

## **An Old Fashioned Star Spangled Fourth of July**

The clueless or some late landed in America might wonder what all the noisy July 4 celebrating was all about, but for you who have somehow avoided or missed out on the miraculous American story by sleeping or texting through history class, let me simply say here that American independence day is amazing, because it celebrates our having won what most human beings most desire, freedom to follow their dream, without fear of being kept from it by some power mad tyrant.

Yes, following one's dream is a universal human need. As we hear in that song from *South Pacific*, "You got to have a dream/ If you ain't got a dream,/ How you goin' to have a dream come true?" And an old rock song adds, "People everywhere just want to be free." The question is, "Free to do what?" I hope it's to follow the *right* dream.

A verse from "America the Beautiful" might help: "Oh beautiful, for pilgrim's dream/ That sees beyond the years/ Thine alabaster cities gleam,/ Undimmed by human tears." A life undimmed by tears would truly be the ideal, and that hope for America still lives in the hearts of countless Americans who have kept that dream alive for over 350 years; longer than any other nation. And this makes our "one nation under God, indivisible" truly exceptional, despite the nay-saying of malcontents who feel we are not progressive enough, and should have the "under God" clause removed from our documents.

I would venture to say that without God's having "shed His Grace" on us, we'd likely have lost our freedoms long ago. But thanks to His amazing grace, we have good reason to celebrate.

This point is beautifully argued in a June 30 article in the Mpls. Trib. by John C. (Chuck) Salberg entitled “The American story: Flawed and yes, Exceptional.” In it he takes issue with past president Barack Obama, who when asked if America was exceptional, said “he believes in American exceptionalism just as a Brit believes in British exceptionalism or a Greek believes in Greek exceptionalism. A perfect Obama response, glib, and flip; right and wrong. Of course he was right, most everyone believes his country to be exceptional, but says Salberg, Obama was saying something “more directly dismissive: at best, he was declaring the question to be unimportant, even meaningless. At worst he was implying there is nothing truly exceptional about this country worth mentioning.”

That is truly shocking, coming from one who was elected under the pretext of wanting only America’s good. Given the direction in which his and the present administration is taking us, we seem to be being directed by a guide like the one in Frost’s poem *Directive*, “who only has at heart our getting lost”, or if not lost, then buried under massive debt, skyrocketing inflation, uncontrolled illegal immigration, and nation-wide malaise and insecurity. All that applauded by a media seemingly Hell bent on politicizing everything.

So is there any hope? Possibly. A preacher said Sunday that 37 % of our population is Christian. Unified and informed, their votes could mean a lot. I’ll quote once more the scripture given to us during the flood of 97: “If my people who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray, and turn from their wicked ways, and seek my face, Then will I hear from Heaven, I will forgive their sins, and I will heal their land.” (II Chron. 7:14)

I think God would love to heal America and keep it as a shining refuge for the lost and destitute. That would make her truly ‘America the Beautiful.’

Gene Pinkney 24-07-09- for the Daily News