

[America's Fabric" #1}

January 6, 2008

Subject: purpose of "America's Fabric," kinds of programs]

Good morning. And welcome to this first broadcast in our radio series "America's Fabric." I'm John McElroy, your host for "America's Fabric," reminding you of what a patriotic American, Samuel Knapp, once said, two centuries ago: No people can ever be prosperous and great who do not love their own country better than all others. There is a lot of truth in that statement.

Patriotism is a basic strength of every great nation. Let us hope and pray therefore that America never lacks men and women who love their country, because our nation faces today problems and dangers that can destroy America if we, the people of the United States, are not united in our love of our country.

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What does love of country mean?

Like any love, it means loyalty and commitment—a sense of duty to cherish and protect. A country is more than a place; it is also what people have done in that place. And love of country is a feeling of being personally connected to the history of a place. Love of country is a sense of gratitude for all of the striving, the sacrifice, the suffering, and the success that have created and preserved the nation. Patriotism manifests itself in our pleasure at seeing our country's flag rippling in the breeze. It is our pleasure at seeing some beautiful landscape or noble river that is part of America. Most clearly it is the thankfulness we feel at being home again after an absence in another country.

Why have we called these radio programs on love of country: “America’s Fabric”? A Danish immigrant and naturalized American, Curt Pedersen, who loves his chosen country very much, suggested the name.

To speak of a country’s “fabric” might appear to be an abstraction. But it is not. Just as love of country involves real commitments and yields a real sense of identity, so, too, is a nation’s fabric real.

Every fabric has its own texture: a particular feel of material and weave of threads, and the fabric of a country is the material and weave of its history.

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Today, there is a need to remind ourselves of the excellence of America’s fabric, because these days it sometimes seems that the only thing we hear and read about America is criticism and blame.

Actually, the situation is worse than that. America is being condemned.

There’s a notion abroad in the land today that America is not worthy of love; that we should stop loving our country and be devoted to a pure and perfect abstraction: the idea that society is responsible for everybody’s happiness and that we should strive to create a society in which classes are defined by federal law, and the government in Washington takes care of every needy class.

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America was condemned in a big way in the 1960s during the years of campus rioting. Many young Americans who came of age in the 60s learned to hate their country.

Those who were condemning America in the 60s gave patriotism a different meaning, which had nothing to do with cherishing and protecting the nation. They called their riots “patriotism.” They wanted, they said, to tear America down so it could be rebuilt according to a better design. That claimed their violence was love of country.

Those who condemned America and its history in the 60s refused to tolerate anything that was less than perfect, as judged by their theories. They insisted that their parents’ generation, which had fought World War II, tolerate their deconstructive thinking and behavior, even though they were intolerant of their elders’ way of life.

Today, the self-centered heirs of the 60s are fond of the statement “Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel,” which they quote in their effort to de-legitimate love of country. But let me assure you that Samuel Johnson, the author of that statement, “Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel,” was criticizing scoundrels, not patriots; for he was one of the most patriotic Englishmen of the eighteenth century.

Today in America, persons who harbor nothing but negativity toward their country sneeringly dismiss patriotism as [quote] “chauvinism.”

They reject love of country as unwarranted, because, they allege:

America was founded for the purpose of exploiting slave labor from Africa, even though freemen have always performed the greatest part of the work that has built America;

and because, they allege:

prior to the twentieth century, annihilation was the usual practice in regard to the descendants of those who lived in America before European settlers came, even though

today, by most estimates, there are more Indians in America than there were in 1607, the date of the first permanent, English-speaking settlement;

and, because, they allege:

male turpitude toward women, rather than respect for women, has been the norm in American history.

Today, in most of our nation's schools, colleges, and universities, it is this kind of history—the history of oppressed classes—that is being taught—in programs of “Women's Studies,” “African-American Studies,” “Mexican-American Studies,” “Native-American Studies,” and homosexual studies—rather than the history of the United States. These so-called “multicultural,” “ethnic,” and “gender” studies make slavery, genocide, rape of the environment and what they call “racism,” “sexism,” and “imperialism,” the substance of the American heritage.

But if American history is the shoddy weave of social sins, imperialism, and environmental degradation that multiculturalism and ethnic and gender studies allege that it is, what are we to think of the two million Union troops who were white who fought in the Civil War that ended slavery, a war in which one out of every five of them sacrificed his life?

And if raping the environment has been the primary drive of Americans, how is it that the United States led the world in the creation of immense national parks to preserve the wondrous beauties of nature, starting 136 years ago with the creation of Yellowstone Park?

And if America is so ineradicably [quote] “sexist,” how did the movement for equal voting rights for women ever succeed? What ideal was it that the suffragists

appealed to if it wasn't the American ideal of equality expressed in the Declaration of Independence?

And if America is so irrevocably [quote] “imperialistic,” why didn't the United States keep all of Mexico, which our armies conquered in 1846-48, and why did the United States pay Mexico \$15,000,000—an enormous sum of money in 1848—for land north of the Rio Grande that our armies already occupied, when nothing was forcing the United States to pay any money?

And if Americans are incorrigibly [quote] “racist,” how is it that Bill Cosby and Oprah Winfrey have become so popular and beloved?

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Those who condemn America represent only a small minority of the adult population of the United States—perhaps 10, maybe 15 percent?—but their condemnation cannot be taken lightly. Why? Because their ranks include so many persons who shape opinion, such as professors at prestigious universities, best-selling authors, media executives, and so-called “public intellectuals.” The influence of such persons is magnified far beyond their numbers by the positions they hold. And they are, year by year, diminishing our pride in America, and making it appear shameful to love an allegedly “racist,” “sexist,” “imperialist” country. They are, in other words, tearing apart the fabric of America's greatness.

It is not lies that foreigners may tell about America that need worry us. It is the lies and distortions about America that influential Americans spread that should concern us.

Everyone has a natural right to their opinion and to express it. But spreading poisonous lies cannot be regarded as a natural right—lies like the following, which were told to excuse the attacks on America by Islamo-fascist suicide bombers in 2001 that killed more Americans than the airplanes of Japan's Imperial Navy killed at Pearl Harbor, sixty years before.

Noam Chomsky, for instance, a professor at MIT, excused the slaughter of those thousands of Americans, on the morning of September 11, 2001, as payback for U. S. responsibility for [quote] “the death of maybe a million civilians and ... half a million children” in Iraq.

The American activist and film maker Michael Moore, in commenting on the 9/11 suicide bombers, referred to America's [quote] “taxpayer funded terrorism.”

And the writer Barbara Kingsolver in apologizing for the Islamo-fascist terrorists had this to say, [quote] “the American flag stands for intimidation, censorship, violence, bigotry, sexism, homophobia, and shoving the Constitution through the paper shredder. Who are we calling terrorists here?” [end of quote]

Since the 1960s, educated Americans like these have ridiculed American patriotism as unjustified, because they regard America as evil.

For them, the centuries-old conviction of most Americans that the United States is the greatest example of freedom, constitutional government, and opportunity the world has ever seen is no longer true. Indeed, they see the United States as the world's foremost example of oppression.

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It is the purpose of these broadcasts called “America’s Fabric” to challenge that view of America and to call attention to the home truth that America deserves our loyalty and love.

These radio programs consider the following observations to be the primary facts of American history:

One. More people have chosen to live in the United States than any other place on the planet: some 60 million immigrants during the course of the last four centuries—not counting the tens of millions who have been entering the United States illegally in the last few decades. This is the largest movement of human beings in the history of mankind.

Two. More people have attained a comfortable, middle-class way of life in the United States than in any other nation in history. It is remarkable that even the poor in America have indoor plumbing and television sets.

Three. The title to more of our nation’s territory has been acquired through negotiation and purchase, rather than military conquest, than has ever been true of any imperialist nation.

Four. The American people annually contribute more money to charity than any other of the world’s peoples. John D. Rockefeller, even as an impecunious, teenage clerk in Cleveland, Ohio, religiously gave ten percent of his meager wages to charity; in 1859 one of the persons who received money from young Rockefeller was a black freeman in Cincinnati who needed funds to buy his wife out of slavery.

Five. The oldest continuous government in the world based on a constitution

written and ratified by elected representatives of a people, is the government of the United States of America.

Six. Christianity has been a fundamental part of the fabric of America. Whether measured by church membership, weekly church attendance, or the proportion of persons polled who say belief in God is important in their lives, America is by far the most religious of the Western nations.

In pointing to these facts, I believe I speak not only for myself, but for all Americans who, like me, are tired of hearing the history of America distorted and unjustly maligned.

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Perhaps, too, a good many of you are as tired as I am of the political squabbling of Congress that often seem to have little point except to see which of the two main political parties will be [quote] “in power.”

I first noticed, a few years back, that some Congressmen, both Democrats and Republicans, were using this un-American phrase “in power” in reference to their hope that their party would either win control over or continue control of every committee in Congress; and thus be able to preside over the distribution of federal pork from Washington. I asked myself then, and I ask you now: whatever happened to the principle enshrined in the Constitution that the American people are “in power,” permanently, and elect representatives to Congress who are supposed to look after the interests of our country as a whole, rather than using the authority entrusted to them for the purpose of either staying or getting [quote] “in power”?

There is an enormous difference between love of power and love of country.

Because America faces grave dangers today, we cannot afford at this time in our country's history to allow our most important political institutions to degenerate into a contest for political spoils. Politicians who engage in that sort of behavior at a time when our country is beset by peril do not deserve to hold offices of public trust—whether they call themselves “Democrats” or “Republicans.”

It is time to remember we are Americans **first** and members of political parties **second**.

It is time for every conservative Democrat and conservative Republican—in other words, patriotic Americans from both parties—to join together, united by a shared love of America, because being conservative means to want to conserve our country's time-tested social and political institutions and heritage of Judeo-Christian morality.

“Change,” which is being so much touted and called for today, is not necessarily progress. It depends on what is to be changed. A specific proposal that is likely to produce a practical improvement is one thing; but a sweeping proposal designed to serve some theory should not be automatically viewed as a change for the better. The genius of the founders of our constitutional government was that they based the Constitution they wrote on experience and common sense—in short, on practicality—not theory.

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How will these radio broadcasts, “America's Fabric,” be a voice for reinvigorating patriotism?

“America’s Fabric” will accomplish that by elaborating great themes of American history: natural rights, equality, opportunity, religion, individualism, freedom, personal responsibility, diversity, unity, morality, law, and education.

But, first of all, it will be necessary to contemplate the reasons why America has been, and is, an exceptional nation in the history of the world.

We will do this in the next two programs.

Next Sunday’s program will be on America’s exceptional immigration history. The sixty-some million human beings who immigrated to the United States to become Americans were seeking something that the countries of their birth did not provide. And whether they came from England in the 1600s, from Germany in the 1700s, from Ireland in the 1800s, or from some country in Asia in the 1900s, these immigrants had certain traits in common. They were in a sense Americans before they left their native countries. That is to say: their desire for self-determination, their hope for a better future, and their willingness to work to achieve the better future they imagined for themselves and their children, which were the chief causes of their emigration, were traits that they shared with those who were already living in America.

The program on January 20th, two Sundays from now, will show that America’s history has also been exceptional in what the immigrants found when they arrived in America.

The wilderness that the immigrants and their descendants encountered in the center of North America in the 1600s, 1700s, and 1800s was unique. No other wilderness in the Western Hemisphere had its combination of continental scope (the fact that the United States is the size of Europe is not widely known), a climate that was for the most

part temperate, and an extraordinary abundance of undeveloped natural resources. The center of North America was an inviting wilderness, awaiting workers to develop it. Canada and Brazil—the other two continent-size wildernesses in the Western Hemisphere—were not so inviting. Their frigid and equatorial geographies have, in fact, proven to be so forbidding that still to this day the heartlands of Canada and Brazil are only sparsely populated.

Following these introductory broadcasts, regular programming on “America’s Fabric” will begin with the January 27th program, which will be an interview with Robert P. George, the McCormick Professor of constitutional law at Princeton University and founder of the James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions. The topic of the interview with Professor George will be natural law: the subject of one of his books and a vital principle of the Declaration of Independence.

The themes which “America’s Fabric” will explore will be developed in a variety of ways: talks by your host, interviews with distinguished Americans, three-person discussions of publications and topics of interest, sketches of historical Americans, and readings from such quintessentially American writings as Walt Whitman’s essay “Democratic Vistas” and George C. Marshall’s address outlining the American plan to aid Europe after World War II.

Because love of country is more important than political affiliations, participants in discussions will be recruited without regard to party membership.

Since listener call-in’s are not to be a feature of “America’s Fabric,” but audience feedback is necessary to the success of this radio series, listeners are encouraged to visit our website: americasfabric.com

If you wish to comment on a program, go to americasfabric.com, and record your comment.

If you have an idea for a program, visit americasfabric.com and state your idea.

If you want to recommend a person to be interviewed, or someone to participate in a program, or a book or subject for discussion, go to americasfabric.com and present your recommendation.

If you would like to hear programs on some theme of American history in addition to natural rights, equality, opportunity, religion, individualism, freedom, personal responsibility, diversity, unity, morality, law, and education, visit americasfabric.com and inform us of your proposed theme.

The website americasfabric.com will also provide information on upcoming programs.

If you do not use a computer, you can mail your comments, ideas, and recommendations to “America’s Fabric,” at this address: Post Office Box seventeen three fifty-six, Tucson, Arizona, 85731. That’s P. O. Box seventeen three fifty-six; zip code 85731.

In keeping with our purpose of encouraging patriotism, “America’s Fabric” will have no particular sponsor or advertiser. To pay for radio time, “America’s Fabric” will rely on contributions from listeners.

If you agree that patriotism in America needs to be encouraged, and would like to support this effort with a tax-deductible contribution, send your personal check, made out to “America’s Fabric,” to Post Office Box seventeen three fifty-six, Tucson, Arizona, 85731. (This address will be repeated at the conclusion of today’s program.)

Anyone who contributes five dollars or more will receive a bumper sticker that says:

GRATEFUL to be an AMERICAN.

Your most important form of support, however, will be to tune in to these programs every Sunday morning at eight and to get your family, friends, and acquaintances to tune in also.

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This is your host for “America’s Fabric,” John McElroy, saying thanks for listening to “America’s Fabric” and reminding you that our country needs men and women who love their country.

Remember, too, that America is the land of the free because it is the home of the brave.

Until next Sunday, and our program on America’s immigrant history: stay proud—and grateful—to be an American.