

TRUE FREEDOM

By Jason Goldtrap

From a sermon preached at
Central Church of Christ, Haines City, FL June 30, 2013



Dedicated to my late uncle
Ewing Harper of Adams, Tennessee:
Soldier, patriot, farmer, Christian, loving
husband and father, my friend.

All scripture quotes from the
New King James Version of the Bible

Church Blog

centralcochc.blogspot.com

Sermons

Articles

Bible studies

Video



INTRODUCTION: TEACH THEM DILIGENTLY

DEUTERONOMY 6:6-7 “And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.”

I was blessed to grow up in a loving home. My father, George Goldtrap, was a preacher for many years in the churches of Christ. My mother, Peggy Goldtrap, a



George, Peggy and Jason Goldtrap, 2012

writer, was a faithful companion to him. She heard his sermons before anyone else; she was always there by his side offering encouragement and creative criticism.

My father and mother encouraged me, my sister Lynn and my brothers George and Jefre to always keep an open mind and loving heart in regards to all men. He taught us to use

good judgment, practice charity, be grateful and never, never take yourself too seriously.

Every Independence Day was an occasion not just for setting off firecrackers, tossing horseshoes and eating homemade ice cream; it was a day to reflect on the meaning of the words found in the Declaration of Independence. A typical family function would include prayers for the nation, a reading of the preamble, first paragraph and conclusion of the Declaration of Independence and a discussion about the history of the signers.



My wife Jamie and Jason Goldtrap, Harper farms, 1999

fried chicken, roast beef, catfish, collard greens, mashed potatoes, rolls, cornbread, chocolate cake, toll house cookies, iced tea or Coca Cola and a nearby hammock for when lunch was over. The kids would splash in the creek; their parents would visit and get caught up on family news and recall precious memories.

My father, who in the early 1970s had served two terms as a County Commissioner in Lee County, Florida, was well versed in the issues of the day due in part to his habit of watching the nightly news and listening to Paul Harvey News and Commentary. A man of passion, he instilled in me many core ideas which to this day define my philosophy of life: five simple ideals which, if applied, will guide you to a measure of Godly wisdom in a world of fallen men.

My favorite such celebrations were in the small town of Adams, Tennessee on the farm of my uncle Ewing Harper. About 60 family members and close friends would gather together at the creek. Food would be set on picnic tables draped with plastic red and white checkerboard covers. A large flag would be hung on a tree where it could catch the breeze. There would be



My brother Jefre Goldtrap (left) and Ewing Harper

1. Men were created by God to be free.
2. Good intentions by the government on all levels often stifle those freedoms.
3. Good intentions are no match for wise laws put forth by moral men.
4. Political parties are no cover for corrupt men.
5. Political leaders regardless of our opinions of them deserve respect and need our prayers for wisdom.

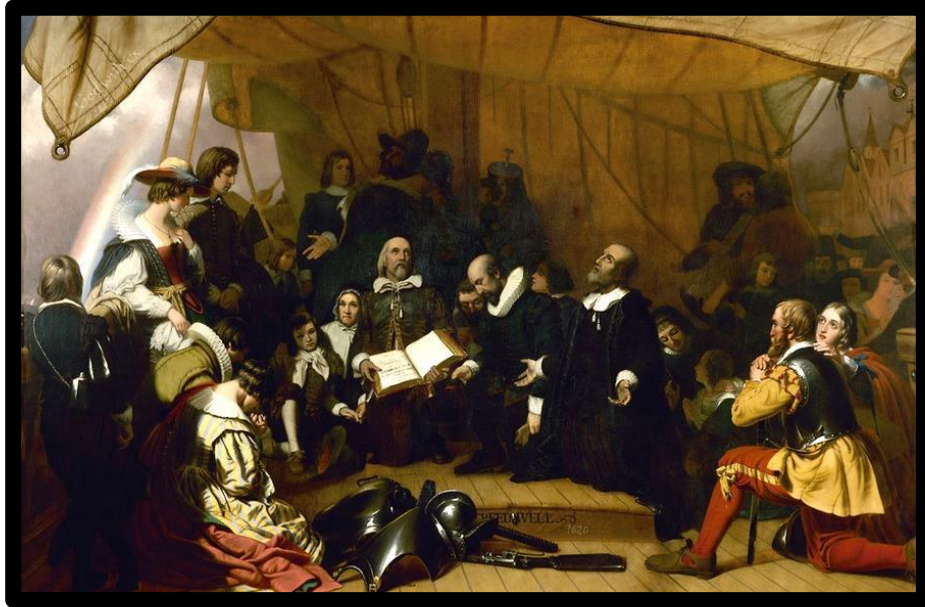
I pray that this book may encourage you to understand the Godly influence on America's founding fathers and principles and that you may pray for our political leaders that they may make sound judgments in all situations.



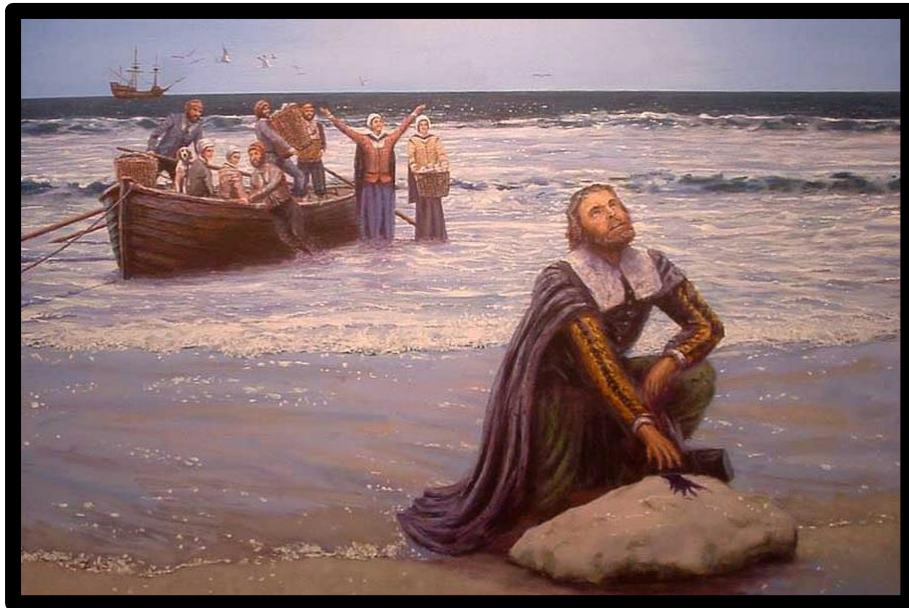
Jason Goldtrap and George Goldtrap in an electric Citicar.
Fort Myers, Florida, 1975.

AMERICA WAS BUILT ON PRAYER

September 16, 1620: South Hampton, England, before the Puritans boarded the *Mayflower*, they prayed.



When they arrived on November 19 off Cape Cod, they prayed.



They established a colony and a system of government in the *Mayflower Compact* built around humility and loyalty to God.

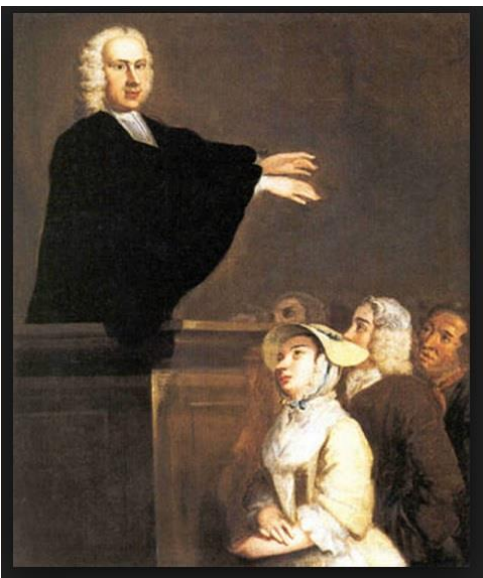
THE MAYFLOWER COMPACT

November 11, 1620

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 Great Britain, France, and Ireland, King, defender of the Faith, etc.

Having undertaken, for the Glory of God, and advancements of the Christian faith and 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 politic; 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 11th of November, in the year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord King James, of England, France, and Ireland, the eighteenth, and of Scotland the fifty-fourth, 1620.



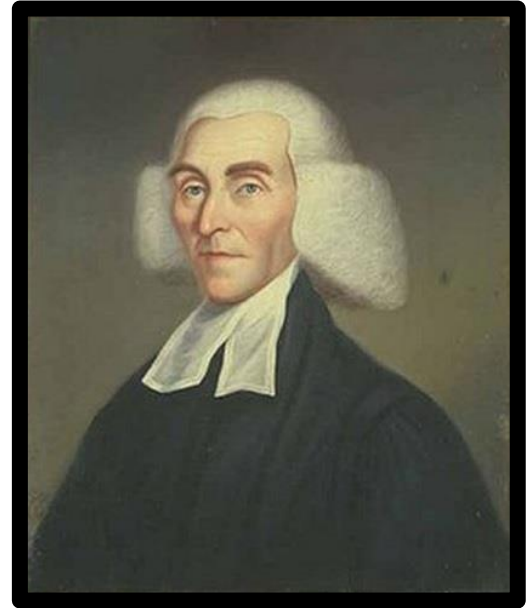
George Whitfield, 1714-1770, was a noted English preacher who taught a controversial idea: faith in God must be a bottom up approach between the individual and his Creator. Man was free from the dictates of the hierarchy of priests and bishops established in the denominational world. God loved you. It was your duty to love Him back and spread His love through your good deeds. This simple message resulted in him being banned from most church buildings so he would preach in the open air with 30,000 in attendance. He influenced the America colonies to be pious and charitable.

Jacob Duché was the first Chaplin of the Continental Congress. On September 7, 1774, he read from Psalm 35 and then led a prayer.

“Be Thou present, O God of wisdom, and direct the councils of this honorable assembly; enable them to settle things on the best and surest foundation.

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 amongst the people. Preserve the health of their bodies and vigor of their minds; shower down on them and the millions they here represent, such temporal blessings as Thou seest expedient for 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.



Godly influence shaped our founding document....



In CONGRESS, July 4, 1776. The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united STATES OF AMERICA.

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their **CREATOR** with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, that whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

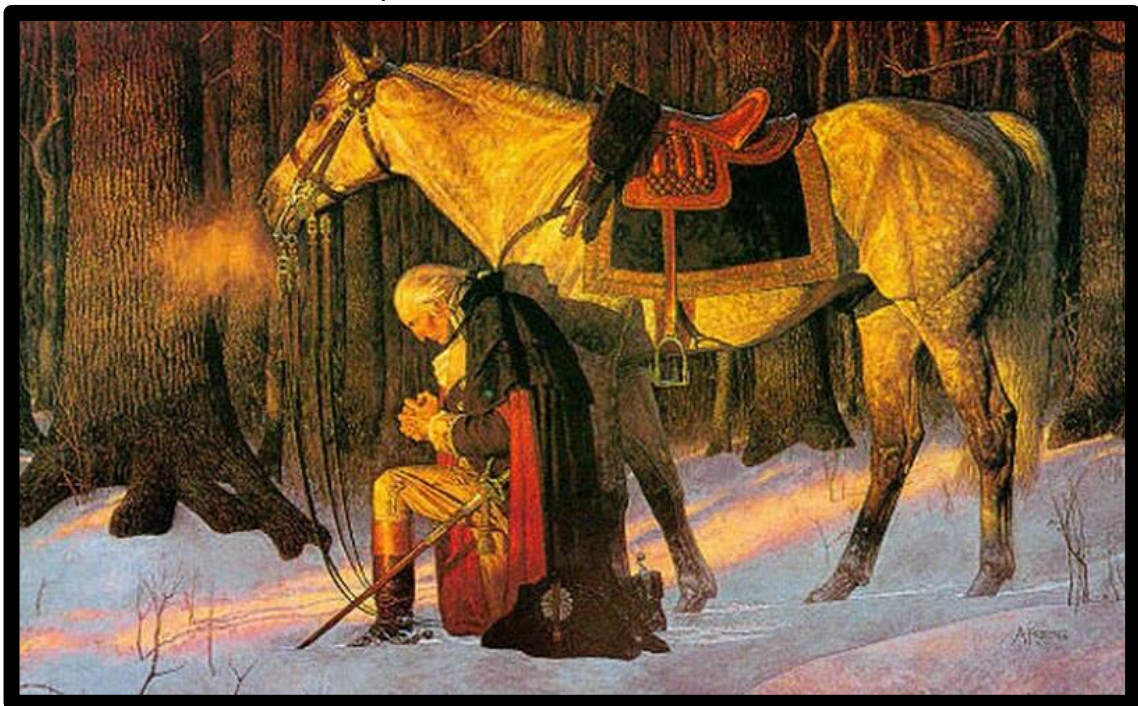
Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath

shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.

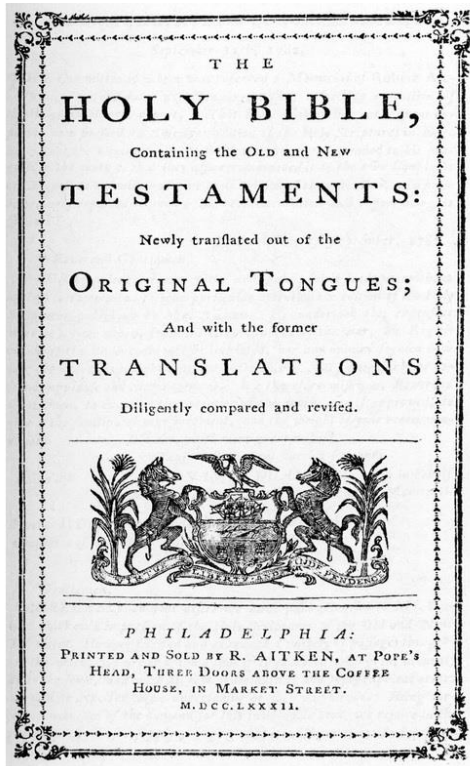
-CONCLUSION-

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.

-Thomas Jefferson, Philadelphia



The Prayer at Valley Forge, Arnold Friberg, 1975



September 17, 1782, Congress approves the purchase and distribution of the “Aitken Bible”, the first Bible published in America. It is confidently endorsed as "the pious and laudable undertaking of Mr. Aitken, as subservient to the interest of religion, as well as an instance of the progress of the arts in this country."

Religion in America ... must be regarded as the foremost of the political institutions of that country; for if it does not impart a taste for freedom, it facilitates the use of it. Indeed, it is in this same point of view that the inhabitants of the United States themselves look upon religious belief. I do not know whether all Americans have a sincere faith in their religion-for who can search the human heart?-But I am certain that they hold it to be indispensable to the maintenance of republican institutions. This opinion is not

peculiar to a class of citizens or a party, but it belongs to the whole nation and to every rank of society.- Alexis De Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 1835 & 1840

“May every citizen in the army and in the country have a proper sense of the Deity upon his mind and an impression of that declaration recorded in the Bible: “Him that honoreth Me I will honor, but he that despiseth Me shall be lightly esteemed”

– Samuel Adams, 1795





Shortly after George Washington placed his hand on a Bible and took the oath of office to become our first President on April 30, 1789, at Federal Hall in lower Manhattan, he and several congressmen left the ceremonies and went to St. Paul's Church to pray. His inaugural address was replete with Godly words.

GEORGE WASHINGTON'S INAUGURAL ADDRESS IN CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH
by Jason Goldtrap, 2012

April 30, 1789, Fellow Citizens of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Of all of the serious occasions in life, no event could have filled me with greater anxiety than the notification given to me by my fellow countrymen on April 14, 1789. I was happily retired. I wanted nothing to do with public life. This was my decision and nothing was going to change my mind. I wanted relief from the stresses put upon me by the war and its aftermath. I wanted to be a simple gentleman farmer. My health, due to my age, has been declining and I did not want to be bothered by matters of state. However, I love my Country and my Country called me. Wise, experienced men had looked to each other and decided

that the leadership needed to guide the Country in matters of civil administration was not among them. They needed someone who had the character and experience necessary to be President of These United States, and so, they chose me. I say this not to brag for I do not consider myself the wisest of men; I merely answered their call.

In this conflict of emotions, all I can say for certain is that it has been my lifelong habit to not rush into things but to do my duty only after I consider every component of the circumstances at hand and how I might be of service in addressing the matter.

All I hope is that I take the oath of office not because I am persuaded by fond memories of previous service nor do I take the oath because I am respected by the people. I hope I am doing this for all the right reasons and in a humble manner for these are serious times. I had to think about it long and hard because my Countrymen expect me to do my best.

So, after much deliberation as well as being obedient to public pleas I find myself standing before you today. It is only proper that my first act as President is to pray for wisdom from the Almighty because He is the One who rules the Universe. God, the Great Magistrate, presides over all nations. Humble obedience to God's Providence can repair any human deficit and I am convinced only His holiness and goodness can preserve both the liberty and the happiness of the People of the United States. We are a free people who have instituted self-government to ensure our own liberty. I pray that we may have everything we need to guarantee that success and thereby honor our Maker. By honoring God, the Great Author of every public and private good, I believe I express a sentiment held not only by myself but by all Americans. No people can be bound to acknowledge and adore the unseen guidance of God, more than the people of the United States for it is He who directs the affairs of men.

We are an independent nation because at every step along the way we have acknowledged God's Providence. Until recently we were fighting the War of Independence, but now the war is over. We are at peace and we can voluntarily gather from many communities and be a united people something that hardly any other nation in history has been able to do and for that alone we should be humbly, eternally grateful to God. We know that He'll be with us in the future

surely as He has been with us in the recent past. When I look around at our present problems I can conclude that we need God. I trust that you will join me in this conclusion if we hope to begin this new, free form of government.

Article 2, section 3 of the United States Constitution which establishes the Executive Department of the Federal Government, says that one of the duties of the president is to give the Congress a State of the Union, which is a summation of what he needs to effectively do his duty. I won't deliver a State of the Union at this time; there is no need for it. We are doing what the Constitution says to do. Instead of such an address, I'll simply say I am grateful that the right, qualified, talented men wrote the Constitution. They, like me, are united in our duty. We are not here out of loyalty to any political party. I pledge to you now that no one will distract us from doing the best we can. We will look out for the interest of all Americans. We will make sure national policy is made with pure motives by decent men governing a free people who both admire and respect their public servants and earn the respect of the rest of the world.

I know that we can do it because I love my Country and my Country in turn inspires me to be my best. I know beyond the shadow of a doubt that there is a strong connection between virtue and happiness, between duty and responsibility, and common sense tells me that where there is reasonable governmental policy there are happy, prosperous people. Everything I see in nature tells me this is true. It seems obvious that God is kind and He blesses those who are righteous and if a people choose not to be righteous or if they choose to behave indecently God in Heaven ceases those blessings. Liberty is a responsibility. For the republican model of government to succeed we all must be sober minded.

It is up to you, the American people, to use your own judgment and decide for yourself the limitations of presidential power as outlined in the Fifth article of the Constitution. You must decide what powers are necessary for the president to be a good leader because the last system we had did not work as well as it should have. Instead of me dictating how much power I need I will leave the matter in your hands. I trust you to make the right decisions in this regard. I am confident you won't give the president too much power and thereby make him a dictator like the King of England. I believe you'll do the right thing and allow the president no more power than he needs to be an effective leader of free men in an office of

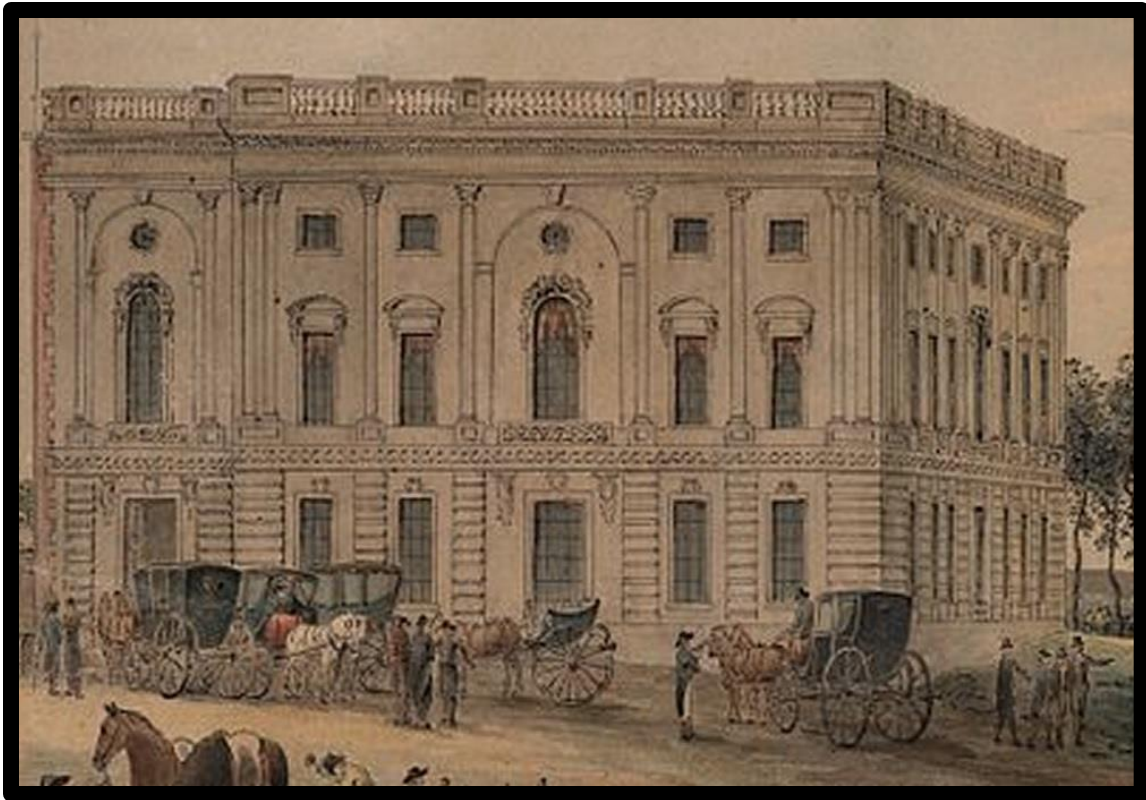
whose limitations we can all agree. Give me no more or no less than what he needs to do a good job.

Let me say this in regard to the office of the presidency. At the beginning of the American Revolution, you called me to lead the struggle for liberty you gave me both charge of duty and a reasonable amount of pay. Now, I ask the same things. I don't go into this office expecting to become wealthy; I just expect to be paid for my services. Every president that comes after me should expect no more or no less. That is all I ask in regard to this matter.

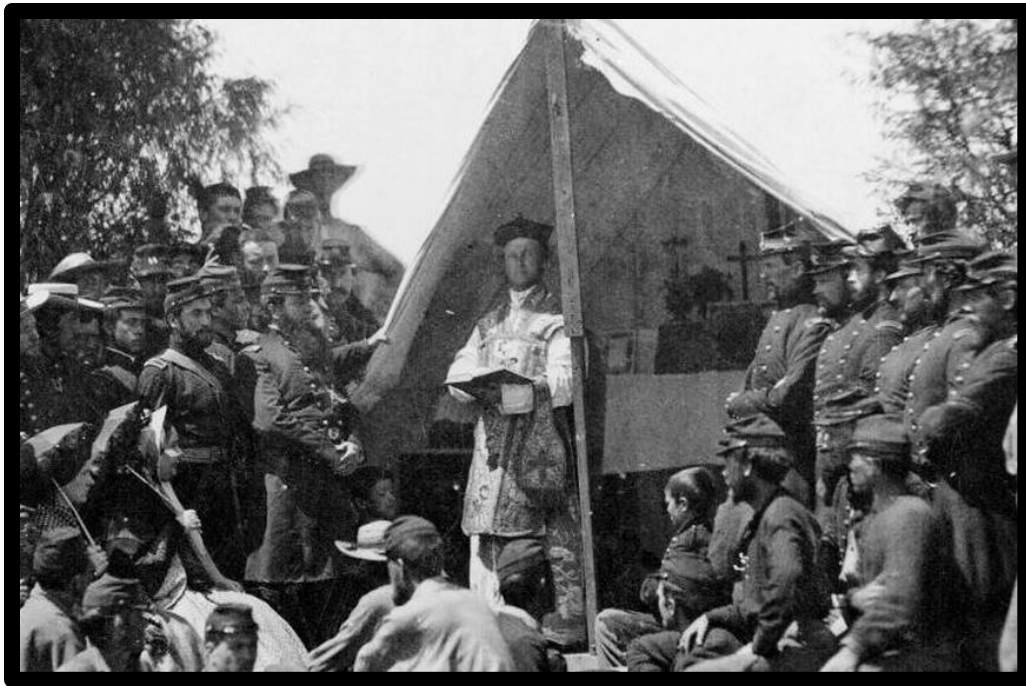
Back to you, the American people: having said all that I needed to say on this monumental occasion I shall conclude my remarks and get to work but first let me, once again, ask you to join me in begging God that we may live as a united, free, humble and peaceful people. I ask that you join me in praying to God that this government might be humble, sober minded, securely united to the Constitution so that we can be happy under God's divine blessing. I pray that the government may always strive to be a gathering of wise men for this will be the hallmark of our success as a people.



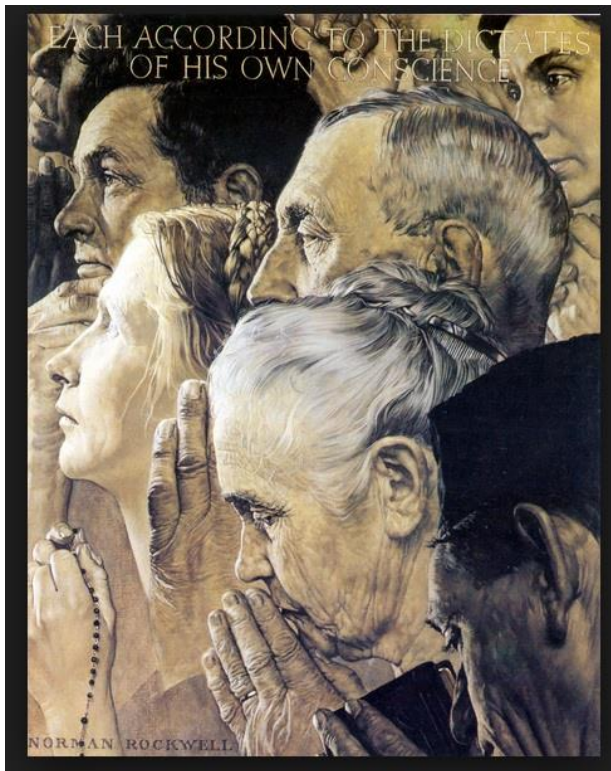
George Washington, walks to St. Paul's church in Manhattan, after his inauguration, to pray.



December 4, 1800. Congress approves the U.S. Capitol building for church services. Every Sunday, for decades, Presidents, Congressmen and ordinary citizens met to worship, pray and hear a preacher.



During the Civil War we prayed.



Newly arrived immigrants prayed when they saw the Statue of Liberty.

"Freedom of Worship" (1943) by Norman Rockwell



In World War 2, American soldier's prayed.



In Vietnam, there were prayers. (below) Edward White, Gus Grissom and Roger Chaffe, crew of the ill-fated Apollo One, pray.

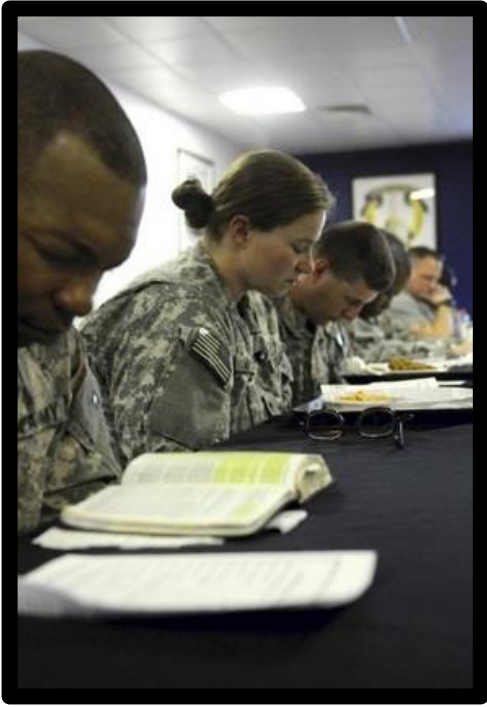




On July 4, 1976, Americans celebrated 200 years of freedom. The Liberty Bell was rung on July 8, 1776 to proclaim the signing of the Declaration of Independence. On July 8, 1835, while being rung at the funeral of John Marshall, fourth Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, the bell cracked. It's inscription reads "PROCLAIM LIBERTY THROUGHOUT ALL THE LAND UNTO ALL THE INHABITANTS THEREOF LEV. XXV X."

We prayed at Ground Zero.





American soldiers praying in Iraq.



Jayson Kennedy in 2013, prays.



On June 1, 2013, Roy Costner IV, valedictorian of Liberty High School in Liberty, South Carolina delivered his valedictorian speech. His senior year had been tough because of constant attacks by the ACLU. Prayer had been removed from school board meetings, prayer had been banned from athletic events and teachers had been ordered to not attend the annual "See You at the Pole" a voluntary, student led prayer held around a flag pole.

And so Roy stood up and began reading his speech which had to be pre-approved by Principal Lori Gwinn. He began his speech but then paused and went off script.

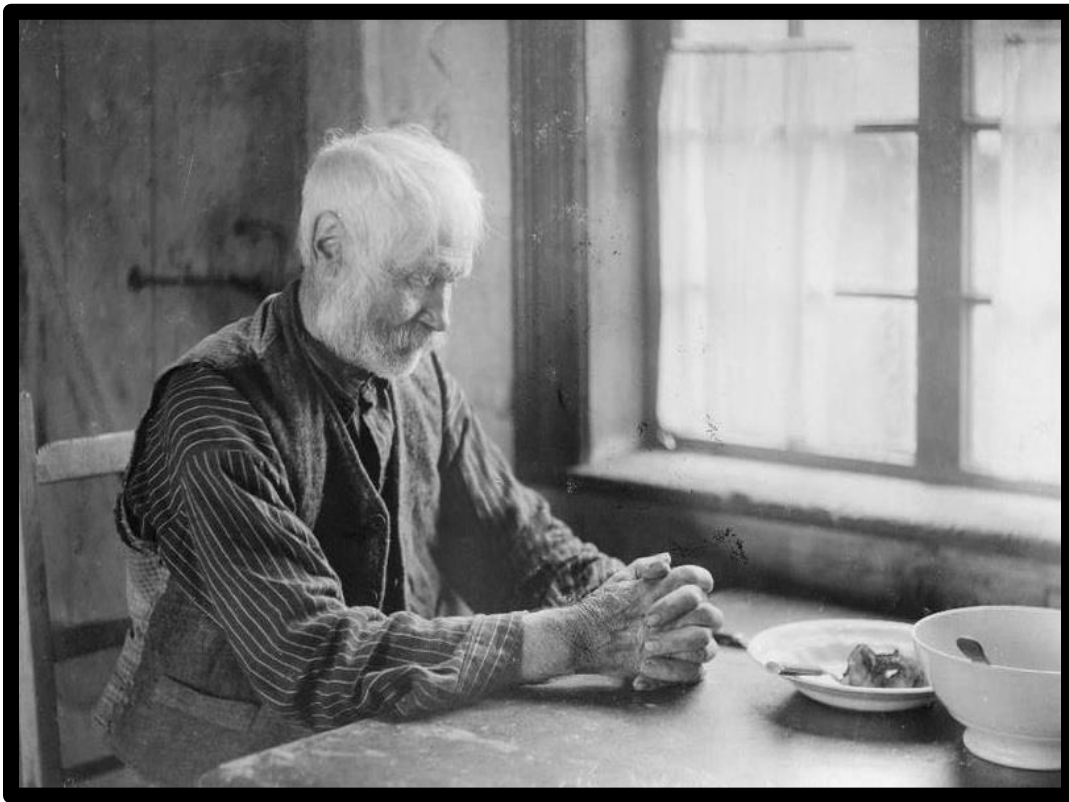
"I'm so glad that both of my parents led me to the Lord at a young age, and I think most of you will understand when I say *"Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen."*

Those assembled gave him a standing ovation. Prayer in 2013 America lives!

We the People

Live in a nation founded on a simple idea: men were created free and equal. We are the benefactors of this self-evident notion and the author of this pure, natural compulsion is none other than the God of the Bible.

As heirs to this abundance it is our sacred duty to nurse, to articulate, to meditate on and defend the propositions set forth in the Declaration of Independence beginning with the foundation concept of our society that we recognize God as our CREATOR, SUPREME JUDGE OF THE WORLD and the one we must rely on for DIVINE PROVIDENCE.



“Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread” by Rudolf Eickemeyer, Jr.

CREATOR

John Adams, in a letter to his cousin Zabdiel Adams, on June 21, 1776 wrote:



“Statesmen, my dear Sir, may plan and speculate for Liberty, but it is Religion and Morality alone, which can establish the Principles upon which Freedom can securely stand.

The only foundation of a free Constitution is pure Virtue, and if this cannot be inspired into our People in a greater Measure than they have it now, [then] they may change their Rulers and the forms of Government, but they will not obtain a lasting Liberty. They will only exchange Tyrants and Tyrannies.”



The National Monument to the Forefathers in Plymouth, Massachusetts, has been described as a “road map to freedom.”

Dedicated in 1889, it is 81 feet tall. It is made of solid granite and weighs 180 tons.

Unknown to most Americans, it came to national attention via the 2012 documentary “Monumental: In Search of America’s National Treasure.”

In the film, actor and patriot Kirk Cameron is lead on a tour of the monument by historian Dr. Marshall Foster.

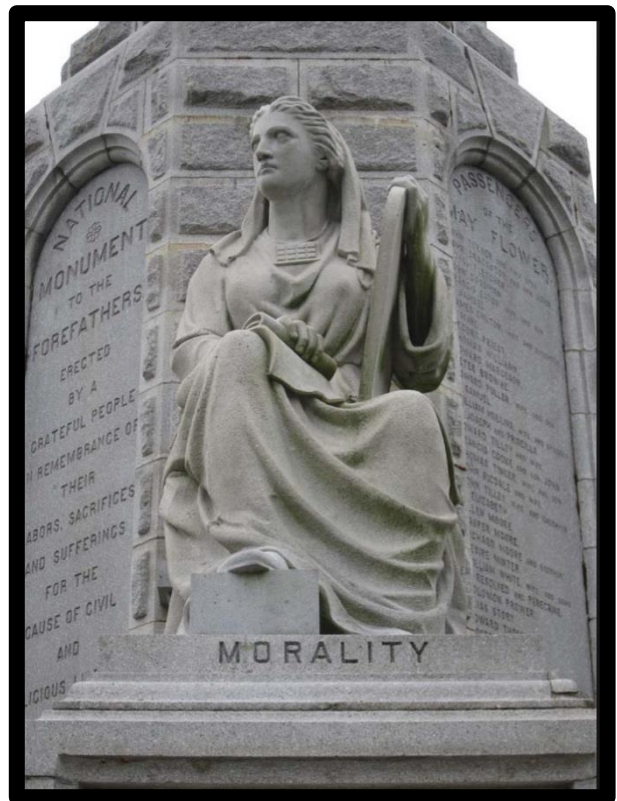


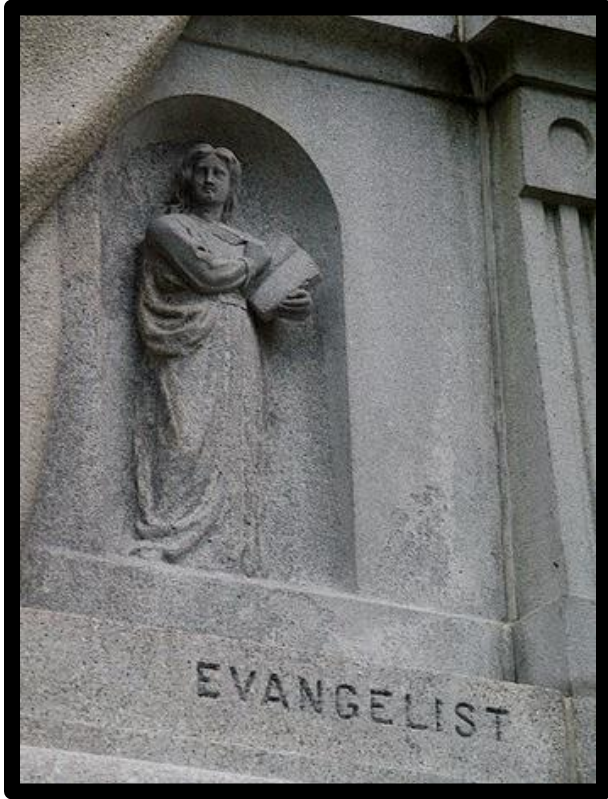
At the top of the statue is FAITH. She is pointing to Heaven to indicate that God is the source of Faith. She carries a *Geneva Bible*. Published in 1560, this was the Bible used by the Mayflower Pilgrims. As a symbol of her devotion to God and study of scripture she proudly wears upon her head a star of wisdom.

PROVERBS 3:8 Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and depart from evil.

At the base of the monument are four buttresses prominently displaying important aspects of liberty beginning with MORALITY. She is holding the Ten Commandments in her left hand while her right hand holds a scroll of revelation. Her eyes lack pupils because she is inwardly focused to determine if her morality is internal.

JEREMIAH 24:7 Then I will give them a heart to know Me, that I *am* the LORD; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God, for they shall return to Me with their whole heart.





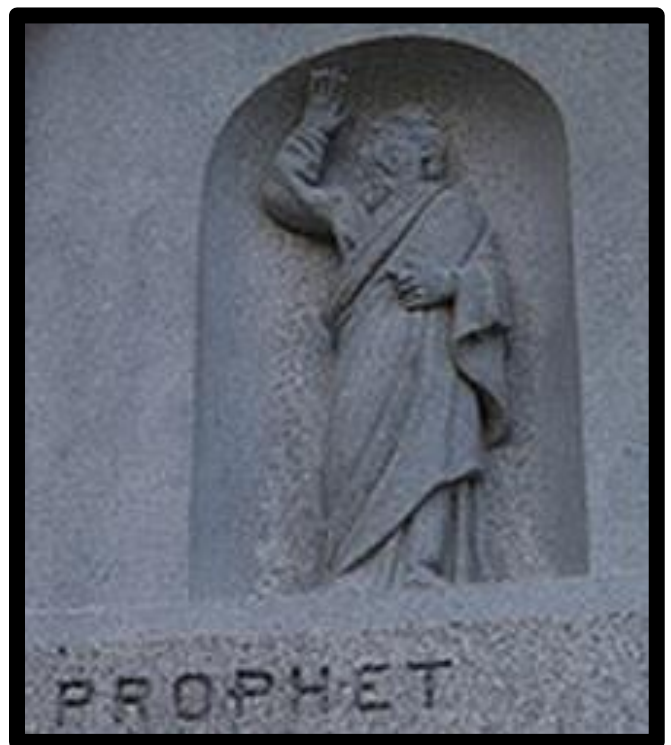
Beneath MORALITY is an EVANGELIST who writes the Gospel of Jesus Christ in order to teach morality.

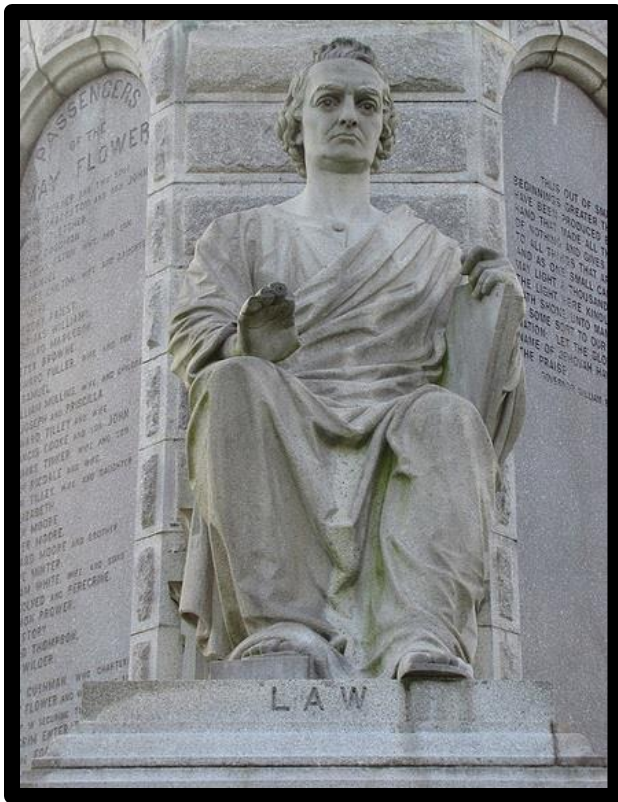
HEBREWS 12:1-2 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares *us*, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

On the other side is a PROPHET.

LAMENTATIONS 3:40-41

Let us search out and examine our ways,
And turn back to the LORD;
Let us lift our hearts and hands
To God in heaven





LAW holds a code book that is easy to read and open to all. His right hand shows his mercy.

ZECHARIAH 7:9-10

“Thus says the LORD of hosts:

‘Execute true justice,

Show mercy and compassion

Everyone to his brother.

Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless,

The alien or the poor.

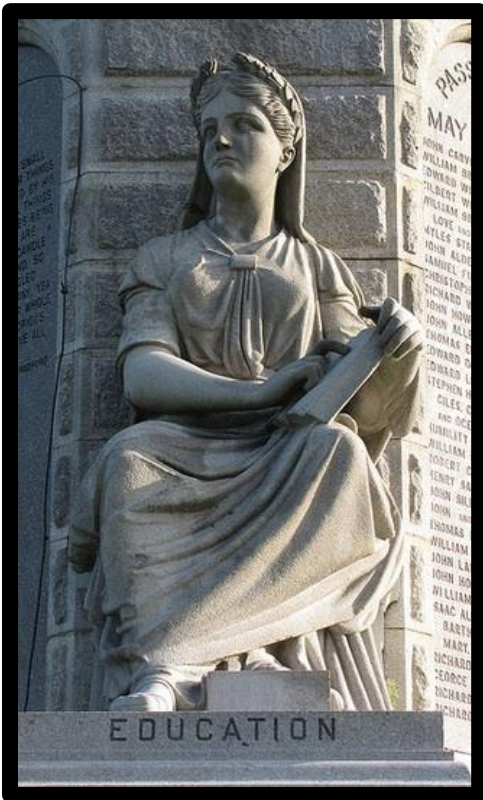
Let none of you plan evil in his heart

Against his brother.’



HOSEA 12:6
 So you, by *the*
help of your
 God, return;
 Observe mercy
 and justice,
 And wait on
 your God
 continually.





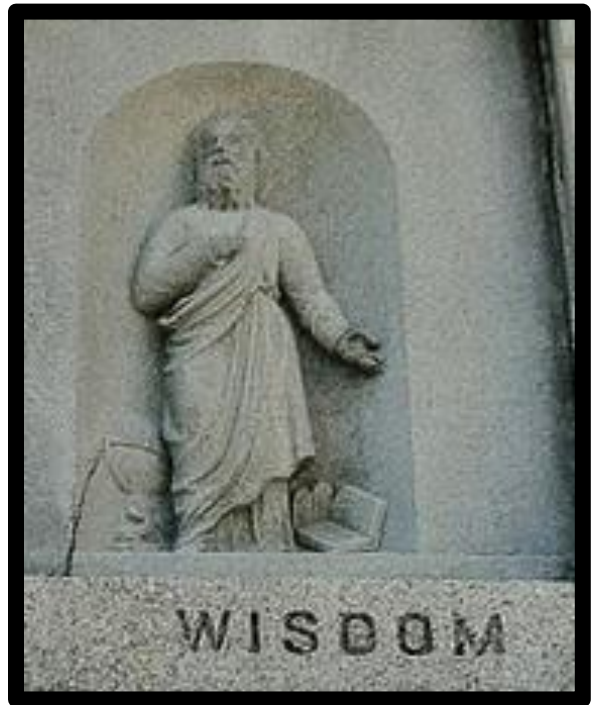
FAITH in God produces MORALITY giving you a standard by which you can judge right and wrong bringing about a sound system of LAW created by a Free, Just and Civil society that relies on a quality EDUCATION.

EDUCATION is a young mother, holding an open book. She wears a wreath of victory.

PROVERBS 4:13 Take firm hold of instruction, do not let go; Keep her, for she *is* your life.

The young mother knows that it is her responsibility to “Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it (PROVERBS 22:6).” YOUTH

An elderly man spreads WISDOM. He teaches from an open Bible and the Ten Commandments, a Christian worldview- depicted as a globe on his right. PROVERBS 9:10 “The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One *is* understanding.”





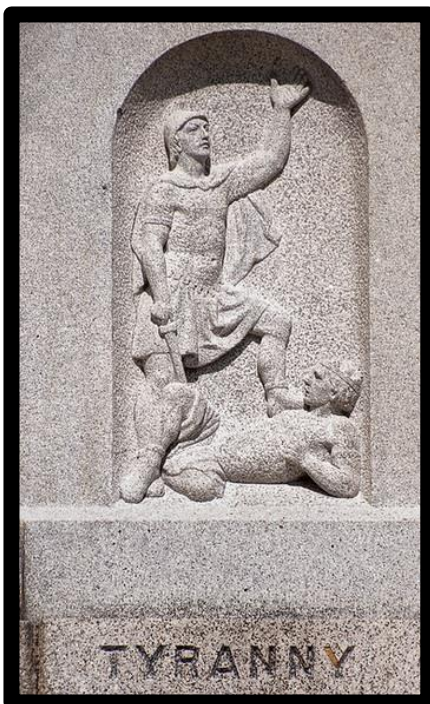
Teaching a Biblical world-view that God made you to be free creates in man a thirst for LIBERTY. Here sits a rugged hero. He is looking out, ever vigilant to potential foes. He holds a sword and he is ready to use it. In his left hand are broken chains, he will be a slave to no man.

PROVERBS 14:11 The house of the wicked will be overthrown, But the tent of the upright will flourish.

On his right shoulder is a lion's paw. He has defeated the British Empire.



The brave warrior praises God for the victory over the tyrant. Peace, through strength, reins in the happy, fruitful land.



PSALM 108:11-12 *Is it not You, O God, who cast us off? And You, O God, who did not go out with our armies? Give us help from trouble, For the help of man is useless. Through God we will do valiantly, For it is He who shall tread down our enemies.*





FAITH + MORALITY + LAW + EDUCATION = LIBERTY

GOD CREATED YOU TO BE FREE

GENESIS 1:27a So God created man in His *own* image;

ECCLESIASTES 12:1a Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth,

JAMES 1:25 But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues *in it*, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

JOHN 8:36 “Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.”

JOHN 4:16b “I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

1 TIMOTHY 2:1-2 Therefore, I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.

PROVERBS 29:18 Where *there is* no revelation, the people cast off restraint; But happy *is* he who keeps the law.

LEVITICUS 11:45c “be holy, for I am holy.”

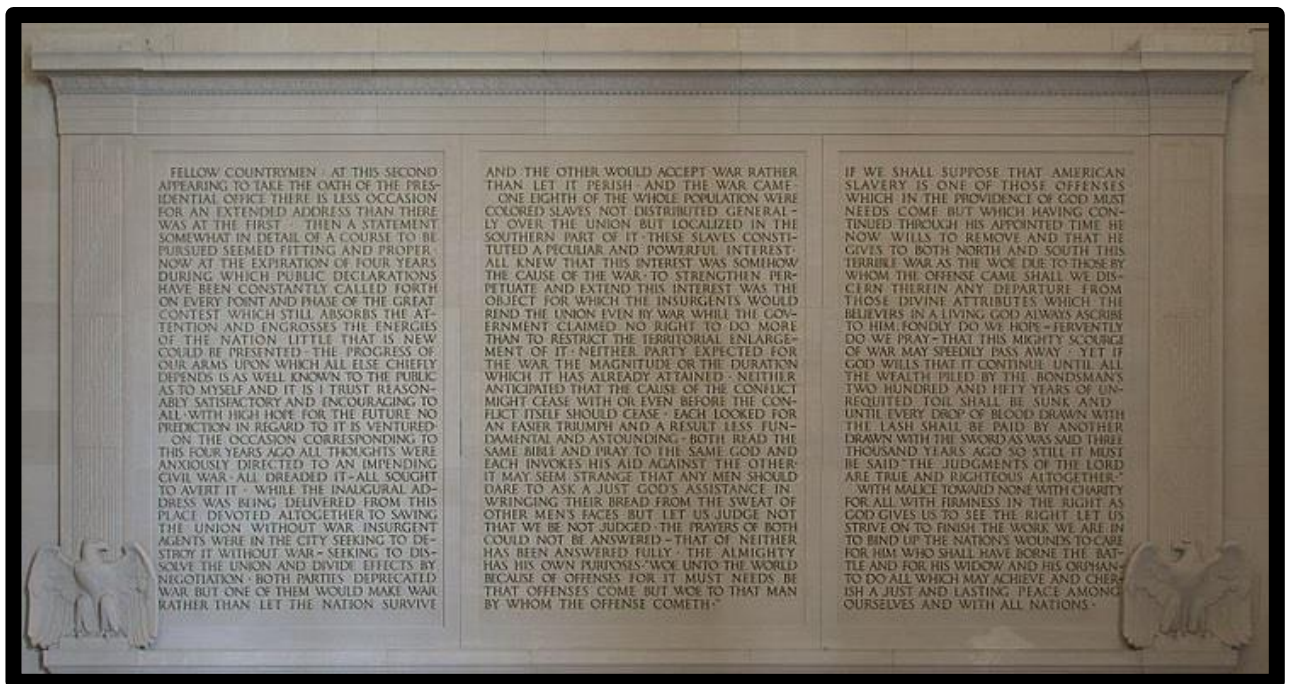


The Lincoln Memorial was dedicated in 1922.

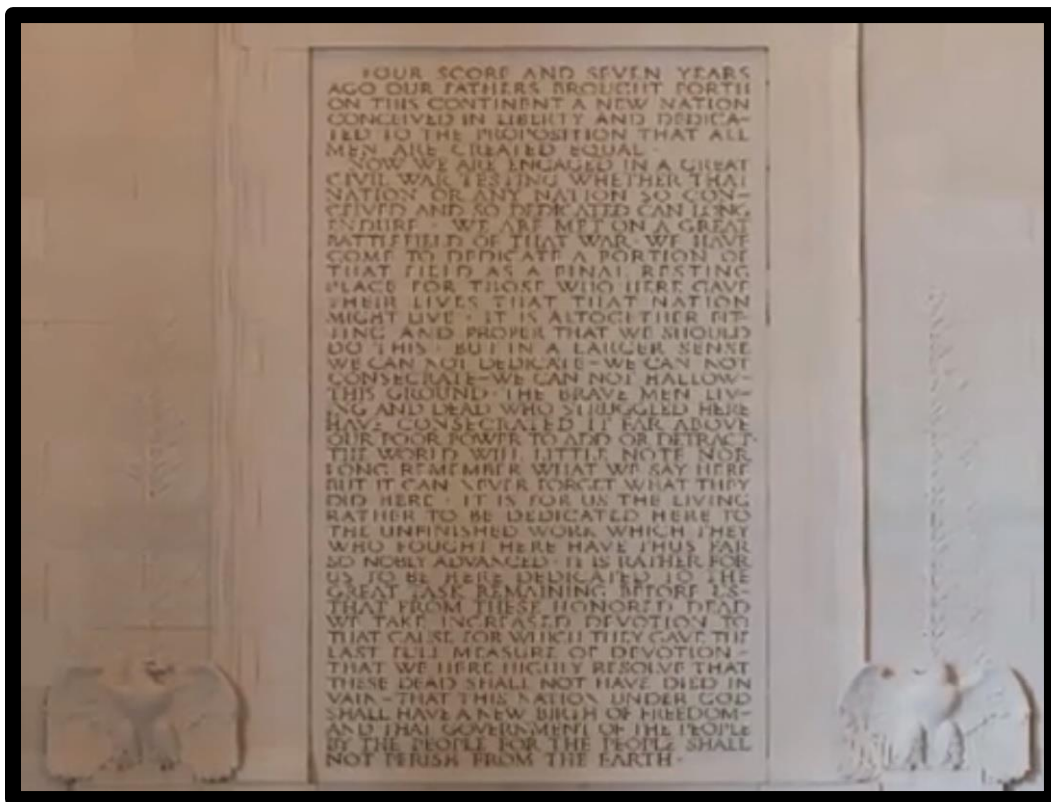


Above Mr. Lincoln is engraved:

"In this temple, as in the hearts of the people for whom he saved the Union, the memory of Abraham Lincoln is enshrined forever."



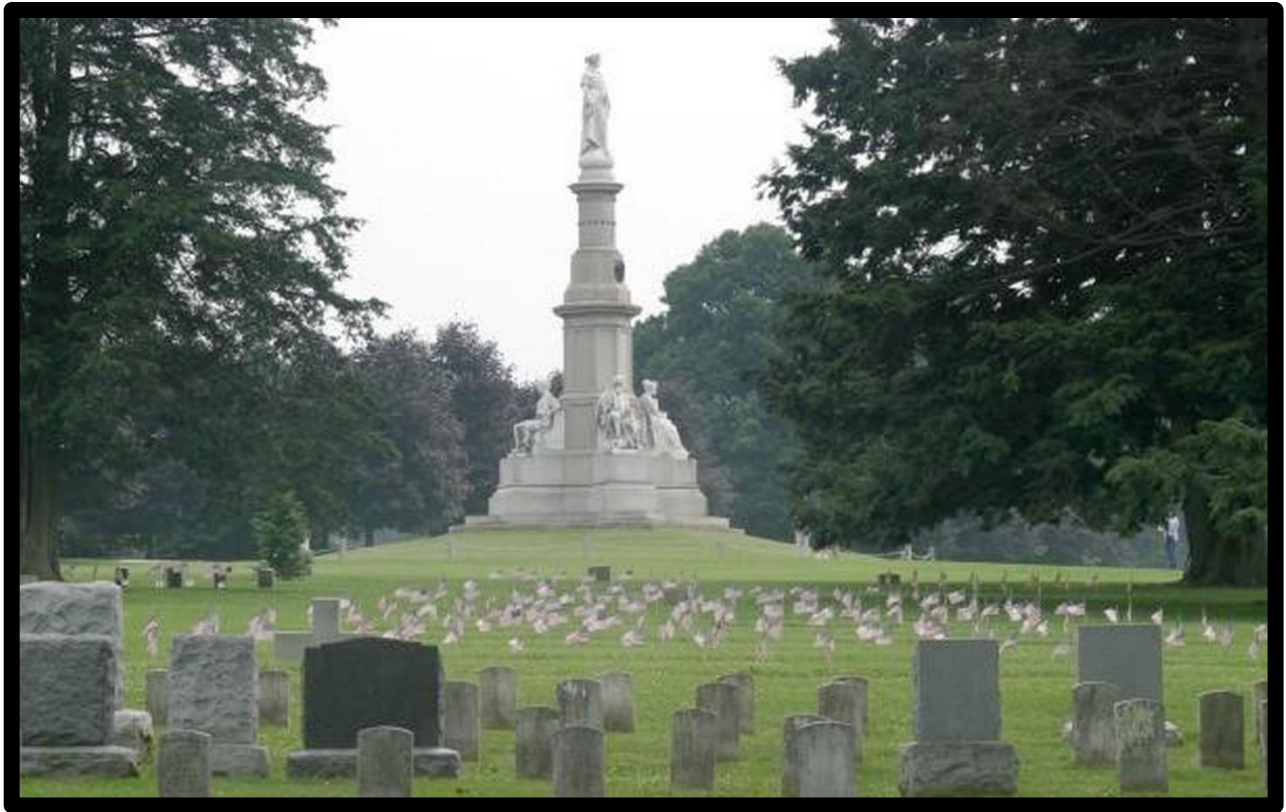
On the south wall is Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address which mentions God 14 times.



On the north wall is the Gettysburg Address.



The Battle of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, was fought between July 1 and 3, 1863. When the smoke cleared, 7,863 Americans lay dead.



On November 19, 1863 there was a ceremony to dedicate the Gettysburg National Cemetery.



The featured speaker that day was respected orator Edward Everett. His speech contained 13,607 words and lasted 2 hours.

The next speaker was President Abraham Lincoln; his speech contained 271 words and lasted 2 minutes.

Soon after, Everett wrote to his friend and said: "I shall be glad if I could flatter myself that I came near to the central idea of the occasion, in two hours, as you did in two minutes."



President Lincoln's address was so short that the newspaper photographer who covered the event did not have time to set up his camera and get the shot except for this blurry image of the president walking down the stage.

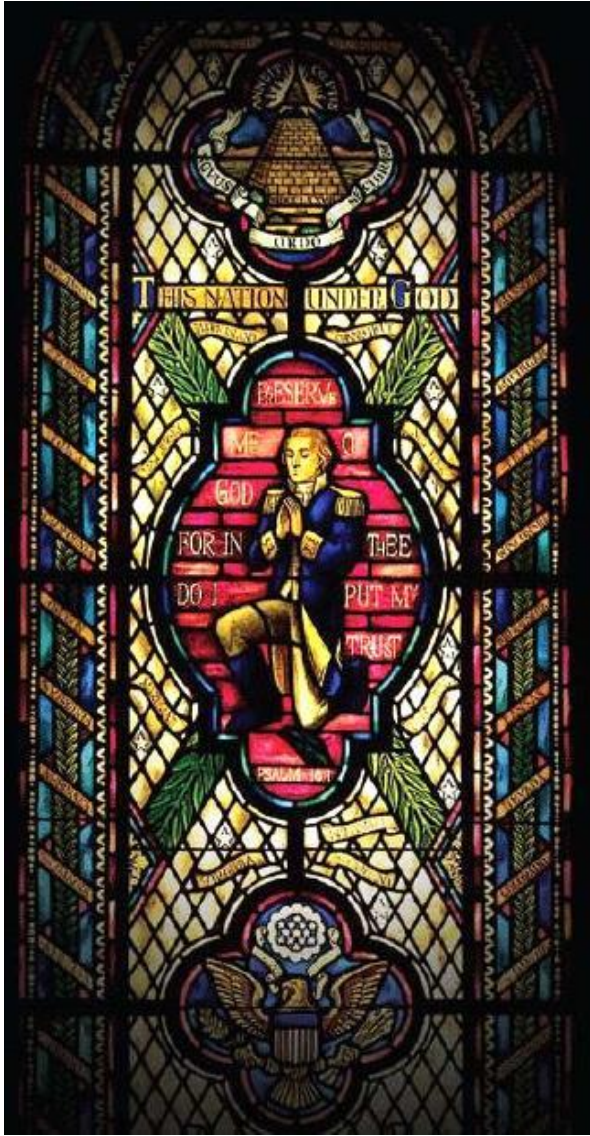


Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate, we can not consecrate, we can not hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

GOD IS THE SUPREME JUDGE OF THE WORLD



ISAIAH 3:13 The Lord stands up to plead,
And stands to judge the people.

1 PETER 4:5 They will give an account to
Him who is ready to judge the living and
the dead.

PSALM 78:38b [The LORD is] Full of
compassion,

PSALM 62:12 Also to You, O
Lord, *belongs* mercy; For You render to
each one according to his work.

JAMES 3:17 But the wisdom that is
from above is first pure, then peaceable,
gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and
good fruits, without partiality and
without hypocrisy.

Congressional Prayer Room, U.S. Capitol

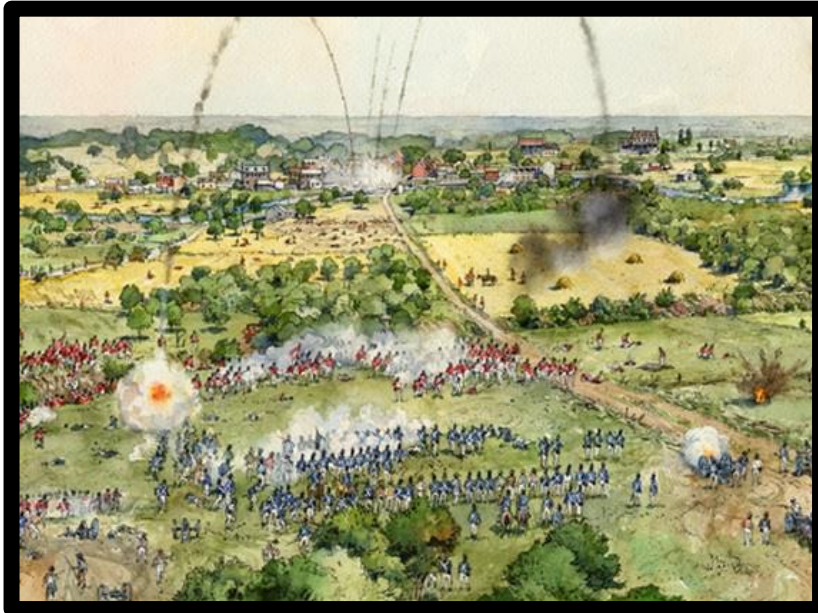
Above General Washington, "This nation under God." Surrounding him is
inscribed, PSALM 16:1, "Preserve me, O God, for in thee do I put my trust."



Benjamin Franklin understood God's role in the affairs of men. During the Constitutional Convention on June 28, 1787, he said, "I have lived, Sir, a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth- that God Governs in the affairs of men. 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, Sir, in the sacred writings, that "except the Lord build the House they labour in vain that build it." I firmly believe this; and I also believe that without his concurring aid we shall succeed in this political building no better, than the Builders of Babel: We shall be divided by our little partial local

interests; our projects will be confounded, and we ourselves shall become a reproach and by word down to future ages. "

Our nation's mettle was tested during in 1812 when, after a series of incidents at sea involving hostile British vessels, the United States Declared War on Great Britain. The war was a slow, tedious conflict. The United States faced a variety of strategic losses in and around the Great Lakes, in the open sea and the South.



The highlight of the war was the Chesapeake Campaign. On August 18, 1814, British Major General Robert Ross landed his troops ashore on Benedict, Maryland and pushed inward. On August 24, 1814, they attacked the small Maryland town of Bladensburg, a few miles northeast of Washington. The American forces were poorly trained

militia. The British forces, many veterans of the Napoleonic Wars in Europe, were battle hardened. In the noise, tumult and confusion of war, the American forces made a hasty retreat.



That night, British forces captured Washington D.C. and set fire to numerous public buildings including the Capitol and the White House. First Lady Dolley Madison had to lead an effort to evacuate the property and rescue important articles of the presidency including a portrait of George Washington.

During the chaos of the day, a physician, Dr. William Beanes, was captured by the British. When the British returned to their ships the next day they took Dr. Beanes with them. The citizens of Bladensburg selected two men to negotiate his release. They met with President James Madison and he approved the plan to send Colonel John Stuart Skinner and a lawyer, Francis Scott Key. A deeply religious man, Key early on in his judicial studies considered going into the ministry.

Flying a white flag of truce, the men boarded the British ship *HMS Tonnant* and, over dinner, pleaded with Major General Ross and Vice Admiral Alexander Cochrane for the release of Dr. Beanes and other civilian prisoners. After overhearing the officers discussing the battle strategy, Skinner and Key were themselves taken prisoner. The next target: Baltimore, home of the American merchant fleet and its third largest city; between the British and the city stood Fort McHenry.



The citizens of Baltimore, fully aware of the stakes applied lessons learned at Bladensburg and Washington and began building defensive positions around the city. They drilled with the regular soldiers and conserved resources which could be used for battle. The commander of the fort, George Armistead, made sure the structure was sound, the men trained and the cannons loaded.

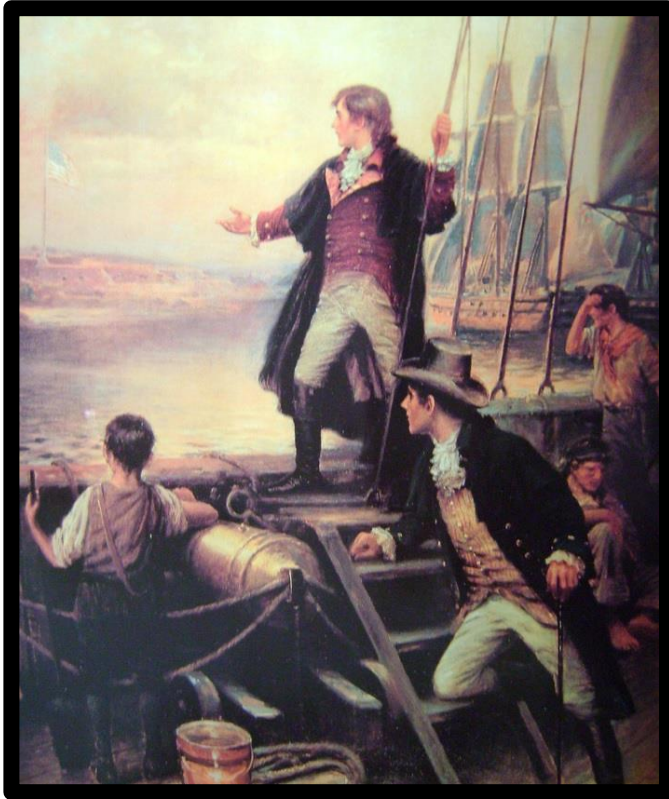
On Sunday, September 13, 1814 at 6a.m. as city dwellers said their morning prayers, 19 British warships began bombarding the fort.



In spite of deluge of cannon fire, the fort continued its defensive posture and answered with their own cannon fire. The fort's magazine held 250,000 pounds of gun powder; enough ammunition to destroy the entire complex in a single blast.

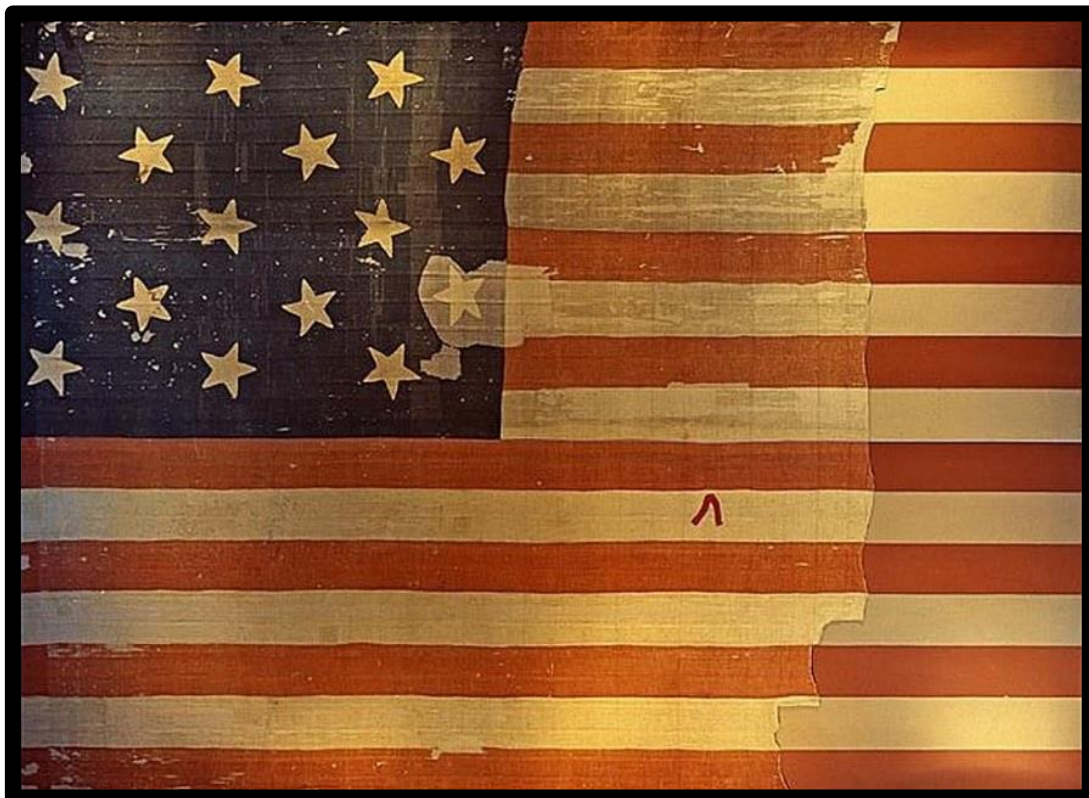
Sometimes, history comes down to a single moment: at 2 o'clock a 13 inch, 200 pound British cannonball hit the magazine's roof. It zoomed through, landed on the floor but failed to explode. The citizens rallied to help move the gunpowder and distribute it in the greater city area.

As the battle raged throughout the day Francis Scott Key, Dr. Beanes and Col. Skinner watched helplessly from the deck of a British ship, 8 miles from the fort. By squinting, they could just barely see the 17 foot by 25 foot storm flag flying over Fort Mifflin, an indication that they had not given up.



After 25 hours of bombardment, the guns finally fell silent at 7a.m. Worried about the battle's outcome, Key peered over the edge of the ship. Col. Skinner likely asked about the storm flag, "Can you see it? Is it still there?"

Key did not see the storm flag, instead, he saw a special banner ordered personally by Commander Armistead. This flag, sewn by Mary Pickersgill, members of her household and neighbors, had 15 stars and 15 stripes, one for each state and was 30 feet by 42 feet. It was this banner that waved in the dawn's early light.



Overwhelmed by the moment, Key took out a letter and wrote:

O say can you see by the dawn's early light,
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming,
Whose broad stripes and bright stars through the perilous fight,
O'er the ramparts we watched, were so gallantly streaming?
And the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there;
O say does that star-spangled banner yet wave,
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

On the shore dimly seen through the mists of the deep,
Where the foe's haughty host in dread silence reposes,
What is that which the breeze, o'er the towering steep,
As it fitfully blows, half conceals, half discloses?
Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam,
In full glory reflected now shines in the stream:
'Tis the star-spangled banner, O! long may it wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.

And where is that band who so vauntingly swore
That the havoc of war and the battle's confusion,
A home and a country, should leave us no more?
Their blood has washed out their foul footsteps' pollution.
No refuge could save the hireling and slave
From the terror of flight, or the gloom of the grave:
And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave,
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.

O thus be it ever, when freemen shall stand
Between their loved home and the war's desolation.
Blest with vict'ry and peace, may the Heav'n rescued land
Praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation!
Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just,
And this be our motto: "In God is our trust."
And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

WE MUST RELY ON GOD FOR DIVINE PROVIDENCE

JOSHUA 1:8-9 “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God *is* with you wherever you go.”

DANIEL 2:21a “And He [the LORD] changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings;”

PSALM 37:23 The steps of a *good* man are ordered by the Lord, And He delights in his way.

ACTS 17:26-27 “And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us;”

2 CHRONICLES 7:14 “if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”

CONCLUSION

Dear reader, God offers a Declaration of Independence to you. Freedom from the tyranny of sin by simply trusting and obeying His Holy Word in a few simple steps:

Step One: Hear the Word of the Lord. MATTHEW 7:24-27 “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.”

Step Two: Believe that Jesus is the Son of God. JOHN 8:24. “Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am *He*, you will die in your sins.”

Step Three: Repent of your sins. LUKE 13:3. “I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.”

Step Four: Confess Jesus before witnesses. MATTHEW 10:32. “Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven.”

Step Five: Be baptized in water. MARK 16:15-16. And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.”

Step Six: Live faithfully. REVELATION 2:10c. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

Central Church of Christ
1232 Robinson Dr.
Haines City, FL 33844

In Jesus Name,
Jason Goldtrap, July 1, 2013