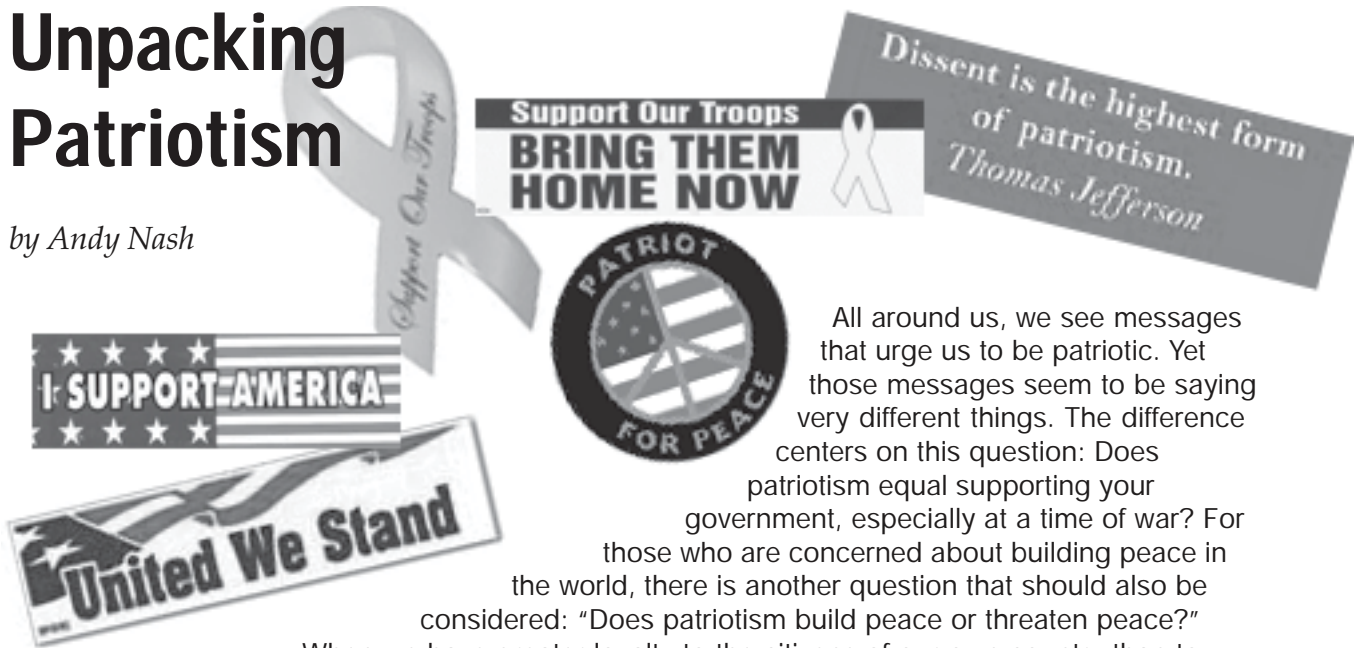


# Unpacking Patriotism

by Andy Nash



All around us, we see messages that urge us to be patriotic. Yet those messages seem to be saying very different things. The difference

centers on this question: Does patriotism equal supporting your government, especially at a time of war? For those who are concerned about building peace in the world, there is another question that should also be considered: "Does patriotism build peace or threaten peace?"

When we have greater loyalty to the citizens of our own country than to other people in the world, does that set up an us/them dynamic that keeps us from seeing our common humanity – that we all love our children, all want to live in safety and security, all want to have freedom and dignity?

## Some Questions to Consider

### THE DEFINITION OF PATRIOTISM

1. Is there a difference between patriotism and caring about your country? If so, what is the difference?
2. Can you be patriotic and disagree with your government? Why or why not?
3. Patriotism becomes a very loaded issue during wartime, when being anti-war is often labeled "unpatriotic." Why do you think this happens?
4. Why do you think that there's very little mention of patriotism during peacetime?
5. What does patriotism mean to you?

### THE IMPACT OF PATRIOTISM

1. How does patriotism distance us from people of other countries? How does it affect our ability to see what we have in common with other people?
2. How does your sense of connection to people from your country compare to your connection to other groups (for example, people in your family, people from your region of the country, people of your same ethnicity, people of your same religion, etc.)?
3. Do you think that our declared loyalty to our own country promotes peace in the world? Why or why not?
4. What would be different if we felt a patriotic loyalty toward the whole world – that we were citizens of the world?

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