

Is America following France?

This month marks the 231st birthday of the United States of America and still I hear people expose their historical ignorance by comparing the French Revolution of 1789 with the American War of Independence of 1776. Today many Americans are annoyed if not outright angry with France, for a host of reasons. **But -**

...actually we could learn a lot from France – specifically things *not* to do.

When Louis XIV revoked the Edit of Nantes in 1685, making Protestantism illegal, thousands of Huguenots fled France in a mass exodus. Many settled in America and South Africa. With these champions of Christian liberty out of the way, it was just a question of time until tyranny evolved into anarchy.

As a result of bigotry and opposition to the Reformation on the part of its rulers, plus a long term persecution of the Huguenots, France was deprived of the leavening influence of the Gospel. Unlike North America, France had no Puritans or Great Awakening to create the political climate for true liberty.

Young French intellectuals, heirs of the 18th century so-called Enlightenment, launched the first revolution in all history against God in general and Christianity in particular. Paris, immediately before the French Revolution, prided itself on being skeptical, sinful and scholarly.

King Louis XV had a long line of mistresses, one of whom, Madame Pompadour, arranged for him a constant stream of virgins to satisfy his perverted lusts. He eventually died from an STD contracted from one of his *safe* virgins. His last mistress, Jeanne du Barry, well-known to many men close to the king, became the ardent enemy of Marie Antoinette, wife of the future king Louis XVI.

When Louis XVI became king in 1774, France was the largest, wealthiest and most powerful nation in Europe – a superpower with a population equal to Russia. It was in France's self-interest to help the Americans in their quest for independence from the French arch-enemy, England. We were indebted to them for that; a debt we have repaid many times over in blood and treasure.

The old regime in France had a major problem, unprecedented in history at that time. French intellectuals, middle and upper classes had grown ashamed of their country, history and institutions. The roots of this strange evil were in what was euphemistically called the Enlightenment. It began with **Voltaire** and his attacks against the Catholic Church and the absolutism of France's Crown. From there it grew to include arguments against God and any established authority. The movement campaigned for an ideal political, economic and educational system where men would forever be rid of prejudice, sin and error – a utopian dream.

In their zeal to destroy the old system, men of the Enlightenment rummaged through the trash bins and graves of the past to rediscover every crime or transgression and place the blame at the doorstep of the Church. It must be remembered that this was an apostate Roman Church that had scorned and resisted the Reformation which had swept northern Europe.

These attacks gained momentum and some credibility with the emergence of **Rousseau**. His ideal was a naked savage, gloriously free of all civilized restraints, whom he deified as the noblest of beings. He preached equality of all classes, sanctity of the poor and sovereign rights of the masses. To him, all evil and sin was the fault of Christianity.

At the same time there were ancient forces at work: pornography, perversion, prostitution and now a new one, the press. For the first time in history the press was the font and fuel for these discussions. Paris had more printers, bookstalls, journalists and theorists than any city in Europe. Journals were a mixture of politics and smut. They admired agitators and never mentioned the Church unless to expose some scandal. Sin in high places was a daily diet of conversation.

In Paris, Marie Antoinette launched relief efforts, soup kitchens and bread distribution from her own personal funds. The propaganda newspapers in Paris were displeased. They charged that the Queen, being told that so many people had no bread, responded by saying that they should eat cake. This lie went through the country like wildfire and was bitterly repeated everywhere.

In fact the Court was working hard to aid in the emergency, but its efforts were turned against it. Relief stations were set up in Paris but the propaganda newspapers insisted nothing was being done. At the same time leaflets appeared in other cities saying that free food could be had in the capital and a stream of the destitute began to flow toward the city, thus adding to its misery.

The storming of the Bastille followed and soon the Monarchy was replaced by anarchy – the Queen by the guillotine. By June 1792 error led to the Reign of Terror.

There is no comparison between the American War of Independence (with 18,500 British and American soldiers killed) and the French Revolution (with 3 million killed, including over 300,000 civilians). The former led to true liberty and freedom. The latter spawned the godless communist revolution and the brutal tyranny that followed. *"While they promised them liberty, they themselves are the slaves of corruption."* 2 Peter 2:19

So what do we learn from France? Just this: All you need to destroy a nation is an *elite* that no longer believes in the Christian ideals that made our country great; that re-writes history to make citizens feel ashamed about our culture, our institutions and about themselves – intellectual termites eating away at the foundation of our Christian culture and heritage.

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Research source: *Robespierre*, by Otto Scott