

Evolution of Social and Cultural Norms Making Society More Tolerant and Safer

But motivated bad actors will always find a way.

By Marian Tupy

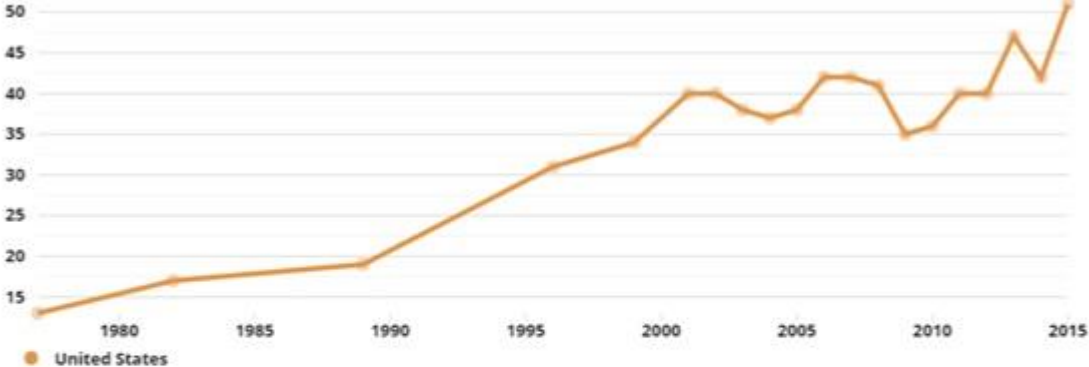
June 14, 2016

The massacre of 49 innocent people at the gay night club in Orlando on Sunday was both shocking and tragic. Not being a specialist on gun rights, immigration, religion or mental health—all of which appear to be pertinent to the discussion of what happened—I do not wish to opine too much.

My immediate reaction is that a crazy or hateful individual, who is determined to kill the largest possible number of people (for whatever twisted reason), cannot be stopped by new laws and regulations, nor by the evolution of social and cultural norms that make the society as a whole more tolerant and safer (of which more below). Similarly, law enforcement response, no matter how speedy and brave, is unlikely to prevent some, perhaps most, casualties. Were I at that night club (or at that church in Charleston), I would have wished to be armed and thus have a fighting chance of survival. But, that's just me.

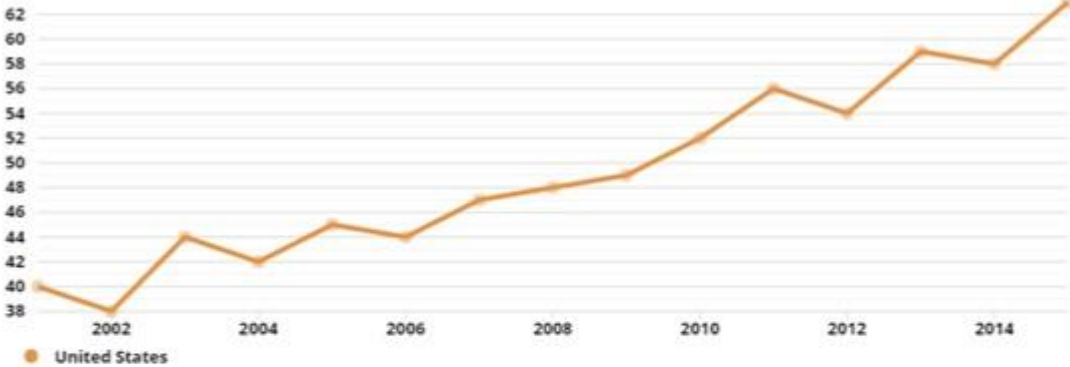
Now back to the evolution of social and cultural norms regarding gay rights. Gays and lesbians used to be persecuted and shunned throughout the world for millennia. In today's America, however, we enjoy rights and acceptance not seen since ancient Greece. Singular acts of hate and madness cannot erase the progress that our society has made and for which we all ought to be grateful. Knowing that will, I hope, provide some solace in dark times.

Belief that being lesbian or gay is something that a person is born with, percent of U.S. adults



Source: Gallup

Belief that lesbian and gay relations are morally acceptable, percent of U.S. adults



Source: Gallup

Support for gay marriage, percent of U.S. adults

