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Americans can lead world by example

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“Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty.”

Most of us have heard this phrase numerous times; it's inscribed on a monument outside the National Archives in Washington, D.C. And although there is some question as to who it should be attributed to, there is little doubt the phrase makes a definitive statement about our cultural identity as Americans.

Like most everyone reading this, I grew up in a country where freedom was considered a sacred virtue. Millions have given their lives both at home and on foreign battlefields to ensure the sovereignty they enjoyed was passed on to future generations.

Americans are defined by many characteristics. Unlike countries with much longer histories, traditions and cultures, the denizens of the United States come from all parts of the world. As such, our respect for individual differences has always been one of our distinguishing qualities.

Also unlike our counterparts in many parts of the world, we recognize the right of those who hold religious beliefs that differ from our own to peacefully co-exist.

As a member of the Church of Christ, I may feel Methodists interpret some of the Scriptures incorrectly. At the same time, I do not feel all Methodists should be rounded up and executed for what I see as misconceptions. In a nutshell, this is what separates us from those who inhabit an emerging portion of the planet.

Freedom denotes many things. It is one of our most cherished rights. Yet the relative independence we have enjoyed for most of our history is increasingly taken for granted by a growing number of our citizens. And problems arise whenever anything is taken for granted.

We have a lot we can teach the world by example, provided we can get our house in order.

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