

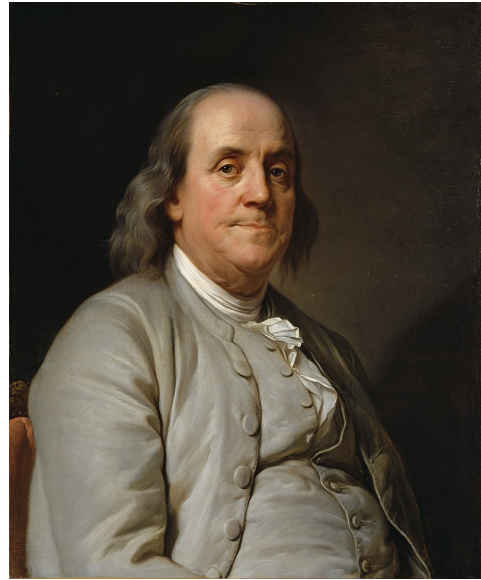
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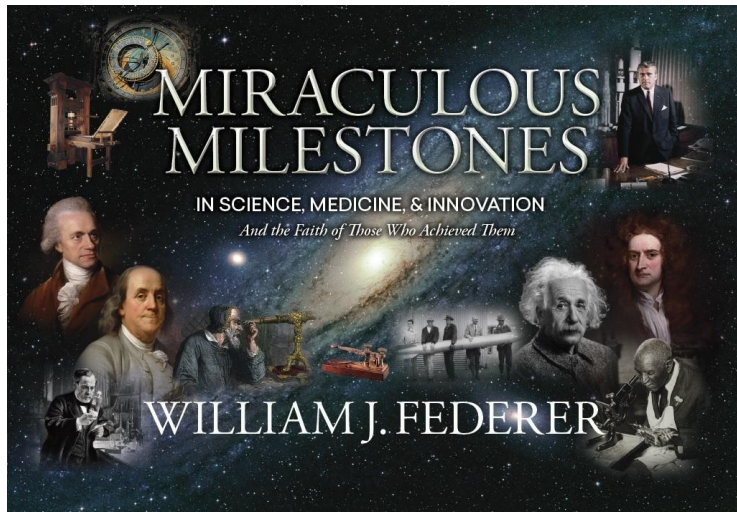
American Minute with Bill Federer Ben Franklin's support of Religious Liberty, Freedom of Conscience & Abolition of Slavery!

On July 26, 1775, **Benjamin Franklin** became the first Postmaster General of the United States, a position he held under the British Crown before the Revolution.



Franklin's public career began when he organized **Pennsylvania's first volunteer militia** during threaten attacks from Spanish and French ships ... [continue reading American Minute here ...](#)

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Franklin then proposed a **General Fast**, which was approved by the Colony's Council and printed in his ***Pennsylvania Gazette***, December 12, 1747:

"As the calamities of a bloody War ... seem every year

more nearly to approach us ...

there is just reason to fear that **unless we humble ourselves before the Lord & amend our Ways, we may be chastized with yet heavier Judgments,**

We have, therefore, thought fit ... to appoint ... **a Day of Fasting & Prayer,** exhorting all, both Ministers & People, to observe the same with becoming **seriousness & attention,** & to join with one accord in the **most humble & fervent Supplications;**

That **Almighty God** would mercifully interpose and still the Rage of War among the Nations & **put a stop to the effusion of Christian Blood."**

Franklin published the sermons of **Great Awakening preachers,** such as evangelist **George Whitefield,** which helped spread the **Revival.**

Franklin established a volunteer fire department, a circulating public library, an insurance company, a city police force, a night watch and the first hospital in America.

He set up the lighting of city streets and was the first to suggest Daylight Savings Time.

He invented bifocal glasses, the Franklin Stove, swim fins, the lightning rod, and coined the electrical terms "positive" and "negative."

In 1754, **Franklin** wrote a pamphlet, "**Information to Those Who Would Remove to America,**" for Europeans interested in sending their youth to this land:

"Hence bad examples to youth are more rare in America, which must be a comfortable consideration to parents.

To this may be truly added, that serious religion, under its

various denominations, is not only tolerated, but respected and practised.

Atheism is unknown there; Infidelity rare and secret; so that persons may live to a great age in that country without having their piety shocked by meeting with either an Atheist or an Infidel.

And the **Divine Being** seems to have manifested his approbation of the mutual forbearance and kindness with which the different sects treat each other; by the remarkable prosperity with which he has been pleased to favor the whole country."

On September 28, 1776, as President of Pennsylvania's Constitutional Convention, **Benjamin Franklin** signed the State's first Constitution, "the most radically democratic Frame of Government the world had ever seen."

Pennsylvania's Constitution stated:

"Government ought to be instituted ... to enable the individuals ... to enjoy their natural rights ... which the **Author of Existence** has bestowed upon man;

and whenever these great ends...are not obtained, the people have a right ... to change it, and take such measures as to them may appear necessary to promote their safety and happiness ..."

It continued:

"All men have a natural and unalienable right to worship **Almighty God** according to the dictates of their own consciences ...

Nor can any man, who acknowledges the being of a **God**, be justly deprived or abridged of any civil right ...

No authority ... shall in any case interfere with ... the **right of conscience** in the **free exercise of religious worship.**"

Pennsylvania's Constitution required:

"And each member ... shall make ... the following declaration, viz:

I do believe in **one God, the Creator and Governor of the Universe, the Rewarder of the good and the Punisher of the wicked.** And I do acknowledge the **Scriptures** of the **Old and New Testament** to be given by **Divine Inspiration.**

And no further or other religious test shall ever hereafter be required."

Pennsylvania's Constitution had in Section 45:

"Laws for the encouragement of virtue, and prevention of vice and immorality, shall be ... constantly kept in force ... **Religious societies** ... incorporated for the advancement of religion ... shall be encouraged."

At the end of the Revolutionary War, **Franklin** signed the **Treaty of Paris**, September 3, 1783, which began:

"In the name of the **Most Holy and Undivided Trinity.**"

As Pennsylvania's President (Governor), **Ben Franklin** hosted the **Constitutional Convention** in Philadelphia, where on June 28, 1787, he moved:

"That henceforth prayers imploring the **assistance of Heaven**, and its blessing on our deliberations, be held in this Assembly every morning."

In 1785, **Ben Franklin** was elected president of America's first anti-slavery society, **Pennsylvania**

Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery.

Pennsylvania's opposition to slavery began with the **Quakers'** Germantown Petition of 1688.

Anthony Benezet, a French Protestant Huguenot who joined the **Quakers**, convinced them in 1758, at their yearly meeting in Philadelphia, to **officially go on record as opposing slavery**.

Benezet wrote in 1766, "**A Caution and Warning to Great Britain ... of the Calamitous State of the Enslaved Negroes**":

"Slavery ... contradicted the precepts and example of **Christ ...**

Bondage ... imposed on the Africans, is absolutely **repugnant to justice ... shocking to humanity**, violative of every generous sentiment, **abhorrent utterly from the Christian religion.**"

Benjamin Franklin opposed slavery, publishing several essays:

- An Address to the Public (1789);
- A Plan for Improving the Condition of the Free Blacks (1789); and
- Sidi Mehemet Ibrahim on the Slave Trade (1790).

In his last published letter (*Federal Gazette*, March 23, 1790), **Franklin** satirically condemned Southern States for continuing to defend slavery by using the same arguments as Muslim Barbary states of North Africa:

"If we cease our cruises against Christians, how shall we ... make slaves of their people ... to cultivate our land ... to perform common labors ... Must we be our own slaves:

And is there not more compassion due to us as Mussulmen than to these Christian dogs.

... We have now about 50,000 slaves in and near Algiers
... If we then cease taking and plundering the infidel ships and making slaves of the seamen and passengers, our lands will become of no value for want of cultivation."

Franklin, on February 3, 1790, sent a petition to end slavery to the first session of the U.S. Congress:

"For promoting the **Abolition of Slavery** ... relieving from bondage a large number of their fellow Creatures of the **African Race ... promote mercy and justice toward this distressed race.**"

The petition was introduced in the House on February 12, 1790, and in the Senate on February 15, 1790.

Southern states immediately denounced it, claiming that the Constitution limited Congress for 20 years from prohibiting the importation or emancipation of slaves.

Two months later, Franklin died on April 17, 1790, at the age of 84.

After 20 years, President Jefferson supported the Act to end the slave trade, stating in his annual message, December 2, 1806:

"I congratulate you, fellow-citizens, on the approach of the period at which you may interpose your authority constitutionally, to withdraw the citizens of the United States from all further participation **in those violations of human rights which have been so long continued on the unoffending inhabitants of Africa**, and which the morality, the reputation, and the best interests of our country, have long been eager to proscribe."

On March 2, 1807, Congress officially passed the **Act Prohibiting the Importation of Slaves**.

The **U.S. Navy and Coast Guard** were sent to enforce the ban on importing slaves by seizing many slave trading ships. Unfortunately, slavery was not abolished until 1865 with the 13 Amendment.

Benjamin Franklin wrote April 17, 1787:

"Only a **virtuous people** are capable of **freedom**.

As nations become **corrupt** and vicious, they have more need of **masters**."

Franklin had composed for his epitaph:

"THE BODY of
B. FRANKLIN, Printer.
Like the cover of an old book,
Its contents torn out,
And stripped of its lettering and gilding,
Lies here, food for worms;
Yet the work itself shall not be lost,
For it will as he believ'd
appear once more,
In a new, and more beautiful edition,
Corrected and improved
By The AUTHOR."

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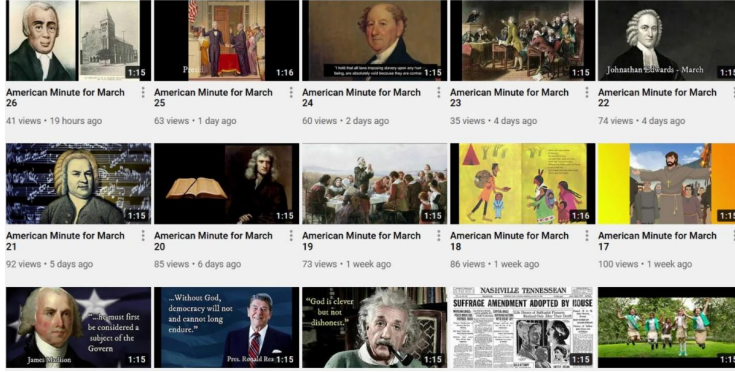
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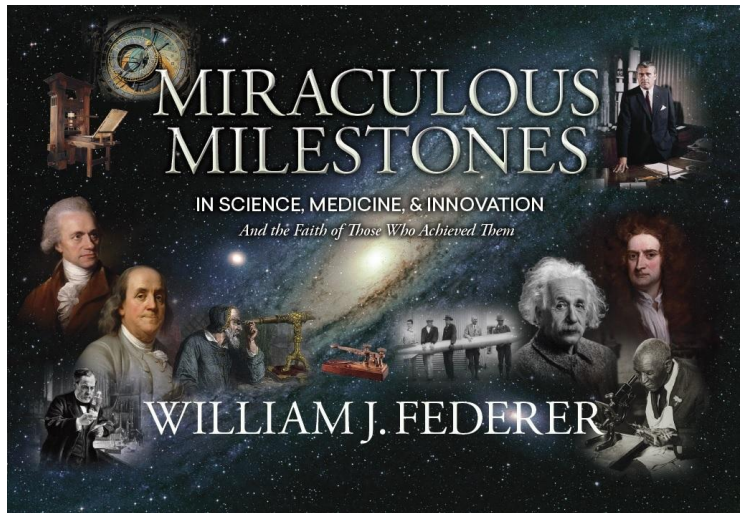
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