

America's Founding: The Marriage of Faith and Freedom Sparked God's Blessings

At the closing banquet celebrating the Constitutional Convention of 1787, 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 the freedoms they had just enshrined in the Constitution, 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 agreed that only Christianity offered the moral values and principles necessary for sustaining the freedoms they had just instituted.

Yes, Faith and Freedom were joined in an indissoluble bond at the time of America's founding. 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).

When the Founders use the word "religion" they are referring

to Christianity. Christianity was their religion. Without exception, they believed that only a people governed by Christian morality could sustain the Constitutional Republic they had formed.

Benjamin Rush, a Philadelphia physician, member of the Continental Congress and signer of the Declaration of Independence, made this clear when he said:

“The only foundation for a republic is to be laid in Religion. Without this there can be no liberty, and liberty is the object and life of all republican governments” (Hyatt, “1726: The Year that Defined America,” 163).

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).

John Quincy Adams (1767-1848), America’s sixth president and son of John Adams, the nation’s second president was clearly aware of this marriage of faith and freedom in the founding of America. He wrote, “The highest glory of the American Revolution is this: it connected in one indissoluble bond the principles of civil government with the principles of Christianity” (Hyatt, “America’s Revival Heritage, 2nd Edition,” 68).

The Challenge We Face

This being the case, how did we arrive at this place in America's history where freedom has been divorced from faith? How did we arrive at this place where prayer and Bible reading have been banned from public schools and crosses and other Christian symbols have been forcibly removed from all public venues? Why are children being erroneously taught that America was founded as a secularist nation by slaveowners who wanted to protect their wealth,

The answer is that there is an insidious plan to transform America into a godless, socialist state. To advance this agenda, there has been a rewriting of our history and a reinterpretation of that part of the First Amendment that says, "Congress shall make no law concerning the establishment of religion, nor hindering the free exercise thereof." The secularist insists that any expression of faith on public property amounts to an "establishment of religion" and must be banned.

The truth is that what the Founders banned was for Congress to establish a national, state church, which is what the nations of Europe had known since Constantine. They knew from experience that such coercive faith does not produce real Christians. They had learned that faith, imposed by civil government, can never produce a moral and virtuous people, and such a people, they believed, would be necessary for a free and stable nation. Interestingly, the day after ratifying the First Amendment, those same Founders declared a Day of Thanksgiving and Prayer throughout the nation.

America's Founders were also aware of the history of spiritual awakenings in Colonial America, including the big one, the Great Awakening, which had impacted all of them. They had seen the populace morally transformed by that Awakening. They believed such an organic faith of the people to be true to real Christianity and capable of producing the kind of national morality necessary for a peaceful and prosperous society.

The Way Forward from Here

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. The handwriting is on the wall for anyone to see, who is willing to see.

If America is to survive, we must get serious about praying for another Great Awakening that will revive the churches, impact the culture, and stem the tide of secularism and immorality that is flooding our land. Samuel Adams, another prominent Founding Father, believed this to be the key for Freedom to continue in America.

The noted historian, Dr. Michael Novak, says that Adams believed: (1) Liberty cannot be enjoyed apart from virtue and (2) Virtue is unlikely to remain vigorous from one generation to another without "religious awakenings." Novak goes on to say,

"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 American church must awaken and recognize the vital role it has been assigned by God and by America's Founders. We must renounce the divorce of Faith and Freedom and once again join them together in one indissoluble bond. This is not Christian nationalism; this is merely acknowledging that the morals of Jesus are superior to those of either Joe Biden or Donald Trump.

The American church must also get serious about praying for another Great Awakening to roll across the land like a great

tsunami wave. It is time to fall on our faces and seek the Lord, as the prophet says, “Til He comes and rains righteousness on you” (Hos. 10:12). {eoa}

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