**PATRIOTISM**

I have several memories of World War II. One is the number of flags that were on every street of our town. Many people worked in factories to help with the war effort. America stopped building cars because the factories were outfitted to build tanks, guns, ammo and other weapons for the war. Patriotism was the order of the day. Women worked in the factories, and the men signed up for the armed forces. Due to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the American people were committed to victory. The war consumed all our thoughts. No one was unpatriotic in those days.

We kids raised money for the war by paper collections, metal collections and giving money to armed services. Everyone worked for the war effort.

The radio was the thing back then; some folks still called it “the wireless.” My mom turned on the news in our giant, brown, wooden, cabinet radio. Pearl Harbor filled the air. That was when the great war machine of the United States began to build. People were angry. In 2001 this was the way it was after 9/11, but the media soon grew tired of talking about the “War on Terror.” Today the American people don’t have the stomach or the stamina to stick with patriotism any more. Flags were unfurled all over America just after 9/11, on cars, trucks, homes and buildings, but today, only a very few years later, it’s hard to find a flag. Thank God it wasn’t like that in the early 1940’s. If it had been, we would probably be speaking German—or Japanese. But in 1941 and thereafter, the people of the United States did not give up until their enemies were destroyed. They finally realized that isolationism was not going to work. Nearly all men of fighting age were drafted immediately. My dad had to catch a train to Chicago to have a physical for the army. Dad passed the physical, but when they found out he was a teacher and the breadwinner for a family of 6, he was allowed to come home.

What has happened to patriotism today? It seems that only veterans and a very few of the people and politicians are patriotic. It seems that everyone has forgotten how great our country is. Some people want to sponge off the government, not wanting to work. But most of us work for a living. And most of us still realize the greatness of our country. Why else would so many people want to come to America? Here, we can become what we choose to be, for the most part. We are the richest people in the world. We are blessed beyond measure.

But I fear that our country has abandoned its founding principles—God and the Bible have been removed from the public square—even taken out of schools. Amazingly, Harvard and Yale and other “Ivy League” schools began mainly as training schools for ministers and lawyers. The Bible was the curriculum of colleges and schools. But two hundred years has reversed that trend. If America is to become great again, we must return to our roots. The Proverb states: “Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.” If we are to be a great and blessed nation again, both our leaders and our people must repent. We must put God back at the center of American life.

May God bless this nation!