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Patriotism and God

By Joyce C. Lock

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When I hear our National Anthem, it still brings tears to my eyes. It was not that long ago that I spoke to an elder in regard to the lack of patriotism among our youth. His response was that every generation expresses such concerns. But, something always happens to change it. September 11th might have been just the horror to awaken patriotism in the hearts of this generation.

Patriotism is a good thing, to recognize that each of us is part of a bigger community (a people we cherish, honor, and love); valuing life, freedom of religion, pursuit of happiness ... things that reach the depths of our soul (treasures money, power, and greed can not buy or fabricate).

God is not against any of these. Though, we cannot hide our heads in the sand; letting people think patriotism, alone, will solve all that ails us as a nation.

Flying our country's flag is representative of our values; a visible show of patriotism, emotional support for those we love, an expression of our unity, honoring our dearly departed, etc. But, doing so brings no power to change our future. If we truly believed in God's provision for healing our land, we would come near flying the Christian flag; to encourage all to give God back His throne, within our hearts and lives (which is all He really wants, anyway).

While we open our heart and door to opportunities to make a difference, there is only one real solution to fixing the world's problems. As long as we allow people to think there is another way, our efforts are like striving against the wind.

God gave His terms for doing what is otherwise impossible ...

"If my people, which are called by my name,

shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face,
and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven,

and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

2 Ch. 7:14

Changing the world begins by, first, changing ourselves. Only then do we have God's promise that He will heal our land, other's land, and the world. The lost are no to blame. To continue to ignore that, to not face the truth of the condition of the world, to not hold ourselves personally accountable for our part ... times will only get worse.

God can not continue to bless America when we do not follow His leading. Scripture does not even grant us the right to claim the name 'Christian' except we are, first, His disciple (Acts 11:26). God does not ask us to be perfect or even good enough. In fact, His requirements are really very simple.

"He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good;

and what doth the Lord require of thee,
but to do justly, and to love mercy,

and to walk humbly with thy God?"

Micah 6:8

Whatever flag you are waving, make sure God is given first place.
You have been given the power to change your world.
It is up to you what you do with it.

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Joyce C. Lock is a published author, poet, and columnist. In addition, she founded and maintains the email ministries "Heavenly Inspirations" <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/HeavenlyInspirations/> and "Share a Smile" <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/smilesaring/> . Joyce's writings encourage us in our relationship with God and each other.

Patriotism and Creativity

By Maricon Williams

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According to George William Curtis, "A man's country is not a certain area of land, of mountains, rivers, and woods, but it is a principle and patriotism is loyalty to that principle".

All through history and time immemorial, the domineering theme in art and literature is patriotism. We recall during times of war that the love for the country is a stirring engine to amalgamate men against their invaders. It is like speaking the unspoken language of unity.

The past trails still have shadows in the present. Images, biographies, stories of great leaders and soldiers are well preserved not only in the museum but also in visual arts galleries. The works of great painters and sculptures like Michelangelo and Da Vinci are still exhibited. It is still open both for artistic and historical purposes. Walt Whitman's poem: Oh Captain, My Captain!, is a subtle attack to the war then existing. A number of poems, songs and short stories made during those times have common denominator and this is patriotism.

Probably, the most memorable patriotic art are war posters. Several have been made then to recruit men to join the army and defend their state. Example of this is the Lady Freedom, which is a World War 1 recruiting poster.

Today, patriotic art is everywhere - clothes, automobiles, movies and the net - practically everywhere your eyes can set on. The unleashed creativity becomes more helpful in commending great people, places and events which have contoured our heritage – in the revelation of the momentum toward the love for our country!

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