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Beginning with the earliest pioneers, Americans have always highly valued their freedoms, and fought hard to protect them. And yet, the author points out that there is a basic freedom which Americans are in danger of losing. What is this endangered freedom? For what reasons could freedom-loving Americans possibly let this freedom slip away? And what steps can they take to protect it their fifth freedom? The Fifth Freedom by Seymour St. John More than three centuries ago a handful of pioneers crossed the ocean to Jamestown and Plymouth in search of freedoms they were unable to find in their own countries, the freedoms of we still cherish today: freedom from want, freedom from fear, freedom of speech, freedom of religion. Today the descendants of the early settlers, and those who have joined them since, are fighting to protect these freedoms at home and throughout the world. And yet there is a fifth freedom - basic to those four - that we are in danger of losing: the freedom to be ones best. St. Exupery describes a ragged, sensitive-faced Arab child, haunting the streets of a North African town, as a lost Mozart: he would never be trained or developed. Was he free? "No one grasped you by the shoulder while there was still time; and nought will awaken in you the sleeping poet or musician or astronomer that possibly inhabited you from the beginning." The freedom to be ones best is the chance for the development of each

person to his highest power. How is it that we in America have begun to lose this freedom , and how can we regain it for our nations youth ? I believe it has started slipping away from us because of three misunderstandings. First , the misunderstanding of the meaning of democracy. The principal of a great Philadelphia high school is driven to cry for help in combating the notion that it is undemocratic to run a special program of studies for outstanding boys and girls. Again , when a good independent school in Memphis recently closed , some thoughtful citizens urged that it be taken over by the public school system and used for boys and girls of high ability , what it have entrance requirements and give an advanced program of studies to superior students who were interested and able to take it. The proposal was rejected because it was undemocratic ! Thus , courses are geared to the middle of the class. The good student is unchallenged , bored. The loafer receives his passing grade. And the lack of an outstanding course for the outstanding student , the lack of a standard which a boy or girl must meet , passes for democracy. The second misunderstanding concerns what makes for happiness. The aims of our present-day culture are avowedly ease and material well-being : shorter hours ; a shorter week ; more return for less accomplishment ; more softsoap excuses and fewer honest , realistic demands. In our schools this is reflected by the vanishing hickory stick and the emerging psychiatrist. The hickory stick had its faults , and the psychiatrist has his strengths. But hickory stick had its faults , and the psychiatrist has his strengths. But the trend is clear. Tout

comprendre cest tout pardonner (To understand everything is to excuse everything) 。 Do we really believe that our softening standards bring happiness ? Is it our sound and considered judgment that the tougher subjects of the classics and mathematics should be thrown aside , as suggested by some educators , for doll-playing ? Small wonder that Charles Malik , Lebanese delegate at the U.N. , writes : "There is in the West" (in the United States) "a general weakening of moral fiber. (Our) leadership does not seem to be adequate to the unprecedented challenges of the age." The last misunderstanding is in the area of values. Here are some of the most influential tenets of teacher education over the past fifty years : there is no eternal truth ; there is no absolute moral law ; there is no God. Yet all of history has taught us that the denial of these ultimates , the placement of man or state at the core of the universe , results in a paralyzing mass selfishness ; and the first signs of it are already frighteningly evident.

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