

AMERICA'S CHRISTIAN HERITAGE

2/26/2017

We are continuing to remind ourselves of our great Christian heritage handed to us from those who went before us.

I. THE POWER OF OUR FIRST AMENDMENT

A. Our First Amendment states; "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

B. What the enemies of the First Amendment propagate

1. All interaction between church and state should be banned.

2. Symbols should be banned.

a. Ten Commandments displays

b. All acknowledgements of God in the public sector

c. Graduation prayers should be banned

d. Prayers at sporting events should be banned

e. Bible reading in the classroom

f. Prayers in the classrooms

g. Public prayers in the Name of Jesus

h. Christmas displays in the public square

C. The founders would not approve of today's interpretation of the First Amendment.

1. They were not afraid to devote tax monies for Christian ends.

2. They used public funds to support Christian missionaries.

3. They used government building for church services.

4. They ENCOURAGED the use of the Bible in the classroom
5. They instituted days of prayer and thanksgiving.
6. They encouraged prayer in the classrooms

II. WHAT THE INDIVIDUAL STATES DECIDED ABOUT RELIGION

- A. Thomas Jefferson stated that the “power to prescribe any religious exercise..must then rest with the states.”
- B. Joseph Story who was appointed in 1811 by President James Madison to serve on the US Supreme Court:
 1. He Wrote that it was the duty of government “to foster and encourage” the nation’s religious beliefs.
 2. Writing about the Constitution he further said; “The whole power over the subject of religion is left exclusively to the state governments, to be acted upon according to their justice and the state constitutions.”
- C. Each State Constitution makes reference to God in some way.
- D. The constitution of North Carolina makes room for God on several occasions;
 1. Preamble: We,the people of the State of North Carolina, grateful to **Almighty God**, the **Sovereign Ruler of Nations**, for the preservation of the American Union and the existence of our civil, political and religious liberties, and acknowledging our dependence upon **Him** for the continuance of those blessings to us and our posterity, do, for the more certain security thereof and for the better government of this State, ordain and establish this Constitution.
 2. Article 1, Section 1: We hold it to be self-evident that all persons are created equal; that they are endowed by their **Creator** with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, the enjoyment of the fruits of their own labor, and the pursuit of happiness.
 3. Article 1, Section 13: All persons have a natural and inalienable right to worship **Almighty God** according to the dictates of their own consciences, and no human authority shall, in any case whatever, control or interfere with the rights of conscience.

4. Article 6, Section 7, oath of office:"... so help me **God**."

5. Article 6, Section 8: The following persons shall be disqualified for office:
First, any person who shall deny the being of **Almighty God**.

- E. In 1854 historian Benjamin Franklin Morris wrote; "An examination of the present Constitutions of the various states, now existing, will show that the Christian religion and its institutions are recognized as the religion of the Government and the nation."
- F. The South Carolina Constitution of 1778 declared; "The Christian Protestant religion shall be deemed, and is hereby constituted and declared to be, the established religion of this State."
- G. In 1818 Connecticut adopted a new state constitution declaring, "Each and every society of denomination of Christians in this state, shall have and enjoy the same and equal powers, rights, and privileges; and shall have power and authority to support and maintain the ministers or teachers of their respective denominations."

III. EARLY ON STATES FUNDED CHRISTIAN EDUCATION.

- A. Up until 1833 the State of Massachusetts mandated its state legislature to "require the several towns...to make suitable provision, at their own expense for the institution of the public worship of God and for the support and maintenance of public Protestant teachers of piety, religion, and morality."
- B. Over 100 years after the United State Constitution was ratified the State of Delaware approved language in its State Constitution proclaiming; "It is the duty of all men frequently to assemble together for the public worship of Almighty God; and piety and morality, on which the prosperity of communities depends, are hereby promoted."
- C. The Legislature of North Carolina recently passed legislation enabling students of Christian Schools to receive State funding under certain circumstances.
 - 1. If they are transferring from a public school.
 - 2. If they are enrolling in school for the first time.

IV. OATHS OF OFFICE WERE DECLARED TO BE CHRISTIAN IN CONTENT

- A. The Delaware Constitution of 1776 stated; “I, _____ do profess faith in God the Father, and in Jesus Christ His only Son, and the Holy Ghost, one God, blessed for evermore; and I do acknowledge the holy scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be given by divine inspiration”
- B. The Massachusetts Constitution of 1780 required an oath of office which stated, “I _____, do declare, that I believe the Christian religion, and have firm persuasion of its truth.”
- C. The New Jersey Constitution of 1776 imposed standards for attaining public office which stated; “All persons, professing a belief in the faith of any Protestant sect...shall be capable of being elected into any office.”
- D. In 1870 the Tennessee Constitution declared; “No person who denies the being of God, or a future stand of rewards and punishments, shall hold any office in the civil departments of this state.”

V. SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

- A. No amount of revisionist history can erase the obvious evidence contained in America’s State Constitutions that God was incorporated in the design.
- B. In 1796 John Adams wrote; “The safety and prosperity of nations ultimately and essentially depend on the protection and blessing of Almighty God; and the national acknowledgement of this truth is not only an indispensable duty, which the people owe to him, but a duty whose natural influence is favorable to the promotion of that morality and piety, without which social happiness cannot exist, nor the blessings of a free government be enjoyed.”
- C. Rousseau a French philosopher was correct when he verbalized; I shall always maintain that whoso says in his heart, “There is no God, while he takes the name of God upon his lips, is either a liar or a madman.
- D. Our sacred halls of government have lost the wonder of our beginnings and only a Biblical return to those foundations will save us as a nation.