



LEGACY INSTITUTE

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Sabbath, 29 November 2003

Dear Fellow-laborers,

Two days ago was Thanksgiving Day, a day celebrated every year on the last Thursday in the month of November in the United States; and on a different day in Canada. We also celebrated this day at Legacy Institute Leadership Center in Chiang Mai, Thailand. We wanted to allow our students to learn about and share in this wonderful and very important day of Thanksgiving and Prayer established by some of the first pioneers to the new world of America, and proclaimed as a national holiday by Presidents of the United States. Of course, our students knew very, little about the day and even less about its *true* meaning.

Today I also gave a sermon about Thanksgiving Day. Here are some excerpts from that sermon. It is important for US ALL to be reminded how important it is to give thanks to God for our many, many blessings; and especially for the FREEDOMS we Americans enjoy.

Thanksgiving to God

Sermon by Leon Sexton on 29 November 2003 in Chiang Mai, Thailand

Thursday we celebrated a day called “Thanksgiving Day”. This day is observed once a year in the US and Canada as a day of thanksgiving and prayer to Almighty God – God of Heaven and Earth; who gives us all we possess, including our freedom to worship Him. Not everyone has this freedom. Some are persecuted and even killed because they believe in an Almighty God and His Son and our Savior and King, Jesus Christ.

In **China** non-state approved Christian churches cannot meet freely. Non-approved worship is forbidden.

In Communist **Laos**, Mr. Ming (who was here visiting us for the FOT) told me that he must be careful in the countryside preaching the gospel because sometimes superstitious people will attack Christians and burn their houses.

In **Burma**, Bibles are burned by the draconian military oligarchy and there is a ban on the construction of any new church buildings. When I was in Myitkyina, the Capitol of Kachinland several years ago, the police came and broke up our Sabbath worship service in the home of a Church of God member because they said. “the westerner (meaning me) is forbidden to preach”.

In **Malaysia**, a Muslim faces arrest and imprisonment if he or she converts to Christianity.

In **Indonesia**, Christians have been slaughtered and churches burned in “ethnic cleansing” raids by non-Christians.

In **Vietnam** and **Cambodia**, Christian activities are carefully monitored and Christian missionary work suppressed.

In **India**, 2 states (Gujarat and Tamil Nadu) have recently passed laws against “forced conversion of Hindus”. But in reality, just about any evangelistic activity on the part of Christians could be labeled “forced conversion” and those preaching or passing out literature arrested.

In **Sri Lanka**, persecution of Christians is on the increase, fanned by flames of fervor of the Buddhist clergy incited by those who want to use religion for political purposes.

But our school is in Thailand. In **Thailand**, so far, we can teach God’s Holy Word peacefully because of the religious freedom enjoyed by the Thai people. This is because ALL religions are protected, and even supported, by the person of the King himself. This kind of religious freedom cannot be found anywhere in Central, South or Southeast Asia. In fact, the freedom of religion we appreciate here in Thailand is only rivaled by that of the United States where freedom of religion is protected and guaranteed by constitutional law. In fact, one of the main reasons we chose to start the Legacy School in Thailand was because of the religious freedom in this country.

Freedom to worship God as we see fit is one of the most important building blocks of the American nation. The federal government is forbidden to enact any law concerning interference with the conduct of any specific religion.

But many people in America, who hate the God of the Bible, would like to see this changed and are now having their way in America. They want to take God OUT OF SOCIETY and remove Him from GOVERNMENT and SCHOOLS. And they are succeeding!

Recently, a monument of the 10 Commandments was removed by federal officers from an Alabama courthouse because God-haters said it was a violation of the constitution of the United States. If that is true, why did the founding fathers of the United States of America *PURPOSLY* PUT GOD INTO THE FOUNDING DOCUMENTS AND AMERICAN PRESIDENTS CONSTANTLY INVOKE HIS NAME – THEN AND TODAY!???

American Law is BASED on the Laws as given by God in the Bible! How can the 10 Commandments be removed from American court houses?

The truth is – the God-haters are winning! They hate God because they do not want Him to rule over them. They hate Him and His Laws because the Laws of God EXPOSE their sins. They want to continue to live their sinful lifestyles and want to be accepted as “GOOD”! God exposes their hypocrisy and they hate Him for it!! These same people call Thanksgiving Day “*Turkey Day*” because they do not want to acknowledge that we should give thanks to God. So far, the majority of American people STILL believe in God and faithfully join in thanking God for his mercy and blessings. But this is declining rapidly.

If we examine the Thanksgiving proclamations by 3 Presidents of the United States: George Washington, the 1st President; Abraham Lincoln, the 16th President; and George W. Bush, the current President; we can see that these men ACKNOWLEDGE that Americans are to humbly give thanks individually and collectively as a people and nation for all the blessings they receive. I have highlighted certain phrases in their proclamations that you will read in the following:

General Thanksgiving
By the PRESIDENT of the United States of America
A PROCLAMATION

“WHEREAS it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly to implore His protection and favour; and Whereas both Houses of Congress have, by their joint committee, requested me "to recommend to the people of the United States a DAY OF PUBLICK THANKSGIVING and PRAYER, to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many and signal favors of Almighty God, especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness:"

“NOW THEREFORE, I do recommend and assign THURSDAY, the TWENTY-SIXTH DAY of NOVEMBER next, to be devoted by the people of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being who is the beneficent author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be; that we may then all unite in rendering unto Him our sincere and humble thanks for His kind care and protection of the people of this country previous to their becoming a nation; for the signal and manifold mercies and the favorable interpositions of His providence in the course and conclusion of the late war; for the great degree of tranquility, union, and plenty which we have since enjoyed;-- for the peaceable and rational manner in which we have been enabled to establish Constitutions of government for our safety and happiness, and particularly the national one now lately instituted; -- for the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed, and the means we have of acquiring and diffusing useful knowledge;-- and, in general, for all the great and various favours which He has been pleased to confer upon us.

“And also, that we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations and beseech Him to pardon our national and other transgressions;-- to enable us all, whether in publick or private stations, to perform our several and relative duties properly and punctually; to render our National Government a blessing to all the people by constantly being a Government of wise, just, and constitutional laws, discreetly and faithfully executed and obeyed; to protect and guide all sovereigns and nations (especially such as have shewn kindness unto us); and to bless them with good governments, peace, and concord; to promote the knowledge and practice of true religion and virtue, and the increase of science among them and us; and, generally to grant unto all mankind such a degree of temporal prosperity as He alone knows to be best.

“GIVEN under my hand, at the city of New-York, the third day of October, in the year of our Lord, one thousand seven hundred and eighty-nine.”

G. Washington

Abraham Lincoln's Proclamation Establishing Thanksgiving Day

October 3, 1863

“The year that is drawing towards its close, has been filled with the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies. To these bounties, which are so constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the source from which they come, others have been added, which are of so extraordinary a nature, that they cannot fail to penetrate and soften even the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever watchful providence of Almighty God. In the midst of a civil war of unequalled magnitude and severity, which has sometimes seemed to foreign States to invite and to provoke their aggression, peace has been preserved with all nations, order has been maintained, the laws have been respected and obeyed, and harmony has prevailed everywhere except in the theatre of military conflict; while that theatre has been greatly contracted by the advancing armies and navies of the Union. Needful diversions of wealth and of strength from the fields of peaceful industry to the national defense, have not arrested the plough, the shuttle, or the ship; the axe had enlarged the borders of our settlements, and the mines, as well of iron and coal as of the precious metals, have yielded even more abundantly than heretofore. Population has steadily increased, notwithstanding the waste that has been made in the camp, the siege and the battle-field; and the country, rejoicing in the consciousness of augmented strength and vigor, is permitted to expect continuance of years, with large increase of freedom.

“No human counsel hath devised nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy.”

“It has seemed to me fit and proper that they should be solemnly, reverently and gratefully acknowledged as with one heart and voice by the whole American people. I do therefore invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next, as a day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens. And I recommend to them that while offering up the ascriptions justly due to Him for such singular deliverances and blessings, they do also, with humble penitence for our national perverseness and disobedience, commend to his tender care all those who have become widows, orphans, mourners or sufferers in the lamentable civil strife in which we are unavoidably engaged, and fervently implore the interposition of the Almighty Hand to heal the wounds of the nation and to restore it as soon as may be consistent with the Divine purposes to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquility and Union.”

“In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand, and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

“Done at the city of Washington, this third day of October, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and of the independence of the United States the eighty-eighth.”

A. *Lincoln*

President George W. Bush's proclamation of November 27, 2003

as Thanksgiving Day:

“Each year on Thanksgiving, we gather with family and friends to **thank God for the many blessings He has given us, and we ask God to continue to guide and watch over our country.**”

“Almost 400 years ago, after surviving their first winter at Plymouth, the Pilgrims celebrated a harvest feast to give thanks. George Washington proclaimed the first National Day of Thanksgiving in 1789, and Abraham Lincoln revived the tradition during the Civil War. Since that time, our citizens have paused **to express thanks for the bounty of blessings we enjoy** and to spend time with family and friends. In want or in plenty, in times of challenge or times of calm, we always have reasons to be thankful.

“America is a land of abundance, prosperity and hope. We must never take for granted the things that make our country great: a firm foundation of freedom, justice, and equality; a belief in democracy and the rule of law; and our fundamental rights to gather, speak and worship freely.

“These liberties do not come without cost. Throughout history, many have sacrificed to preserve our freedoms and to defend peace around the world. Today, the brave men and women of our military continue this noble tradition. These heroes and their loved ones have the gratitude of our nation.

“On this day, we also remember those less fortunate among us. They are our neighbors and our fellow citizens, and we are committed to reaching out to them and to all of those in need in our communities.

“This Thanksgiving, we again give thanks for all of our blessings and for the freedoms we enjoy every day. Our founders thanked the Almighty and humbly sought His wisdom and blessing. May we always live by that same trust, and may God continue to watch over and bless the United States of America.”

“NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE W. BUSH, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim Thursday, November 27, 2003, as a National Day of Thanksgiving. I encourage Americans to gather in their homes, places of worship, and community centers to share the spirit of understanding and prayer and to reinforce ties of family and community.

“IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-first day of November, in the year of our Lord two thousand three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-eighth.”

George W. Bush

These 3 proclamations demonstrate a sincere and humble attitude. One of the most important principles of righteous leadership is to humbly accept that *ALL GOOD THINGS COME FROM GOD* and that there is nothing we possess; whether position, wealth or spiritual gifts that we may “think” that we have, somehow, gotten through our own efforts alone.

But what happens when an individual, nation or government FORGETS that God is the Almighty Provider and Source of all our blessings? What happens when that same individual, nation or government ACTUALLY and DELIBERATELY takes God out of government, schools and the

judgment seat? What happens when God no longer enjoys the paramount position in the minds and hearts of the people? What happens when people learn to *HATE* God?

The Bible **WARNINGS** are clear. God's blessings – ALL His blessings - will be removed, and that nation will lose ALL their freedoms and become SLAVES to some other nation.

Read the entirety of **Deuteronomy 7 and 8**. These chapters contain a chilling and dire warning by the mouth of God Himself!

The choice is ours. We can choose God and live or we can choose to reject God and die.

These choices are being made right now in the United States of America. The God-haters have pulled out all stops to remove God's name FOREVER from the national collective consciousness of the American people. The results of these choices are clearly outlined in the Holy Bible.

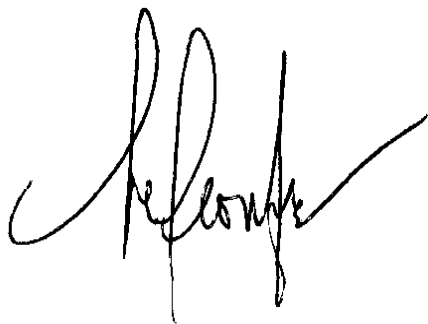
Let God's words in Deuteronomy not only be a warning to America, but to all other individuals, peoples and nations who refuse to worship and obey Him and His Son, King Jesus.

Amen

Well, that's it. This sermon was given to our students and local church members – all non-Americans. But the words of warning in Deuteronomy were aimed at the people of the U.S. and Britain in particular. And, if we in the Church of God are wise, we too, will heed these words. Let's not allow the cares of this world to cause us to forget the kindness and caring of the Great and Benevolent God who watches over us and provides for our every need. And let us not forget the incredible freedoms with which He has blessed us through the efforts of the men who founded the American nation. George Washington knew who the source of freedom was. Abraham Lincoln remembered. And today, George W. Bush is humble enough to acknowledge the grace and blessings of the Great Benefactor.

They remembered to thank Him. Did we?

In Service to the King of Kings,



WHAT IS LEGACY INSTITUTE?

LEGACY INSTITUTE is a private, non-profit, charitable foundation and is not affiliated with any human church organization. Legacy Institute seeks to serve and help mankind in the spirit and example of our Lord Jesus Christ. His instructions were to freely give. This means without discrimination and without prejudice. Your donations to Legacy Institute are tax deductible in the USA.

Leon Sexton