



THE NEXT SUNRISE -- THE LIGHT OF LIBERTY

"No morn ever dawned more favorable than ours did; and no day was every more clouded than the present! Wisdom, and good examples are necessary at this time to rescue the political machine from the impending storm." --George Washington (1786)

From our family home in the mountains of East Tennessee, a sunrise has many of the qualities of a sunset. Indeed, when looking at a photograph of light over the Smoky Mountains, it can be difficult to discern whether it's dawn or dusk. That's in the eye of the beholder.



Dawn or Dusk?

I enjoy both the morning and evening skies, but I'm a "sunrise" person. I live in anticipation of the light of the next sunrise, not the darkness of the last sunset.

I inherited that propensity from [my father](#), tempered as a child of the Great Depression and a Naval Aviator during World War II. After the war, he returned home to grow a small business through innovation, dedication and hard work, and he raised a family through the turbulence of the '60s and the malaise of the '70s. He's in retirement now -- more active than many half his age -- and he celebrates his 90th birthday in two weeks.

My father has seen the best and worst of times. Given the wisdom of age, he clearly acknowledges the current threats to Liberty and the challenges facing our generation. He saw similar threats and challenges from FDR's New Deal and LBJ's Great Society. But his concern about the current [manifestation of socialist ideology](#) notwithstanding, he is an eternal optimist -- living for every new dawn, every rising sun.

In my line of work -- as an analyst of political, social and economic trends, and a forecaster of their consequences -- sometimes it's difficult to hold fast to the "sunrise" perspective. But I can't help but see opportunity in any crisis, including the present. In addition to this predisposition for optimism, I'm also grateful for the example set by another eternal optimist and mentor, [Ronald Reagan](#).

I wasn't around for the New Deal, of course, and I recall little of the Great Society years, but I do clearly recall the Great Malaise of the 1970s, with high unemployment and interest rates to match, runaway inflation, energy shortages, menacing threats from abroad, and a president who, though a man of good character, was wholly unequipped to handle the job. Then came President Reagan, who ably led our nation's about face, restored our national dignity, and seeded the longest economic expansion in history.

Ronald Reagan was a sunrise president. He heralded Morning in America. He focused on all that was good and right with America, the bright days ahead. In his farewell address, he assured, "America's best days are yet to come. Our proudest moments are yet to be. Our most glorious achievements are just ahead."

Reagan's spirit shines today in stark contrast to the darkness our adversaries promote. They appeal to the worst in their constituents -- their fears, doubts, greed,

envy, brokenness, pessimism and dependence on the state.

Indeed, light is the mark of Liberty while darkness is the result of statism. But a physicist will tell you that darkness does not exist -- it is only the absence of light. So it is with the hearts and minds of men.

This week, we observe the life of another sunrise president, [George Washington](#), whose birthday (February 22, 1732) was spontaneously celebrated nationally from the date of his death in 1799 until 1879, when Congress officially established the observance.



Washington was not only the model of presidential character, but also the character of our nation. He endured great trials to lead his generation of American Patriots, those who pledged their [Lives, Fortunes and sacred Honor](#) to lay the foundation of American Liberty and [Rule of Law](#). Those who don't know our great history are predisposed to think of

our Founding Fathers' trials as distant and unrelated to those of the present day. And yet, as the old English proverb concludes, "the more things change, the more they stay the same."

For instructive insight into Washington as president, it would be sufficient to read his [First Inaugural Address](#), delivered on April 30, 1789, and his [Farewell Address](#) of September 17, 1796. These two speeches embody the real George Washington, and the true spirit of a Patriot. They were written by his hand, not professional speech writers guided by focus groups.

In the former, he stated, "The preservation of the sacred fire of liberty, and the destiny of the republican

model of government, are justly considered as deeply, perhaps as finally, staked on the experiment entrusted to the hands of the American People."

In the latter, he wrote, "The basis of our political systems is the right of the people to make and to alter their Constitutions of Government. But the Constitution which at any time exists, till changed by an explicit and authentic act of the whole people, is sacredly obligatory upon all. The very idea of the power and the right of the people to establish Government presupposes the duty of every individual to obey the established Government."

He made plain in his Farewell, "Of all the dispositions and habits, which lead to political prosperity, Religion and Morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of Patriotism, who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of Men and Citizens. The mere Politician, equally with the pious man, ought to respect and to cherish them. A volume could not trace all their connexions with private and public felicity. ... Let us with caution indulge the supposition, that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect, that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle."

Washington's advice from the bleak days of 1777 is applicable today as then: "We should never despair, our Situation before has been unpromising and has changed for the better, so I trust, it will again. If new difficulties arise, we must only put forth new Exertions and proportion our Efforts to the exigency of the times."

[American Patriots](#), take heart. I am certain that at the end of the current long, dark night that there will be a bright new dawn for Liberty, just as the sun has dependably risen after the darkest of times throughout our history.

English theologian Thomas Fuller wrote in 1650, "It is always darkest just before the Day dawneth." The darkest hour of this era has yet come, but dawn will surely follow.

In the meantime fellow Patriots, as President Reagan's friend Barry Goldwater declared, "illegitimi non carborundum" (don't let the bastards get you down)!