

Anchored Between the Tides

Some Republicans are on notice, as they are crossing into the realm of abuse. Women's rights are being attacked, women are being demonized, and Christianity is increasingly being used as a weapon of political power and control. This is why I have always struggled with this political group, because its energy can become very suppressive of women's independence, autonomy, and sense of self, primarily because of ideological views and religious biases.

I agree with many principles associated with the Republican Party, including the preservation of heritage, freedom of religion, family values, national security, and strong communities. However, these values must never be imposed through abuse, coercion, or force. A principle loses its moral purpose when it is used to control another person's body, conscience, or future.

I am a woman who believes in a woman's right to choose. I also understand the importance of nation building, family life, nurturing children, and supporting the natural process of birth. These are normal and meaningful human experiences, but we must also recognize that women continue to endure war, abuse, trafficking, coercion, and slavery.

This is why a woman's right to choose remains a dire necessity. A woman's rights are not merely political beliefs, but represent her freedom from reproductive slavery and forced control. No ideology, particularly one based on ancient political conditions or the customs of distant cultures, should automatically dictate the lives of women today.

The same standard must apply to every religion, including Christianity, Islam, and all other faiths. Religion should never be used to excuse slavery, forced marriage, reproductive control, political violence, suicide bombings, or atrocities committed in the name of God. When faith becomes an instrument of domination, it abandons spiritual truth and enters the realm of power, fear, and abuse.

It is never easy to remain a free thinking person within a political culture that tells us extremism is the only choice. The experience can feel like being caught in a rip tide, struggling to reach the shore while two polarizing forces continually pull us farther out to sea. It is much easier to surrender to the current, go with the flow, and pretend that we do not possess independent minds.

Yet every so often, a fierce and courageous swimmer enters the water. I appreciated President Trump honoring the lifeguard who recently saved a young boy because it offered an opportunity to reflect on true bravery and heroism. The lifeguard swam through competing waves, reached someone in danger, and brought him safely back to shore.

This rescue represents what it means to be a moderate, to stand for the values we believe in, love, peace, forgiveness, family, and community. The waves may not be in our favor, and we may refuse to be swept up completely in either political direction, but we remain there for others. We can hold strong opinions, disagree with both parties, and still recognize that many

people are protecting themselves, acting from fear, or sincerely believing they are doing what is right.

Many people cannot yet see the larger picture. As moderates, we can remain available to people on both sides while staying anchored and stationed outside the strongest currents of political polarity. We do not have to surrender our reason, compassion, or independence to belong.

We are moderate. We are spiritual and interfaith. We are truth seekers and a church of logic, not assumption. We are educators who confront abuse, slavery, and war during increasingly difficult times. Our primary goal is human safety, and our mission is peace. We are proudly moderate conservative Americans, and we call ourselves the Union of Saints.

