

# Roots in Ripon

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Chuck Roots

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## One Nation, Under God

This past Thursday Isaura and I attended the San Joaquin County 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Leadership Prayer Breakfast as guests of Susan Vander Schaaf. This event brings together the leadership of the entirety of San Joaquin County. Having attended a number of times in the past, I am always heartened by the emphasis on prayer for those in leadership across our great land, right down to local public officials and first responders.

This gathering of concerned citizens brings in several hundred people on a Thursday at 6:00am where prayer is the primary focus. There is always a featured speaker, and this year was no different. Joshua Charles is a concert pianist, a best-selling author, an accomplished historian, and is earning his law degree at the Regent University School of Law. *"In his book, The World's Most Important Book, Joshua examines how the Bible has greatly impacted many areas of human life, from art, to music, to government, healthcare, and works of compassion. No book (referring to the Bible) has exerted greater influence."* (taken from the program pamphlet). He has authored a second book, entitled, *Liberty's Secrets: The Lost Wisdom of America's Founders*. I picked up a copy of this book, and am anxious to get started on it, especially because Joshua Charles has done a thorough job of researching his topic as evidenced by the talk he gave. And this man is only twenty-nine years old!

Apart from the keynote speaker, there was a corporate prayer printed in our program, which was actually a responsorial prayer, led by Ron Van De Pol, president and CEO at Van De Pol Enterprises, Inc., (Stockton, CA), and is also the Vice President of Alliance Petroleum Corporation.

Having been asked to lead in such prayers myself in the past, I was particularly taken by the opening section of the prayer which minces no words as to the condition of the human race and its not so glorious relationship with the Living God.

*"We are flawed people, but know you love us unconditionally and your mercy endures forever. Within the span of a few decades, You have been removed from the schoolhouse, the courthouse, and the marketplace. On our watch, the mention of Your name and those who openly serve You are no longer welcomed in a nation that once revered your Holy Word (the Bible). We have forsaken You and ignored the wisdom and warnings of those You have sent to establish the only nation in*

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*world history founded on the principle that 'God created all men equal,' free, and with rights no man could take away."*

Those of us in the audience would then respond with, "LORD, hear our prayer." Please understand, that at the end of this first reading I was uncomfortable joining in with others in asking the Lord to hear our prayer! Think about it! Is it not true that there is a wholesale attempt throughout our nation to eliminate God from the schoolhouse, the courthouse, and the marketplace? Christians and Jews in the United States of America are being harassed and attacked both verbally and physically. Love of God and Country has become taboo in the hallowed halls of academia, the very institutions where the expression of belief and thought should be encouraged and celebrated; not ridiculed, demonized, and besmirched.

The report of religious violations taken from an article in 2012, lists the following as some of the cases reported where Christians and Jews are having their faith criticized and stifled by those in authority.

- A federal judge threatened "incarceration" to a high school valedictorian unless she removed references to Jesus from her graduation speech.
- City officials prohibited senior citizens from praying over their meals, listening to religious messages, or singing gospel songs at a senior activities center.
- A public school official physically lifted an elementary school student from his seat and reprimanded him in front of his classmates for praying over his lunch.
- Following U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' policies, a federal government official sought to censor a pastor's prayer, eliminating references to Jesus, during a Memorial Day ceremony honoring veterans at a national cemetery.
- Public school officials prohibited students from handing out gifts because they contained religious messages.
- A public school official prevented a student from handing out flyers inviting her classmates to an event at her church.
- A public university's law school banned a Christian organization because it required its officers to adhere to a statement of faith that the university disagreed with.
- The U.S. Department of Justice argued before the Supreme Court that the federal government can tell churches and synagogues which pastors and rabbis it can hire and fire.
- The State of Texas sought to approve and regulate what religious seminaries can teach.
- Through the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare, the federal government is forcing religious organizations to provide insurance for birth control and abortion-inducing drugs in direct violation of their religious beliefs.
- The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs banned the mention of God from veterans' funerals, overriding the wishes of the deceased's families.
- A federal judge held that prayers before a state House of Representatives could be to Allah but not to Jesus.

This is no cry of "Wolf!" where there is no wolf. This is a cry for sanity where secularists and progressives are destroying our nation. God, please forgive us, and help us return to being one nation, under God!