

Forbes (R-VA)
May 6, 2009, 4:20 PM - 4:24 PM
U.S. House of Representatives

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, on April 6th of this year, the President of the United States traveled halfway around the globe, and in the nation of Turkey, essentially proclaimed that the United States was not a Judeo-Christian nation.

I don't challenge his right to do that or dispute the fact that it is what he believes, but I wish he had asked and answered two questions when he did that. The first question was whether or not we ever considered ourselves a Judeo-Christian nation, and the second one was, if we did, what was the moment in time where we ceased to be so? If asked the first question, Mr. Speaker, you would find that the very first act of the first congress in the United States was to bring in a minister and have congress led in prayer, and afterwards read four chapters out of the bible. A few years later, when we unanimously declared our independence, we made certain that the rights in there were given to us by our creator. When the Treaty of Paris was signed in 1783, it ended the revolutionary war and birthed this nation. The signers of that document made clear that it began with this phrase, "in the name of the most holy and undivided trinity."

When our constitution was signed, the signers made sure that they punctuated the end of it by saying, "in the year of our lord, 1787", and 100 years later in the supreme court case of Holy Trinity Church vs. United States, the Supreme Court indicated, after recounting the long history of faith in this country, that we were a Christian nation. President George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, Andrew Jackson, Abraham Lincoln, Teddy Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, Herbert Hoover, Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman, John Kennedy, and Ronald Reagan, all disagreed with the President's comments, and indicated how the bible and Judeo-Christian principles were so important to this nation. Franklin Roosevelt even led this nation in a six-minute prayer before the invasion of perhaps the greatest battle in history, in the Invasion of Normandy, and asked for God's protection. After that war, congress came together and said, "Where are we going to put our trust?" It wasn't in our weapons systems, or our economy, or our great decisions here. It was in God we trust, which is emboldened directly behind you. So, if in fact we were a nation that was birthed on those Judeo-Christian principles, what was that moment in time when we ceased to so be?

It wasn't when a small group of people succeeded in taking prayer out of our schools, or when they tried to cover up the word referencing God on the Washington Monument. Or, when they tried to stop our veterans from having flag-folding ceremonies at their funerals on a voluntary basis because they mentioned God, or even when they tried in the new visitor's center to change the national motto, and to refuse to put "in God we trust" in there. No, Mr. Speaker, it wasn't any of those times because they can rip that word off of all of our buildings and still those Judeo-Christian principles are so interwoven in a tapestry of freedom and liberty, that to begin to unravel one is to unravel the other.

That's why we have filed the Spiritual Heritage Resolution, to help reaffirm that great history of faith that we have in this nation and to say to those individual's who have yielded to the temptation of concluding that we are no longer a Judeo-Christian nation, to come back. To come back and look at those great principles that birthed this nation, and sustain us today. We believe if they do, they will

conclude as President Eisenhower did and later Gerald Ford repeated, that “without God, there could be no American form of government. Nor, an American way of life.” Recognition of the Supreme Being is the first, the most basic expression of Americanism. Thus the founding fathers of America sought and thus with God's help, it will continue to be.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back.