

A Fourth of July Wake Up Call for Freedom-Loving Christians

"We have forgotten God, and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own" (Abraham Lincoln).

Over the last few decades, Americans have seen the destruction of the institution of marriage between a man and a woman, the removal of God's Word in several areas, and the aborting of millions of babies. Ironically, many of the men and women who died for our freedoms did not die for what we are becoming today. Many gave their lives in order that we would be "one nation under God," not above God.

A Fifth Division graveyard sign in Iwo Jima, Japan, states it well: "When you go home, tell them for us and say, 'For your tomorrows we gave our today.'" What a travesty when we fail to honor those who gave their lives for the freedoms we now enjoy. This Fourth of July, let's remember those who gave their lives and those who continue to defend our freedoms.

In the words of Mr. O'Brien who served in World War II: "It is the soldier, not the reporter, who has given us the freedom of the press. It is the soldier, not the poet, who has given us the freedom of speech. It is the soldier, not the campus organizer, who gives us the freedom to demonstrate." O'Brien continues: "It is the soldier who salutes the flag, who serves beneath the flag, and whose coffin is draped by the flag, who allows the protester to burn the flag."

Let's be very clear on this: "A people that values its privileges above its principles soon loses both" (Dwight D. Eisenhower). Historically, we know that God judged those nations who continually tolerated sin; wrong choices had

devastating consequences. Arnold Toynbee, who wrote *A Study of History*, said: "Of the 22 civilizations that have appeared in history, 19 of them collapsed when they reached the moral state America is in today." Brace yourself ... this is a quote from the 1960s.

Most realize that a republican democracy, like ours in America, cannot last forever. Eventually, there is a collapse due to moral decay and financial irresponsibility—liberty often leads to abundance; abundance to complacency; complacency to apathy; apathy to a loss of freedom. Based on this, where are we today?

Unfortunately, countless people are confusing God's patience with His approval. "Indeed, I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just; that His justice cannot sleep forever" (Thomas Jefferson). God, not the government, has the final say!

America has been desensitized one generation at a time, one court decision at a time, one compromise at a time, and we are drowning in a cesspool of relativism. "The wicked walk on every side, when the worthless of mankind are exalted" (Ps. 12:8).

There are times to encourage, motivate and uplift, but there are also times to confront, challenge and contend for what is right—that time is now! We are experiencing the rapid deterioration of a nation right before our eyes. This is not the time for passivity, but for prayer ... to weep, fast and petition God. Woe be to the church who is in a hurry to burn through a sermon, scurry through worship and head to the nearest restaurant.

We've heard these questions before, and we will hear them again: If not now, when? If not here, where? If not us, who? God said that He looked for a man from among the leaders who would build a wall and stand in the gap before Him on behalf

of the land that He might not destroy it, but He found no one (Ezek. 22:30). This was true in Ezekiel's day, and it's true today. God is still looking for men and women to do what is right.

Today, the courts have taken it upon themselves to assume the role of a law-making body, rather than a protector of the Constitution; they have become political rather than constitutional. The wall of separation of church and state that was designed to protect America's freedoms has now imprisoned her. (Listen to One Nation "Above" God here.)

For those who believe we should remain passive and silent, I challenge you to read the writings of the Old Testament prophets. They lamented, shed tears and pleaded with the people and the leaders to turn from their sins and to turn back to God—they spoke the truth in love. Even Jesus wept for Jerusalem when He saw that her destruction was near.

One of my great concerns is for the pulpits of America. Many are exchanging truth for tolerance, boldness for balance and conviction for cowardliness. We don't want to offend; we might lose our audience. But we are not to seek the applause of men but the applause of God.

Pastors and Christian leaders alike must take responsibility for the spiritual health of our people. The pulpit inevitably sets the tone of the religious climate of the nation. A culture void of God simply reflects the lack of conviction in the pulpit as well as the pew.

I conclude with words from John Winthrop (1588-1649)—one of the leading figures in the founding of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, "We shall be a city upon a hill, the eyes of all people are upon us; so that if we shall deal falsely with our God in this work we have undertaken, and so cause Him to withdraw His present help from us, we shall be made a story and a byword through the world."

But hope is found in the famous Scripture that many love to quote but few want to obey. 2 Chronicles 7:14 calls out from the past with resounding clarity to America today: "If My people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and will heal their land." We love to quote it without obeying it.

Without question, repentance, prayer, and humility before God is our only hope. Find more at