Movie Review: â€œWe Are Marshallâ€•

Description

Sneak preview tickets in hand, I expected to see a good movie, having seen a few commercials. I saw a great movie. Not knowing the details of the real situation, if the movie wasnâ€™t too overly dramatized, it certainly is an inspirational story of an entire community, not just a coach or a team. It is worth your time.

Yesterday I posted how life seems to emulate reality TV. Today I write about how life, in the context of a small West Virginia town should be a model for our nation.

How timely this happens to be, as the theme of the movie: â€œYes, we took a loss, but we need to suit up and get back in the game, if we ever expect to winâ€• plays into post III of a few weeks ago, in The Ratchet and the Governor â€“ Tools for Todayâ€• series I have been working on. I also commented, just a few days ago, the rough times demand tough men.

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The movie is well acted. Be ready to be brought into the emotions of a town who loses all but 4 of their football players, the college athletic staff and several of the key (read big) supporters. The big picture of the movie is it took many from the College and town, as well as a coach, who knew nothing more about the school than they were in need of a coach, and they made things happen.

They set a goal, first by the desire of one of the four players, who had not gone on the trip due to an injury, who thought the honor was not in shutting down (the equivalent response at our national level is the â€œwithdraw and redeployâ€• concept), but by standing tall, and getting the student body to support a message to the school administration and the board, that they wanted to honor the dead by staying the course until victory. It was not an unruly crowd that gathered to get the point across, but a large one, willing to make their presence know in support of continued effort in the face of disaster.

They couldnâ€™t find a coach in the long list of alumni. It was looking bleak. A coach called and when asked in the interview why he wanted the job, his answer was to look at his three children and his wife, running around the front yard, then tell Marshallâ€™s President it was because of them, and then he paused and said he couldnâ€™t imagine being without them and he figured a whole town was hurting and he thought he might be able to help. What a concept: You do it for your children, and along the way, you do it for everyone else, and their children so to speak.

The NCAA had a rule: No freshman players. Well, without freshmen to play, the dream was dead. Choice: Suit up and go to the mat with NCAA. The coach convinced the President to do it and he drove to Kansas City and cornered one man. Result: Discomfort, unbelief yielded to a higher calling and the NCAA granted an exception. It did so because someone came and personally plead the case.

So.. new, unexperienced team. Canâ€™t use those fancy tactics. The answer: Go to the simplest plan and train to it. Along this path, they figured out another team had used this method before. It was a rival, but the coach, with his assistant coach in tow, walked into the other coachâ€™s office and asked

to get lessons on how to use the plays. After a moment of good belly laughing, the coach showed them to the team files and movies and said get copies of what you need. Why? See the movie.

While the two coaches sat watching game movies, two of the other teams players came in from practice ti see their coach. ON the back of their helmets was painted a small tribute to the lost team. The players didnâ€™t know who these two other men watching movies were, so it merely was an opportunity too see what other teams, rivalries aside, felt about the loss of others.

The movie is full of metaphors and situations many of us could stand to emulate right now. At the end of the second game, the Marshall team wins at home. The coach ran up into the stands and gave the game ball to a non-player. The man, looking very flustered said â€œIâ€™m not a member of the team!â€• to which the answer was something like â€œweâ€™re all part of the team.â€•

Itâ€™s one more story about the human spirit and how we can come back from â€œbehindâ€• or what looks like a tragic event, to thrive and win. It was not without emotional pain, it was not without controversy, it was not without internal conflict, yet it was all about not letting the past and all of the future be buried, so there was no hope of winning again, and it was done with a determination not to be stopped. The team didnâ€™t win big for several years after the accident that decimated them, but when it did, it was because 3 of the four remaining team players got the guts to get the rest of the community thinking straight and about victory. In them, there is the metaphor of our service members.

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Iâ€™m still wondering how our model of sports within our society can point a path for us and yet we somehow miss that. The General Manager for the Tampa Bay Lightning will soon be announcing changes, as the team is running about 50% in their season. He has not come to the general local community to ask how we want him to do it, he is evaluating a team, still with many 1004 Stanley Cup winners on the bench, that canâ€™t win all the time. Iâ€™m sure heâ€™ll clearly communicate his plan, thought out with his coaching staff, and there will be those who will try to shoot holes in it, and those who will think itâ€™s wrong, but itâ€™s his team and he didnâ€™t get to be GM because he doesnâ€™t know anything.

The movie is great and worth your time. It is art, in the form of a documentary, that we should imitate in life these days. Bad times in Iraq? Yep, but thereâ€™s a plan to be made and victory to be achieved for our children, and theirs on the other side of the equation as well.

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