

Letters to the Editor:

Editor's note: The following article was written as a letter to the editor by Bill Stichnot in response to Dr. Tarciso Beal's article, *Violence, The Goddess of America*, that appeared in the November 2014 issue of *La Voz*. I want to encourage our readers to write letters and offer their opinions, corrections or additions to any articles written for *La Voz*. Letters will be published as long as writers strive to engage in critical commentary that is constructive. Letters with the intent to slander individuals or groups will not be published. Opinions expressed in letters to the editor are solely those of the author.

Send To

Email:

lavoz@esperanzacenter.org

Mail:

922 San Pedro
San Antonio, TX 78212

Deadline:

The 8th of each month.

Violence – It's In Our Genes

I read Dr. Tarciso Beal's article with a great deal of interest. While he did a fair job articulating the violence in America, he was just scratching the surface, missing the big picture and some of it was just misleading. It seemed as if he was just listing American atrocities. And, he makes a compelling case. However, except for a comment on "Manifest Destiny", he blames guns as the cause of violence. The fact is that "we" — that is to say — the entire human race, are genetically predisposed to violence.

If you look at anthropology, our prehistoric ancestors led a Darwinian life — only the strong survived. Humans, being relatively weak, as opposed to many of the other animals, kept themselves alive through their brains and their ability for ultra violence and, of course, the use of the thumb. They say: "Life is hard — and it is harder if you're stupid." Through the natural selection process — the slow, the weak, the mentally challenged were killed, either by their peers or animals. Since they were killed, they could not pass on "nonviolent" genes that could act as a counterweight to the violent genes. Through hundreds of thousands of years that passed, they, the "weaker", including the pacifists' genes were lost. They were never passed on to future generations. This resulted in the smarter and more aggressive people, who were more prone to violence, passing their genes on. This occurred millennium after millennium. Thus, when the first modern society (Egypt) was created, the vast majority of us were already natural born killers.

You read it in the Bible, when Cain kills Abel. It doesn't matter if you actually believe that it happened, the point is, violence (murder, in this case) was introduced into the history of the Bible. The first-born human killed the second-born human. Whether you believe in it literally, or not, the point was made that violence happened early in human existence and for hardly any reason (jealousy). The implication being, it didn't take much of a reason for us to kill each other. It is in our genes. Abel could have had more pacifist genes. They were lost and the killer's, Cain's genes, continued.

Dyan Cannon is an actress of some note of the 60s who appeared in movies through 2008. Towards middle age, she became a "born again Christian". She once joked that "If I'd known there was so much sex and violence in the Bible, I'd have started reading it much sooner." She is pretty much right. If you page through the Old Testament, you will see the same thing. Even in Biblical times, violence was commonplace. The Fifth Commandment (Thou shalt not kill) should end with the words "Except when..."

I have to take Dr. Beal to task when he stated that violence has entered American sports. Violence has always been in sports. The fact is, the Greeks started the Olympics as a way to train for war. He speaks of football. It seems Dr. Beal has never seen a Hockey game. That sport is wall-to-wall violence. Full-blown fist fights only get you minutes in the penalty box. In fact, you could probably list on one hand the popular sports that do not include violence.

I have to disagree with Dr. Beal on another point. His statement that the newspaper "carries almost daily reports of murder-suicides by gun." Actually, unless the suicidal person commits a crime, or a celebrity, like Robin Williams commits suicide, the suicide is not printed in the paper. Psychologists will tell you suicide is contagious. There is research stating that an increased number of people, especially teenagers, attempt suicide after they have read about such action. So the press does its part for privacy in an attempt to not feed into the mentally ill.

I find another point made by Dr. Beal, interesting. He wants "Catholic or Christian" (as if Catholics weren't Christian) schools not to be involved in football programs. His wording is interesting. I'm wondering why he did not call for an end of football in ALL schools, not just Christian schools? Is the damaged head of a player from a public school less worthy than a head of a Christian school attendee?

Are available guns a problem? You bet they are! But if it wasn't guns, it would have been something else that caused the violence. Let us not forget, the Nazis killed millions of Jews, with hardly firing a shot. The genocide in Rwanda was performed with people using machetes.

Dr. Beal does a good job of reviewing our violent American history, and it is sad.. But America is just a subset of the world. Genocide is now common place in the world. While America had it's genocide against Native Americans, the genocide perpetrated throughout the world this past 100 years knows no equal — starting with the massacre of 1 million Armenians by the Turks; casualties in World War I through World War II; the genocide in Rwanda in the 90s; the ethnic cleansing in the Balkans; the genocide in Cambodia when the Communists took over in 1975; and presently, the Chinese in Tibet trying to wipe out all of the Tibetan culture. ISIS, too, is taking its turn as the most brutal group in the world. People can point to what ideology they like or don't like, as a reason for violence. But, as I said, the human race has bred itself to be violent. — Bill Stichnot