

# Book review of the *Christian life and character of the civil institutions of the United States*

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## Opinion

### Book Review

*The Christian Life and Character of the Civil Institutions of the United States* by Benjamin F. Morris (2007), American Vision, Georgia, USA, pp. 1060.

No one should be President of the United States or hold any other office in the Executive, Legislative, or Judicial branches of any government in the United States without having read this book.

If you ever had any questions about the essential Christian nature of the origin of the United States of America, this book will answer them. From start to finish, the documentation is overwhelming and exhilarating for Christians. America began with the Pilgrims and their Christianity was all they knew. Indeed, it becomes evident that prior to today's communication technology (from newspapers to internet), reliable information and how to live were limited to the teachings and pronouncements from the churches. Almost all known was related to what was known from the Bible, the pulpit and related churches and church schools. In contrast, today, the people are influenced by an electronic technology which provides mostly fantasy garbage and non-being (that which is not Truth, Oneness, Good or Beauty) unworthy of following except for momentary meaningless thrills which, sad to say, influences greatly millions of suggestible and gullible people. Truly, America would not have happened with today's press & media nor is it likely to survive without those committed like the founders. Indeed, today, America is having a hard time surviving because those in charge of the press & media "know better" and do not really care about the original Constitution and flood the people with arrogant ignorance (a very bad combination).

The book details the Christian basis of every state. One example is the colonization of Maryland under the auspices of Lord Baltimore and his brother, Leonard Calvert, who took possession of this country "for our Lord Jesus Christ and for our sovereign lord the King of England" (Pg. 122). And there in Catholic Maryland, religious toleration was proclaimed as one of the absolute laws of the colony: be true to yourself and "live and let live." Catholic Maryland set the stage for religious tolerance and openness throughout all colonies.

The legislation of the Continental Congress (Chapter 10) is found to be overwhelming in its Christianity – of basically "everyone for everyone" – with the understanding of the need for God, the impact of God and the conceptualization of God on the outcome of all activities. In contrast, today, the primary concern of politicians is "What will the press & media do?" which almost always is ignorant of or rejecting the Christianity which, this book documents, created the United States.

Not that it was easy. The founders of America even argued about whose pastor would be the one to open Congress for the first time. They were so divided in religious sentiments, they could not agree until Mr. Samuel Adams rose and moved for a well known respected Episcopalian Clergyman. And on the 7th day of September, 1774,

he read the 31st Psalm which was the collect for that day. John Adams wrote: "This was the first morning after a horrible rumor of the cannonade of Boston. I never saw a greater effect produced on an audience. It seemed as if Heaven had ordained that Psalm to be read on that morning. It had an excellent effect on everybody here and I must beg you to read that Psalm." Then, gratefully, the book reproduces it for the edification of all on Page 247. It ought to be read every day by everyone. Quote after quote in the book proves the "good faith" (with the emphasis on "faith") arguing which went on and on in the Lord's name, all knowing they had to hammer out a way of life that was the Christian offering of love, freedom and sacrifice.

Then there is Congress' appropriation after the outbreak of the Revolution – to purchase, (guess what)... As duly described on the first order of Thursday, September 11, 1777, the founders realized it was too costly to print the desired 30,000 Bibles so they authorized the purchase of 20,000 copies by import (Pg. 252).

George Washington issued many orders always sounding Christian themes. In an indirect acknowledgement of intrauterine life, there is even an admonition to respect the unborn! "The fate of unborn millions will now depend under God, on the courage and conduct of the Army..." from general order of July 1776 (Pg. 342).

The prayerfulness of George Washington is described vividly. One cannot be moved more than the "The Scene At Valley Forge" (page 356) about the prayerful George Washington:

While the American Army was at Valley Forge, Isaac Potts strolled up a creek that ran through his farm, and, walking quietly through the woods, he heard the tones of a solemn voice, and, looking around, saw Washington's horse tied to a sapling. In a thicket nearby was Washington, on his knees, in earnest prayer. Like Moses, Mr. Potts felt he was on holy ground and retired unobserved. He returned home and, on entering the room of his wife, burst into tears and informed her what he had seen and heard and exclaimed, "If there is anyone on earth whom the Lord it will harken to, it is George Washington; and

I feel a presentiment that under such a commander there can be no doubt of our establishing independence and that God in his providence has willed it so.”

There is much more about the prayerfulness of George Washington who must have prayed almost always! His “Maxims When A Boy” (page 614-615) deserve universal promulgation every year to all children in every school (change to “Maxims When A Child”).

Of especial interest to Catholics is the sermon at the Philadelphia Cathedral Mass Celebration attended by Washington, Congress, and many others shortly after the British surrender at Yorktown on September 17, 1781 (pages 592-595). I add that the Catholic role (by the French especially) for America winning the Revolutionary War was crucial (There even were likely more priests with the French forces than Protestant pastors with the Americans at Yorktown): the French Fleet under Comte de Grasse controlling the sea; the 5,500 French soldiers under general Comte de Rochambeau with artillery (the Americans had no artillery); and British General Lord Cornwallis trying to surrender to French General Marquis de Lafayette instead of General Washington...no wonder they all went to celebrate a Catholic Mass afterwards as almost the first celebratory event at the end of the Revolutionary War with George Washington specifically thanking “a nation in which the Roman Catholic religion is professed.”

The book describes the Christian basis for all: the early colonies, the State Constitutions, the Federal Constitution, acts and scenes of the Army of the Revolution, government chaplains, the women of the revolution, capitol scenes, American Courts, and eminent judges.

Again, this is how things were in the days prior to the electronicelluloid print culture of philosophical, moral, and Christian degrading. Without a doubt, we would be better off if the press and media as we have today had never been brought into existence...or maybe all journalists and editors should read this book to learn how we got here and how we can survive.

What becomes clear is that the founders of America did not want to impose their religion on anyone nor did they want to deprive anyone of their religion. Thus, an unnamed Christianity was encouraged in a universal way as the broad umbrella under which all was conceptualized for the people. The founders were cautious and minimized the promotions of their own points of view except as universally reciprocated; they expected and received mutual collaboration efforts with no obstruction to such as universally tendered, offered, and lived in a genuine Christian manner to promote the massive universal unique Christian principles of love, freedom and sacrifice manifest primarily as charity for all—and no other religion can say that. Indeed, it was only Christians struggling to be Christian who could have given America to the world!

Unfortunately, thanks to the press and media overthrowing the Constitution (and the ignoring “natural born citizen” status for President is proof of that), the world is made up of suggestible idiots, gullible to all the advertising, slick promotions, loud colorful hawking, and smug somber firm statements by nicely dressed men and women. Without the mentality of the Christian founders of America, there is no America...and “Journalism” is the only “ISM” that could kill her when the people are not taught to thoughtfully remember and live the overlooked genuine Christianity of the founders whether they are Christian or not.

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None.

## Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.