

American Decency Association

PO Box 202, Fremont, MI 49412 231-924-4050 www.americandecency.org

Encouraging Christians to guard their hearts

March 2010

Prayer and a Petition



Last week an 89 year old senior saint came into our office and asked with earnestness if we would help her launch a petition to the President of the United States.

She was saddened that in 2009 President Obama had taken a low profile approach to the National Day of Prayer that has been favorably and nearly unanimously recognized by preceding U.S. Presidents.

Knowing that our country's only true source of help comes from God, we are beginning this petition drive to urge President Obama to personally and publicly observe and honor the National Day of Prayer.

The idea for the petition was birthed by a woman just a few days short of

her 90th birthday and written by a 20 year old young man. Without God's touch upon this humble but timely petition, it will be in vain.

The Petition to President Obama reads as follows:

We, the undersigned, do encourage, promote, and request the President's public observance of May 6, 2010 as the National Day of Prayer. Even as we recognize the President's governance over citizens of every religion and of no religion, we adduce the examples of the First Continental Congress, Abraham Lincoln, and many past administrations in support of the propriety and recognized necessity of a public "day of humiliation, fasting and prayer."

In light of the events of the past year which encompass every area of every life, from national security to the economy, we anticipate that the president will be an example of gratitude for the sustenance of our nation and reliance on God for the continued protection and advancement of our society.

As this past year has been of particular political interest to both sides of the aisle, a day of unity in prayer and meditation for the state of this country can provide a welcome harmony and recognition of the need for divine direction.

Thank you for your time and attention to these comments.

God calls us, including those in authority over us, to honor Him. In 2 Chronicles 12:1-7 Rehoboam "forsook the law of the LORD, and all Israel with him." As a result the Lord tells Rehoboam, "you have forsaken Me and therefore I also have left you..." Yet when the leaders and king of Israel humbled themselves and turned to the Lord, He showed mercy.

We ask you to join with us in this call to our nation's leadership for prayer. May this petition spread far and wide. Download the petition at www.americandecency.org or call 888-733-2326 for a copy of this petition.

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Holiness

by Keith A. Mathison



In the early centuries of the church's existence, Christian apologists would sometimes appeal to the distinctively holy lives of Christians as evidence for the truth of Christianity. Would such an appeal be of any use today? According to numerous surveys, the behavior of professing Christians is not discernibly different from the behavior of those who profess other religions or no religion at all. The phrase one often hears on the lips of pagans who observe contemporary Christian behavior is: "The church is full of hypocrites." This should not be. We worship a holy God who calls His people to be holy and who has provided the means by which they may be holy.

The problem of lax and hypocritical Christianity is not a new one, and one of the best treatments of the entire subject is a classic written by J.C. Ryle (1816-1900) ... Ryle was a deeply committed and non-compromising evangelical Christian. In fact, Charles Spurgeon referred

to him as an "evangelical champion." ...

I first read Ryle's *Holiness* some twenty years ago. The book was deeply convicting and made a lasting impact on my thinking. Ryle's work is convicting because he does not appeal to silly gimmicks and other manmade answers to the problem of sin. He appeals over and over to Scripture, to the Word of the living God, and he drives the Word of God home through careful and direct application. If you are complacent in your sin and do not want to be disturbed in your enjoyment of it, do not read Ryle. This is a book about the necessity of sanctification, the necessity of holiness. ... It is a book for those who want to move beyond milk and get to the meat of the Word.

Frankly, some older Christian books are difficult to read because of the style of writing that was common in previous ages. ... Ryle does not fall into that category. ... He writes with such an intensity and passion that the reader cannot easily become bored. ...

One of the most prevalent errors made when discuss-

ing holiness is to slide into the view that we are somehow justified before God by our holiness. Ryle is careful to observe throughout this book the distinction between sanctification and justification. Justification is by faith alone in Christ alone. But those who have been justified bear the fruit of the Spirit and grow in holiness. In other words, they are sanctified by God. They are now to love Christ and the things He loves. ...

Whether you have been a Christian for ten months or ten years, I encourage you to read Ryle's *Holiness*. His words will exhort you, convict you, encourage you, and challenge you. His chapters will drive you to dig into the Scriptures, and there you will see that holiness is not optional for the Christian. We are to strive for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord (Heb. 12:14). We are to walk by the Spirit and not gratify the desires of the flesh (Gal. 5:16). We are to love the Lord because He first loved us (1 John 4:19) and love our neighbor as ourselves (Matt. 22:39).

[Taken from *Tabletalk*, December 2009, Ligonier Ministries. Written by Keith A. Mathison.]

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