

My Tribute to America

Bo Hi Pak
July 1976



During the Korean War in 1950 I was a soldier who fought side by side with American brothers in the most terrifying battle in the distant mountains of Korea. Many times during the battle I had to witness the courageous death of many unknown American heroes - sometimes the enemy's high explosive fire did not even leave enough to bury.

On the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, in Arlington National Cemetery, is inscribed:
"Here rests in honored glory an American soldier known but to God."

The inscription on one tomb was "Korean War." I whispered to myself, "It could be one of my friends." In great emotional shock, I prayed unconsciously for the souls of the heroes whose death I had witnessed. More than 30,000 Americans died in my country and certainly most of their heroic actions were known but to God.

Once I was held behind the enemy lines when the Red Chinese Army launched the all-out spring offensive of 1952. At the brink of starvation, and in constant fear of enemy capture, I was miraculously saved. This miracle was made possible by the U.S. Third Division tankers.

For me, as for many Koreans, America is more than an ally -- more than a friend. America is a big brother with whom we are tied in blood -- shared lives together. Having this deep sense of gratitude toward America, I have the courage to express myself with frankness and honesty, and I boldly present my earnest feeling along with my tribute to America from the bottom of my heart. There is no such thing as "your problem" or "my problem." They are all one -- "our problems."

I first came to America in 1952. This was the year we were fighting a most painful battle in Korea.

The nation as a whole was in chaos. People were dying. Towns and villages were completely devastated. Refugees were flooding my country, and the aged and the children were withering away like fall leaves because of hunger and cold. They had no hope of a tomorrow. I left a country with no hope -- with parents and brothers in despair.

When our ship approached San Francisco's Golden Gate, my first glimpse of America was of a paradise -- a new world for which I had not dared dream. The things I saw, the sounds I heard, were a cause of endless astonishment and they profoundly impressed me, such as the flood of automobiles which seemed to cover entire cities, countless numbers of women drivers which I could never have imagined, skyscrapers like a toyland, TV advertising, and above all, automatic coke machines which do their own mathematics giving exact change without cheating even a penny.

America the blessed! The land of blessings! This came to my mind. The people have all the essential

needs of livelihood, with peace of mind, happiness in life.

However, these first profound impressions of America left me very much alone. There was too much contrast between what I had seen in Korea, my country, and what I saw in America.

That night, in an exquisite hotel room, I dropped to my knees and violently protested to God: "Oh, God, it is very plain to me, there is no God. If there is a God of mercy, that God has already closed His eyes. Otherwise, how can it be so unfair? Should Koreans be born for misery and suffering? If it is all the same to you, couldn't you share with my starved children a chunk of meat or a piece of bread from the mouths of dogs and cats in America?" Since then my question has been: "Why should this nation deserve these profound blessings? What was the fountain of power that made today's America?"

Many people are today apt to think America was born of a rich heritage; the people had nothing to do with it -- America was born a millionaire. I know this much; there is nothing more erroneous.

In the history of America there was a time when even a whole day of life was not taken for granted. Today's America is not a product of chance. The prosperity of America was not brought about by the ocean tide, but it was achieved by the blood and sweat of America's ancestors who fought for today's America.

Along the road to success from a wilderness to a powerful nation -- America had its disappointments, setbacks and bitter struggles.

We must not forget those men who stayed on at Valley Forge risking their lives; we must not forget that Lincoln did fine, unpopular things, without fear; that over 56,000 men died in prison camps between 1861 and 1864; that later, half a million Americans lay in their blood on foreign soil. And we must not forget that in early pioneer days American women faced Indian attack and were partners in the great pioneering movement to the West. Yet these are not enough reasons for America's being what it is today. I can easily find the same reasons in many other countries.

The essence of the greatness of it all is something else. I found God in action in this country. I found that this nation has been "under God."

"Trust in God." This faith made today's America possible. There is no one else who made this miracle possible except God.

There is no more impressive story in American history than that of the Pilgrim Fathers who first came to America. They came to America for God, for freedom of worship. When they left the port of Holland the waves of the Atlantic Ocean were high and the sky was dark. The Mayflower was too poor to guarantee the lives of those who were heading for the unknown land. Yet, they trusted in God and did not fear the future. The Mayflower Compact was signed "In the Name of God, Amen."

In their pursuit of the freedom to worship God, they were willing to risk their lives and to make sacrifices. This is, I believe, the, very spirit of the founding of America, and this is the only and real reason why America deserted the blessing of God.

When I visited Capitol Hill I saw a little prayer room in which it is said that great statesmen, who have the gravest decisions to make, kneel humbly before God and ask His help and earnestly seek divine guidance. And every single meeting in the Congress, I was told, is opened with a prayer, thus letting Him speak to a man's heart and his conscience.

Each president of the United States is sworn into office before Almighty God by reciting the solemn oath while placing his hand on the Bible. President Kennedy concluded his inaugural address by: "... asking His blessing and His help, but knowing that here on earth God's work must truly be our own."

All these things struck my heart and I would like to think of these things as America's greatness and a real offspring of the power of America.

The Koreans, while under Japanese occupation before 1945, were forced to call America "*bei kok*," which literally means "rice country." When the Allied Forces brought Korea liberation, we immediately changed the name to "*mee kuk*," which literally means "country of beauty," because of the reverence, respect and admiration we felt toward America.

America is a country of beauty as we respect it -- beauty of land, cities, mountains and rivers. A country of beauty of people, beauty of hearts, beauty of noble friendships. Yet above all, America is a country of beauty of faith and of love. This is the beauty I admire, cherish and respect most of all.

I pay tribute to this America which is under God.

However, honor means duty, blessing means responsibility. Blessings of God never come alone. They are always accompanied by an equivalent amount of responsibility. One who cherishes blessings must assume and cherish responsibility.

America who has been given blessings also is given a sublime task. What is the responsibility of America? Let us first listen to the world, look at the world of today.



Today, we are at war. No one denies we are totally committed to this deadly war against Communism. The Communist goal is clear in four words: "We shall bury you." We are at war, no one can deny that, and we must fight it out until either we win or we die.

Let us also look at this grim reality -- we have been losing the war. The Communist empire started from zero, 59 years ago. It now rigidly controls one-third of mankind. And the surge of dynamic Red advances is now greater than ever before. Practically the entire world is on fire -- Asia, Africa, Europe and South America. And everywhere the free world remains on the defense. The Reds force us back inch-by-inch and yard-by-yard each day. The times are not favorable to us.

It is a pity, however, that no one knows the true meaning of this war; no one seems to realize the Communist declaration of war, made -- not to free men, not to America, not to the free world but to God.

Communism denies and rejects God. Not only does it deny God, but it provides its followers with a new faith, a program of action, and a hope of the establishment of the final good for mankind. This godless final good, this godless perfect society, takes the place of the Kingdom of God in man's hopes. The writings of Marx and Lenin take the place of the Bible. This is the war which challenges the very existence of God Himself.

If this evil power prevails in worldwide triumph, it means the defeat of God before the defeat of free men. This is the day when God will be thrown out the window, out of this planet.

This is one thing He can never afford to take place. Furthermore, God certainly has His own plan to establish His own Kingdom on this earth. For this, God needs champions. He has already summoned the champion of God to fight to win this war.

As He summoned the shepherd, David, from the wilderness as the champion of God to win over Goliath; as He summoned Moses as the champion of oppressed Israel to win over the pharaoh of Egypt; God summoned this Nation -- the United States of America -- as His champion to fight out this war for His victory. Here the responsibility of America lies.

Has America sufficiently awakened to this calling of God? We constantly hear it said that Communism is an enemy of America, an enemy of the free world. What does it mean? This means America is fighting for America. We are fighting for our survival. Yet God has been forgotten. Today, we constantly hear the appeal of crisis. The word "crisis" has become a part of our daily diet: Berlin crisis; UN crisis; crises in Africa; crises among teenagers, in industry and thousands of others.

Yet no one, practically no one, ever even thinks of the crisis of God, the crisis for His Kingdom. God has been forgotten.

As long as we fight our own war, the chances are we will lose because God has no hand in it. As long as America fights for America's survival, America has no advantage over Communism. And as long as God is forgotten, no crisis on earth will be settled because the root of crisis is there, not here.

If, as President Kennedy said, "here on earth, God's work must truly be our own," a new realization must come to America. A new awakening must come. This must be the voice of America. This must be the determination and faith of every American. Only then will the war already be won. God becomes our weapon.

Today, everyone in America feels the bomb is so near. No one in this present world ever escapes from this fear. No one can be free from this catastrophe of mass destruction. Yet no one knows exactly how to prevent it and still win the battle.

I dare to commit myself in this answer. We must realize this war is God's war, make ourselves champions of God, and use God as our weapon. We must make this nation's purpose parallel to the will of God and face bravely the cross of Jesus. As the Bible says, "who loses his life for my sake will find it."

When our faith comes to this point we won't have to fight this war. We won't have to use our nuclear weapons. The hosts of God will destroy the enemy for us.

Look to the solemn truth.

After Jesus' death on the cross, his surviving disciples marched to Rome when Rome's authority was making the world tremble. They had the dignity of an empire. They had a fearless army counted by millions, and they had boundless treasure. Their power seemed to stop even the rising of the sun. On the contrary, Jesus' army had nothing except bare hands, and even these bare hands were tied by chains.

But they had a weapon. Their only weapon was God. And their march was for Him. They were willing to face any danger, any hardship, any form of sacrifice for His cause. And to what happened, history is witness. God fought for them. The collapse of Rome came from inside. This giant Rome collapsed without employing its huge weapons and legions and without using up their endless treasure. The principle of God remains the same.

Today, America has a billion times more than this barehanded army that Jesus had. And our enemy is unquestionably smaller than Rome in comparative size. There is no reason why we cannot win. Today, we have all weapons -- but no weapons. We have every conceivable weapon that man can create -- but the weapon of God. This is the tragedy of America and the tragedy of the free world.

The question is clear that this faith will be the deciding factor. Those who possess God will possess the world. This great nation under God must become one which possesses this ultimate divine weapon. America must now live up to her traditional motto: "In God We Trust." God left no alternative.

Where can America find this faith? Despite this urgent craving for new faith, America's faith now faces its crucial trial. One of the American missionaries working in Korea once told me: "I did not send my son to any good American school in Korea or nearby Japan, but sent him to a British mission school in Singapore. Why? There is no God in a good American school. Our youngsters seem to believe they can live without Him. Why bother?"

This is the grim reality. Let us be honest. How many of us really believe that Jesus Christ is the answer? How many of us really believe there is a God who presides over the destiny of a nation and its people?

The Christian doctrines of modern churches lack rationality and are full of contradiction. They are in a spiritual and philosophical deadlock in the face of Communism.

The question even arises, "Can atheism rescue religion?" Atheism forcefully approaches as a savior of modern churches. Spiritual power and direct communication with the living God, which Jesus possessed, are almost entirely absent from today's churches. They are virtually unknown to the Christians of today.

"God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." (John 4:23) The religion of Jesus was based on spirit and truth, but today's Christianity is remote from its founder's intent.

The churches are addressing themselves in a dead language to situations and issues that no longer exist.

Dr. Samuel Miller, former dean of the Harvard Divinity School, said "Christianity may be at death's door. If religion is to have any real place in the modern world it will have to undergo a radical revolution."

The question still remains, where will America find a new faith? Here is one voice: "We need a new revelation." This is a popular craving uttered by many thinking people today. "This age needs a prophet and not preachers." This is the cry of many Christians. Why do we need a new revelation? Because we now live in the time of historical and cosmic transition. The world as a whole is in labor to give birth to a new world.

The Bible says, "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto his servants the prophets." (Amos 3:7)

In this crucial time of crisis, in this time of change, in this historical moment of transition, there must be a voice of God. Otherwise He will be too late. Therefore, we need a new revelation. And one must be given.

The Old and New Testaments are primarily written in parables and symbols. For 2,000 years biblical students have attempted the interpretation of the Bible and they have produced numerous commentaries, most of which vary in content. There is no one commentary that is regarded by all Christians as the absolute, authoritative, and complete interpretation. The diversity of interpretation, therefore, has caused a diversity of doctrines. This again has resulted in definite division of over 300 denominations and sects in the Protestant churches.

It is plain, therefore, that the ultimate truth contained in the Bible has not yet been discovered. When this ultimate truth is revealed to man with the explanation of the inner meanings hidden in all parables and symbols, and when the truth is so clear that all denominations can agree, then the barriers of denominations and sects shall be broken down, and all Christian churches will be able to unite. Under the truth of sunlight, candlelights cannot argue but must join. Therefore, we need a new revelation of the truth of sunlight.

We so often speak of God, God, God. But how many of us really know God, His will and His purpose of creation? Every product has its purpose to serve. God's creatures cannot be excepted. Then, what is the purpose of the creation of man? For that purpose we must live. Without knowing it we never really know what we live for.

What is the Kingdom of Heaven? Is it in heaven or on earth? What is our original sin? Suppose man has fallen. If God is Almighty and Omnipotent, why did He not -- or could He not detect the human fall and prevent it? What was His own version of the mission of Jesus? What is the true meaning of salvation? Why does He need to promise a second advent? Is he really coming? How and when and where? By the clouds of Heaven? What is the destination of history? What time is it in God's timetable? What is meant by the end of the world and final judgment? Is total destruction by nuclear war His will? One question after another. The questions have new terms, the doubts have deeper dimensions; the hunger of the heart and mind grows even greater.

Today, science has progressed to a high degree. People rarely accept anything without scientific test and logical proof, and religion cannot be excepted. A blind faith no longer has any attraction to or authority over the minds of modern men. They crave a new definition and expression of God, of His will, or immortality -- in the terminology of twentieth century thoughts. We need a new revelation which will enable us to explain God and His providence in the language of this atomic age.

It is a marked phenomenon in the West, as well as in the East, that Christians and non-Christians alike long for a positive religion which enables man to experience definitely the reality and the power of God by direct confrontation with Him. The fact that the thinking and feeling of the people are inclined toward this view is a sign that the hour has come to fulfill this universal craving.

A supernatural power, originated from the spiritual world, is now decisively interceding in human affairs. Therefore, everyone feels today that world affairs are out of human control. Today people feel uncertain, insecure and confused, and yet do not know the exact cause of it, or how to cope with it. We need a new revelation which enables us to find the answer and to meet the desperate need of this universal craving. God plainly promised this revelation to come by saying: "These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs; but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall show you plainly of the Father." (John 16:25) By the urgency of the world situation, this must be at hand.

America, that has been so courageous in seeking a new world; America, that has been so bold and fearless in seeking new ideals; America, that has been so dedicated and so steadfast in earning the name "the nation under God," must once again be a seeker of new truth, in a new dimension in which the new faith will be born that will reveal the true way to use God as a weapon.

This has been my earnest craving for America. Who am I to present this craving? I am not an official spokesman. I am not doing this as a diplomat or government representative. Then why do I have to express this craving? Only because I love America as my country. Yes, America is my country. Not only Korea but the United States is also my country. And I love America just as I love Korea in my heart. This may sound very strange to you, and I may be the first one to say this. Why am I then saying this to you?

I am saying this as a citizen of the world -- as a citizen of the United Kingdom of God. There is only one God who is your Father and mine. God did not create the Korean, and the American, but He created

children of God. He never asks you what nationality you are. But He does ask you how much you love God and your brothers.

I am truly ready to sacrifice my life for the cause of Americas 30,000 gallant American heroes have already done for the cause in Korea. There is only one cause of God under the banner of which we live or die together.

Once, Napoleon said "in my dictionary there is no word 'impossible.' " Also, in the Kingdom of God, there is no such word as "foreign" or "foreigner." Wherever I go there is my father's country, my brother's home. How could I be foreign?

America's renowned countryman Benjamin Franklin said, "Where liberty dwells, there is my country." And for me, where God dwells, there is my home. Let us raise a torch high and unite the world into "The united hearts of God."

May I close this by reciting the Bible scripture -- Revelation 3:20:

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door I will come in to him, and will sup with him and he with me."

Now America, hear Him and let us stand together and open the door.