

August 15, 2005

SEX RELIGION POLITICS

Recently I was at a small family dinner where everyone knew each other. One husband edged towards a political topic. His wife jumped in immediately, "we agreed we wouldn't talk about politics". Back we went to safe topics.

Sex, religion, politics: these are important topics, among others, that are often 'no talk', but should not be. They cover only one page in this history, but they permeate every family. One way or another they occupy the lives of every one of us.

SEX: The two Busch's and two Berning's who are the parents of this book, had 22 children. The 19 members of their families who survived childhood became parents of 88 children. In the 100 years since two of their ancestors moved to the very strange new world of North Dakota in 1905, over 500 living descendants of the ND Busch's and Berning's live all over the United States. Recently, our 9th grand child was born, and in my own Busch-Berning line there are four children, three in-laws and six grandkids, so I'm a participant in these numbers. It is not shocking to observe that sex was not invented in the 1960s, and will not go out of existence any time soon. Still I managed to grow to adulthood kept completely naïve about sex, and succeeded in almost totally avoiding talk about it with my own children. Sex lives. Why be silent?

RELIGION: We all spring from what seems to have been Catholic Catholic families (the double words intentional). Among those 500 living descendants today are likely all shades of belief, denomination, unbelief, reverence, disgust about religion. Like Sex, Religion is a reality, worthy of discussion and understanding. I choose to be a very active Catholic, but by no means am I an ideologic one. Some Catholics may prefer to label me as not even a Catholic, and in their interpretation of Catholic belief, they may be correct. So be it. Our ancestors seem to have inhabited what was basically a black and white world when it came to faith. Their world was as imperfect as ours, but we never learned that. One Right Way still seems in fashion, but there are too many variations of what 'black and white' means today for One Way of Belief to even be a possibility. But some think so. We need to be able to talk about and understand other ways of believing.

POLITICS: We have degenerated into a country where too many have, it seems, disengaged from responsibility for the political process which is, in my opinion, very dangerous. Politics is not "them", it is every one of us, and we are personally responsible for our future, which politics is largely responsible for creating. My ideology is not important, or yours, but we should be open to discuss and argue and truly listen. The best description I ever heard about the political spectrum was a few months ago when a speaker described our political organism as like an Eagle, which needs both a Left Wing, and a Right Wing to fly. There needs to be balance. Our country has, in my opinion, degenerated into a winner-loser mentality, in which we all are losers. We can't fly with a single 'wing' in charge, much less, just a tip of that wing, as some may feel is desirable.