

St. Bartholomew's Anglican Church
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831-1777

“Freedom is Never Free”

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This weekend, Americans across this land as well as Americans beyond its shores, celebrate a very important event – that being July 4, Independence Day. On this day in 1776, the Declaration of Independence was signed.

This Declaration of Independence, this foundational document, is the catalyst that generated and moved the United States to become the most unique nation in the history of the world.

We don't hear much about the Declaration of Independence anymore. In our schools, it once was a major topic of learning. Sorry to say, not any longer. I am aware that many teachers use required their students to memorize it – all of it! By the way, can anyone tell me what the first word to the Declaration of Independence is? “When...”

“When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bonds which have connected them together...”

The colonists believed, and rightly so, that they were being oppressed by the King of England. The writers of the Declaration of Independence wrote in part: “The history of the great king of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these states.”

To support this statement, a list of some 26 statements of facts is given.

Among the items listed:

- The king's refusal to assent to laws for the public good
- The dissolution of representative houses
- Refusing to allow elections, thus thwarting legislative activity
- I believe this next statement will catch your attention, and I quote it directly from the document itself: “He (the King) has endeavored to prevent the population of these states; for that purpose obstructing the laws for naturalization of foreigners...” 234 years later, some things do not change.
- For imposing taxes without our consent
- Depriving the benefits of trial by jury.

These are but a few of the reasons our founding fathers believed it necessary to come together as a body of people declaring themselves to be free of the oppression they have suffered. They declared these united colonies are, and of right ought to be, totally free and independent states.

We know what occurred next. Although already there were skirmishes with British troops, this date, July 4, 1776, is the official date of the beginning of the Revolutionary War. Yes, we eventually won this war, but not without great cost.

The Revolutionary War was the second longest major war in US history: 80 long months, second only to the Viet Nam War which lasted some 90 months. The Civil War was 48 months in duration; 44 months for World War Two. The Revolutionary War was nearly twice as long in duration as World War II.

The last of the British troops left US soil on November 25, 1783, some 7 years and 4 months after the signing of the Declaration of Independence. It is estimated that more than 25,000 were killed in our war for freedom, which breaks down to about 11 per day. A startling statistic for me is that this war's death toll represented 1% of the population at that time. Now, this 1% may not seem like much. But, in comparison, the death rate for World War Two represented just three tenths of one per cent of the population in 1940. Percentage wise, the Revolutionary War was more than twice as costly, far more costly to the US population, than World War Two. The war most costly population percentage wise was the Civil War. Total Civil War deaths were 2% of the population in 1860, averaging a horrific death toll rate of 600 each day of the war.

Our church sign has a very important message for us on this Independence Day weekend. The first line reads: "Freedom is Never Free." Freedom is achieved only through ultimate sacrifice. And not just political freedom, but freedom from sin also required the ultimate sacrifice, and "Christ paid the price."

Our Declaration of Independence is not just a political document. No, indeed. The Declaration of Independence also is a magnificent statement of biblical faith. The most memorable, the most memorized words of the Declaration of Independence are: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their **C**reator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

The foundation, the basis for the colonists' cause, the basis for their action, lies with theirs and our Creator God. Their faith in God is very much revealed in his document, revealed in the fact that all men are created, and created how? Equally. By whom? Their Creator! This is directly from Genesis one! And with unalienable rights! Unalienable rights: rights that are absolute,

immutable, not to be forfeited, indisputable and undeniable. Such rights are endowed, **given** to us by our Creator. Contrary to what some history books are saying today, the writers of the Declaration of Independence were 98% professing Christians: 28 Anglicans, 8 Presbyterians, 7 Congregationalists, 2 Lutherans, 2 Dutch Reformed, 2 Methodists, 2 Roman Catholics, 1 unknown, and 3 deists – who believe that God created the universe, then left it to run its own course. 98% of the signers were professing Christians who were willing to sacrifice their lives, the lives of their families, the future of a nation, by signing the Declaration of Independence.

Yes, the families of the signers were not immune to the ravages the ensuing war. The wife of one of the signers was captured by the British, tortured repeatedly and placed in prison. She received food only occasionally. Others smuggled food to her. Only after wives of two British soldiers were captured, did the British agree to a prisoner exchange. However, the US signer's wife, shortly after her release, died of her sufferings endured while in prison. Many of the men who signed the Declaration of Independence and their families suffered horribly at the hands of the British. "Freedom is never free."

The writers of the Declaration of Independence created a political document that maintained the biblical view of mankind and biblical view of government. My brothers and sisters in the Lord, what I just stated is extremely important, especially in this present day and age. The writers of the Declaration of Independence created a political document that maintained the biblical view of mankind and biblical view of government. It was the signers' Christian faith that formed the theological and political views expressed in the Declaration of Independence.

Patrick Henry is quoted to have said, "It cannot be emphasized too clearly and too often that this nation was founded, not by religionists, but by Christians; not on religion, but on the Gospel of Jesus Christ." The early settlers brought with them the Gospel of Christ and it was as much a part of who they were as was their brave spirit. The Gospel of Jesus Christ stands out boldly as one sees the goal of government based upon scripture affirmed over and over again in such documents as: the Rhode Island charter, the Pennsylvania charter; the Declaration of Independence, and the US Constitution, to name just a few.

John Jay wrote, "Providence has given to our people the choice of their rulers, and it is the duty, as well as the privilege and interest of our Christian nation, to select and prefer Christians for their rulers." How are we doing today in that regard? John Jay was the first Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. Was the current nominee for the Supreme Court asked about her Jewish beliefs as contained in the Hebrew scriptures? John Jay had no problem stating his... Well, that was then. This is now. So who moved? The gospel or people.

The US culture very quickly forgot or has chosen to ignore the spiritual foundational building blocks of our nation – faith in Jesus Christ and His Word. By and large, the Christian community in this country is not willing to stand firm to do battle with the secularists whose aim is to remove all evidence of Christian faith from the political scene. Just recently, there was a billboard put up, I don't remember where, which read, "One nation, indivisible," which is a line from the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. Apparently during the night, someone spray painted and inserted the words, "under God." Praise God, we still have faith believers that are willing to step forward to correct falsehoods.

The Christian faith today is being attacked increasingly more aggressively and yet at the same time, ever so subtly. Jesus said to be aware of wolves in sheep's clothing. No longer can the Christian just be a Sunday church pew spectator of the faith. The Christian presence and voice must and needs to be heard. Our founding fathers, in the writing of the Declaration of Independence, did not shrink for declaring the roots of their faith to the whole world. This nation has stood on their shoulders for 243 years, and we prospered greatly. We cannot let them or the Lord down. We Christians, we who profess to believe in the risen Christ, must stand up, stand firm, to rebuke and correct falsehoods.

This is Independence Day weekend. The weather promises to be a picnic lovers' delight. Celebrate and enjoy our freedoms. They have come down to us at a very great price. Please remember those serving in our armed forces, especially in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq. And as we watch the fireworks displays, take a moment to reflect the stepping out in faith and the tremendous sacrifice made by our founding fathers.

I close with a quote from Harry S. Truman, 33rd President of the United States: "The fundamental basis of this nation's laws was given to Moses on the Mount. The fundamental basis of our Bill of Rights comes from the teachings we get from Exodus and St. Matthew, from Isaiah and Saint Paul... If we don't have a proper fundamental moral background, we will finally end up with a totalitarian government which does not believe in rights for anybody except the state!"

I ask you, what do observe happening in this country today? Are President Truman's words coming true?

Pray, read the scriptures, proclaim the Word. Let the words of Jesus be heard and lived.

And yes, have a blessed and enjoyable Independence Day weekend.