

IRD President Calls for End to Resentment

Many Americans, including church officials, grouse with complaint about our nation's troubles, forgetting countless blessings meriting thanks, especially at this time of year.

Abraham Lincoln's famous 1863 Thanksgiving proclamation, even amid Civil War, celebrated the union's peace with other nations, the maintenance of law and order, continued economic growth with fertile farms and productive factories and abundant mines, amid population expansion, fueling "augmented strength and vigor," with a "large increase of freedom."

"No human counsel hath devised nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things," Lincoln said. "They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy."

How much more than Americans of 160 years ago do we have today to give thanks for unprecedented wealth, even amid economic slow-down, lengthening and healthier lives, and relative domestic tranquility? That's what Institute on Religion & Democracy president Mark Tooley wants to know.

Despite claims of increasing secularization, Americans are still attending churches and professing faith at rates virtually unchanged across 80 years and higher than in Lincoln's time, he notes.

"Amid our many blessings is a spirit of entitlement and resentment, embodied in the Occupy Wall Street movement, supported even by religious voices who confuse the gospel with coercive wealth redistribution," Tooley says.

"This season, we should rejoice and give thanks for all that God has given us, all of it unmerited. Rather than resenting

what others have, all of us should ask ourselves how we can better share what God has already graciously bestowed on us. As Lincoln summoned, let's use Thanksgiving for 'praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens.' Happy Thanksgiving!"