

What I Believe

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Introduction

This document exists because I wanted to write these things down, and for no other reason. I am not attempting to claim, or even suggest, that those with views which are different, or even opposing, are wrong. I truly do not care if you are wrong, and I truly do not care if you believe I am wrong. I go through this exercise only because some have suggested it would be a benefit TO ME.

And please, don't misunderstand me. I am not being arrogant. Arrogance would claim that I am right and everyone else is wrong. And arrogance would probably demand that everyone else agree with me. This is not at all what I am doing here. In fact, just the opposite. I don't require anyone to agree with me, nor do I require myself to agree with anyone else. And that makes me free, and perhaps more free than you.

I do not make any decision or take any course of action based on what is expected or what I am supposed to do. I always make those decisions based on my personal values and my personal tastes. Sometimes those values and tastes result in decisions that others would make or approve of; sometimes not. When I make those decisions and take those actions, I do not care if you "like them" or approve of them or would speak highly of them to others. On the other hand, there are times when my decisions and actions do take into account a desire or a need to make others more comfortable.. Sometimes it is important to me that you are comfortable, and that sometimes affects my decisions and my actions.

For example, I smoke a pipe at times. I *LOVE* smoking my pipe, and I really don't care if you approve. Further, I really don't care if you have swallowed whole the lies and deceptions of the medical community when they claim that smoking a pipe is unhealthy or dangerous, because they know or should know that the medical evidence is clear and decisive and totally contrary to their claims. And I don't care if you believe that the Bible condemns smoking a pipe as sinful, because I know it does not. And please understand I am talking about smoking my pipe and NOT about smoking cigarettes. Smoking cigarettes can kill you – smoking pipes cannot.

On the other hand, when I am around you, and especially if I am in your house, I will usually take your views into consideration and I might not smoke. Not because I believe that second hand smoke will give you cancer, because it can't, but because I don't want either one of us to grind our teeth or feel irritated simply because one of us is made quite uncomfortable by my smoking. This is not shifting my views and opinions and actions to seek another person's approval – this is common courtesy. While some might call me

arrogant or inflexible, I hope that no one would call me rude. Except, of course, when I choose to be rude...

I hesitated compiling this document at all, not because I don't want to go through the potentially excruciating process of delineating my beliefs and views, but because it will make it at least somewhat easier for people to place me in a box and give me a label rather than deal with me as an individual. And most people are far more comfortable dealing with those whom they can put in a box with a label, and trust that most of the time the individual will stay within that box and act and react as expected. Any box and label that can more easily be applied to me as a result of this document would be repugnant to me. After all, anyone who would take the time to write down a detailed account of their beliefs certainly must be inflexible and judgmental, right?

Yet, I really conduct this possibly frustrating exercise more because of those who pride themselves on being open-minded and accepting of others. There is a large segment of America who is usually liberal in political views and who is committed to the philosophy that there is very little (and maybe *nothing*) in life that is "right" and "wrong" or black and white, and a whole lot of things (and maybe all things) that are gray. Opinions may vary between individuals, they believe, but no one has the right to tell another that his/her opinion is wrong. It is often claimed by this large group that all opinions are equally correct, equally valid, and equally important.

I find that almost every individual within this group of supposedly open-minded people that I have met over the years falls into one of two categories.

The first category, or segment, is comprised of very caring people and they just don't want to hurt anyone's feelings. So facts and objectivity are far less important, and quite easily discarded, when engaged in any discussions about anything deemed important. They tend to believe that it is far more important to communicate acceptance and approval and avoid communicating rejection than it is to resolve what is true. These are some of the most caring people I have ever known. These people are more motivated by heart issues than they are by facts.

The other, and perhaps far larger, segment of this group takes the position that all things are gray because there are no absolutes. There is nothing, they believe, that can be established as universally true or universally false. As a result, there is nothing that can be established as more or less accurate and, therefore, all opinions are equally accurate (or inaccurate) guesses about indiscernible and unverifiable "facts." These people are more motivated by philosophical issues than they are by facts.

These two groups have totally different purposes behind taking the exact same stance. But regardless of the purpose, both groups believe themselves to be more inclusive and accepting of others than people who claim that two disparate views cannot be equally correct and equally valid. In other words, they think they are open-minded because they tell no one they are wrong.

But are they really open-minded and accepting? I contend not.

Why do I say that? Because if all opinions are equal and all opinions must be accepted without correction or judgment or condemnation, then they could never claim that my opinion is wrong. *And believe me they do!* Specifically, if I were to claim my view is right in front of one of these open-minded and accepting individuals, they always, and I mean ***always***, get upset and tell me I am wrong to claim that I am right. Yet, one wonders, if they claim that all opinions are equally correct and all opinions are equally valid, then what business do they have in telling me I am wrong?

In other words, they view *my* opinion as equally correct and equally valid as long as I embrace the belief that every opinion is equally correct and equally valid. But as soon as I claim that any specific belief is correct (or incorrect), ***especially*** any belief that can be construed as conservative, then they make the claim that my belief is wrong.

Why is it that being open-minded and inclusive ALWAYS requires me to accept as valid your view but it NEVER requires you to accept as valid my view?

So, for those who are caring and open-minded and accepting and understanding, I ask that you extend to me the same grace you would demand of me – leave me to my own view without trying to tell me that I cannot have that view. Only then can you benefit from reviewing this document. If you cannot extend to me the same grace that you demand of me, then it would probably be best if you did not read this document at all. Not because I will in any way be telling you that you are wrong or that you cannot have your own view, but because in reading this you will violate your own belief about every opinion being equally valid and equally important.

And I don't want you to have any trouble sleeping tonight because you have just become disillusioned by discovering that you are a hypocrite.

One more thing...

The fact that I state my views does not mean that all other views in disagreement with mine are wrong. It *could* mean that, but I cannot possibly *know* that. My view on any given issue may be the result of many hours of thought, prayer, study, more prayer, more study, and more thought, but that doesn't necessarily mean it is the only correct view. Unless I claim omniscience, I must always admit my limitations.

I cannot know all things, so it is always possible that there are facts outside my understanding or even awareness that, if I knew and understood them, would change my view.

This is why there can be no atheist. [*Think about it...*] My view will almost certainly be a considered position because of my very character and nature, but I must always be aware of and even admit that I may learn something today that would render my view inaccurate. So, no matter what you *think* you are hearing when reading this document, one thing you are *not* hearing is the claim that all who disagree with me are wrong. It is not in my heart and will never be in my words.

That having been said, I will never shy away from taking the responsibility of having a view. For any who look to me for input, I am constrained to offer only researched and well-thought input. I will never offer a “lite beer” opinion. If it is *only* opinion, I will always label it as such and seldom offer it. If I offer a view, I strive to give chapter and verse as to how I came to that conclusion and why.

To offer an opinion that is not researched and well-considered does no service to anyone other than the one expressing it. It is a selfish act. Its only value in this world is how it makes you feel when you tell it, or how it makes you feel when others express appreciation to you for sharing it. But it accomplishes absolutely nothing of substance. Since the listener cannot learn anything of substance from the unresearched and undocumented opinion, that very opinion cannot enhance the listener at all. It offers the listener absolutely nothing of value. If there is no fact behind it, but only claims that are made in shades of gray, then it has value only to the one holding the opinion. If, on the other hand, you have research and fact and thought behind your view, then it just might have value to others. At least, that is my opinion...

Take sides! Have a view! The one who takes sides and has a view might sometimes be wrong. But the one who never takes sides and never has a view will always be wrong.

Issues

Absolutes

There ARE absolutes.

There IS a right and wrong, but these terms apply to moral and spiritual issues. For me, moral issues are resolved by the Bible and by the application to my life of the principles I learn in the Bible. Because of this, I cannot believe that all religions are equal. I cannot believe the Bible is TRUTH and at the same time accept all differing religious views as right. This has absolutely nothing to do with me and everything to do with the Bible. If I take a specific moral or religious stance, it is because the Bible takes that particular moral or religious stance – it is not at all because I am close-minded and judgmental. The Bible claims it is, by itself and all alone, TRUTH. If you don't like that, you have a problem with the Bible, not with me. So don't ever ask me, “Who are you to judge?” when we are discussing right and wrong. If you ask me that question, I will almost certainly inform you that I am not judging anyone or anything – I am merely passing along what God has already judged. When it comes to issues explained in the Bible, I don't have to judge. It is God who has already done the judging, and I am merely repeating his proclamations.

And please note that no one who holds their religious views strongly can allow for any religious views which differ to be right, because every religion claims to be truth. If every

religion claims to be right, and every religion is different from other religions, then a firm belief in your religion does not allow for other religions to be right. Only those who have shallow beliefs (or no religious beliefs at all) can allow for multiple religious views to be equally right.

On the other hand, most subjective choices fall into the category of individual taste or personal preference. These subjective choices usually do not fall under any moral, or right versus wrong, criteria. There is no right about blue versus red; there is no wrong about blonde versus brunette. There is no exclusive and universal claim to "BEST TRUCK" for Ford or Chevrolet or GMC. And some erroneously claim that baseball is somehow more superior to football.

And subjective choices are often irreconcilable. You might like New York City and I might not. No amount of fact concerning New York City is likely to change either your view or mine. But there is something inherently wrong about either one of us concluding that all New Yorkers are rude and belligerent with the personality of an angry pit bull (or some other equally generalized claim), and then treating them all in a manner consistent with that conclusion.

But there IS an accurate and inaccurate. These terms usually apply to non-moral issues. It is probable that no one can learn and understand everything there is to learn and understand about a particular concept or theory or fact, making each and every other view incomplete and somewhat inaccurate. But if there is an absolutely true and accurate item that we can look at, then your view and my view can be judged. Almost always, your own description of New York City will be different than my description. But we can know which description is more accurate because we can see and touch and visit the REAL New York City. Your description of gravity may be more researched and mathematical than mine, and we can know which view of gravity is more accurate simply by observing and even measuring gravity itself. Your view of American history may be more accurate than mine, and we can KNOW that because there are original documents and books to review and you have studied them more than I have. So don't ever ask me, "Who are you to judge?" when we are discussing reality and fact. When it comes to issues that can be observed in reality, this is a question usually based in ignorance, and usually serves to prove my point.

Religion

I believe that all religions, Catholic or Protestant or Muslim or Jew or anything else, are nothing more than mankind's attempt to get to God or to please God or maybe just to describe God. The bigger the religious group, the more requirements and restrictions are usually placed on our opportunities to get to God and to please God, and almost all these requirements and restrictions are placed on people NOT by God but by spiritual leaders.

On the other hand, I believe that Jesus is God's attempt to reach mankind.

I believe that the God of the Bible is the One True God, and that He has described Himself in the Bible. All other views of God in other religious writings and by other religious leaders

are interpretations or incomplete representations or even perversions of the One True God. If you have a problem with this, your problem is NOT with me – your problem is with the Bible. You can claim that this is like the three blind men trying to describe an elephant. If you do, then I will respond with the claim that you have just proven me right, and with the exhortation to touch more of the elephant!

I believe that the Bible (both the Old and New Testaments) interprets itself; leaving nothing unexplained that is expressed in the Bible as being important for us to know. (The Bible never addresses how many angels can fit on the head of a pin, so that is not an issue that is important to God or that God expects us to know.) If you believe that there are many interpretations of these important views or issues, then I believe you have not studied the Bible enough, or at all. And without exception, I have challenged each and every person who has made this claim in my presence to study the Bible with me and point out several of the many interpretations to me. Without exception, each and every person who told me that has declined to spend any time with me looking at the Bible itself. If you have a problem with this, your problem is NOT with me – your problem is with your own laziness.

I believe that the central message of the Bible is not a religion, with structures and belief systems and philosophical implications, but a relationship between the Creator of the Universe, the One True God, on the one hand, and on the other hand, His prized creation, mankind. His prized creation is not the planet, not all things, not all living things, but mankind. Those who have responded to Him in the manner of **His** choosing have that relationship, and those who have responded in any other manner, or have not responded at all, do not have that relationship. If you have a problem with this, your problem is NOT with me – your problem is with Jesus.

I believe there are only two ways to get to Heaven. One way is to be perfect, and 2,000 years ago we nailed to a Cross the last one who was perfect. The other is to be forgiven. God does not grade on a curve. He has little concern with whether or not you are better or worse than your neighbor or any other individual. He is concerned with your heart attitude toward him. God has one condition as to his forgiveness, and that is a repentant heart. If you have a problem with this, your problem is NOT with me – your problem is with the God of the Bible.

God is not in all things, nor is he in all people, nor is he in all experiences, nor is he in all beliefs. Mankind was created in the image of God, and that image was quickly polluted and deformed by rejecting God. But the “image” of God has little to do with the “dwelling” of God. God dwells in those who have received him in the manner of HIS choosing and does not dwell in those who have received him in any other manner, or who have not received him at all. This is the central message, the “gospel”, of the New Testament. If you have a problem with this, your problem is NOT with me – your problem is with the Bible.

I do not believe that individuals are predestined for heaven or for hell. But I believe the process or mechanism by which individuals make it to heaven is predestined from the foundations of this world. The life, death and resurrection of Jesus is the predestined path to heaven, and those who accept this path are predestined to be like Jesus.

I do not believe that the Bible, Old or New Testament, teaches tithing as most preachers present it. I believe the Old Testament teaches “tithes and offerings” which, if added up, can equal as much as 40% of our assets, and not 10% of our paychecks. I believe the New Testament teaches “giving until it hurts” as the *minimum*, with examples including but not limited to Jesus giving his life, and the widow who gave everything she had. Most people use “tithe” to mean they get to keep 90% of their net paychecks, which is a selfish and ungodly interpretation, and not based on anything in the Bible.

Those who have responded to the One True God in the manner of **His** choosing have received special gifts and abilities with which to accomplish His purposes in their lives. One of my gifts is teaching. Why else would I take the time to write all these things down?

Politics

The united States of America (not a typo) is a political experiment unique in all of history. The men who put together certain views and principles and wrote them into our Founding Documents all believed that God of the Bible played a serious and important role in the founding of this Great Nation. They may have had some minor differences in their opinions of who and what God really is, but they all believed God played a serious and important role in the founding of this Great Nation. Therefore, what God created must be preserved. Yes, I believe it is our moral and spiritual duty to God to preserve the united States of America as God helped to create it, and not as the Liberal Socialists today want it to be!

The Founding Fathers did not create a democracy. Our Constitution did not create a democracy. America was never intended to be a democracy. Those around you, friends or teachers or media talking heads or politicians, who refer to America as a democracy are either deceived themselves or are intentionally deceiving you. The Founding Fathers expressly rejected a democracy in their discussions and in their writings. The Constitution *itself* requires that America be a republic form of government. Any other form of central government is a violation of the Constitution, and I believe that those currently in our government who are committed to creating a Socialistic Democracy are guilty of treason; and at the very least are guilty of fomenting revolution. And those in the government and in the media and in our educational institutions who are seemingly committed to moving America into a Socialist Democracy are traitors to the Constitution and enemies of the State. You cannot claim to believe in our Constitution while, at the same time, be engaged in speech or actions or legislation designed to violate or overturn that Constitution. If you have a problem with this, your problem is NOT with me – your problem is with the written Constitution.

I believe that there is no such thing as “separation of church and State” as most people perceive or define it. When Thomas Jefferson used that phrase in a letter to a particular religious group, it was to assure them of their religious freedom under the Constitution. The federal government has absolutely no authority or jurisdiction to tell any State or any group or any individual what they can and cannot do in the arena of religious expression,

especially outside the federal territories and within the several States. The ONLY restrictions in the Constitution on religious issues are directed at the federal government and NOT at the several States or We The People. The 1st Amendment to the Constitution states that “Congress shall pass no law respecting the establishment of religion, nor prohibiting the free exercise thereof...” First, that restriction applies ONLY TO CONGRESS and NOT to the several States, and DEFINITELY not to We the People! Second, no religious view present in America can possibly be an establishment of religion because that religion already exists – it has already been established. Third, Congress (and possibly that includes the entire federal government) has absolutely no authority or jurisdiction to interfere with or deny any or all of my religious views and expressions. Or anyone else's religious views or expressions. Or any State or local government's views or expressions. The restriction here, according to all the Founding Fathers who wrote on the issue, is against creating a federal religion – a State-endorsed church – the restriction is not disallowing States the option of having a religious expression on public property. Fourth, virtually every law passed by Congress involving religion in America restricts or prohibits religious expression within the several States, in DIRECT VIOLATION of the Constitution. These laws should be declared as unconstitutional and overthrown by We The People. And by “overthrown” I mean to be ignored and not obeyed until the federal government formally rescinds these traitorous laws which are violative of our Constitution and far beyond the powers granted to the government by it. If you have a problem with this, your problem is NOT with me – your problem is with the written Constitution.

The Constitution For the united States of America (not a typo) is the one document that all Americans, especially our politicians and judges, must accept as the sole authority behind America. It is not the President nor the Congress nor the Courts that is the authority. The President and the Congress and the Courts were all CREATED by the Constitution and therefore can have no authority over it. It is ONLY We The People who have any authority over the Constitution, and all we can do is obey it, modify it by one of the two processes dictated in the Constitution, or abolish it and write a whole new one, as stated by our Declaration of Independence. No one has the authority or the option to ignore the Constitution, as our Congress and our Presidents have demanded and expected and done for so many years.

All “officers” in all branches of our government (elected or appointed) are required to take an oath of office. All are sworn to uphold and protect our Constitution. Those who attempt to pass laws (Congress) or attempt to create Executive Orders (Presidents) or attempt to twist the Constitution into their own opinions of what they believe it **should** say (judges) are in violation of their Oaths of Office, and should be immediately dismissed without any benefits. Direct words or actions in violation of the principles in our Constitution by our paid public servants are nothing more than acts of insurrection or treason. If we had an employee who went around criticizing how we do things, refusing to discuss these same issues with you, then you need to get rid of that employee. I believe that public trials and public flogging and public hangings are the best manner for dealing with treasonous public federal or State officials . Absent that, we need to eliminate all public benefits, including retirement benefits, from any and all paid public servants who are removed for this cause. As of this moment, paid public servants can be guilty of treason or insurrection and still retain their excessively generous retirement benefits. THIS IS WRONG!!!

I believe that at least half of federal spending and federal programs are totally outside of the limits placed on the federal government by our Constitution and, therefore, these programs and expenditures have no business existing on a federal level. I believe that the federal government loses all its authority and powers when it exceeds and violates the clear and explicit limitations written in the Constitution. I believe it is clear that we have had an unconstitutional federal government since at least 1933, and possibly since Abraham Lincoln threw out the Constitution and declared war on the American people.

I believe that when America again has a Constitutional federal government (hopefully, maybe, someday), the trillions of federal dollars and the thousands of federal programs that would be canceled can be, if deemed important enough, taken up by the various States, assuming the States and the people in those States WANT to continue them. This is how the Constitution and the 10th Amendment call for things to be done. The problem is not the program or the expenditures, nor those receiving the benefits of those programs or expenditures –the problem is in the fact that the federal government is restricted by the Constitution from being engaged in those programs or expenditures at all. Those rights and responsibilities lawfully belong ONLY to the several States and to We The People, according to the Constitution.

I believe the traditional views of American politics, separated into liberal and conservative, miss the point entirely. I believe that there is a third category which is almost always labeled “extreme” by both liberals and conservatives; that of being Constitutional. And as clarification of what I mean, let us take issue of healthcare. A Liberal would create a large federal bureaucracy to oversee the activities and programs, allowing the States to perform some functions, but pretty much run things from Washington, DC, much like Hillary Clinton tried about 15 years ago, and Barack Obama has recently accomplished. A Conservative would create a small federal bureaucracy to monitor things and allow the States to perform the majority of functions and fill the majority of responsibilities. And a Constitutionalist would say, “The Constitution gives the federal government absolutely no authority or jurisdiction over healthcare at all. Why are they even debating the issue?” BOTH Liberals and Conservatives can be unconstitutional in their perspectives, and usually are.

I believe that YOU DESERVE NOTHING that you have not earned. You DO NOT deserve that job or that parking space or that benefit until you have done something to deserve it. You DO NOT deserve to win so that nobody loses and nobody has to feel bad. You DO NOT deserve that raise, unless you have done something remarkable to stand out among the other employees. You DO NOT deserve that job because you are a minority. You DO NOT deserve that benefit because of your demographic. You DO NOT deserve any type of government welfare. America has, over the last 100 years, redefined the word “deserve” into a totally socialistic concept with the eventual goal that people deserve to be equal in every way. This has led to welfare, so we can re-distribute the wealth. And it has led to preferential treatment in both public and private enterprises, so we can make jobs more available to people who have not in any way earned them. Do you want to deserve something? Then accomplish something remarkable that benefits others and improves yourself. This will result in good things happening to you. Do you want a great job? Then make good grades and get involved in some activities that show you are something

special. DO NOT live an unremarkable life punctuated by moments of selfishness and expect to be selected above others who have accomplish more. If you want to get noticed then you have to stand out in the crowd. If you want to get ahead in this life, then do something special with your life! BUT YOU DESERVE NOTHING just for existing.

I believe the “general welfare” clause of our federal Constitution has been treasonously polluted into a socialistic belief never intended, in fact specifically disallowed, by our Founding Fathers. The “general welfare” clause of Article 1, Section 8 of the Constitution is NOT a grant of power, but a restriction placed on the use or expenditure of federal tax revenues. The grant of power in that clause is the power to tax, with the restriction being the expenditure of those tax revenues. The grants of power to the government are clearly stated in the Constitution, being specific and limited. Any legislation based on a power not explicitly granted the federal government in the Constitution is an attempt to overthrow the government created by that Constitution, and is an act of treason.

I believe that huge omnibus legislative bills three and four and five inches thick, especially those passed without extensive public examination and debate BEFORE a vote, is a violation of the Oaths of Office sworn to by our elected representatives, and demands the immediate removal from office of those who voted to pass that legislation. And those removed from office by this violation of their Oaths of Office should result in the immediate termination of ALL federal benefits. It is an embarrassment and a clear dereliction of duty for members of Congress to vote for a bill they have not read, and then complain they were misled when people or groups point out the obviously egregious portions of the bill. Any member of Congress who discovers unacceptable portions of a bill AFTER he/she has voted for that bill and then complains about it should be impeached. Congress approves these huge “omnibus” bills for the specific purpose of allowing plausible deniability when an individual or group points out unacceptable portions of the bill after it is approved. Said behavior should not be rewarded in any way, but should be punished by impeachment and termination of all federal benefits.

I believe that any elected representative who votes on any legislative act, yea or nay, without first reading it personally, is in violation of his or her Oath of Office, and that “uninformed” vote should result in his or her immediate removal from office with immediate termination of all federal benefits.

I believe that all benefits of any federal office should never exceed the benefits available to the typical American. I believe that Congress should NOT have a separate health program but should have to purchase commercially available health insurance policies. I believe that Congress should NOT have a separate retirement program, but should be subject to Social Security like all Americans. The current Congressional retirement program is a travesty, and should be terminated immediately.

I believe that Congress should immediately limit itself to ONLY those powers expressly delegated to it by the federal Constitution, and should eliminate in a timely manner all benefits and programs not expressly delegated to Congress by the federal Constitution. I believe that Congress and the President should obey the Ninth and Tenth Amendments to the Constitution in any and all legislative and executive activities. I believe that any and all

elected federal representatives who attempts to draft, put forth, support, or vote for any legislative or executive efforts not consistent with ALL of the Constitution, and in particular the Ninth and Tenth Amendments of the federal Constitution, should be immediately impeached, put out to pasture, removed from office, with immediate termination of all federal benefits.

And I believe that about does it. If you have a problem with this document, or any part of it, please feel free to contact me and express your problem. And I will be happy to tell you what you can do about it.