

FREEDOM COUNCIL Seminar

LIFE, LIBERTY, AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

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SUMMARY

Our nation's forefathers declared that the government of the United States of America was instituted to secure certain unalienable rights bestowed on us by our Creator. At the present juncture, these rights are under widespread and unrelenting attack as a consequence of the denial of God throughout society and the abandonment of public life by most Christians. To restore the fullest expression of these rights in society and in our public institutions is therefore a critical duty for all Christian citizens of our nation.

Our effectiveness in this restoration rests first and foremost on the recognition of the sovereignty of God the Creator. The concept of inalienable rights may be traced through Samuel Adams, John Locke, and others, to an origin in Holy Scripture. God has created us and we are His. In Jesus Christ is life and life abundantly; He has given us true and complete freedom, and the deepest happiness flows from His salvation and His providence. Our inalienable rights, therefore, are founded upon God. Our declaration, in this year 1984 and in all years, must be positive and joyful, that through acknowledging God and observing His Word, all the people of the nation may enjoy true life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

We must proclaim these truths in the critical places of society and government where a choking of rights threatens whole portions of present and future society. The threats are severe against religious liberty, educational liberty, and family unity, and are frequently delivered by misapplication of government. All freedom-loving people must acquire an understanding of God's divine order for society, as full as the understanding of God's order for internal church government. Then, we may help restore the fullness of our inalienable rights according to the divine pattern, which has the blessing of God. No critical institution in our society can be ignored in this restoration.

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LIFE, LIBERTY, AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

History of Inalienable Rights

The Declaration of Independence

The Declaration of Independence, one of our nation's foundational documents, states in simple eloquence a philosophy of government which is profound, viable, and Biblically correct. In the words of the Declaration,

*We hold these truths to be self-evident,
That all men are created equal,
That they are endowed by their Creator
with certain unalienable Rights,
That among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.—
That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men,
Deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.*

These words written by Thomas Jefferson were immortalized by the success of the American Revolution. But they were by no means any novelty on July 4, 1776. They were not produced out of Jefferson's originality or creativity. It is certainly true that his draft of the Declaration was borne primarily from his own well-developed conceptions about government and its foundations, but he did not claim to be the source of inspiration for the thoughts he set down on paper. Some years after the Revolution, John Adams complained that Jefferson had written nothing new, to which Jefferson agreed. Jefferson was very familiar with earlier documents containing similar thoughts when he penned the Declaration, such as the piece by Samuel Adams entitled "Rights of the Colonists." All the political leaders of the Revolution were of one mind concerning the self-evident truths of the Declaration.

Moreover, the thoughts expressed in the Declaration were shared by the colonists of the time. These thoughts were not reserved to an elite aristocracy that was removed and distant from the colonists. The Declaration was carefully expressed so as to represent the views of the colonists in general, and to win their adherence for the struggle ahead. Years later, John Adams wrote a letter to a Dr. J. Moore, on 29 November 1815, in which he said, looking backward:

*A history of the military operations from 1775 to 1783
is not a history of the American Revolution.
The revolution was in the minds and hearts of the people,
and in the union of the colonies,
both of which were substantially effected
before hostilities commenced.*

This claim by John Adams, a witness to the events of the Revolution, has been confirmed by the historical hindsight of modern analysis. In the words of John Miller, an historian writing in 1943:

*In the final analysis, the question of independence was decided
not in the Continental Congress but in the states
where the issue was threshed out in popular assemblies and meetings.
Both conservatives and radicals in Congress appealed to the people
outside to voice their wishes; and the people's answer
had much to do with the final decision....
Congress, indeed, was in danger of finding itself left in the wake
of public opinion in some states: 'The People are now ahead of you,'
wrote Joseph Hawley of Massachusetts to Sam Adams...¹¹*

Sentiment for rebellion in the colonies centered on questions of trade, taxation without representation, and the colossal insensitivity of Great Britain in sending mercenaries from Germany to help put down internal revolt. These issues were sufficient to inflame passion and rhetoric, and to excite debate on the most fundamental concerns. There was assuredly no lack of public attention on the fact that Great Britain was trampling on liberty itself. The issue of liberty was incorporated in the Declaration as the centerpiece of the document, as the insistence on truths held to be self-evident, namely, that all men are created equal, and that in the state of equality they all are endowed by their

Creator with fixed inalienable rights, listed as including life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Documents Preceding the Declaration

How were such claims regarded by the colonists in general? In what documents preceding the Declaration were these credal beliefs presented as self-evident truths? What is the origin of such ideas?

In 1772, four years before the Declaration was signed, Samuel Adams wrote a short piece entitled "Rights of the Colonists as Men". His words included the following:

Among the natural rights of the Colonists are these: First, a right to life; Secondly, to liberty; Thirdly, to property; together with the right to support and defend them in the best manner they can. These are evident branches of, rather than deductions from, the duty of self-preservation, commonly called the first law of nature. All men have a right to remain in a state of nature as long as they please; and in case of intolerable oppression, civil or religious, to leave the society they belong to, and enter into another. When men enter into society, it is by voluntary consent... Every natural right not expressly given up, or, from the nature of a social compact, necessarily ceded, remains. All positive and civil laws should conform, as far as possible, to the law of natural reason and equity. As neither reason requires nor religion permits the contrary, every man living in or out of a state of civil society has a right peaceably and quietly to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience.

In case this excerpt is not sufficiently explicit concerning the origin of the rights so mentioned, further words from this same piece by Samuel Adams will make the point more clearly:

Just and true liberty, equal and impartial liberty, in matters spiritual and temporal, is a thing that all men are clearly entitled to by the eternal and immutable laws of God and nature, as well as by the law of nations and all well-grounded municipal laws, which must have their foundation in the former... The natural liberty of man is to be free from any superior power on earth, and not to be under the will or legislative authority of man, but only to have the law of nature for his rule.^[2]

The "Rights of the Colonists" was written when Samuel Adams had reached the age of 50, as a part of meetings in Massachusetts in 1772, after the Governor dissolved the colony's Colonial Assembly. Three hundred townspeople thereupon met and voted to appoint a committee of correspondence, and to have this committee draft a statement of the rights of the colonists. The responsibility for preparing the first draft was assigned to Samuel Adams. Excerpts from the result, as quoted above, were in essence utilized by the Continental Congress in 1774, in a document called the "Declaration of Rights", and finally in 1776 in the Declaration of Independence.

The statement of rights by Samuel Adams was not by any means his first essay on liberty. In the year 1750, when he was only 28, he had written about liberty, that:

In the state of nature, every man has a right to think and act according to the dictates of his own mind, which in that state, are subject to no other control and can be commanded by no other power than the laws and ordinances of the great Creator of all things... He therefore is the truest friend to the Liberty of his country who tries most to promote its virtue... The sum of all is, if we would most truly enjoy this gift of Heaven,

let us become a virtuous people....^[3]

One of the influences on Mr. Adams' thought is openly stated by his own words in the "Rights of the Colonists" concerning religious toleration: "Insomuch that Mr. Locke has asserted and proved, beyond the possibility of contradiction on any solid ground, that such toleration ought to be extended to all whose doctrines are not subversive of society."^[4]

The link between Mr. Adams and John Locke is found more than once in Mr. Adams' writings. In 1771, in a publication in the Boston Gazette, he introduced his topic with the words "Mr. Locke, in his treatise on government."^[5] Thus, at the least, the political philosophy of John Locke was one of the foundations of the Declaration of Independence, and inquiry shows that the conception of inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness owe a great deal to John Locke's Second Treatise of Government published in 1690.

The debt to John Locke is revealed by the following excerpts from his Second Treatise. The title page says of the second treatise, "The latter is an essay concerning the true original extent and end of civil government." The opening lines refer to the Biblical Adam and to his "private dominion and parental jurisdiction", given to him by God, which clearly marks the presentation as based ultimately on Scripture, God's Holy and Written Word. In sections 4, 6, and 13, Locke writes that:

(A) All men are naturally in... a state of perfect freedom to order their actions, and dispose of their possessions and persons, as they think fit, within the bounds of the law of nature, without asking leave, or depending upon the will of any other man.

*A state also of equality ... A state of liberty, yet it is not a state of licence....
The state of nature has a law of nature to govern it, which obliges every one: and reason, which is that law, teaches all mankind, who will but consult it, that being equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty, or possessions:
for men being all the workmanship of one omnipotent, and infinitely wise maker; all the servants of one sovereign master, sent into the world by his order, and about his business; they are his property, whose workmanship they are, made to last during his, not one another's pleasure...
Every one... may not, unless it be to do justice on an offender, take away, or impair the life, or what tends to the preservation of the life, the liberty, health, limb, or goods of another.*

*God hath certainly appointed government to restrain the partiality and violence of men.
I easily grant, that civil government is the proper remedy for the inconveniences of the state of nature....*^[6]

Locke does not always state the exact Biblical references for his ideas, but in most instances lacking a reference, it will be readily understood that there is a Biblical source. For example, his notion of the purpose of civil government is derived from Romans 13.1-6, where Paul declares that God has ordained civil government for the purpose of restraining evil-doers.

On liberty, Locke wrote in section 22:

*The natural liberty of man is to be free from any superior power on earth, and not to be under the will or legislative authority of man, but to have only the law of nature for his rule...^[7]
(F)reedom of men under government is, to have a standing rule to live by, common to every one*

*of that society...
and not to be subject to the inconstant, uncertain, unknown,
arbitrary will of another man....*

Locke's conception of liberty is that it is intimately bound up with life itself. In section 23, he states:

*This freedom from absolute, arbitrary power,
is so necessary to, and closely joined with a man's preservation,
that he cannot part with it,
but by what forfeits his preservation and life together:
for a man, not having the power of his own life,
cannot, by compact, or his own consent,
enslave himself to any one....*

Herein is the notion that life and liberty are inalienable rights. Life and liberty are indissoluble, leading Patrick Henry to say, "Give me liberty or give me death!"

On property, Locke expressed many conceptions, but his central theme is Biblical:

*(I)t is very clear, that God, as king David says,
Psalm. 115. 16. has given the earth to the children of men;
given it to mankind in common.*

*And tho' all the fruits it naturally produces,
and beasts it feeds, belong to mankind in common...
there must of necessity be a means to appropriate them...*

*(E)very man has a property in his own person...
The labour of his body, and the work of his hands, we may say,
are properly his.*

*So that God, by commanding to subdue,
gave authority so far to appropriate:
and the condition of human life,
which requires labour and materials to work on,
necessarily introduces private possessions.*

In summary concerning these passages from Locke's treatise, there exists a clearly identifiable conception of the rights of life, liberty, and property. Locke openly maintained that these rights were basic and fundamental rights of man, given by God the Creator. They are inalienable because they are established as part of the God-given law of nature, and thus are bound up in very existence itself. In his frequent use of the phrase law of nature, Locke situated himself in a rich and time-honored tradition reaching back through history to the Bible itself. There is no doubt that Locke had in mind a Bible-centered view of the nature of man as created by God.

One of the enumerated rights of the Declaration, pursuit of happiness, is not found as such in Locke, who used the word happiness only three times in the Second Treatise, in quite restricted contexts. Locke concentrated instead upon the right of property. The right to pursue happiness, which is much broader in scope, is traceable through the Federalist Papers of John Jay, James Madison, and Alexander Hamilton, written under the pseudonym Publius. Ultimately, the fullness of happiness as a concept will be seen in the abundant life promised to us through Jesus Christ.

The Spiritual Condition of the Colonists

Not only the colonial leaders in politics were spiritually minded. The entire society was disposed toward regular religious practice and diligence in worship. Affairs of the day were considered in the light of Scripture.

This condition originated in the fact that the early settlers came to America to enjoy religious freedom. The Puritans of New England came for the purpose of establishing a commonwealth centered in their Calvinistic faith. The first settlers in Virginia planted a cross on the shores of Cape Henry, and dedicated the land to the glory of Jesus Christ.

But backsliding and decline followed the settlers' zeal. The early 1700s saw lukewarm adherence to the spreading of the gospel in the new world, to the extent that the renewal which followed, beginning in the 1730s, is

called the Great Awakening. Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, and other evangelists were mightily used by God for over 30 years, in a great outpouring of God's grace to redeem sinners. Consequently, the years preceding the Revolution were characterized by spiritual preparedness, which itself was God's grace upon the nation about to be established.

In this condition, the colonists generally were disposed to remain loyal to Great Britain until rather late in the decades preceding 1776. This is the mark of a Christian society, which desires to obey God's word in Romans 13 by being subject to the civil authorities. As late as 1766, Stephan Hopkins in Rhode Island described the colonists as loyal subjects of the King of Great Britain, despite their grievances. He noted that:

(T)he first planters of these colonies were pious Christians, were faithful subjects,..., have kept all due order, and have supported a regular government; they have maintained peace, and practiced Christianity. And in all conditions, upon all occasions, and in every relation, they have always demeaned themselves as loyal, as dutiful subjects ought to do...^[8]

The spiritual temper was to see events in the light of God's Word. In contrast to our day, when few political leaders believe or confess the hand of God in the affairs of men, the people of Revolutionary days saw events according to the Biblical view, that God does ultimately control historical events. In the same 1766, Pastor Nathaniel Appleton of the First Church in Boston gave "A Thanksgiving Sermon on the Total Repeal of the Stamp-Act". This occurred on the afternoon of May 20th in Cambridge, Massachusetts, preceding evening celebrations by the people on that great occasion. His opening text was Psalm 30 verses 11 and 12:

*Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing,
Thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness,
To the end that my glory may sing praise to Thee,
and not be silent.
O Lord my God, I will give thanks unto Thee forever.*

In Pastor Appleton's text, he advances a fundamental proposition about national political events. In the Pastor's words, "The great God has the absolute government of our affairs and circumstances in the world, and opens the various scenes of life to us."^[9] This is so on the basis of Deuteronomy 32 and Isaiah 45, where God declares:

*I even I am He and there is no God with me.
I kill, and I make alive, I wound, and I heal,
neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand.*

*I form the light and create darkness.
I make peace and create evil.
I the Lord do all these things.*

Consequently, for Appleton, "Whatever sorrowful, afflicted or threatening circumstances we are at any time under, it is by the over-ruling providence of God." As Amos prophesied in chapter 3, "Shall there be any evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it?" Thus, no matter whether affliction or blessing befalls us, we are to honor God by acknowledging His hand in every circumstance. We can no longer be silent, but may praise the Lord, "Who only doeth wondrous things."

Restoration in Our Time

At the present juncture, our inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are under widespread and unrelenting attack. This situation is a consequence of the denial of God throughout society, and the abandonment of public life by most Christians. The Christian in society is presently dull of hearing and seeing, and is sickly from generations of increasing isolation. God has breathed new life into His body in recent years, but many members of the body are nearly like dry bones in Ezekiel's valley. Since judgment has already begun in the house of the Lord, the way back to a restoration of inalienable rights will involve a painful and difficult struggle. With God, however, all things are possible, and with Him is joy forevermore. The path of restoration can therefore be, despite the struggle against the principalities and powers over this world, full of joy and happiness.

To restore the fullest expression of our inalienable rights in society and in our public institutions is a critical duty for all Christian citizens of our nation. Our effectiveness in this restoration rests first and foremost on the recognition

that God is our Sovereign and our Creator. He endowed us with the inalienable rights spoken of in the Declaration of Independence. He has created us and not we ourselves (Ps. 100.3).

The Biblical Expression of Life, Liberty, and Happiness

The root of inalienable rights, as traced here by way of illustration through the writings of Samuel Adams and John Locke, is in God our Creator. John Locke and others saw these rights as flowing from existence itself as bestowed upon us by our Creator. Two sources inform this understanding, as mentioned in the Declaration of Independence in the phrase “laws of nature and of nature’s God”. Inalienable rights in the first sense are founded on the concept of the law of nature, as mentioned frequently by Locke and others. The law of nature is illustrated in Scripture but has its detailed expression in the findings of natural science. The other source is the Bible itself, where the laws “of nature’s God” are expressed in particular codified form. The opening Biblical text for such thinking is found in Genesis, which describes the creation of man as made in the image of God, and as established on the earth with authority to subdue the earth and to exercise the stewardship of dominion. Inalienable rights and their expression in the “laws of nature and of nature’s God” has a very involved and detailed history throughout the church age, and is rooted in the natural order as created by God.

Something more needs expression in our day, if a restoration of rights is to be successful. The Christian character of our early settlers, and of the colonists at the time of the Revolution, needs to be expressed in us to the full. We must win the hearts and minds of the people of this generation, which at this point have been captured by ungodly religious and political philosophy. To accomplish this involves renewal in us, as well as in the nation’s people for whom we seek God’s blessing. The renewal, ultimately, must be in Christ.

Life—

Concerning life, Jesus said “Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent” (John 17.3). “The Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in Him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3.14–16). Paul said to the Ephesians, “As for you, you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the prince of the power of the air...But because of His great love for us, God Who is rich in mercy made us alive with Christ” (Ephesians 2.1–5). Thus, the fullness of life is in us as Christians, and by living in response to the Holy Spirit within, we will show forth the glory of God to this generation. Truly, then, our words will be the words of our Lord, and they will bring life to the nation.

Liberty—

Concerning liberty, Jesus said “If the Son sets you free, you shall be free indeed” (John 8.36). “If you continue in my word, then you are my disciples, and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free” (John 8.31–32). The Jews responded that they were slaves of no one, interpreting His words in a physical sense. Now it is true that the Bible contains many illustrations of the deliverance by God from physical slavery. The most celebrated deliverance is the Passover as described in Exodus. In the book of Leviticus, the year of Jubilee every fiftieth year was instituted to free the people from all debts, and restore the original distribution of land ownership. For the Israelites, property rights were permanently vested. Through the prophet Isaiah, the Lord promised to “bring out the prisoners from the dungeon” (Is 42.7), “to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of prison to them that are bound” (Is 61.1).

But the Lord’s deliverance is even greater, because He frees us from spiritual as well as physical bondage. The Lord says “I am He that blots out your transgressions for mine own sake, and I will not remember your sins” (Is 43.25). For the apostle Paul, the doctrine of the cross meant freedom from the bondage of sin.

Happiness—

On happiness, our Lord is beautiful indeed, because it is His Divine Will that we be blessed and happy (Matthew 5). The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, and peace in an abundant life, complete in Him. Our situation in the Lord is symbolized by the marriage supper, a time of inexpressible joy and happiness, full of rejoicing and gladness (Rev 19.7).

Thus, life, liberty, and happiness are indeed rooted in Scripture, and have the fullest meaning for Christians. May it be our purpose to convey this bountiful meaning through every facet of our living.

Call, Consecration, and Anointing

For any who have caught the vision to restore religious liberty in this nation, and who desire all the fullness of Christ in His gifts of life, liberty, and happiness, now is the time to pray for the quickening and comfort of God, in the name of Jesus. He stands ready to lead each one of us into a deeper walk with Him.

Upon dedication and commitment, we will receive God's anointing from on high for the task of restoration. We are reminded that the signers of the Declaration entrusted themselves, their fortunes, and their sacred honor to Divine Providence, and were gifted by God's enabling to attain the Revolutionary victory.

The Battle

In the quote earlier from the letter by John Adams, he said that the Revolution took place in the hearts and minds of the colonists before the hostilities commenced. It is of decisive significance to realize that the restoration we seek will be much more complicated than the struggle faced by the colonists. Why?...because the hostilities in our day have already commenced, which indicates that powerful groups of people in the land have already had their hearts and minds turned against our view. Not only do we face a struggle in the body, but also for the hearts and minds of the people, who constitute the nation itself, rather than some foreign power.

Two reports are given as illustrations of the changed hearts. First, many will remember the Free Speech and war resistor movement of the 1960's, culminating in riots at the 1968 Democratic Party National Convention in Chicago. The right of free speech was violently abused by many protestors during those years, without repercussion on the right itself. In fact, it may have been strengthened.

So great a change has occurred since then, that just a few months ago, at an abortion clinic in Norfolk, Virginia, a right-to-life marcher was arrested and convicted by a judge for "verbal trespass". No one except the Christian group involved has protested.

Second, in Evansville, Indiana last fall, a young evangelistic preacher named James Gilles spoke on four successive days at the fall festival of a local civic organization. The crowd increased each day but a third of the audience grew increasingly unruly. The preacher was arrested and convicted on the charge of using abusive language, because he told people they were going to hell. The preacher was convicted by a jury.^[10] Obviously, the public itself has begun to show open hostility against religious expression.

Other recent events have been reported by the Christian Broadcasting Network, and include 1) a 12-year old blind girl, a Vietnamese immigrant, forbidden to say her rosary on a school bus, 2) a 5-year old forbidden to sing "Jesus Loves Me" while coloring Easter eggs in school, 3) a ban on the use of school facilities for a voluntary non-sponsored Bible study, 4) teenagers in school forbidden to pray and study the Bible before school because such activity was deemed by the judge to be "too dangerous," and 5) schoolchildren forbidden to even bring their own Bibles to school.

It is clear that well-situated powers in society have views completely contrary to a Biblical view of man's inalienable rights. At a convocation last fall at the University of Oregon, the speaker was Donald Kennedy, President of Stanford University. In his speech he claimed that "post-Darwinian thought" has consequences for "our most basic notions about freedom, rationality, and equality...(T)he biological sciences have triggered a most extraordinary reordering of our concept of what it means to be human and to be free." In effect, he says that even political arrangements must be rethought in view of an emerging "complementary relationship between our biological endowment and our social arrangements."^[11]

Such a view is not new. It has resided in the nation's system of higher education for nearly a century. In 1904, a political historian named Dr. H. Friedenwald wrote, concerning the foundational concepts of the Declaration of Independence, "And just as the political philosophy of the eighteenth century now seems outworn, and has been supplanted by the evolutionary philosophy, so the latter will in all likelihood prove to be no more the final word upon the subject than its predecessor."^[12]

The Fullness of the Goal of Restoration

Committed to the task of restoration, we cannot be fence-sitters, who succeed only in getting shot at from both sides. By God's direction, we are to "take possession of the land, and dwell therein, for unto you have I given the land to possess it" (Numbers 33:53).

"The land which you are about to cross to possess it, a land of hills and valleys, drinks water from the rain of heaven, and land for which the Lord your God cares. The eyes of the Lord your God are always on it, from the beginning even to the end of the year" (Deuteronomy 11:11-12). Full restoration of religious liberty is a matter of God's blessing, in addition to our dedication. His word alone is strong enough to overcome the unrighteous philosophies and heart attitudes arrayed in opposition.

As Joshua and Caleb proclaimed, we are able to go up and take the country (Num. 14), not to physically conquer but to win the land from destruction, not to call down judgment from heaven, but to call down blessing. Religious freedom is central for avoiding judgment, because through the free exercise of our religious and spiritual heritage, the whole nation may hear of God, turn to Him, be forgiven of trespasses, and be blessed.

All Institutions to be Restored to Liberty

The crucial role of religious liberty was recognized by our forefathers in the Constitution. In the Bill of Rights, the First Amendment in its first clause protects religious liberty from any intrusion by the civil government. Religious liberty was given first place.

This liberty must be jealously guarded. There must be unhindered exercise of religion in all the God-ordained institutions of mankind: The individual must have liberty, the family must be free, so also the church, the school system, all voluntary associations, and all levels of civil government.

The family is the first social unit. The state must not be allowed to intrude on or upset the family, especially the responsibilities of parents for religious upbringing of children, and parental control over children.

The school is occupied in training the young, acting as surrogates of the parents. Parents, according to Proverbs, are fully responsible for all school and educational activities. Free religious exercise in the school environment is therefore a necessity if we are to obey God.

For voluntary associations, including all private clubs and organizations, non-profit or otherwise, religious liberty means the right to hire employees, retain them, and promote them to leadership on the basis of godly principles. It also means the financial conduct of business according to Biblical principles.

For churches, there must be unhindered evangelism, unhindered assembly in homes, church-buildings and elsewhere, plus unhindered worship and unhindered finances. Caesar has no right to property reserved for and by God.

Finally, for civil government, Caesar (civil government) has only that authority delegated to it by God. It must not hinder religious liberty in any public setting, nor trample religious expression in the course of any of its mandated and God-ordained activities. Any of its laws and regulations contrary to God's law are not true laws at all, but arbitrary dictates, and if such dictates abridge inalienable rights, they must be resisted.

Attitudes

We must be consecrated to the task of restoring religious liberty, and believe that this restoration will be instrumental in bringing God's blessing on the nation, instead of a curse.

Liberty is equivalent to godly choice. God sets before us a choice. We must choose the Biblical rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. We must reject death, abortion, the denial of private property, and the quenching of Biblical expression, because these are a denial of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Because we have not been vigilant to preserve religious liberty in its godly conception, God has allowed the enemies of liberty to multiply and grow strong in the land. They have "become as pricks in your eyes and as thorns in your sides, and they shall trouble you in the land in which you live" (Num. 33.55).

Will we allow degeneration to the point foreseen by Samuel Adams? He recognized that natural rights were first wrested from King John at the Magna Charta, "sword in hand. And peradventure," he thought possible, "it must be one day, sword in hand, again rescued and preserved from total destruction and oblivion."^[13]

Our Charge

In David's time, men rallied to him as their king, even while he was pursued by Saul. It is said that coming to him were "the sons of Issachar, men who understood the times, with knowledge of what Israel should do" (I Chronicles 12.32). Do we understand the times? "Knowing the time, that now it is high time, to awaken out of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer to us than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand, let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light" (Romans 13.11-12).

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage" (Gal. 5.1).

In the words of the hymn,

*Rise up O men of God
Have done with lesser things
Give heart and mind and soul and strength
To serve the King of kings*

May our prayer be unto God, that

*God bless America, land that I love
Stand beside her, and guide her,
Through the night with a light from above
From the mountains, to the prairies,
To the oceans, white with foam
God bless America, my home sweet home
God bless America, my home sweet home.*

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- [1] J. C. Miller, *Origins of the American Revolution* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1943), 484-485.
- [2] Verna M. Hall, *The Christian History of the Constitution* (San Francisco, CA: Foundation for American Christian Education, 1980), 365-366.
- [3] *Ibid.*, 364b.
- [4] *Ibid.*, 365.
- [5] *Ibid.*, 364.
- [6] John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, C. B. Macpherson, ed. (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1980 (orig. 1690)).
- [7] Quoted by Samuel Adams in his "Rights of the Colonists."
- [8] S. Hopkins, *The Grievances of the American Colonies Candidly Examined* (Providence, RI: 1766).
- [9] N. Appleton, "A Thanksgiving Sermon on the Total Repeal of the Stamp-Act" (Boston, MA: Edes and Gill, 1766).
- [10] "Preacher Warning of Hell Convicted of 'Abuse,'" *Presbyterian Journal* 42(43):5, 22 February 1984. [P.O. Box 2330, Asheville, NC 28802.]
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