

Spiritual Considerations...

Selected articles designed to assist in our Bible study and Christian walk.



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SOME THOUGHTS ON SEPTEMBER 11

Tank Tankersley, *Park Avenue News (Memphis)*, October 8, 2001

I thank God that I live in a country that provides the political freedoms and economic opportunities that ours does. I owe a great debt to those who have lived, and worked, and sometimes died to preserve the American way of life.

I served fourteen months in Vietnam with a distinguished unit, the 101st Airborne, though I doubt that I did much to enhance the storied history of the Screaming Eagles.

Do you remember when a lightly regarded U.S. hockey team defeated the supposedly invincible Russians on the way to an Olympic gold medal? Do you remember the crowd chanting, "U.S.A., U.S.A."? The memory gives me goose bumps.

I get riled when I hear this great nation unjustly maligned. For me the litmus test is this: How many people are trying their best to get into this country, and how many are trying to leave it, preferring to live elsewhere? The case for the U.S.A. rests.

I commend the mayor of New York, and our President, and the firefighters and law enforcement personnel, and all those who have volunteered in myriad capacities to deal with the aftermath of the reprehensible acts of September 11. Even the politicians, who so seldom give us cause to praise them, have temporarily shelved their customary rancor to pull together for the country's good.

I want the murderers brought to justice. Their acts, barbarous in themselves, are rendered blasphemous as well by the contention that they were committed in God's name. Murdering in the name of God, who has commanded us not to? I search for a word to describe such "thinking," but I search in vain. Such depravity of mind and action eludes description.

So are we straight on all of this? Are my credentials in order? Am I an O.K. guy? I hope so, because there's more.

What people say in times like these! The other day I saw a sign expressing, in effect, the sentiment that one who does not love his country can't love anything. Rubbish!!! Suppose that a Christian in Russia, or China, or Afghanistan, which country denies him the freedom to worship as he would, does not love such a country. Does this mean that he does not love his wife, his parents, his children, his God? Of course not.

And then there are the "celebrity preachers" who rush to tell us "why God did it," or "let them do it," or whatever. Does God dial them direct? Does He have their e-mail addresses? Such arrogance! Such presumption beyond words!! As saddened, and outraged, as we are by the events of September 11, God is more so. He didn't do it, nor did He put anyone up to it. Those who did it did it because they are profoundly evil people, whose lives have been dedicated to acting in ways that are not only ungodly, but anti-God. That's been going on since Eden, when God gave man a choice to obey Him or not. Man made the wrong choice then and continues to do so on a regular basis. Men were doing profoundly evil things on September 10 and September 12. The results were simply much more dramatic on September 11.

And what of the "America is a Christian nation" point of view? Really? Thousands upon thousands of innocents are slaughtered in the womb every year, and this nation's highest court has decreed that lawmakers may not do anything about it. In our "war on drugs" drugs are winning. And countless people in positions of authority live their lives as if auditioning for the role of "the bad example." "Johnny, observe Senator Whoozit. Make it your goal in life to grow up to be as much unlike him as possible." The other night I watched a TV program about one of this country's more celebrated figures, whose patriotism I do not doubt. In one speech he is heard rather energetically taking the name of God in vain. Is there a "national crisis" exception to the third commandment? If so, please enlighten me, for I have searched the scriptures and have not yet uncovered it. I think that I shall seek my heroes elsewhere.

O.K., so we've gone astray, but the founding fathers were Christians weren't they? Have you ever read some of the vile things that Thomas Jefferson wrote about Jesus? Did you know that the delegates to the Constitutional Convention considered having a preacher pray for the success of their efforts but

abandoned the idea because there was no money in the budget to pay him? Could not one of them have petitioned the Almighty? They were honorable, well-intentioned men with soaring intellects and remarkable foresight. But Christian? Well, let's just say that they weren't conducting many Bible studies.

One can be both a "good American" and a Christian, but the two have absolutely nothing to do with each other, and the latter is of infinitely greater importance than the former.

I am blessed beyond measure in being an American. This blessing comes from God. To Him I am thankful. I pray that He grant our leaders wisdom in confronting the difficult times that lie ahead. But I do not worship the U.S.A. God alone is deserving of that. All governments perish, sooner or later. God alone is eternal. I do not put my trust in any form of government, not even one as enlightened as our own. My trust is in God. And my hope lies in the cross.

THE LORD'S DAY

The following poem was given to me by our own Rick Casebier, the author. I thought it was very effective in expressing the significance of the Lord's Day and the deep benefit of being in the Lord's church. I'm glad that Rick shared it with me. I now share it with you.

The sun breaks over the horizon
With all its blaze and glory
The sky is clear and blue
With a deep transparent hue

God is in His house
And for His people does He wait
He is with them each and every day
But in their gathering He longs to hear them sing
and pray

Each they come in the doors
Dressed in their finest
Not in a vain show of being blest
But on the Lord's Day they must be at their best

Each has sinned and fallen short
And know that God will forgive them
For He has promised grace
But each soul must come to the gathering and
take his place

The building is beautiful
With its great stained glass window
The sun shines in on the neat rows of pews
But without the gathering, it is mere sticks,
stones and screws

In small and large groups they meet
To study the Word of God
Learning with each other
What it is to be in Christ, a sister or brother

Then in the great assembly
All come to join in
To sing God's praises
And for each soul, their spirit raises

In remembrance
Around the table they gather
Christ's great sacrifice given by Him for all
The souls eat and drink, both great and small

The preacher teaches from the book
God's Word only as it was given
From God to those who will listen
The light of His love will from their hearts
brightly glisten

As the teaching draws to a close
The preacher offers to those present
A chance to repent or to be baptized
To see the truth of God's teaching in their life
realized

A soul has come forward
To kneel before God's throne
With a sincere heart and tear stained face
A fallen saint has come to know God's grace

The preacher, an elder or fellow Christian
Will bow before God in prayer
Praying for and with the transgressor
The devil no longer to be his oppressor

A final song of praise is offered
And then in prayer all are dismissed
To depart from this house of stone
The strength of each soul's faith, only to God is
known

The sun is high in His sky
The gathering into each little family group
This house of worship they do depart
But each and every one is always in the center of
God's heart