

June 27, 2010

NO LONGER A CHRISTIAN NATION?

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Psalm 33:10-12:

The LORD bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect.

The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.

Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.

The purpose of this sermon and the one next week is not to endorse or condemn a particular political party or person, but rather to give a broad overview of certain principles.

Within the course of a year, we have seen a rapid erosion of liberty coupled with a cavalier approach to following the Constitution. The words of representative Alcee Hastings of Florida during the health care debate haunt us: “There are no rules here... we simply make them up as we go along.” We have seen our national debt expand farther and faster than ever before. All of these issues are real problems, major problems, that should cause us great concern; and there are many others that we could mention, from Communists being put into high government positions to a refusal to acknowledge a war on terror to refusal to secure America’s borders; but I will insist to you this morning that the things we are witnessing now are the fruit of a serious and prolonged attack on Christianity and the Christian principles that made this nation great. In other words, our political problems stem from theological problems.

You see, for many years our society been programming Americans that America is not a Christian nation, and it never was. I submit to you this morning that America was founded as a Christian nation, and that if it is to survive as nation where we can continue to enjoy the freedoms of the Bill of Rights, we must maintain and renew our ties to Christianity.

I’m going to share with you a story to illustrate the seriousness of our current state, and then I want to spend the rest of the sermon sharing with you portions of an article by David Barton entitled, “Is President Obama Correct? Is America No Longer a Christian Nation?”¹ It is vitally important that we all have an understanding of the past so that we can build upon it into the future.

This week, in Dearborn, Michigan, a group of Christians were arrested and put in jail for speaking to Muslims at a Muslim festival. These Christians did not attempt to preach or pass out Gospel tracts. They simply wore Christian t-shirts and talked to anyone who would approach them to talk to them. In this way, they were able to carry on discussions with a number of people. What was the result? Their cameras were confiscated by the police and they were thrown into jail--and this in spite of the fact that they had received an explicit court order allowing them to exercise their freedom of speech.² But, you see, freedom of speech is incompatible with Shariah law which has seemingly found a home in

1 April, 2009. Available at <http://www.wallbuilders.com/LIBissuesArticles.asp?id=23909>.

2 WorldNetDaily, “America 2010: Christians Hauled Off to Jail for Preaching Jesus.” June 22, 2010. Available at <http://www.wnd.com/?pageId=169577>.

Dearborn, Michigan. In fact, freedom of speech is incompatible with any system of law except a system based on Christianity, as you'll hear more fully explained if you'll come next week.

Is America a Christian nation? I felt that this article was important to share because it shows the influence of Christianity within all three branches of government.

Over the past several years, President Barack Obama has repeatedly claimed that America is not a Christian nation. He asserted that while a U. S. Senator, ¹ repeated it as a presidential candidate, ² and on a recent presidential trip to Turkey announced to the world that Americans “do not consider ourselves a Christian nation.” ³ (He made that announcement in Turkey because he said it was “a location he said he chose to send a clear message.” ⁴) Then preceding a subsequent trip to Egypt, he declared that America was “one of the largest Muslim countries in the world” ⁵ (even though the federal government’s own statistics show that less than one-percent of Americans are Muslims). ⁶

The President’s statements were publicized across the world but received little attention in the American media. Had they been carried here, the President might have been surprised to learn that nearly two-thirds of Americans currently consider America to be a Christian nation ⁷ and therefore certainly might have taken exception with his remarks. But regardless of what today’s Americans might think, it is unquestionable that four previous centuries of American leaders would definitely take umbrage with the President’s statements.

Modern claims that America is not a Christian nation are rarely noticed or refuted today because of the nation’s widespread lack of knowledge about America’s history and foundation. To help provide the missing historical knowledge necessary to combat today’s post-modern revisionism, presented below will be some statements by previous presidents, legislatures, and courts (as well as by current national Jewish spokesmen) about America being a Christian nation. These declarations from all three branches of government are representative of scores of others and therefore comprise only the proverbial “tip of the iceberg.”

Defining a Christian Nation

Contemporary post-modern critics (including President Obama) who assert that America is not a Christian nation always refrain from offering any definition of what the term “Christian nation” means. So what is an accurate definition of that term as demonstrated by the American experience?

Contrary to what critics imply, a Christian nation is not one in which all citizens are Christians, or the laws require everyone to adhere to Christian theology, or all leaders are Christians, or any other such superficial measurement. As Supreme Court Justice David Brewer (1837-1910) explained:

[I]n what sense can [America] be called a Christian nation? Not in the sense that Christianity is the established religion or that the people are in any manner compelled to support it. On the contrary, the Constitution specifically provides that “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” Neither is it Christian in the sense that all its citizens are either in fact or name Christians. On the contrary, all religions have free scope within our borders. Numbers of our people profess other religions, and many reject all. Nor is it Christian in the sense that a profession of Christianity is a condition of holding office or otherwise engaging in public service, or essential to recognition either politically or socially. In fact, the government as a legal organization is independent of all religions. Nevertheless, we

constantly speak of this republic as a Christian nation – in fact, as the leading Christian nation of the world. ⁸

So, if being a Christian nation is not based on any of the above criterion, then what makes America a Christian nation? According to Justice Brewer, America was “of all the nations in the world . . . most justly called a Christian nation” because Christianity “has so largely shaped and molded it.” ⁹

...

Founding Father and U. S. Supreme Court Chief Justice John Marshall agreed:

[W]ith us, Christianity and religion are identified. It would be strange, indeed, if with such a people our institutions did not presuppose Christianity and did not often refer to it and exhibit relations with it. ¹¹

Christianity is the religion that shaped America and made her what she is today. In fact, historically speaking, it can be irrefutably demonstrated that Biblical Christianity in America produced many of the cherished traditions still enjoyed today, including:

- A republican rather than a theocratic form of government;
- The institutional separation of church and state (as opposed to today’s enforced institutional secularization of church and state);
- Protection for religious toleration and the rights of conscience;
- A distinction between theology and behavior, thus allowing the incorporation into public policy of religious principles that promote good behavior but which do not enforce theological tenets (examples of this would include religious teachings such as the Good Samaritan, The Golden Rule, the Ten Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount, etc., all of which promote positive civil behavior but do not impose ecclesiastical rites); and
- A free-market approach to religion, thus ensuring religious diversity.

Consequently, a Christian nation as demonstrated by the American experience is a nation founded upon Christian and Biblical principles, whose values, society, and institutions have largely been shaped by those principles. This definition was reaffirmed by American legal scholars and historians for generations ¹² but is widely ignored by today’s revisionists.

American Presidents Affirm that America is a Christian Nation

With his recent statement, President Barack Obama is the first American president to deny that America is a Christian nation – a repudiation of what made America great and a refutation of the declarations of his presidential predecessors. Notice a few representative statements on this subject by some of the forty-three previous presidents:

The general principles on which the fathers achieved independence were. . . . the general principles of Christianity. ¹³ **JOHN ADAMS**

[T]he teachings of the Bible are so interwoven and entwined with our whole civic and social life that it would be literally....impossible for us to figure to ourselves what that life would be if these teaching were removed. ¹⁴ **TEDDY ROOSEVELT**

America was born a Christian nation – America was born to exemplify that devotion to the elements of righteousness which are derived from the revelations of Holy Scripture. ¹⁵ **WOODROW WILSON**

American life is builded, and can alone survive, upon . . . [the] fundamental philosophy announced by the Savior nineteen centuries ago. ¹⁶ **HERBERT HOOVER**

This is a Christian Nation. ¹⁷ **HARRY TRUMAN**

Let us remember that as a Christian nation . . . we have a charge and a destiny. ¹⁸ **RICHARD NIXON**

There are many additional examples, including even that of Thomas Jefferson.

Significantly, Jefferson was instrumental in establishing weekly Sunday worship services at the U. S. Capitol (a practice that continued through the 19th century) and was himself a regular and faithful attendant at those church services, ¹⁹ not even allowing inclement weather to dissuade his weekly horseback travel to the Capitol church. ²⁰

(The fact that the U. S. Capitol building was available for church on Sundays was due to the Art. I, Sec. 7 constitutional requirement that forbade federal lawmaking on Sundays; and this recognition of a Christian Sabbath in the U. S. Constitution was cited by federal courts as proof of the Christian nature of America. ²¹ While not every Christian observes a Sunday Sabbath, no other religion in the world honors Sunday except Christianity. As one court noted, the various Sabbaths were “the Friday of the Mohammedan, the Saturday of the Israelite, or the Sunday of the Christian.” ²²)

Why was Jefferson a faithful attendant at the Sunday church at the Capitol? He once explained to a friend while they were walking to church together:

No nation has ever existed or been governed without religion. Nor can be. The Christian religion is the best religion that has been given to man and I, as Chief Magistrate of this nation, am bound to give it the sanction of my example. ²³

...

Even President Jefferson recognized and treated America as a Christian nation. Clearly, President Obama’s declaration is refuted both by history and by his own presidential predecessors.

The U. S. Congress Affirms that America is a Christian Nation

Declarations from the Legislative Branch affirming America as a Christian nation are abundant. For example, in 1852-1853 when some citizens sought a complete secularization of the public square and a cessation of all religious activities by the government, Congress responded with unambiguous declarations about America as a Christian nation:

HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE: Had the people, during the Revolution, had a suspicion of any attempt to war against Christianity, that Revolution would have been strangled in its cradle. At the time of the adoption of the Constitution and the amendments, the universal sentiment was that Christianity should be encouraged, not any one sect [denomination]. Any attempt to level and discard all religion would have been viewed with universal indignation. . . . In this age there can be no substitute for Christianity; that, in its general principles, is the great conservative element on which we must rely for the purity and permanence of free institutions. ²⁴

SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE: We are Christians, not because the law demands

it, not to gain exclusive benefits or to avoid legal disabilities, but from choice and education; and in a land thus universally Christian, what is to be expected, what desired, but that we shall pay a due regard to Christianity? ²⁵

In 1856, the House of Representatives also declared:

[T]he great vital and conservative element in our system is the belief of our people in the pure doctrines and divine truths of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. ²⁶

On March 3, 1863 while in the midst of the Civil War, the U. S. Senate requested President Abraham Lincoln to “designate and set apart a day for national prayer and humiliation” ²⁷ because:

[S]incerely believing that no people, however great in numbers and resources or however strong in the justice of their cause, can prosper without His favor; and at the same time deploring the national offences which have provoked His righteous judgment, yet encouraged in this day of trouble by the assurances of His word to seek Him for succor according to *His appointed way through Jesus Christ*, the Senate of the United States do hereby request the President of the United States, by his proclamation, to designate and set apart a day for national prayer and humiliation. ²⁸ (emphasis added)

President Lincoln quickly complied with that request, ²⁹ and issued what today has become one of the most famous and quoted proclamations in America’s history. ³⁰

...

There are scores of other official actions by the U. S. Congress over the past two centuries affirming that America is a Christian nation.

The Judicial Branch Affirms that America is a Christian Nation

From the Judicial Branch, consider first some declarations of prominent U. S. Supreme Court Justices regarding America as a Christian nation.

Justice Joseph Story (1779-1845) was appointed to the Court by President James Madison. Story is considered the founder of Harvard Law School and authored the three-volume classic *Commentaries on the Constitution of the United States* (1833). In his 34 years on the Court, Story authored opinions in 286 cases, of which 269 were reported as the majority opinion or the opinion of the Court ³¹ and his many contributions to American law have caused him to be called a “Father of American Jurisprudence.” Justice Story openly declared:

One of the beautiful boasts of our municipal jurisprudence is that Christianity is a part of the Common Law. . . . There never has been a period in which the Common Law did not recognize Christianity as lying at its foundations. . . . I verily believe Christianity necessary to the support of civil society. ³²

His conclusion about America and Christianity was straightforward:

In [our] republic, there would seem to be a peculiar propriety in viewing the Christian religion as the great basis on which it must rest for its support and permanence. ³³

Justice John McLean (1785-1861) was appointed to the Court by President Andrew Jackson. McLean served in the U. S. Congress, as a judge on the Ohio Supreme Court, and then held cabinet positions under two U. S. Presidents. His view on the importance of Christianity to

American government and its institutions was unambiguous:

For many years, my hope for the perpetuity of our institutions has rested upon Bible morality and the general dissemination of Christian principles. This is an element which did not exist in the ancient republics. It is a basis on which free governments may be maintained through all time. . . . Free government is not a self-moving machine. . . . Our mission of freedom is not carried out by brute force, by canon law, or any other law except the moral law and those Christian principles which are found in the Scriptures. ³⁴

Justice David Brewer (1837-1910), appointed to the Court by President Benjamin Harrison, agreed. Brewer held several judgeships in Kansas and served on a federal circuit court before his appointment to the Supreme Court. Justice Brewer declared:

We constantly speak of this republic as a Christian nation – in fact, as the leading Christian nation of the world. ³⁵

...

Brewer did not believe that calling America a Christian nation was a hollow appellation; in fact, he penned an entire book setting forth the evidence that America was a Christian nation. He concluded:

[I] have said enough to show that Christianity came to this country with the first colonists; has been powerfully identified with its rapid development, colonial and national, and today exists as a mighty factor in the life of the republic. This is a Christian nation. . . . [T]he calling of this republic a Christian nation is not a mere pretence, but a recognition of an historical, legal, and social truth. ³⁷

Justice Earl Warren (1891-1974) agreed with his predecessors. Before being appointed as Chief Justice of the U. S. Supreme Court by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, Warren had been the Attorney General of California. Warren declared:

I believe the entire Bill of Rights came into being because of the knowledge our forefathers had of the Bible and their belief in it: freedom of belief, of expression, of assembly, of petition, the dignity of the individual, the sanctity of the home, equal justice under law, and the reservation of powers to the people. . . . I like to believe we are living today in the spirit of the Christian religion. I like also to believe that as long as we do so, no great harm can come to our country. ³⁸

There are many similar declarations by other Supreme Court Justices, but in addition to the declarations of individual judges, the federal courts have repeatedly affirmed America to be a Christian nation – including the U. S. Supreme Court, which declared that America was “a Christian country,” ³⁹ filled with “Christian people,” ⁴⁰ and was indeed “a Christian nation.” ⁴¹ Dozens of other courts past and present have repeated these pronouncements ⁴² but so, too, have American Presidents – as in 1947 when President Harry Truman quoted the Supreme Court, declaring:

This is a Christian Nation. More than a half century ago that declaration was written into the decrees of the highest court in this land [in an 1892 decision]. ⁴³

In addition to its “Christian nation” declarations, the Supreme Court also regularly relied on Christian principles as the basis of its rulings on issues such as marriage, citizenship, foreign

affairs, and domestic treaties.

...[The court also issued rulings upon military issues.]

We are a Christian people (*Holy Trinity Church v. United States*. 143 U.S. 457, 470 , 471 S., 12 S. Ct. 511), according to one another the equal right of religious freedom and acknowledging with reverence the duty of obedience to the will of God. But also we are a nation with the duty to survive; a nation whose Constitution contemplates war as well as peace; whose government must go forward upon the assumption (and safely can proceed upon no other) that unqualified allegiance to the nation and submission and obedience to the laws of the land, as well those made for war as those made for peace, are not inconsistent with the will of God. ⁴⁷

...

These are just a few examples of the literally hundreds of similar cases at both federal and state levels affirming that America is indeed a Christian nation.

Friends, I believe the time has come to recognize that we have a duty to both God and country, and that our duty to our country rests upon our ability to faithfully carry out our duty to God. We can and should be patriotic Christians: men and women who boldly stand for Christ and share his love. As I said at the beginning, what we are seeing now is the fruit of many years of secular deprogramming; what will be the fruit if we are faithful Christians who make a difference in everyday living?