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The Coop Report...

The 1st Amendment — Free Speech, Pornography, Cussin' and Such

Once again, we must first re-visit the historical backdrop surrounding the authorship of the 1st Amendment to understand the intent of the portion devoted to a citizen's right to "free speech."

When the British had only recently been defeated and America was in its infancy, our country had been through its first struggle for the freedom, victorious against its former benefactor. Formerly under British rule, the citizens of the colony in America were not allowed the freedom to speak out against its tyrannical monarchy. According to the laws of the day, (before America won its freedom) those who did, were subject to some form of discipline, fine, etc.

It is important to remember also, that as discussed in last month's edition, America was founded by a group of men and women who wanted to have the freedom to worship Christ according to their interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, not just the way the Anglican Church wanted everyone to worship. America **was** founded as a *Christian* nation. This historical fact remains important background information for this discussion, as well.

The Amendment

Let's review the amendment ...

> *"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."*

The Intent

Here are the twenty-three words we're interested in discussing in this edition…

> "Congress shall make no law…abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press…to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

If you closely examine all of the key words of this amendment, especially the last nine words, its focus was to insure that the citizens of America would retain a legal right to challenge the government and its elected representatives of the people by the spoken word and the prevailing media of the day (the press).

(Most people who would have us believe otherwise leave out these last nine words.)

The authors simply sought to guarantee its citizens' the right to voice their opinions about the conduct of their newly formed government. After all, the government was created *"for the people and by the people."* It was designed to keep the people in control of their government by allowing them the freedom to criticize it.

The Enemy's Response

The amendments referral to "free speech was not intended to permit its citizens to freely espouse their sexual or otherwise morally offensive desires and agendas. It was not intended to allow the profane to openly exhibit or impose their licentious lifestyles in order to undermine or otherwise dilute the Christian foundation of America.

To argue otherwise, you would have to ignore the fact that 54 of the 55 authors and signers of the Constitution were practicing Christians. As a testimony to their Christian faith, it is also documented that 94% of all of the recorded quotations (15,000 of them that appeared in newspapers, articles, and books) from our founding forefathers were excerpted from the Bible.

Nonetheless, taken out of context and removed from the timeline of the historical period in which it was written, many people in our country began, during last half of the last century, to claim that this amendment afforded them the right to public displays of nudity ("live" displays, as well as publications containing nudity), sexually explicit or provocative advertisements, unrestricted use of profane language, or flag burning, just to name a few. They called this "freedom of expression" and claimed it to be synonymous with the amendment's focus on "freedom of speech."

Their agenda and intent continues to find ways to cause modern America to adapt to their morally deficient lifestyle. (Remember Sodom and Gomorrah, Rome, etc.?)

In just the four or five decades, the legal bandwidth of tolerance for these types of "free expressions" by the individual has dramatically widened and altered the character of America.

For 50+ year olds reflecting on the days of their youth, today's T.V. is emblazoned with all of the things that were

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only available in the more remote and darkest corners of the big city underworld. From daytime soaps to the evening sit-coms and hours of suggestive commercials in-between, hardly a day goes by where we are not exposed to sex, bad language, or violent outbursts careening through the air ways.

Freedom is Not Free

Since the birth of our nation, this privilege of being able to speak or print your feelings about our government has survived, keeping us free from the rule of other nations and would be "kings." It has not come without a price, as is evidenced by the all of the wars (including the very Revolutionary War) that started our whole process of democracy. No, freedom is not free, never has been and never will be.

An additional factor that must be considered regarding our right to speak freely about our government is whether or not "free speech" (within its intended boundary) is really a "right" or a privilege? In our land of many freedoms, there are those who argue that everyone has a "right" to do and say as they please. If everyone could do and say as they pleased, however, there would be no civil obedience...there would be no moral fiber...no "glue" to hold our society together.

Consequently, our freedoms cannot be exercised without carefully considering how they may affect the stability...the very survival of our nation. Such was the case in WWII when the phrase, "Loose lips sink ships" was born, which referred to the need of all patriots in America to guard against talking about the deployment of our naval ships in public places where our enemy may be listening.

Our freedoms, one of which is the right to "free speech," must be exercised responsibly. Individually, we must be accountable for what we say, how we say it, to whom we say it, and when we say it.

What Next?

So, what can you do? For starters, strike up some conversation with your next door neighbor and your acquaintances at work and check out where they stand on their knowledge of the intent of the 1st Amendment. Educate yourself on this vital matter and those who need educating. Enlist those who already are educated and continue to spread the word.

Write to your congressman or congresswoman...your duly appointed elected officials...and tell them you want to restore the original intent of our Constitution. *Educate them!*

To locate your US Congressperson, go to the internet and access http://www.house.gov. To locate your US Senator, go to http://www.senate.gov.

Never assume others with your same agenda will take care of this business for you. We have too much to lose if YOU don't get involved...your voice must be heard.

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