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Is America Losing Its Christian Principles?

Micah 6:8: (NASB) *He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?*

Yesterday we celebrated Independence Day, a day that for over 200 years has symbolized all that is good about these United States of America. How did the United States become such a modern day beacon of freedom over the last several hundred years? Is this country still the same beacon of the same freedom or has something changed?

Was the United States of America founded as a Christian nation?

The negative side of the issue:

NO! America Founded as a Christian Nation - Myth or Reality?

- *Actually, the U.S. Constitution never mentions God and the mention of religion in Article 6 in the First Amendment served to separate religion from government altogether. The words "In God We Trust" weren't printed on American coins until 1863 after a religious surge during the Civil War. Paper money didn't have it until 1957. The words "Under God" weren't even in the original Pledge of Allegiance. They were added by Congress in 1954. And many of our founding fathers were either deist or ambivalent about the Christian God including Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, James Madison, John Adams, Thomas Payne and even George Washington.*

The common denominator is the Creator endows His creation with certain basic human rights. This declaration is based on two things: First, independence is being declared because issues of human rights and freedom have risen, and second, these issues are recognizable through acknowledgement of the Creator. It all starts with the Creator.

The other side of the issue...

YES! The Case and the Conclusion, David Barton, Supreme Court Decision of 1892

- *Is the United States a Christian nation or was it founded in any way on Christian principles? Well, there was certainly a period in the American history when we believe that, when we firmly believed that it was built on Christian principles. Probably one of the best indications of the fact that we believed that comes from, of all sources, the U.S. Supreme Court. There was a case that came to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1892, a case called "Church of the Holy Trinity v. United States." At issue in this case was the hiring of a minister, and someone had challenged the fact that a Christian minister was being hired in America and the court in itself thought that was ludicrous that anything Christian should be challenged in America, and so they went into an explanation as to why that was absolutely absurd to challenge Christian principles in America in the court. We understand that when the court does a decision it goes back through history, it goes back through law, it goes through previous precedents; it tries to arrive at some strong conclusion and that is what the U.S. Supreme Court did in this case. The court emphatically declared our laws and our institutions must necessarily be based on and must include the teachings of the redeemer of mankind.*

Exodus 20:1-3: So, the Declaration of Independence begins in the same place that God's Law to Israel began - honoring God! **Psalms 29:2:** (KJV) *Give unto the LORD the glory due unto His name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.* **James 1:8:** (KJV) *A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.* Violation of this First Commandment is the beginning of the downfall of any society.

"It cannot be emphasized too clearly and too often that this nation was founded, not by religionists, but by Christians; not on religion, but on the gospel of Jesus Christ. For this very reason, peoples of other faiths have been afforded asylum, prosperity, and freedom of worship here." - *Patrick Henry, May 1765 Speech to the House of Burgesses*

Do we believe the United States is a Christian nation? No, but we believe it was founded upon Judeo-Christian principles. For some reason in present day, we like to minimize the role the Bible played in the development of this country. We miss the point, then, about why things were done.



One of the beautiful principles the country was founded upon was the freedom to think and worship as one believes one should. We fear this is morphing into the freedom of speech being allowed only if that speech is politically correct.

Christian freedom and happiness come as a result of a hard choice and an utter commitment to that choice: 1 Peter 4:12-13: Selfishness is not a part of this. Our commitment to sacrifice is personally costly. True freedom always costs something.

In many minds, freedom equals entitlement. "I want, therefore I should have." That is not the "freedom" America was founded on. Unfortunately, we have "grown" into this sense of entitlement - spelling it this way: g-r-o-a-n! What is missing in this very sad representation of our country today? To find the answer to that, let's go to the last paragraph of the Declaration of Independence: **We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these united Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States, that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.**

What is missing today? Firm reliance on divine providence, personal responsibility and sacred honor! **Observation:** The shell of the Declaration of Independence is fashioned after the format of the 10 Commandments, starting with honoring God and ending with honoring one another.

Exodus 20:17: We are not to covet those things which do not or should not rightfully belong to us. This honors your neighbor. **Satan the original coveter:** Isaiah 14:12-14: In the covetousness of Satan, we see the principle of what has happened in our country today. We have removed God and replaced Him with ourselves.

Christian Freedom is fought for with humble observance of a higher way: 2 Corinthians 10:3-5

Some Founding Fathers felt freedom was more than belief in Christ; they worked to develop their freedom. But this was not a rejection of every biblical principle.

"God governs in the affairs of man. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid? We have been assured in the Sacred Writings that except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it. I firmly believe this. I also believe that, without His concurring aid, we shall succeed in this political building no better than the builders of Babel." - *Ben Franklin, Constitutional Convention of 1787*

While the Founders were God-fearing men, they did not have any desire to set up a nation under any single religion or a nation where religious freedom would be hindered. They took many Judeo-Christian principles and created a man-made government "of the people, by the people and for the people" (Gettysburg Address, 100 years later) to give all citizens the right to pursue happiness. It was a man-made government looking for the blessing of God.

**If the United States was founded on Christian principles,
then why does the Constitution never mention God?**

Putting the Constitution in perspective with the Declaration of Independence: (Source: Wiki.answers.com) The U.S. Constitution was written in 1787 after the Second Continental Congress called for a convention in Philadelphia to modify the Articles of Confederation, the document that served as the foundation for the United States' first national government. On May 25, 1787, 55 delegates from 12 of the 13 states (Rhode Island boycotted the convention) converged on Philadelphia intent on solving problems that arose from weaknesses in the Articles of Confederation. The written authorization was "to devise such further provisions as shall appear to [the delegates] necessary to render the constitution of the Federal Government adequate to the exigencies of the Union." Some of the issues they needed to address was the lack of Executive and Judicial Branches (no federal court system), a means of providing fair representation for states of unequal population, a way of mediating disputes between the states, provision for taxing power or other means of raising revenue, and related issues. They did not have an Executive or Judicial branch and there were a lot of holes in the Articles of Confederation. This would be fixed by the Constitution.



"For my own part, I sincerely esteem it [the Constitution] a system which without the finger of God, never could have been suggested and agreed upon by such a diversity of interests."
- Alexander Hamilton in 1787 after the Constitutional Convention

So, America's constitutional government was a government of men, for men and therefore God must of necessity be left OUT of the Constitution. However, it was the principles of God, the Bible and Christianity that were the driving forces behind it - everyone knew that back then!

American freedom was fought for with humble observance of a higher way: (Source: www.Eadshome.com) James Madison: At the Constitutional Convention of 1787, James Madison proposed the plan to divide the central government into three branches. He discovered this model of government from the Perfect Governor, as he read Isaiah 33:22, "For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; He will save us."

The United States had its founding upon Christian and biblical principles. It was not a "Christian nation," but founded upon biblical truth of how to treat each other.

(Source: <http://www.heritage.org/research/lecture/2011/06/did-america-have-a-christian-founding>) 1. While America did not have a Christian founding in the sense of creating a theocracy; it was deeply shaped by Christian moral truths, and the Founders created a regime that was hospitable to Christians as well as to practitioners of other religions. 2. To a person, the Founders were committed to protecting religious liberty. 3. Moreover, almost without exception, they agreed that civic authorities could promote and encourage Christianity and that it was appropriate for elected officials to make religious arguments in the public square. 4. There was no support among the Founders for contemporary visions of a strict separation of church and state that would have political leaders avoid religious language and require public spaces to be stripped of religious symbols.

In spite of theological differences among them, the Founders used what they had in common and what they knew to be of the most importance to guide their new country. While God was not at all a part of their government, He was certainly a part of their daily consciousness. Thomas Payne is proof of that. So, six years after the Declaration was written but five years before the Constitution - and while the war was winding down (peace negotiations were underway) - God's part in the minds of men was again proclaimed on Thanksgiving Day, 1782 (see *CQ Rewind Full Edition for more on this section*) Acknowledging and thanking God was commonplace!

As Christians, our acknowledgement and thankfulness to God through Jesus are for a different kind of freedom: Luke 4:16-20: This is the freedom a Christian should be focused on. Here are the basics that drive the sacred honor of a Christian: Micah 6:6-8

As a Christian, our sacred honor should be tied to something higher than nationality. Our first and foremost responsibility is to be an ambassador for Christ, representing the Creator of the Universe. Why is America's freedom important to us? Because we are given the ability to speak about the plan of God. We MUST by definition appreciate that incredible freedom. We are thankful for what we have been given and for those who protect us.

"If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible our country will go on prospering and to prosper, but if we and our prosperity neglect its instruction and authority, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us and bury all our glory in profound obscurity." - Daniel Webster

God does have a plan. We do not believe He is at this time micro-managing every little thing that happens, but He manages everything overall so that His plan will come to fruition. As ambassadors, our primary allegiance must always be to the plan of God through Jesus and living a life of sacrifice. We know these present governments are not permanent. They will be replaced - not enhanced - replaced with Christ's kingdom. This will be a perfect government for all.

The price for freedom Jesus paid and the sacred honor with which he paid it: Isaiah 53:3-9: What humility! Jesus could have stopped his crucifixion but chose not to because the plan of God was bigger than any personal preference. He was mistreated but absorbed it all. As Christians, we should stand for something far greater than the principles of the United States of America. But we want to appreciate the efforts of the Founding Fathers and how they tried to always have God first. We should call out for God to STILL be first, for without God there is no real freedom. Freedom does come as a result of our actions coupled with taking responsibility to use it in accordance with righteousness. This was the founding principle of America. We have great opportunities. We have a country built around the basis of freedom



of thought, speech and religion. There is so much good that can come from these things. But if our actions do not reflect the goodness from above, which was the intention of the Founding Fathers, the freedom we pursue will ultimately lead to ruin. Without the boundaries of righteousness from above there is no true freedom!

Christian freedom looks to deliver life, liberty and the pursuit of *sacrifice* for its people so it can relay life, liberty and happiness to ALL people! Christian freedom requires something of us because God's plan says we are to sacrifice and follow after Jesus so that His plan can release every man, woman and child from the prison house of death and give them an opportunity for life through the Day of Judgment. Genesis 22:18

New Testament words for *freedom*:

Strongs #1658 eleutheros (el-yoo'-ther-os); unrestrained (to go at pleasure), i.e. (as a citizen) not a slave

- The first word carries a physical or civil sense of being free - not a slave, not being held under.

1 Corinthians 12:13: (KJV) *For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or **free <1658>**; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*

Strongs #1659 eleutheroo; to liberate, i.e. (figuratively) to exempt (from moral, ceremonial or mortal liability)

- The second word carries a very full sense of being made free - not merely "not a slave," but rather being liberated.

Romans 8:2: (KJV) *For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath **made me free <1659>** from the law of sin and death.*

Strongs #1657 eleutheria; freedom (legitimate or licentious, chiefly moral or ceremonial)

- The third word carries the personal application of being liberated - the ability to make personal decisions.

Galatians 5:1: (KJV) *Stand fast therefore in the **liberty <1657>** wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.*

Christian liberty gives us the ability to think, choose, interpret, understand and to act. We may differ in the way we do these things, but as Christians we are supposed to take that liberty and honor it in each other. Even though we may not see eye-to-eye spiritually, we can still discuss, reason on the Scriptures and respect each other.

Observations: There is a marked difference between the founding of the United States and Jesus' and the Apostles' teachings regarding freedom:

- The founders were very focused on the first definition **<1658>**, as their objective was a society that would be equitable and just.
- Jesus and the Apostles were very focused on the second **<1659>** and third **<1657>** words in our list. They were not nearly as concerned with physical freedom and the equity of society, as they understood servitude to be a temporary condition, contrasted with the deeper personal freedom to be gained in Christ on a spiritual level. Their primary concern seemed to be grasping spiritual "freedom with responsibility."

Jeremiah 31:34: This prophecy has not yet come into fulfillment. In the future, there will be a time when God's government will be implanted so firmly on this earth that none will mistake it for what it really is: Justice, mercy, love and power.

We are very thankful for the opportunities we have been given, by God's grace, and for our Founding Fathers who gave us the place and ability to speak about God's word.

*So, is America losing its Christian principles?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*