

How much do people think that God is involved in His world? We get a hint from the strong negative reaction from media and political circles to a statement made in a Christian school assembly by the governor of Alaska, Sarah Palin. The governor, commenting on her son's deployment to Iraq, said,

Pray for our military men and women who are striving to do what is right. Also, for this country, that our leaders, our national leaders, are sending [U.S. soldiers] out on a task that is from God. That's what we have to make sure that we're praying for, that there is a plan and that that plan is God's plan.

Governor Palin seems to have suggested that God is involved in His world, and we should pray that we align ourselves with His purposes and not our own. Christians who have a similar world view might even have borrowed the words of

## Acknowledging God's Plan in Our World

by Pastor Bob Reid

Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, "Not my will but your will be done" (Luke 22:42). Such a thought is alien to our culture, which for the most part doubts God's involvement in our world.

When President Abraham Lincoln gave the Thanksgiving Proclamation in 1863 in the midst of the Civil War, he acknowledged that he saw God's involvement in our country. He wrote,

The year that is drawing towards its close has been filled with the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies. To these bounties, which are so constantly enjoyed that

we are prone to forget the source from which they come, others have been added, which are of so extraordinary a nature, that they cannot fail to penetrate and soften even the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever watchful providence of Almighty God...No hu-

man counsel hath devised nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy.

This same president responded to

...a minister who said he hoped the Lord was on our side, that it gave him no concern whether the Lord was on our side or not 'For,' he added, 'I know the Lord is always on the side of right;' and with deep feeling added, 'But God is my witness that it is my constant anxiety and prayer that both myself and this nation should be on the Lord's side.' (from a sermon delivered at Lincoln's funeral by Rev. Matthew Simpson on May 4, 1865)

Evidently President Lincoln was convinced that God is involved in our world, and we need to align ourselves with His plans. Did the culture of Lincoln's day protest his attitude?

People often strongly oppose thinking that God might intervene in the activities of our world. Reading the Christmas story we discover the resistance of a king who was troubled that God was invading the world in the form of a baby Who would be called the Christ, the King of the Jews (Matthew 2:1-18). How dare God invade Herod's domain! Herod's response was to try to squelch any invasion from God, even if it meant infanticide.

How violent an individual—or a culture—can become when they resist the reality that God is involved in their world whether they acknowledge it or not. Such a possibility troubles those who ponder how answerable they are to the "God who is there and...not silent," as Dr. Francis Schaeffer described Him. Secular philosophy sees the world as a closed continuum where God cannot enter and where people are the masters of their own destinies. Thinking that God has a plan to which we should align ourselves is counter-cultural.

In these days of uncertainty it is an encouragement to realize that God is not as distant as our culture has tried to position Him. God can intervene in our world, as He demonstrated in the first coming of Christ at Christmas. Jesus Christ is engaged in our turbulent world today, promising to be "...with [us] always, even unto the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). Jesus, the Son of God, promised he will "come again" (John 14:3).

Since we know God is involved in our world, it would be wise to make sure our plans align with His. One of the best ways for that to happen is to spend time in God's Word. Discover exactly what God has revealed about His plans, and then be conformed to those plans by the renewing of your mind (Romans 12:1-2). As Governor Palin suggested, we need to pray that our plan is God's plan.

