

Steeple News

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Responsible Freedom

In 1775, during the Second Revolutionary Convention in Virginia, Patrick Henry said this, "I know not what cause others may take, but, as for me, give me liberty or give me death." The meaning of liberty for Henry was the freedom to worship as we please and to speak and read without fear. It meant the self-direction each one of us enjoys over our own affairs. It implied the freedom in choice of school, the choice of jobs as well as choice of political party. It meant the freedom to alter the government as citizens may desire at election time. Harry Truman said this, "Liberty does not make all men perfect, nor all society secure, but it has provided more solid progress and happiness and decency for more people than any philosophy of government in history."

Central to the whole fabric of our free society is the thread that runs through it all - the Constitution. The Constitution is a document which has endured the most traumatic events and tests. Our Constitution guarantees freedom and liberty for the individual. Our early forefathers believed that freedom and liberty were basic to the individual's development and happiness. They were also convinced that each person has an obligation to society, a responsibility to assist with the machinery that helps guarantee freedom and liberty.

One such responsibility is to assist in the selection of government and community leaders, a responsibility the framers of the Constitution would not have taken lightly, a responsibility envied by a number of other nations. It is through our participation in the election process that we validate the sacrifices of so many individuals throughout our country's brief history. Thomas Paine observed "Those who expect to reap the blessings of freedom must undergo the fatigue of supporting it."

America is the only nation on Earth deliberately created in behalf of an idea. That idea was liberty. The goal, above all, was to be free. Our Declaration of Independence proclaimed that purpose. The Constitution was written to assure it. We should never forget that original purpose and never take our liberty for granted.

Rev. Hans Lillejord