

Religion & Politics

It is unfortunate that so little is known today about our American heritage. We live in the greatest country, under the greatest government, for the greatest length of time. No free government has ever operated so long and enjoyed so much beneficence as has ours. (e.g. France has had +/- 15 governments during the same time America has had one!). When I say America is the greatest I do not mean to suggest blind arrogance nor do I wish to be an affront to any other country. Rather, it is my desire to humbly proclaim my affection for and appreciation of the United States of America. My Country. I am proud to be an American in a grateful and I hope humble way. What made America great? What has kept her for so long? History provides us with a plethora of examples of governments that did not - that could not last. Many revolutions throughout history gave birth to new governments with great hopes, only to see them come crashing down on the jagged rocks of reality. What is the difference? The distinction for America is her Judeo-Christian heritage (belief in one living God as communicated in the Bible).

Politics defined – The science of government. That part of ethics which consists in the regulation and government of a nation or state, for the preservation of it's safety, peace and prosperity; comprehending the defense of it's existence and rights against foreign control or conquest, the augmentation of it's strength and resources, and the protection of it's citizens in their rights with the preservation and improvement of their morals. (American Dictionary of the English Language, Noah Webster 1828)

It is with great concern as I watch and hear the oft repeated mantra of "no religion in politics." There have been and continue to be many, literally hundreds of examples of governments without God. Just pick one, join it, and hold on for the ride – it will be a ride. It may well be the ride of your life, or perhaps the ride for your life. You see, America's greatness is her faith and always has been. Not blind faith. Not faith in humanity. Not faith in a dead religion that worships idols. Not faith in an oppressive religion. But faith in God. The Judeo-Christian faith of one living God. You don't have to believe in that God. Nor should anyone ever force one to believe (as if that were possible anyway). But before you remove the hull of the very ship in which you ride, understand her foundation. Listen to some dead Americans:

It is religion and morality alone which can establish the principles upon which freedom can surely stand... Our constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. ...If "Thou shalt not covet," and "Thou shalt not steal," were not commandments of Heaven, they must be made inviolable precepts in every society, before it can be civilized or made free. (John Adams, *Signer of the Declaration of Independence and Second President of the United States*)

The law given from Sinai [Ten Commandments] was a civil and municipal as well as a moral and religious code; (John Quincy Adams, *Sixth President of the United States*)

Our liberty depends on our education, our laws, and habits . . . it is founded on morals and religion, (Fisher Ames, *Framer of the First Amendment*)

Without morals a republic cannot subsist any length of time; they therefore who are decrying the Christian religion...are undermining the solid foundation of morals, the best security for the duration of free governments. (Charles Carroll, *Signer of the Declaration of Independence*)

The legislature, charged with the great interests of the community, may, and ought to countenance, aid and protect religious institutions— (Oliver Ellsworth, *Chief-Justice of the Supreme Court*)

I have lived, Sir, a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth, that

God governs in the affairs of men. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without his aid? We have been assured, Sir, in the Sacred Writings, [Bible] that "except the Lord build the House, they labor in vain that build it." I firmly believe this; and I also believe that without His concurring aid we shall succeed in this political building no better, than the Builders of Babel: We shall be divided by our partial local interests; our projects will be confounded, and we ourselves shall become a reproach and by word down to future ages. And what is worse, mankind may hereafter from this unfortunate instance, despair of establishing governments by human wisdom and leave it to chance, war and conquest....I therefore beg leave to move that henceforth prayers imploring the assistance of Heaven, and its blessings on our deliberations be held in this Assembly every morning before we proceed to business, and that one or more of the clergy of this city be requested to officiate in that service. (Benjamin Franklin, *Signer of the Constitution and Declaration of Independence*)

The doctrines of Jesus are simple, and tend all to the happiness of mankind....I concur with the author in considering the moral precepts of Jesus as more pure, correct, and sublime than those of ancient philosophers. (Thomas Jefferson, *Signer of the Declaration of Independence and Third President of the United States*)

Public utility pleads most forcibly for the general distribution of the Holy Scriptures. The doctrine they preach, the obligations they impose, the punishment they threaten, the rewards they promise, the stamp and image of divinity they bear, which produces a conviction of their truths, can alone secure to society, order and peace, and to our courts of justice and constitutions of government, purity, stability and usefulness. In vain, without the Bible, we increase penal laws and draw entrenchments around our institutions. Bibles are strong entrenchments. Where they abound, men cannot pursue wicked courses, and at the same time enjoy quiet conscience. (James McHenry, *Signer of the Constitution*)

To the kindly influence of Christianity we owe that degree of civil freedom, and political and social happiness which mankind now enjoys. . . . Whenever the pillars of Christianity shall be overthrown, our present republican forms of government, and all blessings which flow from them, must fall with them. (Jedediah Morse, *Patriot and "Father of American Geography"*)

It is impossible that any people of government should ever prosper, where men render not unto God, that which is God's, as well as to Caesar, that which is Caesar's. (William Penn, *Founder of Pennsylvania*)

No free government now exists in the world, unless where Christianity is acknowledged, and is the religion of the country. (Pennsylvania Supreme Court, 1824. *Updegraph v. Commonwealth*)

We profess to be republicans, and yet we neglect the only means of establishing and perpetuating our republican forms of government, that is, the universal education of our youth in the principles of Christianity by the means of the Bible. . . . All systems of religion, morals, and government not founded upon it [the Bible] must perish, (Benjamin Rush, *Signer of the Declaration of Independence*)

Indeed, the right of a society or government to [participate] in matters of religion will hardly be contested by any persons who believe that piety, religion, and morality are intimately connected with the well being of the state and indispensable to the administrations of civil justice. The promulgation of the great doctrines of religion—the being, and attributes, and providence of one Almighty God—these never can be a matter of indifference in any well-ordered community. (Joseph Story, *Supreme Court Justice*)

While just government protects all in their religious rights, true religion affords to government its surest support....Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are

indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of man and citizens. The mere politician, equally with the pious man, ought to respect and to cherish them. A volume could not trace all their connexions with private and public felicity. Let it simply be asked, Where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation desert the oaths, which are the instruments of investigation in Courts of Justice?...And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Who, that is a sincere friend to it, can look with indifference upon attempts to shake the foundation of the fabric? ... The [federal] government . . . can never be in danger of degenerating into a monarchy, and oligarchy, an aristocracy, or any other despotic or oppressive form so long as there shall remain any virtue in the body of the people. (George Washington, *"Father of Our Country"*)

If we and our posterity reject religious instruction and authority, violate the rules of eternal justice, trifle with the injunctions of morality, and recklessly destroy the political constitution which holds us together, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us that shall bury all our glory in profound obscurity. (Daniel Webster, *Early American Jurist and Senator*)

The most perfect maxims and examples for regulating your social conduct and domestic economy, as well as the best rules of morality and religion, are to be found in the Bible. . . . The moral principles and precepts found in the scriptures ought to form the basis of all our civil constitutions and laws. These principles and precepts have truth, immutable truth, for their foundation. . . . All the evils which men suffer from vice, crime, ambition, injustice, oppression, slavery and war, proceed from their despising or neglecting the precepts contained in the Bible. . . . For instruction then in social, religious and civil duties resort to the scriptures for the best precepts. (Noah Webster, *Founding Educator*)

Far from being rivals or enemies, religion and law are twin sisters... (James Wilson, *Signer of the Constitution*)

Men, in a word, must necessarily be controlled either by a power within them or by a power without them; either by the Word of God or by the strong arm of man; either by the Bible or by the bayonet. (Robert Winthrop, *Former Speaker of the US House of Representatives*)

Suffice it to say not only did politics and religion co-mingle historically, our very form was conceived and birthed by firm convictions based on God and His Word. Our very government was based not on a single denomination, rather on a unified Judeo-Christian foundation. Space does not permit us to share the plethora of additional quotes from founding leaders. I would encourage anyone to check their facts and at least know your American roots. Read the letters and speeches of our founding fathers. Take a look at the resources that substantiate this and more. There are groups like Wallbuilders, and the Family Research Council that provide research. There are books such as "The Christian Life and Character" by Benjamin Morris and "The Christian History of the Constitution" first published in 1966. Solid foundational roots that resulted in 56 men signing a document that would cost many their lives and their fortunes. By-the-way, half of them which were graduates of seminaries (i.e. theological schools). The first book published by the United States government was the Bible (check out the Aitkin Bible). Thomas Jefferson held church in the White House every Sunday for eight years. He even authorized the Marine band to provide music for Church in the White House. The British military targeted the black brigade (preachers) in the revolution ("The Black Brigade" – so called because most clergy wore black robes when they preached). Many pastors led the militia from their towns, they preached "election" sermons, and constantly challenged abuse by government. A significant amount of words and phrases used in the Declaration of Independence could be found in sermons that were preached for decades before the document was ever written. Many pastors were also political leaders such as governors (e.g. Roger

Williams of Rhode Island, Governor & Pastor).

A closing note. There is a man in Iran (he happens to be their leader) who has said the holocaust never happened. There are millions upon multiplied millions who believe that. Whether we agree with history we must at least know history and guard against "revisionist history". So before we castigate and malign religion and politics in the United States I hope we will make sure we know our history. There are reasons our country has existed for so long when no other free governments could. Let us not forget our past. I am proud to be called an American.