

Is It Important for the Next President to Promote Spiritual Renewal?

As Americans make their way through this election season, there is one question that is not being asked of those who would be president. This question is more important even than questions about social policy, domestic policy, foreign policy and fidelity to the Constitution, as important as all those questions are.

The question is this: how badly do you think America needs spiritual awakening and what will you do to promote it and support it?

The Scriptures are filled with stories of statesmen who used their political influence to promote revival. Nehemiah, for instance, was both the mayor of Jerusalem and the governor of Judah. While he made his mark on history for a great infrastructure project, the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, he was also keenly aware of the even greater need for rebuilding his nation's spiritual infrastructure.

In the prayer that begins the book, he confesses through tears and sorrow that the people of Israel had brought destruction upon themselves through their own rejection of God. "We have acted very corruptly against you, and have not kept the commandments, the statutes, and the rules that you commanded your servant Moses" (Neh. 1:7).

When Ezra came to the land as both a priest and a teacher of God's book of truth, Nehemiah used his political influence to give him a platform to teach the people the abiding truths of the Scripture. The people "gathered as one man" in a giant open square, and Ezra "opened the book in the sight of all the people." He and the Levites "read from the book, from the Law

of God, clearly, and they gave the sense so that the people understood the reading" (Neh. 8:8).

This led the people to a time of genuine repentance and renewed faith in God. "They confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers ... (and) made confession and worshiped the LORD their God" (Neh. 9:2-3). This spiritual renewal soon led to a renewal in marriage and the family.

It's worthy of note that Nehemiah himself, as a statesman, did not feel the need to personally conduct the revival. That was a task for Ezra and his fellow members of the clergy. But Nehemiah knew that his task, using the political authority God had given him, was to support, promote and facilitate the work of spiritual renewal.

The Founding Fathers understood the need for our people to be spiritually strong as well as politically and militarily strong. George Washington, for instance, called for a national day of prayer and thanksgiving the day after the First Amendment had been adopted by Congress, thus shattering for all time the illusion that the First Amendment somehow prohibits public prayer and the public acknowledgement of God.

Washington knew that unless the nation was spiritually strong, it could not be politically strong. "Of all the habits and dispositions that make for political prosperity," he said, "religion and morality are indispensable supports."

As we survey the field of current candidates for the presidency, it is unlikely that we will find the leader we are looking for on the Democratic side of the aisle. This, after all, is the party that literally booed God out of its convention in 2012.

On the Republican side, there are three viable candidates at this point: Donald Trump, Ted Cruz, and Marco Rubio. It is unlikely that Donald Trump will be an agent of revival, since

he seems to need a spiritual awakening of his own. But both Sen. Cruz and Sen. Rubio are men of sincere and robust Christian faith.

Republicans seem to be cognizant of the significant difference of spiritual temperament among the three top GOP candidates. In a January survey of adults who identify as Republicans, just 5 percent identified Mr. Trump as “very religious” while 76% and 70% respectively said Sen. Cruz and Sen. Rubio were either “very religious” or “somewhat religious.”

While a Google search for “Marco Rubio, call for revival” returned very little, the same search did result in numerous hits for Sen. Cruz. For instance, in an interview with CBN’s David Brody, the Texas lawmaker was quite direct about the need for a spiritual awakening.

“David Brody: Do you believe that spiritual revival is needed in this country?”

“Sen. Ted Cruz: Without a doubt. I think we’re at the edge of a precipice. If we keep going down this path we’re risking losing our nation. We’re risking losing the incredible oasis of liberty.”

The Senator himself even described a December, 2015 campaign stop in Nashville as “one part political rally, one part prayer revival.”

Evangelicals, as they should, are driven by 2 Chronicles 7:14 to hunger for a nationwide move of God to bring us in humility and repentance to our knees before God so that he may hear our prayer, forgive our sin, and heal our land.

If we are looking for a modern day Nehemiah to provide statesmanlike leadership for spiritual renewal, no one may fit the profile better than Sen. Ted Cruz.

Bryan Fischer is host of the two-hour radio program “Focal

Point" on American Family Radio.