

AMERICA'S CHRISTIAN HERITAGE

5/28/2017

Today we continue our studies on our Christian History.

I. THE CHRISTIAN FAITH OF OUR FOUNDING FATHERS IS SEEN

A. Patrick Henry

1. Is best know for his speech at given at St. John's Church Richmond, Virginia on March 23, 1775.
2. Thomas Marshall told his son John Marshall, who later became Chief Justice of the United States, that the speech was "one of the most bold, vehement, and animated pieces of eloquence that had ever been delivered.
3. Edward Carrington, who was listening outside a window of the church, requested that he be buried on that spot. He got his wish in 1810!
4. Among the delegates to the convention were future United States Presidents:
 - a. Thomas Jefferson
 - b. George Washington
5. Here is a portion of his motivating speech: They tell us, sir, that we are weak; unable to cope with so formidable an adversary. But when shall we be stronger? Will it be the next week, or the next year? Will it be when we are totally disarmed, and when a British guard shall be stationed in every house? Shall we gather strength by irresolution and inaction? Shall we acquire the means of effectual resistance, by lying supinely on our backs, and hugging the delusive phantom of hope, until our enemies shall have bound us hand and foot? Sir, we are not weak if we make a proper use of those means which the God of nature hath placed in our power. Three millions of people, armed in the holy cause

of liberty, and in such a country as that which we possess, are invincible by any force which our enemy can send against us. Besides, sir, we shall not fight our battles alone. There is a just God who presides over the destinies of nations; and who will raise up friends to fight our battles for us. 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.

It is in vain, sir, to extenuate the matter. Gentlemen may cry, Peace, Peace but there is no peace. The war is actually begun! The next gale that sweeps from the north will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms! Our brethren are already in the field! Why stand we here idle? What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? 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!

6. Henry further stated; "It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great nation was founded, not by religionist, but by Christians; not on religions, but on the gospel of Jesus Christ!

B. George Washington

1. As Commander in Chief of the Continental Army, Washington's first General Order required all officers and men not engaged in actual duty to attend divine services.
2. At Valley Forge, Washington issued a General Order to his troops in which he said: "To the distinguished character of a patriot, it ought to

be our highest glory to add the more distinguished character of a Christian.”

3. On July 9, 1776 the Commander in Chief ordered the commanding officer of each regiment to procure Chaplains. There were to be persons of good character and exemplary lives. In the same order Washington;
 - a. Stated his hope that “every man, will endeavor so to live and act, as becomes a Christian soldier defending the dearest Rights and Liberties of his county.”
 - b. Commanded everyone in the army to obey the orders of the Continental Congress, and thus, “by their unfeigned and pious observance of their religious duties,” they were to “incline the Lord, and Giver of Victor, to prosper our arms.”
 - c. “Earnestly recommended to all officers and soldiers diligently to attend divine service” What would happen to anyone who behaved indecently or irreverently at Divine Worship? They would be brought before a court-martial.
4. On August 3, 1776 Washington talked about “foolish and wicked practice;
 - a. “Foolish and wicked practice would be “Profane cursing and swearing.”
 - b. He added; “we can have little hope of the blessings of Heaven on our arms if we insult it by our impiety and folly.”
 - c. Once again Washington stated that cursing and swearing “is a vice so mean and low...that every man of sense and character detests and despises it.”

5. General Washington revealed his Christian faith to some Delaware Indians chiefs, when they visited his camp in 1779 and brought three youths to be educated in their schools.
 - a. Washington stated to the Indians; “You do well to wish to learn our arts, and way of life and above all the religion of Jesus Christ.”
 - b. Washington stated that Congress would help the children learn about the Christian Faith. (Consider that!)
6. After the War for Independence, in a circular letter to the governors of the states, Washington said that we could “Never hope to be a happy nation” without humbly imitating the example of Jesus Christ.
7. When Washington was inaugurated as our first President in New York City on April 30, 1789 he insisted on taking the oath with his hand on the Bible.
 - a. After his oath he picked up the Bible and kissed it
 - b. He took his cabinet down the street for a 2-3 hour prayer meeting.
8. In a statement in October 1789 Washington said; “While just government protects all in their religious rights, true religion affords to government its surest support.”
9. In his Farewell Address, Washington warned us: “Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports.”

C. John Adams;

1. “Our Constitution was designed only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other”
2. Much we know about the Revolution came from letters written by John Adams to and from and his wife. (More in later studies)