

## 1450 A “Holy Experiment”

In the early days of America, Pennsylvania was a rare colony. Many referred to it as a “Holy Experiment” for persecuted European believers. William Penn established his colony with an emphasis on Christian tolerance. He and his colony did not tolerate moral misbehavior; they tolerated conscientious Christian beliefs that differed from theirs.

Mr. Penn envisioned and established a “great towne” as a commerce center to garner the world’s respect. He called it “Philadelphia,” meaning “brotherly love” in Greek. The city would become the location for signing the Declaration of Independence and the US Constitution and served as the US Capital for a time. It had America’s first lending library, bank, hospital, and stock exchange. Philadelphia and the rest of the colony welcomed people from numerous religious backgrounds, including Amish, Mennonites, Catholics, Lutherans, Dunkards, Moravians, French Catholic Huguenots, and Jews. This land of religious freedom opened the door for the first African-American denomination, the African Methodist Episcopal Church.<sup>1</sup>

On March 10, 1681, King Charles II gave William Penn the Pennsylvania Charter. The king had owed William’s father, Admiral Sir William Penn, a sizeable debt and used Pennsylvania to repay it. Admiral Penn was famous for capturing Jamaica and defeating the Dutch for the British Empire.

The younger William Penn was as unique as the colony he established. He thirsted for religious freedom and serving God from one’s conscience. He got into trouble while attending Oxford because he conducted prayer meetings in his room rather than attending the local Anglican Church services. When he converted to Quakerism, his father beat him with a cane. The king even imprisoned him in the Tower of London. To go against the Church of England was treason to the king, of which he was the head as with the government.

Not only was the colony unique in its tolerance for persecuted believers, but it was also unique in its dealings with the Delaware Indian nation. Rather than using the King’s charter to steal the land from the natives, Penn purchased the land for a fair sum. As a result of Penn’s fairness, the Indians spared Philadelphia from their terrorizing attacks. Before his arrival, he wrote to the Delaware chiefs and said:

My friends, there is one God ... and He hath made ... the king of the country where I live; give... unto you ... consent that we may always live together as ... friends.

The Indians saw the immigrating Europeans as “illegal aliens” taking over their lands as invaders. William Penn and the Pilgrims before him did not steal from the inhabitants. They purchased their property and made treaties. Instead of taking unfair advantage of the natives, many European Christians came to serve and share the gospel with them.<sup>2</sup>

Compare Penn and his immigrants to the current illegal alien invasion. As someone has pointed out, “We owe the illegals nothing and our veterans everything.” Yet, how many of our veterans are homeless or poor while the illegals live in five-star hotels with a substantial monthly income, adding to our national debt and taxpayer expense?

Another positive attribute of William Penn was his wisdom in establishing a government for the Pennsylvania colony. Mr. Penn drafted a proposal to provide for a democratic system with freedom of religion, free and fair trials, freedom from unjust imprisonment, freedom of the press, the right to private

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<sup>1</sup> Cummings, Brad, and Lance Wubbels, editors. *The Founders' Bible*. Newbury Park, CA, Shiloh Road Publishers, 2012, pp. 1931-1843.

<sup>2</sup> Federer, William J. *American Minute*. St. Louis, Amerisearch, Inc., 2012, p. 76.

property, free elections by secret (paper) ballots, no taxation without representation, and a separation of administrative powers. The colony extended equal justice and treatment to the Native Americans.

I am sure you recognize that these qualities of government have become the basis for the US Constitution. It is too bad Pennsylvania, other US states, and our federal government have forgotten our roots. Otherwise, we would fight to keep election integrity and fairness in dealing with people like the J6-ers.

William Penn and the Pennsylvania settlers embodied Proverbs 29:2 (NKJV): "When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; But when a wicked *man* rules, the people groan." (This is rather apropos for today, wouldn't you say?) A century before our Declaration of Independence, Penn declared:

Governments, like clocks, go from the motions men give them; and as governments are made and moved by men, so by them, they are ruined, too. ... Wherefore governments rather depend upon men than men upon governments, let men be good and the government cannot go bad. ... But if men be bad, let the government never be so good, they will endeavor to warp and spoil it to their own turn.

William Penn's "Holy Experiment" proved successful – for a while. As long as people seek God and His will, God blesses them. When they become self-centered, they waver, and He withholds His gifts. There are lessons we can learn from our history. We are faltering because we have forgotten God, tolerance, and "Philadelphia" – i.e., "Brotherly Love." We've turned our once-Christian nation into a "den of robbers," and you remember Christ's actions toward those He labeled with that title.

Let's reconnect with God and ...

Keep The Light *of the Holy Experiment* Burning!  
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