

51st Storyworth: What Has Made Your Faith Stronger?

To a great degree this question is offensive. My faith in myself has always been based on my reasonable appraisal of my situation. But we have experienced a sea change in this country, and I am afraid around the world, where it has somehow become essential to have “religious fervor” in order to think you have value. And the pressure for that compliance has led to both unreasonable expectations for some, and downright insulting behaviors by some others. A case in point; the insistence that “CHRISTIAN” blessings get expressed at things like VFW Bingo, senior meetings, and the like. As if ONLY those who somehow embrace Christ belong there.

So up front I will express my personal opinion that the more powerful the organized religion, the less likely I am to espouse ANY of its dogma. When I consider the past five years’ slathering by the Evangelicals over as worthless a human being as DJTrump demonstrated, removes all their credibility as representing ANYTHING which remotely represents the teachings of Christ. And to watch their ability to somehow compartmentalize his actions which directly refute those teachings, while accepting as gospel the misinformation he and his ilk spread is an insult to my ability to THINK for myself.

As an engineer, I have always sought to understand, and I believe Einstein was correct when he observed that “God doesn’t play dice” which means that physics is there to be understood by observation. So it might seem paradoxical to have some faith in a supernatural being if one is a scientific mindset. But not if one asks “how and why does it all exist in the first place?”. However, I have no patience whatsoever for the biblical “faith” which sees some deity as being the vengeful god as portrayed in the pre-Christian bible, and puts the lie to whatever basis might hope to be my confidence in that being giving a rat’s ass what I do or do not do. If he gave me a capability to reason, why would he then punish me for doing so? And if “his” ego is so fragile as to care WHAT my opinion might be thereof, how can “he” be thought to matter at ALL? EVERY time I hear someone “pray for his healing powers”, I want to ask why they don’t instead prey on him for CAUSING the misery in the first place? Which should explain clearly my disdain for denial of self-determination vs HIM.

I have watched the “Party of Lincoln” so prostitute themselves as to be sickening in their direct manipulation as the Wealthy White Mostly Male Party Of NO, which blames all society’s ills on the VICTIMS of the policies they themselves perpetuate, ever since Nixon decided to sell out the then GOP to the bigots among us because he could see the party’s diminishing relevance, which continues to this day. And MAGA followers mindlessly accept demonstrably false evidence of “their guy” having his re-election “stolen” from him, and then do self-destructive behaviors like vaccine denials even as it keeps killing THEM. Yet all projections I keep hearing suggest those same liars will be returned to power because the Democrats, without the needed 2/3 majority, cannot insist on pushing through corrective measures which actually CAN help, even while those of “faith” offer ONLY their “thoughts and prayers” for the victims of predictable violence at the hands of idiots because some zealot is afraid his manhood will be threatened if he does not possess a personal arsenal, and the GOP will blatantly speak with forked tongue to deny the first black POTUS his choice for SCOTUS, while insisting that MAGA, who was NOT re-elected is somehow granted his choice in the last HOURS before he is trounced at the polls, all because the rules committee made it possible for less than 1/4 the actual populace to control the rest.

My “faith”? I have made a career by assigning implications to facts and then projecting outcomes as a result thereof. If anything, that has suggested even greater certainty for inappropriate lessons to be taken from those facts, in part because we can no longer even agree on what the facts ARE in many cases, not least because those whose jobs used to be the reporting of news have instead become the makers of news by substituting THEIR agenda based “facts” as if they actually were truth, without bothering to mention observable inconsistencies. And an audience too ignorant and celebrityized to question those conclusions. Or to think for themselves.

None of this is new – it is a playbook which has been used by every dictator in history you have ever heard of, because it is a workable process based on empirical evidence, combined with the fact that most people are incapable of leadership, which makes them mostly sheep. But I am not a part of that flock and never will be. I think for myself and care for other people, which is why I don't allow MY beliefs to be imposed upon them, but resent that there is a politically powerful MINORITY which insists on imposing its will on ME.

Faith was always a private matter when I was growing up. While it might have been evident to anyone who looked when I entered a church which church that was, to this day my mere entry should not be construed to imply any compliance with nor specific affection for any particular religion. My activity is entirely consistent with my statements that my choices to participate are based on my socialization with some specific individuals who happen to share that congregation, and without Dawn's interest I would most assuredly NOT be involved.

I have often referred to myself as a devout Porschefile. I love the freedom which is represented by the personal automobile, and as an engineer it makes sense that I would be impressed by one which had a legacy of superb engineering. In fact, the first "history" of the Porsche company, which is legally referred to as Porsche AG in Germany, was titled "Excellence Was Expected". So it ought not to be any surprise to any thinking person that my enthusiasm for the brand might seem "religious". But that would be too simplistic an analysis, and would miss the fact that I all too well know many of the mistakes which they have made. Why I continue to follow them despite that knowledge must certainly have parallels with other intelligent people not discarding their religions when they learned of some of the outrageous things done in the name of their "god", which continue to occur to this very day, however "enlightened" we try to convince ourselves we have become. I am human, too.

I was raised as a Catholic, but the more I learned about their history and the more I observed their actions disavowing their supposed doctrine, the less I saw them as a model I wanted to represent ME. That took its ultimate form in college when I was for the first time in my life actually capable of independent thought and acceptance of its consequences. Before then, my Mother used to insist that "while I lived under her roof I would do as she said, which included attending weekly mass". This while her husband, our father, preyed on my sisters, seemingly with her awareness, which made no sense whatsoever to me, but proved she was human.

So my faith, if that is what it is to be called, has become my personal confidence in my own compass leading me. I try to adversely affect as few people as possible in my individual life, even as I choose to live my individuality to the fullest possible given my circumstance. If there is ANYTHING which might suggest that some supernatural being is in any way paying attention to my existence, it might best be described as their allowing me to continue to do so as I have. I believe in my own efforts, but am quite certain that I have my own share of silver spoon licking luck which many others could not claim to have had. So I would NEVER deny that the term "self-made" needs a whole page of disclaimers for any real accuracy.

I believe in justice, despite, and perhaps because of, seeing how poorly distributed it really is. But I also believe firmly in TANSTAAFL; There Ain't No Such Thing As A Free Lunch, so whatever is to be your lot in life, it depends upon your own efforts to assure whatever is possible can be achieved. I do NOT subscribe to the oft espoused belief that "He will take care of it", because I don't see much evidence in history of "him" seeming to give the slightest care what happens to any specific individual, and that society works ONLY because most members of that society share an acceptance of the rules which guide that society, one of which is to leave other members of that society to make their own decisions, but give them a helping hand where possible if it might help the society as a whole. If THAT is not "having faith" I have no idea what is, nor do I care ;-)

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