

The wonderful world of wackadoodles

A prayer for wisdom

Sept. 6, 2015

One day I was watching coverage of a presidential debate, when all of the sudden (and I know this is going to sound strange) it started to make *sense*! Everything they said just clicked! The back and forth, the heated debates that broke out between rehearsed speeches! Their ideas for saving our country from ruin! I was frightened at first—the way this all suddenly seemed reasonable.

That's when I realized that my brain had fallen onto the floor. I don't know how long it had been there. It probably happened when I plopped down on the couch an hour or so before. I picked it up, brushed off the dust bunnies and put it back in my head. (Some people run it under cold water first, but I'd vacuumed just a few days before, so I figured it was okay.)

I lay back down on the couch. One of the candidates was saying how much he loved immigrants, and that his desire to "rid the country of each and every one" had nothing to do with his deep, deep affection for them. When the moderator asked what his answer had to do with her question regarding campaign finance reform, he replied that he had a plan to defeat ISIS.

"That's something I'd like to hear," another candidate challenged.

"All I'll divulge," the first candidate said, feigning reluctance, his eyes narrowed in a Clint Eastwood glare, "is that it includes an old family recipe for barbecue sauce."

"That's not fair!" another candidate shouted. "My plan includes barbecue sauce, too!"

A fourth candidate chimed in. "Uh, my plan for defeating ISIS also includes barbecue sauce," he said with a nervous smile. The other candidates looked at him doubtfully. The candidate squirmed a bit and loosened his tie.

I considered for a moment taking my brain back out and setting it on the coffee table. It's so much easier not to think. It seems to be working for a lot of people, after all. But instead I simply turned the channel.

Ahhhhh. While SpongeBob doesn't exactly challenge us by offering ideas to save the United States (that may or may not prove detrimental to those who actually live here), he, at the same time, doesn't challenge us by offering ideas to save the United States (that may or may not prove detrimental to those who actually live here), which I find quite refreshing.

The political debates are one of those moments when a person can begin to understand how it is that our efforts to feed the world's hungry is nothing when compared to our efforts to come up with the newest way to tighten our tummies.

Were we created this way, or did we become weird over time? And if it didn't start at creation, when did it start? Was it with the creation of polyester pantsuits? How about spray-on hair?

"The human race is so strange. I mean, it's really mind-boggling."

-- Exodus 13:22

God loves us with all of His being (which is a lot of being!)—so much so that He sent His only Son to die for us. The fact that humanity tends to be a bit nutty only makes this incredible gift of His Son all the more meaningful.

I hope you feel comfort in this, as I do. Because, you see, I too am strange and unusual. To know that this was part of His plan makes me feel like ... I don't know ... well, like I belong! Like we're all in this together! Forget judging each other! Sure, I'm a weirdo—you got that right—but so are you! *Awesome, right?!* Welcome to the Island of Misfit Toys! The Wonderful World of Wackadoodles! We're all one beautifully off-center family of a truly loving God.

Now, before some of you get out your torches and pitchforks, let me tell you why this is so meaningful. I humbly think that only in accepting our wacky ways—our imperfections, our eccentricities—can we accept and even celebrate those in others. And only in doing so can we begin to shape our fundamental values.

See, at that point, we're no longer distracted by an over-abundance of self. John said to make ourselves smaller, so we can make the Christ within us larger. John knew what he was talking about. By the time he died he was only four inches tall, but his faith was the size of Mt. Ararat.

When we accept our imperfections, we are understanding that although we're looking at the world with 20/20 vision, it's a sure thing that we've got a splinter or two in our eye, keeping us from seeing through the eyes of Christ. It's the joyful realization that we are disabled; we *all* need Christ in order to see with clarity!

All this stuff about emptying "self" and removing splinters is just another way of inviting God in; it's a prayer for faith, for love, for *wisdom*. Wisdom allows us to see more clearly the difference between what is truth, and that stuff you really hate to get on your shoe.

Most importantly, wisdom tells us when it's time to take ourselves a little less seriously, and when it's time to take the lives of others much more so. And today especially, that's the kind of wisdom we desperately need.