

Faith Takes Center Stage at Republican National Convention

As thousands of Republicans, journalists and protesters gather in Tampa, Fla., for the Republican National Convention this week, issues of faith and morality will take center stage.

A number of clergy—including Evangelical, Catholic, Mormon, Sikh and Greek Orthodox leaders—are expected to offer **prayers**, while delegates representing every possible expression of faith will bring their convictions to the floor.

Across the country, concerned citizens are discussing the role **faith** should play in public life. That includes controversies over legalizing **same-sex marriage**, **abortion** rights and the mandate in President Barack Obama's healthcare overhaul that requires faith-based employers to provide free contraception to their employees as part of insurance plans. Another top concern for two key voting blocs—evangelicals and Catholics—is **religious liberty**.

While Tropical Storm Isaac delayed the official start of the RNC convention Monday, *Decision* Magazine editor Bob Paulson spent time talking with delegates about the importance of faith in this election and the future of America.

Alabama delegate Jeff Peacock, and his wife, Jodi Peacock, who is an alternate delegate, said: "If there has ever been a time for Christians to get involved, this is the time. ... I think we are faced with an amazing choice of the direction of our country for generations to come. And I really think that Gov. Romney is going to get that message out. I think as Republicans we all need to get that message out to folks so that they realize the real choice that we are facing in this election."

The Peacocks decided to get more involved with the electoral process after Obama won the presidency in 2008. Jeff recalled, "I remember thinking on the night that he won the election that, you know what? This is a battle that we may not win, but if we don't, it won't be because I didn't do enough. That was when I really started getting involved."

On Nov. 7, said Jeff, "I want to wake up and be able to say, regardless of the outcome, that I did everything I possibly could."

Texas delegate Richard Hayes said he appreciates the Republican Party's **pro-life** stance: "I have five kids. ... Our platform is essentially the same as it was in 1996. We're a **pro-life** party."

Hayes believes that words have meaning: "Like *marriage* has a meaning. I strongly believe marriage [means] one man, one woman. So what do we try to do now? We try to twist it and apply it to some other concept. The other concept may be fine for some people, but that's not the meaning of the word. Go have your civil union if that is your inclination, but that is not marriage."

For Hayes, it is imperative that people of **faith** engage. "While there are some that are active, the studies tell us most are not. And what we do on Sundays, many times, is people go and sit in the pew waiting to be entertained. And that's not the role that they need to see in their lives. We are an army of people, if we will get up and do something about it."

If Americans can go back to the nation's roots and understand how important religion is in our government and in our rights as individuals, we can restore our country, said Hayes. "If we continue to drift, we're going to continue to have problems. What we face is not a political problem; it's a spiritual problem. We've got to return to the belief in our God, and we have to start teaching it everywhere."

“We’ve taken a big turn here in the last 50 years and have gotten away from some of the best things that made our country unique and great,” Hayes added.

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