

Why I Don't Identify With People Not Proud to Be American

"And I'm proud to be an American where at least I know I'm free/And I won't forget the men who died who gave that right to me/

And I'd gladly stand up next to you and defend Her still today/'Cause there ain't no doubt I love this land/God bless the USA" –"God Bless the ." by Lee Greenwood

A recent Gallup poll disclosed a new low in people identifying as "proud to be an American." In 2003, 70 percent affirmed positive, patriotic pride. Now it's 47 percent. Among Democrats, it is only 32 percent.

While I thank God for a nation that gives greater freedom and more opportunities than any place on planet Earth; has a history of unparalleled generosity (a report in 2017 found Americans gave \$390 billion to charity, the vast majority from individuals); has set hundreds of millions free from tyranny; and, remains the desired dream destination for peoples worldwide, I'm very much aware of diabolical schemes by evil, extremist and well-funded individuals and groups promoting the destruction of America. There's also a lot of bloviating blather from spoiled celebrities saying they'd leave the USA if they don't get their way with their candidate, but they quickly backtrack upon considering what life would be like elsewhere.

The World-Changing 'American Experiment'

What might happen if multitudes simply pushed the pause button on the avalanche of criticism and nonstop negativism to focus awhile on our rich heritage and the incredible achievements that have blessed us and benefited billions around the world?

In the book *The 5000-Year Leap—A Miracle That Changed the World*, the authors point out that “from the beginning of recorded history until the founding of the American nation, human civilization made relatively little progress. Those who came to the New World in the 1500s and 1600s were still plowing fields behind animals, moving about in ox carts, and hand-weaving cloth the same way they had for thousands of years.”

“Then, beginning with Jamestown and Plymouth, something remarkable happened—the human spirit was set free, creativity flourished and experimentation abounded. Americans were learning how to experience freedom. After the proven principles of liberty were institutionalized by the US Constitution in the 1780s, it took less than 200 years before men were walking on the moon!”

With the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution, a political achievement unprecedented in human history was launched. Government was no longer by a monarchy, oligarchy or by tyranny; it was “of the people, by the people and for the people.” Historically it’s called “The Great Experiment.”

The seminal, revolutionary idea at the heart of America’s success was self-government rooted in morality and a virtuous people forsaking selfishness for the common good. They knew their fallen condition but believed people could be redeemed, embrace checks and balances, then govern themselves in our history-making, new republic.

Their divinely inspired purpose was not self-focused but to bless mankind as a “city on a hill” and demonstrate what ordered freedom could bring. James Madison said: “The happy union of these states is a wonder; their Constitution is a miracle; their example the hope of liberty throughout the world.”

American Exceptionalism

We're not better than any other people. We are simply prospered by the Almighty as we follow His paths so we can honor Him, serve humanity and inspire others to do likewise. This is what is meant by "American Exceptionalism."

It is not "fake news" or fantasy but fact that America is in reality the envy of the world to billions and the exception not the rule in scores of significant areas. Like all people in all nations, we have our sins and flaws, but we've attempted to address them redemptively to advance to a better future.

Frenchman Alexis de Tocqueville, who came to America to discover the "secret" of our success, reported, "America is great because America is good. If she ever ceases to be good, she will cease to be great." He was amazed and inspired by witnessing the blessings of God in such abundance. "Blessed is the nation whose God is Lord" (Ps. 33:12a).

While America prospered in its formative years, from 1789-1858 France had 16 Constitutions. The average length of a Constitution in the world is 17 years. We are the exception, having had our Constitution endure for 231 years.

We rank No. 1 in political and civil liberties. We represent 4 percent of the world's population yet produce more inventions and patents than 96 percent of the world. Our 4 percent has 25 percent of the world's GDP and over 50 percent of the Nobel Peace Prizes in medicine, physics and chemistry.

Did this all come about by accident, or are we the exception because of the covenant our forefathers honored with the God of the Bible as we endeavored to honor His ways? This is not boasting in ourselves but in the Almighty God we serve. So yes, I'm proud to be an American!

Moral Freedom and Creativity

The liberty we have (which can be lost) was never meant to be unrestrained licentiousness. Rooted in religious principle, it was intended to enable individuals to conduct themselves in such a way as to enjoy peace and prosperity; government was accountable to God for restraining evil and promoting good according to Romans 13:1-7; and, each person's creativity and God-given potential was released to glorify God.

Has this great "American experiment" worked? Has our virtuous emphasis and ordered freedom released blessing, helping people throughout the world?

Affirming our Creator in the Declaration of Independence, we've engaged with Him as co-creators. The result? Incredible accomplishments have bettered other's lives throughout the world.

Ceasing Criticism and Celebrating Contributions

As we face the reality of a polarized populace, we should seek the ideal of a better tomorrow as we remind ourselves, "but if you bite and devour one another, take heed that you are not consumed by one another" (Gal. 5:15). Jesus and Abraham Lincoln both warned us, "A house divided against itself ... cannot stand" (Mark 3:25).

Imagine what life would be like without America and the following innovations. Let's tone down the negative and major on the positive to celebrate life-changing contributions we've made: free-market economics, harnessed electricity, internal combustion engine, jet propulsion, nuclear energy, automobile assembly-line, telephone, sustained air travel, sustained electric light, electronic hearing aid, Franklin stove, lightning rod, catheter, bifocals, cotton gin, refrigeration, suspension bridge, fire hydrant, coffee percolator, circular saw, telegraph, sewing machine, dental floss, combine harvester, steam shovel, Mason jar, ice cream maker, grain elevator, rotary printing press, baseball, volleyball,

American football, basketball, softball, stock car racing, racquetball, duckpin bowling, gas mask, dishwasher, inverted microscope, fire alarm box, burglar alarm, jackhammer, electric stove, vacuum cleaner, escalator, ironing board, roller skates, motorcycle, denim jeans, silo, urinal, dental drill, sanitary pad, metal detector, electric iron, thermostat, machine gun, photographic film, gasoline dispenser, electric food mixer, pay phone, recording gramophone, ballpoint pen, touch typing, tractor, zipper, blender, remote control, mousetrap, medical gloves, rechargeable battery, toaster, safety razor, windshield wipers, automatic transmission, flushometer toilet, paper towel, electric blanket, electric traffic light, supermarket, bulldozer, tow truck, polygraph, adhesive bandage, cotton swabs, instant camera, cheeseburger, garage door opener, power steering, drive-thru, nylon, garbage disposal, ice cube tray, pressure washer, stop sign, Teflon, smoke detector, sunglasses, frozen food, electric guitar, radio telescope, trampoline, disposable diaper, digital computer, fluorescent lamp, rock 'n' roll, blues and jazz, automated teller machine, deodorant, aerosol dispenser, earthmoving equipment, bazooka, steam locomotive, microwave oven, Tupperware, credit card, supersonic aircraft, hairspray, blow dryer, defibrillator, cable television, video game, teleprompter, laser, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, nuclear submarine, videotape, Spandex, weather satellite, child safety seat, communication satellite, minicomputer, computer mouse, balloon catheter, cordless telephone, CD, copiers, GPS, central heating, handheld calculator, lunar module, Email, laser printer, Facebook and Google, virtual reality, personal computer, MRI, iPhone, iPad, texting, Internet, digital camera, contact lens, DNA computing, tilt-n-roll luggage, voicemail, space shuttle, nicotine patch, Heimlich maneuver, drones, scoreboards, whole body scanner, catalytic converter, microprocessor, backpack, gas and electric lawnmowers, taser, muffler, flyswatter, cupcake, washer and dryer, air conditioning and hundreds more.

Here's the deal: While there remains work to do, let's remain civil and law-abiding as we celebrate our heritage and God-given accomplishments. Let's reconsecrate ourselves to the ideals upon which we were founded and which God has so richly blessed to recapture the significance of saying in increasing numbers, "I'm proud to be an American!"