

Cape Henry: The Beginning of a Christian Nation

By The 700 Club

CBN.com - On April 29th, 1607, a nation was born. Travel-weary Englishmen landed at Cape Henry on the shores of Virginia and lay the foundation for what would become the most powerful country the world has ever seen. Act 1, scene 1 of the drama that was to be the United States unfolded that day at Cape Henry, and sparked the legacy of Godliness on American shores.

America's destiny and purpose were sealed with that cross at Cape Henry. All that would follow in our nation's growth hinged on the single proclamation that this land belonged to Jesus Christ.

In the Mayflower Compact of 1620, the Pilgrims reaffirmed the mission set forth by the original Virginia settlers.

"All of us were taught that the Pilgrims came to America for freedom of worship or religious freedom, but that's really not true," said Dr. Peter Marshall, an author and historian. "They said that they came to America to, 'propagate the gospel among the Indians and to become, themselves, stepping stones for the furtherance of the gospel to the outermost parts of the Earth.' So they were missionaries."

The Puritans carried the Cape Henry legacy further. On the deck of the Arbella, halfway between England and Cape Cod, leader John Winthrop declared, "We shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us, so that if we shall deal falsely with our God in this work we have undertaken and so cause him to withdraw his present help from us, we shall be made a story and a byword throughout the world."

"Winthrop's phrasing was revealing," said Marshall. "When you bring up Winthrop's phrase there, 'the city upon a hill,' that's the heart and the core of what America's been all about since day one. Point being here that the basis for American life was to be committed Christians who were to so let their light shine to one another and then to the whole world, that the world could see that as an example."

More than 100 years later, as America set off on her own course towards independence, the Godly foundations laid in Virginia established the character of our Revolution.



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"Before God, I believe the hour has come," said John Adams of the Revolution. "My judgment approves this measure and my whole heart is in it. All that I have, all that I am and all that I hope in this life I am now ready to stake upon it. And I leave off as I began, that live or die, survive or perish, I am for the Declaration. It is my living sentiment, and by the blessing of God, it shall be my dying sentiment. Independence now and independence forever."

George Washington's pure, Christian heart, Benjamin Franklin's call to prayer and John Adams' reverence for the will of God symbolize the undying commitment of our Founding Fathers to the creation of a nation which would glorify God. The American character was born in Scripture and nurtured by the Holy Spirit, yet today, our national heritage is under siege.

Bishop James Madison warned of such a risk in 1795: "The moment that religion, the pure and undefiled religion, loses its influence over our hearts, from that fatal moment, farewell to public and private happiness. Farewell--a long farewell--to virtue, to patriotism, to liberty."

Four hundred years have passed since America was first conceived at Cape Henry, and respect for our roots is growing cold. Yet one undeniable fact still remains: At its core, the United States of America is a Christian nation.