

Should Religion and Politics Mix?

According to the old adage, religion and politics are two things which must never be discussed in polite society.

But such an adage was apparently never taken to heart by the American Founders. For them, civil and religious liberty were interconnected – and they talked about both openly. In fact, it has been said that religious leaders and the truths they preached from their pulpits were a prime reason why America won her independence. These leaders were known as the Black Robe Regiment. According to Teaching History.org,

“The term ‘Black Robe Regiment’ referred not to a literal regiment of soldiers that wore black robes into battle but rather to the influential clergymen who promoted American independence and supported the military struggle against Britain. By encouraging the Patriot cause, those ministers helped muster critical support among members of their congregation—support the British begrudgingly acknowledged as vital to maintaining the colonists’ frustrating resistance to British attempts to restore Parliamentary rule.”

Here’s what [John Witherspoon](#), one of the Black Robe Regiment, had to say about the link between civil and religious liberty and America’s fight for freedom:

“If your cause is just—you may look with confidence to the Lord and intreat him to plead it as his own. You are all my witnesses, that this is the first time of my introducing any political subject into the pulpit. At this season however, it is not only lawful but necessary, and I willingly embrace the opportunity of declaring my opinion without any hesitation, that the cause in which America is now in arms, is the cause of justice, of liberty, and of human nature. So far as we

have hitherto proceeded, I am satisfied that the confederacy of the colonies, has not been the effect of pride, resentment, or sedition, but of a deep and general conviction, that our civil and religious liberties, and consequently in a great measure the temporal and eternal happiness of us and our posterity, depended on the issue. The knowledge of God and his truths have from the beginning of the world been chiefly, if not entirely, confined to those parts of the earth, where some degree of liberty and political justice were to be seen, and great were the difficulties with which they had to struggle from the imperfection of human society, and the unjust decisions of usurped authority. There is not a single instance in history in which civil liberty was lost, and religious liberty preserved entire. If therefore we yield up our temporal property, we at the same time deliver the conscience into bondage."

Witherspoon believes that religious liberty is lost when civil liberty disappears. Is the opposite also true – that civil liberty is lost when religious liberty disappears?

[Image Credit](#)