

Daily Prayer Under the Christian Flag Returns to Capitol Hill

Prayer under the Christian flag is back on Capitol Hill.

Following a nearly four-month hiatus as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, the twice-daily prayer event, which began in 2002, has returned to the Capitol with a 7:30 a.m. session as the doors of the Capitol open, with another at noon to facilitate the busy schedules of those who work there.

The prayers sessions include individual prayer daily with senators—seven of whom have been prayed with since the restart—House members, staff and visitors. Urgent prayer for this fall's presidential election, now only 92 days away, for wisdom and for the ongoing presence of God are lifted. Those unable to be physically present are asked to join from wherever they are at 7:30 a.m. and 12 noon and send a message that they are praying to encourage those on site, daily.

The simple, "same time, same place" system takes its cue from the daily prayer meetings of Jeremiah Lanphier, who in 1857, grieved at the state of the country, began a daily noontime prayer meeting in downtown Manhattan, New York. For the first few months he was alone, but eventually nearly every available building in downtown Manhattan was full of praying men, resulting in nearly 1 million conversions and the third Great Awakening.

According to J. Edwin Orr, the historian of revival:

Not many people realize that in the wake of the American Revolution there was a moral slump with drunkenness became epidemic, out of a population of 5 million, 300,000 were confirmed drunkards, profanity was of the most shocking kind,

for the first time in the history of the American settlements, women were afraid to go out at night for fear of assault and bank robberies were a daily occurrence.

The chief justice of the United States, John Marshall, wrote to the bishop of Virginia James Madison, that the church "was too far gone ever to be redeemed." Voltaire averred and Tom Paine echoed, "Christianity will be forgotten in 30 years." The liberal arts colleges at that time had a poll taken at Harvard and discovered not one believer in the whole student body and they took a poll at Princeton, a much more evangelical place, where they discovered only two believers in the student body, and only five that did not belong to the filthy speech movement of that day when students rioted.

They held a mock Communion at Williams College, put on anti-Christian plays at Dartmouth, burned down the Nassau Hall at Princeton, forced the resignation of the president of Harvard, took a Bible out of a local Presbyterian church in New Jersey, and they burnt it in a public bonfire and Christians were so few on campus in the 1790s that they met in secret, like a communist cell, and kept their minutes in code so that no one would know.

The situation changed through a concert of prayer led by a Presbyterian minister named John Erskine, who published a paper pleading with the people to unite in prayer for the revival of religion which results in the second great awakening.

Orr continues by explaining that the result of the Awakenings was not just spiritual, but due to the large amount of conversions and changed in spiritual tenure, there was a dramatic drop in crime and a dramatic rise in the economy as people began to obey the laws, work faithfully and to live out their faith.

The social impact was astounding with judges presented with

white gloves, not a case to try; no robberies, no burglaries, no rapes, no murders and no embezzlement, nothing. District councils held emergency meetings to discuss what to do with the police now that they were unemployed, with one place where the sergeant of police was sent for and asked what he did with his time, to which he replied, "Before the revival, we had two main jobs: to prevent crime and to control crowds, as at football games. Since the revival started there is practically no crime. So we just go with the crowds."

After the revival, crime was cut in half and there was a wave of bankruptcies, but nearly all taverns and even an initial slowdown in the economy as so many were converted and stopped using bad language that even the service animals could not understand what was being said to them, and it took time for them to learn a new set of respectful orders.

The revival also affected sexual moral standards, with the government experts showing that the illegitimate birth rate had dropped 44% within a year of the beginning of the revival. The revival swept Britain, Scandinavia, Germany, North America, Australasia, Africa, Brazil, Mexico and Chile. And as always, it began through a movement of prayer.

Capitol Hill Daily Prayer is held every day at 7:30 a.m. and at noon at the Constitution/Supreme Court entrance to the Hart Senate Office Building, and anyone is welcome for just a few minutes or for the whole hour. Look for the Christian flag. Those unable to be present but joining in prayer at 7:30 and noon are asked to send a note to nextgreatawakeningprayer@ to encourage those on-site daily. {eo}

Amir George is the author of *Liberating Iraq* and directs *The World Helpline* at .

People Needed: *Capitol Hill Daily Prayer 7:30 a.m./12 p.m., Hart Senate Office Building, Constitution Ave./Supreme Court entrance.*

Even if you can't come, please pause to pray at 7:30/12 and let us know at thewhitehouseprayerteam@.