

Speech given to the Rockdale Kiwanis on November 4, 2004 by George Sweeney

Thank you for your invitation to speak on a subject very dear to my heart, the Constitution of these United States of America and the freedoms the Founding Fathers of this nation secured to us.

Deliberation over the type of government

Our Founding Fathers were students of history and politics. They witnessed first hand the tyranny of a monarchy. History revealed to them the folly of a pure democracy. Both, unchecked, lead to tyranny, of a monarch or some elite group, or in a democracy of a minority that is able to sway the masses with emotions.

In their Declaration of Independence they affirmed the belief in these words. "*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.*"

The concept that governments were instituted of men was new in the day. Governments were instituted by whomever could seize power and hold it. Oft times those taking power claimed divine right.

In 1787 distinguished gentlemen from 12 of our 13 original states gathered together to correct the problems of a Confederation they established during the Revolution. The flaw was that the confederacy was too weak to hold the states together and protect them. The states were certain to divide asunder if a better government was not established. The governments of the world saw us as having no government and many here agreed.

Men such as George Washington and James Madison urged a convention to make changes to the Confederation and strengthen our government. They feared that if they failed to correct the problems currently in the Confederation they would soon cease to be a nation and fall prey to the plans of the powers of Europe as well as wars between the states.

After long deliberation and frequent argument they brought forth a contract between the people and the government. The People in this contract granted to the government certain powers and denied them others.

They set up a system of checks and balances:

Federal vs. State

House vs. Senate

Executive vs. Legislative vs. Judicial

People vs. Government

They understood the nature of man. They understood that when someone is given power they would tend to seek more. They understood the saying "*power corrupts, absolute power corrupts absolutely.*"

Thomas Jefferson said, "*In questions of power, then, let no more be heard of confidence in man, but bind him down from mischief by the chains of the Constitution.*"

So they set forth our government understanding the ambitions of men. Here is their genius; they set ambition against ambition. They did not merely rely on the goodness of men and women, they relied on their ambitions for greater power to give check to one another and thus preserve our God-given-rights.

At the same time they realized that the continuation of this nation under this Constitution was reliant on the character of its people. John Adams said, "*Our constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.*"

Not only is our Constitution made for people of this character but also our very freedoms are dependent on the same.

The Constitution is not a "living document."

There are those today that would tell us that the Constitution is a "living document" that can be changed to meet our times. Article VI of our Constitution is very specific. It states "*This Constitution, ... shall be the supreme Law of the Land...*"

Madison asked the question "*Can it be of less consequence that the meaning of a Constitution should be fixed and known, than a meaning of a law should be so?*" (Madison, 1865, IV, page 185)

I would echo this question in another question. Can a contract between two parties be reinterpreted at will by one? We all know this is not so but there are people that would have us believe that they can change the meaning of our Constitution by adding to or taking away in court decisions. They even give parts entirely new meanings from those meanings given by the composers of the Constitution. A contract can only be interpreted by the original wording and intent expressed in the wording.

The Constitution has within itself its own mechanism of adapting to the times. This mechanism being by amendment. This is the same way that laws, contracts and bylaws are changed, by amendment. They established this method of amendment to be difficult so that the Constitution could not be changed in haste and could not be changed without the consent of the state legislatures.

Citizen Advocates for Constitutional Principles.

I come here today representing the Citizen Advocates for Constitutional Principles. This organization was started by individuals that believe that our form of republic, as established by the Constitution, to be the best form of government on earth. We seek to follow George Washington's advice to the Nation at the occasion of his final address as President. He said, "*A primary object ... should be the education of our youth in the science of government. In a republic, what species of knowledge can be equally important? And what duty more pressing ... than communicating it to those who are to be the future guardians of the liberties of the country?*" (George Washington - Farewell address - 1797) We seek not only the education of the youth but the public at large.

In order to remain free we must know and understand these principles of good government. We must understand that we are all born with certain God given rights and responsibilities. We must understand there are absolutes, lines of morality that should never be crossed.

CACP's endeavor is to have everyone in the world understand the principles of our Constitution. We are working to have it taught in our schools, in our forums.

CACP endeavors to have all of our citizens take part in our democratic republic. To achieve this we will teach how to become involved in the local and national political process.

To help in our efforts we have books, videos and lesson plans for teachers and homeschoolers. These materials can be obtained through our website at CACP.info.

We have a local Chapter here in Rockdale County. We meet the fourth Tuesday of each month. Our next meeting being on the 23rd. You can find the address on the cards I have with me today and on our website. Everyone is welcome to come.

We meet to study the Constitution. We meet to learn

how to support it locally and nationally.

Conclusion

I invite each and every one of you to join us at the CACP, to uphold, to revere and to defend the Constitution.

We see in the news attempts to abandon the Constitution or at least to abandon its original intent. Some may ask what can be done to revive it.

Thomas Jefferson suggested that we needed revolution every so often to revive our freedoms and remove tyranny. I think what we need today is another revolution to revive our liberties, not one of arms but of renewed ideas.

John Adams said "*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 radical change in the principles, opinions, sentiments, and affections of the people, was the real American Revolution.*"

We need a revival of our revolutionary spirit. We need to know that "*Government is not reason. Government is not eloquence. It is force. And, like*

fire, it is a dangerous servant and a fearful master."
(George Washington) We need to take back responsibility for our lives and future. We need to keep government as our servant, not our master.

We need to talk about the principles of the Constitution in our schools, our Churches, our meeting halls and our homes.

Join us of Citizen Advocates for Constitutional Principles to speak up for our free Republic and learn how to keep it that way.

Let me conclude with these words from Calvin Coolidge. "*The Constitution is the sole source and guaranty of national freedom.*"