

The Servant



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The purpose of this newsletter is to pass along information and ideas to help the Lord's servants as they minister to others. Feel free to use any of it in your ministry

God Bless America

While all people love their homeland and their heritage (and they should) the American patriot stands on a different level. This is often misunderstood by others as a kind of arrogance. It is not. American patriotism is both a birthright and an article of faith for all her children.

America was founded by men and women who, more than anything else in the world, wanted to be free to do good. They wanted to be free to worship God as they believed Him to be. Even many of our leaders and Historians do not appreciate how closely Christianity and Americanism are integrated. Again this is seen by many non-Christians as a arrogance and they attempt to convince us that America never was a Christian nation. There was an invisible spirit (an almost a kind of Shekinah glory) that shown down upon us making America America.

1) America is about a great ideal and noble dream. No other country speaks about the "dream" as we do. All men dream, but there was no such thing as a "Dutch dream" (DeRidder is Dutch) or a "French dream" or an "Icelandic dream" (Ingimar is Icelandic). These peoples live in houses and castles that are almost a thousand years old. They have long histories. America is still relatively new. Americans built log cabins and immediately began to dream of building something better. I know the Dutch first came to the new world to find wealth, but they and many others had no intentions of staying. They went home. The dreamers stayed. They became something the world had not known before. They became Americans. Many French, Dutch, and Italian dreamers have joined the throngs of other dreamers from all over the world to be part of the "American dream," and they too became Americans.

In Bible times, it was the dreamers that led the way and set the pace. The church of Christ is for those who can dream dreams and see visions. Abraham was a dreamer. He, like our own forefathers, set out looking for a better life. He was looking for a "city that had foundations, whose builder and maker was God." He set out with nothing but faith (not unlike our own ancestors who came to these shores with little more than a suitcase and a dream).

2) America is about Liberty. America was born in a struggle against tyranny and oppression. Its beginnings are not unlike the Children of Israel who were tired of the lash, tired of slavery, and were born in a Biblical Exodus as something new among nations, different than anything the world had known before. The human spirit longs to be free. It wants to spread its wings and fly. America became a magnet to those who dreamed of freedom and were brave enough to make the sacrifice to come.

3) America is about the individual. Other governments almost deify the state. In some societies man is just a worker bee who lives among the colony and exists only to gather honey for others (having little hope of tasting the sweet nectar himself). Socialism, Communism, Totalitarianism, Fascism (religious or political) are just a few of the systems men have escaped to come to America. Some suggest that making the individual most important leads to an evil capitalism and selfishness. America understands however, that when each is allowed to rise, all can rise.

Enough of the Bible has gotten into America that we know the value of a single soul. The individual is sacred because life is sacred. If a single person becomes buried under a collapsed building every possible resource will be dispatched, and every effort made to save him. No one asks what will be the cost, or what is the victim's ethnic background, or what is his political party? Each person is considered precious making us all precious. That is the message of Christianity.

(continued on back)

the Religious Wrong

Strange Fire

Isn't it very strange and odd
that men insist on playing God
and on their heads they place a crown
while on their face they wear a frown?

And stranger still, and cause for wonder
is why they always choose the thunder.
With all the things there are above,
they never seem to choose his love

Playing God is a dangerous game
as foolish children with matches learn.
He who calls down fire in God's name
may their own careless fingers burn.

There are some religions that speak of "fate" to explain poverty, sickness, and disease. In some places "caste" condemns some to a life of poverty and hopelessness, not so in this country of America where a street urchin may rise to the highest pinnacles of power without harming a hair on the head of a single rival.

4) America is about opportunity. Liberty holds her torch high beside the golden door. America still is the land of opportunity. Each may find God's will for their life, not Caesar's will. In some places opportunity is for a select few. In some places a person must bow before the right idols (political or social), or bow before some king (religious or political). In America one need bow before no one but God, and that too, only willingly. Opportunities are everywhere, from gold in the hills to knowledge in her books and schools for all who would work the mines of opportunity. America seems to have picked up God's promise that "with God nothing is impossible." (Lk. 1:37)

5) America is about Charity. Americans have always been willing to share their wealth. There are those who point to the fact that America consumes most of the world's resources. To that I say, the workman is worthy of his hire. America has always been a nation of workers, but no country has given so much of itself to the rest of the world as America. Wherever there is a tragedy, earthquake or disaster, America is there helping. When Europe fought evil we joined in. The Lady in the Harbor stands looking out, not in. That is one of the things that has made America great. The day we turn our backs on the world is the day America is no longer. Likewise, the Church must never turn "in" and become preoccupied with herself. She must look out across the seas and hold the torch for any who wish to find salvation. The church understands that God's love holds open the real golden door, and faith alone brings man to the real golden shore.

6) America is for mankind. America is mankind. The seven points on Liberty's diadem represent the seven continents. Men and women from all over the globe have made their way here. So it is with the Church of Jesus Christ. When one walks through the golden door, he is neither Jew nor Greek; he is Christian. We are one in the Spirit and one in the Blood. "For God so loved the world, he

gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (Jn. 3:16)

7) America is for the common man. It is true that men have come here and made their fortunes. There are many rich. But the rich of the world do not dream of coming here. They live very well in their own lands. They can buy their own armies and islands. America is not as attractive to them. But America is every poor man's dream. America is for the poor. While the poor of America cry out for equality at times, they are equal in opportunity. The poor of America are the envy of the poor of the world. No man need remain down in this land of opportunity where the law itself is that all men are created equal.

8) America is about Justice. Here every man has an equal standing before the law, as every man has an equal standing before God. We have the right to face our accuser.

9) America's Secret. But none of these things alone are what made or make America. They are simply streams that flow from a greater reservoir. Justice, freedom, belief in the sanctity of life, and a balance of power are impossible unless there is a greater force that holds them together like so many planets in a solar system. Without that moral center and illuminating light, all forms of government will fail. That sun of our moral solar system has been belief in a Good God as revealed in the Bible. It is not the flag, or the army, or the machinery of commerce that made America great. It was Biblical and eternal principles that lifted us and raised our ship of state as with a rising tide. Remove those principles and we will run aground. We believe in the separation of church and state. Many of the world's religions don't, and extremists don't either. However, the idea of separation of church and state was never intended to make God irrelevant or America irreverent. To remove our faith in God is to rob the solar system of civilization of its only sun. What we are left with is darkness. Take God out of the American Dream and she may continue to dream, but the dream may become her worst nightmare. Jesus told Peter to "put up thy sword." This does not mean that the innocent should not be defended. In other places in the Bible it is clear that they should. What Jesus meant and what we understand is that truth need

never resort to tyranny to impose or do God's will. There is a big difference between the symbol of the sword and the symbol of the cross. One tries to change the world from the outside in, the other changes men (one by one) from the inside out.

The inscription of the poem at the base of the Statue of Liberty is an invitation, "give me your tired, and your poor..." Many think that "foreigners" are ruining our country. Foreigners made America what she is, but it was God who gave us all the chance to do it. There is a greater invitation and opportunity to every person in the world, and they need not emigrate to begin the wonderful experience America has enjoyed. Jesus gave that invitation and it still stands. "Come unto me all ye who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." God Bless You. And yes, God Bless America. 🍷

Children of the Highest

Those who claim a spiritual kinship to Abraham during these troubled times might do well to ask if they are behaving like Children of the Highest or of the Lowest. Like stunned creatures clinging to a small sharded upcrop of land rising above flood waters, men and women of different faiths came together for a brief moment. Now, they begin to point fingers at each other and try to ascribe blame. Some even ascribe this heinous act to God. I cannot believe it. The hand that reached from the sky on 9-11-2001 was an evil one, not the eternal one. (Lk. 6:35). Saber rattling has no place in the church. God's house is a house of prayer. Should the sons of America need to go to war to fight evil, the children of God should support them, and pray for them. The Children of the highest pray for righteousness, not revenge. 🍷

Should sorrow bring us to our knees
There, in the dust we'll pray
and in the rubble we'll find the keys
to the door to a better day



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