



# Point of View

Dear Marketplace Friend,

The fireworks stands are being disassembled today; sparkler residue and expended fountains are at-the-curb for collection in neighborhoods across America. Our early-summer flirtation with patriotism is, once again, a calendar marker for a year half-spent. Is the "red, white and blue" just a picnic tablecloth color scheme, or does it paint the backdrop for a discussion we need to bring back to the dinner table?

An official "break" from our summer book emphasis today; America is front-and-center, instead. Question: *did you - and, your family - experience the "National Anthem" together in the last few days?*

Anthems are important components of a thoughtful life. Our *documents* define the details of anything important that brings us together, but our *music* puts the heart into any movement. Traditionally, armies always march to the cadence of their band, playing the tunes that inspire their courage. Apart from the military community, the soon-to-be-adults are more energized by their music than they are by their studies. It has been (*rightly*) said: *"The way to a teenagers heart is through his earbuds."* If their iPod *sings* it, it's more believable than if their parent *screams* it...

I wonder: *are you taking advantage of music - and, its power - in your own life, at this historic crossroad, where the future of*



*our country - and, the Kingdom - seem so uncertain?*

Anthems rise above mere songs; Webster says that an Anthem is a *"rousing popular song that typifies or is identified with a particular subculture, movement or point of view."* They capture the uncommon commonality that distinguishes one group from all others.

My friends in the group Third Day perform an anthem called **Creed**, which restates the core of the Christian faith's beliefs. From their number: *"I believe in God the Father, Almighty Maker of heaven and Maker of earth. And in Jesus Christ His only begotten son our Lord. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary. Suffered under Pontius Pilot where he was crucified dead and buried..."* In a confused world that suggests that the term "god" is all-inclusive, they confirm that our God is the one-and-only God who presented Himself incarnate, in Jesus Christ... You ought to get **Creed** onto your

iPod; if you have kids, you ought to download its lyrics and talk through them with them so that they understand what it means to "believe Christianly."

My good friend - and **TMP** graduate - Steve Amerson is known as "*America's Tenor*," and his nonprofit ministry uses music to turn hearts back to God and Country. Steve's presentation of our National Anthem reenergizes the sense of patriotism that seems to be waning among some of today's Americans who seem more *apologetic* than *proud* of our national identity and role in the world.

Here's a beyond-the-Fourth suggestion: take advantage of Steve's gracious provision of his powerful performance of **The Star Spangled Banner** by downloading the MP3 version at no cost:

<http://www.amazedbyamerica.com/free>. Listen to him; the hairs on your neck will stand at attention. Play it with - and, for - your kids.

While you're on-line, download all of the original lyrics: [www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0194015.html](http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0194015.html). Read them that fourth verse, the one that includes the lines: "*Blest with victory and peace, may the heav'n rescued land praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation. Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just, and this be our motto: 'In God is our trust.' And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave, O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!*"

Are we doing everything we must to make sure that we are not the last generation of *serious Christians*... and *serious Americans*?

Hittin' the books, next week,

*Bob Shank*

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