

OPINION

The First Amendment

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition their Government for a redress of grievances.



Letters to the Editor Policy

The Sentinel welcomes letters to the editor as part of a community discussion of issues on the local, state and national level.

Emailed letters are preferred. Handwritten or typed letters must be signed. All letters need to include full name, address and phone number; only name and city will be printed. Letters should be limited to about 300 words. Letters are subject to editing for length, grammar and clarity. Publication of any letter is not guaranteed and depends on space available and the volume of letters received.

Letters that are anonymous, libelous, argumentative, sarcastic or contain accusations that are unourced or without documentation will not be published.

Letters containing poetry or from outside The Sentinel readership area will only be published at the discretion of the editor.

Political/Election Letters:

Election-related letters must address pertinent or timely issues of interest to our readers at-large.

Letters must 1) Not be a part of letter-writing campaigns on behalf of (or by) candidates; 2) Ensure any information about a candidate is accurate, fair and not from second-hand knowledge or hearsay; and 3) explain the reasons to support candidates based on personal experience and perspective rather than partisanship and campaign-style rhetoric.

Candidates themselves may not use the letters to the editor column to outline their views and platforms or to ask for votes; this constitutes paid political advertising.

As with all letters and advertising content, the newspaper, at the sole discretion of the publisher, general manager and editor, reserves the right to reject any letter that doesn't follow the above criteria.

Send letters to:

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Walk a mile in the footsteps of others



By Caitlyn May, Editor
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issued by my Catholic school embedded in the concrete — frozen in 1994, age five. Watching the coverage that day, I wondered if there was a patch of drying cement in the city that now held scores of footprints, forward moving, frozen in time, preserving the terror of that day.

Genesis 25:9 relays the story of the sons of Ishmael, descendant of Abraham. Forgoing reason and relying solely on faith, we are to believe that well into his first century of life, Abraham and his wife, Sarah, welcomed their son Isaac. His birth, of course, came 13 years after the servant Hagar delivered unto Abraham his first-born son, Ishmael.

Fearing her own son would benefit poorly under Ishmael's influence, Sarah cast both the boy and his mother out.

So goes the story of our division: Ishmaelites, known today as 'Arabs,' the sons of Ishmael; and Christians, the sons of Isaac. Remnants of Catholic school.

The notion we don't want to drag from the back of our minds and place firmly in our hearts to rust and settle into the beats is this: We are not divided at all.

The schools full of boys learning to hate America are not all that different from the western hamlets that inject Christianity into every nook and cranny that will hold it for fear that the absence of "God" may be mistaken as a tolerance for "Allah."

Suicide bombers in dusty, desert alleys cast easily back to southern streets, glowing from the hate of the torches and thick with the fear of young black children. Children threatening to kill Americans on film are

not all that different from Aryan toddlers being coached to decry immigrants and using much filthier terms on their parents' social media accounts.

We condemn the culture that would demand a religious doctrine become state law and have women ashamed of their God-given bodies.

And yet picket signs line the chambers of legislatures demanding that a single religion's command be the basis by which all laws are approved — and that even actions deemed legal by the state be banished because they are illegal according to scripture.

When we opt to be driven by faith, it is with the understanding that sometimes we are in the passenger seat and may not always approve of the destination. We'll get there just the same, but our soles may just be more worn than we'd like.

Nearly 20 years after 9/11, we can drown our founding principles in whatever bigotry and profit mongering we want. We can brag about this elusive freedom we seem to want to steal for ourselves and ours, with no regard for those who are different.

We can wave all the flags we want while holding our protest signs higher and point our fingers towards the Middle East and condemn them as terrorists. We can be the land of the free and the home of the brave but I think it would be more fitting of our foundation if we were also the nation of understanding and the mainland of tolerance.

Seventeen years ago, people ran for their lives, leaving footprints in the dust of the towers. Those who ran away

lifted fallen strangers from the sidewalks as they passed.

Those who ran towards the chaos did so with the intent to give their life in the smallest hopes of saving someone else's. Some fell together into the street and prayed because that's all there was left to do.

The sons and daughters of Ishmael bowed their heads and clutched the hands of the sons and daughters of Isaac.

And prayed together.

I imagine there will be a lot of talk of the impact of 9/11 this week. Tributes scattered among the coverage of immigration and football players' peaceful protests. Reminders of the images — victims and heroes of Sept. 11, 2001 — will be coming at us pretty quickly. But I would hope that in re-living the nightmare, we make the conscious effort to work toward the dream — one in which young girls can hope to be president, people of color can find much more than tolerance in a land meant for them as much as anyone else, and that we can all understand that patriotism may hold different meanings but all of them are felt passionately by those who love this country.

Wherein we can be spared the ugliness of judgement and the evil rhetoric that is currently passing for civilized debate in America today, mostly I hope that in the shadows of Sept. 11, 2001, we will remember to walk a mile in our enemies' footsteps and tread lightly in our treatment of others.

I think, in the end, it will save our souls.



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