

FAITH OF OUR FATHERS
GOD AND OUR CONSTITUTION
PSALM 127:1

We have an amazing document in the United States Constitution. It is the foundational document for the longest constitutional republic in the history of the world. Is the constitution based on Christian principles or do we have a godless constitution. (Kramnick and Moore who used no footnotes in their book by that name).

I. THE INFLUENCE OF PRAYER IN THE CONSTITUTION'S DEVELOPMENT.

A. The Plea from Benjamin Franklin.

1. Described the lack of progress in the previous weeks searching ancient and European models.
2. Asked if the nation had forgotten the powerful Friend who had heard their prayers during the war or if He was no longer needed.
3. Quoted Psalm 127:1 and called for prayer before each day's deliberations.

B. The Institution of Chaplains.

* This tradition is still carried on today. *

C. The Attitude of Benjamin Franklin.

"I am not to be understood to infer that our General Convention was divinely inspired when it formed the new Federal Constitution; yet I must own that I have so much faith in the general government of the world by Providence, that I can hardly conceive a transaction of such importance to the welfare of millions now in existence and to exist in the posterity of a great nation, should be suffered to pass without being in some degree influenced, guided, and governed by that omnipotent and beneficent Ruler in whom all inferior spirits love, and move and have their being" (Benjamin Morris, 304).

II. THE ATTITUDE OF THE MEN WHO DEVELOPED THE CONSTITUTION.

A. Their Education in Colonial America.

B. Their Quotations Reveal their Source of Authority.

* David Barton – 15,000 documents from the founding fathers were analyzed in reference to who the fathers most often cited as sources of guidance and information. The most oft quoted reference was the Bible with 34% of documented quotes coming from it.*

C. Scriptural Principles in our Legal System. (David Barton)

1. The separation of powers. Jer. 1:9.
2. Uniform immigration. Lev. 19:33-34.
3. Witnesses and capital punishment. Deut. 17:6.
4. President a natural born citizen. Deut. 17:15.
5. Tax exemption for churches. Ezra 7:24.
6. Republican form of government elected at county, state and national levels. Ex. 18:21.

III. THE FIRST AMENDMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION.

A. The Content of the First Amendment.

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof”

B. The Intent of the First Amendment.

1. The importance of original intent.

“ On every question of construction, carry ourselves back to the time when the Constitution was adopted, recollect the spirit manifested in the debates, and instead of trying what meaning may be squeezed out of the text, or invented against it, conform to the probable one in which it was passed” (Thomas Jefferson. Quoted by Gary Demar, 148).

2. The events that help us understand original intent.

- a. The concern that a national church would be established that would supplant state churches and independent churches.
- b. The awareness that Christianity permeated the American society.

C. The Demonstration of the Original Intent of the First Amendment.

1. Supreme Court Justice Joseph Story of the nineteenth century stated that the First Amendment was not intended to prostrate Christianity before other religions but to prevent rivalry between the different Christian denominations.

2. US Supreme Court Chief Justice William Rehnquist (1985) declared, “The wall of separation between church and state is a metaphor based on bad history, a metaphor which has proved useless as a guide to judging. It should be frankly and explicitly abandoned” (Lillback, 71).

3. The same congress that adopted the constitution had chaplains and passed resolutions for days of prayer.

4. Thomas Jefferson established and attended Sunday church services in the Capitol and had a military band play for those services.