

## WFWP USA: A New And True America - Reflections On Our Country

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Dear friends,

Greetings and Happy Month of July!

I hope you all had a wonderful Fourth of July celebration with family and friends, as our nation took a break to remember her freedoms, blessings and independence. The holiday reminds us of how many dictators and unfree systems still exist in many parts of the world.

Alongside our gratitude for our liberties, however, we are all too aware that we cannot say we truly live in freedom when we see the many visible and invisible shackles our society and families are dealing with. These include addictions, violence, poverty, racism, rabid partisanship, the decline of faith and spiritual fervor in our religious institutions ... the list goes on and on.

It is thus very obvious that as a society we have come far from the original intent of those Founding Fathers who put their faith in God ("In God We Trust") and submitted all their actions and deliberations to our Creator, seeking divine guidance when faced with seemingly unsolvable issues. Because there is today in America a declining lack of adherence to spiritual principles and standards, many of the wounds hurting us are self-inflicted. Would you not agree?

It seems that the only way for human beings to wake up and remember God and the values that truly matter is the path of undergoing suffering. And then what do we do when we are inundated with pain, loss and tragedy?

It is at this point that I would like to surprise you with a possible answer you might not have thought of. Let us look at and learn from how one group of American citizens, who have suffered unimaginably for the last 400 years, have risen above their dire circumstances. That group is, of course, our African-American brothers and sisters. Their story of overcoming - with deep faith in the Divine - is most beautifully expressed in the so-called black national anthem, "Lift Every Voice and Sing," written in 1900 by civil rights leader James Weldon Johnson. If you have a few minutes, please do take a look at it, listen to it and reflect on it!

The words of this anthem ring true to me when I hear the stories of our Herstory Awardees. Most of them, in the words of Dr. Susan Taffer, the emcee of the most recent Herstory Ceremony, have "gone not where the path would lead them but instead where there was no path and they left a trail - through grace and grit."

In the end, I believe that it will be those who have gone through undeserved suffering, and have overcome the odds, who will be the leaders of a new and true America.

I would like to borrow the last four lines of the black national anthem for us to consider:

Shadowed beneath thy hand,  
May we forever stand,  
True to our God,  
True to our native land.

Here's to a new and true America!

Sincerely,

Angelika Selle