



"SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF LIBERTY"

BY: J. DAVID GOWDY

Copyright © 1996: Institute for American Liberty
All Rights Reserved
Permission is Granted to Copy this E-Text for Educational Purposes Only

INTRODUCTION:

"Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto the inhabitants thereof."

[Inscription on the Liberty Bell; Leviticus 25:10]

LIBERTY! The very word evokes hope and stirs the inner soul of man. Throughout the course of time, individuals and nations oppressed by the yoke of tyranny or bondage have cried out for liberty's reprise and have sought for the comfort of its soothing rays. Revolution and war have oft been its price. Few nations have ever obtained it, let alone maintained it. Why so rare this prize for which so much blood and so many tears have been shed? Is its definition misunderstood? What is liberty and how is it secured, or more portentous, how is it lost?

First, we must understand that liberty is based upon fundamental principles and not philosophies or policies. Principles, which are based on truth, are constant and timeless; philosophies and policies are variable and changing and are based upon theories, circumstances and opinion. Second, we must recognize that liberty is not free. It must be both earned and guarded. Lastly, we must realize that liberty

requires public morality or virtue. The greatest, and probably most generally unrecognized, threat to our liberty today results from the gradual erosion of virtue. This decay has resulted from negligence and apathy on the part of many and from calculated attacks on the part of a few. The invasive roots of its opposing influences have crept deeper into the soil of our communities while we have slept, and in some cases, while we have been thwarted in our efforts to eradicate their causes. James Madison stated: "I believe that there are more instances of the abridgment of the freedom of the people by gradual and silent encroachment of those in power than by violent and sudden usurpations." When the policies and practices of the nation favor rights in exclusion of responsibility, and sanction vice at the expense of virtue, calamity is imminent. The impending consequences of the ruin of public virtue, which already cast a dark shadow across our nation, now loom on the horizon as a force destructive to our society, our government and our very peace and happiness.

I believe that except we become vigilant in understanding and upholding liberty's principles, we shall lose all which is attached to it: our national unity, our security, our peace and our prosperity. No person who loves liberty, can, in the face of the danger of its loss, stand idly by when life itself and the pursuit of happiness, hang so precipitously in the balance. A modern statesman, J. Reuben Clark, Jr., said: "We stand in danger of losing our liberties, and . . . once lost, only blood will bring them back . . ." In order to preserve liberty we must not only pledge allegiance, but prove loyal in deed to the standards upon which it is founded. Our Founding Fathers mutually pledged their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor to the cause of liberty. May we commit anything less and stand worthy of its benefaction?

With these thoughts in my mind and heart, I respectfully present this compilation of seven principles of liberty -- principles distilled from the wisdom and inspiration of our Founding Fathers and patriots both ancient and modern -- principles which have been proven in the crucible of individual and collective experience and history.

"[T]he preservation of the sacred fire of liberty . . . [is] finally staked, on the experiment entrusted to the hands of the American People."

George Washington

ONE:

LIBERTY IS OF DIVINE ORIGIN

"No people can be bound to acknowledge and adore the invisible hand, which conducts in the affairs of men more than the people of the United States. -- Every step, by which they have been advanced to the character of an independent nation, seems to have been distinguished by some token of providential agency."

George Washington

THE Founding Fathers proclaimed liberty to be an "unalienable right" bestowed by our Creator, as witnessed by their signatures to the Declaration of Independence which states: "We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all men are . . . endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness -- ." The Constitution states that it was ordained and established to secure the "Blessings of Liberty" to succeeding generations. According to Webster's Dictionary to "bless" is to invoke divine care, and to be "blessed" is to enjoy the bliss of heaven. Thus, both the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence make reference to a divine connection with liberty. Numerous references may also be found in the writings of the framers which acknowledge divine inspiration and the hand of providence in the birth of the American nation and the establishment of the Constitution. James Madison said: "It is impossible for the man of pious reflection not to perceive in [the Constitution] a finger of that Almighty hand which has been so frequently and signally extended to our relief in the critical stages of the revolution." Patrick Henry stated: "There is a just God that presides over the destinies of nations." Thomas Jefferson, in his First Inaugural Address, closed with the appeal: "May that infinite power which rules the destinies of the universe lead our councils to what is best." And, Charles Pinckney said: "Nothing less than the superintending Hand of Providence, that so miraculously carried us through the war . . . could have brought it [the Constitution] about so complete, upon the whole." If we fail to acknowledge this principle, we effectively disregard the works and faith of our Founding Fathers.

This first principle serves as the cornerstone for all others. Just as man alone cannot originate life, a people acting alone cannot obtain liberty without divine sanction. Similarly, like life itself, one cannot fully comprehend or appreciate liberty without reference to inspired principles. Liberty simply does not exist in a secular vacuum. Liberty is a divine promise -- it begets hope. John Foster Dulles stated: "Our nation was founded as an experiment in human liberty. Its institutions reflect the belief of our founders that men had their origin and destiny in God; that they were endowed by Him with unalienable rights and had duties prescribed by moral law, and that human institutions ought primarily to help men develop their God-given possibilities." Patrick Henry warned: "It is when a people forget God that tyrants forge their chains . . ." George Washington said: "[W]e ought to be no less persuaded that the propitious smiles of Heaven, can never be expected on a nation that disregards the eternal rules of order and right, which Heaven itself has ordained. Our currency states, "In God We Trust"; we pledge allegiance to "one nation under God"; and in the well known patriotic hymn "My Country, 'Tis of Thee," we sing, "Our father's God, to thee, Author of Liberty . . ." -- do we so believe?

**"Can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are the gift of God?"
Thomas Jefferson**

TWO:

LIBERTY HAS A PRICE.

**"The independence and liberty you possess are the work of . . . joint efforts, of common dangers, suffering and successes."
George Washington**

DESPITE a natural tendency to believe that liberty is a gift to be autonomously received and enjoyed, without price or reassessment -- liberty is not free. Liberty must be both earned and guarded. Thomas Jefferson in his First Inaugural Address said that: "The wisdom of our sages and the blood of our heroes have been devoted to [the] attainment" of our liberty and form of government. Charles Caleb Colton said: "Liberty will not descend to a people; a people must raise themselves to liberty; it is a blessing that must be earned before it can be enjoyed." Alfred Denning, an English jurist, stated: "The price of freedom is eternal vigilance." And, Boyd K. Packer, a prominent religious educator, said: "Freedom is not a self-preserving gift. It has to be earned, and it has to be protected." Thus, in order to be obtained, liberty must be earned or won, and in order to be maintained, liberty must be effectively re-earned and re-won in the hearts of each generation.

What is the relationship between liberty and its price? First, liberty is freedom from oppression or bondage. Thus, liberty is procured through deliverance or redemption from bondage. For our forefathers, this bondage was the religious and economic oppression of Great Britain's rule over the original Colonies. Such circumstances would also be analogous to the plight of many who have been led to America's shores. Secondly, redemption from bondage requires sacrifice. America's liberty was originally bought by the sacrifice of men's blood shed in the Revolutionary War. It has been re-bought by sacrifice and blood shed in subsequent wars, including the Civil War and World Wars. Finally, liberty is upheld by remembering and honoring such sacrifices -- which requires both knowledge of, and gratitude for, such sacrifices. If the Founding Fathers could speak to us today regarding liberty, rest assured that their message would include reference to the horrible price paid at Valley Forge, Morristown, Camden, and Yorktown, etc. Others of a later time would speak to us of Gettysburg or Pearl Harbor. Only by vicarious remembrance and sincere gratitude for the heavy price paid for the gift of liberty, which we so abundantly enjoy, can we truly appreciate its value and fulfill our duty to uphold it for future generations.

Of those who pledged "their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor" as signers to the Declaration of Independence, five were captured as traitors and tortured before they died; twelve had their homes ransacked and burned; two lost their sons in the Revolutionary War; another had two sons captured; and nine died from wounds or

the hardship of the war (quoted from Ezra Taft Benson). Are we equally as willing to pay liberty's price?

"Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!"
Patrick Henry

THREE:

LIBERTY IS SECURED BY GOVERNMENT

"Liberty itself will find in such a government, with powers properly distributed and adjusted, its surest guardian."
George Washington

THERE should be no dispute that government is required to secure the rights of life and liberty to the individual, to the community and to the nation. The Declaration of Independence states that: "[T]o secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed." Thomas Jefferson said: "The will of the people is the only legitimate foundation for any government." William Penn stated: "[G]overnments rather depend upon men than men upon government." John Jay, author of several of the Federalist Papers, and the first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, stated: "Nothing is more certain than the indispensable necessity of Government, and it is equally undeniable, that whenever and however it is instituted, the people must cede to it some of their natural rights, in order to vest it with requisite powers." These rights and powers, designed to uphold liberty and to protect person and property, are delegated to government by the people. Aristotle wrote: "If liberty and equality, as it is thought by some, are chiefly to be

found in a democracy, they will be best obtained when all persons share in the government to the utmost." Abraham Lincoln described the standard of our democratic republic as: "a government of the people, by the people [and] for the people." Thus, "we the people" are the determinants of our government and of our leaders.

The continuing challenge of any people and government is to maintain a balance of power with adequate controls to ensure the safety and felicity of the people. The entire treatise of the Federalist Papers serves as reference to the need to delegate and diffuse governmental powers in order to ensure our safety and felicity from potential internal and external harms. James Madison stated: "[T]he preservation of liberty requires, that the three great departments of power [executive, legislative and judiciary] should be separate and distinct." James Wilson wrote: "Liberty and happiness have a powerful enemy on each hand; on the one hand tyranny, on the other licentiousness [anarchy]. To guard against the latter, it is necessary to give the proper powers to government; and to guard against the former, it is necessary that those powers should be properly distributed." Woodrow Wilson said: "The history of liberty is a history of the limitations of governmental power, not the increase of it." Both the limitation and balance of power lie at the heart of the U. S. Constitution. It stands as the preeminent example of how a government may be structured with "checks and balances" to secure liberty "with equal justice for all." Various governments may be traced throughout history; yet, the liberty that has existed in America since the establishment of our Constitutional republic in 1787 is the most profound and enlightened in secular history. It has served as the model for constitutions of many other nations. Benjamin Franklin said of it: "It astonishes me to find this system approaching so near to perfection as it does." Gladstone called the Constitution: "The most wonderful work ever struck off at a given time by the brain and purpose of man." The inspired Constitution of the United States of America truly serves as the cradle of liberty.

"We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America." (Preamble)

FOUR:

LIBERTY REQUIRES UNITY

"[Y]our union ought to be considered as a main prop of your liberty, and that the love of the one ought to endear to you the preservation of the other."

George Washington

UNITY was indispensable to the formation of our nation and the establishment of the Constitution. George Washington, in his Farewell Address, said: "The unity of government . . . is a main pillar in the edifice of your real independence, the support of your tranquility at home, your peace abroad, of your safety, of your prosperity, of that very liberty which you so highly prize. . . . it is of definite moment that you should properly estimate the immense value of your national union to your collective and individual happiness . . . accustoming yourselves to think and speak of it as the palladium of your political safety and prosperity." All three authors of the Federalist Papers proclaimed the benefits of a strong union. James Madison stated: "[E]very man who loves liberty ought to have it ever before his eyes that he may cherish in his heart a due attachment to the Union of America and be able to set a due value on the means of preserving it." Madison also stated: "We have seen the necessity of the Union as our bulwark against foreign danger, as the conservator of peace among ourselves, as the guardian of our commerce and other common interests, as the only substitute for those military establishments which have subverted the liberties of the old world, and as the proper antidote for the diseases of faction, which have proved fatal to other popular governments." John Jay, stated: "[T]he prosperity of America depend[s] upon its Union." Finally, Alexander Hamilton said: "I have endeavored, my Fellow Citizens, to place before you in a clear and convincing light, the importance of Union to your political safety and happiness. I have unfolded to you a complication of dangers to which you would be exposed should you permit that sacred knot which binds the people of America together to be severed." Their messages instruct us that in unity, encompassing more than the mere

union on paper of the states, there is mutual strength and safety.

Unity requires adherence to common principles -- a shared vision. Such principles include democratic standards of justice, fairness, equality, and individual freedom of religion and speech, among others. Thomas Jefferson eloquently stated in his Inaugural Address: "[E]very difference of opinion is not a difference of principle. We have been called by different names brethren of the same principle. . . . Let us then pursue with courage and confidence . . . our attachment to union and representative government." In order to create and maintain unity, as evidenced by the very process by which the Constitution was forged, personal opinions must be tempered and often compromised for the benefit of the whole. Thus, the spirit of compromise is essential to the workings of our republican form of government; and the spirit of mutual commitment essential to our form of democracy. In this regard, the Founding Fathers warned that "factions" are destructive to the spirit of unity. What are the prime causes of "the diseases of faction"? Pride, or selfishness, and greed. A proverb states: "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall." (Proverbs 16:18). The central feature of pride is enmity (Benson). Enmity, or animosity, may be pitted against persons or groups in society. Through selfishness, greed and envy, the enmity of pride leads to contentions and strife, causing divisions and factions, thus destroying unity. Humility, gratitude and camaraderie serve as primary antidotes to dispel pride, shield principle and preserve the unity necessary to sustain liberty.

**"A house divided against itself cannot stand."
Abraham Lincoln (quoting Mark 3:25).**

FIVE:

LIBERTY IS MAINTAINED BY OBEDIENCE TO LAW

"Respect for [this Government's] authority, compliance with its laws, acquiescence in its measures, are duties enjoined by the fundamental maxims of true liberty."

George Washington

IT is a fundamental proposition that for liberty to be maintained citizens must be obedient to the nation's laws. The opposite proposition epitomizes the antithesis of liberty, i.e., civil disobedience is anarchy. The social philosopher, John Locke wrote: "[W]here there is no law there is no freedom." Theodore Roosevelt said: "No man is above the law and no man is below it; nor do we ask any man's permission when we require him to obey it." George Washington stated: "The very idea of the power and the right of people to establish government presupposes the duty of every individual to obey the established government. . . . All obstructions to the executions of the laws, all combinations and associations, under whatever plausible character, with the real design to direct, control, counteract, or awe the regular deliberation and action of the constituted authorities, are destructive of this fundamental principle and of fatal tendency." (Farewell Address). It is thus essential for a free people to be a law abiding people. Only therein rests domestic security and peace.

Liberty itself represents both the freedom and responsibility to choose "good" over "evil" and virtue over vice. If virtue is defined as the refinement of character and vice as the corruption of character, law is the governing standard of individual conduct required to uphold virtue and suppress vice in society. William Blackstone stated: "No matter how abandoned may be a man's principles, or how vicious his practice, provided he keeps his wickedness to himself, and does not violate public decency, he is out of reach of human laws. But if he makes his vices public, then they become by his bad example, of pernicious effect to society, and it is the business of human laws to correct them." Just laws, civil and criminal, are based on precepts of virtuous conduct, such as respect for other persons and their property, freedom of religion, assembly and speech, and time-honored prohibitions such as "thou shalt not steal," "thou shalt not kill" and "thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." Other laws seek to regulate and suppress vice, such as gambling, prostitution and drug abuse. Additionally, certain laws are designed to uphold equal opportunity and fairness in society, in areas such as education, housing, labor and trade. Unfortunately, however, not all laws and regulations are just and virtuous. It is incumbent upon each citizen and leader to seek to enact and uphold good and virtuous laws and to

avoid and discard those which are bad or of deleterious effect.

With respect to law and liberty, we must remember that to every right there is a responsibility and to every privilege a duty. The Constitution and Bill of Rights provide emphasis to individual rights and privileges; however, related individual responsibilities and duties are not equally emphasized. Loyalty to country and respect for law are part of each citizen's duty. The fulfillment of individual and public duty maintains order and serves to uphold liberty. Duty is defined as a moral obligation. If we fail to keep private and public moral obligations, what then shall become of duty, or of liberty? Yet, duty and honor cannot be compelled by edict or by force -- allegiance to law and to country must be written in the heart. That is the true spirit of patriotism.

**"Liberty lies in the hearts of men and women. When it dies there, no constitution, no law, no court can save it."
Judge Learned Hand (1872-1961)**

SIX:

LIBERTY IS DEPENDENT UPON VIRTUE

**"Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim tribute to patriotism who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness."
George Washington**

THE principle of virtue is far greater and of more importance than all other principles combined. Without it, others fail. Virtue is the bridge between liberty and true civilization. It intersects society and

the soul. It is liberty's mooring. No other principle is more commonly emphasized by the Founding Fathers. George Washington said: "[V]irtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular government." Benjamin Franklin said: "Only a virtuous people are capable of freedom." James Madison stated: "To suppose that any form of government will secure liberty or happiness without any virtue in the people, is a chimerical idea." Samuel Adams said: "[N]either the wisest constitution nor the wisest laws will secure the liberty and happiness of a people whose manners are universally corrupt. He therefore is the truest friend of the liberty of his country who tries most to promote its virtue." Patrick Henry stated that: "A vitiated state of morals, a corrupted public conscience, is incompatible with freedom." Andrew Jackson said: "No free government can stand without virtue in the people, and a lofty spirit of patriotism. . . ." John Adams stated: "Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other." Liberty without principle, without virtue or morality, is not liberty at all.

Self-government, or democracy, can only be perpetuated by the self-governed. Henry Ward Beecher said: "There is no liberty to men who know not how to govern themselves." Goethe stated: "What is the best government? -- That which teaches us to govern ourselves." Self-governance consists of self-regulation of our behavior and passions.

Virtue ennobles individual character and lifts society as a whole. Virtuous principles eschew prejudice and discrimination, confirming that: "all men are created equal." Virtue encompasses characteristics of good will, patience, tolerance, kindness, respect, humility, gratitude, courage, honor, industry, honesty, chastity and fidelity. These precepts serve as the foundation for individual and societal governance. William Cowper said: "When was public virtue to be found when private was not?" Public virtue, or society's goodness, may be measured then by totalling the virtuous characteristics of its individual citizens.

Allied with public virtue is marriage. Matrimony stands alone as the divine institution that can insure the sanctity of the home, the stability of families and the transmission of virtue to the rising generation. The corrupting influences of pornography, promiscuity, licentiousness and all forms of sexual relations outside of marriage are of pernicious effect to the vows and bonds of matrimony, and are destructive of public virtue -- and thus, also of liberty. Despite prevailing philosophies, these harmful influences lie at the core of our nation's problems. Confucius said: "The strength of a nation is derived from the integrity of its homes." George Washington asked: "Can it be that Providence has not connected the permanent felicity of a nation with

its virtue?" And, Thoreau wrote: "For every thousand hacking at the leaves of evil, there is one striking at the root." Only by laboring to eradicate the roots of immorality, corruption and vice can we preserve the fruit of liberty.

**"[T]he foundations of our National policy . . . [should] be laid in the pure and immutable principles of private morality."
George Washington**

SEVEN:

LIBERTY AFFORDS THE PATH TO HAPPINESS

**"[T]here is no truth more thoroughly established, than that there exists . . . an indissoluble union between virtue and happiness."
George Washington**

THE "pursuit of happiness" is the third "unalienable right" set forth in the Declaration of Independence in connection with "life" and "liberty." Webster's dictionary defines "happiness" as a state of well being and contentment. While each individual may describe happiness differently, most all will agree that happiness is the object of existence.

In this regard, John Adams wrote that:

"[H]appiness of society is the end of government." Thus, liberty is the means and happiness is its end. Without liberty, no person or society can be truly happy. Locke, in his Essay the True End of Civil Government, quotes Dragonetti on Virtue and Rewards, stating: "The science of the politician consists in fixing the true point of happiness and freedom. Those men would deserve the gratitude of ages, who should discover a mode of government that contained the greatest sum of individual happiness, with the least national expense." This, then is the great dilemma for citizens, representatives and leaders in

all ages: how do we efficiently augment the well being and contentment of society, i.e., maximize societal happiness? Endless social programs have been devised, enacted and administered to this end. While there is no single solution or easy answer to all social ills, there is a formula proven in nature: "For whatsoever a man soweth, that also shall he reap" (Galatians 6:7) In other words, being free to sow what we will, if we sow good seed, and so labor, we shall reap good fruit. Individually and collectively we together bear and reap the harvest of the opportunities and privileges provided us through liberty's vale. Thus, wisdom and virtue must fashion each seed sown by government.

Thomas Jefferson said: "[W]hat more is necessary to make us a happy and prosperous people? . . . a wise and frugal government . . . which shall leave [men] free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement, and shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned. . . . We must make our choice between economy and liberty or profusion and servitude. . . . If we can prevent government from wasting the labors of the people, under the pretense of caring for them, the people will be happy." As revered in our past, industry, thrift and self-reliance must be upheld as crowning attributes to each generation. Thoreau said: "This government never of itself furthered any enterprise . . . [t]he character inherent in the American people has done all that has been accomplished." There were no "social programs" for the pilgrims or pioneers. Happiness is garnered by self, not granted by government.

The unalienable rights of "liberty" and "the pursuit of happiness" are truly co-dependent. Liberty provides an unfettered path in life to choose happiness or its counterfeits. These individual and collective choices effectually serve to either bless and benefit, or curse and hinder, each of us, our society, and our posterity. An ancient proverb states: "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people." (Proverbs 14:34). The choice and decision is ours. Thus, while the possession of liberty itself cannot guarantee happiness, it alone affords us the full opportunity in life for its pursuit.

"[T]he form of government which communicates . . . happiness, to the greatest number of persons, and in the greatest degree, is the best."

John Adams

CONCLUSION:

"Promote, then, as an object of primary importance, institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge. . . . it is essential that public opinion should be enlightened."

George Washington

IT is incumbent upon each of us to study and ponder the heritage of liberty. Thomas Jefferson said: "If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be." He also stated: "I know of no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome direction, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion by education. This is the true corrective of abuses of constitutional power." The diffusion of knowledge and an enlightened citizenry are essential elements required to maintain liberty.

In this regard, Thomas Jefferson recommended that the following works be read and taught as containing the "general principles of liberty and rights of man, in nature and society": Locke's "Essay Concerning the True Original, Extent and End of Civil Government," and Sidney's "Discourses Concerning Government"; and with respect to the United States of America in particular: (1) The Declaration of Independence; (2) The "Federalist Papers" written by Alexander Hamilton, James Madison and John Jay; and (3) The Valedictory (farewell) Address of President George Washington. Have we read and considered each of these works? Have we studied and learned the principles of the Constitution in the tradition of the Founding Fathers? Are the Constitution and principles of liberty expounded by the Founding Fathers being taught in our schools? Has their history been diluted? President Abraham Lincoln stated: "Let it [the Constitution, etc.] be taught in schools, seminaries and in colleges; let it be written in primers, in spelling books and in almanacs; let it be preached from the pulpit, proclaimed in legislative halls, enforced in courts of justice. In short, let it become the political religion of the nation." Vigilance in learning and imparting liberty's knowledge is part of liberty's price.

Our Founding Fathers understood the true principles of liberty. They paid liberty's price. With the aid of the "Divine Hand of Providence," their generation raised this nation to liberty and furnished its grand legacy to us in word and deed. Subsequent generations have bought and maintained liberty, spreading it abroad, for over 200 years. Is it possible that liberty stands in jeopardy in this, our generation, its enemy threatening from within? To quote an old adage: "America is great because she is good, and if America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great." Daniel Webster stated: "[I]f we and our posterity reject religious instruction and authority, violate the rules of eternal justice, trifle with the injunctions of morality, and recklessly destroy the political constitution which holds us together, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us, that shall bury all our glory in profound obscurity." I pray that together we may avoid catastrophe and uphold the "sacred fire of liberty" by choosing paths of wisdom and virtue, which alone can afford a lasting peace and happiness to each of us and to our posterity.

**"Bad men cannot make good citizens. It is when a people forget God that tyrants forge their chains. A vitiated state of morals, a corrupted public conscience, is incompatible with freedom. No free government, or the blessings of liberty, can be preserved to any people but by a firm adherence to justice, moderation, temperance, frugality, and virtue; and by a frequent recurrence to
FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES."
Patrick Henry [emphasis added]**