

Our constituents are crying out for it. None of us go home that we don't come across somebody who has asked, why do you constantly argue with each other and fuss and fight? Get something done.

Benjamin Franklin knew a solution 221 years ago, Mr. Speaker. I would argue that that solution is more powerful today, and it is clearly more needed today by this body than even 210 years ago.

AMERICAN RELIGIOUS HISTORY WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. ADERHOLT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Speaker, I do want to thank my colleagues for taking time to call attention to this topic that we have been discussing tonight. And certainly from the very beginning of our history in this Nation, religious expression and faith was the norm amongst conversations that our Founding Fathers had.

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. FORBES) along with several of my colleagues tonight pointed out that as we stand here tonight in this Chamber that as we look around the room and we see the reliefs under the ceiling of the Chamber, and we see the 23 different lawgivers that are depicted above the gallery doorways, the most prominent relief, of course, has been noted is that of Moses who handed down the Ten Commandments. And of course those Ten Commandments were handed down to the children of Israel from God Himself.

Furthermore, it has been noted here tonight that "In God We Trust" is above the Speaker's chair, as it is our national motto. And of course let's not forget that as we started the legislative day today, before we voted on the legislation just a couple of hours ago, a chaplain said a prayer that began the legislative day. And of course that has been the custom dating back to the days of our Founding Fathers.

The Founding Fathers no doubt believed that God had His Almighty hand in the founding and the building of this Nation. George Washington himself believed that America's independence from Britain ultimately depended on God and not man. I find it interesting that it is not unusual for the Founding Fathers when they dated documents at that time they would use the phrase "in the year of our Lord Jesus Christ 1776" of what the date may have been.

A few months ago, I was walking down the stairways just outside of the House Chamber, and one of the paintings that is above the stairways is the "Signing of the Constitution." And I have passed by that painting hundreds of times. Of course, most Americans are very familiar with that famous painting. But for some reason, one thing caught my eye that was not usually the case, and I noticed there was

an open book there near where the presiding officer was over the signers of the Constitution. And I took a closer look and noticed that it was an open book. And at the top it said "Saint Matthew." And certainly I don't think it is any coincidence that that book was open on that particular day.

One may ask why our Founding Fathers were so concerned about this issue. And one reason I believe that they were so focused on this issue and thought it was so important is because they had this radical belief that we are all endowed by our Creator with certain inalienable rights. And this was indeed a radical concept in the time, because in England your rights were granted to you by the king. Therefore, if the king or the queen granted your rights, or if man granted your rights, then the king or the queen or the man could take those rights away. However, if God granted those rights, no person, be he king or queen, could take them away. They were a gift of God.

So when one asks the importance of religious history and faith in America, one can point to many reasons. And one reason that we can point back to is that in the United States of America, rights are granted by God and not by man.

THE WAR OF PRINCIPALITIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. JORDAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. JORDAN of Ohio. I thank the Speaker for his patience this evening. I want to thank Congressman FORBES for putting the previous Special Order together on our religious history here in this country.

Mr. Speaker, make no mistake about it. There is a debate going on today in our culture over whose set of principles, whose set of values are going to prevail. There are those of us who understand the significance of faith, the importance of faith in public life, the importance of faith in America and our entire history and our entire experience, those of us who understand that faith has been central to making us the greatest Nation in human history versus those on the secular side who think we need a more secular culture. That is the debate.

And it is important that we weigh in on that debate. It is important that as we wage that debate and argue for the importance of faith in our culture and our public life that we recognize the religious history in the entire American experience that we have so enjoyed. I believe the American people get it. I believe the vast majority of families understand what the Founders understood, that faith is central to who we are as a people and to the great place we have as the greatest country in history.

It has been said many times already by previous speakers, but I think when you think about some of the things the

Founders said, I love what Franklin said when they were in the midst of debate, and he was advocating for prayer before, so they could get through this impasse that they found themselves, he made the statement that if a sparrow can't fall without His knowledge, is it likely an empire can rise without His assistance? The Founders understood the importance of prayer. They understood the importance of faith.

And as many speakers have also referenced that document that I would argue next to Scripture, second only to Scripture, the greatest words ever put on paper, the Declaration of Independence, where the Founders wrote, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, all men are created equal, endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," fabulous language, this almost romantic vision that the Founders had about what this country would offer to its people. They understood that we did, in fact, get our rights from the Almighty, and it is government's job not to grant us privileges, not to grant us rights, but to protect the rights we have by the very fact we were created in God's image.

And that fundamental principle is different from any other country in history. And again, it sets us apart. And so it is important that we recognize this history and recognize this debate that is going on and not be afraid to stand up and defend those principles that make us special.

I think it is appropriate that I end with one of my favorite Scriptures in II Timothy where Paul writes to Timothy. He says, "I fought the good fight, I finished the course, I have kept the faith." And that is our charge as Americans, to fight the fight, to finish the course and to keep the faith that the Founders understood was central to making us the greatest nation ever.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. CONYERS (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today on account of personal business.

Mr. ENGEL (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today on account of a codel flight delay.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today on account of a doctor's appointment.

Mr. KIND (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today on account of flooding in the district.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today on account of family obligations.

Mr. STARK (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today after 6 p.m. and for the balance of the week.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to: