

7.04.21 ~ **The 'One Nation Under God' is the Church**

Most of us grew up in an America where reciting the Pledge of Allegiance in our classrooms was something we did at the beginning of every school day. But did you know [according to USHistory.org] that the Pledge of Allegiance was originally written in August 1892, by Francis Bellamy, a Socialist Unitarian minister. whose aspiration was for this pledge to be used by citizens in any country, of any ethnicity.

It originally read, as follows: "I pledge allegiance to my Flag and the Republic for which it stands, one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

In 1923, the words, "the Flag of the United States of America" were added, so as to read, as follows: "I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

In 1954, in response to the rising Communist threat of the times, President Dwight Eisenhower strongly encouraged Congress to add the words "under God," so as to read, as follows: "I pledge allegiance 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."

One Nation Under God, what does that mean? What does our history tell us?

The Pilgrims arrived in New England in 1620, and as they established villages and began providing formal education for their children, the main teaching tools used were the Alphabet and the Bible.

The New England Primer was published in the late 1600's, and it became the primary teaching tool in the Colonies for over 150 years.

The New England Primer was based mostly on God's Word, as can be seen in its presentation of the alphabet, where couplets were used to teach the letters, e.g., for the the letter A - *In Adam's fall, we sinned all*; to teach the letter C - *Christ crucify'd / For sinners dy'd*.

The New England Primer contained the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, the Apostles Creed, the Children's Prayer - "Now I lay me down to sleep," along with a catechism drill that include questions, like: "What is the chief end of man?" "What is the first commandment?" "What is faith in Jesus Christ?"

On **July 4, 1776**, the wording for the Declaration of Independence was agreed upon, but it was not until **August 2** that it was it signed by a group of fifty-six courageous men, who are sometimes referred to as our "founding fathers," men who, for the most part, were guided by a belief in God and the precepts in His Word.

1787 - Benjamin Franklin, 81 years old, addressed the men who were preparing to write the Constitution of the United States, as follows, "The longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth: that God governs in the affairs of man. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid? We have been assured, Sir, in the Sacred Writings that except the Lord build a house, they labor in vain that build it. I firmly believe this. I, therefore, beg leave to move that, henceforth, prayers imploring the assistance of Heaven and its blessing on our deliberation be held in this assembly every morning."

1789 - George Washington addressing Congress said, "No people can be bound to acknowledge and adore the invisible hand which conducts the affairs of men more than the people of the United States. Every step by which they have advanced to the character

of an independent nation seems to have been distinguished by some token of providential agency. We ought to be no less persuaded that the propitious smiles of heaven cannot be expected on a nation that disregards the eternal rules of order and right, which heaven itself has ordained."

1816 - John Jay, Supreme Court Chief Justice, said, "Providence has given our people the choice of their rulers, it is the duty, privilege, and interest of a Christian nation to select and prefer Christians for their rulers."

1892 - Noah Webster, author of *The American Dictionary of the English Language* wrote, "In my view, the Christian religion is the most important and one of the first things in which all children, under a free government, ought to be instructed. ...No truth is more evident to my mind than that the Christian religion must be the basis of any government intended to secure the rights and privileges of a free people."

April 30, 1863 - Abraham Lincoln proclaimed a day of fasting and prayer, as follows: "It is the duty of nations as well as of men to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God, to confess their sins and transgressions, in humble sorrow, yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon; and to recognize the sublime truth, announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord."

1903 - Edward Everett Hale, Chaplain to the Senate, was asked if he prayed for the Senators. He said, "No, I look at the Senators and [then] I pray for the country."

May 7, 1911 - Woodrow Wilson, Gov. of New Jersey, said, "America was born a Christian nation. America was born to exemplify that devotion to the elements of righteousness which are derived from the revelations of Holy Scriptures. Part of the destiny of Americans lies in their daily perusal of this great book of revelations."

1947 - Peter Marshall, twice Chaplain to US Senate, stated, "The choice before us is plain, Christ or chaos, conviction or compromise, discipline or disintegration. I am rather tired of hearing about our rights and privileges as American citizens. The time is come, it now is, when we ought to hear about the duties and responsibilities of our citizenship. America's future depends upon her accepting and demonstrating God's government."

1974 - Gerald Ford, *quoting a 1955 speech by Dwight D. Eisenhower* said, "Without God there could be no American form of government, nor an American way of life. Recognition of the Supreme Being is the first--the most basic--expression of Americanism. Thus, the founding fathers of America saw it, and thus with God's help, it will continue to be."

Although America clearly began as a nation looking to God, praying to God, trusting in God's providence, governed by leaders who mostly recognized and revered God's authority — America's government, along with most of its citizens, has become spiritually deaf, dumb, and blind, bringing consequences on us all, as corruption, chaos, and crime rise to threaten nearly every community and neighborhood in America.

Last year, during the pandemic, confused and deceived people, along with anarchists, were allowed to practice unbridled lawlessness: rioting, looting, burning, vandalizing businesses, attacking state and federal buildings, tearing down national monuments, assaulting and killing people for just for being in the wrong place at the wrong time; and they got away with this mayhem, actually being protected by many mayors and governors.

2Timothy 3:1-4, "in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God," **12-13**, "Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived."

Although America began as a Nation Under God, the truth is, a majority of Americans no longer believe in the God of the Bible, let alone do they revere or fear Him. The majority of America's people are spiritually deceived, confused, easily led astray and corrupted; and no doubt, future generations will inevitably be more hostile toward Christianity than even this present one is.

In **Matthew 24:6-9**, the Lord is telling His disciples what the world is going to be like before He returns, "You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs. Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name."

Jesus then told His followers (**Matthew 24:12**), "Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold." I believe America is reaching or has already reached that point, i.e., the majority of people don't know, fear, or even seem to care about, God.

God's Word is the sovereign authority in all of life: past, present, and future; for it was God who ordained Marriage, Family, Religion, Culture, Community, and Government; when the Bible is no longer respected or revered, America will cease to know and to experience God's providence. I believe we may already be there.

The number of adults attending houses of worship in America continues to decline; in 2020, only 47% of Americans said they belonged to a church, synagogue or mosque; down from 50% in 2018, and 70% in 1999.

Church membership, when Gallup first measured it in 1937, was 73%; and it remained above 70% for the next six decades, but has steadily declined since 2000.

There is an increasing number of Americans among all age groups who are declaring that they have no religious affiliation at all (NONES). From oldest to the youngest it becomes clear, people's love for God is will growing cold: 7% of Traditionalists [born before 1946], 15% of Baby Boomers [born 1946-1964], 21% of Generation X [born 1965-1980], 31% of Millennials [born 1981-2000], 33% of Generation Z [born 1997-2015].

The majority of America's leaders today do not practice or promote the Biblical principles that once guided our nation and made it great. And although it is sad, but true, the majority of Americans will celebrate this July 4th as being people who are independent of and indifferent toward the sovereign God of Creation.

God's Word has been marginalized by the government, banned from the workplace, removed from public education, and slandered by the media; and the godless immoral political majority of both the extreme left and the extreme right, continue to promote one of the deceptions of the devil, that America's foundational heritage doesn't include a predominance of men (like those I quoted earlier) who openly sought and trusted in the Sovereign authority and wisdom of God's Holy Word.

The Constitution of the United States was designed to perpetuate a Christian order, it was never the intention or expectation of our Founding Fathers that there would be an absence of God in America's government, schools, houses of worship, workplaces, or its society. America began as One Nation Under God, but it is no more!

But what is much more important than the present condition or the ultimate end of America, is this: That Christians from all nations, cultures, languages, and backgrounds, throughout all eternity past, present, and future, are One Nation, i.e., One People [the Church of God, the Bride of Christ, the Fellowship of Believers, the Family of God] and we alone are One Nation Under God, i.e., in submission to the Word of God, Jesus Christ, God's Son, Lord over all, Savior to those who believe.

Today, July 4, 2021, the majority of American's are celebrating their Independence as Citizens of this Nation; but if you belong to God in Christ, you ought to celebrate your dependence upon Him who made you (**1Peter 2:9-10**), "a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy," therefore **12**, "Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles [non-Christians, unbelievers], so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation." **16**, "Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God." **1Peter 3:15-16**, "sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame." **1Peter 5:8-11**, "Be of sober *spirit*, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in *your* faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen *and* establish you. To Him *be* dominion forever and ever. Amen."

There is only One Nation Under God, and that is the Church of God, and if you are a believer and follower of Jesus Christ, that includes you.

If you are not a believer and follower of Christ, I have to ask why aren't you? Look, we are all sinners and the penalty for sin is death, eternal separation from God and everything good; and the only cure, the only provision for salvation is in Christ the Lord. Everyone who calls on Him for the forgiveness of their sins will be saved now and forever, becoming part of the One Nation Under God.

Just as Paul gave the following benediction to the believers in Corinth, I offer it to all of you who believe in God, through Christ, made effectual by God's indwelling Spirit (**2Corinthians 13:14**), "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all."

Pastor Mike
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