

The Sower

The Lord's Day-----July 2, 2017

Arthur Church of Christ

415 W 4th Street, Arthur, IL 61951

Preacher: Ron Bartanen

Times of Worship

9:30 a.m. (Bible Classes)-----10:30 a.m. (Morning Worship)----1:30 p.m. (Wednesday Bible Class)

New Web Site: <http://arthurcoc.com>

Check out the Apologetics Press Website

<http://apologeticspress.org>

FREEDOM AND TRUTH

It is truly a blessing to live in a country that recognizes the value of freedom, such as is guaranteed by our Constitution. On July 4, 241 years ago, brave patriots from our 13 colonies declared our nation's independence from England. As we visit with family and friends at this season of the year, and devour our burgers and hot dogs, may we pause to remind ourselves that the fathers of our nation were not only affirming a Declaration of Independence from England, but also a Declaration of Dependence upon

God. Certain "truths" were held to be "self evident," and had their source with God, our Creator. They perceived "rights" as free men and women to have been "endowed by our Creator", not endowed by government. Rights granted by government can, as quickly, be denied us. Freedom guaranteed us by God, based on His truths, is irrevocable. Jesus expressed this principle to His disciples, saying, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

That said, it must be realized that our founders were not mere religionists, but recognized the unique principles of Christianity to be a solid base for a free people. While not all were Christians in the full sense of the word, yet they were wise enough to recognize certain eternal truths that would result in liberty and justice for all. Our culture, as a nation, has not been based simply on religion, but on the Judeo-Christian truths of the word of God. Without that recognition, we would open up ourselves to bondage.

An even greater freedom is available to us in the full surrender of our wills to God through Jesus Christ. Jesus declared, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36). A true and lasting freedom is available to all who would

"know the truth" (John 8:32), believe the truth (1 Thessalonians 2:13), and obey the truth (Romans 6:17-18). In Jesus Christ, who is "the way, the truth and the life" (John 14:6), true freedom is found. Jesus is the answer for all who would not only be free from the guilt and bondage of sin, but also free from the ineffectual religious systems by which Satan would deceive and ensnare us, as the apostle Paul declared in Colossians 2:20-22: "If ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why are ye subject to ordinances...after the commandments and doctrines of men"? Sin and false religion are the devil's means of putting us in bondage, while the truth of God would set us free. Which is your choice?
--Ron

"But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he, being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed"
(James 1:25).

HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY!

ISLAM—A TREACHEROUS HALLUCINATION

The Judeo-Christian culture of our nation is in sharp contrast with the culture of Islamic nations. We celebrate a culture that guarantees "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," while Islam speaks loudly of "death to the infidels, bondage to Muhammad and sharia law, and the pursuit and death of all who would not honor Mohammed and Islamic law. As we rejoice in our freedoms, I thought it well that we consider the origin of Islam, and its threat to the world. I recently received an article on the Internet that was enlightening, especially in regard to Islam's origin. Much of the following is information derived from that article.

Our world-view, or belief-system, defines our culture. We become our beliefs. They define our lives. Some beliefs are harmless, some are a force for good, while others are delusional and a spiritual cancer that leads to ruin. The article referred to Islam as a "grand and dangerous hallucination." The hallucination was had by Muhammad, and relayed to his first wife and employer, Khadija. Greatly frightened by it, he told Khadija that he had been visited by a jinn (devil) in the Hira cave. Finding him distraught, she sought to console him, assuring him that instead of being visited by a devil, this was Allah's means of appointing him as his messenger. Khadija was 15 years older than Muhammad, and was both his wife and

employer. He put his trust in her interpretation of this experience. Thus was born the belief-system of Islam—a religion with strong political overtones that currently pose a threat to all non-Islamic nations, including our own.

Khadija was influential in aiding Muhammad in successfully attracting a good number of influential followers to his new-found beliefs. The influence of this politico-religious system spread throughout the east, as Jews and Christians came under his assault. Through violent campaigns Islam became a threat to western nations. The article concludes: “This grand hallucination, Islam, presently has in its stranglehold over a billion humans, posing an existential threat to all non-Muslims.”

As Christians, we embrace a culture of life through Him who said, “I am come that ye might have life, and have it more abundantly” (John 5:40), and the apostle John said of his gospel message: “These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name” (John 20:31). We are definitely engaged in battle with “principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:12).

--Ron

PRAY LOUD

Two young boys were spending the night with their grandparents. At bedtime, the two boys knelt beside their beds to say their prayers when the youngest one began praying at the top of his lungs: “I PRAY FOR A NEW BICYCLE. I PRAY FOR A NEW NINTENDO. I PRAY FOR A NEW PVR...”

His older brother leaned over and nudged the younger brother, and said, “Why are you shouting your prayers? God isn’t deaf.”

At which the little brother replied, “No, but Grandma is!”

--Today’s Clean Laugh; Cyber Salt Digest

A QUOTE TO PONDER: “Give me four years to teach children, and the seed I have sown will never be uprooted.” (Vladimir Lenin)

“**YOU GOTTA MAKE A CHOICE**” (Part 2) will be today’s message. The reading is Daniel 3:8-21.

CONTINUE IN PRAYER for: Lyla; Eva; Nadine; Linda; Rodger; our service men and women; the souls of those around us who have not accepted Christ; and those who are being persecuted for their faith in Christ, especially in Islamic and communist countries.