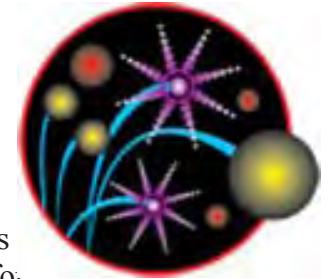


Preparing for Independence Day — A Reflection



Our nation is at a crossroad. The clutter and complexity of our current government is obvious: today's atmosphere, actions, and policies are the result of many factors that affect us and are the effect of past deeds and decisions. Religious beliefs are usually a balm generating calm. Today they add to the combustion growing in the bedrock polarization that cripples us all. We need an understanding and conviction to get beyond the present paralysis. Healthy dialogue, frank discussions, cooperation, and consensus can stop our self-destructing.

This is my view, not God's truth or U.S. principles as stated in the [Declaration of Independence](#), [Constitution](#), or [Bill of Rights](#). Those hard earned and worthwhile values are the glory of our nation. Today I sense too many rest on these laurels of our heritage, but aren't eager or committed to participating in their healthy practice. Winning, being right, holds sway. This becomes bedrock truth when the letter of the law and moral principles are absolutes broaching no opposition and eliminating every kind of wrong.

I believe this contributes greatly to the polar views where everything and everyone becomes either/or rather than both/and. This produces an absolute loyalty and obedience to a view or a group, thus dismissing

whomever disagrees as wrong, as threats, as causes for our ills. When did listening to other views openly, honestly, and thoroughly, in a dialogue of mutual respect and a desire for what serves all best, become obsolete? When did introspection, soul-searching, acknowledgement of one's own mistakes, misjudgments, and harmful actions, all acceptances of responsibility, become unacceptable? The blind spot of moral certitude is the righteousness that labels any disagreement with it as evil. It is blind to the real issues that need resolving and to the compassion and justice that Jesus ever exemplified.

I invite you to reflect on what is happening in our nation and what any or all of us can do about it. No one can undo any of it. That's the heartache of living sincerely and caring for others. As painful and distressing as doing so is, it is our salvation as true peoples of the United States and as daughters and sons of God.

God once called the people to "Choose Life" not death. Did God mean choose to be for others as well as yourself? The seeds of death were planted in self-seeking and an absurd love of self which blinds one to participating in the giving, receiving, sharing and enjoyment of life which comes from relationships of love and justice, compassion and forgiveness. Is this fantasy?

I believe God expects an answer that becomes a way of life.

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