

Dr. Robert George, Civil Discourse and Rights of Conscience

Transcription By Grace Hemmeke

Robert George:

their necessity for truth seeking. We want to think that freedom of speech or other basic

pure logical propositions. They are to be affirmed as true because they protect a central goods. There is no way that the truth can be honestly and fruitfully sought without freedom of thought and freedom of expression and freedom of discussion. That is essential that we honor and respect freedom of thought, freedom of speech, freedom of discussion, freedom of inquiry.

presuppose relativism, moral or otherwise. In fact, it is incompatible with it. It is not because there

because the truth is so important that we must honor those things. The same considerations apply when we consider

That is,

republican government. That same unsettling process by which we challenge, for the sake of truth, also needs to be in place and its conditions need to be in place if we are to conduct good government. We cannot make good decisions if we are not free to poke and prod and question and challenge in radical ways. If we do not as a republic make good decisions, then we will not succeed as a republic. It goes without saying that today, these conditions of truth seeking and of republican government are precluded. We see it in the universities and the cancel culture. We see it in the streets. We see it in the unwillingness of people who have power, political economic, cultural, to stay their hands, to permit dissent, to permit challenges. If that continues to be the case, then the loss of civic friendship will continue. This is another thing that cannot be lost if we are to sustain republican government. Government by the people requires that the people treat each other as fellow citizens and civic friends, not as enemies. Yet we look around ourselves today and we see people regarding each other and treating each other not as fellow citizens with whom we disagree, but as people who are to be destroyed because they are impossible to maintain civil friendship with. Good examples need to be set by people of standing and influence across the culture, not just the politicians,

