

Remembering the Faith and Courage of America's Founders

In today's society where some people are frantically trying to erase America's history, the signers of the Declaration of Independence, a document which maintained that the 13 American states were free of British rule, clearly revealed their faith and sacrifice to ensure that this nation was founded upon Judeo-Christian principles and religious freedom.

A few months before signing the Declaration, Patrick Henry, a founder who served as the first and sixth post-colonial governor of Virginia, addressed the Virginia Convention and declared: "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 battle 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."

John Hancock, the presiding officer over the Second Continental Congress, became the first representative to sign the Declaration on July 4, 1776. Hancock left a sizable signature which started the modern-day idea of leaving a "John Hancock" on paperwork. In fact, according to a popular saying, he signed his name large so that King George could read it without his glasses. While that may or may not be true, it is factual that one of America's most ardent patriots put his life on the line with that signature. If the Revolutionary War were lost or he was caught, Hancock would have been hanged by the British. Yet Hancock said, "Principally and first of all, I give and recommend my soul into the hands of God that gave

it: and my body I recommend to the earth. Nothing doubting but at the general resurrection I shall receive the same again by the mercy and power of God.”

All 56 patriots who signed the Declaration took their duties so seriously to the people of the new nation that they made a promise “with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.” They signed the Declaration of Independence knowing that the penalty would be death if they were captured, and that pledge could literally cost them their lives and fortunes.

As a result, 17 men lost property because of British raids, and 12 had homes destroyed. Five lost their fortunes in helping fund the Continental Army and state militias battle the redcoats; five were captured by the British as traitors and tortured before they died. One had two sons imprisoned on a British starving ship, one had a son killed in battle, one had his wife die from harsh prison treatment and nine signers died in the Revolutionary War.

Liberty Counsel founder and Chairman Mat Staver said, “The Founders were deeply influenced by a Judeo-Christian worldview that gave them great courage to sacrifice everything in order to establish this great nation. Yet, for many of them, signing America’s birth certificate was their own death sentence. However, they knew that our rights come from God, not government, and that the sole purpose of government is to protect these inalienable rights whatever the cost. As we celebrate America’s birthday this weekend, we must continue to protect the priceless gift of our religious freedom and never forget the cost that was paid for it.” {eo}

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