

Why We Must Remain One Nation Under God

By Paul D. Norcross

It was sweltering hot during the summer of 1787 in Philadelphia. The Revolutionary War had closed with victory four years earlier – a victory on the narrowest margins, sustained by nothing short of crucial and miraculous divine interventions. Now came the task of writing a constitution for the new United States. Polarized with long, blistering hot days of wrangling, the weary convention delegates were beginning to give up in disgust. Alexander Hamilton had already returned to Boston, convinced nothing would break the deadlock and bring unity to the task of writing a proper document for the governance of the new nation.

States rights, big government vs. small government, slavery – these were among the hotly contested issues. Obvious to all was the disunity, and the growing certainty that reaching a consensus on all the issues that were dividing would be impossible. Independence from foreign dominance had been won on the battlefield. But fractious, partisan fighting was threatening that independence inside the political chamber.

A weary and tired 81 year old Benjamin Franklin stood up on his cane, and changed the course of our nation. He spoke in few words. But he triggered something that should be continually understood by every American. He reminded the delegates that during the conduct of the war for independence, this body in this very room had prayed daily for the success of the war. They had implored the hand of the Almighty God to help bring victory, despite all the odds against the humiliatingly ill equipped Continental forces.

Franklin declared, "I have lived, sir, a long time. And the longer I live, the more convinced I am of this truth – that God governs in the affairs of men. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid?"

Franklin's words were met with stunned silence. It had been a long time since the Continental Congress had remembered to pray as a body. One nation was proving to be impossible to craft without divine intervention. After pondering Franklin's words, the delegates determined to cease their deliberations and chose instead to pray and fast for three days. When they returned to the convention hall, the document which we now know as the Constitution of the United States of America, the document to which every military service man and woman swears to support and defend against all enemies foreign and domestic, flowed into its present form in a mere matter of days. Some of the thorniest provisions were shelved for a later

Bill of Rights, and some were agreed to be set aside for future address. But through the mercy and grace of God in response to the united prayer and fasting of the Continental Congress, the impossible logjam was broken.

Franklin's words are all the more relevant today. God does govern in the affairs of men. When He is formally rejected from their governance, whether through the courts by their misinterpretation of what separation of church and state really means, or simply by the neglect of the people of the nation He intervened to establish, the result is a chaotic and continuing downward spiral from its founding principles. But when that people return to the faith of their fathers, the process is reversed. Betting men like sure bets. The following verse from II Chronicles is such a bet.

2 Chronicles 7:14

If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

One Nation Under God is not merely a relic phrase from irrelevant era. It is a recognition of a deeply powerful and unseen benefactor that underlies the success of any nation. Without the formal and continuing acknowledgement of God officially and privately, the life span of every nation becomes short-lived.

What shall be your role in this?

With you In Christ's enormous love,

--Paul Norcross