

Dark Clouds and Silver Linings: Hope in Our Age of Anxiety

Recently a friend who works as an editor for a large homeschool company told me his supervisors had temporarily assigned him to the admissions department. "In June," he explained, "our enrollments were up 35 percent, in July they were up 100 percent over the previous July, and now it's mid-August and we've already broken that record. So a bunch of us are now working the phones in admissions."

The company, which services 12,000 students, publishes its own books and lesson plans for grades K-12, and enrolled families receive grading and counseling services as well. "We've had to hire extra shippers in the warehouse, which now operates 24 hours a day," my friend told me, "and the copying machines are running round the clock. Come the fall, we'll need to hire lots more graders and counselors just to meet the new demand."

Though many of these new students are coming from public schools, quite a few are also emigrating out of private institutions. As one mom of four told my friend, "It costs a lot of money for my kids to attend school, and now they're going to be home again doing distance learning and I'm still paying the same fees. If I'm going to have my children at home, I might as well save the money and teach them myself."

Is this a positive consequence of the coronavirus shutdown? Parents who work fulltime and students who enjoy the camaraderie of the classroom probably don't think so. I've spoken with several parents who, whether they are working inside or outside the home, find themselves under enormous pressure to keep up the pace while instructing their children.

On the other hand, stay-at-home education has opened the eyes

of parents as to what their children are learning. And because many secondary schools lean to the left in their teaching of subjects such as history and literature, some might make the case that removing students from that indoctrination is healthy.

The looting and burning in our cities, in some ways a direct consequence of the quarantine, have also brought unexpected outcomes. Gun sales have skyrocketed, and [2.5 million](#) of those purchasing firearms are first-time buyers. The majority of those seeking to own a rifle, shotgun, or pistol wish to protect themselves and their families. They've seen the chaos in our cities, heard the calls to defund the police, and realize they may well be on their own when trouble comes knocking at the door.

Again we may ask: Is this turn of events positive or negative? Negative, if you're opposed to private ownership of firearms. You want restrictions on these weapons, or would like to see them confiscated altogether.

But the coronavirus and the mayhem in our streets have created an army of new gun owners who, whether liberal or conservative, will be unhappy if politicians try to strip them of their Second Amendment rights. For those supporting these rights, this is a plus thanks to the turmoil of the last few months.

The anarchy in our streets, the fires and the shootings, certainly belong in the negative column. Radicals, opportunists, thugs, and thieves have destroyed property, ruined small business owners, and killed or maimed innocent citizens. They have cost our country billions of dollars in damage and lost revenues, and once peaceful neighborhoods now live in fear of violence.

But even here we find a positive side. Members of Antifa, Black Lives Matter, and other Marxists may wear masks as they

destroy police stations and businesses, but they have unmasked themselves before the rest of America. Some people who take their news only from television may be ignorant of this bedlam – a friend recounts that he recently met a man who prided himself on staying abreast of the news, but who had never heard of Antifa – but the vast majority of Americans are aware of the destruction done by these mobs. They know these riots are not spontaneous, and they now understand these fanatics want to junk the Constitution, throw law and order in the dumpster, and transform America into a Marxist state. These militants have stepped from cover and have openly revealed their intentions and plans for all to see.

Finally, distrust of public officials and mainstream media is deepening. During the crisis some of our mayors and governors revealed themselves as petty tyrants and incompetent buffoons, dictating what shops and restaurants could remain open, and permitting mass protests while keeping beaches and parks closed. Some of them claim they want us to mail in our ballots for fear voting will expose Americans to COVID-19, but they have kept mega-stores like Walmart and Lowe's open. The negative? They've done enormous damage. The positive? Some voters are now awakening to the consequences of inept leadership. They'll be voting in November.

At *The Washington Times*, Christopher Vondracek [reports](#) on a major poll showing American distrust in its mainstream media is at an all-time high. On the negative side, that lack of trust can do enormous damage to our democracy and our national conversation about various pressing issues. The positive side? Americans are “woke” to the misreporting and deceptions by many of these reporters and commentators.

A silver lining in a cloud means the sun is shining behind the cloud.

And sooner or later, that sun will break through the clouds.

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