

My God!

by Vic Berecz

I know, they say never discuss politics, religion, or money with your friends ... but to me these are among the few topics worth discussing. The weather, how the Yanks or Rays are doing, and who's sleeping with who are, to my mind, very poor substitutes.

Let's start at the beginning. I confess to a lack of understanding of the concept that we call God. But, that's not surprising, since I'm only human and the God-concept reaches far beyond all human understanding. You've probably already gotten the idea that I don't agree with the long-standing attempts to humanize God by gender assignment and images of a stern bearded old guy sitting on a golden throne. These were, I believe, designed to teach ignorant peasants to equate their feudal overlords with god-like powers. There are lots of reasons we still call that era the *Dark Ages*. That's one of them. So, I won't take the easy route and refer to God as *He* or *Father*. Instead, I'll have to choose all my words very carefully.

A few weeks ago, at our Sunday church service, a phrase from the liturgy jumped out at me. Even though I'd used those words a multitude of times before, this time they hit me with like a brick. In retrospect, I believe I suddenly gained a new insight for my developing personal concept of God. I'd like to share these words, and perhaps they will resound with you also. They were:

... to the God of life and love and freedom: all praise and glory forevermore!

Think about it. As sentient beings we all prize life, and love, and freedom. And whatever your religious beliefs, is there any better or more rational way to view our lives, our loves, and our freedoms than as gifts of our God ... whatever that concept means to you? Yes ... life, love, and freedom ... these are the gifts of God and maybe the essence of God.

Christmas is almost upon us, the time of the year when we Christians commemorate with joy the birth into this world, and the life, and the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth. So, I'd like to take this opportunity to wish each of my readers a joyous Christmas season ... or holiday season, if you're so-inclined ... and a New Year in which your hopes and dreams for life, love, and freedom are truly fulfilled.

Those thoughts make me want to sing out:

Our God, our Help in ages past, our Hope for years to come ...

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