

TWO REVOLUTIONS – ONE TO CREATE; ONE TO ELIMINATE

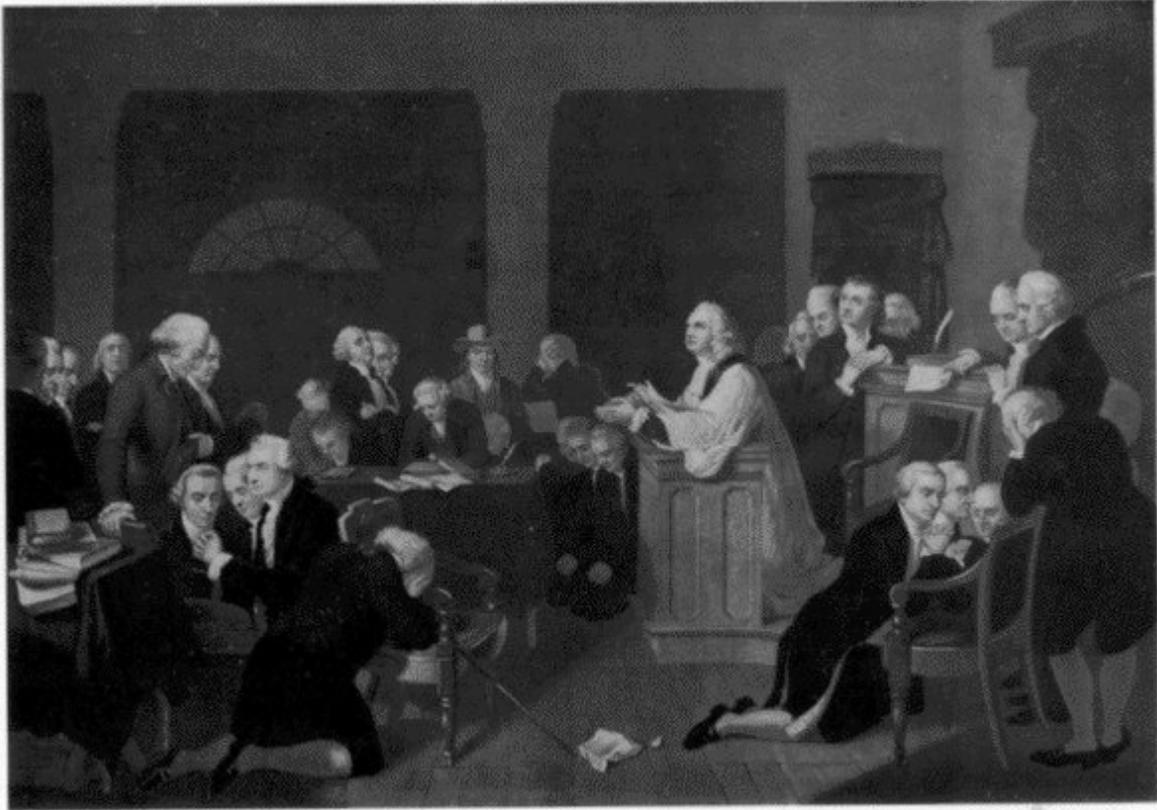
TWO RESULTS – FREEDOM; FEAR

1572: The St. Bartholomew's Day massacre in France involved the assassination of Huguenot (French Protestant) leaders in Paris, followed by a wave of Roman Catholic mob violence against believers in the city. The signal to commence the massacre was given by the ringing of the palace bell; the assassins were told to recognize each other in the darkness by tying a piece of white linen around their left arm and wearing a white cross on their hat. The massacre took place after a wedding for which many of the most wealthy and prominent Huguenots had gathered in largely Catholic Paris. The massacre spread by means of mob violence throughout Paris. It lasted several weeks, and extended to other urban centers and the countryside. Estimates for the number of dead were 3,000 in Paris and 30,000 in all of France. The Huguenot political movement was crippled by the loss of many of its prominent aristocratic leaders and a murderous campaign against Biblical Christianity continued on into the 17th century. Cardinal Richelieu, then "prime minister" in France, waged a bloody military campaign which culminated in the [second] siege of La Rochelle (1627-1628). This ended with a complete victory for King Louis XIII and the Catholics. Thus, almost at the same time that Pilgrims and Puritans were making their way to America to set up a Bible-based society, France was using the sword to exterminate Bible-believers.

1793, The "dechristianisation" of France: During the French Revolution, an atheistic movement attempted the extinction of Christianity in France. Alexis de Tocqueville would later write that *"In France... Christianity was attacked with almost frenzied violence."* Followers of this movement ransacked churches, abolished the worship of God, murdered 100s of people, and established the "Cult of the goddess of Reason" as the new "religion." On November 10, Notre-Dame de Paris -- most famous of the Gothic cathedrals -- was formally declared "The Temple of Reason"; busts of Rousseau and Voltaire were set up and, during the ceremony, a hymn to "Liberty" was sung with the following words:
"Descend, O Liberty, daughter of Nature; the people have recaptured their immortal power:
Over the pompous remains of age-old imposture their hands raise thine altar...
Thou, holy Liberty, come dwell in this temple, be the goddess of the French."

During the ebb and flow of power positions in the revolution, those belonging to this movement fell out of favor and were quickly executed by Robespierre on March 24th, 1794, effectively ending the outlawing of religion in France. Robespierre replaced that movement with "The Cult of the Supreme Being," a religion based on deism. It became popular for devout revolutionaries to baptize their children not "In the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost" but with "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity," the slogan of the French Revolution. In some places the very word Dimanche ("Sunday") was abolished. The Gregorian calendar was replaced by the French Republican Calendar so there could be no reference to the birth of Christ. *"At the suggestion of the deputy [Charles-Gilbert] Romme, the Convention voted on 5 October 1793 to abolish the Christian calendar and introduce a Republican calendar ... Weeks were replaced with periods of ten days (decades) so that the Christian Sunday would disappear."* The revolutionaries counted the years according to the establishment of their republic (beginning 1792) rather than the birth of Christ. Street and place names with any sort of religious connotation were changed. Religious holidays were banned and replaced with holidays celebrating the harvest and other non-religious events. This "dechristianisation" of France reached its zenith around the middle of 1794 with the fall of Robespierre. By early 1795 a return to some form of religion-based faith was beginning to take shape and a law passed on February 21, 1795, legalized public worship, albeit with strict limitations.

During "The Reign of Terror," (also called "The Terror"), from September 5, 1793, to July 27, 1794, victims totaled somewhere between 20,000 and 40,000. According to one estimate, among those condemned by the revolutionary tribunals, about 8% were aristocrats, 6% clergy, 14% middle-class, and **70% workers or peasants.** And this was in a revolution purportedly for the good of the common people!



"THE FIRST PRAYER IN CONGRESS" SEPTEMBER 7TH 1774, CARPENTERS' HALL, PHILADELPHIA

In a letter to Abigail his wife, John Adams described what happened when the Continental Congress met for the first time, in September 1774. **They had a prayer meeting and a Bible reading – in Congress!**

"When the Congress met, Mr. Cushing made a motion that it should be opened with prayer. It was opposed by Mr. Jay of New York and Mr. Rutledge of South Carolina because we were so divided in religious sentiments—some Episcopalians, some Quakers, some Anabaptists, some Presbyterians, and some Congregationalists—that we could not join in the same act of worship. Mr. Samuel Adams arose and said that he was no bigot and could hear a prayer from any gentleman of piety and virtue who was at the same time a friend to his country. He was a stranger in Philadelphia but had heard that Dr. Duche [pronounced Dushay] deserved that character, and therefore he moved that Mr. Duche, an Episcopal clergyman, might be desired to read prayers to Congress tomorrow morning. The motion was seconded and passed in the affirmative. Accordingly next morning he appeared with his clerk and his pontificals [vestments], and read the Psalter for the seventh day of September, which was the 85th Psalm. You must remember this was the next morning after we had heard the rumor of the horrible cannonade of Boston. I never saw greater effect produced upon an audience. It seemed as if Heaven had ordained that Psalm to be read on that morning. After this, Mr. Duche, unexpectedly to everybody, struck out into extemporaneous prayer, which filled the bosom of every man present: *'Be Thou present, O God of Wisdom, and direct the counsel of this honorable assembly. Enable them to settle all things on the best and surest foundations, that the scene of blood may be speedily closed, that order, harmony, and peace may be effectually restored, and truth and justice, religion and piety, prevail and flourish among the people. Preserve the health of their bodies and the vigor of them in this world, and crown them with everlasting glory in the world to come. All this we ask in the name and through the merits of Jesus Christ, thy Son and our Savior, Amen.'*" Later a Library of Congress placard described the scene: *"Washington was kneeling there, and Henry, Randolph, Rutledge, Lee, and Jay, and by their side there stood, bowed in reverence, the Puritan patriots of New England, who at that moment had reason to believe that an armed soldiery was wasting their humble households. ... They prayed fervently for America, for Congress, for the Province of Massachusetts Bay, and especially for the town of Boston [whose port had been closed and in which British troops were being quartered] ... It was enough to melt a heart of stone. I saw the tears gush into the eyes of the old, grave, pacifist Quakers of Philadelphia."* The Connecticut Delegate Silas Deane said that Mr. Duche's prayer *"was worth riding one hundred miles to hear; even Quakers shed tears."*