

IN GOD WE TRUST—A MESSAGE FOR THE 4TH OF JULY SUNDAY
by Pastor George Spencer presented at CrossRoad Church
Jacksonville Florida on July 4, 2010

VIDEO: The Star Spangled Banner (1:34)

Email from CrossRoad Member Ernest Valverde:

George:

Today was the 4th of July celebration for the international community here in Kabul, Afghanistan. As I sat and watched the celebration, listening to the speeches of the U.S. Ambassador and the U.S. General, I was taken back to the words of John Adams:

The Second Day of July 1776, will be the most memorable Epocha, in the History of America. I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated, by succeeding Generations, as the great anniversary Festival. It ought to be commemorated, as the Day of Deliverance by solemn Acts of Devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with Pomp and Parade, with Shews, Games, Sports, Guns, Bells, Bonfires and Illuminations from one End of this Continent to the other from this Time forward forever more. You will think me transported with Enthusiasm but I am not. I am well aware of the Toil and Blood and Treasure, that it will cost Us to maintain this Declaration, and support and defend these States. Yet through all the Gloom I can see the Rays of ravishing Light and Glory. I can see that the End is more than worth all the Means. And that Posterity will triumph in that Days Transaction, even altho We should rue it, which I trust in God We shall not.

This day was a day of pomp and circumstance, with the buildings all sporting a good cleaning and draped with bunting. There were flowers on every table, flags lining the sidewalks and displays of the American assistance to the people of Afghanistan. The French sent a delegation, dressed in traditional uniforms; the British were here in full uniform, celebrating the independence of a country they once claimed as their own. The Afghans sent official delegations and even flowers for the podium from their President. The world came together here to celebrate our independence, citing the resolve of our founding fathers. And as John Adams envisioned; an illumination, not from one end of American continent, but across the world and to our corner here in central Asia.

There was a special significance to seeing the U.S. Marines to carry our flag into the courtyard and listen to a rendition of the Star Spangled Banner in a war zone.

Our visitors had a chance to mix with the Americans and enjoy traditional American food, including fried chicken and ice cream.

The ideals of our founding fathers were, I'm sure, carried beyond their wildest imaginations. Even the U.S. citizens included people of every background,

ethnicity and color....all celebrating the freedom that the rest of the world can only dream of and hope for.

America, America God shed his grace on thee.

Ernest

Prayer for our Servicemen and Women: Eternal Father, strong to save, as You did long ago, through the ages, and in our own time, bless and protect our servicemen and women here and around the world, and as You are for us now, be for them their Refuge and Strength, their Shield and their Salvation, their God and their Savior, by the power of Your Holy Spirit, and in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

MESSAGE:

What's so great about America? Well, someone compiled a list...

"Only in America.....

can a pizza get to your house faster than an ambulance.

Only in America.....do people order a double cheeseburger, large fries, and a Diet Coke.

Only in America.....do banks leave both doors unlocked, and then chain the pens to the counters.

Only in America.....do we leave cars worth thousands of dollars in the driveway and put our useless junk in the garage.

Only in America.....do we buy hot dogs in packages of ten, and hot dog buns in packages of eight.

Only in America.....do we use the word 'politics' to describe the process so well: 'Poli' which is Latin meaning 'many' and 'tics' meaning 'bloodsucking creatures'.

Only in America.....do drugstores make the sick walk all the way to the back of the store to get their prescriptions, and healthy people can buy cigarettes at the front.

And finally,

Only in America.....do we use answering machines to screen calls and then have call waiting so we won't miss a call from someone we didn't want to talk to in the first place. Only in America! (1)

There are many things that are unique about America. One of them is our national motto: "In God We Trust." Officially it became our motto in 1956, but it has a long history in our nation. Would you like to know where it came from? It came from our history, our National Anthem and before that, the Bible.

There are many verses in the Bible that talk about trusting in God.

2 Samuel 22:3 – The God of my rock; in Him will I trust.

2 Kings 18:22 We trust in the Lord our God...

1 Chronicles 5:20...for they cried out to God in the battle, and He answered their prayers because they trusted in Him.

One of the most famous lines in the Bible is from Job 13:15 – "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him."

But most of the 'trusting in God' lines come from the Psalms, which is where our founders, and those who followed them, got the quotes from the Geneva and King James Bibles.

Psalm 7:1 – O Lord, my God, in Thee do I put my trust...

Psalm 11:1 - In the Lord put I my trust...

Psalm 16:1 - Preserve me, O God, for in Thee do I put my trust.

Psalm 18:2 - The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; my God, my Strength, in whom I will trust.

I could quote many more.

Someone asked me one time: George, why do you celebrate the 4th of July as if it's a religious holiday? Well, the reason I do is because, our founders believed that, after Christmas, Americans should celebrate the 4th of July as the biggest holy day of the year.

The word patriotism comes from the Latin patris meaning fatherland. Patriotism means a love OF and devotion TO your country, having gratitude for the sacrifices of our forefathers and mothers, and thanking God for His inheritance to us that we receive just by being here.

John Adams' famous letter of July 3, 1776 to his wife Abigail captured his thoughts about celebrating Independence Day. It's on many web sites, but this is the exact text from his letter with his original spellings:

...I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated, by succeeding Generations, as the great anniversary Festival. It ought to be commemorated, as the Day of Deliverance by solemn Acts of Devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with Pomp and Parade, with Shews, Games, Sports, Guns, Bells, Bonfires and Illuminations from one End of this Continent to the other from this Time forward forever more. You will think me transported with Enthusiasm but I am not. I am well aware of the Toil and Blood and Treasure, that it will cost Us to maintain this Declaration, and support and defend these States."

Our founders believed God's promise in PSALM 33:12, where God clearly states:

"Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people He chose for His inheritance." (Psalm 33:12)

As John Adams said: (and I quote)

"The general principles on which the fathers achieved independence were....the general principles of Christianity....Now I will avow that I then believed and now believe that those general principles of Christianity are as eternal and immutable as the existence and attributes of God."

It's really important that I say up front that our founding fathers and mothers did not advocate a theocracy, that is, that the church should rule the state, as some atheists complain today.

Our founders distinguished between 'the general principles of Christianity' to form a foundation for the government, and the specific beliefs of Christianity as the personal decision of your heart and soul to follow Jesus Christ. Atheists don't make that distinction.

For the first time in human history, the general principles of Christianity were incorporated into a nation's government, which made America unique among the nations of the world.

John Adams (1735-1826) was instrumental in arguing for independence at the Continental Congresses (1774-78), he signed the Declaration of Independence, and was eventually elected as the 2nd President of the United States.

What is crucial to understand is that America was as pluralistic in the days of our founders as it is now. John Adams lists dozens of different religions living, working and sharing their faith in America at that time, all of whom were willing and actually happy to have the republican form of government based on Christian principles that our founders set up, because all people of all religions were welcomed to America, to live and worship, as they still are. - see *The Works of John Adams*, Charles Francis Adams, editor (Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1851), Vol X, pp.45-46, to Thomas Jefferson on June 28, 1813.

Another reason Americans should celebrate the 4th of July is that our founders put their trust in God, for themselves individually, but also their new nation in particular, and thus far, they succeeded in creating "one nation under God" that has lasted 234 years.

Benjamin Franklin for example, was a believer in God, but for most of his life did not believe that Jesus Christ was divine. But he quoted the words of Jesus Christ and fought for the general principles of the Bible to be put into the foundational principles of the new government. What our founders did was to take from Christianity the basic principles and separate them from the practice of Christianity, namely worship and church, in order to lay a foundation for the new nation to be governed by these principles, that all people

would be able to live in freedom. They did that in the Declaration, the Constitution, and the Amendments.

Critics ignore all this and complain that some of the founders were deists and slave holders. Well, a couple of them were, but almost half of them were seminary graduates, and the genius of our founders is not that they were gods or god-like in any way, as critics today don't hesitate to point out.

These men were just ordinary guys who did an extraordinary thing. Remember that slavery was a worldwide institution, and it still is in some areas of the world. Some of them were slave holders but they knew that by signing the Declaration of Independence, they were abolishing slavery, simply by using the phrase 'all men are created equal.' And George Washington started it all by freeing all of his slaves in his will.

The critics of course will say: well, it took another hundred years to set the slaves free, and another hundred years to make us all equal. Well, yes, it takes a long time to change the world!

Even so, we are still unique among the nations of the world, that in our laws all men are created equal, and we have unalienable rights. Where is that anywhere else?

The Christian principles are embodied in our Constitution and the Bill of Rights and Amendments. Our founders did not believe that you had to be a born-again Christian to live the general principles, like the Golden Rule, that is, to treat people like you want to be treated. You don't have to be a Christian not to murder your neighbor, or not to steal other people's property, or not to lie under oath. Those 'general principles' are good for any nation. And that's what they set up.

As an American, you and I are equal to a king or to the President, and in some circles, that is still a revolutionary idea. We may not be equal in position or authority, but we are equal in value and worth in the eyes of God. And we have the same unalienable rights - that

means 'given by God' - and they cannot be taken away by anyone, even by a king or a president.

Our founders had seen kings take away many of their rights, and even imprison people at the whim of the king or governor, and they wrote it into our laws so that it would never happen again, without due process of law. For them, 'the law is king.'

That idea came from God through Jesus Christ. When Jesus Christ walked the earth, it was Jesus who spoke the truth and said: "...you shall you know the truth, and the truth shall set you free. (John 8:32) Jesus lived the truth, and showed us how to do it too. Jesus treated men and women and children as equal in the eyes of God.

Now you remember from your Bible reading that God created man to be the protector of women and children, but as always happens, ungodly people take over a good idea, and subvert or pervert or convert it for ungodly purposes. So that by the time of Jesus, women and children were considered to be property, to be bought and sold according to the man's desire.

It's still that way in some countries. There's the story of Barbara Walters going to Afghanistan years ago, and she noticed that the women walked 5 paces behind their husbands. Years later, after some changes had come, she went back, and noticed that the women still walked 5 paces behind their man. Astonished, she asked one of the women she interviewed previously: 'Why do you still walk 5 paces behind your husband?' The woman looked Barbara straight in the eye and said: Land mines! (2)

You don't have to be a born-again Christian to treat your wife or child or other people kindly, or to simply open a door for someone. It's what our founders called manners or civility. There are still discussions about whether or not a man should open a door for woman. For me, the argument ended when I read about a man who opened a door for a woman, and she sneered: "Did you open that door for me because *I* am a *lady*?" To which the man replied softly:

“No, ma’am, I opened that door for you because *I am a gentleman.*”

That’s what our founders wanted: a civil and polite society, because it would bring peace and prosperity. They had studied all the political systems of the world, from the beginning of history, and discovered that the general principles of Biblical Christianity provided everything needed for a peaceful, civilized and polite society.

Now there are some people who are ashamed of our country, and they’ve taught their followers that America in general and Christianity in particular have caused untold harm and even genocide because of our religious and patriotic beliefs.

But this attitude is exactly WHY our founding fathers set up our form of democracy as a constitutional republic in the first place.

Our founders had great libraries in their homes as well as in the universities like Harvard, which was named after the Rev. John Harvard, and was established as a seminary to educate preachers in the Gospel. It’s motto then was Veritas Christo et Ecclesiae which means Truth, Christ and Church. Now its motto is just Veritas, with no Christ and no Church.

Our founders were against atheism and its core beliefs of relativism and inequality. Relativism is the belief that everything is relative, and relativism works fine, UNLESS you’re on the receiving end. As a Christian philosopher said not long ago, we have trained our young people in the principles of economics and in relativism at Harvard, and we sent them to Wall Street. And when they put their beliefs in relativism to work with our money, we sent them to prison.

You don’t have to go to Wall Street to see it – when you leave here, just drive. Someone who believes in relativism will be speeding and go through a red light, because when everything is relative, it really doesn’t matter if it’s red or green anyway, UNLESS you’re on the receiving end of relativism, and you end up dead or injured or traumatized because of that belief.

And inequality is fine too, UNLESS you’re on the receiving end.

Our founding fathers put together a system of government based on the Biblical beliefs of absolute right and wrong, and of all people being equal, that begins with the belief in the book of Romans, chapter 3:23 that says: "All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." And because of this, they created a system of checks and balances that would ensure equality and honesty.

The century of the American Revolution was called the Age of Revolutions because there were revolutions in France, Russia, Italy, and other nations, because of the beliefs published in a book by John Locke, which held that rulers should only govern with the consent of the people.

Since that Age, France has had several forms of government, Italy has had dozens, and Russia has had 4 since 1917.

As of now, America is the longest lasting constitutional democracy in the world.

The reason why is that our founders believed that religion in general and Christianity in particular offered the best hope for mankind. Christians give and build hospitals and schools, here and in other countries. Atheists simply take away and give for themselves.

One of the atheist beliefs of the French Revolution was that religion in general, and Christianity in particular, had caused the death of hundreds of people by wars and by executions in France alone.

Another atheist belief is that man is good, that there is no such thing as sin, and if the elite smart people could wipe out all the traces of religion which they believe is the primary cause of conflict in society, and then eliminate all the people who are Christians, then we would live in a good and non-violent world.

That idea and those beliefs are still behind atheism and the people who are trying to change eliminate God from our nation.

The founder of the ACLU Roger Baldwin said: (and I quote) "Communism is...the goal." (3)

I've lived and worked in other countries. When I worked for an international chemical company in Germany, I saw the death camps of atheism with my own eyes. Not only were 6 million Jews

exterminated, but also Christians and people of other faiths, not to mention the 12 million Russians, and millions from other nations who were killed because of the atheist belief, that some people are better than others, and the better people have to get rid of the inferior people, like you and me. With Jesus Christ, there are no inferior people; we are all children of the living God.

It was Hitler who founded his beliefs on Darwinism, the atheistic belief that there is no God, and Hitler and Stalin and others took the belief in 'survival of the fittest' as their motto, to exterminate people they believed to be inferior. Some will say that Darwinism is just a philosophical idea, UNLESS of course, you're on the receiving end of that idea.

Atheists complain about the millions of deaths caused in the name of Christianity, but they can never find the evidence for that, and neither can anyone else. They just say it as if it's true, and we're supposed to believe it.

There certainly were people masquerading as Christians with the Inquisition and other groups, but atheists conveniently ignore the millions of documented deaths in the 20th century alone caused by atheism, which was predicted by the foremost atheist of all time, Friedrich Nietzsche in the 19th century.

He became famous again in the 1960's for the 'God is dead' movement. I still remember the slogan written on the wall of the philosophy dept at my college that said: "God is dead. –Nietzsche." And underneath someone else had written: "Nietzsche is dead. – God"

I've seen the remnants of the history of the anti-Christian French Revolution in which 16,000 people were executed in 9 months, more than 5 times all the executions by any religious authorities in all of history – in just 9 months! The favorite method in Paris was the guillotine, but another favorite method of execution was to tie women and children together, put them on barges on the Seine River, sink the barges, and watch everyone scream and struggle and finally drown, while the atheists all applauded and cheered.

Ironically, it was a Frenchman who later answered the question:
What makes America Great?

Alexis de Tocqueville was the famous 19th century French statesman, historian and social philosopher. He traveled to America 50 years after the Declaration of Independence to discover the reasons for the incredible success of this new nation.

He published his observations in his classic two-volume work called Democracy in America. Here are some of his statements:

Upon my arrival in the United States the religious aspect of the country was the first thing that struck my attention; and the longer I stayed there, the more I perceived the great political consequences resulting from this new state of things.

In France I had almost always seen the spirit of religion and the spirit of freedom marching in opposite directions. But in America I found they were intimately united and that they reigned in common over the same country.

Religion in America...must be regarded as the foremost of the political institutions of that country; for if it does not impart a taste for freedom, it facilitates the use of it. Indeed, it is in this same point of view that the inhabitants of the United States themselves look upon religious belief.

I do not know whether all Americans have a sincere faith in their religion -- for who can search the human heart? But I am certain that they hold it to be indispensable to the maintenance of republican institutions. This opinion is not peculiar to a class of citizens or a party, but it belongs to the whole nation and to every rank of society.

In the United States, the sovereign authority is religious...there is no country in the world where the Christian religion retains a greater influence over the souls of men than in America, and there can be no greater proof of its utility and of its conformity to human nature than that its influence is powerfully felt over the most enlightened and free nation of the earth. In the United States, the influence of religion is

not confined to the manners, but it extends to the intelligence of the people... Christianity, therefore, reigns without obstacle, by universal consent...

I sought for the key to the greatness and genius of America in her harbors...; in her fertile fields and boundless forests; in her rich mines and vast world commerce; in her public school system and institutions of learning. I sought for it in her democratic Congress and in her matchless Constitution.

Not until I went into the churches of America and heard her pulpits aflame with righteousness did I understand the secret of her genius and power. America is great because America is good, and if America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great.

The safeguard of morality is religion, and morality is the best security of law as well as the surest pledge of freedom. The Americans combine the notions of Christianity and of liberty so intimately in their minds, that it is impossible to make them conceive the one without the other

Christianity is the companion of liberty in all its conflicts...(4)

That's why the new Congress's first act was to employ and pay for chaplains for Congress. And one of the next acts was to pay for Bibles to be printed for the whole country. Later the Bible was chosen by our leaders to be the primary textbook of our public education system. Can you see Congress doing that today? That's how far away we are from our roots.

Our founders decided that a government of the people was supposed to PROTECT them, not take over their lives and rob them. So they set up a government based on the Bible, and the starting point was this - Isaiah, chapter 33, verse 12, which says:
 "The Lord is our judge; the Lord is our lawgiver; the Lord is our king. He will save us."

From this one verse, our founders set up the system that – if followed - ensured that the leader of the country, the Congress and

the judges were each restrained by the other, and prevented from taking total control without checks and balances.

And if followed, only Congress – the duly elected representatives voted in by the people – only Congress can make or change laws. Lately, the original intent of the founders has been 're-interpreted' by twisting its meaning, and essentially in my view creating a new law with no previous precedent.

In 1962, the Supreme Court reinterpreted 'church' to mean not just a church, but "any religious activity" – which our founders would find hilarious, and then ridiculous, and then see this as an attempt to outlaw the Christian principles which the founders would never intend.

Murder and other crimes, teen pregnancy, families without fathers, and abortions have all gone up over 700% in 50 years, and our kids are suiciding because they're being taught in the curriculum that they are just random collections of atoms, that life doesn't mean anything, so just live it up for awhile and then you die, and then nothing.

But as for me and my children, and I hope for you and your children, and all God's children, you are created by God in the image of God with dignity and meaning and a purpose, to use your inborn God-given talents, to fulfill your dreams and inspire your life and to honor God and to make the world a better place, and when you die, you spend forever with God's and God's people in a place where true love lasts forever.

Our nation has gotten so far away from God, that the Supreme Court ruled that it was illegal to even show the Ten Commandments on government property. They made that ruling while the Ten Commandments were publicly displayed in the courtroom where they made that pronouncement!

Does anyone besides me see that as ridiculous?

Now some people might call this message a political sermon, but I'm telling you, if you go back and read the sermons of pastors from that time and compare, I have nothing on them.

Atheists are trying their very best to make America like other nations, where a few elitist folks rule the rest of us, by taking away the principles that ensure everyone's freedom and equality. God said it long ago - that people will call good evil, and people will call evil good. We've turned our backs on God Almighty, and we wonder why our country is falling apart.

In the Bible, when God's people turn away from God, God gives them the free will to do what they want, and when they do, God allows them to be hurt by ungodly people and by their own bad decisions. Just read Exodus, Isaiah, Jeremiah and the other prophets. But like a good parent, every time we come back to God, God redeems us and rewards us and blesses us.

We need to wake up and read the biblical history that our founders read. If we don't, I believe we're on the verge of a dark time in our history, which Christians and non-Christians alike will experience. We already see that the nations of the world are going broke, because we have rejected God and God's life-giving principles

According to God, there is only one solution.

That solution is found in **2 CHRONICLES 7:14-15:**

"If MY people who are called by MY name, will humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from Heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land. Now My eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place."

Notice that God does NOT say that EVERYONE has to do these 4 things. Ungodly people don't care about you or God or anybody, they just want to do what they want to do.

So God invites HIS people – the people who say they belong to God - *His* people who are called by *His* name. That's you and me. That's the people who call themselves Christians.

IF you and I will do these 4 simple things, if you and I will humble ourselves, if we will pray, if we will seek God's face, and if we will repent – that means turn away from our wicked ways – then God will hear our prayers and forgive us and God will heal our land. And then God WILL bless us.

That's how much power YOU have to change the world. Jesus Himself did not live in a free country, and yet he had more personal freedom than anyone, and He taught His first disciples how to be free men and women, how to be forgiven and loved, and how to use God's power to change the world, which they did.

You'll remember that when our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was asked whether or not his people should pay taxes to Caesar or not, He replied:

"Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and give to God what belongs to God."

If you follow Jesus, right now you can:

Give to your country what belongs to your country, and give to GOD what belongs to God. (Matthew 22:21)

If we do not recognize our nation's dependence on God, we will never continue to be an independent nation.

Our independence depends on our dependence on God.

Our founders knew that.

Jesus Himself lived in a country occupied by ordinary people like you and me who had no political power, and the government paid for their own excesses by borrowing heavily, taking over the local businesses, and taxing the people heavily.

I need to say right now that I am not advocating for or against Democrats or Republicans. I'll say it plainly. There may be godly men and women in both parties, but they seem to be hard to find right now. So I pray that God will restore our Congress and our generation, and that God will raise up a new generation of young people who will discover the truth - that you can pledge your

allegiance to both God and your country, and that will be a blessing for all!

So how long do we have before it all falls apart? God never lets his people know how long we have, but He always gives HIS people enough time to repent, to make a decision that will change history, and to give us the opportunity to make a personal decision in our heart and soul to choose God.

It was the response of the Reverend Jonas Clarke to the shot that started the American Revolution at Lexington, Massachusetts, that Pastor Clarke said: "We recognize no Sovereign but God, and no King but Jesus."

Later, one of the governors appointed by the king, wrote back to England, saying: "If you ask an American, who is his master? He will tell you he has none, nor any governor but Jesus Christ."

Our founders chose each exact word of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution with its Amendments, with the scrutiny of the finest minds ever assembled at one time. They had one purpose, which was guided by prayer and fasting, by themselves and the people. They knew - and our enemies knew - the significance of recognizing Jesus Christ.

If you question whether or not our founders intended it - let me show you clearly that this nation, our constitutional Republic, is founded on Jesus Christ. Here are two of MANY quotes from the founders. Patrick Henry who said: "Give me liberty or give me death!" also boldly stated: *"It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great nation was founded, not by religionists, but by Christians: not on religions, but on the Gospel of Jesus Christ."*

Samuel Adams declared: *"We have this day restored the Sovereign to whom all men ought to be obedient. He reigns in heaven and from the rising to the setting of the sun, let His kingdom come."*

For this very reason, people of ALL faiths have been given the gifts of asylum, prosperity, and freedom in America. I am one of those

people. I'm a Christian. And I'm an American. I give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, AND I give to God what belongs to God.

For our founders, there has always been separation between church and state, but there should not be separation between the general principles of Christianity the founders intended, and our government. For Jesus Christ and our founders,
you give your allegiance to God AND country, not God OR country.

I've seen the freedom and prosperity of the Christian nations of Western Europe and North America, which used to be built on our American financial and banking system, which used to be based on the financial principles of the Bible. Our system used to work well, but in the past 100 years, unscrupulous people have attempted to subvert it, pervert it and convert it, and use it for their own gain. Until 50 years ago, the Bible and Biblical morality were the guardians of freedom, but they have been thrown out like yesterday's trash.

At the (Willow Creek Global) Leadership Summit coming up in August, you're going to hear from the man the Chinese government sent to America to discover the secret of American ingenuity and enterprise and prosperity. He came here and discovered that the secret the communist Chinese government was looking for is..... drum roll, please.... Christianity!

That Chinese man went back to China, and told his bosses - the ruling officially-atheist, communist party officials - that if they would allow Christianity into China, their economy would boom. And they're doing it. AND then, based on what he had seen and experienced in America, and the power of Jesus Christ in our nation, that man himself became a Christian. Now I ask you: Who will have the biggest economy in the world very soon? China. And now you know why.

In America, atheists are trying desperately to get God OUT of the country, but 'godless China' has seen the light, and they're trying to get God INTO the country, so they can be more prosperous,

because they know that the same Jesus Christ our founders decided to follow is the same Jesus Christ who blesses individuals and nations today – IF we will stand up and affirm the motto of OUR nation – IN GOD WE TRUST.

When you give to your country what belongs to your country,
and you give to God what belongs to God,
God WILL bless your country – whatever country it is –
and God will bless your family, your work and you.
That's God's promise!

Don Carson, a preacher and professor I met not long ago, said this:
"If God had perceived that our greatest need was economic,
he would have sent an economist.
If he had perceived that our greatest need was entertainment,
he would have sent us a comedian...(or an artist.)
If God had perceived that our greatest need was political stability,
he would have sent us a politician.
If He had perceived that our greatest need was health,
he would have sent us a doctor.
But he perceived that our greatest need involved our sin, our
alienation from Him, our profound rebellion, our death;
and he sent us a Savior. "

— D.A. Carson (A Call to Spiritual Reformation: Priorities from Paul and His Prayers)

You may have noticed that we have a multi-racial, multi-ethnic church. Our founders believed and wrote it into the Declaration of Independence that all men are created equal. As a church, we are living proof that the true love of God through Jesus Christ transcends any barrier, any skin color, any creed, any belief, anything, anywhere, anytime.

Now is the time when God invites you to give your first allegiance to Him, by giving Him your heart and soul, because of what Jesus Christ did on the Cross – in dying, Jesus took our sins on Himself, so that we would be set free from sin and guilt and death. And God raised Jesus from death, so that we could know that we can live a new life, in this life, on this earth,

and an eternal life in heaven. That's your personal decision.

AND your country needs your allegiance, your life, and your sacred honor, to stand up for and defend the general Christian principles – not church beliefs and denominations and worship – but the general principles to keep your country free, and when life and liberty are threatened, to get involved in government as a Christian, whether by getting elected yourself, or by electing godly men and women to create laws that will allow our government to continue protecting and defending you and me, by depending on God and God's leadership. So as a Christian and an American, will you choose to give to America what belongs to America, and give to God what belongs to God?

I'm going to ask you to pray with me now, as your brother in the Lord, created equal by God, in praying for our nation. We'll close with a prayer by President George Washington, followed by the 4th verse of our national anthem, which many of you emailed me in the past two weeks, which will be led by Justin Murphy and our worship team. Our national anthem was written by Francis Scott Key during the defense of Fort McHenry in Baltimore during the war of 1812. We usually sing only the 1st verse, but I hope you will hear in this 4th verse the love you can have for both God AND country.

Let's pray to God for America:

Eternal and Loving God, you are the Almighty God our forefathers and mothers prayed to, trusted and they were not disappointed. Our founders called on you to establish this country as one nation under God, and by God, with God, and for God, they did it. Now it's our turn. We are faced on every side by sin, and wickedness, and evil; by ungodly people, and ungodly nations who seek to destroy us, and destroy every evidence of our faith, because we remind them of YOU.

Heavenly Father, you sent your Son, our Savior, to show us how to live in tough times. So now Lord, give us the Strength and the Power you gave our founders, so that we will *humble ourselves, and pray, and seek Your face and turn from our wicked ways, and You will hear from Heaven and will forgive our sin and heal our land.*

Eternal God, hear this prayer of the godly man who was our 1st President, as we make it our own... Almighty GOD; we make it our earnest prayer that Thou wilt keep the United States in Thy holy protection, that thou wilt incline the hearts of the citizens to cultivate a spirit of subordination and obedience to government; and entertain a brotherly affection and love for one another and for their fellow citizens of the United States of America at large. And finally that Thou wilt most graciously be pleased to dispose us all to do justice, to love mercy and to demean ourselves with that charity, humility and pacific temper of mind which were the characteristics of The Divine Author of our blessed religion, and without whose example in these things we can never hope to be a happy nation....Grant our supplication, we beseech thee, through Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen.

*And now, the **4th verse of the Star Spangled Banner***

**"Oh, thus be it ever when free men shall stand
Between their loved homes and the war's desolation!
Blest with vict'ry and peace, may the heav'n rescued land
Praise the Pow'r that hath made and preserved us a nation!
Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just,
And this be our motto: "In God is our trust"
And the Star-Spangled Banner in triumph shall wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!**

God bless you and God bless America! AMEN!

FOOTNOTES:

- (1) 'Only in America' can be found on various internet websites.
- (2) Apparently this story is an 'urban legend' which I did not know at the time of this message....but it sure is funny!
- (3) Various websites report this as being from the Harvard Class Book of 1935, entitled "Thirty Years Later", spotlighting Baldwin's class of 1905 on its thirtieth anniversary, as quoted in a 1997 Insight on the News article.
- (4) Democracy in America, cited at www.wallbuilders.com
Except where noted, other texts quoted may be found at www.wallbuilders.com

Bulletin Inserts for:

IN GOD WE TRUST - A MESSAGE FOR THE 4TH OF JULY SUNDAY
by Pastor George Spencer presented at CrossRoad Church
Jacksonville Florida on July 4, 2010

Psalm 22: 4-5 – “In you our fathers trusted, They trusted and you delivered them. To You they cried out and were delivered; In You they trusted and were not disappointed.”

The fill-ins are:

Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord,
the people He has chosen for His inheritance.
(Psalm 33:12)

If My people who are called by My name
will humble themselves and pray and
seek My face and turn from their wicked ways,
then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin
and will heal their land.
(2 Chronicles 7:14)

Give to your country what belongs to your country,
and give to God what belongs to God.
(Matthew 22:21)