

What Profoundly Retarded Means

Written by Reggie

Thursday, 17 September 2009 00:04

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by Bob Alexander

In 1992 I read a feature in our local Sunday paper called, "Will You Adopt This Child?" That week's article profiled a four year old boy who was blind, could feed himself, use the bathroom, brush his teeth and put his clothes on. The article went on to say the little boy was classified as being "Profoundly Retarded."

After reading the piece I thought, "Now there's a tough sell." Here's a little kid who is going to need a lot of care ... forever. I also thought about my own son. He was nine years old at the time and I wished he was as accomplished as the little kid in the article. He has Cerebral Palsy and though he could feed himself, he still needed help doing everything else.

It was the first time I'd come across the phrase "Profoundly Retarded." It made me wonder how my son would be classified since he couldn't do 75% of what the little boy in the article could. It took a long time but eventually my son made it to the level of the child I had read about so many years before. He lives in a group home now that provides 24-hour supervised residential care. He is forever ... 3 years old.

I'm not trying to inject an element of pathos here ... I just want to make it clear that I know what the term "Profoundly Retarded" means.

According to The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, profoundly retarded individuals have IQ scores under 20 - 25. They may be able to develop basic self-care and communication skills with appropriate support and training. Their retardation is often caused by an accompanying neurological disorder.

Over the Summer, culminating on September 12th with the Taxpayer March on Washington D.C., we have seen a perfect example of a truly remarkable phenomenon.

The 70,000 people who attended the rally, as well as millions of other like-minded Americans, for a host of different reasons, have become willfully Profoundly Retarded. They can feed themselves ... Use a bathroom ... Brush their teeth ... And put their clothes on. They have developed basic self-care and communication skills. And That's It.

What is almost overwhelming to even think about ... is that these millions of Americans ... chose their condition. They have turned their ability to think critically ... off.

Critical thinking employs not only logic but also clarity, credibility, accuracy, precision,

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relevance, depth, breadth, significance and fairness. All of which was missing from the Taxpayer March and has been missing from The Conservative Agenda since before this country came into existence.

And to be fair ... Critical thinking is intermittently missing from Liberals as well. For years various pundits on The Right and The Left have described The United States of America as a conservative country. Or a religious country. No. We are a Profoundly Retarded country. By Choice.

To explain why we have become what we are is an almost futile endeavor. Explanations may lead to understanding ... but we have to do something about it. To solve the problem we have to tear down established institutions and belief systems. But that's too hard. Or too uncomfortable. Or too confrontational. Or too whatever the hell it is that keeps people from doing anything.

61% of Americans don't believe in evolution. We can blame this rejection of science and the belief in absolute nonsense directly on religious indoctrination ... and an astounding level of religious tolerance.

Freedom of religion means one has the liberty to worship without persecution. But it has come to include tolerating belief systems in the public arena that don't make any sense. The core tenets of the major religions in this country ... Make No Sense. But in this country, one has to profess, and demonstrably practice, Christianity in order to hold elective office. In a functional nation ... no one would vote for a candidate that believes in irrational mumbo jumbo. We have to exclude these people ... not excuse them. I used to think that if anyone said God Spoke To Them ... it was the same as if they said Elvis spoke to them. Not anymore. Though still well within the Crazy Continuum ... It's even crazier. Elvis Actually Existed.

But we're raised to be polite ... and tolerant ... and suspend our critical thinking. Liberals will bend over backwards not to offend.

A war of aggression is a military conflict waged absent the justification of self-defense. The International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg after World War II, called the waging of aggressive war "essentially an evil thing...to initiate a war of aggression...is not only an international crime; it is the supreme international crime, differing only from other war crimes in that it contains within itself the accumulated evil of the whole."

Our war and occupation of Iraq is the supreme international crime. Our country is responsible for the murder of over a million innocent people. But because of an urban myth ... Liberals have twisted themselves into knots trying to deal with aspects of this war with "political correctness."

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Spitting_Image

The Spitting Image: Myth, Memory and the Legacy of Vietnam is a 1998 book by sociologist Jerry Lembcke. A Los Angeles Times book reviewer wrote:

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"The image is ingrained: A Vietnam veteran, arriving home from the war, gets off a plane only to be greeted by an angry mob of antiwar protesters yelling, 'Murderer!' and 'Baby killer!' Then out of the crowd comes someone who spits in the veteran's face. The only problem, according to Jerry Lembcke, is that no such incident has ever been documented. It is instead, says Lembcke, a kind of urban myth that reflects our lingering national confusion over the war."

The Right has continued to promulgate this myth since the end of the Vietnam war. Myths are powerful ... and almost impossible to discard. Liberals are so afraid of being linked to the actions of anti-war protesters ... that never existed ... that they've come up with an absolutely incredible phrase.

I've used it. Perhaps you have too. When talking to an Iraq war veteran ... have you ever said, "Thank you for your service."

They have returned from participating in a war crime. We vilify The Bush Regime for being war criminals. But we tell the participants in the war crime, "Thank you for your service." What service did they perform for us? We can't speak the truth. We can't say that we're so sorry they were played for chumps and that their fellow soldiers were wounded or killed for Corporate America. Do we keep the switch for our critical thinking in the off position out of empathy ... or cowardice?

How many anti-war demonstrations would have happened since November 2008 if John McCain and Sarah Palin had won the election and continued The Bush Regime's wars in Afghanistan and Iraq? How many banners would there have been portraying them as war criminals like there were for Bush and Cheney?

Obama has not changed The Bush Regime's policies about the wars or in the treatment of the prisoners from those wars in any discernible way. *Where Are the Obama Anti-War Protests?* When you inherit a war crime you're supposed to stop it ... not allow it to continue. Otherwise it's your war crime. War crimes are not absolved by rhetoric. But we do nothing because we certainly wouldn't want to be accused of being racists now would we? Mounting a huge demonstration against the first African-American president because of his war policies would so easily be termed racist by your typical unthinking ... Liberal.

We've turned off our critical thinking and joined our Conservative fellow citizens in obstructing justice and peace. We weren't hamstrung at birth by a neurological disorder. We don't have any excuse. We choose to discard critical thinking and embrace a dark age of myth and superstition, and cowardice.

We do have hope. We hope that if we do nothing, if we don't think about it ... magically everything will turn out alright.

It's not going to. The Bush Regime is gone. We have to focus on the people calling the shots now. The ones that won't end the wars. The ones that won't prosecute war criminals. The ones that deny us healthcare. The new pawns of The Corporatocracy.

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Democrats.