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Editorials

August 1, 2007

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As I see it By Blake Thomas Under God



The topic of prayer in our city council meetings has recently been the discussion for many of us around the water cooler and the odd after church social. Don't worry I'm not going to step foot into the mire that is separation of church and state. What I wanted to do is shed some light on maybe where this practice of opening public meetings with a prayer of thanksgiving and

or a request for guidance from our Almighty comes from. In recent years we have all either seen on the news or read in our papers discussions of states and local government offices having to remove some form or another reference to Christianity (God) from their offices, courtrooms, or even grounds.

We all know prayer in our schools have been banished and within the last several years there has been discussion to try and remove the statement "under God" from our pledge of allegiance and even the phrase "In God We Trust" from our coin and paper money. I thought to myself that if I could come up with an acceptable solution to my fellow pontificator's confusion on the subject of opening our city and county's commission meetings with a prayer, maybe I could be of help.

I wanted to keep my research somewhat regional in scope since he was talking about city and county government, so I looked to state government and specifically state constitutional government, and here is what I found. All 50 state constitutions refer to "God" or some higher power. Forty-three states feature these religious references in the Preamble (introductory clause of explanation) of

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Mr. and Mrs. David Gray were married on January 12, 2008 at Christian Fellowship Temple before God and all of their friends. The couple would like to thank those who were involved in making their wedding so special. Congratulations to the beautiful couple.

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their constitution. The seven remaining states refer to "God" in their religious freedom provisions. (source: www.undergodprocon.org)

Our very own state of Florida's constitution says in our opening lines: "We, the people of the State of Florida, grateful to Almighty God for our constitutional liberty..."

I thought it interesting that my counterpart commented on the content of Commissioner Gordon Crews' prayer when he was quoted as saying "we love you and praise you in the name of Jesus." Here are a few more outtakes from some of our other states' constitutions.

Colorado: "We, the people of Colorado, with profound reverence for the Supreme Ruler of the Universe..."

Connecticut: "The People of Connecticut, acknowledging with gratitude the good Providence of God in permitting them to enjoy..."

Hawaii: "We, the people of Hawaii, grateful for Divine Guidance..."

Iowa: "We, the People of the State of Iowa, grateful to the Supreme Being for the blessings hitherto enjoyed, and feeling our dependence on Him for a continuation of those blessings..."

I liked Kentucky's stance, they thanked God for the right to have rights: "We, the people of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, grateful to Almighty God for the civil, political and religious liberties..."

I thought Rhode Island said it pretty well: " We, the people of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, grateful to Almighty God for the civil and religious liberty which He hath so long permitted us to enjoy, and looking to Him for a blessing upon our endeavors to secure and to transmit the same, unimpaired, to succeeding generations..."

Maybe in the future our commissioners can open each meeting with an excerpt from anyone of our 50 states' constitutions. Don't be confused, my little friend, know your history!

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