

How the Democratic Party Rejects the America of Our Founding Fathers

The Democrat National Committee unanimously passed a resolution affirming atheists and the non-religious and insisting that neither Christianity nor any religion is necessary for morality and patriotism. In a swipe at evangelical Christians, they condemned those who are, in their words, “loudly claiming that morals, values and patriotism must be defined by their particular religious views.”

Obviously rejecting the First Amendment guarantee of religious liberty, the DNC also accuses Christians of using “misplaced claims of ‘religious liberty’”—to justify public policy that has threatened the civil rights and liberties of many Americans, including but not limited to the LGBT community, women and ethnic and religious/nonreligious minorities.”

With this resolution, the DNC rejected the Christian vision of Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Adams and the entire founding generation.

George Washington Saw the World Very Differently

Enter George Washington and America’s Founding Fathers who, without exception, believed only Christianity provided the moral values that would lead to a stable, free and prosperous nation. Washington made this clear in his farewell address after serving two terms as America’s first president. He said,

Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are *indispensable* supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism, who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of men and

citizens. The mere politician, equally with the pious man, ought to respect and to cherish them. And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion [Christianity]. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle (Hyatt, *Pilgrims and Patriots*, 169-70).

Washington clearly contradicts the DNC on three points.

1. He says religion and morality are *indispensable* supports for political prosperity.
2. He says anyone who subverts these “great pillars of human happiness” cannot claim the tribute of patriotism.
3. He says that national morality will never prevail apart from religious principle.

In the same address, Washington again warned the nation to not neglect its duty toward God, saying, “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*, 174).

Thomas Jefferson Agreed With Washington

Thomas Jefferson was in complete agreement with Washington, and he made Washington’s farewell address required reading at the University of Virginia, which he had founded. Notice that Washington did not call religion “optional.” The word he used was “indispensable,” and Jefferson obviously agreed. It should be remembered that when the founders used the word “religion,” they were referring to Christianity.

Jefferson may have had questions at times about certain aspects of Christian doctrine, but there is no question that he saw Christianity as providing the moral and intellectual

system necessary for a stable society. Having read the Koran and the literature of ancient Greece, Rome and the Enlightenment, he stated, "Of all the systems of morality that have come under my observations, none appear to me so pure as that of Jesus."

Jefferson's commitment to Christian values is why he closed all presidential documents with the appellation, "In the year of our Lord Christ." It is also why he took money from the federal treasury to pay for missionaries to work among the Kaskaskia Indian tribe and to build them a building in which to worship.

John Adams Agreed

John Adams, America's second president, was also convinced that only Christian morality would enable the American Republic to survive. Two weeks before he signed the Declaration of Independence, Adams wrote to his cousin, Zabdiel, a minister of the gospel, and exhorted him about his vital role in the success of the nation, saying,

"Statesmen, my dear sir, may plan and speculate for Liberty, but it is Religion and Morality alone, which can establish the Principles, upon which Freedom can securely stand" (Hyatt, *Pilgrims and Patriots*, 173).

In a 1798 address to the officers of the Massachusetts Militia, Adams again made clear his belief in a national, Christian morality as the only hope for the survival of the American Republic. He declared,

"We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion ... Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious [Christian] people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other" (Hyatt, *Pilgrims and Patriots*, 173).

The Catholic scholar, William Novak, commented on why Adams

believed Christianity necessary for the survival of a free society. He writes,

“Without the existence of an all-knowing Governor of the universe, the Divine Judge and Arbiter, Adams argued, there can be no right or wrong, only subjective opinion, whim and desire. Turning from God is a recipe for moral chaos which no appeal to reason is efficacious, a world in which brute power decides right and wrong.”

James Madison Agreed

The Founding Fathers unanimously believed that unless America's citizens would have a moral sense of obligation to their Creator, they would tend to live self-centered lives, harmful to society. This is why James Madison, chief architect of the Constitution, wrote,

“The belief in a God All Powerful wise and good, is so essential to the moral order of the world and to the happiness of man, that arguments which enforce it cannot be drawn from too many sources nor adapted with too much solicitude to the different characters and capacities impressed with it” (Hyatt, *Pilgrims and Patriots*, 131).

Good Government and Religion Go Hand in Hand

The same Founding Fathers who gave us the U.S. Constitution and the First Amendment also passed the Northwest Ordinance establishing the Northwest Territory—at the same Constitutional Convention in 1787. Not only did they ban slavery in the territory, but they also set aside federal lands and funds for the building of schools in order to promote “religion, morality and knowledge.”

They did this because, in their own words, the promotion of religion and morality are “necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind.” Further demonstrating that the

First Amendment had nothing to do with putting restrictions on religious expression, the Founders also proclaimed a day of "Prayer and Thanksgiving" the day after ratifying the First Amendment.

Novak is thus correct in saying, "The founders did not think that the constitutional government they were erecting could survive without Hebrew-Christian faith." He also says,

Far from having a hostility toward religion, the founders counted on religion [Christianity] for the underlying philosophy of the republic, its supporting ethic and its reliable source of rejuvenation (Hyatt, *Pilgrims and Patriots*, 174).

It's Time for Another Spiritual Awakening

The DNC has rejected, not only the vision of the Founding Fathers, but the Declaration of Independence itself and its insistence that our rights and liberties come from God. For the DNC, God seems to be an unnecessary inconvenience. A comment from Jefferson is stunningly applicable in this regard. He wrote,

"God who gave us life, gave us liberty. And can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are a gift from God? That they are not to be violated but with His wrath? Indeed, I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just and that His justice cannot sleep forever" (Hyatt, *Pilgrims and Patriots*, 160-61).

We too should tremble at the open rejection of God and His moral laws. American liberty has survived because of periodic, national spiritual awakenings that have renewed the faith of American citizens and strengthened their moral resolve. These include the Second Great Awakening (1800-1840), the Great Prayer Awakening of 1857-58 and other regional and national awakenings.

We must pray for another such awakening that will transform the churches of America and stem the tide of secularism and immorality that is flooding the land. Such an awakening is not a luxury but a necessity if the America of Washington, Jefferson and Madison is to survive. Such an awakening will come, not by instituting a new religious order or program, but by following those same instructions God gave Israel for a national healing.

“If My people, who are called by name, will humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and will heal their land (2 Chron. 7:14). {eoa}

This article is derived from Dr. Eddie Hyatt's book, Pilgrims and Patriots, and his soon-to-be published book, 1726: The Spiritual Awakening that Defined America. His books are available from Amazon and his website at .