

2010 JULY4 A CHRISTIAN'S RESPONSIBILITY

Romans 13:1-7

John Adams said:

“The second of July 1776 will be the most memorable day
in the history of America;

I believe it will be celebrated by succeeding generations
as the great anniversary festival, with shows,
games, sports, bon fires and illuminations,
from one end of the country to the other,
from this time forward and forever more...”

Except for the date, John Adam was an amazing prophet.

Congress approved the final wording of the declaration (July 4),

We have celebrated it ever since.

Fourth of July to a kid is fireworks.

It was a big event on our farm.

We planned it and then we celebrated it.

I lost more of my hearing on the fourth of July,

Than I did any other month of the year.

There was a ringing in my ears for weeks.

I remember my brother and I taking firecrackers apart

On the South side of our granary.

We laboriously piled up that black powder.

We thought we would have a little fun.

If a little firecracker made that little bang

Think what kind of a bang that pile of powder would make.

When we lit that pile of powder,

There was no big bang but a great whoosh of fire and smoke.

At Supper that night Mom looked over and asked:

What happened to your eyebrows and eyelashes?

Fourth of July was also your parade time.

We would go to Menno for the local parade,

And the Free candy and pop.

I remember how we would stand at attention

With our fellow citizens

And watch with pride the passing of the Stars and Stripes.

Because all of us had a father, brother, uncle, relative

Who had served in the big war.

We were not alone because with

thousands of other loyal Americas

We too pledge again our allegiance to America as

“One nation under God.”

However, many of our people today will offer no salutes,

feel no sense of pride,

no pledge of allegiance to the flag.

Some will be indifferent.
 Some will actually work to destroy,
 the fabric of our national life;
 to worsen, not heal, our sickness;
 For them, patriotism is dead;
 Far from echoing the words of Stephen Decatur,
 "Our country, right or wrong," they will even refuse to say,
 "My country when it is right."

I. CHRISTIANS HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO SOCIETY BEYOND THE WALLS OF THE CHURCH.

The state itself, no less than God's church,
 is a divine institution,
 It was placed in authority by God's permission.
 and absolutely necessary for a civilized people.

Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. Romans 13:1

This cannot mean that we support the shameful deeds,
 Or that God approves of the evil deeds of godless rulers, but
 It is the unqualified duty of the Christian to submit to the government,
 except in situations where doing so
 would break the commandments of God.

Just because we have in the past elected presidents who
 Openly support social policies contrary to scriptures,
 Does not mean as some Christians suggest
 that the church abandon efforts to change society.
 Stay out of politics
 Some say: "Just preach the old-fashioned gospel,"
 "and pray for revival".

That would be fine if we could forget the
 Millions of people in Russia, Czechoslovakia, China, and Cuba,
 Who do not walk as free men across our broad prairies or city streets!
 But who lived in concentration camps,
 and fill unmarked graves.
 All the while the very people who dissent and protest the most violently,
 Have their rights protected by the very Government,
 Courts and police they rail out against.

The doors of our churches are open, the Bible can be read,
 and we are free to preach the glories of our God.
 because we are protected by Freedom of Religion,
 and that Church is separated from state and
 that was the intended reality of the early constitutionalist.

"The 1st amendment has created a wall of separation between church and state, but that wall is a one directional wall, it keeps the government from running the church, but it also makes sure that Christian principles will always stay in government."

-- President Thomas Jefferson in an address to Danbury Baptists.

Our coins say: "In God we trust."
 Our presidents take their oath of office on the Bible.
 We still pledge allegiance to a nation "under God."
 In a spirit of hope and pride we can sing:

But we have a responsibility as Christians to our nation.
 We must care not just about the spiritual wellbeing,
 But the material and social well being of every citizen.

Jonathan Edwards

“God has made us dependent on our non-Christian neighbors for help,
 he taught; to fail to acknowledge our interdependence
 "is more suitable for wolves and other beasts of prey, than for human beings."

If we are made in the image of God,
 Then we must always be out in our relationship to others
 and care for their bodies as well as their souls.

John Quincy Adams said:

The American Revolution brought together the
 Principles of civil government
 With the principles of Christianity.

Jonathan Edwards, the New England theologian
 Never tired of fighting for the rights
 of the Native Americans who came to his mission church.
 He argued that Indian girls should be able to go to school,
 He wrote repeated letters to the Massachusetts Assembly and
 urged the colony to honor its treaty obligations
 to the local tribe, (Housatonnuks,) and spent hours patiently listening to the broken English
 and sign language of Indian children
 so he could report accurately to mission officials in Boston and London.
 He told the officials that his Indian friends did not
 have enough blankets and food;
 that some boys had no breeches,
 and many wore ragged clothes;
 and that all the boys were forced to work six days per week.
 In sermons, he berated New England for having
 "Debauched [the Indians] with strong drink
 instead of seeking their spiritual welfare."

**AS CHRISTIANS WE HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO SOCIETY
 BEYOND THE WALLS OF THE CHURCH.**

As Christians we should

**II. JOIN FORCES WITH THE GOVERNMENT AND NON-CHRISTIANS TO
 WORK TOWARD COMMON MORAL GOALS.**

Jonathan Edwards had no trouble supporting his colony's
 stand of war against the French,
 because the latter threatened religious and political liberties

common to Christians and non-Christians alike.

3 For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. 4 For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. Romans 13:3-4

Besides, Edwards argued,

Christians have much in common with non-Christians:

the same basic sense of good and evil, similar appreciation of beauty

For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. Romans 1:20

What is it that we all clearly understand?

God's eternal power and divine nature.

His Divine nature of what is Right

His Divine nature of what is truth,

His Divine nature of what is pure and holy.

God has engraved his moral law on every human conscience;
the same fundamental religious knowledge
that there is a God, and that he is good;
and we all have the same basic human feelings
of pity for the unfortunate and love for family.

Yes that is why we can work together with a
Nonbelievers,

We can work together with Muslims, Jehovah witness, or Mormons

In our fight against pornography in our community.

In our fight against gambling, or abortion or drunkenness.

Which threatens the integrity of marriage and family.

Certainly Christians have a prior allegiance to God Almighty.

But this should only make us better Americans,

And better citizens, and patriots.

Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men. Titus 3:1-2

We need not gloss over our nation's defects or
sweep its failures under the rug.

We need not claim that our country is always right.

But when it is right - support it.

And when it is wrong – to love it and work to correct it.

the Apostle Paul spoke proudly of his Roman citizenship,
and so should every American Christian
speak proudly of his American citizenship.

Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world" ([John 18:36](#)).

Yes Jesus' kingdom was a Spiritual one,
 And yet he fed the poor, healed the sick,
 Raised the dead.
 In this way glorified God.

Christ honored the state,
 He paid taxes to Caesar ([Matthew 22:21](#)),
 He declared that the authority, Pontius Pilate, was given from above ([John 19:11](#)),
 He prophetically said the armies of Vespasian and Titus were God's agents sent to
 destroy the city of Jerusalem ([Matthew 22:7](#)),
 He submitted to arrest, even illegal and unjust arrest ([Matthew 26:47-56](#)),
 and meekly accepted the death penalty itself,
 which the state unjustly exacted,
 and which Christ had ample means of avoiding ([Matthew 26:53](#)), but did not.

There is a time to stand up with those in authority and be counted.
 There is another time to stand against those in Authority and be counted.

III CHRISTIANS SHOULD SUPPORT THEIR GOVERNMENTS BUT BE READY TO CORRECT THEM WHEN NEEDED

What God is saying is if our nation focus on what is right,
 Then God will bless us.

"Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord..." Ps 33:12

When our nation gets side tracked
 We are to step up and move back to what is right.

94% of the writing of the founding fathers contained quotations from the Holy Scriptures.
 The state constitutions of all 50 states mention God.
 That is why we must continue to fight for the spiritual history of this country,
 Because without God and the bible we will
 Slowly fade into history.
 Evil will win.

Abraham Lincoln read his bible,
 And that was why he fought so hard to free this country of its greatest sin.

Leith Anderson tells this story about Abraham Lincoln in his book

"A church for the 21st Century."

"Abraham Lincoln went to a slave auction one day and was appalled at the sights and sounds of buying and selling human beings. His heart was drawn to a young woman on the block whose story seemed to be told in her eyes. She looked with hatred and contempt on everyone around her. She had been used and abused all her life, and this was but one more cruel humiliation. The bidding began, and Lincoln offered a bid. As other amounts were bid, he countered with larger amounts until he won. When he paid the auctioneer the money and took title to the young woman, she stared at him with vicious contempt. She asked him what he was going to do next with her, and he said, "I'm going to set you free."

"Free?" she asked. "Free for what?"

"Just free." Lincoln answered. "completely free."

"Free to do whatever I want to do?"

"Yes," he said. "free to do whatever you want to do."

"Free to say whatever I want to say?"
 "Yes, free to say whatever you want say."
 "Free to go wherever I want to go?" she asked with skepticism.
 Lincoln answered, "you are free to go anywhere you want to go."
 "Then I'm going with you!" she said with a smile.

We don't know if this story is really true,
 But what it does show us is that
 The best way to correct and improve our country
 Is for each of us to step up even to sacrifice if need be
 To love and honor, respect and defend what is right.
 And act in accordance with God's truth and
 Moral righteousness. .

In 1893, Katherine Lee Bates,
 a New England school teacher
 with a party of friends decided to Climb Pikes Peak.
 So in a "prairie Wagon" they slowly
 made their way up the 14,110 foot mountain.
Katherine said it seem they were standing
 on the roof of the world.
 Great ridges and valleys stretched away
 to the north, and west, the plains to the east
 reached out toward the state of Kansas.

The group stay at the top was short because
 of the thin air. But long enough for Katherine
 to write a poem.
 Which ,**Samuel A. Ward set to music.**

Her poem reminds us that the true patriot
 Should love his country dearly
 And not ignore its wrongs
 But move to correct them.
 On bended knee seek God's guidance.
 Katherine Bates pleads
**"God Mend this country's every flaw."
 And shed your grace on thee.
 "Confirm thy soul in Self control.
 Thy Liberty in Law."**
 We must never forget that this
 Country was founded as Patrick Henry said:
 not by religionists, but by Christians,
 not on religions, but on the gospel of Jesus Christ!
 Patrick Henry.
 Listen to the song of Kathleen Bates
 And catch the image of patriotism,
 And let its music catch our hearts and inspire us as well.
**Lord bless us as good Citizens to be loyal to God,
 To our biblical principles and to our country.
 I pray in Jesus name.**