

Responding in Truth to Jon Stewart

As I've spoken to news commentators nationwide recently about the themes in my new book *Falling in Love with America Again*, a question came up that is worth addressing. Jon Stewart of Comedy Central's *The Daily Show* posed it with his trademark tongue-in-cheek humor.

"We were built as a nation different than any other nation," I said, "because we have decentralized individuals and communities working together." Stewart's response: "What you're saying is we need more, I guess, community organizers?"

When some hear about people getting involved in local communities, they jump to a vision of collectivism—of common ownership and false equality propped up by extensive federal government programs. But we can starkly contrast collectivism with individuals serving and loving the people they know in their own neighborhoods.

I discuss in the book how, for my family, our local church became an integral part of our life together. With other church members, we became more involved in volunteer activities throughout our community. I served on many local boards and community groups—all as a result of my relationships with members of my church. We worked together to improve our local schools, health care, and roads, to help the needy, and to attract new businesses to our community.

One of my fellow volunteers was a community banker who, with just a handshake as collateral, gave me a loan to start my own business, a market-research firm. Some of the people I met through my volunteer activities helped my business grow by becoming clients.

I developed a deeper knowledge of my community and a genuine

affection for it, and I had the satisfaction of making it a better place to live and work.

You can see the *true* spirit of community in the story of Bobby Black, from my hometown of Greenville, SC. This dedicated teacher faced a life-threatening crisis—and learned from experience the power of a helping hand. It's one example of the inspiring real-life stories in *Falling in Love with America Again*.

Former U.S. Senator Jim DeMint serves as President of The Heritage Foundation. The new book Falling in Love with America Again (Center Street, 2014) is now available in bookstores everywhere.