

JIM HANKS' PRAYER:

First, a very personal admission, which I hope is in order: Four days ago I had my 88th birthday. My Mother's birthday was also in July and yesterday we celebrated our country's most American holiday. Strangely, my mind goes back to the first prayer my Mother ever taught me. I repeat it today in all its wonderful simplicity: "God is great, God is good and we thank Him for this food. By his Hand we all are fed, Give us, God, our daily bread."

If there is one poem that best captures the hearts of Hoosiers, I nominate William Herschell's classic "Ain't God Good To Indiana?" Its lines are inscribed on a pillar in the state capital in Indianapolis. Herschell's lines, familiar to every Indiana school child, is more a ringing declaration of affirmation, almost a boast, rather than a question in the title. Remember:

"Ain't God good to Indiana?
Other spots may look as fair,
But they lack th' soothin' somethin'
In th' Hoosier sky an' air.
They don't have that snug-up feelin'
Like a mother gives a child;
They don't soothe your soul an' body,
With their breezes soft an' mild.
They don't know th' joys o' heaven
Have their birthplace here below:
Ain't God good to Indiana?
Ain't He, fellers? Ain't He though?"

(Forgive me, William Herschell, I just must share the following as part of today's invocation):

AIN'T GOD GOOD TO ROTARY?
Ain't God good to Rotary?
Other clubs may lay a claim
But they lack that certain somethin'
Inherent in our honored name.
We who man this Club are not alone
Paul Harris and past leaders set the tone
And thru such endeavors as Polio Plus
The whole world has learned to count on us
Ain't God good to Rotary,
Ain't He, Fellers, ain't He though?

Ain't God good to Rotary?

That is my prayer and my plea
For blessings great our gratitude
We now bow in thankful attitude
For hungry school kids we do our best
The world is better because of the 4 way test
And to new Prexy, a Luzadder named Tim
We pledge our year-long full support to him
With the help of Vice President Terry West
We hope this year will be our Club's best
To keep us straight if we stoop to complain
Our thanks go to faithful leader Jane.

Now I should sit down I've had my say

But July too is this nation's birthday.
Ain't God good to this country?
Ain't He, Rotarians, ain't He though?
Our forefathers made our nation great
We pray we stay masters of our fate
Thru depressions, attacks, too many wars
We're marked by cruel cuts and psychic scars
But above all 50 states our flag still glows
With red, white and blue our freedom shows.
Oh, I don't know how to say it
But this I surely know
Ain't God good to this country?
Ain't He, Rotary, ain't He though?