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By Lynn Stoddard

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Washington and the Miracles of America’s Founding

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Cover art by Arnold Friberg.
George Washington faced a grim moment January 1, 1777. All enlistments for the Continental Army had expired on that date and all of the army, or at least what was left of it, was free to go home. This would not just cripple the Revolution, but probably end it.

He gathered his troops together, the drum roll began, and the general asked all those willing to extend their tours to step forward. Not one soul moved. Then, as Tim Ballard tells it in his new book Washington Hypothesis, “A depressed Washington turned his horse and began riding away. Then suddenly he stopped, returned to his men, and said:

“My brave fellows, you have done all I asked you to do, and more than could be reasonably expected, but your country is at stake, your wives, your houses, and all that you hold dear. You have worn yourselves out with fatigue and hardship, but we know not how to spare you. If you will continue to stay one month longer, you will render that service to the cause of liberty, and to your country, which you can possibly never do under any other circumstances.”

“If ever there was a Captain Moroni’s Title of Liberty moment during the American war for independence, this was it,” writes Ballard. In fact, the entire revolution was “a play inaduated by miracles, unnatural courage, unprecedented faithfulness, angels, and a cause so important that countless millions would eventually be blessed for it.”

America is a covenant nation, and its founding reflects those covenant promises repeated so often in the Book of Mormon. These are binding promises from God, which He remembered for generations. A covenant nation has covenant protection—which began even at its founding.

What’s interesting is that George Washington was so fully aware that God was at the helm of this battle and that their success was completely dependent on the miracles of Providence. Ballard says these miracles came to George Washington and the American cause—and came often—though secular scholars will dismiss it or find other explanations. It is critical that we, who have the benefit of gospel understanding, not forget the exceptional intervention of God in America’s founding.

Even from the beginning of the war, Washington said, “God in his great goodness will direct [the outcome]” and, after his surprising victory at Princeton, he noted, “Providence has heretofore saved us in remarkable manner,” and on this we must principally rely.

This was not mere talk or lip service. Washington’s understanding was that God’s blessings were inextricably linked to the obedience and righteousness of his army, so he was forthright in placing high standards upon them. A covenant blessing was activated by righteous living and only this led to miracles.

Ballard says, “One of his very first instructions he gave to his soldiers at the Boston scene was to ban all ‘profane cursing, swearing and drunkenness’ and to encourage ‘a punctual attendance on divine Service, to implore the blessings of heaven upon the means used for our safety and defense.’”

Help Needed in New York

The rag tag and green Continental Army would need heaven’s help. In April 1776, they arrived in New York, a city with a large population of Loyalists and surrounded by water that was conducive to a British naval attack.

By June the British fleet arrived in the harbor with some four hundred ships. It was at this time, the largest force ever sent forth by one nation to another. One of Washington’s men wrote, “I declare that I thought all London was aboard.”

The Americans numbered well under half of the British troops, but they did have a promise of the Lord on which they could rely. George Washington wrote to John Adams saying, “We have nothing, my Dear Sir, to depend upon, but the protection of a kind Providence.”

Washington sent his troops to Long Island to engage the Red Coats where they had landed and the Americans were devastatingly defeated, losing between 700 and a thousand men. The British lost fewer than one hundred.

It was at a time of great devastation when Washington again called on his army to implore the God of heaven. On Friday, May 31, Washington sent general orders to his army:

“Instant to be observed as a day of lasting, humiliation and prayer, humbly to supplicate the mercy of Almighty God, that it would please him to pardon all our manifold sins and transgressions, and to prosper the Arms of the United Colonies, and finally establish the peace and freedom of America, upon a solid and lasting foundation.”

Ballard writes, “It was as if the American leadership were following Book of Mormon principles. Washington followed up the call shortly thereafter with another, which declared that ‘the fate of unborn Millions will now depend, under God, on the courage and conduct of this army.’”

Ballard says, “From a higher view, it seems the hosts of heaven would have been praying, cheering, supporting, and helping the American cause. Can we not suppose that the angels of God looked down upon Washington in his predicament at Long Island? Certainly those billions of deceased souls understood what hung in the balance, because it affected them on a very personal level. They had been waiting for priesthood and temples for hundreds, even thousands, of years. Millions upon millions were waiting for their work to be done, waiting for salvation. No government in the world had afforded the liberty necessary for the restoration of priesthood and temples to the earth. This was their chance. But the chance seemed to be fading quickly. Should Washington and his army be captured or destroyed, hope for freedom—the kind required for the Restoration—would disappear.”

“As Benjamin Franklin declared, ‘Tyranny is so generally established in the rest of the world that the prospect of an asylum in America for those who love liberty gives general joy. It is a common observation here that our cause is the cause of all mankind, and that we are fighting for their liberty in defending our own.’”

It must have been a highly unusual sight to see an army fasting, praying regularly and repenting of their sins—but that was Washington’s vision and that’s what they did.

As the British continued to close in on Washington’s army at Long Island—the land troops threatening from the east and the British navy pushing up the river, it became clear that the only way Washington could save his army was for them to cross the river by night, landing safely back in Manhattan.

This would seem impossible with the British swarming on both land and water, but on the third day after his decision, Washington turned to General Israel Putnam and declared, “God is propitious tonight.” Indeed He was. A miracle happened.

A ferocious wind from the north pushed the British back from advancing up the river and intercepting the fleeing Americans. Still, the night ended and the dawn was coming with a substantial number of American troops needing to make it off of Long Island and across that river.

David McCullough writes, “Troops in substantial number had still to be evacuated and at the rate things were going, it appeared day would dawn before everyone was safely removed. But again the ‘elements’ interceded, this time in the form of pea-soup fog. It was called ‘a peculiar providential occurrence,’ manifestly providential, ‘very favorable to the design,’ an unusual fog, ‘a friendly fog,’ an American fog. ‘So very dense was the atmosphere,’ remembers Benjamin Tallmadge, ‘that I could scarcely discern a man at six yards’ distance.’ And as daylight came, the fog held, covering the entire operation no less than had the night…while over on the New York side of the river there was no fog at all.”

McCullough sums it up. “But what a close call it had been. How readily it could have gone all wrong—had there been no northeast wind to hold the British fleet in check through the day the Battle of Long Island was fought, not to say the days immediately afterward. Or had the wind not turned southwest the night of August 29. Of had there been no fortuitous fog as a final safeguard when day broke…Incredibly, yet again—fate, luck, Providence, the hand of God, as would be said so often—intervened.”

Washington’s Own Sense of Destiny

Miracles like this marked the Revolutionary War. Divinely orchestrated weather events. Fortunate fogs. The Lord’s storms. Yet, just as impressive was the man Washington himself, whom the Lord “raised up unto this very purpose” (D&C 101:80).

Though the fog saved the Revolutionary Army in New York, they had lost this battle. Washington was devastated and humiliated. Washington wrote, “If I were to wish the bitterest curse to an enemy on this side of the grave, I should put him in my stead with my feelings…In confidence I tell you that I never was in such an unhappy, divided state since I was born.”

But things got worse. Washington received word that the colonial governments, hearing about the New York “debacle” lost interest in pursuing the war and were refusing to send back up troops. From the beginning this
had not been a tremendously popular movement. At various times during the American Revolution over 50% and perhaps as high as 65% of the people believed the American sacrifice was not worth it.

McCullough reminds us that “the Americans of 1776 enjoyed a higher standard of living than any people in the world... How people with so much, living on their own land, would ever choose to rebel against the ruler God had put over them and thereby bring down such devastation on themselves was incomprehensible.”

After the New York loss, when support for the war was at an all-time low, the British took advantage of the moment. “They offered a ‘free and general pardon’ to all American rebels, including a guarantee of the ‘preservation of their property, the restoration of their commerce, and the security of their most valuable rights.’”

George Washington didn’t listen. Ballard says, “He rejected the peace terms and the pardon and continued his sad and lonely retreat southward, his small army intact and willing to fight.”

Ballard asks, “Why? Why would Washington pursue this course of action?”

He answers, “No secular-based historian can explain why Washington did what he did any more than they can explain why Moses put everything on the line and did what he did, challenging the Pharaoh; or why Joseph Smith sacrificed all in doing what he did, challenging the religious establishment of the world. In each of those cases, God’s chosen ones were acting on inspiration, having been ‘raised up unto this very purpose.” And though admittedly Washington was not a prophet in the mold of Moses or Joseph, he was the closest thing to a prophet in that time. For his inspired actions, though not fully understood by the world in which he lived, laid the ground work for the Restoration.”

The Lord has always asked us to remember. In The Washington Hypothesis, Tim Ballard tries to teach us through history that God’s covenant blessings were on the founding of this nation—and this we must remember.

John Adams said, “What do we mean by the American Revolution? Do we mean the American war? The Revolution was effected before the war commenced. The Revolution was in the minds and hearts of the people; a change in their religious sentiments of their duties and obligations.”

“This,” says Ballard, “is the spiritual change we need today.

If Washington could lead American out of the darkest of days through invoking the covenant, then we can be led out of anything under similar leadership. Think about how dark those days were. The world’s military superpower had landed on American beaches, after which over half of all American troops abandoned the cause. Picture that happening to our America today. How frightening! And yet, they overcame. They knew how. If we apply the same covenant theology today, which it is out right to do, then no obstacle, no matter how dark, scary, or difficult, can get in our way. The purposes of the Almighty can then move forward in ways we have not yet seen.”

That’s a hopeful note.

Books to Celebrate America the Beautiful
Brave Like My Brother, by Marc Tyler Nobleman, is a book written with a “letters to home” format. Older brother, Joe, has been sent to serve in England during World War II. He promised his ten-year-old brother, Charlie, that he would write him and keep him informed about life as a soldier. These letters are one way but are very informative and are helpful for younger children. Joe describes the conditions of mud and wet conditions, the food rations and blackouts, and dealing with other soldiers. This book is good for ages seven through ten.

Diana’s White House Garden, by Elisa Carbone, and illustrated by Jen Hill, is another picture book based on a true story. Young Diana Hopkins wants desperately to help with the war effort. It’s World War II and her father is serving President Roosevelt as his Presidential Advisor. When she overhears her father discuss a victory garden with the president she desires to be part of the entire project from preparing the ground, to planting and watering. The garden is a huge success and continues to be. The illustrations are delightful and take on a look of the 1940’s. Both front and back end-pages give clues to how the garden begins and ends. Be sure the read more about Diana and her garden in the author’s and illustrator’s notes at the back of the book.

Austin, Lost in America, A Geography Adventure by Jef Czekaj, is a picture book packed with facts about our great country that will inform the reader. Austin is a cute little brown and white dog who escapes from a pet store and who is determined to find a home. He begins his journey on the east coast and travels throughout the country – eventually hitting all fifty states. As he travels, there are clues to help the reader solve Austin’s final destination. The entire book has a comic-book style with pictures in blocks on each page. But between picture and text, this book is definitely kid friendly as kids of all ages will be taught by this book! The beginning end-pages show the map of the United States. The final end-pages shows Austin’s route.

Elizabeth Started All the Trouble, by Doreen Rappaport, and masterfully painted by Matt Faulkner, is a picture book that showcases Elizabeth Cody Stanton and how she forged the way for women to receive the right to vote. She was also for the rights of all, no matter what color of skin. The book reads like a timeline and with more interesting information found at the back of the book.

The Seagoing Cowboy, by Peggy Reiff Miller, and nicely painted by Claire Ewart, is an amazing story told through a picture book of an event that I never knew about. When World War II ended (and beginning in 1945) America sent to war-torn Europe over 7,000 men, ages sixteen to seventy two, to help rebuild and feed the millions who were affected by the war. These cowboys came over on ships and they took care of the thousands of horses and heifers as they traveled. The author’s grandfather was such a cowboy who served in this capacity and helped restore Europe. This story follows a young man and his friend as they board a ship headed to Poland. Additionally, there are actual photos found at the back of the book that are good for ages four and up.

Flashback Four: The Lincoln Project, by Dan Gutman, is a terrific way to learn about some of the most important events in America’s history. Mr. Gutman is one of my favorite kid’s authors because he knows how to write an exciting adventure to keep his audience glued to the book. This book doesn’t disappoint. Four kids receive a letter inviting them to time-travel back to 1863 and have the opportunity to meet President Lincoln and hear his famous Gettysburg Address. The author is a master of weaving historical events with modern day reactions such as the reaction to the smelly muddy streets in Gettysburg. This is the first book in a planned series.

You Can Fly: The Tuskegee Airmen, by Carole Boston Weatherford, and sprinkled with black and white illustrations by Jeffery Boston Weatherford, is a compilation of beautifully written poems about these courageous African-American pilots who braved the European Front during World War II. These powerful poems reflect their bravery, as well as others’ bigotry, as they learned to become pilots and ultimately risk their lives for our country. The poems are short and written in a timeline frame of events. The brilliant pictures were rendered in scratchboard. Be sure to check out more facts at the back of the book. Kids, ages nine through high school, should be required to read this outstanding book!

Tucky Jo and Little Heart, by Patricia Polacco, is a picture book based on a true story. Tucky Jo was one of the youngest soldiers to serve in World War II and through his courage and marksmanship he gained much respect from his peers. While serving in the Philippines he made friends with a little Filipino girl, Little Heart, and he ends up helping save her village from attack. Later in his life, he is in need of medical help at the veteran’s hospital. This nurse ends up being Little Heart. Polacco is a master of these true stories and her renderings in colored pencils and markers are her trademark. You’ll learn even more about both protagonists at the back of the book.

Your Hardest Family Question: My wife’s past haunts me
My wife and I were both raised in the Church. We met and married within a year. It was only after we became engaged that my wife told me that she had been sexually active from her early teens right up until just before we started dating. I was horrified and my gut instinct was to break off the engagement. However, I felt that the Christian thing to do would be to forgive and move on. I had struggled with pornography before and knew what it was to need the Atonement. We were married not long afterwards, and immediately my wife’s past caused issues in our relationship, both physically and emotionally. We are overcoming these and I feel we have a good relationship, but I am still haunted by thoughts of her past. I know her experiences must affect how she views me. I fear that if I ever fail to satisfy her sexually she will soon seek out satisfaction from other people. What can I do to overcome these issues? Do I not want these thoughts to ruin our marriage. We do not have children yet, but when we do, I want to be able to bring them up well and teach them to keep the law of chastity. I want to forgive and forget. How can I make sure my wife’s past experiences (and my thoughts regarding them) do not impact our future family?

The key issue here is that you are anxious about your own inadequacy compared to her previous lovers. Unless you wife lied to you about her past when you were dating, your wife has not betrayed you or given you a reason to doubt her commitment to you or her faithfulness to your marriage. Your wife has owned her story. Now, it’s time for you to own your story about how insecure you feel.

It’s normal to have questions about our partner’s stories and wonder why they made certain choices. Learn as much as you can about her and let her learn about you and your past. This will deepen your appreciation of each other as flawed individuals who are choosing to build a close bond with one another. The more familiar and free you are with each other, the closer you’ll feel to each other.

It’s been my observation that men are anxious about their “performance” in the bedroom instead of focusing on the complete experience of the sexual and emotional relationship. Because you have reduced the sexual act down to the performance of a set of techniques, you will imagine in your mind that you are doing it worse than these other performers. You will be constantly tied up in your own inadequacy and self-judgment. Don’t reduce intimacy down to a performance in the bedroom and live beneath the privilege that is right in front of you. You are both imperfect people who found each other and can build something more beautiful than either of you could create on your own. Don’t bring these other guys along with you. She left them behind to choose you. Now, it’s your chance to leave them behind as well.

Instead of focusing on technique and performance, slow down and focus on how she’s right there with you in every moment. Talk to her, make eye contact, and spend less time focusing on erogenous zones. Make sure you spend adequate time with nonsexual touch to let your body and heart know without doubt that she is there with you.

Your anxiety will lie to you and tell you that she would rather be with someone else doing something else. It’s your job to keep looking for evidence that she wants to be with you. You run the risk of pushing her away out of your own shame when she is, in fact, trying to get closer to you.

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland taught that the ability to love our spouse the way we need to requires “an endowment from heaven” in the form of true charity. I would also add that your ability to feel secure with yourself and trust your wife’s love for you requires the same endowment from on high.

You have a chance to build real intimacy with your wife. This is an opportunity for both of you to claim your sexual and emotional intimacy as your own. There are several excellent LDS resources on sexual intimacy that can help you both discover how you want to create your own intimate life.[i]

Don’t reduce intimacy down to a performance in the bedroom and live beneath the privilege that is right in front of you. You are both imperfect people who found each other and can build something more beautiful than either of you could create on your own. Don’t bring these other guys along with you. She left them behind to choose you. Now, it’s your chance to leave them behind as well.

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Geoff will answer a new family and relationship question every Friday. You can email your question to him at geoff@lovingmarriage.com

About the Author
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Why Was Jershon Called a Land of Inheritance?

After their conversion, the people of Anti-Nephi-Lehi ran afloat of their former Lamanite kindred, whose “hated became exceedingly sore against them” (Alma 24:2). After they suffered a massacre at the hands of the Lamanites (Alma 24:20–30), the Lord commanded Ammon to move the people of Anti-Nephi-Lehi closer to the Nephite polity in order to protect them from further aggression (Alma 27).

Eventually the “voice of the people came, saying: Behold, we will give up the land of Jershon, which is on the east by the sea, which joins the land Bountiful, which is on the south of the land Bountiful; and this land Jershon is the land which we will give unto our brethren for an inheritance” (Alma 27:22). Not only that, but Nephite armies were to be set “between the land Jershon and the land Nephi,” so as to protect the Anti-Nephi-Lehies from future attacks (v. 23). The text reiterated a second time that the Anti-Nephi-Lehies were relocated so “that they may inherit the land Jershon” (v. 24).

With the decision made, Ammon “returned to the people of Anti-Nephi-Lehi” (Alma 27:25) and with them “went down into the land of Jershon, and took possession of the land of Jershon; and they were called by the Nephites the people of Ammon; therefore they were distinguished by that name ever after” (v. 26).

As explained by Latter-day Saint scholars Stephen D. Ricks and Matthew L. Bowen, the name Jershon and the attending detail that it was a land of “inheritance” for the Anti-Nephi-Lehies is a fairly obvious Hebrew pun. The Hebrew verb yərš (pronounced yarash) means “to take possession of” or “to inherit.” The nominal form (morashah/morashh, “possession”) of this root is specifically used to describe the land of promise: “And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an inheritance [morashah]; I am the LORD” (KJV Exodus 6:8).

The Hebrew letter yod (y) is typically rendered in English with a J, as in the names Jehovah (YHWH or Yahweh) and Jerusalem (yerushalaim). Combining yərš with the element –on (which in Hebrew toponymy may designate a place or location) would easily render the name Jershon: “place of possession/inheritance.” Quite literally, then Alma 27 depicts the Anti-Nephi-Lehies “inheriting” or “taking possession” of the “place of possession/inheritance.”
In keeping with biblical law, the newly-formed Anti-Nephi-Lehies would have required land in order to live the law of Moses or otherwise be subject to rules of inheritance and other property laws. On a more practical level, they required protection from Lamanite and Amlicite aggression, which would have most easily come after being securely stationed in their own land. The Anti-Nephi-Lehies were essentially, refugees displaced by religious and political strife in need of protection and support. In following the earlier instructions of Benjamin and Alma, the Nephites imparted their substance to the Anti-Nephi-Lehies according to their need.

With this gesture, the Nephites were also helping to fulfill the Lord’s promises in Alma 3 that repentant Lamanites could once more be numbered among Nephi’s seed. “Behold, the Lamanites have I cursed,” the Lord declared, “and I will set a mark on them that they and their seed may be separated from thee and thy seed, from this time henceforth and forever, except they repent of their wickedness and turn to me that I may have mercy upon them” (Alma 3:14). The Anti-Nephi-Lehies accepted the Lord’s invitation to repentance and “the curse of God did no more follow them” (Alma 3:14). As a result of their repentance, they were counted as Nephites (Alma 27:26).

Finally, the pun on the name Jershon (“place of inheritance”), with the detail that it was “inherited” by the Anti-Nephi-Lehies, reinforces the literary sophistication of the Book of Mormon. The Nephite chroniclers were adept at employing the subtleties of biblical Hebrew literary conventions, including the use of puns and plays on words, and did so in effectively communicating important narrative themes and doctrinal points.

Further Reading


1 On the origin and name of the Anti-Nephi-Lehies, see Book of Mormon Central, Why Did Converted Lamanites Call Themselves Anti-Nephi-Lehies? (Alma 23:17) KnoWhy 131 (June 28, 2016).
4 Compare Isaiah 14:22–23, where the Lord swears that Babylon will become “a possession [hotchath] of the hedgehog.” See also Deuteronomy 33:4; Ezekiel 11:15; 25:10; 33:24; 36:2, 5.
5 E.g. Ashkelon (Joshua 13:3; Judges 1:18; 14:18; 1 Samuel 6:17), Ekron (Joshua 13:3; 15:11, 44–46; Judges 1:18; 1 Samuel 5:10), Gibeon (Joshua 9:3, 17; 10:1–5; 2 Samuel 5:20), Jericho (Joshua 6:21–28; Deuteronomy 1:7–11; 2:27), Jershon (Joshua 13:22; Joshua 13:3–5; 1 Kings 4:33, 5:6), Morasha (Numbers 21:22–26; Deuteronomy 1:4; 2:26, 31; and Samuel 1 Chronicles 5:16; 7:29; Song of Solomon 2:1; Isaiah 33:6; 35:2). Much like Jershon, many of these names derive from a verbal root with the appended-on element denoting a place. Thus Hebron = “place of association” (from the verb hibrabah “to associate”), Lebanon = “place of whiteness” (from the verb laban = “to be white”), Heshbon = “place of reckoning” (from the verbbashab = “to reckon, plot”), and Sharon = “plain, level place” (from the verbbashar = “to do good, make straight, smooth,” etc.).
7 See also the commentary by John W. Welch explaining how the military exemption still requiring the Ammonites to provide supplies to Nephite troops was consistent with the Jewish interpretation of the exemptions under Deuteronomy 20: John W. Welch, “Exemption from Military Duty,” in Reexploring the Book of Mormon: A Decade of New Research. John W. Welch (Salt Lake City and Provo, UT: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1992), 189–192.
8 For more on the Lamanite curse, see Book of Mormon Central, What Does it Mean to Be a White and Delightsome People? (2 Nephi 30:6) KnoWhy 57 (March 18, 2016); Why Did Book of Mormon Prophets Discourage Nephi-Lamanite Intermarriage? (Alma 3:8) KnoWhy 110 (May 30, 2016).

**Cartoon: Celestial Thoughts**

“I know I should be pondering my divine nature and the wonders of creation, but all that keeps going through my mind is the theme from ‘Star Trek’!”
The 3 Stages of Entrepreneurship in America

American entrepreneurship has been a driving force for democracy from the foundation of our nation and it must continue to be the fuel of freedom if we are to remain independent and strong as a nation. Entrepreneurs, not politicians or government agencies, are the central source for American success as they propel our free market economy and civil society.

Alex Mandossian described American history as three periods of entrepreneurship. The first period was entrepreneurial independence. We often, and rightly, describe the Founding Fathers as great, wise and noble men – which they clearly were. However, the Founders were not just upset about tea and taxes, nor were they strictly politically centered people – above all they were entrepreneurs and business owners who wanted to pursue their passions and dreams without the heavy hand of government controlling, regulating or determining their destiny.

The American entrepreneurial pursuit began in earnest with a protest battle in Boston, proceeded to a declaration of entrepreneurial independence on July 4th, 1776 and culminated in Philadelphia in 1787 with a Constitution that provided the framework for a government that would provide the structure and vision for a nation where every citizen could pursue their version of the American dream. These events ushered in a golden era of entrepreneurial independence. America grew, communities blossomed and individuals flourished.

Shortly after World War II many American entrepreneurs decided to trade their independence for a false sense of security by selling out to big – big corporations and big government. An era of “entrepreneurial dependence” ensued. Crony capitalism and collusion between big government and big business hurt entrepreneurs and led to large corporate scandals and corruption, including Enron and Worldcom. Big government unleashed unprecedented executive branch over-reach and unrelenting regulation.

Entrepreneurial dependence has led to our current state of semi-market collapse, a stagnant job market and global uncertainty, including Great Britain’s recent rejection of big centralized power and unaccountable bureaucracy through their vote to exit the European Union.

American entrepreneurs are approaching the dawn of a brighter future and a brand-new era of freedom which will be known as “entrepreneurial interdependence.” With the internet coming of age, social media exploding and a truly global economy we are about to enter the third and brightest era in entrepreneurial history.

American interdependence is actually one of the great gifts the Founding Fathers gave us. It is that we have a nation where your success depends on your service.

Our free market economy takes a lot of criticism for promoting greed and competition. None of our businesses, workers or entrepreneurs nor our charitable and social organizations survive unless they serve and help people.
Both in our free-enterprise economy and our voluntary civil society, success in America is ultimately based not on competition, but on interdependent cooperation. We look out for ourselves by looking out for everyone else. Freedom, properly understood, doesn’t mean you’re on your own. It means “we’re all in this together.”

American entrepreneurs must continue to drive freedom. We would be wise to remember that the ultimate American entrepreneurs are the couple exchanging vows at a local church, the teacher investing in a struggling student, the mom rocking a cradle, the neighbor seeing a chance to serve a neighbor. Opportunities to experience our nation’s entrepreneurial spirit are all around us. We are independent and yet interdependent – not reliant on big government but on each other. America is great, not because of who we are, but because of what we do.

For Sutherland Institute, this is Boyd Matheson. Thanks for engaging.

Boyd Matheson is president of Sutherland Institute.

This post is an expanded transcript of the Sutherland Soapbox, a weekly radio commentary aired on several Utah radio stations. The podcast can be found below.


Receive this broadcast each week directly to your iTunes by clicking here.

Holocaust Escape Tunnel Found: Prisoners Dug with Spoons to Escape Nazis

A tunnel in Lithuania that allowed Jewish prisoners to escape to freedom has been discovered at an infamous location called Ponar, decades after they used it to flee the Nazis one night in April 1944. The escapees were part of a group tasked with the horrific job of burning bodies to cover up the Nazi’s crimes.

The group was known as the burning brigade—80 prisoners from the Stutthof concentration camp who were forced to burn the thousands upon thousands of Nazi victims murdered near Vilnius, Lithuania. That gruesome task involved taking the bodies out of pits so they could be cremated.

“We had pokers that we had to stick into the bodies, to pull them up,” one survivor recounted in a video published by Yad Vashem, the Holocaust remembrance center in Israel. “We put them on stretchers, head to head, feet to feet. The crematorium held about 3000 bodies, and we’d light it up. It was horrific.”

But one night a group of 40 attempted an escape through a tunnel they had slowly dug from the pit where they were being held, according to the Israel Antiquities Authority. The guards were alerted, however, and shot many of the prisoners. A dozen escaped.

And now, researchers using ground penetrating radar as well as a method called electric resistivity tomography have located that tunnel, the Israel Antiquities Authority reported. These techniques allowed the scientists to find the tunnel without digging.

To read the full article, click here.

Mitt Romney: My family still wants me to run for president

Mitt Romney’s family is still pleading for him to mount an independent bid for the presidency, the 2012 Republican nominee said Wednesday.

Romney, speaking to CBS News’ John Dickerson at the Aspen Ideas Festival, said a son asked him as recently as Tuesday to do so.

“My wife and kids wanted me to run again this time, interestingly enough,” Romney said. “I got an email from one of my sons yesterday, saying ‘You gotta get in, Dad! You gotta get in!’”

Romney did not specify which of his five sons sent him the note.

“For my wife and kids to say, ‘Do it again’ — and I’m talking about late in the process here — they were concerned about the direction of the nominating process in our party,” Romney said, before being reminded that he pushed his dad to remain engaged even after his political defeats. “I appreciate the fact that they’re doing that — but my dad didn’t run when there was no chance of winning.”

Romney briefly considered joining the 2016 race in January 2015, but decided against it after former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush locked down many establishment heavyweights. Romney was approached again after Donald Trump became the presumptive nominee, but turned down the entreaties.

To read the full article, click here.

4 Ways to Help Children Enjoy Chores and Become Good Workers
“There is no substitute for hard work.” (Thomas Edison)

Years ago, when I was planning a Teaching Self-Government trip to China, a good friend of mine said, “Nicholeen, what are you going to tell parents in China who don’t understand why their child should earn an extra chore? Most parents don’t have their children do manual work.”

Since I was raised by a mother who made sure we were able to sew and cook, as well as fix, build, clean and organize just about anything inside and outside of a house, I didn’t imagine there were societies where children didn’t get the opportunity to increase their confidence by learning to work. The American dream was based on the idea that we can work for anything we desire and achieve it in time.

One of the great examples of living the American dream was Thomas Edison. Edison’s greatest character trait was his determination to work hard until he found the answer he was looking for. He said, “Genius is one percent inspiration and ninety-nine percent perspiration.”

He also said, “Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work.”

That is the American dream; but we are forgetting it.

Not too many years after my trip to China to teach parenting I started hearing unexpected comments about work from U.S. parents. “I want them to work hard, but I never thought of having them clean the house.” And, “We don’t have time to do chores, but he does pack his own backpack each morning.” By far the most common comment I get from parents who don’t have their children work is, “But, if I make my children work, won’t they end up hating work?”

There are many children who profess to hate work and display all sorts of negative attitudes when work is suggested or prescribed. What can parents do to help children enjoy chores and hard work? Here are 4 ways:

1. The parents first need to change their own attitude about work.

One time, after a mother said her son wouldn’t do his chores because he was always distracted — and that when he did do the chore it was sloppy — she said, “Sure, work is awful. I hate it too. But it has to be done or we will live in a pigsty.”

“Have you always hated work?” I asked.

“Yes,” she confided.

“Well, if you don’t like work, then your children won’t ever like work,” I responded.

This statement really took her back. Suddenly she saw a piece of the puzzle she hadn’t seen before. Her attitude about work negatively affected her children’s attitude about work.

If we teach one thing and do another, then we’re not teaching properly and the teaching will not stick. The old adage, “do as I say, not as I do” as a reminder of the foolishness of hypocritical teachers is still profound. We have to walk the talk.

When we look forward to work with a happy countenance and a good attitude, we will not be surprised when our children turn out just like us one day: happy, hard workers.

Oh, some parents think that they can’t change their minds on a feeling they’ve experienced previously. A parent once said to me, “What do I do? Just fake it even though I know I hate work?”

There is no such thing as faking it. There is only changing your mind. Why do emotions or experiences get to be called “real,” but deliberate choices have to be called “fake?” This way of thinking is false.

Just be real and consciously decide to enjoy working.

2. Do more work.

Richard L. Evans said, “The process of learning is a process of repetition.” In other words, no one who never does work, or rarely does it, will ever love it.

I have a good friend named Les. He’s a nearly 80-year-old shepherd. When we recently visited him, we saw him running after baby lambs in his field to catch one for us to see. Les has had a lifetime of hard work, and even though he may say he’s slowing down a bit, we just don’t see it. He loves his sheep and all the hard work he does to care for them. He told us that he doesn’t know what he would do if he couldn’t work.

Children these days are lacking in self-confidence. They need to do more work, not less. They need to repeatedly feel project mastery, improvement, and success. This will help them see their worth, and thereby instilling confidence.

The children I know who weed fields, move sprinkler pipes and mend fences are always the happiest children I meet. Their futures are bright. They know how to fix problems and know the strength of their wills and bodies.

Idle people are never happy because they don’t accomplish or live with purpose. Likewise, coddled children often become lazy.

3. Work together.
Knowing how to work alone is useful, but working as a family builds great relationships. Working alongside children will create lifetime bonds. You will have conquered together. That shared experience will be a treasured memory.

4. Prepare for work-time success by pre-teaching.

Children are naturally anxious. They worry about details and unknown experiences. Decrease childhood anxiety about work by making sure that you properly teach them each task, especially when they're young.

Pre-teaching a new chore by doing it with the child or demonstrating it will help the child be more confident about doing it. Often times the child actually becomes excited to do the chore when she’s seen how to successfully complete the task.

Learning to work increases freedom. One of the greatest gifts you can ever give your child is the opportunity to do some good hard work.

To Help You Get Started

Depending where you live, this is the time of year when gardens are starting to grow. If you’re an aspiring gardener or want to more confidently teach your children about gardening, try this gardening book I love.

And, if you think teaching your children how to cook and bake things the whole family will love sounds fun, then check out the Taste Tested And Approved Series, which includes the gardening book for free.

PBS Video Calls Mormon Welfare System Huge, Impressive

Emmy Award-winning TV reporter Lucky Severson characterized the LDS Church’s welfare system as huge and impressive in a seven-minute report on the PBS TV show “Religion & Ethics Newsweekly.” Both the video and a transcript are available at PBS.org’s Religion & Ethics Newsweekly web page.

The piece included interviews with a bishop, a Relief Society president, service missionaries and leaders of various departments of the welfare system of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Much of the information will be familiar to many Mormons, including the fact that the Department of Defense, Army, Navy, Marines and FEMA have toured and studied the system.

But Severson also included a number of interesting details. The church has 115 bishop’s storehouses throughout the United States, for example. The main storehouse in Salt Lake City is a massive warehouse with more than 500,000 square feet built to withstand a 7.5-magnitude earthquake. The overall system, Severson said, “holds enough provisions to meet the projected demands of members and nonmembers in the United States and Canada for two years.”

To read the full article, click here.

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WASHINGTON—Most people know Michael Medved as a radio talk-show host, but he’s also a history buff deeply concerned about America’s cultural drift away from its spiritual and moral roots. He tries awakening people to how godly and divinely-touched those roots are in his 13th book, “The American Miracle: Divine Providence in the Rise of the Republic.” Medved’s “American Miracle” covers such divine moments from the Mayflower and the Pilgrims all the way through Lincoln and the Civil War. From Doubter in The Divine to Divine Instrument. Though Lincoln was a snarky agnostic as a young man, Medved writes of how Honest Abe came later to a deep belief in God. America’s Founding Fathers Learn about our Revolutionary War heroes! The Founding Fathers of America have some of the most intriguing and endearing stories that you will ever read. There were many people who fought in the Revolutionary War and many others who helped define the ideas and principles of the new government of the United States of America. To many others, the duty fell to implement the new government. Limited Time - Free Shipping. The Miracle Machine has transformed the way we live and work, strengthened national defense and revolutionized medicine. It has birthed entire industries — organized around computers, biotechnology, energy and communications — creating millions of jobs. It’s the reason the United States is the global hub for the technologies of the future: self-driving cars, genome editing, artificial intelligence, cancer immunotherapy, quantum computers and more. Our machine is the envy of the world. And yet, while other nations, such as China, are working furiously to develop their own Miracle Machines, we’v