

America's founding principles course work

[Experience](#), [Belief](#)



America is a unique nation (Madison 35). Its beginning can be traced back at an exact in history-July 4, 1776. It is one of the few nations in the world, whose citizens, apart from Native Americans, all came from someplace else. America is a nation of immigrants, and a truly diverse nation. The Americans believe in certain core principles, perhaps most succinctly expressed in their Declaration of independence. Americans believe that all men are equal and each of them is most multi-ethnic and multi-racial society (Mason 34). These values and beliefs hold them together and unify their nation. America's founding principles truly provide a relevant foundation from which to build a house united. This essay summarizes three American Founding principles: life, liberty and pursuit of happiness.

In the Declaration of Independence, the thirteen colonies gave their reasons for separation from Great Britain (Madison 53). They stated fundamental ideas about the nature of man and the government. First, they believed that all men have been endowed with unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness by their Creator. The Declaration points out that the governments must be instituted to `secure' the rights of the people, operating with the presumption that people will by nature seek their own gratification to the harm the life, liberty, and happiness of others. The belief that God created nature and human beings is the main cultural belief of the American people about religion (Mason 41).

The founders believed that if any form of government becomes destructive, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it, and to institute new government and lay its foundation on such principles, as well as organize its powers in such a form as it shall affect their safety and happiness. The

Declaration of Independence has a structure like that of a common law legal document. It clearly states that all men have a right to liberty only in so far as they are equal in nature. This means that no one is naturally superior and deserves to rule or inferior and deserves to be ruled. Individual liberty is the state of affairs, in which law abiding citizens can live according to their own choices rather than those of someone else (Madison 33). Individual liberty as the founders understood it is proportional to size and scope of government. Americans believe that the bigger the government, the less freedom they enjoy. For this reason America's government is limited by the remunerated power in a written constitution.

The Declaration goes on to articulate the end of the government in its second set of fundamental principles by pointing out that people must together lay the foundations of the government ``on such principles as to them shall seem most likely to affect their safety and happiness''. Does this mean that government must provide for the instant happiness of every person? The principles founders had a different understanding of the word happiness after observing humans throughout history. Adams says, ``all sober enquiries after truth, ancient and modern, pagan and Christian, have declared the happiness of man, as well as defined his dignity''(Mason 15). This government created by men obtains its powers from fellow created men and it is established to provide safety and happiness. In pursuing their own individual happiness, Americans have discovered that voluntary cooperation will increase the results of individual's initiatives and that the organization that such organization creates will also facilitate their goals. The fourth of July is a great opportunity for the Americans to renew their dedication to the

principles of liberty and equality enshrined in what Thomas Jefferson called ``the declaratory charter of our rights'' (Mason 14).

The founding principles today should be attacked having in mind whether they can remain true from one generation to the other. Therefore there is need for consideration of the relevance and the truth of these principles. It is also important to consider if any principles can remain relevant throughout history. According to Madison (33) human nature is under abuse. ' When the idea of natural rights no longer obtains on an individual level, the state', according to John Dewey (1859-1952) ' has the responsibility for creating institutions under which individuals can effectively realize the potentialities that are theirs'. Rather than speak as the founders did of rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, America today speaks of the right to housing and education and medical care and food. In the real sense, truths have come to mean that people who are not as hardworking , as talented or as fortunate have rightful claims on others resources. Madison (34) explains the difference between the founders and the modern view of rights is that rights today are not seen as existing prior to government; rather they are assigned as government gifts.

Work cited

Dr. Kenneth C. Mason. America's Founding Principles. James Madison.