



The real roots of freedom

by Nancy Manley, MRW Chaplain

As we celebrate our country's 250th anniversary of freedom, we should take a look back at our real roots of freedom.

On December 21, 1620, a group of weary people, led by William Bradford, waded ashore to a place they considered "New Israel." They even came within one vote of adopting Hebrew as the official language of this new Plymouth Colony. Their official document was called the Mayflower

Compact, which established self-government and rule of law among the settlers. While not a constitution, it was a provisional agreement that adapted Puritan church covenant principles to a civil context, laying the foundation for Godly self government and democratic principles in America. (Later, Colonial charters were not only influenced by this document with its emphasis on law, order and collective decision making, but they quoted Scripture.)

The Mayflower Compact adopted specific laws from ancient Israel as the laws of their "New Israel"

Israel was set up as a commonwealth of free men.

The emphasis of Israel's system, given them by God in the Promised Land, was reflected in the proclamation: "Proclaim liberty throughout all the whole land to all its inhabitants." (Leviticus 25:10) This same proclamation became part of the American heritage and is emblazoned on our Liberty Bell.

Fundamental to their society was the basic code of solid morality and reliance on God.

Our Founders emphasized this. Ben Franklin said, "Only a virtuous people are capable of freedom; as nations become corrupt they have more need of masters." And John Adams said, "Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other." To this day all 50 state constitutions contain references to God.

The people of Israel organized into small manageable units, with a hierarchy of leaders. There was a strong emphasis on local government. The adults had a voice and a vote.

They had a system of honest money that was based on gold and silver and a strict honest measurement.

The land was looked upon as the private stewardship of the people, and their property rights were protected.

Their rights to life and liberty were protected.

The government was from the people upward, and it was required to operate according to the principles of law, not the whims of men.

When the time came for the United States to adopt a constitution, they modeled it after the Mayflower Compact, which was based on the ancient Israeli platform.

That is the foundation upon which the United States of America was built.

God Bless America, and make us worthy of your blessing!