



By

Mark McGee



*Last Call for Liberty: How America's Genius for Freedom Has Become Its Greatest Threat* by Os Guinness (IVP Books, 2018) is an important read for anyone who cares about freedom.

Os Guinness is the author or editor of more than thirty books. FaithandSelfDefense has reviewed some of them in the past. Guinness is a frequent speaker and prominent social critic and a senior fellow at the Oxford Centre for Christian Apologetics. He is also the founder of the Trinity Forum.

I found *Last Call For Liberty* to be a fascinating read. Guinness' introduction is an attention grabber with statements that read as if he had taken them from the headlines of the morning newspaper or evening cable TV programs –

“The great American republic is in the throes of its gravest crisis since the Civil War, a crisis that threatens its greatness, its freedom, and its character.”

“The problem is not America against the world, or the world against America, but America against itself, citizens against citizens, government against citizens, one president against another president, and one view of America in radical opposition to another.”

“Political debate has degenerated into degrading and barbaric incivility, and wild talk of spying, leaking, impeachment, governability, the Twenty-fifth Amendment, and even assassination and secession is in the air.”

“America is locked in a mortal struggle for what each side believes is the soul of the republic.”

One of the key insights that helps make *Last Call For Liberty* different than other books looking at the challenges we face in the United States is this –

“At the core, the deepest division is rooted in the differences between two world-changing and opposing revolutions, the American Revolution of 1776 and the

French Revolution of 1789, and their rival views of freedom and the nature of the American experiment.”

Guinness asks and answers ten important questions in *Last Call For Liberty* –

- Question One: Do You Know Where Your Freedom Came From?
- Question Two: Are There Enough Americans Who Care About Freedom?
- Question Three: What Do You Mean by Freedom?
- Question Four: Have You Faced Up to the Central Paradox of Freedom?
- Question Five: How Do You Plan to Sustain Freedom?
- Question Six: How Will You Make the World Safe for Diversity?
- Question Seven: How Do You Justify Your Vision of a Free and Open Society?
- Question Eight: Where Do You Ground Your Faith in Human Freedom?
- Question Nine: Are You Vigilant About the Institutions Crucial to Freedom? A Republic or a Democracy?

- Question Ten: Are You Vigilant About the Ideas Crucial to Freedom? Which Revolution Do They Serve?

One of the highlights was the question about a clear definition of 'freedom.' I especially like the insights concerning negative freedom and positive freedom.

I highly recommend *Last Call For Liberty* to all citizens of the United States and those around the world who look to us to wave the flag of unrivaled freedom.

## From the Publisher

“The hour is critical. The American republic is suffering its gravest crisis since the Civil War. Conflicts, hostility, and incivility now threaten to tear the country apart. Competing visions have led to a dangerous moment of cultural self-destruction. This is no longer politics as usual, but an era of political warfare where our enemies are not foreign adversaries, but our fellow citizens.

Yet the roots of the crisis are deeper than many realize. Os Guinness argues that we face a fundamental crisis of freedom, as America’s genius for freedom has become her Achilles’ heel. Our society’s conflicts are rooted in two rival views of freedom, one embodied in “1776” and the ideals of the American Revolution, and the other in “1789” and the ideals of the French Revolution. Once again America has become a house divided, and Americans must make

up their minds as to which freedom to follow. Will the constitutional republic be restored or replaced?

This grand treatment of history, civics, and ethics in the Jewish and Christian traditions represents Guinness's definitive exploration of the prospects for human freedom today. He calls for a national conversation on the nature of freedom, and poses key questions for concerned citizens to consider as we face a critical chapter in the American story. He offers readers a checklist by which they can assess the character and consequences of the freedoms they are choosing.

In the tradition of Alexis de Tocqueville, Guinness provides a visitor's careful observation of the American experiment. Discover here a stirring vision for faithful citizenship and renewed responsibility for not only the nation but also the watching world."



## Reviews

“It will be a tragedy of inestimable proportions for the American people if that great nation eats its own legendary commitment to freedom from within. Equally, to lose the leadership of the world’s most powerful champion of liberty would be truly dangerous for non-Americans everywhere in these increasingly unsettled times. Os Guinness has gifted us magnificently with the insights and understanding of a lifetime in this book, which really needs to be read—urgently—across the length and breadth of the world.” John Anderson, deputy prime minister of Australia, 1999-2005

“Os Guinness has stood as a beacon of eloquence and insight. In a host of important books, he has chronicled the struggle of those who resist the modern world’s descent into carnival culture. *Last Call for Liberty* is his masterwork—an urgent guide that leads out of the maze America has wandered

into. For those who seek to understand the best of freedom's vital gifts, Guinness is the master class leader." Shelby Coffey III, vice chairman of the Newseum, former editor of the Los Angeles Times

"A timely and important book from one of the most insightful observers of American society and politics. Guinness argues that America's future depends on learning the right lessons from America's past. Provocative without being incendiary. Sobering without being gloomy. Inspiring without being glib." Peter Feaver, professor of political science at Duke University

"If you care about the future of America—no matter where you are on the political spectrum—then do yourself a favor and read this book. I believe you will be encouraged to look at America in a new light, and hopefully all who love her will find a new energy to make her healthy again and keep her strong. Freedom-loving people everywhere will be

grateful you did.” John Brandon, former vice president of international, Apple Inc.

“With moral clarity and a deep sense of history, Os Guinness discerns the taproot of America’s republican achievement as well as the forces that threaten to tear it asunder. In this penetrating critique of American democracy, Guinness emerges as the English voice of Alexis de Tocqueville—and not a moment too soon. Perhaps only an Englishman could deliver such a powerful reminder to Americans about why their revolution in human liberty has succeeded where others have failed. Against the prophets of gloom, *Last Call for Liberty* charts a pathway toward American renewal rooted in a bracing vision of human freedom.” Joseph Loconte, associate professor of history at the King’s College in New York City, author of *God, Locke, and Liberty: The Struggle for Religious Freedom in the West*

“Guinness’s impassioned tone, complex arguments, and dire warnings are sure to start conversations among readers interested in the intersection of politics and religion in America.”

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