

DNC Delegates Grapple With Nixing God

While some would say that Charlotte, N.C., is an odd choice to host the 2012 Democratic National Convention, others recognize that holding the event in **Billy Graham's** hometown is somehow fitting.

After all, Graham has met with every U.S. president since Harry Truman—including democrats Kennedy, Carter, Clinton and Obama. He is recognized for offering spiritual support to the man, not the party platform.

Reporters and pundits argue back, saying that conservative North Carolina, with its support for traditional marriage, should not be hosting this party.

And so it goes.

Some would say the two points of view perfectly symbolize the dichotomies of this election. Speaking at the convention's morning **prayer gathering**, the Rev. Derrick Harkins, the National Director of Faith and Outreach for the Democratic Party, said, "We begin every single morning of this 2012 convention in **prayer** because faith in God is not a strange concept to Democrats.

"It is woven into the fabric of who we are. There are Democrats who are people of faith—and yes, Christians. It is not a partisan distinction."

Discussing how he reconciles his faith with the party platform, Harkins said that for him being a Christian means being a good citizen. It means loving his neighbor and caring for the poor and needy.

"As people of faith in the Democratic Party, it is our

responsibility to relieve the pain and suffering of the least of these,” Harkins added.

The Rev. Cynthia Hale, senior pastor of the Ray of Hope Christian Church in Decatur, Ga., said that as a Democrat, she believes in helping the poor, “not just with hand-outs or in soup kitchens, but by providing government assistance.

“The Democratic Party cares for all individuals,” Hale added. “We represent the **love of God** to the world.”

Maggie Finnerty, who is visiting Charlotte this week to care for her brother’s children, said that although she opposes **abortion** and **gay marriage**—both key to the party’s platform—she believes that loving thy neighbor is the overriding value that governs her thoughts.

“I am a Christian and a Democrat,” said Finnerty. “While I would never choose to end a child’s life, I understand why some women need to. I think Jesus would forgive a ‘fallen’ woman.”

As for what seems to be missing from the platform, (the Democrats took God out completely, compared to the Republicans using it 12 times), Harkins said, “There is not a concerted effort to excise God deliberately. In fact, the importance of faith was mentioned 11 times last night and the name of God was mentioned 30 times during the evening.”

In giving the benediction on the first night of the convention, Jena Lee Nardella, who is the founder of Blood: Water Mission said, “The kingdom of God is not divided into red and blue states. “

She prayed for **President Obama** and also candidate Romney, for “understanding and wisdom across the political spectrum, and for this nation, to walk humbly before our God.”

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