

OKC TEA-PARTY - April 14, 2010
On the North Steps of the Oklahoma State Capitol
Benjamin Franklin's Exhortation to Prayer
With Opening Prayer
By Pastor Alan Conner - Northwest Bible Church

Our founding fathers firmly believed in the importance of prayer. Even Benjamin Franklin who was one of the least religious of our founding fathers believed in prayer. Now Franklin is commonly called a DEIST, *a deist is someone who believes that after God created the world he went on a permanent vacation and does not intervene in the affairs of men in any way.*

Now Franklin was not an evangelical Christian but he certainly was not a deist because he had embraced a Christian worldview and believed that if we were going to succeed as a nation, we needed the blessings of God.

In 1787, the delegates of the original 13 states met to write the Constitution of the United States. They struggled for several weeks making little or no progress, frustrations grew daily, and they were on the brink of failure and about to adjourn when eighty-one-year-old Benjamin Franklin rose and addressed the convention. And this is what he said,

“In the beginning of the contest with Britain, when we were sensible of danger, we had daily prayers in this room for Divine protection. Our prayers, Sir, were heard and they were graciously answered. All of us who were engaged in the struggle must have observed frequent instances of a superintending Providence in our favor. . . . And have we now forgotten this powerful Friend? Or do we imagine we no longer need His assistance?

“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 man.’ 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 that except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it. I firmly believe this. I also believe that, without His concurring aid, we shall succeed [no better] in this political building than the builders of Babel. . . .

“I therefore beg leave to move that, henceforth, prayers imploring the assistance of Heaven and its blessing on our deliberation be held in this assembly every morning before we proceed to business. . . .”ⁱ

Benjamin Franklin then proposed that the Congress adjourn for two days

to seek divine guidance. When they returned they began each of their sessions with prayer. This stirring speech of Benjamin Franklin, the least religious of our founding fathers, which exhorted the Congress to pray for God's blessings, marked a turning point in the writing of the Constitution and the establishment of our nation.

Conclusion – If one of the least religious of our founding fathers believed so strongly in prayer, HOW MUCH MORE should we!

So, in these troubling days, let us also remember that GOD DOES NOT NEED AMERICA, BUT AMERICA NEEDS GOD.

Let us pray . . . DEAR LORD WE THANK YOU FOR THE PRIVILEGE OF LIVING IN AMERICA AND IN THIS GREAT STATE OF OKLAHOMA,

BUT LORD THERE IS A CANCER GROWING IN OUR NATION. A CANCER THAT BELIEVES THAT A BIGGER GOVT. IS THE ANSWER TO ALL OUR PROBLEMS. BUT THIS CANCER IS STEALING AWAY OUR GOD-GIVEN LIBERTIES, AND ROBBING US OF OUR CHRISTIAN HERITAGE. AND IT IS GROWING BY THE DAY AND IF IT IS NOT STOPPED IT WILL SURELY DESTROY OUR NATION.

SO WE PRAY, LORD, UNIFY US, EMPOWER US, THAT WE MIGHT RESTORE TO THIS COUNTRY OUR CONSTITUTION, OUR FREEDOMS, AND OUR CHRISTIAN FAITH WHICH HOLDS IT ALL TOGETHER. THWART THE EFFORTS OF THOSE WHO WOULD CONTINUE TO INFECT OUR COUNTRY WITH THE CANCER OF SOCIALISM. AND SEND A MIGHTY REVIVAL UPON OUR LAND TO TURN OUR HEARTS BACK TO YOU THAT YOU MIGHT TURN YOUR FACE BACK TO US.

THIS WE PRAY IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST, OUR ONLY LORD AND SAVIOR, WHO DIED ON THE CROSS TO SAVE US FROM OUR SINS, AND ROSE TRIUMPHANTLY FROM THE GRAVE ON THE THIRD DAY, IN HIS PRECIOUS NAME WE PRAY, AMEN.

ⁱ *Notes of Debates in the Federal Convention of 1787*, by James Madison, (1787; reprinted NY: W.W. Norton & Co. 1987), pp. 209-210, taken from *America's God and Country Encyclopedia of Quotations*, by William J. Federer (FAME publishing, Inc. Coppel, Texas, 1994), pp. 248-249.