



God Keep Our Land

By Dr. Linda Hancock

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled “All Psyched Up” for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of “Life is An Adventure...every step of the way” and “Open for Business Success” is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email office@drlindahancock.com

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Since childhood, I have been advised that it is safer to stay away from discussing politics or religion. There is therefore some risk in writing this one for Canada Day.

When I grew up we began each school day with prayer. On the weekend we attended Sunday School and church. Mid-week activities were usually scheduled at or involving groups at the church. In our small Saskatchewan town everyone knew each other and we understood that some people were Catholic, some Protestant and others not interested in religion. We just accepted that! At the same time, we knew that we would all pray together at community events and sing the familiar words of hymns at funerals. We kind of assumed that no matter what people practiced, they all had some kind of a God in their lives.

Things are much different now. Immigration and technology have introduced so many different kinds of religion into our lives that it is kind of hard to know about them all. People value beliefs that are very different from the ones that I grew up with. Not wrong - just different.

Some people have been against the practice of anything that has to do with spiritual beliefs in schools or at community events. We cannot always expect that a funeral will be held after a death and the format of funerals that are held often have a different format than those of the past.

Prayer in schools has been debated and, in some instances, stopped.

Because of parents' beliefs, children might not be allowed to participate in Hallowe'en or activities that involve Easter or Christmas traditions.

Our liberal society sometimes is offended by things we say or assumptions that we make innocently.

And so, the fabric of our country has and continues to change. We are more vocal about what we believe and what we do not believe. We are more particular about how our values and faith are acted out in our environments.

Despite all this, I find two things very interesting. The first is that no matter what people state that they believe, I have never had anyone object when I offer to pray for them when they are going through a difficult time. I'm not sure if this is because they are being polite, feel desperate or figure they just don't have anything to lose by this.

Secondly, considering all the diversity in our country it is fascinating to know that the two national anthems we sing both clearly acknowledge that we depend on God. In "O Canada" we sing "God keep our land glorious and free". We also recognize our British ties when we sing "God Save our Queen".

And all around the world people hear us. It might be at the Olympic Games, a sporting event or for annual July 1st celebrations.