

The Making of America By Cleon Skousen

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Summary

Everyone should read this book, and you will have to invest a good amount of time because it is a large book. However, it is worth the sacrifice. The U.S. Constitution is the foundation of liberty and freedom for the entire world.

America's Founding Fathers were truly raised up and inspired by God to create the Constitution, which produced the richest nation with the highest standard of living in the world. Additionally, America understands where much is given much is expected. For example, America frequently forgave other nations debts.

The United States of America is a special nation to the Lord because of the freedoms guaranteed in the U.S. Constitution. It has done more for freedom around the world than any other country. And freedom is the greatest gift America can give to the world. Any struggling and undeveloped nation can be lifted out of poverty or political oppression by living the principles in the U.S. Constitution.

Skousen felt the constitutional principles, "may turn out to be the key for the survival of the human family on the planet earth."

We can easily lose our freedoms in one generation if the American values of the U.S. Constitution and freedom are not passed down to our children. We cannot take our freedoms for granted!

The Three Universal Desires Of Every Human On Earth

1. Freedom
2. Prosperity
3. Peace

The Revolutionary War And The Challenges It Faced

Winning the Revolutionary War was an absolute miracle that was only possible because of God. There is only one reasonable explanation for how we won the war. God won it!

First off, most American's were comfortable under British rule. Fortunately however some brave souls were willing to fight; and they fought with almost no government support.

At that time the federal government had not yet been established. Therefore, any pay and supplies were provided by the few states that were willing to support the war. Most states did not help because they had no legal obligation to help and there were not many states at that time.

During the Revolutionary War Congress operated under Articles of Confederation, which gave all power to the states. The federal government had no power to tax; therefore, the entire burden of supporting the war fell upon the individual states if they wanted to help. None were forced to support the war.

Additionally, America was not a unified nation because each state was their own sovereign entity.

God won the Revolutionary War and the Founders knew it.

In our current day we think that every American supported the war effort because the Revolutionary war brought us unprecedented freedom and prosperity. However, American support was limited. Compared to everyone else in the world, they had the highest standard of living and the most freedom. Additionally, the British King made compromises giving American's more reasons not to fight. Very few chose to fight and those who did paid a heavy price.

The farmer warriors suffered tremendously. For example, most were not paid and since it was not an organized Army but mostly farmers (fighting the world's superpower) they received little to no supplies. Many could desert without any serious consequences. Freedom was their sole reason for fighting. For example, the federal government was not yet established to give them any other reason to fight.

The Freedom Formula

What or who inspired the Founding Fathers? The Bible was their primary source of inspiration. Specifically, Thomas Jefferson was the primary mastermind behind discovering the freedom formula. The lessons they learned from Moses formed their ideas for the Constitution. Once Moses escaped Pharaoh, how would he provide for their needs? At first Moses tried to govern by himself and not because he wanted to be dictator. He had no prior experience doing something like this; therefore, he learned on the job from others and the Lord.

Leading and managing a massive group of freed slaves was not easy. These were people who lived their entire life controlled by others and told what to do at every moment. No wonder once freed they didn't know what to do. Their tendency was still to be ruled over.

Managing everyone himself eventually turned into a burden too heavy to bear. Eventually, Moses' father in law counseled him to divide the group into various small groups and give each leader the responsibility to lead and govern. This lifted a heavy burden off Moses' shoulders. Therefore, the people were now responsible for their own life and ultimately accountable to God. Thus, the people were expected to govern their own life and solve their own problems. Not Moses! Not the government.

Several small governments were formed under Moses' direction. He created a system where the individual was sovereign, responsible and accountable.

Now, everything is resolved at the lowest level allowing Moses to govern with mostly a hands off approach, and leaving him free to deal with only the most serious cases.

In like manner the Founding Fathers wanted the president to have few duties.

A Republic of Representatives Is The Critical Element of Freedom

The power and magic of Moses' system was representatives. Moses governed by representatives. That is, the people elected people who they knew and trusted to represent them and make decisions in their behalf.

A pure democracy is disastrous for freedom. That is because everyone must participate; however, only the rich and upper class (elite) would get involved. The middle class and the poor are too worried about paying their bills. Therefore, only the rich would benefit because they would get laws passed that benefited them only. They would not care about anyone else, and the minority would not be represented.

Electing representatives solves this problem. If the representatives want votes they will care about everyone and not just a select group of people. As a result, the minorities will have their voices heard because the politician also wants their vote.

Thomas Jefferson

Thomas Jefferson discovered the freedom formula and he wrote the Declaration of Independence.

He was born April 13, 1743 in Virginia to a very influential father who taught him to work hard by example. However, sadly Thomas lost his father at 14; but, he used his inheritance to start college young and he graduated when he was 19 from William and Mary. And, his quest for knowledge made him one of the best attorneys in the country. It also helped that his professor was a prominent legal scholar who pushed Thomas to learn everything possible.

In general, Thomas Jefferson loved to learn just about everything possible and he became a subject matter expert in a wide variety of subjects. For example, he would study for 14 hours per day late into the night and still get up early to study some more. He became a subject matter expert in many fields to the point that professionals such as engineers thought he was an engineer.

Professionals such as engineers thought Thomas was also an engineer because of his knowledge. Several other professionals in different fields could say the same thing.

Languages were very important to him and by the time he was an adult he could read several languages including; Latin, Greek, Spanish, Italian and Anglo-Saxon, and also became very fluent in French.

Patrick Henry changed Thomas Jefferson's life. One day in the House of Burgesses, Thomas heard Patrick speak about freedom, and that speech ignited a flame in his soul. That motivated him to give up practicing law and dedicate his life to the cause of freedom.

The Declaration of Independence

Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence, and here are the highlights:

1. **Self-evident truths must control governments.** The self-evident truths must be so obvious and morally sound that people would accept them without reservation.
2. **God determined that man is equal.** This doesn't mean we are all the same or need to be of the same social or economic class. For example, the billionaire is not better than a poor man, and vice versa. We are all equal in His sight, that is, God is no respecter of persons.
3. **These unalienable rights are from God** and no man has the right to tamper with them without receiving the wrath and justice of God.

4. **Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are crucial unalienable rights.**
These rights allow you to pursue your dreams and fulfill your divine destiny.
5. The entire purpose of a government is to protect and preserve the rights of individual citizens.
6. Government and any government agency can only exist by the consent and approval of the people.
7. The people have a right to set up a government that will protect their rights if their current government is not doing so.

The final sentence of the Declaration of Independence the signers said, "And for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, fortunes, and our sacred honor."

The Founding Fathers who signed the Declaration of Independence were willing to sacrifice everything for our freedom, and knew the consequences for losing the Revolutionary war. They would be martyrs!

Thomas Jefferson Resigns From Congress

Shocking his colleagues in Congress, Thomas Jefferson resigns to care for his ill wife and to build up Virginia's Constitution because he felt strongly that a strong constitution needed to be in place when the Revolutionary War was over.

He wanted Virginia's Constitution to be the model for the U.S. Constitution. That is why he wasted no time by writing a storm of bills designed to eliminate an aristocratic form of government and secure a republic.

Additionally, he wrote so many bills because he feared chaos and disorder because he didn't think people would know what to do with freedom.

The Two Extremes of Government

The Rulers Law

Ruler's law is when a king or elite group has all power. The perfect government has just enough power to protect the inalienable rights of the individuals. The Founding Fathers understood history and the pattern of nations to move toward anarchy or tyranny. This is why they did everything in their power to prevent this in America. How?

Give control to the people!!

Giving the people control ensured the middle ground.

Other names for Rulers Law include; monarchy, autocracy, plutocracy, aristocracy, oligarchy, empire, and military dictatorship.

The Rulers Law is tyranny. That is because all power resides with the central government, and they make and interpret all the laws. There are no checks and balances, and no separation of powers. Tyranny always transpires when all power resides with one person or ruling committee.

That is why the Founders considered the Rulers Law the greatest threat to freedom and self-government. The people have no say!

Some of the core characteristics of Rulers Law are;

- The ruler (i.e. governing body) considers the people their subjects.
- The people have no unalienable rights.
- It is a top down form of government and not a bottom up. That is the government is not by the people and for the people.
- The people themselves are not allowed to solve their own problems. Instead government agencies and committees are formed to solve problems that should be left to the people themselves to solve.
- The record of Rulers Law is blood and horror. The governing body lives in comfort and ease while most others live in poverty and misery because of high taxation and extreme regulations.

George Washington is a great example for all presidents. He had every opportunity to take over as king but he refused because he didn't care about power.

The People's Law

With people's law, the power base is with the people not the government. This prevents any kind of elitism taking control.

Thomas Jefferson said in the Declaration of Independence; "To secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed....Whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness."

The Powers of The Federal And State Governments

The Founding Fathers created the perfect balance of powers between the federal and state governments. If followed, the Constitution would provide for the greatest amount of freedom for every individual at every level. Fortunately, the powers given to the Federal Government are few and defined, and those given to the states are many. The powers of the Federal Government are for external reasons such as war, peace, negotiations with foreign governments and foreign commerce, and taxation.

The states maintain the greatest power, because the power base is with the people. This system of state control is effective both politically and economically.

Additionally, strong local governments are the strongest defense against corruption.

Furthermore the Founding Fathers expected the states to deal with their own internal issues. They didn't want the federal government to meddle with state problems. Basically, following Moses' example the federal government is assigned a few specific responsibilities and leaving the bulk of everything else up to the states.

However, states must follow federal laws and those should be minimal. Congress makes laws for the nation. The best laws are made at the state level, and this is because the people hold their state legislatures more accountable than the national lawmakers such as congress.

Governments function best when they leave responsibility for the individuals to govern their own lives. This is the genius of the constitution to make the individual sovereign. Therefore, guaranteeing him life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. This requires each person the right to private property.

The Individual Is Supreme

The Declaration of Independence says; "We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."

All men are created equal! This doesn't mean the government must make everyone the same through socialism and communism.

Our inherent self worth to God is the same irrespective of our social class.

The sovereignty of the individual means that each individual can make better decisions for himself and his family than the government. This is why socialism and communism are so dangerous.

It destroys individual freedom!

That is why the Founders specifically made socialism/communism illegal in the constitution.

The Family Is The Foundation Of Every Society

Every government and society fails when the family is not protected. This is why the family is the most important unit in any society. No school, church or community can replace the parents in any way especially as teachers and mentors. There are only certain situations when the government has the right to intervene in the affairs of the family. Government can intervene if the family is abusing the children or grossly neglecting them, and also if the family is using their home for criminal purposes.

The Community

The community is responsible for providing the basic infrastructure and necessities, such as schools, roads and police. This is not the role of the federal government.

The County

A collection of communities can handle some things more efficiently than individual communities. Therefore, they combine to form a county. The county is responsible for minor and serious crimes and the building of jails.

The State

The state is designed to help the communities and county's function correctly. The state has the rights to make and enforce laws for the state, tax and regulate commerce, build the infrastructure such as roads, and to build public schools.

Intruding in the private morals of individuals is abusing state power unless it harms society as a whole. Pornography is a good example of this, and there is much debate about the damage to society as a whole pornography causes. A few states declared pornography a public health crisis. There is no question that pornography is a drug that causes physical damage to the brain.

Should pornography be illegal at any level?

The Federal Government

The federal government has important powers but they are limited to only 20 by the constitution. Therefore, it should have mostly a hands off approach. This list is the duty of the federal government and anything beyond it is the responsibility of the states. For example, the federal government should have nothing to do with welfare. Instead the states must take on this burden. Otherwise it will make slaves of us and might destroy our economic prosperity. Welfare always works best at the local level. Otherwise, there is no accountability and opens wide the door for abuse.

When wicked people rule the people suffer. You can see this the best with socialist dictators. Eventually, these rulers run out of money because they have taken it all from the people, and there is nothing left.

If you want to see how socialism is currently destroying a nation look at what is happening in Venezuela right now. Their dreadful condition proves socialism is corrupt and destructive.

Powers Of The Federal Government

- Foreign affairs
- War
- Peace
- National security
- Interstate commerce
- Federal taxes
- Naturalization
- Patents
- Bankruptcy
- Federal lands and property
- Federal finance
- Coining of money
- Fixing weights and measures
- Establishing post offices
- Federal Courts
- Crimes on the high seas
- Violating the laws of nations

The Three Branches of Government

1. Legislative: House and Senate

2. Executive
3. Judicial

Legislative

The legislature is the only branch in government that can make laws. The President (executive) can write bills but only congress can pass them. The Supreme Court (Judicial) interprets laws based on the constitution. However, all too often they legislate from the bench. The Legislature comprises the Senate and The House of Representatives.

The Senate

Every state has the same number of Senators, which are two. This prevents the larger states from overpowering the smaller ones. Originally, Senators were appointed by the state legislatures directly and not by the popular vote. This changed when the Seventeenth Amendment turned it into a popular vote and a result state representation terminated.

For example, the Founders felt state legislatures should appoint Senators not the popular vote. This was an important check and balance because the Founders were wise to recognize that the population at large is not educated in politics. Therefore, some politicians should be chosen by trusted and experienced legislatures to ensure competent statesmen would represent and defend state rights in the national level.

Because Senators are elected by the people and not the state they cater to the people who voted for them instead of fighting for state rights.

The House of Representatives

Representatives are elected according to congressional districts; and therefore are based on the state population. This is why we are a republic and not a pure democracy. Furthermore, a republic produces the greatest level of freedom. A democracy does not. California for example has the most representatives because it is the largest state. However, the maximum number of representatives nationwide is limited to a total of 435.

The House of Representatives is known as the lower house and is responsible for the money issues.

Important Guidelines For Congress (The Legislative Branch)

- Laws should be few.
- Bills should be written simply in layman's terms.
- The House examines laws for the nation, and the Senate for the state.
- The President must review each law approved by Congress.

Article V is a last ditch effort to save freedom due to politicians shredding the constitution. However, this would not be necessary if our representatives followed the constitution.

Powers of Congress

I have already mentioned that only Congress can pass laws for the nation but it is also responsible for policing the politicians. For example Congress has the Constitutional power to impeach just about anyone, including the President and the Supreme Court judges.

Additionally, Congress can also impeach fellow congressman and senators if they can prove they were elected by their states illegally. And it can punish its own members for misconduct and bad behavior.

Senators and Congressman can't double dip. They can't be a congressman or senator and also have another government job. This is a significant check and balance that prevents corruption. Imagine if Congress members also worked for the president. They would be more loyal to the President than the people who elected them.

The Legislative Process

Thousands of bills are introduced in Congress each session and approximately 90% don't survive the screening process. For example, a congressman writes a bill and then it goes to a committee who discusses and debates it as a group. They automatically throw out the bad bills and move forward with the ones they want to vote on.

The Right To Raise Taxes

Only our Representatives have the right to raise taxes and it is an important part of the Federal Government. However, it should only be done for specific purposes, such as to defend the nation. Taxes should not be used to increase the size of government or expand the general welfare.

America learned a hard lesson during the Revolutionary War that independent states can't support a national army. Similarly, the Founding Fathers felt strongly the importance of a strong national military.

The base of security and protection for the Founders revolved around a strong economy (not one burdened by heavy national debt), high standard of public morality, and a military preparedness that would discourage any enemy from waging war against us.

Additionally, the Founders knew the sword and debt were the two primary means this nation could be conquered and enslaved.

The Founders had strong warnings against public debt;

- Do not pass on the national debt to future generations, and doing so is immoral.
- Thomas Jefferson rejected the belief that "a public debt is a public blessing."
- A debt free nation is critical for survival.
- Oppressive taxation results from national debt.

As president, Thomas Jefferson eliminated as many taxes as possible; and he paid off the Revolutionary War debt in eight years by selling public lands. This shows their disdain for debt. In fact, they considered debt a great evil.

Furthermore, they restricted collecting taxes to specific methods. For example, they saw direct taxes such as property tax and personal income tax unconstitutional. Therefore, using taxes for the general welfare or bailing out failed businesses would not happen under the Founding Fathers.

This doesn't mean they were selfish or didn't care about the poor and needy. They were concerned! However, it was strictly the states responsibility and not the federal governments duty.

Fortunately, they made it so the president couldn't stall everything. If congress writes a bill and the president sits on it and does nothing, after some time passes it automatically becomes law.

Passing bills into law is a long and necessary process. This is why most bills are not voted on because it doesn't get past committees whose job is to weed out the bad ones kill the necessary screening process and many.

Restrictions on Lawmaking

Congress doesn't have the freedom to pass any law they want. In addition to using the Constitution as their rule book they must also follow these principles;

1. Congress is not above the law.
2. Congress cannot delegate their legislative (lawmaking) powers to anyone else. This duty is fixed to them alone.
3. Congress cannot write and pass laws that violate the “Law of Nature,” and if they do the law becomes null and void. The Law of Nature is the will of his Maker. This means laws cannot violate the commandments of God. There are indisputable laws of human nature that deal with good and evil. The Founders call these “natural rights” which are life and liberty.
4. Laws can’t be created for the purposes to destroy justice. The law can’t demolish its own purpose. That is, laws can’t exploit individuals, liberty or personal property.

The Judicial Branch

Judges cannot make laws!!!

If there is one major weakness in the American system it is the Supreme Court.

The courts only job is to enforce laws passed by the legislatures (congress and state lawmakers); and they must do it using the Constitution as their strict guide. Furthermore, they should interpret the Constitution based on the intent of the Founding Fathers, and not their own opinions.

Gay marriage is a good recent example of Judges “legislating from the bench.” Congress never wrote a bill or voted on a bill regarding gay marriage. This was a case of the Supreme Court judges forcing their agenda on the nation. Technically therefore, the gay marriage ruling by the Supreme Court is unconstitutional and null and void. And, this applies to every other ruling they made on their own.

The Founding Fathers did not want the Supreme Court to be burdened by trivial cases or issues the states should handle. Instead, the Supreme Court should only deal with cases that involve the entire nation. Fortunately, most cases are state concerns; however, many local matters are often pushed up to the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court is the guardian of the Constitution, and that made them king because there are no real checks on the Supreme Court. This supremacy clause also gives the Supreme Court the right to review laws passed by Congress to ensure they are not violating the Constitution.

Who reviews the Supreme Court?

Officially, Congress can but they don’t. Additionally, Congress can also impeach Supreme Court judges but this also never happens.

The Supremacy Clause

The supremacy clause declares the U.S. Constitution, the federal laws and treaties the supreme law of the land. Therefore, states cannot violate a national law.

And, it gives the Supreme Court the final say. That is why the Supreme Court could be our greatest internal threat to our freedoms. For example, they are not accountable to anyone but Congress. However, they don't fear Congress and Congress isn't concerned that the Supreme Court legislates from the bench. Otherwise they would stop these judges.

Thomas Jefferson was particularly fearful about giving so much power to the judicial branch to the point he thought the entire government might be destroyed. Namely, he thought the lack of checks and balances on the Supreme Court would undo everything. He warned state rights could be hijacked little by little by the Supreme Court until it becomes the center of all power. That would destroy the general freedoms of every American. Additionally, Jefferson was troubled that the federal government would be powerless to counter a corrupted Supreme Court. Ultimately, he felt it could become tyrannical.

Common Law Jury

The common-law jury was a brilliant idea that could have protected us from a corrupted Supreme Court; however the common law jury didn't last long. This gave the common people great power; which is what the government was designed for.

If I understand the common law jury correctly, these jurors could make the final decision of a case based on the facts. Additionally, they were another check and balance because they could declare someone innocent of a crime that should have been made law. And their decision was final overriding the judge. The judge could not interpret the law for them or direct their decision like he can today.

Unfortunately, common law jury ended in 1895. Since then the court (judge) instructs the jurors how the law must be interpreted and applied.

The Executive Branch

The executive branch of government is the president of the United States and is considered the most powerful political office in the world.

By design the President shouldn't have much to do. If he were following the Constitution he would only have these responsibilities;

1. Chief of state over all Americans.
2. Commander and chief over the military.
3. The chief executive officer over the whole executive branch of the government.
4. The chief diplomat in handling foreign relations.
5. Lead out in needed legislation.
6. Authority to grant pardons and reprieves.

The Founders would be shocked to see how the president's role has become too large and extending far beyond the scope of the Constitution.

All bills are sent to the President for review, and if he likes it he signs it as the law of the land. But if he rejects the bill he sends it back to congress with his comments. Then, congress debates the bill further and decides if they still want to make it a law despite the president's objections.

Prosperity Economics

The free-market economy made the United States of America the richest nation in the world with the highest standard of living. This economic prosperity has attracted many people throughout the years.

Groups That Make Up The Economy

Entrepreneurs And Business Owners

This group is the power base behind any strong national economy. They generate the jobs and supply the products and services. For example, no government, federal or state should be the primary employer of the masses. This is because taxes pay for their salaries, and if most people were on the government payroll it would destroy any economy. Therefore, the entrepreneurs and business owners are the backbone of every strong economy.

Sales and Service Workers

No business can survive without sales. Therefore, the sales force is key. This group also includes the self-employed who are not business owners.

The General Workforce

This is the labor force for the entrepreneurs and businessmen. Most people fall in this category and it includes the skilled and unskilled labor.

The Four Fundamental Economic Freedoms

1. The freedom to try.
2. The freedom to buy.
3. The freedom to sell.
4. The freedom to fail.

The free-market system thrives when the government leaves it alone. This is why socialism and communism destroys freedom particularly economic freedom. Eventually, socialist governments run out of other people's money. All societies who try socialism fail.

There are situations when the government must get involved but these are very few in a free market system. Those rare cases of government intervention are to prevent crime and fraud, to thwart a monopoly and stop moral perversion.

The Profit Motive

It might seem counterproductive but a businessman's ambition to succeed blesses everyone. This is assuming he is not corrupt.

The Importance of Competition

Competition is important in the market place because it improves products and services and reduces waste.

Price controls for example are a corrupted way to manage the free market system. The government does this to help the poor, but it never works and always causes more harm than good. For example, price controls reduce the wide selection of products and services.

A good illustration of this is when the government tried to control the potato market. The government thought potatoes cost too much so they forced prices down. However, farmers responded by not selling potatoes because they could not make a profit. Everyone lost!

Therefore, everyone loses with price controls!

Sometimes socialist countries try to determine the varieties of products in the marketplace. For whatever reason the government might determine that a certain kind of cheese is not necessary, and therefore ban anyone from selling it.

Fortunately, the free market system doesn't have this problem. For instance, there is no threat with too many choices because the products that do not sell are eventually not offered. Hence, people vote with their pocket books and the inferior products go out of business.

The Founders Considered The Welfare State Unconstitutional

The Founding Fathers felt a strong duty to help the poor and needy; however, it had to be done in the right way. Self-help is the right way, which is to help people become self-sufficient.

Welfare should be done at the smallest level and ideally the family should handle this problem and leave the government out of it completely. These steps should be followed. First, do everything possible to help yourself. Second, turn to your immediate family then extended family. Then turn to your church if you have exhausted up all your family resources. Finally, use the local community and state as a last resort.

Never should the federal government be involved in welfare.

Other Principles of Welfare

- It must be a program of self-help. Don't provide for their every want so they don't become entitled and lazy.
- Reward them by earned achievement instead of giving free money.
- Financial help should not be long term.

Certainly there are exceptions. Some people are disabled to the point they are not employable. Furthermore, lifelong disability requires lifelong financial help. However, I feel charitable and non-profit organizations should fulfill this role and not the government.

Bret Bradshaw

This book review is found at bretadambradshaw.com

