

A Revelation 3:2 Word for America

It's Time to Reconnect Our Severed Roots

To the church in Sardis that had a reputation of being alive but was, in fact, dead, Jesus had an appropriate word. He said, "Wake up!" (Revelation 3:2a, NIV). I have lately felt that same urgency for the church in America. Wake up!

It is time to "wake up" and realize how this nation is being taken from us under our very noses. It is time to connect the dots and realize that we have been severed from our Christian roots. Roots produce fruit, and reconnecting with our roots is a key to seeing a national healing as promised in 2 Chronicles 7:14.

The Severing of Our Roots

This severing of our roots has consisted primarily in the revising of our history and the secularizing of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution that reads, "Congress shall make no law concerning the establishment of religion or hindering the free exercise thereof." Secularists have wrenched this statement from its historical context and original intent and made it to mean, not freedom *of* religion, but freedom *from* religion.

They have done this by seizing on the first phrase of the amendment that reads, "Congress shall make no law concerning the establishment of religion," and from it concocting a so-called "establishment clause." Contrary to all historical evidence, the secularists have been successful in claiming that anything "Christian" on public property is a violation of this "establishment clause."

Based on this phony "establishment clause," prayer and Bible

reading have been banned from public schools throughout America. Crosses and Ten Commandment displays have been removed from public buildings and monuments. Christmas is now called the “winter holiday” and carols that mention Jesus can no longer be sung by public school children, who are also told they cannot talk about their faith in God at graduation ceremonies.

Where is the Church?

This situation could never have happened if the church in America had been awake and informed. But while we were busy enjoying our conferences, concerts, seminars and revivals, the secularists were busy revising our history and concocting a plan to secularize the nation by severing us from our Christian roots. As Alexander Solzhenitsyn, who spent time in a Soviet labor camp, said, “To destroy a people, you must first sever their roots” (Hyatt, *Pilgrims and Patriots*, 175).

We are now seeing the cultural fruit of our severed roots. The vitriolic anger, crudeness and violence so obvious today can be traced to the rejection of everything Christian from the public life of the nation. We are seeing the answer to the question posed by Benjamin Franklin when Thomas Paine sent him a manuscript for publication. Noting that it contained an attack on Christianity, Franklin refused to print it and rhetorically asked, “If men are this wicked with Christianity, what would they be if without it?”

The Truth About the First Amendment

That the First Amendment had nothing to do with barring Christian symbols and teachings from the public square was made clear when the day after voting to ratify the First Amendment, those same Founding Fathers issued a proclamation for a national day of prayer and thanksgiving. Congress continued to be opened with prayer and Bible reading, and prayer continued to be a daily part of the normal school day

in America. Presidents also continued to issue proclamations for special days of prayer and thanksgiving.

It was also made clear by George Washington, who in his farewell address, after serving two terms as the nation's first president, called on the citizens of the new nation to cling to "religion and morality," which he called "indispensable" supports for a stable and prosperous nation. He went on to say that the person who would seek to undermine "these great pillars of human happiness" can never claim to be an American patriot.

By implementing the First Amendment, the founders were simply saying that America would never have an official state church as had been the case in Europe since the time of Constantine. Indeed, it was from these oppressive state churches that their parents and grandparents had fled.

When Thomas Jefferson used the phrase "wall of separation" in a letter to a Baptist association, he was assuring them that the First Amendment guaranteed them protection from persecution by the state such as they had known in the Old World, and even in Jefferson's home state of Virginia. Jefferson saw the First Amendment as a unilateral wall erected to keep the government out of the church, not to keep the influence of the church out of government.

The words and actions of the founders themselves make it clear that the First Amendment was not put in place to stifle Christianity or to be indifferent towards it. This was also made clear by Joseph Story (1779-1845) who served as a Supreme Court justice for 34 years from 1811-1845. Commenting on the First Amendment, he said,

We are not to attribute this prohibition of a national religious establishment to an indifference in religion, and especially to Christianity, which none could hold in more reverence than the framers of the Constitution (Hyatt,

Pilgrims and Patriots, 153).

America's Founders Revered Christianity

Yes, America's Founders revered Christianity and they counted on the moral influence of Christianity to maintain civil liberty. This was obvious to the young French sociologist, Alexis de Tocqueville, who came to America in 1831 to study her institutions. After nine months of studying all facets of American society, Tocqueville concluded that Americans had combined Christianity and civil liberty so intimately in their minds that it was impossible to make them conceive of one without the other.

According to Tocqueville, this linking of faith with civil liberty was the reason for their passion to spread the gospel to the American frontier, where new settlements were springing up. He wrote,

I have known of societies formed by the Americans to send out ministers of the gospel in the new Western states, to found schools and churches there, lest religion should be suffered to die away in those remote settlements, and the rising states be less fitted to enjoy free institutions than the people from whom they came. I met with New Englanders who abandoned the country in which they were born in order to lay the foundations of Christianity and of freedom on the banks of the Missouri, or in the prairies of Illinois. Thus, religious zeal is warmed in the United States by the fires of patriotism.

From his observations, Tocqueville concluded, "From the beginning, politics and religion contracted an alliance which has never been dissolved" (Hyatt, *Pilgrims and Patriots*, 168).

It's Time to Wake Up!

America's founders would be astonished to see how the First Amendment has been distorted by modern secularists into a weapon against religious liberty, the very thing they meant to

protect. They would be shocked to hear of a judge ordering a cross to be removed from a Veteran's Memorial or a Marine corporal being forced out of the military because of a Bible verse posted in her work station.

Wake up, America! It's time to reconnect with our Christian roots and pray for another Great Awakening across the land. Only then will our land be healed. {eoa}

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