

# A Call To National Repentance

Here are some quotations from the Book of Isaiah:

55:6-7, "Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near.

Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon."

1:16-18, "Wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight! Stop doing wrong.

Learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow.

Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord. Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool."

60:12, "For the nation or kingdom that will not serve you will perish; it will be utterly ruined."

The underlying principles that were in force in Isaiah's day are still in full force today. As the last reference indicates, nations, like individuals, commit sin and suffer for it. Nations, like individuals, find that "the judg-

ments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether."

Even a casual observation will disclose sins in our nation that are "scarlet" and "red like crimson." Our society increasingly disregards God's commandments. In recent decades we have "achieved" marked increases in alcoholism and drug addiction at all levels of society, disregard for the Lord's Day, the amount of smut and indecency in the media, break-down in family life, the number of abortions, and both "white collar" and violent crimes. These all point to the fact that our nation is assuming an attitude of self-indulgence that has little interest in counting the cost.

We say that we long for a peace that will be just and lasting, and not simply the prelude to another and vastly more devastating war. But as long as sin rules in national life, war will rule as a policy in national councils. The nations of the world are not at peace with God; therefore they cannot be at peace with one another. Nations and kingdoms show little concern about serving the Divine Ruler of nations.

There have been times in the past when our government has called for national days of repentance and prayer. Unless we again repent and seek forgiveness our ultimate end will be to perish. There are various ways of perishing. A nation can perish by internal corruption as certainly as by being over-run from without. The path of history is strewn with the wrecks of nations that have ceased to exist because of their sins. Our nation may or may not be in danger of attack by the foe from without. We definitely are in danger of decomposition from within.

The really central issue in America, the national sin that leaves us naked before our enemies, is our failure to admit that there is a higher Power to Whom "We, the people of the United States" are accountable. The Word of God tells us clearly that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the Lord of the nation's life. "The kingdom is the Lord's: and He is the governor among the nations." (Psalm 22:28) He arose from the dead declaring, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth." (Matthew 28:18) "On His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." (Revelation 19:16)

Yet our nation's Constitution, the fundamental law of the land, contains no acknowledgment that God exists. When Mr. Justice Robert Jackson was a member of the United States Supreme Court, that court was confronted with a situation having to do with morals and religion. Mr. Justice Jackson lamented, "It is idle to pretend that this task is one for which we can find in the Constitution one word to help us . . . It is a matter on which we can find no law but our own pre-suppositions." It is no wonder that our courts interpret the law by whatever concept of morality and justice is popular at the moment.

After being accepted through most of our history, prayer and Bible reading in the public schools were declared *unconstitutional* a few decades ago. Recently, laws protecting the Sabbath and posting the ten commandments in public schools have been judged *unconstitutional*, while abortions were judged to be *constitutional*. All governmental recognition of God, Christmas carols, chaplains for the armed forces, the motto on our coins, are

attacked on the same basis. Dr. Nelson Billy Graham's father-in-law, wrote editorial which appeared in *Chri Today*: "It is obvious that we are toward a completely secular acknowledging at no point its responsi a sovereign God. But the nations th rejected God have faded into obliv Shall America reject her own C heritage? Shall our government remo her official life every vestige of recogn Him?" Is trust in "We the people" or the Ruler of nations the best guara freedom, justice and peace?

How shall our nation get right wit There is a way. That way is throug tance and seeking God's direction. T authoritative code of ethics tells us 13:3, 5, "Unless you repent, you toc perish." Individual repentance gets a n with God. National repentance gets right with God. The responsibility f national confession begins with Chris

"If my people, who are called 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 the land."

(II Chronicles 7:14)

\* \* \*

Reformed Presbyterian Church of N  
Board of Education and Publicatio  
800 Wood Street  
Pittsburgh, Penn. 15221