

# God And Country

*“Pray for our leaders and those in authority over us so “that we may lead a quiet and tranquil life in all devotion and dignity.”~ 1 Tim 2:2*

The Fourth of July has just passed. Do we know what that was?

In other countries, the Fourth of July is just another day. In fact, some countries may not even have a July. The days are measured differently, depending on where we live.

For us in the United States of America, July the Fourth is a big day. Like Sundays, and other very important days, we must not take it for granted. We must always give thanks for those who walked before us. We must constantly seek to protect the values which were fought for and won. And we must continually honor the God who makes life then and now possible.

It is the day in 1776 when the First Continental Congress finished the Declaration of Independence. They relied on God’s plans for the world, and God language is all through the document.

Patrick Henry, the great Virginia statesman, best known for his shout for American liberty in the early days of the formation this nation, “Give me liberty, or give me death!” That passion, that drive, this is what we need if we are going to leave this country closer to God or one another as the years go by.

But greater still is his comment on how and on what foundation this country began. “It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often,” he writes, “that this great nation was founded, not by religionists, but by Christians, not on religions, but on the gospel of Jesus Christ!

For many years, we have held true to that course. Many still do today. This idea of one nation under God is a worthy aim, and a goal to live for each day.

Teddy Roosevelt became president in 1901. One hundred and twenty five years after the Declaration of Independence. Like a prophet of old, he looked at his time, and looked forward, and made a powerful statement. "I believe," he said, "that the next half century will determine if we will advance the cause of Christian civilization or revert to the horrors of brutal paganism."

Some fifty years later I was born, and grew up in a time when most everyone went to church, and lived their faith. It was a time of faith and growth for our nation, a time where limits were tested, but faith always remained supreme.

Now, people are not as considerate of others as they once were. The golden rule is not followed as a command, but as an option. Loving your neighbor and honoring them at all costs seems foreign to man.

We need a return to trusting in God's plans for our nation by all people. It is too often proven that our own plans, even if undertaken with much forethought and planning, can sometimes cause harm and pain to people and country.

As President John F. Kennedy came to believe, "The rights of man come not from the generosity of the state but from the hand of God." If we look higher, toward heaven, we will discover much about how to live on earth.

Trusting in God brings people together, for God has the same plan for all of us. He wants us to love others, to build a wonderful world which shows love and grace in our daily walk.

Perhaps our noisy national politicians can find common ground under God's guidance. We must pray for this. Certainly God will work his will despite the plans of men or women, but it is so much easier when we trust his leadership, and look higher than ourselves.

Perhaps at this juncture of history, as we move further into the third century of our young nation's journey, we can return to the values and faith with which we began. And when things don't go our way, we won't be so critical or angry of God's created people.

The key, I think, is trust in God's plans, whether the category be personal, family, country, or world. People, even nations, are temporary. God is eternal.

When we spend a dollar, even in today's almost cashless society, take a moment to look at the phrase, "In God we trust," written on the back of the bill, just under the words, "The United States of America."

Then realize that we are all in this together. Let us never forget that the values which brought us to this point are good ones. "If we ever forget," wrote President Ronald Reagan, "that we are One Nation Under God, then we will be a nation gone under."

We must give thanks in this Independence Day time both for God and for the country in which we live. And be in prayer that we never try to put country or self above the Almighty.