

So. N. July 3, 70 WXR1

"THE NATION THAT IS BLESSED"

Psalm 33:12

"Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord". And the people whom He has chosen for his own inheritance.

1947m Hist - Honor American Day was yesterday -

This past week the people of the United States celebrated Independence Day. The 4th is a national holiday in a variety of ways. People display flags, others shoot firecrackers, and some remain at home - but very few. Other people visit relatives. Some attend sporting events. Now there are a few people, no doubt, who offer up prayers of Thanksgiving, for the life, the liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

July the 4th is a supreme day on our calendar. On that date in 1776 the original 13 colonies issued their Declaration of Independence. For many reasons the founding fathers took this courageous action because of abuses and a deep desire for a better form of government.

The Declaration included "we hold these truths to be self evident that all men are created equal. That they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights. And among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

The Declaration of Independence set the colonies free. It left them the liberty to build a new government, of the people, by the people, and for the people. Now they did not arrive at the Constitution without a struggle. And this Document was arrived at from aid above. Who can doubt that God blessed the nation.

In 1620 the Pilgrim fathers had sailed the seas and landed on New England. They fled from cruel rule - both civic and religious. They dreamed of establishing

a home where they could find churches and a better country. Because of their influence, the word of God was written into the Constitution in principles. Our past and our present - great source of help is from above. Our greatness in the future depends upon His blessing.

America is great (not) because it has more people. China and India lead the world. I think it is great because the government has been built on the principle of God's truth.

Now there is always the parallel of decline. And this fear is a fear that we have in our nation, at the present time.

The history of America has been wrapped around with the blessings of God.

For America was found as a Christian nation. Other civilizations have been built upon culture, and culture failed. Or they were built upon power and power failed. Our fore-fathers founded this nation upon religion. And America is going to live so long as the Lord is our God.

The continental congress faced with great problems and difficulties knew not which way to turn. Ben Franklin called the members of the congress to fall upon their knees and pray.

Can you imagine what would happen today if our great legislative bodies prayed more and talked less.

The first coins printed in America have a picture of Moses and the grand old words - "In God We Trust".

Our fore fathers were building on a firm foundation.

A South American president was talking to Roger Babson. He said, South America was settled by men who were seeking gold. But North America was settled by men who were seeking God.

There have been some great nations. The Persians - but they drank their way to doom. And they crashed and perished off the face of the earth.

Egypt flourished under Joseph. 400 years went by. And the people had forgotten Joseph and his God. Egypt went down.

Greece was a world power when Alexander conquered the entire world. But he died - drunk. And the nation tumbled.

Rome was proud as it ruled the world. But luxury and lust ate the center of her life.

America that we love was not built upon these things. And if these things become the major -- then we shall die.

Do you recall Washington at Valley Forge. His little army freezing, starving, fighting against odds. But out in the snow George knelt upon his knees to pray. And that is the spirit that built America.

What makes a nation great. Alexander Blackburn said it is not armoured ships but that land is great which knows the Lord. Whose songs are guided by his word.

Where justice rules twix man and man

Where love controls in art and plan

Where breathing in his native air

Each soul finds joy in praise and prayer.

Thus may our country good and great

Be God's delight, man's best estate.

America has a great emblem. You remember David said in the Psalm - thou hast given a banner to them that fear Thee. God had blessed his forces. When Israel sinned - she had been defeated. But when she obeyed God - she had always been successful. David desired to keep this glory - a continued victory. And David compared his government to a flag - because his being lifted to the throne had united the people as the flag had united them.

We have a great flag - it speaks of freedom. When the French flag rolls out in the wind - we see France. When the Italian flag is unferrelled, we see Italy.

There is not another flag in all the world that has such an errand and has been sent forth overseas everywhere around this world, with the glorious tidings of liberty. It has not gone to take people into slavery. But to offer light and liberty to slaves. And where you have found the American flag - the meaning of that flag is what Concord and Lexington and Bunker Hill - it means all of the glorious revolution. Our flag carries, history, ideas, liberty in man. Every color means liberty. It's stars are like arrows shot with a bow from God. And wherever it flies - on the peaceful Pacific or the beautiful Atlantic - it speaks of the heroes. It's white teaches us the purity of purpose. It's red testifies the blood and so often freely shed in its defense.

It's blue with its consolations reminds us of Heaven. That we are tramping under the eternal oversight of God.

No wonder that brave soldier as he fell on the field of battle said, boys don't wait for me. Just open the old flag and let me see it once more before I

die.

No wonder the boy of Mass. dying on the streets of Baltimore lifted his eyes and shouted - all hail to the stars and the stripes. Our flag and it's history has had power and been known and respected around the globe. It carries a touch of honor with it. And we think of that great group from the Mayflower until this day - that our nation has called hundreds of thousands of true men. We have been blessed as a nation and as a people. God has richly blessed us.

✓ Think of the resources of this nation. Of the crops that are grown, the fruit trees, the minerals, the wonderful lakes.

✓ Think of the natural beauty that we have in America. The beautiful coast, the Gulf, the Mississippi, the Ohio, the Rockies, The Smokies, Yellowstone Park, the Grand Canyon, the Redwood Forests, the Caverns and the springs. The nation that God has blessed.

✓ Think of the government - the democracy. And then compare it to the dictatorships of other nations. And you really have to visit some of those countries to get the true meaning of the difference in the form of governments. We do not have concentration camps, police forces.

We are allowed the freedom of press and speech, radio, and men today can say anything they desire in a critical way of their President. Now these things can only happen in America. If it happened in Russia or Hungary, or Cuba - that man would not be free 24 hours.

✓ How marvelous the religious freedom that we have. A few people meeting in a little church or in a rented building - or in a great cathedral can believe God and conduct a religious meeting according to their own desires.

In 1937 Stalin said there must not remain in the territory of Soviet Russia a single house of prayer to God. And the very conception of God will be banished from the boundaries of Russia. Now we are told that at least 7000 priests were killed by the government and their churches torn down and the newspapers and magazines ridiculed the idea of God.

America has religious freedom. You think of that humble Baptist preacher who helped America get it. His name was Roger Williams. He was persecuted for his beliefs and he fled with a few followers to the land which is now Rhode Island. At Rhode Island he founded the city of Providence - which is another name for God. In the Constitution of that state - he wrote down the decree that every man should be permitted to worship God according to dictates of his own conscience.

When Thomas Jefferson and others were forming the Constitution of the United States - they borrowed his principle and studied it as an underlying law inserted it in that Document. Baptists originating religious freedom in our land. And they have sought to stand up for that freedom. While you may believe that which is the opposite - it is true that we as Baptists give you the right to believe as you please. This is the concept of religious freedom for all men. And America enjoys this freedom as does no other country.

Now recently the President appointed a representative to the Vatican. And of course this is against the belief of many religious bodies from all over the country and world. Baptists do not want this privilege for themselves. I do not think that other denominations want it. We want the separation of church and state. This will permit a man to worship God after the dictates of his own conscience.

There is another way, I think, that America has been blessed. And that is in giving everyone a chance - that is - a man like Lincoln, living in a log cabin,

could study and make progress and finally reach fame in the White House.

Henry Ford, a poor mechanic, became the world's greatest industrialist. Because America gave him a chance. Now Rockefeller was a poor boy in America - but he has reached the point of giving away millions of dollars.

Edison, a poor boy, that the whole world knows invented 1150 different things. We ought to thank God for a country where you do not have a class or system that holds down a man and deprives him .

I think every person who listens to me - will say, I thank God that he allowed me to be born and to live in the greatest and the freest land under the sun. This is our country and we love it. And many of our fore fathers have been willing to give a great deal, to make it, what it is today. Regardless of what any free thinker might say, you will never find a place like this in all the world.

The nation has been blessed of God. And America, like nothing else, needs God.

We have enemies of course on the outside - communists ~~foe~~ which is ever present. They say they will bury us in history. And some of the other enemies from without. I think this gives us a false view.

I think we well understand that there are enemies on the inside, in our country today, I would say the most dangerous foes live within this country. There are paid spies.

But millions forget almighty God as Israel did. Psalm 106:21 - they forgot God their Saviour, which had done great things in Egypt. Many of us forget, that our greatness, in Glory will come to us because of the Lord's goodness and grace.

As a nation, what do we possess that we have not received from him. When we boast about our strength, our wealth, and our high standard of living - we have forgotten, and ignored the warning of Moses. Duet. 8:18. Remember the Lord Thy God for it is he, that hath given thee power to get wealth - that he may establish the covenant, which he swear unto thy fathers. We stand in danger. Because we forget that God has made possible the freedom which we enjoy. The political freedom.

Today we have so many moral sags.

Year by year the break up of hundreds of thousands of homes - the constant increase of juvenile delinquency.

I wonder what if some modern prophet should come and say - yet 40 days and Washington, D. C. shall be destroyed.

The wild spread of pleasure, and delight in luxury. Our military leaders feel that we are armed and that physical fitness in this era of automobiles, T. V., and ice cream. That we worship these things which will bring self destruction. And the promise comes from every politician - two cars in every garage. T. V. in every home. And we are more concerned with all of this and saying thou hast much goods - we will tear down our barns and build new ones.

All the uncertainties and fears - where do we put our trust. A great many of you tonight trust in military leaders and you are trusting in the Armed Forces of this country, their modern equipment, the financial might, the technical know how.

If we study God's word, we would discover that we need a new Declaration of Independence. Every American needs an independence day in his life. Time as Isaiah said, Thy God reigneth. Isa. 52:7. America needs most of all to repent of her sins. Turn back to God. We have gone off the gold standard. That is not our trouble. Our trouble is that we have gone off the God standard.

We have pushed our programs of defense, ships, planes, tanks - and the greatest defense is that of spiritual preparation.

Now some think that this is just preacher language. Look at the present war. Why doesn't God stop it.

I think I can tell you why. It is because God's conditions have not been met. Here are those eternal conditions - 2 Chron. 7:14.

"If my people, which are called by name, shall humble themselves and pray, seek my face and turn from their wicked ways - then will I hear in Heaven and I will forgive their sin and heal their land."

I heard a Doctor say once to a sick man - if you will follow my directions. You will be healed. And I think God says to this sin sick nation - if you will follow my direction, I will heal your lands.

Clean up your lives. Your homes, your churches, and I will bless this nation.

You must obey his voice. Who knows that we will suffer the fate of others. In other days, God saw the wickedness of the heathen, and he persecuted them. And God used some of the heathen nations to punish some of his chosen people.

I think America needs God in their government. That great decisions must be made by the man who has the public office. The President down to the smallest officer we have in this city of ours.

We ought to pray for these officials. And lift them up. We discover that ^{in Europe} ~~some~~ ⁱⁿ the crisis during the first and second World War - that when there was real trouble - more people went to church than at any other time in history. I wonder is America going to wait - are you going to wait - until something like that happens to our country as it did in Europe, in Paris, and London. People flocked to the churches.

We need God in our homes. One man in the Capitol - pointed to the Capitol Dome and said there is the heart of our nation. The other man said "no", the heart of America is in her homes. And I think he was right. Look way back into the country - look into that little village or town - look into the heart of this great city and see these scores of homes. These homes, make up the heart of America.

But how sad today - there is no room for Christ, in some of these homes to which I speak tonight. Grace Crowell said so long as there are homes to which men turn at close of day, homes where children are and where women stay. And in the last stanza she said, so long as there are homes, lamps are lit and prayers are said, all though people falter through the dark and nations grope - with God himself back of these little homes we can still hope.

We need to get God back into our schools today. I think the mighty influence upon moral public life, and ~~the~~ character being built with the right sort of teachers, who are interested in real character. God will bless our nation.

I think also this Declaration of Independence should lead us to put God back into our churches.

Somebody will ask me, but isn't God in our churches today. I am afraid that sometimes we fill up our churches with campaigns and things in which God does not have a chance. Yet the church ought to be at the center of the nation. And every man ought to love his church and do the best possible job in lifting up his church.

I read of Dr. Aires, a medical missionary to China. He was telling about a Saturday afternoon in a Chinese hospital and was bombed by the Japanese. A number of people were killed and a part of the hospital was destroyed. Sunday morning the people came into an open area for a service in the hospital yard. The congregation stood about in the holes which had been made by the bombs dropped the day before. There stood a boy who had lost an arm. And whose parents had been killed on Saturday. Another man lost his wife. And others who had suffered in various ways. When it came down to the time for the pastor to pray - he lifted his voice and his heart to God and said, Lord we thank thee that in the midst of war and suffering - there is peace in our hearts. That nothing can take away. We thank thee that no matter what happens to our bodies, our souls are safe.

This is the thing that we pray - that America's soul may be safe. The other nations are forgetting God. We must stand by Him as we read of the tragedies in S. E. Asia and in Europe. May God help us to live close to him who is ready to remake the world after his own plans. May we with the King Hezekiah, depend upon the power of God because he recognized the deep needs of his own heart and the

needs of his people. And in his prayer, he sincerely relied upon God.

May the celebration of this independence weekend awaken the necessity of sincere worship of almighty God. God is still eager and able to save if we will depend upon him. You remember that song - many people know it - "God Bless America" - land that we love. Stand beside her and guide her, through the night with the light from above.

From the mountains to the prairies -

To the ocean white with foam

God Bless America

My home, sweet home!

If we follow Him - America will be great. And it will be a happy place for future generations because God has promised that he would bless the nation whose trust was in Him.

A curious look at George Washington's lineage

George Washington, arguably Virginia's most distinguished son and whose 265th birthday anniversary will be celebrated Saturday, was not particularly noted for having a back-slapping sense of humor. Even so, if he had lived to see the publication of a book I encountered some time ago in the genealogy collection of Kirn Memorial Library that purported to contain irrefutable evidence concerning the remote ancestry of a branch of his family, I am sure he would have greeted the assertion with a sly chuckle.

Titled "The Willisess of Virginia," the volume, published during the early years of the present century, attempted with deadpan seriousness to give a minutely detailed account of the lineage of the Willis families of Gloucester County, Fredericksburg and Southside Creek, Va., all of them close kin to the "father of our country."

To make the connection clear, the Willisess are descended from George Reade (1608-1671) and his wife, Elizabeth Marteau (1627-1687), a couple also definitely known to have been the grandparents twice removed of the master of Mount Vernon. Once the family connection between the Willisess and Farmer George was made, however, the author took off for the Cloud Cuckoo Land of speculation.

Beginning on page 152 and continuing through page 155, the au-



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thor inserted a formidable family chart claiming to trace George Reade, the common ancestor of the Willisess and Washington, "from Adam through Royal Lines" over countless centuries prefaced by this observation: "That blood is thicker than water is a human proverb expressing Divine truth. Family relations are very precious. This goes back to God's eternal law."

After that curtain raiser, the author brought up such heavy "begat" artillery as the Old and New Testaments as well as Burke's "Genealogical Heraldic Compendium of American Genealogy" to prove that the Willisess and Washington were directly descended from Adam and Eve. What is more, the author included the exact, not conjectural, dates of birth and death for each patriarchal, ecclesiastical and royal ancestor on the chart — a risky practice considering the antiquity of the biblical persons mentioned.

According to the chart, George Washington, who knew little about his ancestry except that his great-grandfather John Washington came

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Had Washington known that a book traces him to Adam and Eve, his smile may have been even broader.

to Virginia from England during the 17th century, belonged to the 130th generation in line of descent from the original occupants of the Garden of Eden.

To be more precise, the chart further revealed that Washington and his Willis kin were direct lineal descendants of Seth, a son of Adam and Eve, who in turn was the progenitor of such high and mighty worthies as Methuselah, Noah, Shem, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Ruth and Boaz, Joseph of Arimathea ("the father of Anna, cousin of the Virgin Mary"), Charles Martel and Charlemagne, as well as any number of kings and

queens of England and France.

Finally, toward the end of the chart, the author touched terra firma as far as Virginia was concerned by tacking on George Reade, Washington's known great-great-grandfather, whose daughter, Mildred, married Augustine Warner of Gloucester County. This couple, as every well-informed Virginia genealogical buff knows, were the parents of Mildred Warner, the wife of George Washington's grandfather Lawrence Washington.

Well, after that ancestral roller-coaster ride I was happy to put the book back on the shelf — but not before recalling my favorite Washington yarn that made me speculate that old George would have willingly chopped down that particular family tree with a wry smile.

On one occasion after the Revolutionary War, Washington, as the honored guest at a dinner party, was placed at the head of the table that abutted a Franklin stove in which the fire burned briskly. When the seat of honor became too hot for comfort, he asked for permission to move to a cooler spot at the table. Amused by his request, his hostess quipped, "Oh, fie, General, I thought an old soldier like you could stand fire better than that."

"Indeed I can, madam," Washington replied with a stately bow, "but not in my rear!"