

‘America, You Must Turn Back to God’

Today is Presidents Day, a federal holiday honoring America’s two greatest presidents, George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. Washington led the nation to victory in its war for independence from Great Britain and served as her first president. Lincoln led the nation through its most grave and dangerous time—a divisive and horrifying Civil War.

Both men believed faith and freedom to be Siamese twins and that freedom could only survive if coupled with a living faith. Neither was shy in publicly declaring their conviction of faith in God being essential for the stability and success of the nation.

George Washington

Washington took every opportunity to point the American people to God as the key to their peace and happiness. Shortly after the surrender of the British at Yorktown, he penned a letter to the governors of the various states in which he exhorted them to make Jesus Christ their example for life and morals. He wrote:

“I now make it my earnest prayer that God would have you, and the State over which you preside, in his holy protection; that he would incline the hearts of the citizens . . . to entertain a brotherly affection and love for one another . . . and to demean ourselves with that charity, humility, and pacific temper of mind, which were the characteristics of the Divine Author of our blessed religion, and without a humble imitation of His example in these things, we can never hope to be a happy nation” (Hyatt, “1726: The Year that Defined America,” 120).

Shortly after becoming president, Washington issued a

proclamation for a Day of Thanksgiving and Prayer. The purpose of this Day of Thanksgiving and Prayer was, he said:

“That we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the Great Lord and Ruler of Nations and beseech him to pardon our national sins and other transgressions, to enable us all, whether in public or private stations, to perform our several and relative duties properly and punctually, to render our national government a blessing to all people” (Hyatt, “1726: The Year that Defined America,” 134).

In his first inaugural address, which was filled with references to God, Washington clearly stated his belief in the necessity of a living faith for national stability. He warned, “The propitious smiles of heaven can never be expected on a nation that disregards the external rules of order and right, which heaven itself has ordained” (Hyatt, “Pilgrims and Patriots 2nd Edition,” 173).

Abraham Lincoln

God did bless America and the new nation quickly rose to prominence among the nations of the world. Succeeding generations, however, became smug and prideful in their prosperity and did not use their new-found power to free those who were enslaved in their midst. Judgement came and a horrible Civil War began that could have forever destroyed America.

Abraham Lincoln, however, recognized the root of the problem. In the midst of the Civil War, he called the nation back to God by issuing a proclamation designating April 30, 1863, as a National Day of Humiliation, Fasting, and Prayer. In this proclamation he rebuked the nation for its smugness and self-sufficient pride, saying:

“It is the duty of nations as well as of men to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God, to confess their

sins and transgressions in humble sorrow yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon.

“But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious Hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own.

“Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us” (Hyatt, “1726: The Year that Defined America,” 184-86)!

Does that not describe America today! Lincoln went on to say,

“It behooves us then to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins and to pray for clemency and forgiveness . . . and I do, by this proclamation, designate and set apart Thursday, the 30th day of April 1863, as a day of national humiliation, fasting and prayer.

“And I do hereby request all the people to abstain on that day from their ordinary secular pursuits, and to unite, at their several places of public worship and their respective homes, in keeping the day holy to the Lord and devoted to the humble discharge of the religious duties proper to that solemn occasion.

“All this being done, in sincerity and truth, let us then rest humbly in the hope authorized by the Divine teachings, that the united cry of the nation will be heard on high and answered with blessing no less than the pardon of our national sins and the restoration of our now divided and suffering country to its former happy condition of unity and peace.

“In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed. By the President: Abraham Lincoln” (Hyatt, “1726: The Year that Defined

America," 184-86).

It is an historical fact that immediately after this day of prayer and repentance, the war shifted in favor of the Union, and the war was soon brought to an end by the Battle of Gettysburg. National repentance and prayer changed the course of history.

Here's What They Would Say Today

Washington and Lincoln would be appalled at how America has turned her back on God. They would be shocked that prayer and Bible reading have been banned in public schools and other public venues. They would be outraged that Christian symbols have been ordered removed from federal property and at the general animosity shown toward people of faith.

They would be shocked that the Democrat National Committee (DNC), the governing body of the party now in power, has unanimously passed a resolution affirming atheism and declaring that neither Christianity nor any religion is necessary for morality and patriotism.

 Even from the above brief summary of their faith, it is clear what the nation's two greatest presidents would say to this generation. They would shout with great concern, "America, Turn Back to God!"

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