

Faith of Our Fathers

No, this is not a Father's Day article, although it could be. Every Father's Day in the Arthur congregation we make it a point to sing the song, "Faith of Our Fathers." (We even sing it on Mother's Day, only substituting "mothers" for "fathers.") However, with Independence Day coming this Wednesday, I feel it important to stress the role that the Christian faith played in the hearts of our founding fathers in the establishing of the United States as a nation of unprecedented liberty, without the despotic intrusion of government. We were formed as a nation "of the people, by the people and for the people," not in a secular humanistic sense, but in recognition of the fact that we are endowed, not by government, but "by our Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." They viewed our freedoms not as being dispensed to us by government officials seeking to take charge of citizens' lives, but by God, recognized as our Creator. They viewed government, not as seeking the control over all its citizens' lives, but as the protector of its citizens' God-given lives and liberty. Through our history men and women have shown themselves ready to die in order that this spirit of independence might be handed down from generation to generation. For those of us who have never been beyond our shores, it is perhaps difficult to realize as we should the value of the incredible gift of liberty. It would be well for us to recognize that liberty has its strongest roots in the principles set forth in God's word, the Bible. Although our founding fathers could not all be accurately described as Christians, yet the respect for the Bible was almost universal. While some would seek to erase Christian influence from the history of our nation, under the guise of a misunderstood "separation of church and state," the fact remains that faith in God—not faith in government—was the driving force that made the United States the envy of the world. Other forces at work in the world, such as Islam and Marxism, have served only to bring people into bondage. It would be well to remind ourselves of our roots in the Judeo-Christian ideals that gave birth to, and once nourished our nation:

The Mayflower Compact began with the words, "In the name of God, amen."

The Declaration of Independence speaks of "Nature's God," and "the Supreme Judge of the world."

Ben Franklin, whom some have portrayed as being a Deist (one who believes God created the world but abandoned it to natural law without divine intervention) speaks quite differently. To delegates during the war, he said, "Our prayers, Sir, were heard, and they were graciously answered." At the same convention he said, "I have lived, Sir, a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth—that God governs in the affairs of men."

Closer to our time, President Ronald Reagan, speaking at a prayer breakfast during the party's national convention, said, "I believe that faith and religion play a critical role in the political life of our Nation and always has.... Those who created our country understood that there is a Divine order which transcends human order." Of course, such plain language resulted in a storm of protest from politicians who are set on propagating the myth of "separation of church and state" as somehow being the American way.

As we see a spirit of humanism pervading our nation, let us pray that the "faith of our fathers" will prevail—faith that God is, and that "*Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD*" (Psalms

33:12).

—Ron