



THE AMERICAN TRINITY: THE THREE VALUES THAT MAKE AMERICA GREAT

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Race and ethnicity have defined every nation on earth. Except one: the United States of America. It is defined by values.

So, to understand America, you have to understand American values.

They are:

1. “*E Pluribus Unum*”
2. “Liberty”
3. “In God We Trust.”

I call this “The American Trinity.” I made up the name, but I didn’t make up the values. They are on every American coin.

The first, *E Pluribus Unum*, is Latin, meaning, “Out of many, one.” When first adopted as an American motto shortly after the American founding in 1776, it referred to the thirteen American colonies becoming one nation. Over time, however, most Americans understood the motto to mean one people from many backgrounds. To quote The *E Pluribus Unum* Project, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, “Over the years, *E Pluribus Unum* has also served as a reminder of America’s bold attempt to make one unified nation of people from many different backgrounds and beliefs.”

In other words, America doesn’t care about your national or ethnic origins.

This explains why people who immigrate to America assimilate faster and more fully than immigrants to any other country.

Most of those who have immigrated to Europe, from, for example, Turkey – as millions have – are not considered fully German by fellow Germans or fully Swedish by fellow Swedes or fully Spanish by fellow Spaniards. This is even true of the children and grandchildren of those immigrants.

And, just as important, few of those immigrants – or their children or grandchildren – will ever feel fully German, Swedish, or Spanish. But a Turk who immigrates to the United States will be regarded as fully American – as American as any other American – the moment he or she becomes a citizen. And they – and certainly their children – will feel fully American.

Of course, America has not always lived up to this “*e pluribus unum*” ideal. But the ideal was always there. And it was applied to virtually every immigrant to America.

The second component of the American Trinity is liberty.

Now, you might ask, “Didn’t the French Revolution also enshrine liberty as a central national value? Wasn’t its motto “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity”?”

The answer is yes. America is hardly the only country to enshrine liberty; it is the only country to enshrine “Liberty,” “*E Pluribus Unum*,” and “In God We Trust.”

What’s the difference?

The difference is this: The moment you affirm equality, as the French Revolution did, you will lose liberty.

It is a basic American value that all human beings are born equal, and all must be equal before the law. But *ending up* equal – that’s a French and European value. And if you want people to end up equal, you must deprive them of liberty. Which is exactly what happened right after the French Revolution and in every other society that made equality its national goal.

America gives people the liberty to end up wherever their abilities, work ethic, and luck take them – meaning unequal. Therefore, professional athletes will make more money than teachers or doctors. That may be unfortunate, but that is what liberty allows. If you want equality, you will tell people how much they can earn – and that means the end of liberty.

And third, In God We Trust.

Unlike almost every other country, America never had a state religion. But it was founded on the principle that God – specifically, the God of the Bible – is the source of moral values. As the Declaration of Independence put it, all people “are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” In other words, rights come from God, not from men. If rights are given by men, men can take them away.

The American Trinity is the reason America became the world’s freest and most prosperous country. But many Americans want to, in the words of former President Barack Obama, “fundamentally transform” it. They wish to replace American values with European values – equality of result and an ever-expanding state, which greatly reduce individual freedom; the celebration of ethnic and racial identity, which is the opposite of *E Pluribus Unum*; and the removal of God as the source of morality and rights.

Which set of values Americans adopt will determine whether America remains free, prosperous, and the force for good in the world that it has been. With the exception of the Civil War, this is the greatest internal battle in American history.

I’m Dennis Prager.