

Independence week: an homage to the preachers

Known to the world was the great Christian revival, “The Great Awakening” of the 1740’s. Christianity roared through the colonies and their diverse Christian denominations. Men were reintroduced to the fervent commitment to their Creator, practiced by their puritan and pilgrim ancestors. As mankind has witnessed all through time, religious (that is, Christian) revival precedes the greatest moves of sustained liberty to man. Man’s allegiance to his God and Savior will always produce virtue, which is the essential strength that can overcome tyranny. To use the words of John Adams in a letter to his wife Abigail in 1776, “The only foundation of a free Constitution, is pure Virtue, and if this cannot be inspired into our People, in a greater Measure, than they have it now, They may change their Rulers, and the forms of Government, but they will not obtain a lasting Liberty. They will only exchange Tyrants and Tyrannies.”

Let us then speak of this cherished virtue and how it affected our country’s foundation.

Out of this virtue sprang many patriots including the Sons of Liberty. The initial goal of the Sons of Liberty, and patriots of all classes and distinctions, was to ensure their God-given rights as Englishmen.

They relayed in print the major events of their struggle for Liberty and would hold meetings to decide which candidates to support—those that would bring about the desired political change. In return, the British authorities attempted to denigrate the Sons of Liberty by referring to them as the “Sons of Violence” or the “Sons of Iniquity.”

Now working in unison with the Sons of Liberty for the cause

of liberty, colonial preachers espoused resistance and civil disobedience to the unjust rules of despotic kings and the lawless acts of a foreign parliament. These were not anarchists, for they also taught the necessity of obeying legitimate government. Their own colonial legislatures, which had been constituted from the duly elected representatives of the people, instilled a reverence and honor of good government, as well as contempt for tyrants. More than any other element of society, King George feared the preachers. He called them the "Black Regiment," because of the black clerical robes they wore when preaching. Were it not for the Black Regiment, it is most unlikely that there would have ever been a Declaration of Independence.

King George's fears of the Black Regiment were well founded. In all of recorded history, there has never been a more capable and persuasive group of military recruiters. Many a preacher single-handedly raised multiple companies of men, and in most cases, those men then insisted he be their commander. Their power of persuasion was simply irresistible; their love for liberty, and of their men, equally irresistible. The impassioned preacher could enlist more men than George Washington himself. Those who could not go to war often wrote stirring pamphlets to be circulated amongst the troops, so as to keep morale high.

No segment of society deserves more credit for America's founding and independence than do its preachers. They confronted the tyrant to his face and protested, "No king, but King Jesus!"

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