

ONE



Founding a Christian Nation

We, . . . Having undertaken for the Glory of God, and Advancement of the Christian Faith, and the Honor of our King and Country, a voyage to plant the first colony in the northern parts of Virginia; do . . . solemnly and mutually in the Presence of God and one another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil Body Politick . . .

—MAYFLOWER COMPACT (1620)

IT WAS A SLIGHTLY CHILLY APRIL DAY in the year 1607 when three tiny boats, scarcely bigger than twenty-first-century cabin cruisers, appeared on the horizon of the Atlantic Ocean and sailed toward the coastline of North America, where they dropped anchor in deep water just offshore. One hundred twenty bone-weary English travelers then took their turns climbing down into long boats that deposited them onto the sandy beach.

After an agonizingly long journey during which the travelers had been packed into their tiny vessels, they were intoxicated with the feel of land under their feet and the scent of woods and flowers. They scrambled up the adjoining sand dunes in search of wild berries, fresh water, and firewood. The next three days were spent in exploration and profuse apologies to one another for the contemptible attitudes many had displayed during their most trying voyage. But they had come to settle a continent, not to beachcomb on this point of land they named Cape Henry, after Henry, the son of King James I of England.

On April 29, 1607, their spiritual leader, Reverend Robert Hunt,

suggested they memorialize their landing in this New World. He directed that the seven-foot oak cross they had brought from England be carried from one of the ships and planted firmly in the sand of what years later became the city of Virginia Beach, Virginia. These brave pioneer men and women then knelt in prayer around the rough-hewn cross and claimed this new land for the glory of God and His Son, Jesus Christ.

Centuries later, in the 1930s, an official monument was erected at this site (although, regrettably, it is no longer there) with a stone cross and the following inscription:

*Act One, Scene One of the unfolding drama that became
the United States of America.*

Having begun this new land with a prayer meeting, these first permanent English settlers to America reboarded their boats and sailed up a large river that they named the James. In a protected harbor on the northeast bank some fifteen miles upstream, they founded a settlement called Jamestown, so named in honor of their king, James of England.

The central and largest building constructed for the tiny settlement was a church where all of the settlers worshiped God, observed the sacraments of their Christian faith, and were taught to obey the commandments of God. The concept of “separation of church and state” would have been unthinkable to them because their Christian faith and their civic government were as one. Their concepts of life, freedom, and ordered liberty were framed principally by the Ten Commandments of the Old Testament and the Sermon on the Mount of the New Testament.

Without dispute, the United States of America began as a nation of Christians and as a Christian nation framed by the commandments of God.

THE MAYFLOWER COMPACT

Thirteen years later, another band of English settlers sailed on a boat called the *Mayflower* and reached Cape Cod on the Atlantic coastline of what later became the state of Massachusetts. After coming ashore in November of 1620, they drafted a foundational document known as the Mayflower Compact, which historians tell us was the first formal document for self-government drafted in America. Here is what it said (emphases added):

In the name of God, Amen. We, whose names are underwritten, the Loyal Subjects of our dread Sovereign Lord, King James, *by the Grace of God*, of England, France and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith, . . . Having undertaken for the *Glory of God, and Advancement of the Christian Faith*, and the Honor of our King and Country, a voyage to plant the first colony in the northern parts of Virginia; do by these presents, solemnly and mutually *in the Presence of God* and one another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil Body Politick, for our better Ordering and Preservation, and Furtherance of the Ends aforesaid; and by Virtue hereof to enact, constitute, and frame, such just and equal Laws, Ordinances, Acts, Constitutions and Offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the General good of the Colony; unto which we promise all due submission and obedience. In Witness whereof we have hereunto subscribed our names at Cape Cod the eleventh of November, in the Reign of our Sovereign Lord, King James of England, France and Ireland, the eighteenth, and of Scotland the fifty-fourth. *Anno Domini*, 1620.

Again, contemporary political correctness and revisionist history notwithstanding, the founders of the United States of America did

so to “advance the Christian faith and bring glory to God.” Some today may not like that fact, but it is true nonetheless.

It would have been unthinkable that the teaching of the Holy Bible, which laid out the concepts of Christianity and, in turn, the views of “just and equal laws, ordinances, acts, constitutions, and offices,” would be denied to children in their schools or stripped from the public square by court orders in subsequent years.

THE CHARTER OF MASSACHUSETTS BAY

To underscore their clear intentions, these *Mayflower* settlers, and those who came later, set forth the full scope of their concept of government—including a governor, legislature, and various courts—in what was called the Charter of Massachusetts Bay. In this charter, they included these words, “. . . whereby our said people, inhabitants there, may be so religiously, peaceably, and civilly governed, as their good life and orderly conversation may win and incite the natives of country, to *the knowledge and obedience of the only true God and Savior of mankind and the Christian faith*” (emphasis added).

This new nation was not polytheistic, multicultural, Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist, animist, or atheistic. It was a Christian nation intended to be governed by religious people who were guided by the precepts of the Holy Bible.

In 1663, the Charter for Rhode Island and Providence described their founders as people who were “pursuing with peaceable and loyal minds, their sober, serious and religious intentions, *of godly edifying themselves, and one another, in the holy Christian faith and worship as they were persuaded*” (emphasis added).

Written ninety-four years after the founding of Jamestown, the Delaware Charter of 1701 expressly states: “Almighty God being the only Lord of Conscience, Father of Lights and Spirits; and the Author as well as object of all divine Knowledge, Faith, and Wor-

ship, who only doth enlighten the Minds, and persuade and convenience the Understandings of People . . . *And that all persons who also profess to believe in Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, shall be capable . . . to serve this government in any capacity, both legislatively and executively . . .*” (emphasis added).

THIRTEEN COLONIES BASED ON FAITH

From 1607 until 1776, thirteen colonies came into being in this new land. By 1776, there were an estimated three million inhabitants of the thirteen colonial states, of which some 2,500 were Jewish (according to the World Jewish Congress), a handful were atheists and agnostics, and the remainder were primarily Protestant Christians.

Although the colonies’ leaders had studied the writings of contemporary European philosophers as well as the sages of Greece and Rome, their concepts of ordered liberty, the dignity of the individual, the proper role of government, and true private and public morality came from the Bible. The great thinkers of the Reformation, especially John Calvin and Martin Luther, and expository sermons preached by gifted men of God throughout the land, were also pivotal to their thinking. Without an understanding of the Bible, especially the Ten Commandments of Moses the great law-giver, it is impossible to understand the constitutions, the laws, and the customs of either colonial or modern America.

Some 169 years after the founding of Jamestown, the new nation was confronted with an intolerable situation. King George III of England, who was an autocratic tyrant, and the British Parliament, which was led by Lord North, considered the American colonies not as a prized part of the British Empire but as a cash cow to be repeatedly milked of its wealth to support the government of England.

The colonists were taxed on the importations of silk, linen, manufactured goods, gunpowder, and tea, as well as the exportation of tobacco and other agricultural products. To add further indignity,

the colonists were required to quarter British troops in their homes and to pay taxes to support them. Although each colony had its own legislature, those legislative bodies had little voice in setting taxes. The British Parliament set taxes on the colonies and then ratcheted them up with studied indifference to the suffering they caused. Frequent colonial petitions were rebuffed or ignored by the government in London. So seething discontent began to bubble over into talk of rebellion. The abuses were clear, and the rallying cry of the colonists was equally clear: "Taxation without representation is tyranny."

THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

An assembly of distinguished representatives from each of the thirteen American colonies assembled in Philadelphia in the summer of 1776 to catalogue their grievances and to submit a declaration setting forth the reasons that the thirteen English colonies in America should become a separate nation, independent from their mother country, England.

The vast majority of these representatives were Christians! All had been taught the Bible. In their declaration, they spoke of truths that were "self-evident." The first "self-evident truth" was that all men are *created* equal. They all assumed the biblical concept of creation.

They understood that God had created a world order in which all people, regardless of race or religious heritage, held the right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." And what is the "pursuit of happiness?" It is none other than personal fulfillment by each individual, without hindrance by government, of the purposes for which he or she has been created. I can only presume that those who drafted the Declaration of Independence were familiar with God's words to the prophet Jeremiah: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, . . . I appointed you as a prophet to the nations"

(Jeremiah 1:5). Finding that ordained purpose, just as Jeremiah did, will indeed bring happiness and is man's highest goal.

Historians believe that John Adams, our second president, who was a dedicated Christian and learned Bible scholar, formulated the essential concepts of the Declaration. Adams recommended that Thomas Jefferson of Virginia, a man highly regarded for the felicity of his writing, draft the language of the document.

FAITH AT THE CENTER OF INDEPENDENCE

And so it was that on July 4, 1776, my collateral ancestor, Benjamin Harrison, was the presiding officer when the delegates pledged their lives to the cause of freedom and signed the Declaration of Independence for what was to become the United States of America. At our independence, our rallying cry as a nation sprang from the firm conviction that we should fight for the liberty that had been given to each one of us by our Creator—God. In the twenty-first century, we would do well to remember that the essential support of our liberty is our faith in God. Strip away the affirmation of faith in God from the public arena, and the only support of liberty standing against the armed might of cruel tyrants is the fickle passion of public opinion.

The Declaration of Independence sets forth in clear but peaceable language the abuses inflicted by England on its colonies in North America and the reasons that the colonists deemed it necessary to sever the formal ties with their mother country. The British government could have acceded to the colonists' request, granted them independence, and entered into a treaty of friendship, comity, and beneficial trade with the colonies. Instead, the British regarded the Declaration of Independence as an act of rebellion to be crushed by force of arms. Each hostile act of the British thereafter merely served to harden the colonists' resolve.

Eloquent Virginia statesman Patrick Henry echoed the prevailing

sentiment of his fellow countrymen when he thundered forth: "Is life so dear or peace so sweet as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what others may do, but as for me, give me liberty or give me death."

Many died in the cause of freedom. The suffering of the American colonists and their soldiers on the battlefield was intense.

COLONISTS PRAY FOR GOD'S PROTECTION

Yet on two notable instances, what seemed like miracles saved the colonial armies from annihilation. Here are the stories of what actually happened.

General George Washington's men had fought valiantly to prevent a British takeover of New York. Despite their heroism, the American forces had been pushed to the water's edge in Brooklyn at the western tip of Long Island. By nightfall, the British had moved into position to annihilate the Americans the following morning. But during the night, a dense fog moved into the area. By morning, the fog completely shielded Washington's forces from British sight. Slowly but surely, every man, every artillery piece, and every horse was quietly loaded on boats and barges and ferried across the Hudson River to the safety of New Jersey, where the Americans could resupply and fight on. Later that morning, when the fog lifted and the British sprung the trap they had so carefully put in place, they found not one single American remaining. All had escaped because of what the American forces believed was a direct miracle of God.

Later in the war, a second miraculous event occurred. Lord Cornwallis of England had taken a position on the riverbank in Yorktown, Virginia. The sea lanes at the mouth of the river were blockaded by a French fleet that had arrived to help the Americans. Cornwallis was surrounded, but he knew aid was coming to him by way of a large British force from the south. Again, as was the case on

Long Island, a dense fog settled over the river at Yorktown, making maneuvers by the British ships impossible. Cornwallis realized that without reinforcements, his situation was untenable. Facing a crushing defeat, he did the wise thing and surrendered his army to Washington, ending what we know as the Revolutionary War.

The colonists had offered fervent prayers to God. And, despite all human reason to the contrary, they believed God had sustained them, blessed them, and miraculously delivered them, helping them to defeat the armies of the most powerful nation on earth.

GOD IN THE CONSTITUTION

Eleven years after the signing of the Declaration of Independence, delegates from the thirteen states met again in Philadelphia to craft a constitution for “a more perfect union” than they had known under the loose Articles of Confederation, which had been their governing charter following the Revolutionary War.

The Constitution for the emerging United States of America was signed by George Washington on September 17, “in the year of our Lord” 1787. To those who say that there is no mention of God or Jesus Christ in the Constitution, I ask this question: Which “Lord” was Washington referring to? Lord North? King George, Lord of England? Or was it the Lord Jesus Christ, who was born 1,787 years previously and whose birth became the point of reference for all Western calendars—those events “Before Christ” (BC) and those events “*Anno Domini*” (AD), the year of our Lord?

Having signed “in the year of our Lord,” Washington was faced with no protest, no minority report, and no claim that the rights of non-Christians were being violated. When he affirmed in the Constitution that Jesus Christ was Lord of the assembled delegates, and in fact of the entire nation, no dissent was forthcoming because this statement was a fact not in dispute at the time of the signing of the Constitution of the United States.

The Constitution drafted by the Constitutional Convention in 1787 could not become effective unless ratified by at least three-fourths of the states. The states wanted a strong, effective central government, but they insisted on a bill of rights that would prevent the proposed national legislature from trampling individual liberties or the clear prerogatives of the states.

“CONGRESS SHALL MAKE NO LAW . . .”

James Madison of Virginia—who studied theology at Princeton University under the great minister statesman John Witherspoon—along with fellow Virginian George Mason, was asked to draft ten amendments to the Constitution in a fashion not unlike the Ten Commandments of Moses. These amendments, later known as the Bill of Rights, began with the First Amendment, which says, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof . . .” Clearly, the First Amendment was a restriction on Congress, not the states or any individual or group of individuals.

Several of the states had established churches that were similar to the Church of England. Virginia had just struggled free from the oppression of an established church where non-Anglicans experienced mild persecution. All of the colonists were familiar with the persecution and bloodshed resulting from overly zealous secular governments using coercion to force a state religion on their citizens.

After numerous attempts to draft language prohibiting the establishment of a national church, Madison wrote, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion.” He clearly meant a state church where ministers draw salaries from the government, bishops serve in the legislature, and people are taxed and otherwise burdened to support the established church’s buildings, employees, and activities.

So the First Amendment prohibits the national Congress from

establishing a national religion, sponsored and funded by the national government, or from “prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” Clearly, the national government (and its agencies) is not allowed to hinder, fine, imprison, or unduly restrict citizens in their expression of religion. There is no debate here regarding the prohibition. But this in no way undermines the fact that Christianity was by design part of the very fabric of the new federal government. And we should note that it was this new government, established on Christian principles, not on humanistic ideals, that created unprecedented freedoms for all religious faiths.

In the next chapter, I will show how the United States Supreme Court and lesser federal courts have used this First Amendment establishment of religion prohibition, which actually dealt with the role of Congress, to launch a vicious vendetta against all forms of public affirmation of faith in our nation.

THE “ESTABLISHMENT CLAUSE”

How did the first Congress regard the First Amendment establishment of religion clause? They treated it as the language specified, and they took great pains not to set up a national church.

On entering the newly formed House of Representatives, James Madison, who had written the First Amendment, served as chairman of the committee to choose a *paid* chaplain to open each session of the House with prayer. Madison, who knew better than anyone the constitutional prohibition against an “establishment of religion,” clearly did not feel that using public funds to pay a Christian chaplain to lead the Congress in prayer in any way violated the prohibition.

Nor did the vote in the Continental Congress to appropriate funds to pay for the importing of 20,000 Bibles (due to what the Library of Congress records as a shortage caused by the Revolutionary War) violate what later became the First Amendment. Nor

did the use of the Capitol Rotunda for Christian Sunday worship services appear in any way to establish a religion in contravention of the First Amendment.

As Thomas Jefferson put it in his second inaugural address, “I have not attempted to prescribe any form of worship for the federal government, but I have left the matter as the Constitution found it *with the states and the several religious bodies*” (emphasis added). Implicit in this remark is the sense that Thomas Jefferson could, if he had so desired, set up a form of worship for federal employees in the new central government without that act being considered an “establishment of religion.”

The founding fathers recognized that religious faith was the essential underpinning of this new nation. In 1798 John Adams, who some consider the chief architect of the Constitution, remarked, “We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Avarice, ambition, revenge, or gallantry would break the strongest cords of our Constitution as a whale goes through a net. Our Constitution is designed only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate for any other.”

Adams recognized that the “unbridled passions” of unregenerate people could only be controlled by the force of tyranny. Democratic self-government with maximum freedom was only possible to people who had restrained their basic instincts by self-regulating morality and religious belief.

OUR FOUNDERS AND THEIR FAITH

Our first president, George Washington, was a dedicated Christian, and he echoed the sentiment of Adams in his farewell address when he said, “Reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.”

In short, it was clear to the wise leaders at the founding of the

United States that the fear of God and the restraining hand of God's commandments prohibit people from murder, theft, adultery, immorality, perjury, and rebellion by the young. The generations of those who laid the legal, economic, and moral foundation of this land knew well the warning of King Solomon, who had written, "Without a vision of God, the people run amok" (Proverbs 29:18, author's translation). Without such a vision of a Creator—of ultimate reward and ultimate punishment—only martial law and armed restraint can prevent anarchy and mayhem.

Following the establishment of the federal union, each state adopted its own constitution. The constitution of every one of our fifty states includes a reference to God or Almighty God or divine guidance. Without question, the God referred to is not Allah or Brahma or Shiva or the Great Spirit. It is the Jehovah God of the Old and New Testaments. None of these Christian references has, to my knowledge, been challenged as an "establishment of religion." Each clearly indicates that the veneration of the Creator God is an integral part of the fabric of this nation.

I am including the references from the state constitutions in the appendix of this book. For illustration, here are a few of the references (emphases added):

CALIFORNIA

(Preamble)—We, the People of the State of California, *grateful to Almighty God for our freedom, in order to secure and perpetuate its blessings*, do establish this Constitution.

COLORADO

(Preamble)—We, the people of Colorado, *with profound reverence for the Supreme Ruler of the Universe*, in order to form a more independent and perfect government; establish justice; insure tranquility; provide for the common defense;

promote the general welfare and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this constitution for the "State of Colorado."

FLORIDA

(Preamble)—We, the people of the State of Florida, *being grateful to Almighty God for our constitutional liberty*, in order to secure its benefits, perfect our government, insure domestic tranquility, maintain public order, and guarantee equal civil and political rights to all, do ordain and establish this constitution.

ILLINOIS

(Preamble)—We, the People of the State of Illinois—*grateful to Almighty God for the civil, political and religious liberty which He has permitted us to enjoy and seeking His blessing upon our endeavors*—in order to provide for the health, safety and welfare of the people; maintain a representative and orderly government; eliminate poverty and inequality; assure legal, social and economic justice; provide opportunity for the fullest development of the individual; insure domestic tranquility; provide for the common defense; and secure the blessings of freedom and liberty to ourselves and our posterity—do ordain and establish this Constitution for the State of Illinois.

IOWA

(Preamble)—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*, do ordain and establish a free and independent government, by the name of the State of Iowa.

MASSACHUSETTS

... We, therefore, the people of Massachusetts, *acknowledging, with grateful hearts, the goodness of the great Legislator of the universe, in affording us, in the course of His providence, an opportunity, deliberately and peaceably, without fraud, violence or surprise, of entering into an original, explicit, and solemn compact with each other; and of forming a new constitution of civil government, for ourselves and posterity; and devoutly imploring His direction in so interesting a design, do agree upon, ordain and establish the following Declaration of Rights, and Frame of Government, as the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.*

(Article II)—It is the right as well as the duty of all men in society, publicly, and at stated seasons to *worship the Supreme Being, the great Creator and Preserver of the universe. And no subject shall be hurt, molested, or restrained, in his person, liberty, or estate, for worshipping God in the manner and season most agreeable to the dictates of his own conscience; or for his religious profession or sentiments; provided he doth not disturb the public peace, or obstruct others in their religious worship.*

(Article III)—*As the happiness of a people, and the good order and preservation of civil government, essentially depend upon piety, religion and morality; and as these cannot be generally diffused through a community, but by the institution of the public worship of God, and of public instructions in piety, religion and morality:* Therefore, to promote their happiness and to secure the good order and preservation of their government, the people of this commonwealth have a right to invest their legislature with power to authorize and require, and *the legislature shall, from time to time, authorize and require, the several towns, parishes, precincts, and other*

bodies politic, or religious societies, to make suitable provision, at their own expense, for the institution of the public worship of God, and for the support and maintenance of public Protestant teachers or piety, religion and morality, in all cases where such provision shall not be made voluntarily.

OHIO

(Preamble)—We, the people of the State of Ohio, *grateful to Almighty God for our freedom, to secure its blessings and promote our common welfare*, do establish this Constitution.

This was America from its founding, through its revolution, through its growth from East to West, and to its rise as the most powerful nation on earth. America was a nation whose institutions, according to the Supreme Court case of *Zorach v. Clausen* in 1952, “presuppose the existence of a Supreme Being.”

Despite injustice, despite corruption and bribery, despite a bloody Civil War, despite Reconstruction, this nation assented to a belief in Almighty God, to Jesus Christ as the Son of God, to the Holy Bible, and to the Ten Commandments of God as the acknowledged standard of human conduct.

We will see in the next chapter how a tiny minority of so-called elite, secular liberals decided to make a sneak attack on the source of American greatness by using the courts to destroy our spiritual heritage.