



Celebrating the 250TH Anniversary of Our Nation

Psalm 33:12

Lake Arrowhead Church, Waleska, Georgia
©Monty Watson – July 5, 2026

CELEBRATING THE 250TH ANNIVERSARY OF OUR NATION

Psalm 33:12

“Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord” (Psalm 33:12, NIV).

When George Washington took the oath to become America’s first president, “hundreds of eyewitnesses saw Washington lay his hands on God’s Word and kiss its pages.”¹

Historian Robert Morgan writes, “The founders of the United States of America revered the Bible because it reflected their awareness of God’s authority over the nations. Washington did not place his hand on the Declaration of Independence or the Constitution of the United States, as hallowed as those documents are. Nor did he kiss the pages of any other religious or secular tome. It was the Bible that sanctified the moment ... The Bible made America.”²

This weekend is the 250th anniversary of our nation. This weekend, we wave flags and grill hot dogs. We enjoy fireworks and sing “I’m proud to be an American!” This weekend, we celebrate our 250th anniversary with feelings of pride, feelings of gratitude, and feelings of concern. We love our country. We’re grateful for freedom. But we know that all is not well in our nation. So, with these feelings of pride and feelings of concern, *how should we, as Christians, celebrate the 250th anniversary of our nation?*

Looking at the state of our union raises a controversial question. Is America a Christian nation? Yes or no does not adequately answer that question. It’s more complicated than that. In fact, yes or no fall on the extreme edges of the political spectrum. To answer the question, we must look at the history of our founding.

Officially, the United States is not a Christian nation.³ Our Founders stopped short of establishing Christianity as the official religion of our nation. Why?

The Founders looked at the marriage of the Roman Catholic Church and many European governments and how in every case that marriage diluted the Gospel and power corrupted the church. Since many of the first Americans came from Great Britain, they learned a lesson from the civil wars in their own country. The King or Parliament often dictated oppressive laws on the church, and pastors who refused to conform were banned from the church, and in some cases, severely persecuted.⁴ The Founders knew that the marriage of church and state always dilutes the Gospel and power always corrupts the church.⁵

That’s why our Founders stopped short of establishing Christianity as the official religion of our nation. Instead, the First Amendment reads, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” Not establishing and not prohibiting. Freedom of religion and freedom from religion.⁶

But on the other hand, the influence of Christianity on the founding of our nation is undeniable. In the 1700s, the dominant worldview was Christian, especially in Europe and Great Britain. And those who sailed across the Atlantic brought that worldview with them. Christianity provided a belief in God and humility that man had to look beyond for help. It provided an

understanding of sin and the need for laws to restrain that sin. Christianity also provided a moral code for a peaceful and civil society.

When it came to the personal faith of our Founders, the vast majority were Christian. Of the 55 delegates at the 1787 Continental Congress, were 28 Episcopalians, 8 Presbyterians, 7 Congregationalists, 2 Lutherans, 2 Dutch Reformed, 2 Methodists, 2 Catholics, and 3 Deists. Of the 55 delegates, 51 were Christian! Of the 13 colonies, 11 required a person to be a professing Christian to hold office. Christianity was the dominant worldview which formed our nation.⁷

After the Revolutionary War, in May of 1787, delegates gathered in Philadelphia to draft the Constitution. But differences of opinion led to quarrels and the convention stalled. After six weeks with little progress, a weary, 81-year-old Benjamin Franklin stood to make a motion. Franklin was far from being a born again Christian and vaguely could be called a Deist. When Franklin stood, this is what he said.

“As we grope in the dark for political truth, we have not once thought of humbly appealing to the Father of Lights to illuminate our understanding. In the beginning of our contest with Britain, when we were aware of the danger, we had daily prayers in this room for His divine protection. Our prayers were heard and graciously answered. All of us observed frequent instances of a superintending Providence in our favor. And *have we now forgotten our powerful friend?* ...

I have lived a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth – *that God governs in the affairs of men!* And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without his aid? We have been assured in the sacred writings (Franklin quoting Psalm 127), that *‘unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain.’* ... I beg to move that prayers, imploring the assistance of heaven, be held in this assembly every morning before we proceed to business.”⁸

Even though 51 of the 55 delegates were Christian, the Congress voted against prayer and the motion failed. But George Washington, presiding over the Congress, announced that a prayer service would be held on July 4. On that day, Rev. William Rogers cried out to God for help, and it was called the prayer that birthed the Constitution. Because a few days later came the words, “We, the People of the United States.” James Madison said it was impossible not to recognize the help of Almighty God.

“Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord” (Psalm 33:12, NIV).

There are too many quotes to mention of our Founders looking to God for help in establishing our nation.⁹ I highly recommend Robert Morgan’s book *100 Bible Verses that Made America*. It records how specific Bible verses shaped the thinking of our Founders at crucial moments in our history. Here are just a few examples of how God and His word influenced the thinking of our Founders.

John Adams said, “The Bible contains the most profound philosophy, the most perfect morality, and the most refined policy that was ever conceived on earth ... I believe it is the only system that will preserve our republic.”¹⁰

Patriot-physician Dr. Benjamin Rush said, “I do not believe that the Constitution was the offspring of inspiration, but that it is the work of Divine Providence.”¹¹

Noah Webster, who later compiled the first American dictionary, said, “No truth is more evident than that the Christian religion must be the basis of any government intended to secure the rights and privileges of a free people ... The Christian religion is the basis, or rather the source, of all genuine freedom in government ... I am persuaded that no civil government can exist and be durable without the controlling influence of Christianity.”¹²

In 1789, President George Washington declared the first day of thanksgiving and prayer. “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 implore his protection and favor ... (Therefore, I) recommend to the people of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer acknowledging with grateful hearts the many favors of Almighty God.”¹³

In 1884, Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Casey completed the Washington Monument by placing an aluminum capstone engraved with the words of Psalm 68. “Praise be to God!” At 555 feet, the Washington Monument towers above every other structure, and above all the speeches heard in Washington are the words “Praise be to God!” We see God’s word engraved all over Washington. The walls of the Lincoln Memorial contain 14 references to God. In the Rotunda of the U.S. Capitol, two of the massive paintings are prayer meetings and one is a baptism. The Ten Commandments hang inside the Supreme Court building. A bust of Moses is in the House of Representatives, along with the words “In God We Trust” above the speaker’s chair.¹⁴ God’s word is engraved all over Washington.

We celebrate the 250th anniversary of our nation with feelings of pride and feelings of concern. Sadly today, there is no consensus on who we are or what we should be. We are a divided nation. Democrat versus Republican. MAGA versus Progressive. Evangelical versus secular. “IN GOD WE TRUST” may be on our money, but the consensus of faith upon which our nation was founded no longer exists.

Christian author Natasha Crain confirms this reality when she writes. “As Christians, we must grapple not only with the result of worldviews shifting over time, but also with the increasing militance many are using to proactively push Christian values out of public life. *Today, Christianity is (criticized as) a morally offensive weed ... and it must be uprooted at all costs.*”¹⁵

The cultural reality is that we, as Christians, are in the minority. You may say that’s not true, and numerically you’re right. Statistically, Christians are in the majority, but when it comes to influence, we’re not. And here’s why.

According to the Pew Research Center, 62% of Americans identify as Christians. That includes people who are Christian in name only, who do not necessarily believe in the Bible or attend church. When the survey asked about church attendance, that number dropped to 29%. When the survey asked if a person believed that the Bible was the word of God, that Jesus rose from the dead, and that Jesus was the only way to God, only 10% held to a biblical worldview. So yes, 62% of Americans are Christians in name, but only 10% of the American population hold a biblical worldview that is theologically and morally based on the Bible.¹⁶

Again, we approach this weekend with feelings of pride and feelings of concern. ***So how should we, as Christians, celebrate the 250th anniversary of our nation?***

By thanking God for His blessings. “Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord” (Psalm 33:12, NIV). God blesses the nation that worships and honors Him. Our country is far from perfect. Yet, in spite of our sins and our flaws, it is obvious that God has blessed our nation these last 250 years. Yet too often, our prosperity fills us with arrogance instead of humility. How should we, as Christians, celebrate the 250th anniversary of our nation? With deep humility. “Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God” (1 Peter 5:6, NAS).¹⁷ And if we do, He will bless us. How should we celebrate? With gratitude. “Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good” (Psalm 107:1, NAS). Thank God for our freedom and thank God for His blessings.

So how should we celebrate? **By praying for God to heal our land.** We must acknowledge that our nation is flawed and that we need God’s help. There is so much that is broken in our country. We are a divided nation with an unimaginable chasm of opinion on what is right and wrong. Yes, we’re rich and powerful, but all is not well in our country. And we should fall to our knees and cry out to God for help.

When Dwight Eisenhower took the presidential oath, his hand rested on a Bible opened to 2 Chronicles 7:14.¹⁸ Following years of war, filled with death and sacrifice, Eisenhower chose this verse as the prayer of his presidency. What the Lord said to Israel applies to us as a nation as well. “If My people who are called by My name humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land” (2 Chronicles 7:14, NAS). As a nation, we are to call on His name. Humble ourselves. Seek His face. As a nation, turn from our wicked ways. Then He will heal our land.

How should we, as Christians, celebrate the 250th anniversary of our nation? **By speaking biblical truth to the issues of our day.**¹⁹ Jesus called us “the salt of the earth” and “the light of the world.” He said, “Let your light shine” (Matthew 5:13-16). That’s means influence. That’s means engaging our culture. The Lord said, “Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you and pray to the Lord on its behalf” (Jeremiah 29:7, NAS). “Seek the welfare of the city,” seek what’s best for the city “where I have sent you.”

According to Romans 13, God established government.²⁰ The Bible calls government “a minister of God.”²¹ And the purpose of government is to protect the innocent, execute justice, and work for the common good.

Yet too often today, politics is about party, personality, and power. But true politics is about shaping a culture. And as Christians, we have a responsibility to speak biblical truth to the issues of our day. Issues such as abortion, marriage, and gender. Issues such as immigration, economics, and war. Yet with our involvement, we must not become addicted to political power or guilty of political idolatry.

Albert Mohler, seminary president and reasoned voice on issues of faith and culture, warns us of this. He writes, “We might be tempted to look for rescue in political victory, thinking victory is only one election away ... While we must never demean the importance of elections nor diminish the responsible stewardship Christians have with their vote, we also dare not believe political

victory will secure ultimate and lasting peace. Rescue will not come by mere politics. We do not need a political movement. We need a theological movement ... Christians must not retreat nor find salvation in a false hope ... With every ounce of conviction we can muster through prayer, with unwavering courage ... we must continue to be faithful.”²²

And being faithful means speaking up, declaring God’s truth, voting for policies that are righteous and just, shaping our culture in a way that pleases God. Again, Jesus called us to be “the salt of the earth” and “the light of the world.” He said, “Let your light shine” (Matthew 5:13-16).

How should we, as Christians, celebrate the 250th anniversary of our nation? **By making the mission our priority.** Every astronaut who has flown into space and looked back at our planet has said the same thing.²³ From space there are no borders. As God looks at our planet He sees no borders, no races, and no religions, only one humanity in desperate need of salvation. And that reminds us of the words of Jesus. “For God so loved the world” (John 3:16). Jesus said, “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19, NAS). The priority of the Church is to share the Gospel around the world and across the street.

Of course, we must be engaged in the pressing issues of our day. Of course, we engage politically and we vote. But as Christian apologist Greg Koukl says, “Our most important weapon is not our voting power.”²⁴ Our greatest weapon, our greatest power, is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Save your loudest voice not for politics and not for Facebook. Save your loudest voice for sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16, NIV).

How should we, as Christians, celebrate the 250th anniversary of our nation? **We love our country, but we worship God!**

David warned, “Do not put your trust in princes, in human beings, who cannot save ... Blessed are those whose help is the Lord and whose hope is in the Lord” (Psalm 146:3, 5, NIV).²⁵

Years ago when I lived in Washington, DC, I heard Chuck Colson speak. As one of President Nixon’s advisors, Colson was convicted in the Watergate scandal and went to jail. While in prison, Colson became a Christian, and became a spiritual voice in our nation, speaking both biblically and prophetically.

At this conference, he told the audience that his favorite place to go in Washington was at the base of the Washington Monument. Colson described that vantage point. At the center of the Mall, at the center of the city, the Washington Monument stands 555 feet tall and is 142 years old. From the base of the Washington Monument, one can look to the west and see the Lincoln Memorial. Built in 1917, today it is 109 years old. Looking to the south one can see the Jefferson Memorial, which has stood for 83 years. Looking to the east one can see the U. S. Capitol, the seat of our democracy, which is 233 years old. Then one can look to the north and see the White House. Home of presidential power since 1792, the White House is 234 years old. Colson fondly described how looking at all those monuments stirred patriotism in his heart. He also admitted the excessive pride he felt being in Nixon’s circle of power. He called it addicting. He described how, for him, patriotism turned into vanity.

At the end of his speech, Colson said, “Today, when I visit Washington and stand at my favorite place, at the base of the Washington Monument, I look at the city with a Christian perspective. I have come to realize, and you must realize as well, that one day all of this will be gone. One day, those monuments will no longer stand. They are not eternal. Democracy is not eternal. The United States is not eternal. As grand as the values Washington represents, there is something grander – the kingdom of God! That is our only hope.”

And that’s exactly what Jesus said. “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36, NAS).

The Bible reminds us, “Our citizenship is in heaven, from which we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Philippians 3:20, NAS). We are citizens of a greater kingdom. We bow to a greater king. And we look to a greater Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

We love our country, but we worship God! David was the king of the nation, yet he understood that distinction and said, “God reigns over the nations, God sits on His holy throne” (Psalm 47:8, NAS).²⁶ David said, “Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are exalted as head above all” (1 Chronicles 29:11, ESV). And in Psalm 95, David said, “Come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker” (Psalm 95:6, NAS). ***Yes, we love our country, but we worship God!*** May that distinction be true of us.

A few months ago, a movie was released on the relationship between Benjamin Franklin and George Whitefield. Franklin was a newspaper publisher in Philadelphia, and Whitefield was the famous evangelist from England. The movie is called *A Great Awakening* and tells the story of the spiritual awakening in America in the mid-1700s. Historians say Whitefield “set the Colonies on fire.”²⁷ Crowds gathered by the tens of thousands wherever Whitefield preached, often in open fields. It was estimated that 80% of the population of the colonies heard Whitefield preach. And his message? The words of Jesus. “You must be born again.”²⁸ And tens of thousands came to Christ and a great spiritual awakening swept the colonies.

A hymn was specially written for the movie called “Awaken Us Today.”²⁹ It’s more than a song. It’s a prayer. It’s a prayer of surrender and a prayer calling on God to awaken our hearts. Listen closely to these words and make them your prayer today. **VIDEO**

So let’s pray to Him.

Lord, as we celebrate the 250th anniversary of our nation, we thank You for Your blessings. In spite of our sins and our failures, You have blessed us so greatly and so graciously. And we thank You.

We pray for You to heal our land. All is not well. We are a divided nation debating what is right and wrong. Today, we seek You, we confess to You, and beg You to help us. Please come and heal our land.

And Father, give us boldness to speak biblical truth to the issues of our day. Fill us with righteous hearts and righteous words. Give us courage to speak and to live in a way that honors You.

And may we never forget the mission. Over every other cause and every other issue, may the Gospel be our priority. Give us boldness to speak the name of Jesus, to point people to the cross, and to share the message of eternal life through Jesus Christ.

As celebrate America's anniversary, yes we love our country, but we only worship You! In the Lord's name, Amen.

NOTES

¹ Robert J. Morgan, *100 Bible Verses that Made America* (Nashville, TN: W Publishing Group, 2020), pages xix-xx. Referring to the Bible, Washington said, “The smiles of Heaven can never be expected on a nation that disregards the eternal rules of order and right” (page xx).

² *Ibid.*, pages xix-xx.

³ See Wayne Grudem, *Politics According to the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), pages 64-65.

⁴ Famous dissenters refusing to conform to the King’s dictates included John Bunyan, Matthew Henry, Richard Baxter, John Winthrop, Isaac Watts, John Wesley, Thomas Watson, and many others.

⁵ England is officially a Christian nation. But liberalism has rendered the Church of England impotent, and only 2% of the population bothers to attend church. This is an example of how codifying Christianity as the official religion of the nation does not guarantee a robust spiritual population.

⁶ The intent of the Founders was that government would not “compel religion” or “exclude religion.” See Grudem, pages 23-36.

⁷ The Founders repeatedly mentioned “the Creator” and referred to God as “Providence.”

⁸ Morgan, pages 113-115.

⁹ Morgan quotes numerous leaders acknowledging the necessity of God’s help in establishing our nation.

- John Winthrop, speaking of the new world, “The Lord will make it like that of New England. In the words of Jesus, a city on a hill ... We are commanded this day to love the Lord our God ... (and as we do), may the Lord our God bless us in this land” (page 17).
- Anglican pastor Jacob Duche was asked to lead the Continental Congress in prayer. His reading before the Congress was from Psalm 35, which says, “Plead my cause, O Lord, with those who strive with me, fight against those who fight against me” (page 63). Duche’s powerful prayer lasted ten minutes, in which he said, “O Lord our Heavenly Father ... be present, O God of wisdom, and direct the councils of this honorable assembly ... on the best and surest foundation ... may truth and justice, religious and piety prevail and flourish among the people” (page 63). In a letter to his wife Abigail, John Adams wrote, “I never saw a greater effect upon an audience. It seemed as if Heaven ordained that moment” (page 64).
- During the throes of the Revolutionary War, Samuel Adams stood before Congress and challenged their gloom and despair. “We have appealed to Heaven for the justice of our cause, and in Heaven we have placed our trust ... Let us still rely in humble confidence on Him ... We shall never be abandoned by Heaven while we act worthy of its aid and protection” (page 95).
- Established in the name of John Harvard as a school to train pastors, the student handbook for Harvard University reads, “Let every student be plainly instructed that the main end of his life and studies is to know God and Jesus Christ, which is eternal life ... the Lord only gives wisdom” (pages 20-21).
- Calvin Coolidge, “The foundation of our society and our government rest so much on the teachings of the Bible” (page xxi).
- Franklin Roosevelt, “We cannot read the history of our rise and development as a Nation without reckoning with the place the Bible has occupied in shaping our Republic” (page xxii).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, page xxi.

¹¹ This quote is from a letter written by Rush to fellow signer of the Declaration of Independence, Elias Boudinot, on July 9, 1788. The complete quote is as follows. “I do not believe that the Constitution was the offspring of inspiration, but I am as satisfied that it is as much the work of a Divine Providence as any of the miracles recorded in the Old and New Testament.”

¹² The quote originates from Webster’s 1843 book, *A Collection of Papers on Political, Literary, and Moral Subjects*.

¹³ Morgan, page 125.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, page 228-230.

¹⁵ Natasha Crain, *Faithfully Different – Regaining Biblical Clarity in a Secular Culture* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2022), page 40.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pages 24-27.

¹⁷ “Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you” (James 4:10, ESV). If we humble ourselves before God, He will exalt us and He will bless us.

¹⁸ Morgan, page 284.

¹⁹ See Grudem, pages 55-64, as he writes about “significant Christian influence.” See pages 44-54, as he writes about doing evangelism and politics.

²⁰ See Grudem, pages 77-115.

²¹ See Romans 13:4.

²² R. Albert Mohler, Jr., *The Gathering Storm – Secularization, Culture, and the Church* (Nashville, TN: Nelson Books, 2020), pages 12-13, 14, 15.

²³ See Morgan on the experience of Apollo 8 crewman Bill Anders, pages 293-295.

²⁴ Greg Koukl, “The Faith of Our Fathers,” Stand to Reason, 2/28/2013.

²⁵ David also said, “It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man. It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in princes” (Psalm 118:8-9, NIV). He said two times. A lesson so important he repeated it. David also said, “Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God” (Psalm 20:7, ESV).

²⁶ “You are God in heaven. You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. In your hand are power and might, so that none can stand against you” (2 Chronicles 20:6, ESV).

²⁷ Morgan, page 34.

²⁸ Jesus’ words from John 3:7.

²⁹ “Awaken Us Today” – a hymn written for the movie *A Great Awakening*, Sight & Sound Films.

From the oceans, through the valleys
From the mainland to the shore
Let Your Kingdom be awakened
In the hearts of men once more
Call Your children into freedom
Captive souls to liberty
Come awaken, Holy Spirit!
Come awaken us today!

Love unending, grace unyielding
Tender mercies from thy throne
Brings the lost soul into families
Calls the wayward sinner home
Bring salvation, Great Redeemer
Holy fire fan to flame
Come restore us, come revive us
Come awaken us today!

I will serve Thee, Precious Jesus
Unto Thee I give my all
Lay my hands unto thy service
And my heart unto thy call
Perish every fond ambition
Lay aside all selfish gain
All forsaken for thy glory
Come awaken us today!

Wake, O sleeper, from your slumber!
Saints awaken, come to life!
Christ will rise and shine upon you
In His heavenly light divine
Like the sunrise in its dawning
Breaking darkness with new light
Rise upon us, King of glory
Come awaken us today!

For Your Kingdom, for Your glory
Come awaken us today!