

Post-Election Word From Ben Franklin

Writing my regular commentary prior to election results posed a problem. After prayer, I sensed God's prompting to do what is done in Congress when someone says, "I yield the balance of my time to ..." Today I will defer to one of our oldest and most beloved Founding Fathers, Benjamin Franklin, whom God used in a providential way to rescue 55 delegates who gathered to try and establish a constitution that would soon serve as a framework for our emerging nation.

In our living room, my wife and I have a beautiful portrait of the delegates convening in Philadelphia in 1787. Washington, Madison, Hamilton, Franklin and others are pictured looking serene, all because of something Franklin triggered.

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Weren't they involved for weeks in toxic rancor, rage and division? Some of them even threatened to walk out after days of fruitless debate.

Passionate and polarized, they clashed furiously on topics such as representation, federal power versus state, limits of the executive branch, slavery and commerce.

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Then, just when everything appeared lost, the elder statesman (a deist among the overwhelming majority of Christians) appealed for quiet at a pivotal time. He then proposed something that was catalytic in altering not just the gathering but in becoming the solution that saved our nation

and gave us the longest surviving constitution in world history—now almost 240 years!

Our constitution was ratified in 1788. Three delegates held back from signing the initial documents, but whatever Franklin proposed they honored, then added the ingenious Bill of Rights, which was ratified in 1791. Franklin jokingly said, “Those still having objections should doubt a little of their own infallibility.”

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