

Prayer and the Supreme Court

By Jim Shaner

The years, 1962-63, was a very important time of my life, since they represent my senior year in high school. As I reflect back forty years to the present day, I remember the assassination of President Kennedy and the assassination attempts of Presidents Ford and Regan, and Desert Storm and Vietnam from which several of my friends never returned. I remember the songs of Bob Dylan and the invasion of the Beatles. I remember Neil Armstrong walking on the moon and the tragedy of a failure of an o-ring on a space shuttle. I remember Hurricane Agnes, the Bicentennial and the Phillies winning the World Series.

Yes, many things have changed in the last forty years. Since 1963, our streets are not safe to walk, since violent crime has risen 544%. Even though the pill is used extensively, teenage pregnancies have increased 573%. From 1963 to 1983, the number of divorces rose 300%, and after the year 1963, the SAT scores, the criteria utilized by colleges for intelligence, declined eighteen years in a row. Why has this happened to our nation?

One reason may be a result of the Supreme Court ruling in 1962 banning school prayer. It was ruled that the following prayer may cause psychological damage to a student if he should hear it: "Almighty God, we acknowledge our dependence upon Thee and we beg Thy blessing over us, our teachers, our parents, and our country." This simple prayer which contains the word, God, only once, while the Declaration of Independence contains the word, God, four times, was banned from public school along with any other prayers. The Supreme Court in this ruling quoted for the first time no previous legal cases and zero historical pretenses to back its decision. This was the first ruling favoring the separation of church and state.

When I hear the words, separation of church and state, I do not believe that is what our forefathers, that founded this great nation, would endorse. If you would travel to Washington DC, our nations' capitol, you would be amazed to find many references to God and the Bible engraved on the buildings. Behind the Speaker of the House of Representatives are inscribed in large words is this phrase, "In God We Trust." Engraved on the metal cap on the top of the Washington Monument are the words, "Praise be to God." On a wall of the Library of Congress are the words, "The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not." These words of Thomas Jefferson, "Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just, that His justice cannot sleep forever," are written for all to see in the Jefferson Memorial. The great statue of Abraham Lincoln in the Lincoln Memorial gazes at his own words inscribed into the walls, ". . .that this Nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that the government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from the earth."

If you look into history books, you would find the following words were spoken by our founding fathers:

“Whereas it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly implore His protection and favor. . . “

George Washington

“The first and almost the only Book deserving of universal attention is the Bible.”

John Quincy Adams

“The moral principles and precepts contained in the scriptures ought to form the basis of all our civil constitutions and laws.”

Noah Webster

“It is the duty of nations, as well as of men, to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God 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,”

Abraham Lincoln

“Let us pray for ourselves, that we may not lose the word ‘concern’ out of our Christian vocabulary. Let us pray for our nation. Let us pray for those who have never known Jesus Christ and redeeming love, for moral forces everywhere, and for our national leaders.”

Robert E. Lee

“Our laws and our institutions must necessarily be based upon and embody the teaching of the Redeemer of mankind. It is impossible that it should be otherwise; and in this sense and to this extent our civilization and institutions are emphatically Christian. . .”

Supreme Court Decision 1892

This decision which the Court ruled that this nation was Christian was based on 87 historical pretenses while the decision to ban prayer from public schools was based on zero historical pretenses.

The First Amendment to the Constitution states: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech. . .” Christian children in public schools can no longer follow the teaching of the Bible to continue in prayer (Col. 4:2) or to pray without ceasing and in everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus (1 Thess. 5:17-18). By removing prayer from schools, the right of free exercise of religion has been prohibited.

The next time a vote concerning prayer reaches the Supreme Court, they, themselves, should listen to the crier who opens session of court as he closes with this

simple prayer, “God save the United States and the Honorable Court.” Also each session of the Senate and the House opens with prayer.

What can we do to stop the backsliding of our great nation? Let us respond to these words:

“Knowing that intercessory prayer is our mightiest weapon and the supreme call for all Christians today. I pleadingly urge our people everywhere to pray. Believing that prayer is the greatest contribution that our people can make in this critical hour, I humbly urge that we take time to pray – to really pray.”

Robert E. Lee

“. . . 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 will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.”

2 Chronicles 7:14

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God bless,
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Total miles walked of the American Discovery Trail -825 miles
Number of prayer walkers - 64 prayer walkers
Number of people praying for America - 54,103 prayer warriors