

# Sustaining Our Nation's Liberty

by Kristen Nicole Lucas

A Christian who is thoroughly disciplined is able to apply truth, not only for personal piety, but ultimately to sustain our nation's liberty. Christian principles that were once held dear in this nation forged our liberty. It was the pastors in the founding generation who imparted the Biblical principles of liberty which our founding fathers weaved into the Constitution. Does today's generation even understand this liberty?

## Solutions for America Today from America Yesterday

Our Founding Fathers understood that Liberty was a precious gift from God and that God created mankind for freedom. Thus, they formed a nation that would reflect true liberty from the inside—the individual and home, then the government and Constitution. Citizens of the founding era knew how to live in liberty. Education was taught from the Word of God. A Providential view of history was inherent in the classroom. Educators of this time understood that the way people view history affects the way they behave. They learned history from the Old and New Testaments and the significance history can and will have on a nation, especially if it is forgotten. The men who authored the design of our American government were instructed in this manner.<sup>1</sup>

The founders were also scholars of the Bible. Did you know that out of the fifty-six men who signed the *Declaration of Independence*, twenty-four had what today would be considered seminary degrees? According to the Founding Fathers, the most influential book for the founding documents was John Locke's *Two Treatises on Civil Government*. This book cites the Bible more than 1,700 times to show the proper operation of civil government. A University of Houston study revealed that out of the 3,154 documented quotes from the Founding Era, 34% of them were directly from the Bible. Where did they get their ideas? Jeremiah 17:9 teaches on the need for Separation of Powers. The idea of the three branches of government and checks and balances is found in Isaiah 33:22. Ezra 7:24 speaks to the issue of tax exemption for churches. The founders embedded Biblical principles in America's government.<sup>2</sup>

John Quincy Adams became known as one of the greatest leaders in the cause against slavery. He pointed out to his colleagues a profound Biblical truth, . . . *Jesus came to set at liberty the captives*. If we were to be a nation of liberty, then all people must thrive on this gift from the Creator. Benjamin Franklin, known as one of the least religious founders, recommended Christianity in Pennsylvania's public schools. When asked who was responsible for American Independence, John Adams gave credit to Jonathan Mahew, George White-field, and Samuel Cooper. Each of these men were pastors who significantly influenced the congregations and leaders of the day. Sermons came directly from the Bible on every subject. Sermons for specific occasions shed light on executions, solar eclipses, the military, earthquakes, fires, growing old, elections, and transportation, to name a few issues of the day. When an unjust tax was repealed, the minister would call for a day of Thanksgiving! Christians understood that some taxes were not Biblically sound.<sup>3</sup>

They understood that they must first be scholars of the Word and then apply Biblical principles to all aspects of life, including government and politics. Yes, the first Congress opened in prayer and Bible study, and by some accounts continued for three hours. The morning opening prayer time included reading four chapters of the Bible and many felt it was at that time God built their faith to defeat the British.<sup>4</sup>

## America Today

Today most Christians are not being educated in Biblical principles. The church has backed down and allowed the courts to legally compartmentalize our faith and to separate faith from life. Instead of a providential view of history, we have an economic view of history. In the *Declaration of Independence*, our forefathers stated 27 reasons for separating from Great Britain; yet our schools teach only one: 'taxation without representation.' What happened to the fact that King George vetoed religious societies, or that he vetoed the colonies' antislavery laws? Up until 1920, children in many states studied and were tested on George Washington's "Farewell Address." It clearly gave Biblically sound advice about many matters on civil responsibility, the government's role, and leadership. One highlight in this speech sums up the wisdom of our Founding Fathers, ". . . Of all habits and dispositions that lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports." If we knew our history, would we put up with the secularization of America? <sup>5</sup>

In this nation 84% of all Americans consider themselves to be Christian. This sounds great; however, statistics from George Barna conclude that by a three-to-one margin, adults said truth is always relative to the person and their situation. Eighty-three percent of teenagers said moral truth depends on the circumstances and only 6% said that moral truth is absolute. Among adults, 32% of those who were born-again said they believe in moral absolutes, compared to just half as many among the non-born-again contingent. Only 9% of born-again teens believe in moral absolutes versus 4% of the non-born-again teens. If the Christians do not believe in moral absolutes, they probably do not know the principles outlined in God's Word. How will they be effective in witnessing, educating their posterity, preaching, voting, Christian citizenship, and leading the nation? <sup>6</sup>

## Counsel from the Founders

The Founders greatest truth is also the Bible's greatest truth: "Liberty is sweet, it comes at a price and all men have the God given right to enjoy its blessing."<sup>7</sup> They were more than willing to pay any price for freedom. The Revolution's blood was the ultimate sacrifice. Those who fought for America's Liberty on the battlefield, in the pulpit, and during sessions of the Continental Congress grasped the understanding that "Liberty must be wrestled with in the grip of oppression."<sup>8</sup> Liberty left unchecked would result in anarchy and tyranny. Yes, "we the people" are free to do as we will, but we were created in the image of God.<sup>9</sup>

How did they receive strength for battle? They prayed as Joshua did. Who gave them the inspiration to write the *Declaration of Independence* and *Constitution*? The same God who gave Moses the *Ten Commandments*. How did they receive insight to teach the principles that formed our nation? Like Samuel who received Providential direction to restore the foundations of Israel and sustain his posterity. How did they establish permanent liberty, when every other country's revolution has resulted in temporary or lesser freedoms? The Founding Fathers knew how to apply the principles of liberty from God's Word.

## Charge for Christians Today

Who will bring this strength to America today? If not we Christians, then who? If not now, when? It is incumbent upon the Church to be the bedrock of discipleship. It is imperative that our pulpits take a stand on issues and are not concerned with being 'politically correct.' It is our duty to take God's principles and re-apply them to all of life and learning. What are you teaching your children? What sacrifices will you make? How will you be a revolutionary like the Founders? Will you teach the upcoming generation how to live free?

<sup>1</sup> Barton, David. 2003. Sermon at the Council for National Policy.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Barna, George. George Barna Ministries. [www.georgebarna.com](http://www.georgebarna.com)

<sup>7</sup> Atwood, Nate. 2003. Sermon entitled "Liberty," April 13, 2003

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

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