

## One Nation Under God

As we approach the 2016 Fourth of July weekend, we must never forget the faith which gave our ancestors the courage and vision to take the enormous step of beginning the United States of America. The Signers of the Declaration of Independence, who adopted it on July 4, 1776, at the second Continental Congress in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania could not conceive of doing this without God.

“We hold these truths to be self-evident,” Thomas Jefferson wrote, “that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

When we are considering big things, we always think of God, whether we admit it or not. God and country are inseparable, and when we try to separate them, we lapse into sin, confusion, and despair.

These men who met and debated and visioned together knew they were risking their lives, families, and fortunes. Many of them were killed, their homes and families ravaged by the enemy. But the cause was bigger than their individual lives. It was about God’s plan for you and me.

Patrick Henry, an impassioned orator, gave his famous, “give me liberty or give me death speech” at the meeting of the continental congress at St. John’s Church in Richmond, Virginia in order to avoid interference from Governor Dunmore and his Royal Marines.

To avoid interference from Lieutenant-Governor Dunmore and his Royal Marines, the Second Virginia Convention met March 20, 1775 inland at Richmond--in what is now called St. John's Church--instead of the Capitol in Williamsburg. Delegate Patrick Henry presented resolutions to raise a militia, and to put Virginia in a posture of defense.

“And for the support of this Declaration,” Henry shouted, “with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.”

He continued with his strongest argument, citing God as he giver of power and author of destiny. “Sir, we are not weak if we make a proper use of those means which the God of nature hath placed in our power. Three millions of people, armed in the holy cause of liberty, and in such a country as that which we possess, are invincible by any force which our enemy can send against us. Besides, sir, we shall not fight our battles alone. There is a just God who presides over the destinies of nations; and who will raise up friends to fight our battles for us. The battle, sir, is not to the strong alone; it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave.”

And finally, just before his last word, he appeals to God again.

“Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!”

Today many people, from politicians to college professors, from parents to children, forget that deep and committed faith is more important than anything they might think or do. As they pursue their own agendas, our nation falls into sin, and our job as Christians is to hold the line until they finally come back into spiritual reality.

The pledge of allegiance was written by a Baptist minister who was a socialist in 1892. He originally hoped it could be used by any country. But the words "Under God" were not added until 1942, when we were under fear of attack from the communist and socialist country of Cuba. Another example of people trying to leave God out, when God is at the center of everything that matters.

"I pledge allegiance," we must recite and think as often as possible, "to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." This will keep us together, and give us great vision and power for a certain future. Indeed, God is the only thing that is permanent.

Ronald Reagan, with a star-studded Hollywood background, had faith as a bedrock belief, and he was not afraid to let anyone know it. "If we ever forget that we are One Nation Under God," he wrote, "then we will be a nation gone under."

We are in danger of being a nation gone under in today's world. If people, including Christians who attend church on a regular basis, do not take their faith seriously, as their bedrock foundation from which every thought and action goes forth, it will slip away, not because politicians legislate it, but because we have abdicated it.

Let this Fourth of July be a call to return to passionate and life and death faith. Jesus died so that we could believe, and rose again to show us that anything is possible with God. May God raise up Patrick Henrys, Thomas Jeffersons, and Betsy Rosses who know and rely on God above all.