

Human Rights Widen In the West, Vanish Elsewhere.  
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On June 26, the United States extended its freedoms to one more group of fellow citizens, homosexuals, who now have the equality in marriage. Over many centuries before this, homosexual males were jailed, beaten, tortured, and scorned. Female homosexuals were forced into marriage, institutionalized, or shunned.

In Muslim societies, even today, homosexuality is technically forbidden but socially rampant, particularly practiced against boys by those responsible for them (including having special bordellos) and boys among themselves. In harems, women practiced it, running the risk of execution if caught.

Today, in an amazingly short time, Europeans and Americans (even in macho Mexico), countries have extended to homosexuals the same rights that all adult citizens have: to marry, to have children, and to have the legal rights to live with the property rights and inheritance rights accorded to all in our civilization.

Marriage in the West has been a changing institution. Not too long ago, women were property and had no choice of spouse. Families would not permit children of different religions to marry. Not too long ago, it was illegal for marriage between people of different races to marry. All of this was challenged and changed under law. Now people of different genders may marry too. This is an extension of rights that is the hallmark of Western civilization: enlarging liberty.

This parallels all the other enlargement of liberty in America too, particularly in voting rights: from adult White men of property to all adult White men to all men (at least by law including Black men) and finally to all Women. This took several centuries and a bloody war and more bloodshed and grief, but it did happen.

As for the rest of the world, freedom is a work in progress, but is not doing as well as in the West. Unfortunately the Western model of expansion of freedoms has hit a dreadful roadblock, one which Samuel D. Huntington warned us of in 1993 in his Clash of Civilizations: the roadblock of Islam.

On June 26, when America showed its expansion of human rights with its Supreme Court Decision, the "Islamic State" showed its own values in three significant attacks.

Muslims worldwide are celebrating Ramadan, the month-long fast in which they are urged to meditate, pray, pity the hungry, show charity to the poor, and then break their fasts with kindness and good fellowship with family and neighbors. ISIS has a different idea: "To make Ramadan a month of calamities for the nonbelievers." This was their "noble" goal, and indeed they did.

In Tunisia, they pulled a Kalishnikov from a beach umbrella at a resort for European tourists and killed 38 people (go after the tourist industry). In Kuwait, they killed at least 27 worshippers at midday prayers at a Shiite mosque (wrong kind of believers). And in southeastern France, they car-bombed a gas factory and left the severed head of the driver's employer hanging at the entrance, the assassin taking a "selfie" of the deed.

Somalia doesn't have enough trouble. An al-Qaeda group attacked an African Union base and killed 25 soldiers there. They do not want any kind of law and order in Somalia.

Is it any surprise that Europe is dealing with 40,000 recent migrants fleeing the Muslim world? Why should anyone want to stay there? What does it offer other than death? Which freedoms do ISIS support?

Ken Burns' wonderful special on the Roosevelts has been rerunning this summer. Eleanor Roosevelt has been justly remembered for her stellar work in the United Nations as the author of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a document that spelled out in the 1950s the best values of Western Civilization, that all human beings should enjoy. Every member of the General Assembly of that day, signed that document, including the Saudis! I watched with disbelief, knowing full well that the majority of signers had laws that forbade granting human rights to women, political opposition, religious diversity, legal independence, yet they signed.

Today, the General Assembly is a Cave of Winds with one agenda: Condemn Israel, the only democracy among them. Human Rights is a Grand Canyon.

686 words

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