

December 3, 2005

Dear Friend:

**Glorious Past**

## OUR NATION'S GODLY HERITAGE

### Connecticut's Godly Origins — Established According to God

The Fundamental Orders of Connecticut, dating from January 14, 1639 served as the very first state constitution of the colonies. Creating a provisional government, The Fundamental Orders later became a source of inspiration for the framers of the Constitution. They are filled with references to the Scriptures and an implicit faith in God. These words from the Preamble reveal the godly heritage of Connecticut's Founders:

*" Forasmuch as it has pleased the Almighty God by the wise disposition of His divine providence so to order and dispose of things that we the inhabitants and residents ... well knowing when a people are gathered together the Word of God requires, that to mention the peace and union of such a people there should be an orderly and decent government established according to God, to order and dispose of the affairs of all the people at all seasons as occasion shall require ... We enter into combination and confederation together, to maintain and preserve the liberty and purity of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus which we now profess ... which according to the truth of the said Gospel is now practiced among us; as also in our civil affairs to be guided and governed according to such laws, rules, orders and decrees."*

In addition, many godly men were among the early leaders of Connecticut. One example is Colonel Abraham Davenport, a leader in the legislature. On May 19, 1780, an unusual phenomenon occurred over New England that is still discussed today. The skies grew extraordinarily black and the birds ceased their singing, causing many to believe that the Day of the Lord had arrived. Some were fearful and frightened, but Davenport, in session with the legislature in Hartford was calm. When asked if the leaders should adjourn to prepare to meet the Lord, he replied, *" I am against an adjournment. The day of judgment is either approaching, or it is not. If it is not, there is no cause of an adjournment: if it is, I choose to be found doing my duty. I wish therefore that candles may be brought."* The Connecticut legislature continued their work.

## PRESIDENTIAL QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

*" The whole inspiration of our civilization springs from the teachings of Christ and the lessons of the prophets. To read the Bible for these fundamentals is a necessity of American life."*  
-- Herbert Hoover

## ONE NATION UNDER GOD: THE HISTORY OF PRAYER IN AMERICA

### The Incredible Story of Eddie Rickenbacker by James P. Moore

Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, there was no one more qualified for the U.S. Government to send around the world to inspect American air units to assess their readiness than Rickenbacker. Having returned from a tour of air bases in Britain where he also conferred with Churchill, Rickenbacker flew directly to Washington to meet with Secretary of War Henry Stimson who lost no time in sending him out to the Pacific in the fall of 1942. Taking off from Hawaii in a B-17 bomber, Rickenbacker and seven other men realized midway through the flight that their faulty navigational equipment had taken them hundreds of miles off course. With little fuel left, they ditched the massive bomber in the ocean some 600 miles to

the north of the Samoan Islands. Among the floating wreckage the men were able to construct three makeshift rafts, holding on for dear life, hoping that somehow the Allies would find them before Japanese reconnaissance planes did, that is, if anyone would find them at all. Through it all, they watched as one of their own, Sergeant Alex Kaczmarczyk, died from injuries he incurred.

From the outset Rickenbacker became the leader of the group, reminding the men of his own past brushes with death. But it was also clear that the dangers and logistics this time were far more harrowing.

For the next twenty-two days the men floated totally exposed to the elements as they carefully divided four oranges among themselves, the only food left from the crash. The heat, the salt, and the hunger became relentless. "Daytimes we prayed for the coolness of the nights; nights we craved the sun," Rickenbacker would remember.

Each morning and evening the men pulled their rafts together to pray "frankly and humbly" for deliverance. Private First Class Johnny Bartek before the crash had grabbed his small New Testament that also contained the Psalms and fastened it into one of his pockets. Finding solace in the psalms, the men would read some of the same passages of David's prayers over and over again, words that had particular meaning for them:

*"Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? Or, What shall we drink? Or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? ... For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.*

Eddie Rickenbacker realized that throughout his life he had been anything but a religious man, but under these circumstances prayer never seemed to be more important. After a few days afloat, he and the men soon found that by singing hymns after their prayer service they were able to release something in their minds and that the talk for the first time became intensely personal. By the end of the first week, however, one or two who had been most fervent, became backsliders. Because their prayers were unanswered within twenty-four to forty-eight hours, they condemned the Lord for His failure to save them. They wanted deliverance immediately. Nonetheless, the rest went on praying with deep-felt hope.

Rickenbacker never gave into feelings of despair, pointedly remembering that "*frankly and humbly, we prayed for deliverance.*" It was on the eighth day, however, another endurance test in the midst of the "hot, flat calm" that he and the men found some visible sign that all was not lost. Minutes after they had finished their morning prayers, Rickenbacker laid back on his raft, pulling his cap over his eyes to doze off for a few moments. Without warning a seagull landed on his head, and with careful, unhurried precision he grabbed the bird's legs in his bare hands. Not only did the bird provide the men with immediate food, bones and all, but Rickenbacker successfully used the bird's intestines as bait to catch fish, later recounting in detail how "*that seagull kept us alive.*"

Given the prominence of Rickenbacker, the U.S. military had spent considerable resources in executing an all out effort to find signs of the plane's wreckage. After a naval pilot finally cited the remaining wreckage and then circled the rafts to identify the men on the twentieth day of their ordeal, he called home base, and a ship was sent to pick up the men the next morning.

The fifty-two year old Rickenbacker unfolded his latest tale to a clearly riveted American public. From media interviews to congressional hearings, Rickenbacker found himself in great demand, and soon was pressed by his admirers to chronicle his experience in a book that he decided to call *Seven Came Through*.

He also provided a series of recommendations for the U.S. armed services to meet minimum requirements for survival equipment and provisions on board military aircraft in the event of future emergencies. Many

of them were introduced immediately. At the same time Rickenbacker did not forget the role of Divine Providence in his personal odyssey and proceeded to write a prayer of gratitude that was widely circulated to the troops and to Americans on the home front.

*" O Lord, I thank thee for the strength and blessings thou hast given me, and Even though I have walked through the valley of the shadow of death, I feared no evil, for thy rod and thy staff comforted me even unto the four corners of the world. I have sinned, O Lord, but through thy mercy thou hast shown me the light of thy saving grace.*

*In thy care we are entrusting out boys and girls in the Services scattered throughout the entire world, and we know that in thee they are finding their haven of hope. Be with our leaders, Lord; give them wisdom to lead us to a spiritual victory, as well as a physical one. And until that day, be with those at home strengthen them for whatever may lie ahead. Be with our enemies, O Lord, and through the light of thy divine grace, may they re-consecrate themselves to thy service as we are re-consecrating ourselves, so all peoples of the world will sing in unison ' Glory to God in the Highest,' as only through thee can we realize our hopes for peace everlasting. In Jesus' name I ask it. Amen."*

This excerpt is drawn from *One Nation Under God: The History of Prayer in America* by James P. Moore, Jr. published on November 1, 2005. More information can be found on <http://www.1nug.com/>.

## Energetic Present

### PRAYER REQUESTS

As concern over the issue of border security remains high, pray for the President and others who are working to bring reform to our immigration laws and border security – that they will discern the very best course of action.

As President Bush and advisors work on strategy for victory in Iraq, pray for the continued growth of freedom and democracy there as security forces grow stronger and the nation prepares for elections on December 15. Pray for our troops as they continue to support and train Iraqi forces, asking God to protect and empower each one. Pray for their families and loved ones to be comforted and encouraged for their sacrifices during the holiday season.

Pray for the President as he welcomes to the White House Austrian Chancellor Wolfgang Schuessel on December 8. The two leaders will discuss the Chancellor's upcoming Presidency of the European Council and the way ahead for transatlantic cooperation as well as advancing freedom and democracy, increasing prosperity and economic development, and fighting terrorism around the world.

As Christmas festivities at the White House begin this week, pray for President and Mrs. Bush as they welcome thousands of guests to a great variety of Christmas celebrations. These will include employees, troops, White House staff and their families. Pray that God will be honored and glorified in each of these and that hearts will be drawn to Him.

As President Bush joins leaders around the world in observing World AIDS Day, pray that many more people will get involved in learning more about this, the greatest humanitarian crisis of our day, and that all Americans will support the fight against AIDS which orphans 6,000 children a day.

Pray for the members of Congress as they continue their Thanksgiving break that they will return with renewed energy and wisdom to manage concerns like the renewal of the Patriot Act which is set to expire

soon. Pray also for the Senate Judiciary Committee as they prepare for confirmation hearings for both the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals and the nomination of Judge Samuel Alito.

Pray for those working to bring rebuild homes, services and infrastructure in the city of New Orleans and to the entire Gulf Coast, asking God to bring His justice to the region, providing relief and support to every person still displaced and homeless. Pray also for ministries that seek to bring the love and compassion of Jesus Christ that God's love will be powerfully displayed.

As the nation observes Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day on December 7, give thanks for the many lives that were sacrificed that day and pray for all veterans who gave faithfully during all past military conflicts, praying that they will experience the blessing of God and the gratitude of their country.

## Challenging Future

### WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT ON AMERICA'S STRENGTH

*" The Thanksgiving holiday reminds us that, 'to whom much is given, from him much will be required.' As we count our blessings, we are mindful of the need to share our blessings and gifts with others, and America is moved to compassionate action. This compassionate spirit was seen again this year, when Americans rallied to help their neighbors in need after the destruction caused by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. We pray for continued strength as we rebuild these communities and return hope to our fellow citizens."*

– George W. Bush

Serving God and Country,

*Chaplain Ken*

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