

How Donald Trump Just Aligned Himself With America's Founding Generation

President Donald Trump's Proclamation of Sunday as a Day of Prayer for the victims of Hurricane Harvey was the "American" thing to do. From its inception, America has turned to God in times of crises. Prayer has been the very lifeblood of this nation.

For example, at the opening of the First Continental Congress on September 5, 1774, the delegates began with Bible reading and prayer. Rev Jacob Dusche of Philadelphia read the entire 35th chapter of Psalms, and it had a powerful impact on everyone present.

The psalm is a prayer of David for deliverance and begins with the words, "Plead my cause O LORD, with my adversaries; fight those who fight me" (Ps. 35:1). The psalm ends with praise for God's deliverance.

With British troops on American soil and occupying the city of Boston, the psalm resonated deeply with everyone present. At the end of the reading, Rev. Dusche began to pray and everyone present lifted their hearts to heaven in sincere prayer to God for his assistance in their struggle for liberty.

John Adams wrote to his wife, Abigail, of the impact of the Bible reading and prayer on the delegates. He wrote,

Who can realize the emotions with which they turned imploringly to heaven for divine interposition and aid. It was enough to melt a heart of stone. I never saw a greater effect upon an audience. It seems as if heaven had ordained that psalm to be read that day. I saw tears gush into the eyes of the old, grave pacific Quakers of Philadelphia. I must beg

you to read that psalm.

The Congress and the Nation Prayed

Prayer continued to be a daily and vital part of the proceedings of the Continental Congress. Years later, when Benjamin Franklin called the delegates of the Constitutional Convention to prayer, he reminded them, "In the beginning of the contest with Great Britain, when we were sensible to danger, we had daily prayers in this room for Divine protection."

Indeed, the Catholic scholar, Michael Novak, is correct when he says, "In all moments of imminent danger, as in the first Act of the First Continental Congress, the founding generation turned to prayer."

During the Revolutionary War, the Congresses issued no less than fifteen separate calls for special days of prayer and fasting. For example, during the fall of 1776, when the morale of the army and populace had sunk to an all-time low because of a poor harvest and hardship on the battlefield, Congress proclaimed Dec. 11, 1776, as a Day of Fasting and Repentance.

After this day of prayer, there was an amazing change of circumstances, with successes on the battlefield and the reaping of abundant harvests. There was, in fact, such a turnaround after this that in 1779 Congress issued a proclamation setting aside a day of thanksgiving, because "it hath pleased Almighty God, the father of mercies, remarkably to assist and support the United States of America in their important struggle for liberty."

The Congress then listed seven different accomplishments of God on the behalf of the nation, including "many instances of prowess and success in our armies" and "so great abundance of the fruits of the earth of every kind, as not only to enable us to easily to supply the wants of the army, but gives comfort and happiness to the whole people."

Washington Transforms the Colonial Army into a Praying Army

The Second Continental Congress, which convened on May 10, 1775, asked George Washington to become commander-in-chief of the ragtag colonial militias and transform them into an army that could face the might of the British military.

Washington accepted the call and began immediately to instill in the colonial troops a very real faith in God, for he knew that without heaven's assistance they had no hope against the mighty British war machine.

Washington, therefore, issued an order that each day was to begin with prayer led by the officers of each unit. He also ordered that, unless their duties required them to be elsewhere, every soldier was to observe, "a punctual attendance of Divine services, to implore the blessing of heaven upon the means used for our safety and public defense."

He also forbade all profanity and drunkenness and promised swift punishment for any who uttered oaths that would offend God or man.

Washington continually sought to instill in his troops faith and reverence toward God. While the colonial army was quartering at Valley Forge, during a particularly difficult part of the war, Rev. Henry Muhlenberg was able to observe Washington's conduct from his nearby Lutheran church. He wrote, "Washington rode around among his army yesterday and admonished each one to fear God."

Washington's 'Earnest Prayer' for America

The many prayers of colonial America were heard, and the Revolutionary War came to an amazing end. It officially ended on Oct. 19, 1781, when General Cornwallis surrendered his entire force to Washington. In customary fashion, Cornwallis turned his sword over to Washington, and the weaponry of his troops was stacked in neat piles.

As this occurred, the British band played, "The World Turned Upside Down." For freedom-loving people everywhere, however, the world had been turned right side up.

Showing the influence of Christianity on the American populace and their leaders, there was none of the revenge and butchery that are so common in Marxist and Islamic revolutions. There were no tribunals to exact revenge, no reign of terror and no bloodthirsty proclamations by the Continental Congress. The war ended, and the patriots picked up their lives and moved on.

Having completed his call, Washington issued a letter of resignation as commander in chief to the Continental Congress. Then, he wrote what could be described as a pastoral letter, dated June 14, 1783, to the governors of the various states. This letter included his "earnest prayer" that is here quoted in part. 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.

The Real Meaning of the First Amendment

It is worth noting that the day after approving the First Amendment, which states that "Congress shall make no law concerning the establishment of religion or hindering the free exercise thereof," those same Founding Fathers issued another proclamation for a day of prayer and thanksgiving.

This shows that the First Amendment had nothing to do with

banning expressions of faith from the public square but was merely saying that America would never have an official, government-run church as was the case with the nations of Europe at that time. The First Amendment guarantees “freedom of religion,” not “freedom from religion.”

Our Response

Every true American should applaud Donald Trump for his Day of Prayer proclamation. It was the American thing to do at this time of crisis.

And seeing the vital role of prayer in the founding of this nation, let us not be intimidated by the modern assertion that prayer is somehow inappropriate for public or political venues. Let us be bold in our faith. Let us be salt and light in this generation. Let us pray. It is the godly thing to do! It is the American thing to do! {eo}

This article is derived from Dr. Eddie Hyatt's book, Pilgrims and Patriots, available from Amazon and his website at . Dr. Hyatt believes another Great Awakening is coming to America. You can read about his vision by visiting his website at .