

"Writing the truth
as I see it;
trying not to
offend
those who will
disagree."

The truth as I see it™

Idaho Common Sense™



Craig L. Bosley, MD

It's our choice

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"The real problem is in the hearts and minds of men. It is easier to denature plutonium than to denature the evil spirit of man."

Albert Einstein

Larry Echohawk, the assistant secretary for Indian Affairs at the U.S. Department of Interior, recently commented on the mistreatment of the "first Americans" by the United States government. Mr. Echohawk described "very dark chapters" of United States history, including "government atrocities against the Indian people."

Because of the strong emotions that accompany such statements, exploring these remarks could lead us through a bed of hot coals. But, it's worth the risk because this topic deserves more discussion.

What do we do about past failures? Is the United States unique with its past "dark chapters" or is it a snapshot of world history? Can we move forward with what we are today or must we remain what we were yesterday? Do any of us have ancestries without blemish?

My ancestors are mainly English and Prussian with some Scottish thrown into the mix. Do I have ancestors who are less than the pride of the ancestral tree? More important – "How far back in that tree do I share responsibility for any failures?"

My English ancestors came to America in the 1600s, so more than likely I had ancestors in the Crusades. The book "Crimes of Christianity" said of the Crusades, ". . . every atrocity the imagination can

conceive disgraced the warriors of the Cross." Do I share responsibility for what happened over 800 years ago?

Walter Bosley, the first Bosley in our family tree in America, settled in Maryland in the early 1600s. I found his will, which included a handwritten list of his belongings; but I was ill prepared for what was on that list. One male slave. Although I know about slavery and its evils, this was somehow different. A will with my surname on it listed a human being as property along with tables and chairs—a human being valued like furniture. I felt sick reading that a man could be considered so trivial. Do I share responsibility for what happened over 300 years ago?

Before World War I, Prussia was the most powerful German state. It led the unification of Germany, which set the stage for what would become Nazi Germany. Although some of my Prussian ancestors came to America before this occurred, others stayed behind and may have become a part of the evils of those wars. Do I share responsibility for what happened over 50 years ago?

How many people can find similar stories in their ancestry? Must we try to stay separate peoples with separate "dark chapters" in our histories or can we become one people, become one people out of many peoples? Can we become just Americans?

The Americas were the last lands of the world inhabited by people. Many "first Americans" are

descendants of the northern Asia Mongols who migrated across a land bridge in the Bering Strait.

Research continues on the origins of the peoples of the Americas, but it appears there were several more migrations or immigrations from diverse groups rather than a single migration. Peoples from at least three major immigrations settled the Americas. Besides the Mongols of northern Asia, other people came from Africa by way of Australia and from southern Asia.

It seems America has always been the world's melting pot. America has always been a country whose people have become one out of many.

Our national motto, adopted in 1782, is E pluribus unum, Latin for "out of many, one." Does it accurately describe the United States of today and the Americas of antiquity?

So, what do we do? We are the United States of America and we are one people, Americans. We can learn from the past or live in the past. We can meld into one people or maintain divides. We can gain strength from diversity or weakness from division. We have a choice. It's worth some thought.