

The Dogma That 'Lived Loudly' in America's Founders

By now, you have probably heard how Diane Feinstein, the ranking senator from California, and several of her colleagues took Notre Dame professor Amy Barrett to task for her Christian values and beliefs. This occurred during the confirmation hearing for Barrett, a federal court nominee.

Feinstein expressed dismay over the fact that when she reads Barrett's speeches, "The conclusion one draws is that the dogma lives loudly in you."

The statement of Feinstein, and those of her colleagues, reveal how clueless much of Washington D.C. is about American history. The truth is that the "dogma" [Christian beliefs] lived loudly in virtually all of America's founders.

The following are five brief examples from America's founders, and they show that Feinstein and her colleagues would have rejected all of them from public service based on the fact that the "dogma" lived loudly in them.

Benjamin Franklin

Benjamin Franklin (1706-90) is the only Founding Father to have signed all four documents leading to the founding of the United States of America. These documents are the Declaration of Independence (1776), the Treaty of Alliance with France (1778), the Treaty of Paris (1782) and the Constitution (1787).

Although he embraced deism as a teenager, I have conclusively shown in my book, *The Faith & Vision of Benjamin Franklin*, that Franklin returned to his Puritan roots as a result of his close friendship with George Whitefield and as a result of the impact of the Great Awakening on his life.

Franklin's Christian "dogma" was living loudly in him when he called the 1787 Constitutional Convention to prayer. He began by reminding the delegates how they had had daily prayer in that very room during the War for Independence. Addressing the convention president, he said, "Our prayers, sir, were heard and they were graciously answered."

Then quoting from both the Psalms and the words of Jesus about a sparrow not falling without the heavenly Father taking notice, Franklin said, "And if a sparrow cannot fall without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid?"

Yes, Senator Feinstein and her colleagues would reject Benjamin Franklin from serving on the federal judiciary or any public office. The dogma lived too loudly in him to suit their secularist tastes.

George Washington

George Washington (1732-99) was America's first president and a devout Christian whose "dogma" [Christian beliefs] would have greatly troubled Senator Feinstein and her secularist colleagues.

It was Washington who began the tradition of the president taking the oath of office with his hand placed on a Bible. This was no mere formality for Washington, who once said, "It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible."

After resigning as commander in chief at the end of the war, Washington wrote a letter to governors of the various states in which his "dogma" was obvious. The letter included his "earnest prayer" that God would keep each state in His "holy protection."

In the letter, Washington also expressed his desire that the citizens of the new nation would model their lives after Jesus

Christ. He mentioned in particular the characteristics of charity and humility, and then said, "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."

Yes, it is obvious that Senator Feinstein and her colleagues could not bear with George Washington. His "dogma" lived too loudly for their secularist vision for America.

John Witherspoon

John Witherspoon (1723-94) was a signer of the Declaration of Independence and one of the prominent members of the Continental Congress, serving on over 100 committees. He was also the president of the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University) and there trained many of America's first-generation leaders, including James Madison.

Witherspoon was not only an academic, he was also a preacher and a reformer within the Church of Scotland before immigrating to America. From his students at the College of New Jersey came 37 judges, three of whom served on the Supreme Court, 28 senators and 49 congressmen. His most famous student was Madison.

Expressing his Christ-centered approach to education, Witherspoon declared, "Cursed is all education that is contrary to Christ." In regards to his profound influence on the founding generation, the Catholic scholar, William Novak, calls Witherspoon, "The most influential academic in American history."

Yes, Witherspoon was a passionate follower of Christ, and it was he who composed the calls to prayer issued by the Continental Congress. He also provided theological justification for the War for Independence, especially in his sermon entitled "The Dominion of Providence Over the Passions of Men."

It is obvious that Senator Feinstein and many of her colleagues could not stomach John Witherspoon, for his “dogma” lived loudly in him.

Samuel Adams

Samuel Adams (1722-1803) is sometimes called “The Father of the American Revolution” for his tireless work in organizing colonial resistance to the tyranny of King George. He was a member of the Continental Congress and a signer of the Declaration of the Declaration of Independence. He also served as governor of Massachusetts.

While serving as governor of Massachusetts, Adams issued a call to prayer in 1795, and as part of the proclamation, he asked the citizens of that state to pray a specific prayer. He said, “Pray that the peaceful and glorious reign of our Divine Redeemer may be known throughout the whole family of mankind.”

It is obvious that the “dogma” of Samuel Adams lived loudly in him, and he would not be welcome in the snooty circles of Senator Diane Feinstein and her “esteemed” colleagues.

John Hancock

John Hancock (1737-93) was a Founding Father who served as president of the Continental Congress. He was a signer of the Declaration of Independence and his large signature in the center of the page has produced the adage, “Give me your John Hancock.”

Signing the document in that manner was an expression of defiance on his part, for they all knew that their act would be seen as rebellion and sedition by King George who would target them for arrest.

Hancock also served as governor of Massachusetts, and it was while governor that he issued a call for prayer that expressed his Christian missionary vision for the whole world. He asked

the citizens of Massachusetts to pray, "That all nations may bow to the scepter of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and that the whole earth may be filled with his glory."

John Hancock was another American founder whose "dogma" lived largely in him. His example is an indication of how far Senator Feinstein and her colleagues are removed from America's founding generation.

Where We Go from Here

These examples demonstrate how far Senator Feinstein and her colleagues are removed from America's founding generation. Her attack on Professor Barrett should serve as a wake-up call to this generation that we must recover the truth of America's founding that lies buried beneath the rubble of revisionist histories by historians who are troubled by the overt Christian faith of America's founders. {eoa}

This article is derived from Dr. Eddie Hyatt's book, Pilgrims and Patriots, available from Amazon and his website at . Dr. Hyatt is also the founder of "Revive America" and conducts Revive America events across American in which he shows how America was birthed out of a great, spiritual awakening. He uses the event to call the American church to repentance and to prayer for another Great Spiritual Awakening.