

A First in Florida

Could a 450-year milestone establish new order in the “First Coast” state?



Florida has been a key state in recent national election seasons, yet it's also been the focal point of many prophetic words regarding the apostolic spirit resting upon it. The word *apostolic* relates to being “first in order or that which sets order,” and indeed, prophetic statements have defined Florida as a pioneering state that sets the standard for the nation and for revival.

Because Jacksonville, Fla., is my hometown, I take note whenever people offer such words concerning Florida. Lately, though, I've noticed the prophetic words spoken over my state are manifesting in a three-fold nature in 2012: in the natural, spiritual and historical.

In the natural, you don't have to be a prophet to know that during the year of the presidential election all eyes will be on Florida. But it's the spiritual and historical elements that have brought new revelation to why this is called the “First Coast” state.

In 1562, French Huguenot Jean Ribault landed at Fort Caroline and pioneered the first French settlement. Historical documents prove that on June 30, 1564, the Huguenots declared a day of thanksgiving and offered the first Protestant prayer in America at Fort Caroline: “We sang a psalm of Thanksgiving unto God, beseeching Him that it would please Him to continue His accustomed goodness toward us.”

Some would argue that they only placed a monument (without praying) at Fort Caroline in 1562 and then settled the territory in 1564. But think about it: After escaping religious persecution and overcoming the challenges of a rough

voyage in 1562, I can only imagine that when Ribault and his crew landed at Fort Caroline, they couldn't help but at least say, "Thank You, Jesus!" (I'm just saying ...)

In his historical account in *Laudonniere & Fort Caroline: History and Documents*, Charles Bennett states: "Ribault sited the east coast of Florida and on May 1 entered the mouth of a majestic river which he named the River of May (now the St. John's). There he landed and prayers were sent heavenward in thanksgiving for safe voyage."

A historical map titled "Fort St. Augustine" on the ceiling of the Cox Corridor in the House wing of the Capitol Building in Washington, D.C., displays the dates of three founding cities: St. Augustine (1565); Jamestown (1607); Plymouth (1620). These dates commemorate three important dates for the colonization of our great country, but let us not forget the First Coast. If my numbers are right, 1562 comes before any of those dates.

Bennett recites Ribault's return to Ft. Caroline in 1564: "Three small ships carrying 300 Frenchmen led by Rene de Laudonniere anchored in a river known as the St. John's on June 30, 1564, [and began] construction of a triangular shaped fort ... with the help of a local tribe of Timucuan Indians. ... [Fort Caroline was] home for this hardy group of Huguenots ... [and] their strong religious motivation inspired them."

As a graduate of Jean Ribault Sr. High School in Jacksonville, I'm honored that my hometown is sponsoring the 450-year Jean Ribault Celebration on May 1.

My prayer is that this monumental celebration will stir the hearts of people of faith to remember the martyrs who lost their lives in this plight for religious liberty. As the blood of the martyrs of our history cries out from the ground, victory is in the air.

I thank God for the recent Supreme Court decision to stay out of the affairs of the church. This is what the language (not

law) of “separation of church and state” is all about—keeping the state out of the church so there will be no government-controlled religions; not keeping the church out of the state!

It isn't by chance that this case was settled at the beginning of 2012. The word *apostolic* refers also to God's governmental order. Twelve is the number for government. The spirit realm is colliding with the natural realm, and no matter how things appear to our physical eyes, order is being set!

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