
VIEWS LETTER

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AWD's Views, News & Other Things of Interest

November & December 2001

The Rotary Hoe

Here is another tractor-driving story by Gaylon Stamps

It was a dark spring Saturday morning on the High-Plains of Texas. It was dark because it was windy, and the slick fields in the country were blowing dirt. I don't remember any sunshine, so it may have been cloudy as well. Regardless, it was not your ideal day, "weather-wise."

Since it was Saturday, I didn't have to go to school. I remember getting up a little later than usual and noticed Dad was not at home. He had been working the graveyard shift at the plant and usually got home early in the morning while I was still in bed.

Pop was not in his bed. I asked mother where he was. She said, "He's on the tractor. He had to go to the field to stop some blowing dirt."

That's all I needed to hear. I figured I'd better get my britches on and go see if he needed some help.

I hopped on my bicycle (which I considered more my "horse" than my "bike") and whipped

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God, country gain fragile new toehold

By Kathleen Parker

One can't help notice the silence of atheists these days. Suddenly "God" is everywhere, as ubiquitous as American flags, spreading — as Dan Rather said in a spasm of simile-rapture to describe rumors following the Sept. 11 attacks — "like mildew in a damp basement."

War has that effect. There are no atheists in foxholes, we've always known. There were none in the World Trade Center on Sept. 11, we can guess. And now there are none anywhere to be found. America today is about God and country, but then it always has been. We just lost track.

We lost track when we evicted God from our public institutions and when we stopped honoring our nation with the songs and rituals that defined American childhood until a few decades ago. We of a certain age remember beginning each school day by pledging allegiance to the flag, singing *My Country, 'Tis of Thee* and, finally, reciting *The Lord's Prayer*.

We twitched and fidgeted because we were children. We mouthed words we couldn't pronounce and didn't understand. For years I thought we were "pegging legions" to "publix for witches," but no matter. We were united in song and prayer and a shared, if immature, understanding that we were a whole dedicated to a common purpose.

That unity of purpose has been resurrected through an unspeakable tragedy and expressed in the language of God and country such as we've not heard in my adult lifetime. Since terrorists brought down the twin towers and part of the

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Pentagon, we've repeatedly witnessed America's leaders praying, singing, pledging and asking the nation's citizen to join them.

Which is to say, our children must be awfully confused. Reared and educated in godless institutions that also scarcely acknowledge the importance of patriotism — watching adults sing songs they've never learned — they must wonder "wassup." It's as though America's adults belong to a secret society to which their children have never been exposed.

These thoughts have struck me over and over, beginning with the memorial service at the National Cathedral. As the audience sang *The Battle Hymn of the Republic* — joined by yours truly back home in the family room (confess: you did it, too) — it occurred to me that my son doesn't even know the words.

He and most other American children don't know that song or a half-dozen other patriotic tunes that are imprinted on older Americans' brains — for the simple reason that hardly anyone sings them anymore. Patriotism, meanwhile, is as unfamiliar as the alien notions that form the Taliban.

As with much of what's wrong with America, my (boomer) generation gets the credit. No one needs a rehash of that particular lesson. But thanks to our own World War II parents, we at least have a heritage to return to. We know the words when we need them; our children don't. We've been so overzealously protective of newcomers to and renegades from our traditional heritage — and fearful of offending anyone hungry for attention — that we've failed to pass on the very values that made us who and what we are.

"And what values might those be?" ask the cynics. We're a diverse, multicultural nation. Different values for different folks. Hey, it's all relative. Whatever.

The values are those you've heard over and over since Sept. 11. They're the values that prompted Americans to buy up every American flag in the country, to clog Manhattan's streets

looking for some way to help, to stand in line for hours to donate blood, to crowd churches and synagogues and other houses of worship to pray.

A friend told me she was trying to figure out what recent events meant to her. After some deliberation, she hit on a simple answer. "I figured it out, and it's really very succinct," she said. "I believe in God and I believe in my country."

From the beginning of American time, the two have been entwined and inseparable. Today, we seem to have no trouble seeing how necessary the one is to the other. By whatever name you call God — yes, including Allah — there's no extracting Him from our moments of greatest valor and our times of deepest despair.

Faith in God and devotion to country are values, however, that do not evolve from nothing. Both require nourishment and a continuity of commitment passed from one generation to the next. Our parents, most of whom had tasted war and paid the dues of freedom, gave us these values to which we now so readily return. We have a duty to do the same for our own children.

I don't know how we reconcile the legal separation of church and state required by law with the marriage of God and country demanded by our national psyche, but I'm sure we can figure out something.

If we're to win this war — sure to last into our children's futures — we have to reweave the rituals of God and country into our institutions. We can't expect children to understand and someday defend a heritage that they have never been given. ✧ †

Kathleen Parker is a syndicated columnist for Tribune Media Services and a member of USA TODAY'S board of contributors. This article came from Monday October 1, 2001 edition of USA TODAY.

You can discover what your enemy fears most by observing the means he uses to frighten you.
-Eric Hoffer, philosopher and author (1902-1983)

Harsh Words

Dr. James Dobson, Ph.D.

This is a paragraph from "FAMILY NEWS FROM DR. JAMES DOBSON July 2001.

Forgive my harsh words, but I do get frustrated at times. This is one of those tougher moments. I see so little willingness among believers to fight for what is decent and right. They remind me of something that was shared by Diet Eman, author of *Things We Couldn't Say*, with a member of the Focus on the Family staff. Diet told a story about a rail line that ran nearby and was used by the Nazis to transport boxcars jammed with Jews and other "undesirables." They were on their way to the death camps in the East. Many times, the trains were sidetracked for hours while the miserable people begged pitifully for food, water and mercy. There were no bathroom facilities for the journey, which could last four days or longer. Nearby, I'm told, was a small church located close enough to the rail line to hear the cries coming from within the boxcars. The church people attending services were deeply disturbed by these mournful "distractions," and so, they began singing more loudly so they wouldn't have to hear them. I wonder what the God of all compassion thought about His followers as they used their worship to drown out the calls for help from tortured people. ❖❖

The alarm sounded by the last U.S. Census Report has horrible indications. Marriages are way down and the family unit is dying. Dr. Dobson has been warning us for the past 24 years; his July 2001 newsletter says a lot about what has been going wrong right here at home in the USA.

Anyone that is interested should check it out. It can be found on his web page, (www.family.org) and if you are not equipped to get it off the net, let me know, and I'll send you a copy via "snail mail."

We are each given a soul that has mind, emotion and will—given a promise of eternal life by the very Creator that created us. What have we allowed to happen to our country, our heritage and ourselves? Why? Is it ➤

complacency, blind ambition, squeamish fear, or just what? We are systematically giving up our liberty day after day by ignoring the facts and just "singing a little louder." We are allowing evil to make inroads into what was once a great nation of God fearing people.

Is the comfort of our earth suits worth the depravity that we allow them to live in? I encourage you to get a copy of Dr. Dobson's newsletter, and I encourage you to standup and make some noise about some of the things that your government is doing that is in direct opposition to the health of the family unit.

If we continue to only sing louder when we see obvious injustice, we will eventually find ourselves singing on one of those trains headed for destruction. By then, we will have little or no strength left to fight and struggle for what is right.

Isn't our liberty worth the effort, the fight, and the blood that has already been shed for its sake? How can we be so ignorant and stupid not to notice what is happening? If we remain silent, we the people, are not doing our job. Are we to simply sing louder as our so-called and wrongly called democratic government destroys itself along with ourselves? The torment that we will receive if and when we allow our society to self-destruct will be justly deserved. ➤

Comment by AWD

Flying The Line After 911

By AWD

Going to work after the terrorist attack is more stressful and time consuming than before for me. This job was already one of dealing with stress as much as it was flying from point A to point B. Only now there is much more stress, and it doesn't seem to let up.

Before 9/11 I would show up 10 min. before scheduled push time. Now I am standing in the jet-way at least 30 minutes earlier; I make eye contact with each passenger as they board the airplane and offer a greeting. We need our passengers to feel comfortable about flying so they will continue to fly, and I need to make assessments about who is friend and who is foe.

During the boarding process some young men have assured me that I can count on them should the need arise, and I assure them that I will count on them. To give you a better idea of how I feel I have included a copy of a letter I wrote to the President.

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and spurred up the turn-row to where he was. While I waited for him to come back around to my corner, I chunked a few clods at imagined rabbits and was having a pretty good hunt! Likely, I also participated in the Olympic “Clod Throwing Distance Competition,” and won the contest “hands down.” It’s amazing what boys can imagine while killing time.

Finally, Pop came around to my corner and stopped the tractor. I climbed up. I sat between his legs and got in his way until he finally let me steer. Sometimes I would just hold my hands on the steering wheel with his and hope he would just let go. When he did, I was “flying solo”! It was a great feeling!

Pop had the rotary hoe hooked to the Moline tractor. A section of rotary hoe is two rows of spiked-wheels in a gang, about 3 inches apart, and about 4-feet wide. When pulled over the field, those spiked-wheels really stir up the dirt! Makes a field look like a garden.

This hoe had either 5 or 6 sections joined together to make one wide plow. The implement was used to break the crust of the ground after a hard rain, or to kill very small weeds in a field, or as on this day, to just stir up the ground so it wouldn’t blow so badly. That’s what we were doing out there... stopping erosion. It felt good to be helping with such an important task.

The “fun” thing about a rotary hoe is you can pull it fast! And in these conditions, and for this job, “the faster the better.” I think we had ‘er kicked up there to about 6 or 7 miles per hour and were really getting lots done!

Now this was the first time I’d ever steered with the hoe. I had always steered with the “one-way.” In fact, by this time I was even plowing with the Moline and the “one-way” by myself.

This hoeing was some pretty exciting tractor driving... especially at the corners. Pop taught me how to watch the draw bars when we turned to make sure we didn’t get the tire into that “cable-sized” rod which was attached to the very end of the outside gang. The word here was “Be

careful... and WATCH what you’re doing.” On one corner he even turned short enough for the tire to barely bump the rod. It made a terrible and even scary racket. He said, “If that tire grabs that rod, it could pull that hoe right up on top of you!” I knew I didn’t want to turn too short after THAT object lesson!

We made three or four rounds on the fair-sized field and Pop asked, “Rekon you could handle this by yourself?”

I must have had thoughts like... “Do bicycles get flats from runnin’ in the goat-heads?” Or, “Do cows slobber in the horse-tank when they get a drink?” But I simply replied, “Sure Pop. I can handle ‘er.”

We got to the number one corner and he instructed, “Just take it back to the house when you finish. Be careful goin’ through that gate. I just barely fits.”

“Ok, Pop. I’ll be careful.”

Pop watched me roll away stirring up the dirt like mama’s mixer in a bowl of dry flour, then hopped on my bike and headed to the house. I remember how funny I thought he looked.... “Big old Dad on that li’l old bike”.

I felt like a million bucks! It was grand! I could almost imagine that I was a REAL farmer now... driving that tractor all by myself... stopping the wind erosion.

I looked forward to a day of fast-tractor driving, but after just an hour or so, I noticed I was almost through! “Wow!” I thought, “This plow can really cover the country.”

Before I knew it, I was finished with the field. Time to go home. I headed the tractor for the gate.

Now to get to the gate, I had to hoe across another little 10-acre field that Pop hadn’t lain out to be hoed. As I noticed though, that field was just exactly like the one I’d just finished. I wondered, “Why hadn’t Dad hoed that field too?” I finally decided the reason was that it was across a little gully that would have been too rough to cross with the tractor going that fast.

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Growing Up With Two Older Brothers

By Brett Davis (*AWD's nephew*)

About seven years ago I lived in New Mexico in a small area called Tijeras just outside of Albuquerque. We were so far away from our school that my dad or mom would have to drive us for a half an hour just to get us to our bus stop, and then it would be another half-hour ride on the bus. Our elementary school was Edgewood. The school went all the way through the sixth grade so my older brother Clark was with me for one of my years at Edgewood. My oldest brother, Aaron, was in high school when I started school. He went to Moriarty High School and was a sophomore when I was just starting kindergarten.

My brother Clark, who is five years older than me, was always picking on me when I was young. I would always scream until Aaron came to my rescue. If Clark and I weren't fighting, we probably weren't with each other. Whenever Clark would go somewhere, he would never let me go. When I would ask him why I couldn't go, he would just say, "Because I said so." I would then run inside crying because the only person that would ever let me go anywhere with him was Aaron. The only reason I really cared was that we lived out in the woods and I wasn't allowed to go very far without one of my brothers.

Whenever Clark was around the house I was like his shadow; whatever he did, I did. That was just the way things were with him and me. One day we were sitting at the dinner table when we saw a snake just outside the kitchen window. Clark, being the snake lover that he is, ran outside to catch it. When he picked it up, it hissed like crazy. He ran and put it in the trashcan. I, of course, was right behind him the whole time. My dad had the video camera and was taping when my mom yelled, "Here comes another one."

"Where?" yelled Clark running around the corner.

"Right there!" said Mom pointing. It had just about crawled over my dad's foot and was ↗

hissing louder than the first one. Clark grabbed it and put it in the trash can with the other one. Clark was very lucky never to have come across a rattlesnake. All we had were bull snakes, bull snakes, bull snakes, and more bull snakes. I remember a time when Clark and I were walking down our long dirt driveway to get the mail, when my dad yelled, "Clark, snake!" from the side of the house. We both took off to where my dad had yelled. We caught it going down a hole, and my brother grabbed its tail and pulled.

"Go get me some gloves, Brett," he said, his face turning red from trying to pull the snake out of the hole.

"Where?" I asked. I took off to the garage to get the gloves. When I finally figured out where the gloves were, it had been several minutes. I then had to get a stool to reach the shelf where they sat. By the time I got back to my brother, it had been at least ten minutes, and he had long ago let go of the snake which we figured was at least five feet long. So, of course, he acted like it was my fault for not bringing the gloves fast enough. That was just the way my life was with Clark in New Mexico because to him everything was my fault.

My older brother Aaron was a lot nicer to me. He was always protecting me from Clark. When he made our garden, Aaron would shoot the chipmunks with his pellet gun. I had built what I called a crossbow. Of course, all it was a two by four nailed on another two by four to make a cross shape. But sometimes when Aaron would go hunting for chipmunks and rabbits, he would let me go with him (which was against the rules of my brother Clark). Aaron would tell me that if he shot something he would let me beat it with my crossbow. Of course, he never shot anything.

Aaron taught me how to ride a two-wheeler when I was two or three. He would take me out on the porch just about every day and help me ride back and forth. We bought a tractor one time that my brother Aaron would use to plow driveways in the winter. He always had trouble with the plow because he couldn't get the

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plow to come up very well, but he really made a lot of money from that tractor business because every time it snowed it snowed four feet, and he would plow every house on the street. He would let me drive it sometimes. Of course, I would always come close to wrecking it, but he would save me and the tractor.

Aaron was really good at building forts. He and one of his friends once built an underground fort that was about ten feet deep. They put a fireplace in it that always smoked us out until they figured out that bricks at the top would suck out the smoke. When they got bored of just one room, they built an underground tunnel that went into another room about the same size as the last. They found some old boards that they put across the holes for roofs. When I wasn't being the shadow of Clark, I was being the shadow of Aaron. That was just the way things were with Aaron and me; he was always my teacher.

One day my dad called us into the kitchen. He told us that he had been offered a job in Colorado Springs and that he had taken the job. We were going to be moving soon. We moved on June 11, 1993, which happened to be Clark's birthday. Clark said he would always remember that day because he got a call from Mike Worley, the soon-to-be youth pastor at the church my dad was going to work at, wishing him a happy birthday.

When we moved to Colorado Springs, my brother Aaron was still in high school, so he attended Air Academy. Clark was at Eagleview for one year; then he went to Air Academy. I was at Rockrimmon for my second grade year and then at Foothills for the rest of elementary school; then I went to Eagleview. Aaron moved back to New Mexico for a year. Clark soon got

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A person without a sense of humor is like a wagon without springs--jolted by every pebble in the road.-Henry Ward Beecher, preacher and writer (1813-1887)

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"Heck!" I thought. (Hope Mama didn't hear me think that.) "While I'm here, I might as well hoe this field too!"

Decision made, I drove over to the edge of the field and started to hoe the outside round bordered on two sides by barbwire fences. The thought crossed my mind that that hoe stuck out there a long way, and if I were not careful, I could take out a fence post or two!

With great care, I hoed the pass by the first fence, then turned the corner to get by the next one. As I turned the corner, the outside gang of the hoe was really moving fast! The hoe slung toward the fence! My eyes bugged wide because I knew it was gonna be close. Finally, the hoe flew past the nearest post, missing it by a hair! Then, I was headed safely up the row. (Ha! You thought I was gonna hit it, didn't you! Nope!)

I got the outside round hoed, and I was now "in the groove" to finish the little field. "Pop is really gonna be proud of me when he sees what I've done!"

It all went without a hitch... until the very last turn for the very last pass. Then it happened!

"BUMP... BUMP... BUMP... BUMP... BUMP..."

I heard the sound like I'd heard once before, and like I knew I never wanted to hear again..., but I was hearing it now! I looked at the tire. I was into the rod... and the rod was coming up on the tire.

It is amazing how fast the mind works in the midst of danger! I thought, "I'm gonna get killed! Benny is gonna lose his favorite cousin! I'm fixin' to kill my mama's favorite son!" Then the thought flashed, "But not if I STOP THE TRACTOR!"

With both hands I got a strong hold on the steering wheel, and in the same instant, pulled and stomped hard on the clutch! The tractor stopped! I froze in that position. I couldn't dare let go! If my foot slipped off that clutch I'd be dead for sure!" Finally, I thought to use my other foot to bump the tractor out of gear. I kicked it into

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neutral then, slowly let the clutch back out making sure it was not in any gear.

“Sheewwwwwww,” I sighed... relieved. Relieved that I had survived my first “near death” experience.

“Hey! Idle the engine you Doofuss!”

I pushed the throttle up to idle and began to survey the damage. The rod had made it all the way to the front of the tire, and the hoe was almost up to the back of the tractor.

“I gotta figure this out,” I thought to myself. “I just gotta!”

Well, the “figgrin“ wasn’t a problem, but the “fixin” was!

I figured I could pull that rod over that rubber tractor-tire lug and then just drive away from it. NOT! I pulled with all my might, but could not budge the rod. (Where was Superman when you needed him?)

Well... maybe I could just back the tractor up and the rod would come over with the tire! Good idea... but the plow is too close behind the tractor.

STUMPED!

I finally resigned myself to the fact that I was gonna have to walk to the house and “face the music,” and loud, wild music I was sure it would be!

The worst thing in the world for me was to have to face Dad when I had “goofed up.” Dad was good at everything he did, and I, wanting so much to be like him, seemed to always be “goofing stuff up.” And it made me not like me.

I ran to the house! (No sense in getting in trouble for “lolly-gagging.”) Dad was in bed. I told Mama a little about what had happened. We thought we wouldn’t wake him up, but he’d heard me come in.

He showed his sleepy-eyed face at the door and asked, “What’s up.” I tried to explain to him the whole story with special emphasis on how careful I had been, but confessed, “I’d let it happen. I got the rod over the tire.”

Without a word, but with a strained look he

pulled on his boots and britches, grabbed a shirt and jacket and headed for the pickup. Like a puppy, I was right behind him.

On the way to the field I was surprised that he had nothing to say. “When was he gonna start hollerin?” I wondered. He never did...

At the tractor he surveyed the situation. I just remember his saying something like, “Well, you did a good job of getting it stopped.”

He got some wrenches out of the toolbox and undid a couple of bolts to free the rod. Then he pulled the tractor forward. Next, he straightened the rod by cold-bending it between a couple of lever points on the tractor. Then, we bolted the rod back in place. In what seemed like “nothing flat,” he had it all fixed up!

Then, as he was putting the tools away he told me, “Finish that pass and take it back to the house.”

Such a simple statement... and yet a statement which said volumes to the boy standing there. After I’d messed up in what I thought was a GRAND way, he still trusted my ability to drive that tractor. I had figured it would be 5 or 6 years before I could even STEER again. Wow! I couldn’t believe my ears, but without any questions I replied, “Yes sir.”

I finished the field and got the tractor back to the house without a hitch. (I never touched a splinter on that gate either!) If I was careful before, I was a hundred times MORE careful now.

Through the rest of that day and many times since, I’ve thought about that time... my mistake... Pops reaction... and then his trust. It has always been amazing to recall.

You see, from the perspective of a man, I think I know now that it scared him about as bad as it did me. I think that’s why he never hollered. I think he questioned his own judgment leaving me out there alone with that rig. But I know he was grateful that everything worked out OK.

Bottom line is, the damage had been done... and the lesson had been learned. It is a sad fact-of-life that “experience only comes from

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experience... and there are risks involved in experience". He let me have confidence in my experience that day.

I loved my dad for the way he'd treated me... and I still do. You know what? As I knew then, I know now... I have the best dad in the whole dang state of Texas! And that covers a lot of ground! ➔ ➔ ➔

Gaylon Stamps, March 22, 2001

THANKSGIVING

On October 18, 1780 the Continental Congress issued a proclamation for a Day of Public Thanksgiving and Prayer:

Whereas it hath pleased Almighty God, the Father of all mercies, amidst the vicissitudes and calamities of war, to bestow blessings on the people of these states, which call for their devout and thankful acknowledgements, more especially in the late remarkable interposition of His watchful Providence, in the rescuing the person of our Commander-in-Chief and the army from imminent dangers, at the moment when treason was ripened for execution....

It is therefore recommended to the several states...a day of public thanksgiving and prayer, that all the people may assemble on that day celebrate the praises of our Divine Benefactor; to confess our unworthiness of the least of His favors, and to offer our fervent supplication to the God of all grace...to cause the knowledge of Christianity to be spread over all the earth.

On September 25, 1789, Congress unanimously approved a resolution asking President George Washington to proclaim a National Day of Thanksgiving:

Day of Thanksgiving. Resolved. That a joint committee of both Houses be directed to wait upon the President of the United States to request that he recommend to the people of the United States a day of public

thanksgiving and prayer, to be observed by acknowledging, with grateful hearts, the many signal favors of Almighty God, especially by affording them an opportunity peaceable to establish a constitution of government for their safety and happiness.

What does Thanksgiving mean on this the first year of the twenty-first Century? In light of what happened September 11, 2001, it may take on a little different meaning.

At the start, when America was first born, the words Liberty and Christianity were inseparable. Prayer and thanksgiving were a common emotion with action.

—AWD—

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done with high school at Air Academy. Meanwhile, Aaron returned to Colorado Springs, and he is living here in town by himself and working for a construction company. He comes over just about every Sunday after church for lunch. Clark, soon after high school, left home and became homeless. After six months of it, he got sick of it and came home with the idea of moving to California to work on the fishing ships. But, after hearing some of the stories from past sailors, he quickly changed his mind. Clark lived at home for three or four more years before finding a girl he liked a lot and marrying her. Her name is Misty. Just over a month ago they had a baby boy, who they named Zephaniah Micah Davis. And without an argument, he is the cutest baby you'll ever see! I am now a sophomore and continue to attend Air Academy High School. And this was my life growing up with two older brothers, who are the coolest older brothers I could ever wish for.

Thanks Aaron and Clark! ❖❖❖❖

Thank you everyone for your support, encouragement, and contributions. Please keep the e-mail, cards, letters and contributions coming. They are each and every one appreciated very much. —AWD E-mail address is Viewsletter@aol.com or snail mail at: VIEWS LETTER, 1015 West Dorchester Way Mustang, Oklahoma 73064

September 29, 2001

President George W. Bush
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Bush:

You, as a public servant, who has been put in place to make honorable choices, should consider asking the pilots that fly the airways of this country what they think should be done to protect airplanes and passengers. Among other things, most pilots are in favor of being armed. Few, if any, desire the added responsibility, but as a very last resort, most of us would welcome the opportunity to defend our crew, our passengers, and ourselves. Don't just have some military jet launch a missile at us. At least give us a voice and a chance to sort a situation out and the means to do so.

It has been more than two weeks since the terrible terrorist attack against our nation in Virginia, Pennsylvania and lower Manhattan. In a matter of days the outlook of my world has changed from the possibility of getting a decent contract with my company to what looks to be a very dismal future. Now, hopefully I will be able to continue to fly airplanes until I'm 59-years-364 days old, but with no retirement and low pay, plagued with pitifully fatiguing schedules and a government that is totally set on disarming me on my way to work.

Not only do I face a threat in the sky, but I am expected to layover in some of the sleaziest places in America totally unarmed. People that don't know the difference between a pair of cuticle scissors and a vertical stabilizer search me several times each day. I am given the responsibility for the safety of hundreds of lives and a complex piece of machinery, yet I have to submit to someone going through my dirty underwear. I am no longer allowed to carry my Buck knife (folding pocketknife with less than 4-in. blade that is a minimal defense protection.), and I have been relieved of my cuticle scissors and tweezers. (Personal grooming is done only at home.) Must I place all my faith and hopes of personal safety and defense in the hands of my government which has been slow to correct any of the problems that pilots face? I read yesterday that two Generals in the military have been given the authority to have us shot down if one of them suspects that we have been Hijacked. That possibility is frightening.

I have heard a lot of talk about fixing the problems, but no one with any authority has asked me or any other pilots that I know of what we think should or could be done. I encourage you to ask the people doing the job; you will be pleasantly surprised at their insight, and you just might find some real solutions to real problems that we pilots have been aware of for years.

We pilots have been more than handicapped at defending ourselves in the cockpit and elsewhere. We must place all faith and trust in the government that dropped the ball in the first place. I have been writing letters to Congressmen and Senators for years about the problems we face, but I get form letters for replies. When I make contributions, I still am not heard; I just get put on the list of contributors so that I get more requests for donations to political campaigns.

Before September 11, 2001, politics was paramount in our government; now, it remains to be seen if there is anyone within the Beltway that is interested in real solutions. Please remember that truth is always true whether we want to believe it or not. I encourage you to search for that bottom line.

Respectfully,

Captain A. Wayne Doudney

P.S. Of all the agencies of our Federal Government, my hat is off to those men and women who work Air Traffic Control. In spite of being handicapped and shortchanged by politics, they have been doing an admirable job for years.

CC: Rep. Ernest Istook, Jr. - Rep.J.C. Watts, Jr. - Rep. Frank Lucas – Sen. James Inhofe – Sen. Don Nickles.

What happened?

What happened September 11, 2001? We all know that four airliners were taken by force and three were deliberately crashed into buildings filled with thousands of people. The fourth attempt was foiled by passengers who had heard about the other hijackings via cell phone communications. They took initiative, sacrificed themselves, and thwarted another major catastrophe.

Many ask, where was God, and how could He allow all of this to happen? There must be volumes written on the reasons that God does what God does, or allows what He allows. It is obvious that something has gone wrong.

Things that are obvious seem to have slipped past the majority of America. There are many things that are not understood about this evil that is so ambitious and arrogant to think that it can win over good. Much of America seems to be aligned with it and has been infected with the same arrogance.

When this country was established over 200 years ago God was of paramount importance in everything that was said and done. John Adams, the principal author of the Constitution, entered in his diary on February 22, 1756 these words:

Suppose a nation in some distant region should take the Bible for their only law book, and every member should regulate his conduct by the precepts there exhibited! Every member would be obliged in conscience, to temperance, frugality, and industry; to justice, kindness, and charity towards his fellow men; and to piety, love and reverence toward Almighty God... What a Utopia, what a Paradise would this region be.

Alexis de Tocqueville a famous 19th century French statesman, historian and social philosopher travel to America in the 1830s to discover the reason for the incredible success of this new nation. He published his observations in his classic two-volume work, "Democracy in America." Here are some startling excerpts from Tocqueville's great work:

Upon my arrival in the United States the religious aspect of the country was the first thing that struck my attention; and the longer I stayed there, the more I perceived the great political consequences resulting from this new state of things.

In France I had almost always seen the spirit of religion and the spirit of freedom marching in opposite directions. But in America I found they were intimately united and that they reigned in common over the same country. Religion in America...must be regarded as the foremost of the political institutions of that country; for if it does not impart a taste for freedom, it facilitates the use of it. Indeed, it is in the same point of view that the inhabitants of the United States themselves look upon religious belief.

I do not know whether all Americans have a sincere faith

in their religion – for who can search the human heart? But I am certain that they hold it to be indispensable to the maintenance of the republican institutions. This opinion is not peculiar to a class of citizens or a party, but it belongs to the whole nation and to every rank of society.

In the United States, the sovereign authority is religious...there is no country in the world where the Christian religion retains a greater influence over the souls of men than in America, and there can be no greater proof of its utility and of its conformity to human nature than that its influence is powerfully felt over the most enlightened and free nation of the earth.

In the United States, the influence of religion is not confined to the manners, but it extends to the intelligence of the people...

Christianity, therefore, reigns without obstacle, by universal consent...

I sought for the key to the greatness and genius of America in her harbors...; in her fertile fields and boundless forests; in her rich mines and vast world commerce; in her public school system and institutions of learning. I sought for it in her democratic Congress and in her matchless Constitution.

Not until I went into the churches of America and heard her pulpits flame with righteousness did I understand the secret of her genius and power.

America is great because America is good, and if America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great.

The safe guard of morality is religion, and morality is the best security of law as well as the surest pledge of freedom.

The Americans combine the notions of Christianity and of liberty so intimately in their minds, that it is impossible to make them conceive the one without the other.

Christianity is the companion of liberty in all its conflicts – the cradle of its infancy, and the divine source of its claims.

Without God America's immediate future is grim. America has been blessed because she was so dependent upon the Almighty. She looked to Him for everything, and He graciously blessed her.

Has America turned its back on its heritage? Has she become immoral sinful and arrogant? Is she pious for only her selfish self?

Maybe we Americans should each review the words that Almighty God personally delivered to Solomon in 2nd Chronicles 7: 14.

⁴If 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.

It makes sense to me! → → →

By –AWD