

## Play Reveille!!!

Jim Williams

Editor's Note: We all have thoughts – some good - some bad, but nonetheless they are thoughts. Our thoughts should be reflected upon and dealt with biblically (Rom. 12:1-3; Gal. 6:3; Phil. 3:12-17; Phil. 4:8-9; 2 Pet. 3:1, etc.). 'Just Thinkin' Out Loud' (spelling of 'thinkin' is purposeful) is a series of thoughts that are being made public. You may or may not agree with all of the thoughts you read in this series, but it will help all of us to discuss them – out loud. The hope of the author and editors at IIM is that this will assist all of us to begin personal reflection upon our own thoughts and compare them with God's perspective in Holy Scripture. Readers are encouraged to use small discussion groups and/or our RPM forum for any irenic discussion(s) of these specific thoughts and others they may bring about.

It is on the occasion of the passing of former U.S. president Richard Nixon that I write. He was more than a person, he was an era - larger than life. I suppose this summation comes from his having had such a major role in national and world history in the latter half of this century. I tend to take some comfort from the presence of such powerful people whose judgment I trust. This applies to leaders on local levels as well as national ones. When a pastor I like leaves town, I am sad and a little fearful that I will not be as comfy with the next guy in that place. It affects my world a little jarringly to experience such a change.

Richard Nixon was as large-scale a player as any president could ever be. He showed tremendous insight and fortitude in his dealings with other world leaders. He went to Russia. He went to China. He dared go to those places to try to reason with their leaders. How often I forget that every world leader is just a person. He or she is a very powerful person, but Romans 13:1 says that there is not a ruler on the earth that God did not put there and give power to. Nixon was a leader who recognized his position as a mission to be a peacemaker.

The sovereignty of God strikes me just now. It strikes me when I think of the broad strokes of His Story that were played out by this servant of His. All rulers are like pawns on a chessboard. Willingly or unwillingly they play out God's plan for His Creation. A king's heart is God's tool. He steers it like a rudder. Didn't the Persian King Cyrus say that Jerusalem would never be rebuilt? Wasn't he the same king who later not only changed his mind, but supplied the needs of Nehemiah's project to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem? What about the signers of the Declaration of Independence? Weren't they all skeptics at first?

At Nixon's funeral, the Rev. Billy Graham said that Winston Churchill's funeral was an event arranged by Churchill himself. In the ceremony, a bugle played taps to signal the end of an era. After that, another bugler played reveille to signal the beginning of a new era. We've played taps. The soldiers of our country and our faith are now either at rest or onto other assignments. Their time in our presence, immediate or global, is now over. Let us now look to our new leaders, and let us not forget that they are in the hands of the Supreme leader of all time, the God of Creation, guide of history. Play Reveille!!

Tell me what you think, I'm just thinkin' out loud.

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