

De Tocqueville saw the importance of faith in America

November 15, 2018

[Randy Bright](#)

The 5000-Year Leap is a book that I have encouraged people to read for several years now. I recently read the book for the third time, and I have come to the conclusion that it belongs in the curriculums of every school in this nation.

That won't happen, of course, unless America takes a very big turn, because the book accurately describes how our nation was founded by Christians with the idea that our freedoms were created by God. Progressivism has been so deeply implanted in our schools that its proponents would do all in their power to prevent that truth from being taught.

Despite that, I am firmly convinced that if this nation were to turn back to God and to the principles that our Founders based our Constitution upon, most of the problems our nation faces now would eventually disappear.

One of the evidences that our country was based upon God's principles can be found in the writings of an early visitor to America, Alexis de Tocqueville.

De Tocqueville was a French jurist who came to America in 1831 to see what made America tick. Upon his arrival, he wrote, "...in the United States the religious aspect of the country was the first thing that struck my attention, and the longer I stayed there, the more I perceived the great political consequences resulting from this new state of things... Religion takes no part in the government of society, but it must be regarded as the first of their political institutions... I do not know whether all Americans have a sincere faith in their religion – for who can search the human heart? – but I am certain that they hold it to be indispensable to the maintenance of republican institutions. This opinion is not peculiar to a class of citizens or to a party, but it belongs to the whole nation and to every rank of society."

Being from Europe, this was a totally foreign concept to De Tocqueville, because in Europe it was taught that religion and freedom were incompatible, even enemies. But in America, he found that in "one of the freest and most enlightened nations in the world, the people fulfill with fervor all the outward duties of religion" and that the early American colonists "brought with them into the New World a form of Christianity which I cannot better describe than by styling it a democratic and republican religion." (Emphasis mine.)

One of the criticisms of this fact has been that there were so many denominations in America that it could not have avoided creating favoritism or strife between denominations. Of this De Tocqueville said, "the sects (different denominations) that exist in the United States are innumerable. They all differ in respect to the worship which is due to the Creator; but they all agree in respect to the duties which are due from man to man. Each sect adores the Deity in its own peculiar manner, but all sects preach the same moral law in the name of God... All the sects of the United States are comprised within the great unity of Christianity, and Christian

morality is everywhere the same... There is no country in the world where the Christian religion retains greater influence over the souls of men than in America.”

De Tocqueville was astonished that this harmony between religion and government could work, but what he found was that religion could do what laws could not: “The revolutionists of America are obliged to profess an ostensible respect for Christian morality and equity, which does not permit them to violate wantonly the laws that oppose their designs... Thus, while the law permits the Americans to do what they please, religion prevents them from conceiving, and forbids them to commit, what is rash or unjust.”

In other words, because America had a Christian mindset – even if not all of them were necessarily believers, though the vast majority were – they had a conscience that negated the necessity for the creation of laws. This is in stark contrast to the many thousands of laws that we now have, many of them in response to actions by those who have not possessed such a conscience.

Perhaps one of the most striking statements by De Tocqueville was eerily prophetic of America. He wrote, “The unbelievers in Europe attack the Christians as their political opponents rather than as their religious adversaries; they hate the Christian religion as the opinion of a (political) party much more than as an error of belief; and they reject the clergy less because they are the representatives of the Deity than because they are allies of government.”

Is that not the current state in America today? Christianity is becoming the enemy in America now, following the same pattern that Europe held, leading to many bloody revolutions.

More on Alexis De Tocqueville next week.



Randy W. Bright, AIA, NCARB, is an architect who specializes in church and church-related projects. You may contact him at 918-582-3972, rwbrightchurcharch@sbcglobal.net or www.churcharchitect.net. ©2016 Randy W. Bright