

not want the government trying to do for them what they could and should do for themselves. They asked only for the freedom to enjoy the just fruits of their daily labors.

Even as the Crown continued to infringe upon their "unalienable rights," the colonists followed legal channels of protest, expressing loyalty to the King. There was the firm intention of retaining the traditional political relationship with England. The preservation of freedom—not revolution—was on the colonists' minds.

Eventually, patience ran out, prompting Patrick Henry to declare: "We have done everything that could be done to avert the storm which is now coming on. We have petitioned, we have remonstrated, we have supplicated, we have prostrated ourselves before the throne, and have implored its interposition to arrest the tyrannical hands of the ministry and Parliament. Our petitions have been slighted; our remonstrances have produced additional violence and insult; our supplications have been disregarded; and we have been spurned with contempt from the foot of the throne."

Individual Dignity

The American War of Independence was fought to preserve a truly "revolutionary" truth—each of us is a unique individual, able to accept self-responsibility and thus to enjoy

personal dignity. For the most part, the governments, systems, revolutions, societies, and ideologies of the world have tried to suppress that truth. People have been enslaved, tortured, and killed by those who reject man's God-given right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

The American colonists had seen the approach of slavery. In the Declaration of Independence, they accused King George III of seeking the "establishment of an absolute tyranny over these States." Similar language was used by the revolutionary Jacobins during the French Revolution when they assailed the monarchy under Louis XVI. The French radicals shouted lofty slogans about liberty, but their bloody revolution against the monarchy hardly parallels the spirit of the American Revolution—the true spirit of freedom.

"Liberty! Equality! Fraternity!" clamored the revolutionaries of France. Louis XVI lost his head on the guillotine. So did thousands of other Frenchmen.

The leaders of the French Revolution of 1789 had read the Declaration of Independence. They admired America's document of freedom. Unfortunately, they lauded it but rejected its principles. They failed to comprehend what Jefferson and Adams meant when they said "all men are created equal." Equal-

ity as it is outlined in the Declaration says that individuals are equal in their right to be free and independent—to be free and independent as long as they respect the rights of others to be free and independent, with everyone respecting property and other individual rights.

Each person should have the right to rise to the height of self-realization consistent with that person's individual talents, ambition, and willingness to accept personal accountability. In seeking this self-fulfillment, each person must respect the equal rights of other individuals.

When a government respects true equality—the equal right to enjoy personal freedom—the result will be that many differences will exist among the citizenry. This natural condition of *inequality* is consistent with freedom, justice, and human nature. Individuals are unique. Each person has varying talents, aspirations, and weaknesses. If individuals are free to arrange their own lives, they create a diverse society where men and women attain different social, intellectual, and economic status.

Equal Treatment Results in Many Differences

Individuals are equal in their right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness"—so long as they accept responsibility for their own lives and recognize their personal accounta-

bility for their failures, shortcomings, and misdeeds. Regrettably for mankind, modern-day politicians and "social architects" like the French revolutionaries reject this truth.

Robespierre, Danton, and other leaders of the French Revolution believed they could bring about the regeneration of humanity through the power of the State (government power and authority). Although they spoke much about freedom, they actually denied self-determination and the free will of the individual. They insisted that man was the product of his environment. Crime, poverty, greed—these were supposedly inflicted upon humanity by corrupt political, social, and economic conditions/institutions. By the use of government authority and power, the revolutionaries believed they could erect a near-perfect if not perfect society.

The visionaries of Revolutionary France had a distorted view of human nature—a distorted view still held by many people today in the media, in politics, in our universities, and even in our religious institutions. The theory-minded leaders of the French Revolution believed that the individual was inherently virtuous. If a person committed murder, he should not be harshly condemned for a criminal act. Rather, he should be regarded as the victim of adverse social or economic condi-