

America: A Heritage to be Remembered

by

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Take away a heritage of a people and they are easily persuaded.

Karl Marx - Author of "The Communist Manifesto"

A Favorite pastime of mine is American History, and the more I studied it, the more obvious it became to me of how great the Lord's hand is upon this nation and how God ordained America to be His example of a Christian nation to the whole world.

My purpose for writing this booklet is to share with you some of my favorite stories of American History, while at the same time giving a brief overview of American History up to the signing of the Constitution, and how God guided America every step of the way.

If you have been blessed by this booklet and would like to share it with others, feel free to make copies and pass them along.

Send Men There

If you want to talk about the foundations of this nation and what this republic is all about you have to go back to the year 1315 in North Africa, what we call Algeria today. "There was a European missionary there named Ramon Lull, a Franciscan Friar, an incredible saint of God. He was 80 years old then, and his superiors had begged him to return home and retire in comfort. He refused their request and instead set out on a missionary journey to North Africa to reach the Muslims with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Muslims would have nothing to do with the gospel and stoned him and left him to die in the town square of that port city. There were two merchants from Geneva in port that day trading with the Muslims and they got word of Ramón dying in the town square. They rushed down to find him lying there, clinging to life by a thread, and they took him to the ship and set sail for home. But the winds of the Mediterranean blew them off course and they ended up off a the small island of Majorca. This island just happened to be the birth place of Ramón Lull. When he heard this, he asked to be brought up on deck so that he may see his birthplace one last time.

From the deck of the ship they lifted him up so that he may see the island, and with the last strength in his body he pointed with his hand to the Western horizon and said, *"Beyond this sea that washes this continent we know there lies another continent that we have never seen, and those natives are ignorant of the gospel of Christ, send men there"*, and then he died. Two merchants who were kneeling beside him heard these dying words. One of those two men went back to his home in Geneva and told this story over and over to his children and grandchildren, it passed down through his family from generation to generation.

That merchant's name was Stephano Columbo - Stephan Columbus, he was the ancestor of Christopher Columbus. Christopher Columbus grew up hearing this story of "Send men there."¹

The Thread Of American History

Beginning with Ramon Lull, and continuing even to today, there is a thread that runs through American History. The thread that God's hand is upon this nation, and the thread that the freedom we enjoy today came at a great price. All through American History men and women gave of themselves, willing to endure hardships and sufferings, even to the point of death, so that their followers could enjoy freedom.

Columbus; A Chosen Vessel

There have been many reports of Columbus' poor treatment of the Native Americans, and his arrogance to be recognized for his achievements. I do not doubt that to some extent these stories are true of him. But before I judge him, I must first look at myself and wonder what such fame and fortune would have done to me. So rather than throw out that Columbus was a man of God, I searched the history books to find out what Columbus was like before he discovered the New World and made history that billions of people have been affected by ever since.

What I found was that Columbus believed he was chosen by God to discover a new land so that he may take the gospel of Christ to those who had never heard it. Columbus means "Christ Bearer," and that became the passion of his life. I found that Columbus, in his early years was dedicated to serving the Lord and he did look to the Lord for guidance in his venture. Columbus wrote:

"It was the Lord who put into my mind (I could feel His hand upon me) the fact that it would be possible to sail from here to the Indies. All who heard my project rejected it with laughter, ridiculing me.

There is no question that the inspiration was from the Holy Spirit, because He comforted me with rays of marvelous inspiration from the Holy Scriptures, a strong and clear testimony from the 44 book of the Old Testament, from the 4 gospels, and the 23 Epistles of the blessed Apostles, encouraging me continually to press forward and without ceasing for a moment they now encourage me to make haste. ...I am a most unworthy sinner, but I have cried out to the Lord for grace and mercy, and they have covered me completely. I have found the sweetest consolation since I made it my whole purpose to enjoy His marvelous presence. For the execution of the journey to the Indies, I did not make use of intelligence, mathematics or maps. It is simply the fulfillment of what Isaiah had prophesied.

No one should fear to undertake any task in the name of our Savior, if it is just and if the intention is purely for His holy

service. The working out of all things has been assigned to each person by our Lord, but it all happens according to His sovereign will, even though He gives advice. He lacks nothing that is in the power of men to give Him. Oh, what a gracious Lord, who desires that people should perform for Him those things for which He holds Himself responsible! Day and night, moment by moment, everyone should express their most devoted gratitude to Him.

I said that some of the prophecies remained yet to be fulfilled. These are great and wonderful things for the earth, and the signs are that the Lord is hastening the end. The fact the gospel must still be preached to so many lands in such a short time, that is what convinces me."²

The New World

Inspiration of the Holy Spirit indeed, for Columbus was the one God had destined to discover this great land, and Columbus himself knew it. After seven years of trying to convince the monarchs of Europe to finance his expedition and receiving much ridicule, he won the support of Queen Isabella of Castille and her husband King Ferdinand of Aragon.

Columbus set sail on August 3, 1492 and after the longest voyage ever made out of sight of land, discovered the New World on October 12, 1492.

Columbus had discovered America, the New World. He had landed on an island in the Bahamas, an island he named *San Salvador*, which means "Holy Savior." Columbus thought he was in the Indies, thus he called the natives "Indians." Although Columbus may have been in error, the important fact remained, America had been discovered.

It is important to note that Queen Isabella shared in Columbus' vision of bringing the gospel to foreign lands, for without her the expedition would never have happened. The Queen informed the church the reason for Columbus' attempt: "To bear the light of Christ west to the heathen undiscovered lands."³

The day she commissioned Columbus she recited: "It is hoped that by God's assistance some of the continents and islands in the ocean will be discovered... for the glory of God."⁴

TRIALS AT SEA

I think so many of us would like life to be smooth and easy with

no bumps in the road. I am sure that is how Columbus felt after he discovered the New World; but as it was mentioned earlier, America's foundation was laid on hardships and sufferings.

Columbus probably figured that he fulfilled what God had called him to do, and that was go and discover a new world in which the gospel of Jesus Christ could be spread to. I can only imagine the euphoria running through Columbus as he journey back to Spain with the news of his discovery. He probably thought that the ride home would be a breeze, especially compared to finding the New World. That is exactly how things went for about three quarters of the way home, that is until they hit a storm. The storm was so big that the waves were bigger than the ship, the sea was practically swallowing up the ship.

Columbus had to abandon his route and just let the storm take him where it would. The storm raged for several days, wearing the crew down, and at times they even thought they may not survive it. I wonder what Columbus was thinking at this time, maybe questioning God on why he would lead him to the New World, and then have him die before he could bring the news to the rest of the world. Columbus may have thought that it wasn't fair that he was the one who was ridiculed and mocked when he presented his plan to the world leaders that the world wasn't flat and that there were other lands out there. He was probably saying, wasn't that enough suffering Lord, why this, why now, can't I at least get to reap some of what I labored for.

Like every storm, it did cease, and by the grace of God Columbus and crew survived. They limped the ship into the next dry land for some rest and ship maintenance. The rest was short lived, for as the first half of the landing party went ashore they were taken captive. The order had gone out from King John of Lisbon to all of Portugal's land possessions that if Columbus set foot there after a successful exploration they were to take him captive (King John had rejected the offer to support Columbus' journey) and then Portugal would send out their own expedition and claim rights to the new land. So here again I am sure Columbus went through the same thoughts, why God, why have you

let this happen. The Lord was with Columbus and he was able to outmaneuver his adversary and regain his full crew and set sail once again.

But hardly had they been at sea when another monster storm arose again. The storm was so strong that it ripped off their sails. They were left to just go wherever the storm blew them, which lasted for several more days. Finally they spotted land, but it was the last place they wanted to see, for they were being blown right into the coast of Portugal, and King John's court.

This sounds like a terrible story, a story of God abandoning his servant Columbus, but it is interesting to note that according to Columbus' journal, 25 ships were lost off that very same coast during that winter because the storms were so bad. So really what we see is God's guiding hand upon the crew and ship for they could have been number 26.

How did Columbus escape imprisonment this time as he sat right in the lion's den? Well, Columbus quickly sent messages about their discovery of the New World aboard other ships leaving the port and heading to Spain. So once the word was out, then there was nothing for Portugal to claim, or else it would mean war with Spain, and they surely did not want that.

I personally believe that God allowed this trial to keep Columbus humble so that he would give glory and credit where it was due. And as we read earlier, Columbus did. So in the end Columbus was recognized as the discoverer of the New World, and the world would later find out how big this discovery was.

God's Perfect Time To Reveal The New World - Spiritually

North America is 9.1 million square miles in size, of the seven continents it is the third largest in size, yet it remained undiscovered by the civilized world until only 500 years ago. So why had it taken so long for God to reveal this New World? I believe the answer comes when we look at the periods of Church history. After looking at Church

history we will see it was God's perfect timing.

From the beginning, early Christians were persecuted for their faith. Church history indicates that of the 11 apostles that walked with Jesus, 10 were martyred for their faith. They were not just singled out because they were close to Jesus, history shows that this was the price that many followers paid for centuries to come.

At one period of Church history, it has been recorded that 6 million Christians were martyred for their faith between 100 AD to 300 AD. Probably the worse thing that happened to the spreading of the gospel came when Constantine (Emperor of the Roman Empire) made Christianity the state religion in 313 AD, thus ceasing the persecution of Christians. Christians no longer lived in fear for their lives, but in peace with the world. The problem that resulted was that non-believers in Christ were required to join the so-called "church". This resulted in many pagan rituals and beliefs to be intermixed within the principles of Christianity. The overall resultant was that compromise crept into the church and established a stronghold that is still prevalent today.

The church lived in peace from approximately 300 AD to 600 AD until the darkest period of Church history, the period known as the Dark ages. This period existed from approximately 600 AD to 1400 AD, it was a time when the church hierarchy believed themselves in direct communication with God, and that the "common man" could not communicate with God directly. The church hierarchy did all they could to keep the people suppressed; they did this by adding many rules and traditions upon the people and kept the Bible from them. This was also the period that the "Holy Wars" were fought, people and nations would be wiped-out for failure to believe and conform to the Christian faith.

In 1520 it was Martin Luther's 95 point thesis that started the "Reformation Period." Martin Luther, a priest, upon studying the Bible came to the realization that, "the just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17), and that it was not man's good works that would get them into heaven, but only through accepting Christ's finished work on the cross

(Ephesians 2:8-9). During this Reformation Period, many people saw that their relationship with God was personal and that they did not need to go through the priest to fellowship with God. The Reformation was the beginning of people breaking away from the bondage that the corrupt church was trying to put them under.

If America was discovered hundreds of years earlier, it would have been just like the churches in Europe; churches full of compromise, rituals, and traditions, but God had other plans for America. God never intended for America to be a place where Christianity would be suppressed and corrupted, but a place where the truth of gospel would shine, and people could worship freely.

Preparing The Land

Along with the spiritual timing of God revealing America, God allowed another period of time to elapse before He would send His chosen people - the Pilgrims. After the discovery of America many groups of people came to America in search of riches. The stories of America being a land overflowing with gold spread throughout the world. However these stories were greatly exaggerated, and those who came in search of riches were greatly disappointed. It appears that God allowed a time period for the world to find this out. Men came and failed, and many lost their life either through shipwreck, starvation, or Indian attack.

It is obvious that God did not want those seeking riches to taint those who were coming to America to live a life that was set-apart for Jesus Christ.

During the period of men coming mainly to America for quick riches, God started His work in America by sending a small, yet vital group of men to bring the gospel to the Native Indian Americans. The great awakening to the truth of the gospel that arose from the Reformation increased the desire for the spreading of the gospel among many of the monks and the friars in Europe. These men had solely dedicated their lives for God. For these men, the New World was the perfect opportunity to exercise their God given desire to spread the

Gospel.

Everywhere the first friars went when they came to America to spread the gospel, they established orphanages and schools for the Indians, and shelters for the outcasts. Through the loving service of these missionaries, dozens, then hundreds, then thousands of Native Americans came to the Christian faith.

Because of the monks and friars success in reaching the natives, the men responsible for determining Spain's policy in the New World soon realized that when it came to pacifying the Indians and extending the frontier, one friar could accomplish peaceably what it might take a thousand soldiers to do forcibly. So they made it a policy to encourage these missionary efforts.⁵

Taking The Land

After 100 years of the missionaries succeeding and the self-seekers failing and finally giving up, God allowed His pathfinders, the Pilgrims, to come and begin the work He had ordained.

In England during the early 1600's, the church of England was being controlled by the church hierarchy that ruled over the congregation (the Reformation was not complete, only the beginning). This hierarchy established rules and dogmas upon the people that restricted their freedom to worship the Lord. The Pilgrims came to the point of realization that to continue with the Church of England would bring spiritual death to them and their children.

What most people do not know is that the Pilgrims did not leave England for America, but they left England and went to Holland. The Pilgrims lived in Holland for twelve years, from 1607 to 1619. The Pilgrims had religious freedom there in Holland and they were not persecuted for their faith. This is significant in that it dispels the stories of the Pilgrims fleeing England to America for religious freedom - the fact is they all ready had it there in Holland.

Why then did the Pilgrims come to America? Why did they take the risk of a Trans-Atlantic ocean crossing when they knew full well the

average death rate for a crossing in those days was 1 out of 2 people. Why were they willing to risk diseases, famine, Indian attacks, and numerous other hardships? The answer is that they believed they were called of God to be the ground breakers for what would become a Christian nation that would beacon the Light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

William Bradford, one of the Pilgrims on the Mayflower, and who would become one of the first leaders of the New World wrote this: "We had cherished a great hope and inward zeal of at least playing a part, if only as a stepping stone for others, in the carrying forth of the Light of Christ to remote parts of the world."⁶

We see that the Pilgrims were not running from persecution, but they were really missionaries who desired to spread the gospel. With this being the desire of their hearts, the Pilgrims set sail for America.

Divine Preparation: The Story Of The Speedwell:

I think everybody has heard of the Mayflower, but how many have heard of the Speedwell? You see originally the Pilgrims set out on two ships - the Mayflower and the Speedwell. Both were deemed sea worthy when they were looking to hire ship and crew. The Pilgrims set sail for the New World on August 5, 1620 on the Speedwell and the Mayflower, but only 3 days into the voyage they had to turn back because the Speedwell was taking on water through the seams of the ship's haul. So they caulked the seams and set sail again one week later. Once again they had to turn around for the same problem. When back in port the shipwrights in England did an intensive search to find the loose seam. They crawled along every inch of the ships haul holding a candle up to the seam. The method in those days was that if there was a gap in the seam, the air from outside would cause the candle to flicker or go out, but after a thorough search they still could not find a gap. Obviously, there was no water coming in the seams while at port, or else they would not have needed the candles.

The resultant of this was that the Pilgrims had to abandon the two ship plan and all squeeze in together on the one ship - the Mayflower.⁷

This hardship caused several of the original passengers to become discouraged and decide not to go, some questioned whether God was really in this plan or not, and then there were those who just couldn't handle the hardships and difficulties they had encountered. But there is another explanation: God was using the Speedwell's problem to separate the wheat from the chaff. As William Stoughton later put it: "God sifted a whole nation, that He might send choice grain into this wilderness."⁸

About 20 of them willingly dropped out. William Bradford wrote, "Like Gideon's army this small number was divided, as if the Lord, by this work of His Providence, thought these few were still too many for the great work He had to do."⁹

If God wanted to unify the group He could not have picked a better way. The Pilgrims lived on the Mayflower in what is called the "tween deck". The tween deck is the deck between the top of the ship and the cargo hold. All 102 Pilgrims had to cram into a space equivalent to the size of a volleyball court. To make matters worse there was no fresh air or light (all hatches had to be battened-down due to stormy weather). The duration of this confinement was 66 days.

Distance isolates people, confinement brings them closer together. The Lord prepared the Pilgrims to stick together before they ever set foot on American soil knowing full well that if they tried to live apart in the New World they would fall one by one, either to Indian attacks, starvation, or the extremities of the cold winters. By the time the Pilgrims landed on Plymouth Rock, they were united as one. We can see all the way back then the great American saying that separates us from all other nations, "United We Stand, Divided We Fall".

Divine Intervention: The Printing Screw

An interesting story that I came across was one of when the Mayflower was about half way from England to America and they

encountered a terrible storm at sea. The writings say that the storm was so violent that the Mayflower at one point had almost went full over on her side. It was during this storm that a mighty booming crack was heard throughout the ship. The crack was none other than the main cross beam of the ship that holds up the main mast. The cross beam runs horizontally across the ship, and the main mast runs vertical (up and down), without a main mast which holds the main sail, the boat is dead in the water with no chance of making it back to England, or the rest of the way to America. The reports say that even the experienced sailors were filled with fear because they knew what their fate would be when the beam went from a crack to a break - death at sea through starvation or dehydration.

The Pilgrims immediately went into prayer and then one of the Pilgrims, Mr. William Brewster remembered the Printing press that he had brought on board for the journey to America had a large iron screw in it which was several feet long. They found the screw and put it under the cross beam that had cracked directly under the main mast and they cranked it up into its' original place. The Mayflower was seaworthy again and ready to continue the voyage to the new land.¹⁰

Some may say that it was luck that kept the beam from breaking, and the Pilgrims were very fortunate that the iron screw was on board. But I ask you this, "in light of how small the cargo hold was, space was extremely limited; If you were moving to a new land 3,000 miles away, with no house or stores, would you take as much food and clothing as you could, or take less food and clothing so you could take a printing press?" I also ask you this, "just how many items would you be printing for a city that was starting with 102 people?" I believe that God's hand was upon the situation not only by the beam not totally breaking, but that all the way back in England, God laid it on William Brewsters mind to bring his printing press.

Through this trial God had provided a way for the Pilgrims to overcome the trial, draw closer to one another, and draw closer to the Lord. Through this trial God was preparing them for the trials and

hardships that would be waiting for them in the New World.

The Birth Of American Government

On November 9th, 1620, after 66 hard days at sea, the Pilgrims reached the shores of Cape Cod Massachusetts. The Pilgrims had originally intended to land in Northern Virginia. When they arrived at Cape Cod, several hundred miles north of their planned destination in Virginia (due to storms at sea), the passengers realized they were outside the bounds of the governmental authority they had contracted with in England. With winter rapidly setting in, the Pilgrims decided it was too late to try to reach Virginia.

Northern Virginia was governed by the English. But if the Pilgrims settled at Plymouth, there would be no government in place there. The Pilgrims came together and set up a new government. The document establishing this new government was called the "Mayflower Compact." The Mayflower Compact set a precedent which was not only to affect the course of American history, but eventually to affect the course of world history.

The Mayflower Compact is actually the cornerstone of American Democracy, it set the precedent of citizens taking an active role in the workings of their government. It marked the first time in recorded history that free and equal men had voluntarily covenanted together to create their own new civil government. The Mayflower Compact was the forerunner of the Declaration of Independence that would be penned some 150 years later. Both documents were based on the truth that men were equal and that they were under God; to us who have lived under these principles all our lives, that doesn't surprise us, but in the early 1600's this thought was unheard of and extremely radical. The king was always viewed as superior over man, and the hierarchy went all the way down to the poor farmer being considered the bottom. The Pilgrims were the first to establish a government where all men were considered equal.

The Mayflower Compact

"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 of 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."

The Lord Goes Before Us: Prepared Land

When the Pilgrims came ashore from the Mayflower they went scouting to find a place off the river to build their colony, and what they found they could hardly believe. They found a place that had rich fertile soil. There was a gentle slope that rose up out of the water, that would be easy to access the water, yet not get flooded out when the river rose. There were also four fresh water streams close by for drinking water. On the hill was 20 acres of ground that had already been cleared and ready to plant. Also there was open field all around it so it would be easy to spot and defend any enemy intruders. The land was ready for inhabitation and planting the day the Pilgrims landed.

Here is an interesting thought, considering how small they were in number, why were the Pilgrims not wiped out by the Indians? The area where the Pilgrims landed was the area of the Patuxets, a large hostile tribe who had murdered every white man who had landed on there shore. But four years prior to the Pilgrims arrival, a mysterious plague had broken out among them, killing every man woman and child. So complete was the devastation that the neighboring tribes had shunned the area ever since, convinced that some great supernatural spirit had destroyed the Patuxets. Hence the cleared land which the Pilgrims landed on belonged to no one. The nearest Indian tribe was fifty miles away.¹¹

The Price They Paid

The price for the blessings we enjoy today came at a great price. In the first year that the Pilgrims left England they had lost 47 people, which is nearly half of the 102 that had set sail on the Mayflower. Thirteen out of the eighteen wives died; only three families remained unbroken.¹²

In spite of all the death and suffering, not one of the original Pilgrims ever left America to go back to England to live when given the opportunity. Something special had been born among them in the midst of all the dying - they shared the love of Jesus Christ in a way that only happens when people are willing to suffer together in His causes. This is what the Pilgrims had come to America to find, and not one of them wanted to leave it.

Squanto: Can One Person Make A Difference?

The Pilgrims experienced severe trials and hardships when they came to America, and one of the greatest trials for them was to learn how to live totally off the land. They had to start from scratch on acquiring the necessities for everyday life. To make matters worse, they were not very experienced in hunting, fishing, and farming. The Lord did not leave them alone in this predicament; for He brought to them a most experienced, and prepared teacher. The teacher's name was Squanto.

Squanto was the last remaining Indian from the Patuxet tribe that had mysteriously been wiped out by a plague. Squanto had not been wiped out by the plague because he had been captured by slave traders and taken to Spain before the plague hit.

The story of Squanto began when he was taken captive by the English in 1605. He was taken to England and taught English so that he could be questioned on what tribes populated New England, and where the most favorable places to establish colonies would be. Squanto would spend the next nine years in England before they finally released him

and returned him to America.

Unfortunately for Squanto, immediately following his return to America he was taken captive again and taken to Spain to be sold on the slave market. While in Spain he was rescued (or shall we say purchased) by some local friars who would introduce him to the Christian faith. Thus did God begin Squanto's preparation for the vital role he would play with the Pilgrims. William Bradford would later write regarding Squanto, "a special instrument sent of God for their good, beyond their expectation."¹³

When Squanto would finally come back to his home tribe in 1619, less than a year before the Pilgrims arrived, he would receive the tragic blow that not one man, woman, or child of his tribe was left alive. Squanto wandered aimlessly for several months until he heard news of a small colony of English settlers who had settled in his former land.

Squanto saw the weakness and near hopelessness of the Pilgrims, so he committed himself to teaching them how to live off the land. Squanto taught the Pilgrims how to plant the food which would be their life sustainer - corn. He taught them the Indian method of planting corn which was hoeing six foot squares of soil in towards the center, then put down four or five kernels, and then fertilizing the corn with three fish on top of the soil pointing head to head.

Squanto also helped teach the Pilgrims how to stalk deer, plant pumpkins, refine maple syrup, discern which herbs were edible and which herbs could be used for medicine. Squanto also taught the Pilgrims how to trap beaver (which was in high demand in Europe). The beaver would be the Pilgrims economic deliverance, and the corn would be their physical deliverance.¹⁴ So it was, that through one man, God was able to equip a whole nation.

The First Thanksgiving

The harvest was so plentiful that year that Governor Bradford declared a day of Public Thanksgiving to be held in October 1621. The

day was set aside to thank God for his provision for them. President Abraham Lincoln continued this practice and wrote the famous, *Thanksgiving Proclamation of 1863*:

It is the duty of nations as well as of men to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God; to confess their sins and transgressions in humble sorrow, yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon; and to recognize the sublime truth, announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations are blessed whose God is the Lord.

We know that by His divine law, nations, like individuals, are subjected to punishments and chastisements in this world. May we not justly fear the awful calamity of civil war which now desolates the land may be a punishment inflicted upon us for our presumptuous sins, to the needful end of our national reformation as a whole people.

We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven; we have been preserved these many years in peace and prosperity; we have grown in numbers, wealth and power as no other nation has ever grown.

But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us, and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us.

It has seemed to me fit and proper that God should be solemnly, reverently, and gratefully acknowledged, as with one heart and one voice, by the whole American people. I do therefore invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November as a day of Thanksgiving and praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the heavens.

Our First Universities

Out of the first 108 schools in this country, 106 were established for the primary reason to equip this nation with trained ministers to teach the Bible.

Harvard University was founded in 1636. Harvard was the first college in America, being established only sixteen years after the landing of the Pilgrims. The declared purpose of the college according to school writings was: "To train a literate clergy."¹⁵ The importance of trained clergy to the early settlers is obvious from the fact that the first university was established only 16 years after the first Pilgrims arrived.

Entry into the university was not taken lightly. Before a student could be admitted into the school, they had to agree upon and then maintain the following "Rules and Precepts" that were observed at Harvard:

1. When any Scholar...is able to make [write] and speak true Latin in Verse and Prose....And decline perfectly the paradigms of Nouns and Verbs in the Greek tongue...[he is capable] of admission into the college.

2. Let every Student be plainly instructed, and earnestly pressed to consider well, the main end of his life and studies is, to know God and Jesus Christ which is eternal life, John 17:3 and therefore to lay in the bottom, as the only foundation of all sound knowledge and learning. And seeing the Lord only giveth wisdom, Let every one seriously set himself by prayer in secret to seek it of him Prov.2,3.

3. Every one shall so exercise himself in reading the Scriptures twice a day, that he shall be ready to give such an account of his proficiency therein..., both in Theoretical observations of Language and logic, and in practical and spiritual truths, as his Tutor shall require, according to his ability; seeing the entrance of the word giveth light, it giveth understanding to the simple, Psalm, 119:130.

4. That they eshewing all profanation of God's name, Attributes, ordinances, and times of Worship, do study with good conscience carefully to retain God, and the love of his truth in their minds, else let them know, that (notwithstanding their Learning) God may give them up to strong delusions, and in the end to a reprobate mind, 2 Thes. 2:11, 12. Rom. 1:28.

5. That they studiously redeem the time; observe the general hours...diligently attend the Lectures, without any disturbance by word or gesture....

6. None shall...frequent the company and society of such men as unfit, and dissolute life. Nor shall any without his Tutors leave without the call of Parents or Guardians, go abroad to other towns.

7. Every Scholar shall be present in his Tutors chamber at the 7th hour in the morning, immediately after the sound of the Bell, at his opening the Scripture and prayer, so also at the 5th hour at the night, and then give an account of his own private reading....But if any...shall absent himself from prayer or Lectures, he shall be liable to Admonition, if he offend above once a week.

8. If any Scholar shall be found to transgress any of the Laws of God or the School...he may be admonished at the public monthly Act.¹⁶

The Slumber

The Pilgrims had established a beachhead in the New World. As advancements poured in, New England grew rapidly. Unfortunately as prosperity increased, they started to drift away from their foundation of looking to God for their needs. With each passing season, the Colony became more and more secure. The hard times were behind them, there was plenty of good land and plenty to eat, spacious housing, and for the most part, living peaceably with the Indians.

With such good fortunes for every generation, things began to change. With each generation they began to help themselves to more land, which caused them to be further spread apart. The distance caused them to establish their own life on their own land. Every parent from the Pilgrims on up took the philosophy that they didn't want their children to toil and labor as hard as they had to, so they worked harder and longer. This resulted in the breakdown of the unity that had been established all the way back on the Mayflower and the first settlers. They no longer were building community meeting centers and churches because the people were too spread out or too busy to meet there.

William Bradford wrote of this progression long before it had run rampant:

"No man now thought he could live, except he had cattle and a great deal of ground to keep them; all were striving to increase their stocks. By which means they were scattered all over the bay quickly, and the towns in which they lived compactly till now was left very thin and in a short time almost desolate. And if this had been all, it would have been less, though too much. But the church must also be divided, and those that had lived so long together in Christian comfort and fellowship must now part and suffer many divisions . . . And this, I fear, will be the ruin of New England, at least of the churches of God there, and will provoke the Lord's displeasure against them."¹⁷

The Awakening

Thus it appears that for a period of about 100 years the spirituality of the early settlers had grown cold. But around 1734 revival began to spread throughout America. This great revival was known as the "Great Awakening."

Such great preachers as Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield were used by God. Whitefield preached more than 18,000 sermons between 1736 and 1770. The resultant of the Great Awakening over the 40 year period was the uniting of the country. Churches were being filled and attendance was again a priority to the people. God was uniting the nation together again as in the days of the first Pilgrims. Whitefield himself felt called of God that "his preaching might help create one nation under God - thirteen scattered colonies united with each other."¹⁸

It was written that when Whitefield preached, mechanics shut up their shops, and day laborers threw down their tools to go hear him preach, and few returned unaffected.¹⁹ The people of America were no longer operating as lone individualists, but as a group, there was no longer Presbyterians, Methodists, or Episcopalians, but one body of Christ. This unity brought them to a vital realization that would be a foundation of America - that in the eyes of their Creator, all men were created equal.

Benjamin Franklin wrote in his autobiography of the effect George Whitefield's preaching was having on the colonies:

It was wonderful to see the change soon made in the manners of our inhabitants. From being thoughtless or indifferent about religion, it seemed as if all the world were growing religious, so that one could not walk thro' the town in an evening without hearing psalms sung in different families of every street.²⁰

One might ask why now a revival? Why now the uniting of a nation? The answer would be obvious in that only five years after Whitefield's last sermon, America would have to unite and fight for freedom.

The Fight

Starting in the 1760's, England started to tax the American colonies heavily. Many of the taxes levied were unjust and began to cause increased resentment towards England. The resentment grew worse when England refused to give the Colonies a voice in the matter.

England, in order to enforce their taxes and keep order, began to send thousands of soldiers to America. To make matters worse, to pay for sending and maintaining an army in America, the British raised taxes on the Colonists. Americans were now being taxed for the mother country's own revenue, while at the same time being denied the basic rights of all Englishmen, which is representation in the government which was levying the taxes.

The Magna Carta was England's government document which by law, limited the absolute power of the king, and guaranteed certain rights to his subjects. King George the 3rd was ignoring the rights which was guaranteed in the Magna Carta, and he was putting himself above the law.

The British were imposing on the Colonies taxation which eventually became unbearable, and gave them no say in the matter.

Early in the year of 1773, the men of Marlborough, Massachusetts, declared unanimously:

Death is more eligible than slavery. A free-born people are not required by the religion of Jesus Christ to submit to tyranny, but may make use of such power as God has given them to recover and support their laws and liberties... We implore the Ruler above the skies, that He would make bare His arm in defense of His Church and people, and let Israel go.²¹

A band of Colonists in Boston responded to the intolerable taxes imposed by the British by throwing the cargo of 342 chests of tea from a British ship into the Boston Harbor. In 1774, the parliament of Great Britain decided to blockade the Boston harbor by passing the Boston Port Bill, thus destroying all trade and effectively starving the inhabitants of the city.

The strategy backfired on the British, for rather than weakening the Colonist, they were strengthened. Every Colony began to send supplies to the citizens of Boston. It was no longer 13 Colonies, but "one." The inhabitants of Boston Responded to this encouraging support by declaring:

The Christian sympathy and generosity of our friends throughout

the Continent cannot fail to inspire the inhabitants of this town with patience, resignation, and firmness, while we trust in the Supreme Ruler of the universe, that He will graciously hear our cries, and in His time free us from our present bondage and make us rejoice in His great salvation."²²

The Colonist grew in their resilience and confidence in God to the point where one Governor of the Colonies wrote:

"If you ask an American, who is His master? He will tell you he has none, nor any governor but Jesus Christ."²³

Patrick Henry made a speech to the Virginia House of Burgess in which he foretold the fast approaching conflict between England and America. He proclaimed in the speech on 28 March 1775:

The battle Sir is not to the strong alone; it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave. Besides Sir, we have no election. If we were base enough to desire it, it is now too late to retire from the contest.

There is no retreat, but in submission and slavery! Our chains are forged! Their clanking may be heard on the plains of Boston! The war is inevitable-and let it come! I repeat it, Sir, let it come!

Henry summed up the American spirit with his memorable conclusion:
I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty, or give me death!

On April 19th, 1775 British troops came upon some seventy Minuteman at Lexington Massachusetts. The British commander ordered the Patriots to give up their weapons, but the Patriots refused. Captain John Parker ordered his Minuteman, *"Stand your ground. Don't fire unless fired upon; but if they mean to have a war, let it begin here!"* It is unknown who fired the first shot, but it was the "shot heard 'round the world", for it was to change the course of human history - *The Fight for American Independence had begun.*

The Declaration Of Independence

In spite of the unjust taxation and the presence of the British Army on American soil, most Colonist still hoped to avoid separation

from Britain. Unfortunately, over a year had passed from that first shot fired in Lexington, but the suppression from England did not ease, thus the Colony's felt they had no other alternative but to break free from England.

Many are unaware that the Declaration of Independence was not even to be considered until a day of fasting and prayer had been observed. Appointed by the Continental Congress, it was kept by all the colonies on May 17, 1776. When the nation was finally born on July 4th, 1776, our forefathers rang the Liberty Bell with great enthusiasm, and a legend says that it cracked as they zealously proclaimed their freedom.

Years later the White Chapel Foundry of London offered to recast the huge carillon, but their proposal was of course refused. Apparently the symbolic value of the damaged bell, which recalls the religious and patriotic fervor of those early days, is something that America still wishes to preserve.

The Declaration of Independence

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 bonds 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...

...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 the 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.

Caesar Rodney: Can One Man Make A Difference?

The Declaration of Independence, signed July 4, 1776, starts with these words, "The Unanimous Declaration of the Thirteen United States of America." You see the thirteen states agreed that there would be no Declaration of Independence unless all 13 states were united. The first vote by congress ended with nine colonies voting for Independence, two voted no, one colony abstained, and the colony of Delaware was split, one delegate to one.

Since Congress was, in effect, only acting as a committee on behalf of the whole country, any decision on the Declaration would have to be unanimous. It was decided that the debate would resume the next morning, to be followed by another vote. In the meantime, to resolve the Delaware deadlock, which could well decide the outcome of the nation, an express was dispatched to Delaware to fetch their third delegate, Caesar Rodney.

Rodney had been in Delaware due to urgent business at home, but he mounted his horse quickly when the dispatch arrived at his house at two in the morning to tell him that the debate would resume in less than seven hours and then the final vote would be taken.

Taking his best horse, Rodney galloped off into the pitch-black, stormy night. It was eighty-nine miles to Philadelphia, over stretches of road that were difficult in the best of conditions. The road would be hard going this night with streams flooding the road from the torrents of rain, and the road becoming a quagmire of mud and water. In many cases Rodney had to get off his horse and lead his horse through it.

Rodney finally arrived at Philadelphia the next day around 1:00 P.M. just in time for the final vote. He entered the state room being half-carried and barely able to speak, but he spoke these words, "As I believe the voice of my conscience and all sensible and honest men is in favor of independence, my own judgment concurs with them. I vote for independence."²⁴

The Delaware deadlock was broken, and the other delegations voted the same way, except New York, which abstained. The decision was twelve to none. The Colonies had just become the United States of America. The realization of what just transpired did not take long to sink in, every man in that room knew that freedom would cost a price. John Hancock broke the silence and said it so well, "Gentlemen, the price on my head has just been doubled!"

Nobody in that room knew the price that freedom would cost better than Caesar Rodney. Caesar Rodney had cancer. It was disfiguring his face, and the only doctor in the world to have any treatment for him was in England. Rodney had been planning a trip to England to attempt to rid himself of this affliction. By casting his vote for Independence, he knew that the possibility of his being cured would be lost forever. When Caesar Rodney signed the Declaration of Independence, he signed his life away.²⁵

The Price They Paid To Sign The Declaration Of Independence.

The men who signed the Declaration knew this was no idle declaration - In the eyes of England, it was a direct act of treason and would be dealt with as such. What kind of men were they? Twenty-four were lawyers and jurists. Eleven were merchants, nine were farmers and large plantation owners, men of means, well educated. But they signed the Declaration of Independence knowing full well that the penalty would be death if they were captured. They signed and they pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor.

Have you ever wondered what happened to those men who signed the Declaration of Independence?

Five signers were captured by the British as traitors before they died. Twelve had their homes ransacked and burned. Two lost their sons in the Revolutionary Army, another had two sons captured. Nine of the 56 fought and died from wounds or the hardship of the Revolutionary War.

Carter Braxton of Virginia, a wealthy planter and trader, saw his ships swept from the seas by the British navy. He sold his home and

properties to pay his debts, and died in rags.

Thomas McKeam was so hounded by the British that he was forced to move his family almost constantly. He served in Congress without pay, and his family was kept in hiding. His possessions were taken from him, and poverty was his reward.

Vandals or soldiers or both, looted the properties of Ellery, Clymer, Hall, Walton, Gwinnett, Heyward, Rutledge, and Middleton.

At the battle of Yorktown, Thomas Nelson Jr. noted that the British General Cornwallis had taken over the Nelson home for his headquarters. The owner quietly urged General George Washington to open fire, which was done. The home was destroyed, and Nelson died bankrupt.

Francis Lewis had his home and property destroyed. The enemy jailed his wife, and she died within a few months.

John Hart was driven from his wife's bedside as she was dying. Their 13 children fled for their lives. His fields and his grist mill were laid to waste. For more than a year he lived in forests and caves, returning home after the war to find his wife dead, his children vanished. A few weeks later he died of exhaustion and a broken heart.

Norris and Livingston suffered similar fates.

Francis Hopkinson and his family were forced from their home at bayonet point.

Lewis Morris had a 3,000 acre estate. The British set fire to 1,000 acres of woods around it and then destroyed everything in the fine house.

Any one of them could have turned back at any time he chose. Each of them were offered immunity, rewards of money, restoration of their homes, release of their loved ones, and a position with the Crown if they would but switch their allegiance. History records with pride that not a single man did.²⁶

The Continental Congress

The First Continental Congress of the United States convened in Philadelphia on September 5th, 1774. As recorded in the *Journals of the*

Continental Congress, on September 6, 1774, after just receiving the news that the British troops had attacked Boston, they made their first official act a call for prayer.

The first declaration of a National Emergency by the Continental Congress was the printing of more Bibles. England had passed a bill that the American colonies could only purchase Bibles from England. Because of the Revolution War, England cut-off selling Bibles to America. The Continental Congress passed an emergency Act to import 20,000 Bibles from Holland.²⁷

Congress assigned symbolic meanings to the colors that are on the American flag which dates from June 14, 1777. White symbolizes Purity and Innocence; Red, Hardiness and Valor; and Blue, Vigilance, Perseverance, and Justice.

The New York River

On August 27th, 20,000 British soldiers drove back the 8,000 American soldiers to the tip of Brooklyn. Already in the battle 1,500 American soldiers had been killed. The situation looked hopeless for the Americans, in front of them were 20,000 British soldiers, and behind them was the East River, and to make matters worse the British fleet was making its' way up the river to totally surround them. Although the British army could have easily defeated the Americans with their land forces, it appears that the British forces were waiting for their fleet to come and bomb what remained of the American forces.

So the Americans waited for the inevitable, but the next day a cold pelting rain came on a northeast wind, and that wind prevented the British fleet from coming up the river to descend upon the American troops. General Washington made a decision to take the entire army off Brooklyn by small boat. They would rejoin the main body of American forces (some 12,000 men) at the foot of Manhattan Island. Washington's officers pointed out how it was a full mile across the East River, and that the British fleet was close enough to bomb them as they rowed across.

Washington had made up his mind, so the first thing they needed were boats and men to handle them. By "coincidence" the most recent group that had joined up for reinforcements were from Manhattan and Massachusetts Bay, all were experienced oarsman. They were so skilled that they could put the oar in and out of the water without making a sound. All night they made the treacherous two mile round trip without being detected.

With the clearing of the night, it became crucial to maintain a screen of men in the front positions so that the British would not suspect a withdrawal. It was written that it became so clear that night, and the troops were so close to one another, that you could make out the features of the British soldiers faces. Washington himself rode his horse up and down the front line to give the British the impression that nothing had changed.

But then came the greatest peril of all: dawn. As the first hints of pink began to illuminate the sky, the retreat was far from over. The American forces still needed at least three hours to get the last man across. As the night began to recede and the American troops would be exposed; Major Ben Tallmadge who was there wrote:

"those of us who remained in the trenches became very anxious for our own safety, and when dawn appeared there was still several regiments still on duty. At this time a very dense fog began to rise (out of the ground and off the river), and it seemed to settle in a peculiar providential occurrence perfectly well, and so very dense was the atmosphere that I could scarcely discern a man at six yards distance. We tarried until the sun had risen, but the fog remained as dense as ever."²⁸

The fog remained intact until the last boat, with Washington in it, had departed. Then it lifted, and the shocked British ran to the shore and started firing after them, but they were out of range. Nearly eight thousand men had been extricated from certain death or imprisonment without the loss of a single life.

Had the British won that day, the fight for Independence would

have been over, and America as we know it, would be a much different place today.

Valley Forge

The American army had experienced many triumphs since the war began, but they also experienced many defeats. Going into the winter of 1777 the outlook was dim for the American fight for Independence. The British had taken control over Philadelphia, they had plenty of reinforcements arriving from England, where the American army was having trouble getting men to re-enlist. The British troops were well supplied and outfitted, where the American troops supplies were depleted. The list goes on, and one can imagine the thoughts of the soldiers as they entered into winter quarters at Valley Forge.

The American Army entered Valley Forge on December 19th, 1777. It has been recorded that one-third were without shoes. Their footgear consisted of strips of blankets wound around their feet. All too quickly the blanket would wear out and they would be walking through the snow barefoot. The army had to build their log huts, which took over a month to complete for all 11,000 men. In the mean-time they slept out in the snow, half without blankets.

As winter wore on, Valley Forge became an unbearable nightmare. A Committee from Congress sent to report on Valley Forge wrote this, "feet and legs were froze till they became black, and it was often necessary to amputate them." Sights of bloody footprints in the snow and lack of food and shelter caused the Commander in Chief to seek divine assistance.

Soldiers were dying at the rate of 12-18 per day. The Commander in Chief himself, records the desperate state in a letter he wrote from Valley Forge to John Banister:

No history, now extant, can furnish an instance of an Army's suffering such uncommon hardships as ours has done and bearing them with the same patience and fortitude. To see men without clothes to cover their nakedness, without blankets to lay on, without shoes, by which their marches might be traced by the blood from their feet, and almost as often without provisions as with; marching through frost and snow, and at Christmas taking up their winter quarters within a day's march of

the enemy, without a house or hut to cover them till they could be built and submitting without a murmur, is a mark of patience and obedience which in my opinion can scarce be paralleled.

Unparalleled indeed! 3,000 of those 11,000 men died there in Valley Forge that winter; what could have kept them there? I would have to say their love for freedom. Those men chose to suffer, even to death, rather than fall under the bondage of England. It should be noted that not one man asked for a discharge, but they all stayed and endured the hardship.

God forged the iron of the Continental Army into steel. Through the suffering and hardships, the Army had become one. There was a new strength and determination in the camp in the midst of death. On the other hand, the British army was only 18 miles away in Philadelphia. There they had taken up quarters for the winter in the homes of Philadelphia. The soldiers were enjoying the warmth of a home, the abundance of food and clothing as it was being shipped from England. The weekend included brandy and the social life of Philadelphia.

Just as those first Pilgrims on the Mayflower were put through a period of suffering that united them together as one, so did the American Army. That winter an article in the "Pennsylvania Packet" appeared saying this:

"Our attention is now drawn to one point: the enemy grows weaker every day, and we are growing stronger. Our work is almost done, and with the blessing of heaven, and the valor of our worthy General, we shall soon drive these plunderers out of our country."²⁹

The soldiers at Valley Forge didn't wait for the winter to end, but they were up every morning at 3AM drilling. The Army became so crisp they could shoot a round every 15 seconds. The Continental Army became a "Fighting Machine". The result of Valley Forge, the result of all the suffering, The American Army that endured the winter at Valley Forge never again lost a battle. Valley Forge was the turning point in the war on Independence. Despite being greatly outnumbered, and out supplied, they never lost again - and we live in freedom today because of their commitment and courage to endure the hardships and fight for

this nation.

The Victory

On September 3rd, 1783 America and England signed the Peace Treaty ending the Revolutionary War. A population of 2,781,000 had defied the world's most powerful empire, and won it's Independence after a long seven year war which claimed the lives of tens of thousands of Americans.

George Washington declared in 1783, a great opportunity awaited the young Republic:

The citizens of America, placed in the most enviable condition, as the sole lords, and proprietors of a vast tract of continent, comprehending all the various soils and climates of the world, and abounding with all the necessities and conveniences of life, are now by the late satisfactory pacification, acknowledged to be possessed of absolute freedom and independence. They are, from this period, to be considered as the actors on a most conspicuous theater, which seems to be peculiarly designated by Providence for the display of human greatness and felicity (happiness).³⁰

The Constitution

In 1787, the American Constitution was written because the Colonies were a mess. After the War was over, the unity between the Colonies disappeared quickly. Each colony was printing their own money, and making trade agreements with foreign countries that were in direct competition with the other American Colonies. War debts that were owed to pay for the Revolution were being ignored. Instead of America being one union, America within a matter of four years had become 13 individual unions.

The Constitution brought the country together. Most of the delegates who represented the 13 Colonies at the Constitutional Convention were agreed that what was needed was a federal system, with sovereignty divided between the states and the national government. They also agreed that a republican system was essential, with the power of government residing ultimately in the people.

The delegates at the Constitutional Convention framed the

Constitution on 3 basic Christian Principles:

1. A Government of Laws, not men. Majority does not rule.
2. The belief in the dignity and worth of each human individual.
3. The sinfulness of man.

With these three principles in mind, The Constitution was made with checks and balances built into it so no one person or group could have supreme power. It is the only one of it's kind then and now. The greatest legal minds of two centuries have continued to marvel at it as almost beyond the scope and dimension of human wisdom.

John Adams, our Nation's second President wrote:

"We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other."

So was laid the foundation of the Great United States of America.

Quotes By Our Forefathers

It is impossible to rightly govern a nation without God and the Bible.
George Washington

God who gave us life, gave us liberty. Can the liberties of a nation be secure when we have removed a conviction that these liberties are a gift from God? Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just and that His justice can not sleep forever.
Thomas Jefferson

I consider it an indispensable duty to close this last solemn act of my official life, to commending the interests of our dearest country to the protection of Almighty God and those who have the superintendency of them into His holy keeping.
George Washington

Before any man can be considered as a member of civil society he must be considered a subject of the Governor of the Universe.
James Madison

We have been assured, sir, 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

The Sacred rights of mankind are not to be rummaged for among old parchments or musty records. They are written as with a sunbeam, in the whole volume of human nature by the hand of the Divinity itself, and can never be erased or obscured by mortal power.
Alexander Hamilton

It is the duty of nations, as well as of men, to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God and to recognize the sublime truth announcing in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord.
Abe Lincoln

Almighty and Eternal Lord God, the Great Creator of heaven and earth, and the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, look down from heaven in the pity and compassion upon me thy servant, who humbly prostrate myself before thee.

George Washington

If the power of the gospel is not felt throughout the length and breadth of this land, anarchy and misrule, degradation and misery, corruption and darkness will reign without mitigation or end.
Daniel Webster

I know that the Lord is always on the side of right. But it is my constant anxiety and prayer that I , and this nation, should be on the Lord's side.

Abe Lincoln

To the distinguished character of a patriot, it should be our highest glory to add the more distinguished character of a Christian.
George Washington

I wish I could leave you my most cherished possession, my faith in Jesus Christ. For with him you have everything; without him you have nothing.
Patrick Henry

Let us pray for our nation. Let us pray for those who have never known Jesus Christ and redeeming love....for our national leaders. Let our prayer be our passion. Let prayer be our practice.

Robert E. Lee

We have staked the whole of our political institution on the capacity of mankind to govern themselves according to the ten Commandments of God.

James Madison

It cannot be emphasized too strongly not too often that this great nation was founded, not by religionists, but by Christians; not on religions, but on the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Patrick Henry

His Story

As we saw with Ramon Lull, Christopher Columbus, the Pilgrims, Caesar Rodney, the men who fought in the Revolutionary War, and so many others, there is a thread that runs through American History. The thread that God's hand is upon this nation, and the thread that the freedom we enjoy today came at a great price. All through American history men and women gave of themselves, willing to endure hardships and sufferings, even to the point of death, so that their followers could enjoy freedom. America is great indeed because of their willingness to sacrifice for others.

The early Americans were not the initiators of self-sacrifice, rather they were just following the One whom they believed in, the One who taught them about self-sacrifice. It would be useless to tell these stories about American history, without telling the story of the One whom American history is founded on - Jesus Christ. His story is the story of the ultimate sacrifice so that those who were to follow could enjoy freedom. This is His-story.

His story is focused on us. Just how special we are to God is told in the Bible. The Bible tells us that we were made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26), and that God is not a distant far away God who doesn't think of us individually and personally, it's the complete opposite; the Bible tells us that God knew and formed us while we were still in our mother's womb (Psalm 139:13-18), and that He knows the

number of hairs on our heads (Luke 12:7), and that God stores our tears in a bottle (Psalm 56:8). We are also told that God has a plan and a purpose for our life. God says in the Bible, *"For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope (Jeremiah 29:11)*. All these things sum up to one central message from God, and that is that He loves us (John 3:16).

With all this good news it is hard to imagine that there could be a problem, but there is. The problem is that we are separated from God because of our sin. To understand this, we have to understand who God is. God is Holy and pure, and because of this He can not be a part of impurity. The Bible says of God, *"You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look upon wickedness"* (Habakkuk 1:13). The Bible also says, *"Behold the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. But your iniquities have **separated** you from God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear (Isaiah 59:1-2)*.

To sin, is to break God's law which is the standard of conduct that He has given for our common good. We are all guilty of sin, the Bible says, *"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23)*. And this guilty verdict brings a penalty. The Bible says, *"The wages of sin is death"* (Romans 6:23). When we break man's laws, we must pay a penalty for our actions. In much the same way, God in His justice must pass judgment. For law without consequences would truly not be law, but mere advice.

The Good News

God has not left us alone in this predicament. He has reached out to us. He came to this earth 2,000 years ago as a man named Jesus. And Jesus, who was God, voluntarily died on the cross to bridge the gap between mankind and God and to eliminate our separation from God. When Jesus hung on the cross, He essentially took hold of a Holy God with one hand, and with the other He took hold of us, sinful man.

What held Jesus to the cross? After all, He possesses the powers

of the universe. It wasn't the nails; it was His love for you and I. The Bible tells us, "*God demonstrated His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us*" (Romans 5:8). As we saw earlier, the penalty for our sin, is death, yet God devised a plan that would allow Him to be merciful to us, while at the same time maintaining His justice by upholding the standard of His Law. Jesus took our death penalty for sin upon Himself and gave His life as our substitute; for that should have been us on the cross.

Jesus demonstrated the ultimate sacrifice. In the Bible Jesus said, '*Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends*' (John 15:13). We know that God accepted this substitute because Jesus broke the power of death and rose again on the third day. God has shown us just how much He loves us by dying for us, and providing a way for us to be right before Him, and giving us eternal life.

What Must We Do?

What is our response to this Good News? The Bible says, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." (John 3:16-17)

Our response to receive God's offer of forgiveness is to "believe". Belief means to put one's trust and reliance for salvation solely in Jesus Christ.

It has been said, the gospel is "simply profound", yet "profoundly simply." Simply profound in that Jesus could love us so much that He would die for us, yet profoundly simple in that all we have to do to receive His free gift is to believe.

That is His story, the greatest love story ever told.

America

America has been blessed like no other nation in the world. There

is a heritage to be remembered, a heritage to be cherished, and a heritage to be displayed to the whole world.

This nation has a call upon it, we are not here by accident. We have something to prove to the rest of the world. Abraham Lincoln said, "America is called to hold out a beacon of hope to all men of all time to come, that there can be a society with liberty and justice for all."

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;
(1 Peter 2:9)

America: God's Country

¹ Peter Marshall. Study given in Williamsburgh Virginia, 1992.

² Cecil Jane. *The Voyages Of Christopher Columbus*. pp.146-7.
(Translated from original writing in 1930.)

³ Cecil Jane. *The Voyages Of Christopher Columbus*. pp.146.
(Translated from original writing in 1930.)

⁴ The Plymouth Rock Foundation. *Letter from Plymouth Rock*.
p.1.

⁵ Peter Marshall and David Manuel. *The Light and the Glory*.
Pg. 71.

⁶ Peter Marshall and David Manuel. *The Light and the Glory*.
pg.109.

⁷ Michael Lowman. *United States History in Christian Perspective*. Pg 32.

⁸ Perry Miller and Thomas Johnson. *The Puritans*. Vol. 1,
pg.246.

⁹ William Bradford. *Of Plimoth Plantation*. pg.85-89.

¹⁰ Peter Marshall and David Manuel. *The Light and the Glory*.
pg.119.

¹¹ Peter Marshall and David Manuel. *The Light and the Glory*.
pg.125.

¹² Peter Marshall and David Manuel. *The Light and the Glory*.
pg.126.

¹³ Peter Marshall and David Manuel. *The Light and the Glory*.
pg.130.

- ¹⁴ Peter Marshall and David Manuel. *The Light and the Glory*.
pg.133.
- ¹⁵ John Harvard. 1636.
- ¹⁶ Harvard University. 1636.
- ¹⁷ Stephen Foster. *Their Solitary Way*. pg. 50.
- ¹⁸ Russell Hitt. *Heroic Colonial Christians*. pg.171.
- ¹⁹ John Pollock. *George Whitefield and the Great Awakening*.
pg 198.
- ²⁰ Benjamin Franklin. *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*.
Pg. 146.
- ²¹ Peter Marshall and David Manuel. *The Glory of America*. pg
56.
- ²² David Barton, *The Myth of Separation*. pg.96.
- ²³ David Barton, *The Myth of Separation*. pg.96.
- ²⁴ Robert Lewis. *Pace Magazine*. July/August 1976, pg.25.
- ²⁵ Robert Lewis. *Pace Magazine*. July/August 1976, pg.25.
- ²⁶ Bux. *Around Our House*.
- ²⁷ Ray Bollas. *Personal research of American History*.
- ²⁸ Scheer and Rankin. *Rebels and Redcoats*. pg. 167.
- ²⁹ John Stoudt. *Ordeal at Valley Forge*. pg. 135.
- ³⁰ Daniel Aaron. *The United States: The History of a Republic*.
pg. 116.