

Is the American Experiment in Self-Government Coming to an End?

America's founding has been called the "great experiment" in human government because it was an experiment in self-government.

Authority would reside, not with a monarchy, oligarchy or centralized government, but with the people. According to the founding documents, it was to be a government designed to "serve" the people who have unalienable rights from God that no government can take from them. Abraham Lincoln called it a government "of the people, by the people and for the people."

The great question was, "Can a free people govern themselves and produce an orderly and safe society?" Such a government "of the people" would require a certain kind of people, which is why Benjamin Franklin responded as he did to a question at the closing banquet of the Constitutional Convention in 1787.

At this banquet a Philadelphia matron rushed to the side of the convention's most senior member and gushed, "O Mister Franklin, what have you gentlemen wrought?" The 81-year-old Franklin is said to have paused, adjusted his glasses and solemnly replied, "A republic madam; if you can keep it" (Hyatt, "Pilgrims and Patriots, 2nd Edition," 171).

One Thing Necessary for a Free Republic

Franklin was solemn because he knew that for the Constitutional Republic they had just formed to survive, it would require a special kind of people. He knew that those same freedoms they had just enshrined could be turned into anarchy by a populace that did not have the capacity to govern itself according to internal, moral values.

He and all the Founders knew that the success of the nation they had formed hinged on the moral character of its citizens and their ability to govern themselves according to godly principles. This is why John Adams, in a 1798 address to the officers of the Massachusetts Militia, 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, “1726: The Year that Defined America,” 168).

George Washington was in complete agreement and in a 1783 letter to the governors of the various states he exhorted them to make Jesus their example and role model for life, saying, “Without a humble imitation of His example in these things, we can never hope to be a happy nation” (Hyatt, “1726: The Year that Defined America,” 120). He continued this theme in his First Inaugural Address in which he exhorted the new nation to cling to Christian morals, and warned,

“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, 2nd Edition,” 173).

The well-known historian, Michael Novak, was correct in saying, “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, “1726: The Year that Defined America,” 171).

The Challenge We Face

We have entered a unique time in America’s history in which there has never been such a widespread and adamant rejection of Christian faith and values. Colleges and universities, as

well as elementary and high schools, have become indoctrination centers for agnosticism and wokeism, and parents who protest are labeled "domestic terrorists" by our government.

We probably should not be surprised since in 2019 the Democrat National Committee (DNC), the governing body of the Democrat Party, unanimously passed a resolution affirming atheism and declaring that neither Christianity or any religion to be necessary for morality and patriotism. Their resolution is completely at odds with America's founding.

At the same time there has been an all-out effort to rewrite America's history and destroy her Christian heritage. School children are now taught that America was founded by wicked slaveowners and is racist and evil at her core. Those who teach this are willfully ignorant or uneducated, of the fact that America's founders turned against slavery at a time it was being practiced in Africa, Asia and throughout the world (Hyatt, "1726: The Year that Defined America," 89-90).

For the secularist, the revision of America's history is a major coup, for to fundamentally transform a nation, its history must first be transformed. This is what George Orwell was referring to when he said, "Whoever controls the past, controls the future." Alexander Solzhenitsyn sounded the same alarm when he said, "To destroy a people, you must first sever their roots" (Hyatt, "1726: The Year that Defined America," 6).

Severed from her Christian past, America seems defenseless against the moral relativism and atheistic wokeism that is permeating the culture. With the loss of its Christian heritage, America's populace is now vulnerable, in a way it has never been, to being shaped into an amoral, Marxist society. American culture has now reached the point, spoken of by Karl Marx when he said, "A people without a heritage are easily persuaded" (Hyatt, "1726: The Year that Defined

America," 6).

So, Franklin's statement is very appropriate and timely. Are we going to keep the free Republic that was passed along to us by former generations. Ronald Reagan was right when he said,

"Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected and handed on for them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children what it was once like in the United States where men were free."

The Answer for America Today

One thing I have learned from years of studying America's history is that again and again God has intervened at critical moments with great, national revivals that have altered the course of the nation. Without another such Awakening at this time in history, the America many of us grew up in will cease to exist. We are in a moral and political freefall. The handwriting is on the wall for anyone to see, who is willing to see.

This is, however, hope. I have documented in my book, "1726: The Year that Defined America," how this nation was birthed out of the First Great Awakening. God has no grandchildren, and when second and third generation Americans drifted from the faith of their parents, a remnant prayed and God sent a Second Great Awakening.

It was on the heels of this Second Great Awakening that a foreign visitor gave the secret for America's success and greatness. The following statement has historically been attributed to Alexis de Tocqueville, a French sociologist who visited America in 1831. Although it is not found in his writings, it has the feel and sound of Tocqueville and may well have been spoken in one of his many speeches and then written down by someone in the audience.

Regardless, this visitor tells how he sought for America's greatness in her great commercial centers, her educational institutions, and her halls of government. He then said,

"Not until I went into the churches of America and heard her pulpits flame with righteousness did I understand the secret of her genius and power. America is great because America is good, and if America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great" (Hyatt, "Pilgrims and Patriots, 2nd Edition," 177).

America's pulpits "flaming with righteousness" once again is the key to the preservation of the free Republic that was formed 247 years ago. Let us pray, therefore, that pastors, Christian leaders, and Christians in general will fall on their faces and seek the Lord, as the prophet says, "Til He comes and rains righteousness on you" (Hos. 10:12).

"If My people, who are called by My 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 heal their land" (2 Chr. 7:14). {eo}

This article is derived from Dr. Eddie Hyatt's books, 1726: The Year that Defined America and Pilgrims and Patriots, 2nd Edition, available from Amazon and his website at .

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