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# This July 4, don't ignore America's dark underbelly

Tony Magliano | Jun. 25, 2012 Making a Difference

The Fourth of July is the most patriotic of U.S. holidays. As the red, white and blue waves from sea to shining sea, parades, fireworks and social celebrations fill the day. It's a special time to cherish what is good about America.

But a mature patriotism also demands that we take an honest look at the dark side of our government and society. After all, how can we genuinely claim to love our nation if we ignore its many illnesses?

Living in a state of denial aids the disease, not the cure. A healthy patriotism recognizes evil for what it is and works to transform it into virtue.

Every day in the United States, more than 3,200 unborn babies are brutally murdered by surgical abortions and the abortion, inducing drug RU-486. And it's all totally legal, though totally immoral, as is the destruction of human embryos for their stem cells. This is so evil.

Contrary to the rhetoric of some politicians, the United States is not broke. The nation has plenty of money. The problem is that it's being squandered on astronomical military budgets and war and is largely concentrated in the hands of a small percentage of individuals who have low overall tax rates and corporations who often pay little to no taxes. Meanwhile millions of Americans are jobless, underemployed, medically uninsured and poor. All of this is evil.

More than 10 million undocumented workers who harvest our food, repair our roads, landscape our businesses and labor in miserable slaughterhouses are forced to live an underground existence unjustly fearing deportation. This, too, is evil.

In a world where 1.4 billion fellow human beings live and die in extreme poverty with little food, no clean water or sanitation, no medical care, no education, no insurance of any kind, dirt floor shacks for houses and with no hope of ever living decent lives, the U.S. government gives only 0.6 percent of its annual budget for poverty-focused international assistance. This stingy response to the poorest of the poor is shamefully evil.

After China, the United States is dumping the largest amount of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, dangerously warming our environment. This is not good stewardship of God's creation, and is thus also evil.

The United States possesses the most lethal nuclear arsenal in the world and has a military budget larger than the military budgets of the next 14 nations combined. As the world's leading arms merchant, America is fueling many of the world's armed conflicts. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have killed hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians, and an attack against Iran is still very much on the table.

Furthermore, with at least 700 military bases throughout the world, the United States has become a global military empire.

And of course, all of this, too, is evil. It ignores what God is saying to us through the prophet Isaiah: "They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore."

Instead of just celebrations, perhaps July 4 should also include mourning and repentance.

If we fairly share the nation's wealth to end all poverty and hunger, if we tirelessly strive to eliminate environmental degradation, abortion, war preparation and every other form of injustice suffered by humanity, we will truly one day become what both presidents John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan called that shining city on a hilltop.

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