

## **SOME THOUGHTS ON THE CONNECTION BETWEEN CHURCH AND STATE IN THIS TIME OF NATIONAL DISCONTENT**

In my lead July *Newsletter* piece I note the Lutheran perspective that the Church is not called by God to rule the State. Yet the State is called by God to function for the well-being of its people (Romans 13), and it is God who determines the meaning of well-being, or “good.”

Tim Wildmon, President of the American Family Association, recently wrote in the *AFA Journal* about the cultural divide in this country, “At its most fundamental level, this is not a war about mere cultural values or even public policies such as abortion, sex, or marriage. At its heart, this is a war over the subject of God” (July-August issue, p. 7).

Wildmon goes on to identify what he sees as underlying questions for many: Is God real? Is He the God of the Bible? Did He create mankind? Will we all one day stand before Him in judgment?

One difference between this age and the era of the nation’s founding fathers is, as the AFA article notes, in that era these questions had, with minimal dissent, been settled at the founding of our country. “Even those founders who were not Christian knew our nation could not survive without God.”

George Washington stated, “It is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the Providence of Almighty God.” Washington added in his Farewell Address, 1796: “Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, Religion and Morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of Patriotism, who should labor to subvert these great Pillars of human happiness.” (Both cited at <http://www.wnd.com/2015/02/it-is-the-duty-of-all-nations-to-acknowledge-god/#jpJMtAVsRaiCCEbF.99>.)

The following passage from Thomas Jefferson is engraved into the wall of the Jefferson Memorial, Washington, D.C.: “God who gave us life gave us liberty. Can the liberties of a nation be secure when we have removed a conviction that these liberties are the gift of God? Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just, that his justice cannot sleep forever.”

It is time for a spiritual re-awakening in our country. Christians know the true purpose for God revealing Himself to us is for the salvation of souls through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Moral purity in itself will save no one. Yet God does hold nations to account for promoting the well-being of its citizens. A nation that values and supports the free exercise of religion encourages the faith that seeks its welfare. The Christian faith can and will survive under the most aggressive attempts to undermine its truth and its values, but when many in our land ignore or work to defeat those values, we may well lose the favor and protection that has been the base of our national blessings. The words of Jefferson can make every believer tremble, but they can also encourage Christians, who are God’s agents on earth, to point to, lead, and encourage the well-being of citizens according to God’s meaning of those words.

Faithfully and Patriotically,  
Pastor Knill

P.S. I want to welcome everyone moving into the Quantico, Dumfries, Triangle, and SE Prince William County area, and invite you to share in the blessings of God’s Word and Sacraments at Concordia.