

WORLD HISTORY INSTITUTE JOURNAL

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2017 · A BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW TO WIN THE FUTURE

THE FORGOTTEN INSPIRATION FOR THE U.S. CONSTITUTION

The administration has promised to help restore our constitutional republic. For this worthy goal to be achieved, **“We the People” should know the major source and inspiration for our Constitution.** This source reveals that in our decentralized republic, most of the responsibility for the preservation of our freedom rests upon the people’s engagement at the local level. The following story gives insight into our one-of-a-kind Constitution.



In 1776, the American patriots had just broken free from the tyrannical pattern of nations throughout history. In the Declaration of Independence they pledged their “firm reliance upon Divine Providence” as they formed their new nation. Eleven years later, fifty-six delegates were sent from the states to Philadelphia to form “a more perfect union.” They went to strengthen the weak Articles of Confederation but instead created a new Constitution. Their hope was that this new Constitution would cement their union **while maintaining their freedom as states.**

After the long hot summer of 1787, the delegates emerged with a proposed Constitution. But to be implemented, the document had to be ratified by three-fourths of the states. But what would

cause the diverse and independent states to unite behind this Constitution? They had won their freedom from England and the tyrant, King George. They didn’t want to create another all-powerful national government.

Their fears of falling back into tyranny were well grounded because **when America began, dictators ruled nearly all the world.** For 5,000 years, people worldwide were born into iron-clad caste systems, condemning them to lifelong bondage, poverty and hopelessness.

Because of these legitimate concerns, a battle ensued regarding the approval of the new Constitution. This battle would divide fellow patriots like Patrick Henry and George Washington. But by the fall of 1788, eight states had voted to approve



the Constitution. **It remained for New Hampshire, the ninth state, to cast the deciding vote in the ratification process.**

At this critical point, the New Hampshire legislature chose Dr. Samuel Langdon, former president of Harvard and esteemed clergyman, to address the representatives. **America’s future as a viable nation hung in the balance.** Langdon’s classic, powerful speech helped turn the tide in favor of the new Constitution.¹ He lifted his argument above the rancor of partisan politics.

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How did Langdon encourage a skeptical New Hampshire legislature to ratify the proposed Constitution? He reminded them that **the new U.S. Constitution was patterned after the divine constitution of Moses and the decentralized republic of the Ancient Hebrews (1400-1000 B.C.).** He said that this liberating form of accountable and just government is “a pattern to the world in all ages” for any nation desiring freedom and prosperity.

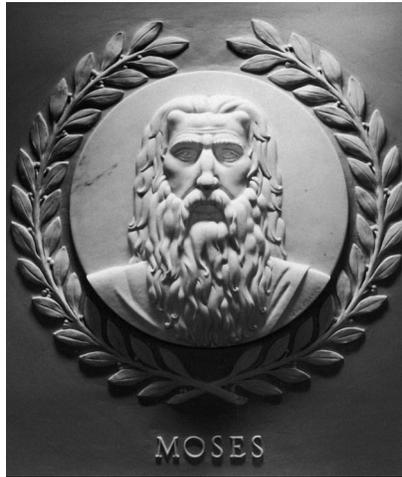
The Israelites were transformed from a band of disorderly families coming out of bondage in Egypt into self-governing, orderly tribes. Langdon said there was no example in history of a people making “this quick progress of the Israelites, from abject slavery, ignorance, and almost total want of order, to a national establishment perfected in all its parts far beyond all other kingdoms and states!”

Langdon detailed how the Hebrews formed their successful republic. First, before the Hebrew tribes arrived at Mt. Sinai, **Moses instructed them to elect character-filled leaders at the local level.** They were to be competent, godly, honest and hating bribes (see Exodus 18). These local elections **decentralized** power in their new republic..

Second, at Mt. Sinai, God graciously gave His people a few concise but perfect laws that would be applied without partiality and would protect lives, families, private property, personal freedoms, and reputations: The Ten Commandments.

Langdon described the Lord’s compassion: “God did not leave a people wholly unskilled in legislation to make laws for themselves: He took this important matter wholly into His own hands Had the inexperienced multitude been left to themselves to draw up a system of civil and military government, it would have been entirely beyond their abilities to comprehend so complicated a subject; they must have committed innumerable mistakes....” **The Lord created a bottom-up, representative constitutional republic with maximum freedom and no need for an earthly king.** Through the centuries, this plan has liberated hundreds of millions of people from bondage.

Third, Langdon detailed the basic structure of the Hebrew republic. He said, “A **senate** was constructed,



An engraved marble image depicting Moses, affixed to a wall in the U.S. Congress.

as necessary for the future government of the nation, under a **chief commander [executive]** ... the people were consulted, the whole **congregation [assembly]** being called together on all important occasions: **the government therefore was a proper republic.**”

“Moreover, to complete the establishment of civil government, **courts** were to be appointed...and elders most distinguished for wisdom and integrity were to be made **judges.**” These courts were a safeguard to ensure that the laws would be applied on an equitable basis without class distinction or partiality.

Appeals were allowed to a supreme court.

Langdon explained that the proposed U.S. Constitution mirrored the divinely inspired Hebrew Republic and would maximize freedom and limit tyranny. He called upon the New Hampshire legislature to approve the proposed Constitution. With their approval, the new Constitution would become law.

Ultimately, Langdon declared that once this Constitution was ratified, **the people**, through their vigilance and character, would determine the success or failure of their nation. He concluded by saying that “the best constitution, badly managed, will soon fall and be changed into anarchy or tyranny ... **On the people, therefore, of these United States it depends whether wise men, or fools, good or bad men, shall govern them; whether they shall have righteous laws, a faithful administration of government and permanent good order, peace and liberty; or, on the contrary, feel unsupportable burdens, and see all their affairs run to confusion and ruin.**”

— Marshall Foster

Note: This short article provides only a glimpse into the divinely inspired Constitution. In 1850, Rev. E. C. Wines authored a masterpiece volume entitled, *Commentaries of the Ancient Hebrews*. I encourage those interested in the biblical roots our Constitution to study this text.

¹ *Political Sermons of the Founding Era*; Ellis Sandoz, Editor; Indianapolis: Liberty Press, 1991, pp. 943-967.

ARE YOU A RIVER OR A RESERVOIR?

The richest generosity often comes out of the deepest poverty.



People are frequently confused about the difference between a paradox and an oxymoron. Both involve words which seem contradictory or incongruous. In the case of oxymorons, they're so interesting that "experts" faithfully record them. There's even a list of the Top 10 Oxymorons posted on several websites:

1. Government Organization
2. Same Difference
3. Taped Live
4. Plastic Glasses
5. Peace Force
6. Pretty Ugly
7. Head Butt
8. Working Vacation
9. Jumbo Shrimp
10. Tax Return

Oxymorons are intriguing and often downright funny, but they are different from paradoxes. The main distinction is that a paradox, although it may appear opposed to common sense, is nevertheless true. The Christian life is full of paradoxes, and the teaching of Jesus was replete with them. For example, He taught that...

- To find you must lose¹
- To be rich you must be poor²
- To live you must die³
- To be first you must be last⁴
- To be honored you must be humbled⁵

And to this list we could add others. Suffice it to say that paradoxes were a major component of Jesus's teaching, as they were in the writings of the Apostle Paul. One important example is found in Paul's description of the Macedonian believers: "Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity."⁶ These exemplary Christians personified what we could call the Principle of Generous Giving, the spiritual law that says *the rich-*

est generosity often comes out of the deepest poverty.

True generosity is not measured by the size of the gift but by the spirit of the giver, and the Macedonians had a joyous spirit which transcended their severe circumstances. They were a living paradox: poor yet rich, pressed down yet rising up, humbled yet exalted. What a beautiful picture they were of the way believers should be. Their stewardship was exceptional, and it made an impact on others over a wide region.

The Principle of Generous Giving reminds us that God uses the simple things to confound the wise, and the little things to accomplish great deeds. He is not impressed with outward appearances or natural abilities because "the Lord looks upon the heart."⁷ Some of the most effective servants of Jesus Christ have been the most unlikely men and women, people whose deepest longing was not to be known, but to make Him known. "Little is much if God is in it," says the well-known song, and it's true.

John Wesley was a paradox, the most unlikely leader of a major religious movement. A mere five feet four inches tall, he never weighed more than 120 pounds. As a child he was often sickly and at age six he nearly died when his home caught fire. But in his 88 years of life, spanning nearly the entire 18th century, he travelled more than a quarter million miles on horseback, preaching the Word and establishing churches. Along the way he delivered over 42,000 sermons and authored more than 200 books. He felt limited and inadequate, but he always found encouragement in God's promise: "I can do everything through him who gives me strength."⁸ As a steward he was so efficient that upon his death, after his debts were paid, he left an estate of less than ten pounds! He had given away nearly everything he ever acquired, not wanting to hoard or

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hang onto anything. What a testimony of godly diligence, and what an inspiration to live by the Principle of Generous Giving.

How shall we live by this important spiritual law? It comes down to several priorities:

Respond to need, not to pressure. The generous giver is prompted to give by seeing a need and being touched by it. There may be an emotional element, but the primary motive is spiritual. Giving is never to be done out of compulsion because it is a matter of grace, not law. We are to give because we want to give, love to give, and are grateful we can give.

Have an open heart and an open hand. Openness is willingness, and nothing pleases God more than

a heart that willingly yields to Him and a hand that willingly gives to Him. If one claims to have an open heart but is not willing to have an open hand, something is amiss, for the two should be inseparable.

Be a river, not a reservoir. Believers are channels, not containers. God's love and grace are to flow through us, not be held in us. As stewards, our compelling desire must be to constantly give and give and give as the river of God's blessings courses through our lives.

Scripture References:

¹Matthew 10:39; ²Matthew 5:3; ³Luke 17:33; ⁴Matthew 19:30; ⁵Matthew 23:12; ⁶2 Corinthians 8:2; ⁷1 Samuel 16:7; ⁸Philippians 4:13.

Dear Friend,

We are deeply grateful for your prayers and support for the *Pray 31* initiative last fall. I am thrilled to report that over one million people, using the *Pray 31 U.S. Prayer Atlas* every day during the month of October 2016, were storming heaven with their prayers prior to last fall's crucial elections.

We are also thankful for the honor of playing a role in the pivotal *Revive US* blockbuster with Kirk Cameron that opened in theaters on October 18. *Revive US* inspired hundreds of thousands of believers to get involved, to pray and to vote for a restored nation. As a result of our participation in these events, great opportunities for teaching our "newly awakened" citizens are opening up in 2017.

2017 marks the 500th Anniversary of the Christian Reformation. On October 31, 1517 Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the door of Wittenberg Church. At that moment, he chose to stand alone proclaiming that true salvation is found in Christ alone, by faith alone. In the following 40 years, the Bible was unleashed all over Europe and up to half of the population came to faith in Christ. That Reformation, a movement back to the Bible, was the most transforming event of the last millennium.

Our resolution and prayer for this New Year is that we will experience a true Reformation of faith, especially in America and Europe where the move back to the Bible began five centuries ago. God has called us to restore the Biblical foundations of our nation (Isaiah 58:12). Signs are all around that He is working this restoration.



Pray with me as I meet to plan major outreaches with leaders and missionaries from the Ukraine, Scotland, Germany and Switzerland. Your diligent prayers and your generous support are so vital at this critical turning point in our history. We are honored to have you as partners in the Gospel.

Yours for another Great Reformation in Western Civilization,



Marshall Foster



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