

**United States Trust for A More Perfect Union
and Life-Changing Pursuit of Unity
for the Well-being of Humanity**

The Better Angels of our Nature

An attitude of mind. A condition of the heart. A place for the soul.
All of which fosters the capacity for a better life, liberty and happiness.

By

A More Perfect Union Society

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National Constitution Day Conclave

*“We the People of the United States,
in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure
domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote
the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to
ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this
Constitution for the United States of America.”*

The Better Angels of our Nature

The founders of the United States of America sought to unify the divided colonies under one governing body through *The Articles of Confederation*, the predecessor of the Constitution.

In spite of their differences, they led hard and challenging lives influenced by division, and yet, in the name of unity, their hearts gave way to reason. Unity prevailed.

For a more perfect union, America merged together as one nation under God, as the better angels of our nature rose to the occasion.

It established a weak central government that was unable to successfully govern the new nation. There was widespread disagreement over a plethora of issues, but states began to realize that if they didn't work together, then this already-weak Union would fall apart —and thus, the Philadelphia Convention was called into order in 1787 by George William Van Cleve.

It was *division* and the need to unify which caused these words and signatures to authenticate our Constitution. On September 17, 1787 the United States of America became truth.

At the Convention, the Constitution was conceived with the ultimate aim **to ensure perpetual unity of its people** through a central, democratic government. In the eyes of James Madison, **liberty needed to be safeguarded** from oppressive majorities capturing governmental power.

Madison would do this by transferring power to the federal government and splitting the government into three co-equal branches, “each of which would be given weapons to fight the other;” **solidarity among states was the objective**. Therefore, at its inception, “**a more perfect Union**” alluded mainly to an actual physical unity between the individual states.

Abraham Lincoln delivered his First Inaugural Address in Washington, DC, March 4, 1861. At the time, seven southern states had seceded and formed the Confederate States of America, and the country—especially the southerners—were apprehensive to hear the new Republican president’s approach to the national controversy of slavery.

Lincoln assured the Southerners of the right of each state to determine its own actions on slavery without the coercion of other state or federal powers. However, Lincoln was concrete in his holding that secession was an impossibility because the Union is perpetual:

I hold, that in contemplation of universal law, and of the Constitution, the Union of these States is perpetual. Perpetuity is implied, if not expressed, in the fundamental law of all national governments... And finally, in 1787, one of the declared objects for ordaining and establishing the Constitution was ***‘to form a more perfect Union.’*** But if [the] destruction of the Union, by one, or by a part only, of the States, be lawfully possible, the Union is *less* perfect than before the Constitution, having lost the vital element of perpetuity...

Lincoln greatly disliked the idea of secession. Yet, without ending aggressively, Lincoln assured the people of his great desire to remain unified:

I am loath to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not

be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our **bonds of affection**. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield, and patriot grave, to every living heart and hearthstone, all over this broad land, will yet swell the **chorus of][the Union**, when again touched, as surely they will be, by **the better angels of our nature**.

Lincoln harkens to the people's rationale to put down their "passions" and remember their original bond of unity; he appeals to the nation's bloody and painful history to swell up affection and nostalgia in the people's hearts; and he finally speaks to those eternal values that must arise within the people so that the "**chorus of the Union**" may sing loudly again. Lincoln's speech, in summation, offers us a perfect duality of meaning: "union" meaning a physical unity of states, and "**union**" meaning a **bond of unity between the peoples**.

Lincoln's address was finally unable to repress conflicting emotions and opinions and 620,000 American souls were lost in the Civil War.

A unified nation—between states and peoples—was at the forefront of Lincoln's concern.

Where are we the people today? What is "a more perfect Union" among the peoples? There are indications the people are not unified.

A bond of unity today is in question. In this period of uncertainty, we are unable to become a more perfect union together. We are going it alone, with others seeking and trying to manage the lack of harmony.

Regardless of circumstances, to discover how best “a more perfect Union” can be approached, we should consider a self-imposed examination of conscience. Like it or not, we are most likely the problem or a contributing factor to disunity.

To ignore self in considering disunity is wrong. We either are the problem - or are not.

The devil is in the details of disunity. To become a more perfect union, the issue will reveal itself quickly and dramatically. One will agree or disagree, but how we handle either is important to maintain highest level of respect for others.

It is September 17, 2020. What is happening within our nation? Within ourselves? With others?

Why are we treating each other the way we are? If we seek to really discover the causes of our disunity, let us go deep into and examine the heart of America—namely, its people.

Since “a more perfect union” can best be realized in the union of people on an issue, what are reasons of an unwillingness to bend, compromise, or worse, rise up against others because of opinions?

What reasons do we have to over-react to situations, and more so, over-react to an over-reaction? In either case in point, the end result is not productive and most often leaves both parties in an unsupportive and contrary state.

Life is tough. One may be right. Our nation may be right. If not, to gain unity is a heart to heart matter, based upon the truth and facts which reveal that the human condition should always come first.

Disunity is ugly. It favors no one position or person. Both parties lose in the long run. The end result is strife, conflict or worse.

In the hearts of mankind lie many souls who won an issue, the bottom-line, and lost in the long run. There is nothing worse than having gained the ultimate end result, and having lost friends or lives in the process. Worse – a nation.

Since September 17, 1787, America has won many battles, and in the process, lost its way ahead by not putting humanity first.

To truly be a nation pursuing a more perfect union, there are opportunities which are watershed moments that can be life-changing for our nation. We need to respectfully recognize them and act with a spirit of goodness becoming to our nation.

We wish to point to the words from the following colloquialisms: we kill in our hearts before we kill with our hands; sow a thought, reap an action.

From these short phrases, we gather that something is not right with our nation. There must be a better way to listen, to understand, respect and become more perfect in how we are, or not, treating each other.

Best shared, America is not valuing relationships as we should.

These most insightful words by Prince Charles of England, are worthy of reflection,

“For all the advances of science,
there remains deep in the soul a
persistent and unconscious anxiety that
something is missing, some ingredient
that makes life worth living.”

Something isn't right in our nation's world; in fact, something is not right in *us*.

We invite the reader to pause here.

What is disunity? Conflict within a group is our preferred response. We are seeing and feeling conflict growing in number and seriousness. To understand others requires intent to listen with all of self. With disunity, the internal is not comfortable with self.

Disunity in society often begins not in the exterior but rather in the heart of man, for “out of the abundance of the heart [or lack thereof] the mouth speaks” (Mt 12:34). (S)

Our disunity is usually not the result of religion, politics or wherewithal. It is the result of a true lack of peace within, an anxiety, or – a lack of God working within.

Unity and disunity begins in the heart. From the dawn of history goodness and unity are not always chosen; a battleground is present within each person to do what is right—sometimes at great expense of themselves and others.

There is a war in every man and woman’s heart. For the most part, we are able to keep things and issues at rest. But when not, life, others, and circumstances become out of control – and then disunity erupts.

The exterior disunity in the world only points to the disunity within each of us.

We are indeed in a war. With uncivil discourse, we must go deeper into why issues reach a boiling point—into the hearts of mankind.

Let us begin with the choice between what is good and right for mankind and not. What may be good for one is not necessarily so for another. There is a most interesting suggestion for a more perfect union to act for the good is the difference between right and wrong.

To orient ourselves regarding right versus wrong, we must also consider what the standard is for what is right and what is wrong. The question of belief in God arises.

Is God a factor in what one believes right or not? It was with George Washington, with Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther King, Jr.

Russian Fyodor Dostoyevsky writes, “If there is no immortality, then all things are permitted,” or, in the other words, if God does not exist then an objective morality ceases to exist too.

The truth of this idea is echoed by the atheist philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche, in his book, *Will to Power (Book I)*, "One still hopes to get along with a moralism without religious background: but that necessarily leads to nihilism," which essentially means that God's existence is necessary for any kind of objective morality to exist; if not, we are left with a baseless moralism or no moralism at all, and even worse - a meaningless existence.

George Washington makes note of this principle connection between morality and God in his Inaugural Address at the Senate Chamber of Federal Hall in New York City on April 30, 1789, "*Since we ought to be no less persuaded that the propitious smiles of Heaven can never be expected on a nation that disregards the eternal rules of order and right, which Heaven itself has ordained...*" If Washington were alive today, we might suppose that if this country were to pursue unity through civil, just, and upright living, he might suggest that a firm belief in God is necessary.

God's existence is necessary for an objective standard of right and wrong to exist, but the question that logically follows is God is a factor.

Is God a factor in our state of trying to more be a more perfect union?

To answer this let us turn to philosophers, Aristotle (350 BC), who was able to derive God's attribute of being good by reason alone: "*This Immovable First Mover...It must be Necessary Being, and inasmuch as necessary, It must constitute the Good; It must therefore be the First Principle from which have depended Heaven and Nature [emphasis added]*" (*Metaphysics*, XIII. Vii.).

In this, Aristotle establishes that everything finds its being in God, that God must constitute goodness itself, and that God is creator. Accordingly, since God is Being itself, is goodness itself, and is creator, then everything that is created, or has being, is good.

Thus, the remedy to man's heart, which becomes empty when it turns away from its creator, is to seek and redirect his entire being towards Being itself, towards goodness itself, towards its creator - God: "...for it was You who created my being,

knit me together in my mother's womb" (Psalm 139:13-14); "In him everything continues in being" (Colossians 1:17). (S)

Without God, chaos wreaks havoc in all of our hearts and leaves us corrupted.

"O search me, God, and know my heart...See that I follow not the wrong path and lead me in the path of life eternal" (Psalm 139:23-24). (S). This, however, requires the submission of our hearts to our creator and this naturally requires a virtue that is essential for all other relationships: trust.

The virtue: Trust.

Virtue, according to Aristotle in his *Nicomachean Ethics*, "is a state of character concerned with choice, lying in a mean," and this mean lying between the vices of "excess and defect."

Courage, for example, "is a mean between the excess of rashness and the deficiency of cowardice." In the virtue of trust in relation to God then, what is the excess and defect?

Since virtue is a choice towards some good, then we must consider the good in which we are choosing; and in this case, it is goodness itself, God.

Therefore, there is no excess of the virtue of trust in relation to God. The deficiency, however, of trust in God would entail a choice against that which is goodness itself, which means that any choice to not trust in God would be a deficiency—including even the smallest act of not trusting.

Since trusting in God is the action of turning towards the Almighty, or goodness itself, then any action of turning away from God would then be a deprivation of goodness or going from a greater good to a lesser good.

God, again, is Being itself, and He must constitute the Good, which means that anything that is good has substantial being; and since all being is good, then anything that lacks being or is lesser than what it could be.

From this, we gather that the human heart has misdirected itself away from its creator and therefore has fallen

into evil; it has experienced its own brokenness and its disunity with others.

The act of trusting involves the giving-over of some part or the whole of oneself to the other, but for someone to act in such a way would require that one to hold that the other is *good*.

The wisdom of George Washington is... “be courteous to all, but intimate with few, and let those few be well tried before you give them your confidence.” In our broken, human condition, it is necessary to follow this wise counsel from Washington in order to, as noted earlier, discover whether or not the other person is good, which would make them worthy of trust.

It is precisely this constituent of *goodness* that makes trust possible and right.

Since turning-away from God may be a cause of much disunity, then Washington and the rest of his cohort’s intent of drafting such a constitution “in order to form a more perfect Union” might well be achieved through the restitution of a society which includes more of God today.

In order to bring about a more perfect union *today*, we must first consider something is wrong in how we treat each and how we deal with disunity.

Admitting a crisis level of disunity is important. If so, what can do done to reduce the crisis level to a more manageable process and one of trust?

Key: Building a bridge of trust must be built to reach an accord acceptable by all parties.

How?

Think with us. Are there any current days on America’s calendar which warrant any added emphasis? Or, is there a window of opportunity to set a part one day, or week or month for the human condition to take a step back in life’s busyness and go within to better deal with the external?

There are ways to seriously consider celebrating Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness – for a more perfect union. Black History Month is an example.

Call it National Constitutional Month, and within it many different collections of moments in support of it. On this day, week or month, we wish to engage the best of America to invest in its future.

Perhaps it can be a period for a national intervention. A retreat-like opportunity to better value what we value which warrants thought and action in some meaningful and lasting way.

With America being formed to be a more perfect union, if we are the truth in unity or not, we should rise to a higher standard. What is the standard?

This is not a call to non-activity but rather, as Dr. Michael Naughton notes, “an attitude of mind and a condition of the soul that fosters a capacity to receive the reality of the world.”

This is confirmed by the great German philosopher Josef Pieper in his book, *Leisure, the Basis of Culture*,

“The essence of leisure is not to assure that we may function smoothly [in order to work more] but rather to assure that we, embedded in our social function [of work], are enabled to remain fully human. That we may not lose the ability look beyond the limits of our social and functional station, to contemplate and celebrate the world as such, to become and be that person who is essentially oriented toward the whole of reality.”

In the spirit of productive intervention, our thought is to contemplate two specific, eternal questions that necessitate the consideration of a creator: **why is there something rather than nothing and what is the meaning of life?**

There are questions that are unanswerable by science; they are questions that linger in the foundation of the human heart; and finally, they are questions that yield the human heart restless *until* answered in the Almighty, as confirmed by St. Augustine, “You have made us for yourself, O God, and our heart is restless until it finds rest in You.”

Perhaps, Restless Heart Syndrome (RHS) is the matter at hand. If we individually are restless, why? As a body are we restless? Why?

Are our hearts not at rest?

Let us begin to redirect each of our own hearts towards our creator, why we were born, what are we doing with our lives and where are we headed.

Experiencing an interior renewal, and therein unifying our broken world, heart by heart is our response to be more perfect.

With our imperfections, we live in a wonderful nation. Thank God. Lincoln said, "With malice toward none..." may we live and work to be a more perfect union. The final choice is ours and how we choose to love our neighbor.

We call upon the better angels of our nature for greater unity – for a more perfect union. "Tis'well."