

Ron Meier

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Our Generation's Fight for Freedom

I'm actively involved in many groups, including neighborhood, church, veterans, schools, and friends. Many in these groups are my age, but some are younger. Because most of my friends in these groups share my political and spiritual beliefs, I constantly hear their fear for the America our children and grandchildren will inherit.

My friends and I have enjoyed the fruits of our nation's bounty. Our economic success enables us to travel, engage in many leisure activities, and enjoy fine dining. Economic success was not among the list of unalienable rights which our Founding Fathers declared in the Declaration of Independence; economic success is a consequence of those endowed rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Our Founders struggled through the greater part of a decade in the Revolutionary War to release the chains of autocratic government and to create a new form of government never tried before. They called it an experiment, and it remains an experiment to this day. The Constitution they wrote was brief because the experiment in government they created envisioned a limited government, with power retained by the people. The power of government was not delegated to a single ruler, nor largely to a legislature; government's power was limited to the protection of the people's unalienable rights.

My parents' generation suffered through the hardships of the Great Depression and World War II. They wanted their children, my generation, to have a better life than they had. Thanks to their sacrifices, my generation has seen our parents' wishes fulfilled. Yet now, our generation gathers over meals and doesn't share the dreams and hopes of our parents for the next generation; rather, we share a fear that our children and grandchildren will not have the liberty and happiness that we enjoy.

How is it that, over the course of just one generation, hope has transitioned to fear? What must our generation do to keep today's fear from being the next generation's realization that the great political "experiment" of 1787 has failed?

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The answer to the first question is easily discovered in the writings and speeches of "progressive" politicians and academics of the past 130 years. They envision an extinction of our Founders' experiment and a return to the pre-Revolutionary structure of government, one in which the people's rights are granted by government, not by the people's Creator. Many of them deny the existence of a Creator. They envision a new Constitution that minimizes the checks and balances in our Founders' document and concentrates power in the Chief Executive. With power so concentrated, the dreams of Woodrow Wilson and other progressives of an elite "administrative state," deciding what is best for the people, will become reality.

The answer to the second question is more difficult, not because our generation cannot see the problems and does not know the answer to the first question, but because the answer to the second question contains the word "do." Our generation has been conditioned to believe that, at a certain age, our work is done and "earned" leisure is our primary purpose for the remainder of our lives.

Had Benjamin Franklin and George Washington believed that their work was done at a specific age, our nation's experiment might have failed quickly. Over the past two centuries, countless political leaders have toiled until death, some favoring a continuation of our experiment, others favoring a new progressive vision for America.

If the power rests with the people, not with the politicians, then our work is never done. Yes, we can enjoy our "earned" leisure, but leisure is not purpose. If we fear for our children and grandchildren, then we must actively fight for the passing of our freedoms to them; we must protect the Constitution's limitations of government power.

We cannot do this work from our Lazy Boys, from our cruise ships, or from our golf courses. We must invest our time helping the future generations acquire the knowledge and skills they will need to keep our Founders' experiment alive. We must review their text books so we can fill in the gaps with truth; we must take our children and grandchildren on historical vacations to Boston, Philadelphia, Washington DC, and to Revolutionary and Civil War battlefields. We must volunteer in neighborhood schools to mentor and tutor the next generation's leaders. We must form Constitution study groups in our neighborhoods and churches to encourage and mentor others to find their purpose and pass on hope, not fear, to the next generations.

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If we can renew our own purpose and invest just half of our leisure time mentoring the next generation, President Reagan can rest in peace, knowing that our generation is doing its share of the work required to avoid the extinction of our Founders' great experiment in liberty.

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