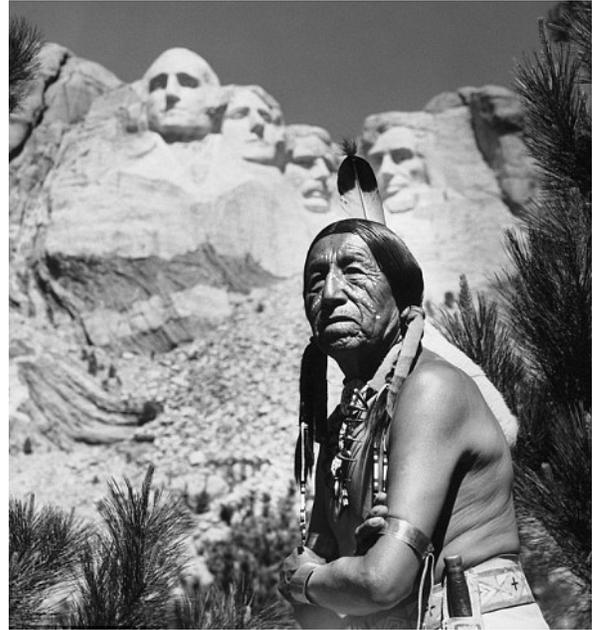


CHRISTIAN NATION?



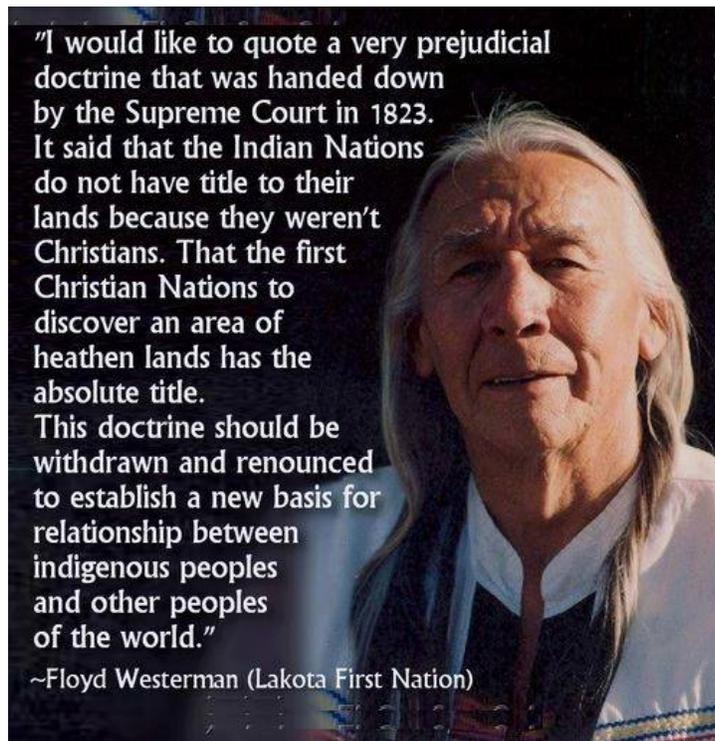
So, America was founded on a Foreign born, Brown skinned, Jewish guy that never spoke a word of English, fed and healed the poor for free. Defended a woman from being slut shamed and killed, and chose not to conform to either Religious or Political nonsense?

Cool... When are we gonna start that?



PLEASE NOTE that, while I myself *am* a devout Follower of The Way of Christ (and therefore *not* a Christian), I am *NOT* intending to discredit the religion of Christianity or its member Christians with this chapter. I also openly recognize that the underlying morality & ethics of Jesus Christ (as presented in the Gospels, *not* the "teachings" from his imposter in the book of Revelation) are also found in many of the edicts & the ideals of both the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution. Of course, these truths do not change the fact that the vast majority of America's founding fathers were *NOT* Christians, that the vast majority of them did *NOT* intend for America to be or to become a "Christian nation", and that the true potential Strength of the United States rests in her call to accept & respect & indeed cherish the equal rights of ALL her citizens to responsibly pursue life, liberty and happiness in the ways they each see fit -- and this regardless of the god or gods they happen to worship, and regardless of the religion to which they happen to adhere.

Amen ... Let it be so.



"I would like to quote a very prejudicial doctrine that was handed down by the Supreme Court in 1823. It said that the Indian Nations do not have title to their lands because they weren't Christians. That the first Christian Nations to discover an area of heathen lands has the absolute title. This doctrine should be withdrawn and renounced to establish a new basis for relationship between indigenous peoples and other peoples of the world."

~Floyd Westerman (Lakota First Nation)

Patriotism Purified ... a brief conclusion

"The secret of true Freedom rests in providing one's fellow citizens with solid information about the true nature of their nation and its government, whereas the essence of tyranny lies in keeping those same people blind and ignorant of the same." ~ inspired by Robespierre

Let it be known that my sole intention underlying this book on patriotism has been to illuminate what has remained hidden for so long -- the fact that, even though America has many wonderful qualities and is indeed in many ways a great country, she is not what she was made to be, she is not what she once was, and she is not what she could one day become.

Indeed, all the flag-waving & anthem-singing & patriotic-posturing in the world will not change the fact that America has quite a loooooong way to go before she even comes close to embodying her truly majestic potential ... Nor will all that waving & singing & posturing encourage her current "leaders" to alter her course and steer her any closer to realizing the same. No, my Friends, if America is truly to become what she was made to be -- if the Freedom & the Justice & the Compassion that reside at the heart of the U.S. Constitution and the Declaration of Independence are to finally come to life -- and thereby give her flag its still-latent luster, then it is you, the American people, who will have to do so ... You will have to do so in your homes, you will have to do so in your workplaces, you will have to do so in your schools, and you will have to do so in your neighborhoods.

The American political system is irreparably damaged -- bought out by corporations lusting for power and crippled by politicians smothered in greed. As such, that very system cannot hope to be repaired (certainly not via the toothless means of the voting booth or your hollow demands for change) ... and as such, as has clearly proven to be the case for lo these many recent years, the American political system is no longer capable of rising to repair the wrongs that need to be righted.



How fortunate it is, then, for all you Americans -- indeed, how fortunate it is for all of Earth's sentient citizens, that you are people of great Compassion;

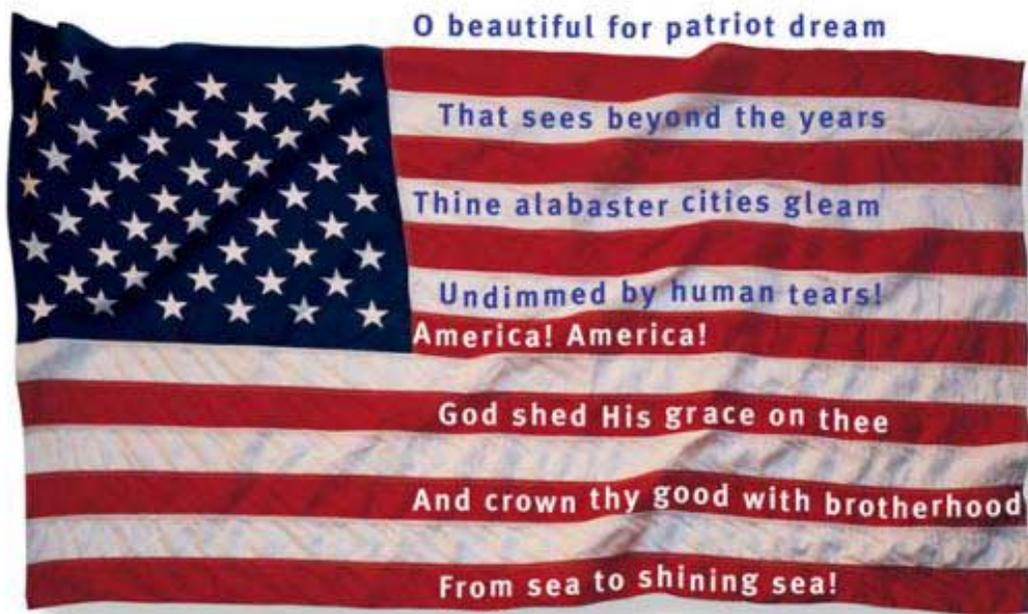
*... that you need no governmental assistance to rebuild what is rightfully yours;

*... that you need no governmental cooperation to effectuate a Justice as potent as it is gentle; ... that you have not forgotten what it means to be Humble & Kind;

*... that you are strong enough to put aside all your saber-rattling and patriotic arrogance in favor of showering not only your own communities, but also all your nearby neighborhoods -- indeed, the entire world -- with both your Generosity & your Goodwill.

Amen ... Let it be so!

America The Beautiful



"And an immense Love for humanity came over me;
watering the fields of my inner world,
which had until then been lying fallow ...
And this immense Love vented itself
in a vast Compassion
that encompassed all things living."
~ inspired by Georg Brandes



*“And I will take one from a thousand
and two from ten thousand,
and they shall Become a single One.”
~ Jesus (Gospel of Thomas 23)*