

Some evidences that
American Identity
has been based upon
Christian Faith

Revised 7/3/2018

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America – A Christian Nation?

Was America ever a Christian nation? This first article was co-written in 2000 with Aleena Gilbert for Committee on Moral Concerns and last updated in 2005 for California Family Alliance.

Art Croney printed this collection of the quotes through 1800 from the founders of the United States in the monthly **Capitol Reporter** newsletter 1999 through 2002. I do not know the copyrighted source that Mr. Croney or Ms. Gilbert used. I added more quotes from America's founders and those since 1800 in date order.



Harry Briley, 2001

Christopher Columbus - 1492

August 3, 1492, Queen Isabella commissioned Christopher Columbus, writing:

It is hoped that by God's assistance some of the continents and islands in the ocean will be discovered... for the glory of God.

Columbus set sail in the name of Jesus. On October 12, 1492, Columbus landed at the Bahamas. From his writings, he described the natives:

So that they might be well-disposed towards us (for I knew that they were a people to be delivered and converted to our Holy Faith rather by love than by force)... I gave many things of slight value. At this they were greatly pleased and became so entirely our friends that it was a wonder... I believe that they would easily be made Christians, for it seemed to me that they had no religion of their own. Our Lord willing, when I depart, I shall bring back six of them to your Highnesses that they may learn to talk our language.

He repeated his observation on October 16, 1492.

I don't recognize in them any religion, and I believe that they very promptly would turn Christians, for they are of very good understanding.

Columbus first landed at San Salvador, meaning "Holy Savior." There, he knelt and prayed:

O Lord, Almighty and everlasting God, by Thy holy Word Thou has created the heaven and the earth and the sea; blessed and glorified be Thy Name, and praised be Thy Majesty, which has designed to use us, Thy humble servants, that Thy holy Name may be proclaimed in this second part of the earth.

As they landed on each island, Columbus had his men erect a large wooden cross:

- *"As a token of Jesus Christ our Lord and in honor of the Christian faith."*

On December 24, 1492, he wrote:

Your Highnesses may believe that in all the world, there can be no better or gentler people. Your Highnesses should feel great joy, because presently they will be Christians and instructed in the good manners of your realms; for a better people there cannot be on earth, and both people and land are in such quantity that I don't know how to write.

On January 13, 1493, the Santa Maria ran aground on Haiti. Columbus left 40 men there and promised to return the next year. On April 4, 1493, Columbus asked the King and Queen for 2,000 colonists to return with him to the new land that:

There be a church...to administer the sacraments, perform divine worship, and convert the natives...to the Holy Catholic Faith.

May 29, 1493, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella agreed and ordered Columbus to:

Force and compel all those who sail therein as well as all others who are to go out from here later on, that they treat said Indians very well and lovingly and abstain from doing them any injury.... If some person or persons shall maltreat said Indians in any manner whatsoever, the Admiral [Columbus] shall punish them severely.

All was not well in paradise however. In November 1493, Columbus returned to Haiti and wrote of their first encounter with the Caribs, a tribe of warrior cannibals. The Caribs killed all 40 men. Columbus had to resist growing apprehension among the newly arrived colonists.

That the Caribs were cannibals was gruesomely described by Michele de Cuneo:

The Caribs whenever they catch these Indians eat them as we would eat goats and they say that a boy's flesh tastes better than that of a woman. Of this human flesh they are very greedy.... Wherever they go, they depopulate the islands... When conquering and eating those Indians, for spite they also committed the extreme offense of sodomy.

As soon as the [both sets of] Indians learned that the colonists abhorred such people because of their evil practices of aggressive war and eating human flesh, [both sets of] Indians felt delighted [for opposite reasons]. The devil never rests. There was no peace in the old world or in the new. Columbus brought the Good News of Jesus Christ to the [passive] Indians, and he brought them a [military] defense [against the Caribs] which eventually led to civilization.

Columbus did not sail to prove that the earth was round. All sea-faring nations already knew that fact by sailing down the coast of Africa. Columbus himself had sailed "over the horizon" down that same coast. His first ocean stop was at the remote but colonized Canary Islands.

Washington Irving's 1828 biography of Columbus [falsely] popularized the idea that Columbus had difficulty obtaining support because Europeans thought the Earth was flat. Maritime navigation relied on the stars and the curvature of the spherical Earth. The knowledge that the Earth was spherical was widespread, and the means of calculating its diameter using an astrolabe was known to both scholars and navigators. - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Voyages_of_Christopher_Columbus

According to Columbus' personal log, his purpose in seeking "undiscovered worlds" was to:

- bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the heathens
- bring the Word of God to unknown coastlands.

[Even with his possible Jewish heritage,] Christopher Columbus's motive for sailing was Christian evangelism. He brought not only the Gospel of the Good News of Jesus Christ, but the seed of civilization and a military defense of peaceful natives against aggressive cannibals.

100 Years of Colonial Charters - 1600's

We advance 91 years to the birth of the English colonies. While there were secular adventurers and interlopers, we cannot ignore the intensity of Christian fervor among their authorities.

English explorer Sir Walter Raleigh received the first colonial grant to America in 1584 authorizing him to enact statutes for the government of the proposed colony that:

- *“They be not against the true Christian Faith....”*

The First Charter of **Virginia**, April 10, 1606, for the Jamestown Colonists by King James I:

We, greatly commending and graciously accepting of their Desires for the Furtherance of so noble a Work, which may, by the Providence of Almighty God, hereafter tend to the Glory of His Divine Majesty, in propagating of Christian Religion to such People, as yet live in Darkness and miserable Ignorance of the true Knowledge and Worship of God, and may in time bring the Infidels and Savages, living in those Parts, to human Civility, and to a settled and quiet Government. - “The Rebirth of America” (page 46)

[Legal grammar was as horrid 400 years ago as it is today. - hb]

On April 27, 1607, the English Colonists' first act after landing at Cape Henry was to erect a large wooden cross and hold a prayer meeting. Subsequently, on May 14, 1607, **Jamestown**, Virginia became the first permanent settlement in North America.

On November 3, 1620, King James I granted the Charter of the Plymouth Council. These Pilgrims were full Separatists and not Puritans. The declared purpose of the **Plymouth Colony** was:

- *“In the hope thereby to advance the enlargement of the Christian religion, to the glory of God Almighty.”*

On November 11, 1620, the **Mayflower Compact** became America's first great governmental document. The Pilgrims signed it before they disembarked their ship, the Mayflower:

In ye name of God, Amen. We whose names are underwritten, the loyall subjects of our dread sovereign Lord, King James, by ye grace of God, Great Britaine, France, & Ireland king, defender of ye faith, etc., having undertaken for ye glorie of God, and advancements of ye Christian faith, and honour of our king & countrie, a voyage to plant ye first colonie in ye Northerne parts of Virginia, do by these presents solemnly & mutually in ye presence of God, and one of another, covenant & combine our selves together into a civill body politick, for our better ordering & preservation & furtherance of ye ends aforesaid....

March 4, 1629, the First Charter of **Massachusetts**:

For the directing...of all other Matters...maie be soe religiously, peaceable, and civilly governed, as their good life and orderlie Conversation, maie wynn and incite the Natives of the Country to the Knowledg and Obedience of the onlie true God and Savior of Mankinde and the Christian Fayth, which...is the principall Ende of this Plantation....

Robert Flood noted in "The Rebirth of America" (page 28):

By [1638], some 20,000 colonists [arrived] in New England. Many of these were not Puritans. Perhaps less than one-fifth [under 20%] even professed to be Christians. But the Puritan Christians established the government, built the schools, administered the churches, and set the moral tone ... much more than "blue laws" and the religious discipline which critics like to caricature.

The following is misquoted in print, on the web, and even in a 2007 Supreme Court case as the "Rhode Island Charter of 1683". The quoted text, while vital, was not in the Charter of 1663.

*On 7 March 1638, William Freeborn with other planters, among them Clement Weaver, original purchasers of Rhode Island, Signed, the compact which marks the foundation of the **Colony at Portsmouth, R. I.**: "We whose names are underwritten do hereby solemnly in the presence of Jehovah, incorporate ourselves into a Bodie Politick and as He shall help, will submit our persons, lives and estates unto our Lord Jesus Christ, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords and to all those perfect and most absolute laws of His, given us in His holy word of truth, to be guided and judged thereby."*

Five days later, [nine] of the signers, "because the opinions and revelations of Mr. Wheelwright and Mrs. Hutchinson have seduced and led into dangerous errors many of the people of New England," were ... ordered to deliver up all firearms and by act of Assembly of 12 March 1638 were ... formally banished from the Massachusetts Bay Colony. - <https://donvaughan.wordpress.com/genealogy/family-story/appendix-4/>

April 3, 1644, **New Haven Colony** Charter:

The judicial laws of God, as they were delivered by Moses ... [are to] be a rule to all the courts in this jurisdiction.

1663, Fundamental Constitutions of the **Carolinas**:

No man shall be permitted to be a freeman of Carolina, or to have any estate of habitation within it that doth not acknowledge a God, and that God is publicly and solemnly to be worshipped.

July 15, 1663, Royal Charter of **Rhode Island**:

... that they, pursueing, with peaceable and loyall mindes, their sober, serious and religious intentions, of goalie edifieing themselves, and one another, in the holie Christian ffaith and worshipp as they were perswaded; together with the gaineing over and conversione of the poore ignorant Indian natives, in those partes of America, to the sincere professione and obedienc of the same ffaith and worship, ... that a most flourishing civill state may stand and best bee maintained, and that among our English subjects. with a full libertie in religious concernements; and that true pietye rightly grounded upon gospell principles, ... in their just rights and libertyes against all the enemies of the Christian ffaith, ...
http://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th_century/ri04.asp#1

1665, Colonial Legislature of **New York Colony**:

It is ordered that a church shall be built in each parish, capable of holding two hundred persons; that ministers of every church shall preach every Sunday, and pray for the king, queen, the Duke of York, and the royal family; and to marry persons after legal publication of license.... Sunday is not to be profaned by traveling, by laborers, or vicious persons.... Church wardens to report twice a year all misdemeanors, such as swearing, profaneness, Sabbath-breaking, drunkenness, fornication, adultery, and all such abominable sins.

1681, Charter of **Pennsylvania**:

To reduce the savage natives by gentle and just manners to the Love of Civil Societe and Christian religion.

1697, **New Jersey Colony**, Governor Basse proclaimed in part:

Take due care that all laws made and provided for the suppression of vice and encouraging of religion and virtue, particularly the observance of the Lord's day, be duly put into execution.

These are examples of colonial charters and the basis for some of our other earliest laws.

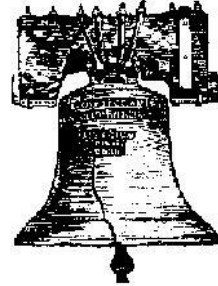
Revolution at the Door

Continental Congress - 1774

Moving forward 80 years, we glimpse the birth pangs of the United States as we sought freedom from England and established the Continental Congress.

In 1756, as a prologue to the Revolutionary War, John Adams (yet to become the Second President), wrote:

Suppose a nation in some distant region should take the Bible for their only Law Book and every member should regulate his conduct by the precepts there exhibited ... What a paradise would this region be!



On September 6, 1774, the Continental Congress made their first official act a call for prayer after just receiving the news that British troops had attacked Boston. Their first resolution was that, the next day they would open Congress with prayers by Rev. Jacob Duche.

As described in a letter by John Adams,

[The motion, however,] was opposed by Mr.[John] Jay of New York and Mr. Rutledge of South Carolina because we were so divided in religious sentiments, some Episcopalians, some Quakers, some Anabaptists, some Presbyterians, and some Congregationalists, that we could not join in the same worship. Mr. Samuel Adams arose and said that he was no bigot, and could hear a Prayer from any gentleman of Piety and virtue, who was at the same time a friend to his country.

The motion was seconded and passed. The next morning Rev. Duche, an Episcopal clergyman, read several prayers and Psalm 35.

September 7, 1774, that first prayer in Congress by Rev. Jacob Duche at Carpenter's Hall, Philadelphia after reading Psalm 35:

Be Thou present O God of Wisdom and direct the counsel of this Honorable Assembly; enable them to settle all things on the best and surest foundations; that the scene of blood may be speedily closed; that Order, Harmony and Peace may be effectually restored, and the Truth and Justice, Religion and Piety, prevail and flourish among the people.

Preserve the health of their bodies, and the vigor of their minds, shower down on them and the millions they here represent, such temporal Blessings as Thou seest expedient for them in this world, and crown them with everlasting Glory in the world to come. All this we ask in the name and through the merits of Jesus Christ, Thy Son and our Saviour.

John Adams continued,

You must remember, this was the next morning after we heard the horrible rumor of the cannonade of Boston. I never saw a greater effect upon an audience. It seemed as if heaven had ordained that Psalm [35] to be read that morning.

After this, Mr. Duche, unexpectedly to everybody, struck out into an extemporary prayer, which filled the bosom of every man present....

This description from the Library of Congress for that specific day:

Washington was kneeling there, and Henry, Randolph, Rutledge, Lee, and Jay, and by their side stood, bowed in reverence, the Puritan Patriots of New England, who had reason to believe that an armed soldiery was wasting their humble households. It was believed that Boston had been bombarded and destroyed.

They prayed fervently "for America, for Congress, for the Province of Massachusetts Bay, and especially for the town of Boston," and who can realize the emotion with which they turned imploringly to Heaven for Divine interposition.

"It was enough," says Mr. [John] Adams, "to melt a heart of stone. I saw tears gush into the eyes of the old, grave, pacific Quakers of Philadelphia."

Continental Congress - 1775

June 12, 1775, less than 2 months after "the shot heard 'round the world," the Continental Congress issued a call for all citizens to fast and pray and confess their sins that the Lord God might bless the land.

July 4, 1775, General George Washington gave the order:

The General most earnestly requires and expects a due observance of those articles of war established for the government of the Army which forbid profane cursing, swearing and drunkenness.

And in like manner he requires and expects of all officers and soldiers not engaged in actual duty, a punctual attendance of Divine services, to implore the blessing of Heaven upon the means used for our safety and defense.



July 6, 1775, the Continental Congress passed the "Declaration of the Causes and Necessity of Taking Up Arms" which included:

With a humble confidence in the Mercies of the Supreme and impartial God and ruler of the universe, we most devoutly implore His divine goodness to protect us happily through this great conflict, and to dispose of our adversaries to reconciliation on reasonable terms, and thereby to relieve the empire from the calamities of civil war.

July 19, 1775, as recorded in the Journals of Congress:

Agreed, The Congress meet here to Morrow morning, at half after 9 o'clock, in order to attend divine service at Mr. Duche's church; and that in the afternoon they meet here to go from this place and attend divine service at Doctor Allison's church.

July 20, 1775, General Washington repeated his July 4 order:

The General orders this day to be religiously observed by the forces under his Command, exactly in manner directed by the Continental Congress.

It is therefore strictly enjoined on all officers and soldiers to attend Divine service. And it is expected that all those who go to worship do take their arms, ammunition and accoutrements, and are prepared for immediate action, if called upon.

The six Navy cruisers commissioned by General Washington in 1775 flew as their ensign a white flag with a green pine tree, and above it the inscription: "An Appeal to Heaven".



March 16, 1776, the Continental Congress appointed a day of fasting and prayer for the colonies:

The Congress ... desirous ... to have people of all ranks and degrees duly impressed with a solemn sense of God's superintending providence, and of their duty, devoutly to rely ... on his aid and direction...

Do earnestly recommend Friday, the 17th day of May be observed by the colonies as a day of humiliation, fasting, and prayer; that we may, with unified hearts, confess and bewail our manifold sins and transgressions, and, by sincere repentance and amendment of life, appease God's righteous displeasure, and, through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, obtain this pardon and forgiveness.

[Date unknown] John Witherspoon, the active clergyman who signed the Declaration, wrote:

It is in the man of piety and inward principle that we may expect to find the uncorrupted patriot, the useful citizen, and the invincible soldier. God grant that in America true religion and civil liberty may be inseparable, and that the unjust attempts to destroy the one, may in the issue tend to the support and establishment of both.

Birth of a Nation - JULY 1776

July 2, 1776, the Continental Congress approved several overt, if generic, appeals to a personally involved God in the Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia:

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitles them...

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal. That they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness...

We, therefore, the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions...

And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our fortunes, and our sacred Honor.



July 2, 1776, the same day the Continental Congress approved the wording of the Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia, from his New York headquarters, George Washington ordered:

The time is now near at hand which must probably determine whether Americans are to be free men or slaves; whether they are to have any property they can call their own; whether their houses and farms are to be pillaged and destroyed, and themselves consigned to a state of wretchedness from which no human efforts will deliver them.

The fate of unborn millions will now depend, under God, on the courage of this army. Our cruel and unrelenting enemy leaves us only the choice of brave resistance, or the most abject submission. We have, therefore, to resolve to conquer or die.

July 3, 1776, John Adams of the Continental Congress wrote,

The second day of July, 1776, will be the most memorable epoch in the history of America, to be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary festival, commemorated as the day of deliverance by solemn devotion to God Almighty from one end of the Continent to the other, from this time forward forevermore.

July 8, 1776, the Continental Congress, after the first public reading of the Declaration of Independence, appointed Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, and Ben Franklin to design a great seal and motto for the United States. The supposedly "atheistic" deists were decidedly partial to Old Testament imagery!

- Ben Franklin suggested: **Moses lifting up his wand**, and dividing the red sea, and pharaoh in his chariot overwhelmed with the waters. He suggested this motto: "Rebellion to tyrants is obedience to God."
- Thomas Jefferson proposed: The children of **Israel in the wilderness**, led by a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.



July 9, 1776, the Continental Congress moved to establish prayer as a daily part of the new nation. Congress then authorized the Continental Army to provide chaplains for the troops.

General George Washington ordered,

The General hopes and trusts that every officer and man, will endeavor so to live, and act, as becomes a Christian Soldier defending the dearest Rights and Liberties of this country.

Samuel West was a chaplain in the Continental Army assisting General Washington,

Our cause us so just and good that nothing can prevent our success but only our sins. And though I confess that the irreligion and profaneness which are so common among us give something of a damp to my spirits yet I cannot help hoping and even believing, that Providence has designed this continent to be the asylum of liberty and true religion.

August 2, 1776, as the Declaration of Independence was being signed, Samuel Adams, the 'Father of the American Revolution' declared,

We have this day restored the Sovereign to Whom all men ought to be obedient. He reigns in heaven and from the rising to the setting of the sun, let His kingdom come.

August 27, 1776, British General Howe trapped General Washington and his 8,000 troops on Long Island, intending to advance the next morning and crush them. General Washington spent all night ferrying his troops across the East River. But when morning came a large number of his troops remained exposed to the British.

Major Ben Tallmage wrote,

Those of us who remained became very anxious for our own safety. At this time a very dense fog began to rise [from the river and out of the ground], and it seemed to settle in a peculiar manner. I recollect this peculiar providential occurrence perfectly well....

The fog covered Washington's retreat until the entire army had escaped. Never again did the British have such a rare chance of winning the war. However, of the 56 signers, few were long to survive. Five were tortured and died. Twelve had their homes sacked, looted, or burned. Nine died from war causes. Two lost their sons in the Army.

Explicit Faith-Centric State Constitutions

State Constitutions in 1776

In 1776, the first six of the 13 original states adopted their constitutions.

Connecticut: *"The People of this State ... by the Providence of God ... hath the sole and exclusive right of governing themselves as a free, sovereign, and independent state ... and forasmuch as the free fruition of such liberties and privileges as humanity, civility, and Christianity call for, as is due to every man in his place and proportion...."*

Delaware: *"[It is] the duty of all men frequently to assemble together for the public worship of the Author of the Universe ... [although] no man ought to be compelled to attend any religious worship."*

Article XXII **required** Delaware lawmakers to *"profess faith in God the Father, and in Jesus Christ His only Son, and in the Holy Ghost, one God, blessed for evermore...."*

Maryland: *"We, the people of the state of Maryland, grateful to Almighty God for our civil and religious liberty...."*

Article XXXV **required** office holders to take an oath including a *"declaration of a belief in the Christian religion."* Furthermore, *"... the Legislature may, in their discretion, lay a general and equal tax, for the support of the Christian religion."*

North Carolina: Article XXXII *"That no person who shall deny the being of God, or the truth of the Protestant religion, or the divine authority of the Old or New Testaments, or who shall hold religious principles incompatible with the freedom and safety of the State, shall be capable of holding any office or place of trust or profit in the civil department within this State."*

Pennsylvania: *"We, the people of Pennsylvania, grateful to Almighty God for the blessings of civil and religious liberty, and humbly invoking His guidance, do ordain and establish this Constitution...."*

Section 10 *"And each member [of the legislature], before he takes his seat, shall make and **subscribe** the following declaration, viz: 'I do believe in one God, the Creator and Governour of the universe, the rewarder of the good and punisher of the wicked, and I do acknowledge the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be given by Divine Inspiration.'"*

Virginia: Bill of Rights, Article XVI: *"That Religion, or the Duty which we owe our Creator, and the Manner of discharging it, can be directed only by Reason and Convictions, not by Force or Violence; and therefore all Men are equally entitled to the free exercise of Religion, according to the Dictates of Conscience; and that it is the mutual Duty of all to practice Christian Forebearance, Love, and Charity towards each other."*

State Constitutions in 1777

Georgia: *We, the people of Georgia, relying upon protection and guidance of Almighty God, do ordain and establish this Constitution.*

New York: *The free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship, without discrimination or preference, shall forever hereafter be allowed, within this state, to all mankind: Provided, that the liberty of conscience, hereby granted, shall not be so construed as to excuse acts of licentiousness.*

State Constitutions in 1778

South Carolina: Article XXXVIII. *That all persons and religious societies who acknowledge that there is one God, and a future state of rewards and punishments, and that God is publicly to be worshipped, shall be freely tolerated ... That all denominations of Christian[s] ... shall enjoy equal religious and civil privileges.*

State Constitutions in 1780

Massachusetts, the 10th state, adopted its constitution:

We, therefore, the people of Massachusetts, acknowledging, with grateful hearts, the goodness of the great Legislator of the Universe, in affording us, in the course of His providence [an opportunity to form a compact]; ... and devoutly imploring His direction in so interesting a design, ... [establish this Constitution].

Part I, Article II: *It is the right, as well as the duty of all men in society, publicly and in stated seasons, to worship the Supreme Being, the Great Creator and Preserver of the Universe. And no subject shall be hurt, molested, or restrained in his person, liberty, or estate, for worshipping God in the manner and seasons most agreeable to the dictates of his own conscience.*

Part I, Article III: *And every denomination of Christians, demeaning themselves peaceably, and as good subjects of the commonwealth, shall be equally under the protection of the law....*

Appealing to God - 1777-1778

No Atheists in Foxholes

September 11, 1777, [notice the date -hb] the Continental Congress approved that 20,000 copies of the Holy Bible be imported. A shortage of Bibles was caused by the interruption of trade with England during the Revolutionary War. A special congressional committee reported:

The Bible is so universal and its importance so great that ... the Committee recommends that Congress will order the Committee of Commerce to import 20,000 Bibles from Holland, Scotland, or elsewhere, into different parts of the States of the Union.

November 1, 1777, the Continental Congress issued the **First National Proclamation of Thanksgiving** to all colonies as a result of their victory at Saratoga:

Forasmuch as it is the indispensable duty of all men to adore the superintending Providence of Almighty God; to acknowledge with gratitude their obligation to Him for benefits received and to implore such further blessing as they stand in need of; and it having pleased Him in His abundant mercy not only to continue to us the innumerable bounties of His common Providence ... to smile upon us as in the prosecution of a just and necessary war for the defense and establishment of our unalienable rights and liberties....

-o- It is therefore recommended to the legislative or executive powers of these United States, to set apart Thursday, the eighteenth day of December next, for the solemn thanksgiving and praise....

-o- That with one heart and one voice the good people may express the grateful feelings of their hearts, and consecrate themselves to the service of their Divine Benefactor; that together with their sincere acknowledgements and offerings, they may join the penitent confession of their manifold sins ... and their humble and earnest supplication that it may please God, through the merits of Jesus Christ, mercifully to forgive....

-o- That it may please Him graciously to afford His blessings on the governments of these states....

-o- That it may please Him to prosper the trade and manufactures of the people ... and to prosper the means of religion for the promotion and enlargement of that kingdom "in righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."

-o- And it further recommended, that servile labour, and such recreation as, though at other times innocent, may be unbecoming the purpose of this appointment, be omitted on so solemn and occasion.

On May 2, 1778, General George Washington ordered his troops at Valley Forge:

While we are zealously performing the duties of good citizens and soldiers, we certainly ought not to be inattentive to the higher duties of religion. To the distinguished character of Patriot, it should be our highest Glory to laud the more distinguished Character of Christian. The signal instances of Providential goodness which we have experienced and which have now almost crowned our labors with complete success demand from us in a peculiar manner the warmest returns of gratitude and piety to the Supreme Author of all good.

On May 5, 1778, upon receiving news that France had joined the War on the side of the colonies, General Washington ordered:

It having pleased the Almighty Ruler of the universe to defend the cause of the United American States, and finally to raise up a powerful friend among the princes of the earth, to establish liberty and independence upon a lasting foundation, it becomes us to set apart a day for gratefully acknowledging the divine goodness, and celebrating the important event, which we owe to His divine interposition.

August 20, 1778, General Washington wrote to General Thomas Nelson:

The hand of Providence has been so conspicuous in all this (course of the war) that he must be worse than an infidel that lacks faith, and more wicked that has not gratitude to acknowledge his obligations; but it will be time enough for me to turn Preacher when my present appointment ceases.

June 1779, a prayer by General George Washington:

And now, Almighty Father, if it is Thy holy will that we shall obtain a place and name among the nations of the earth, grant that we may be enabled to show our gratitude for Thy goodness by our endeavors to fear and obey Thee. Bless us with Thy wisdom in our counsels, success in battle, and let our victories be tempered with humanity. Endow, also, our enemies with enlightened minds, that they become sensible of their injustice, and willing to restore our liberty and peace. Grant the petition of Thy servant, for the sake of Him whom Thou hast called Thy beloved Son; nevertheless, not my will, but Thine be done.

June 1780, British General Clinton [really!] led a charge against the Americans at Springfield, New Jersey. During the battle, the patriots ran out of paper wadding used to hold gunpowder in their muskets. Chaplain James Caldwell ran to the nearby Presbyterian Church and collected the hymnals. The patriots tore out pages for wadding, held their ground in the battle, and Clinton and his troops withdrew by the next day.

October 18, 1780, after Benedict Arnold's plot to betray Washington's troops to the British, the Continental Congress issued a Proclamation for a **Day of Public Thanksgiving and Prayer**:

*Whereas it hath pleased **Almighty God, the Father of all mercies**, amidst the vicissitudes and calamities of war, to bestow blessings on the people of these states, which call for their devout and thankful acknowledgments, more especially in the late remarkable interposition of his watchful providence, in the rescuing of the person of our Commander-in-Chief and the army from imminent dangers, at the moment when treason was ripened for execution...*

*It is therefore recommended to the several states ... a day of public thanksgiving and prayer, that all the people may assemble on that day to celebrate the praises of our Divine Benefactor; to confess our unworthiness of the least of his favours, and to offer our fervent supplications to the **God of all grace** ... to cause the **knowledge of Christianity** to spread over all the earth.*

The Nation Sets Priorities

In 1781, supposedly “atheistic” deist Thomas Jefferson advised:

*God who gave us life gave us liberty. And can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are a gift of God? That they are not to be violated but with His wrath? Indeed, **I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just**; that His justice cannot sleep forever.*

September 10, 1782, Congress, responding to the need for Bibles contracted with printer Robert Aitken to print "a neat edition of the Holy Scriptures for the use of schools." Known as the 'Bible of the Revolution', the **Endorsement of Congress** was printed on its front page:

Whereupon, Resolved, That the United States in Congress assembled ... recommend this edition of the Bible to the inhabitants of the United States, and hereby authorize [Robert Aitken] to publish this recommendation in the manner he shall think proper.

In 1783, the Revolutionary War ended victoriously with this peace treaty beginning:

In the name of the Most Holy and Undivided Trinity. It having pleased the Divine Providence to dispose in the hearts of the most serene and most potent Prince George the Third, by the Grace of God, King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith ... and of the United States of America, to forget all past misunderstandings and differences....

December 23, 1783, General Washington resigned his military commission addressing Congress:

I resign with satisfaction the appointment ... my abilities to accomplish so arduous a task, were superseded by ... the patronage of Heaven.... My gratitude for the interposition of Providence ... increases with every review of the momentous contest. I consider it an indispensable duty to close this last solemn act of my official life by commending the interest of our dearest country to the protection of Almighty God, and those who have the superintendence of them, to his holy keeping.

The Constitutional Convention struggled for weeks. On June 28, 1787, supposedly “atheistic” deist Benjamin Franklin, age 81, requested opening each **daily** session with prayer:

Mr. President, the small progress we have made after four or five weeks ... is methinks a melancholy proof of the imperfection of the Human Understanding. We indeed seem to feel our own want of political wisdom, since we have been running about in search of it. We have gone back to ancient history for models of government ... which, having been formed with the seeds of their own dissolution, now no longer exist. And we have viewed Modern States all around Europe, but find none of their Constitutions suitable to our circumstances.



In this situation of this Assembly, groping as it were in the dark to find political truth, and scarce able to distinguish it when presented to us, how has it happened, Sir, that we have not hitherto once thought of humbly applying to the Father of lights to illuminate our understanding?

*In the beginning of the Contest with Great Britain, when we were sensible of danger we had **daily prayer** in this room for the Divine protection. Our prayers, Sir, were heard, and they were graciously answered. All of us who were engaged in the struggle must have observed frequent instances of a super-intending Providence in our favor ...*

To that kind of providence we owe this happy opportunity of consulting in peace on the means of establishing our future national felicity. And have we now forgotten that powerful Friend? Or do we imagine we no longer need His assistance?

*I have lived, Sir, a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth -- that **God governs in the affairs of men**. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid?*

*We have been assured, Sir, in the Sacred Writings, that "except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it." **I firmly believe this**; and I also believe that without his concurring aid we shall succeed in this political building no better than the Builders of Babel ... mankind may hereafter from this unfortunate instance, despair of establishing governments by Human wisdom and leave it to chance, war, and conquest.*

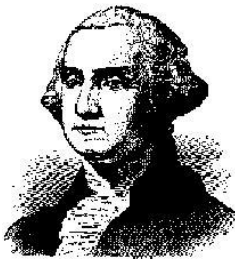
*I therefore beg to move that henceforth prayers imploring the assistance of Heaven, and its blessing on our deliberations, be held in this Assembly **every morning** before we proceed to business, and that one or more of the clergy of this city be requested to officiate in that service.*

September 25, 1789, Congress passed the first ten amendments to the Constitution. Known as the **Bill of Rights**, the First Amendment (of highest priority) included religious freedom,

- "Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

The very same day, Congress unanimously approved a resolution asking President Washington to proclaim a **National Day of Thanksgiving**:

That a joint committee of both Houses be directed to wait upon the President to request that he recommend to the people of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer, to be observed by acknowledging, with grateful hearts, the many signal favors of Almighty God, especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a constitution of government for their safety and happiness.



Therefore, on October 3, 1789, George Washington proclaimed a **National Day of Prayer and Thanksgiving** saying

It is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the Providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and to humbly implore His protection and favor.

In 1789, Congress "ordained and established" the United States Supreme Court. Each court session is opened with the invocation,

- *"God save the United States and this Honorable Court."*

John Jay, the first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, later said,

*Providence has given to our people the choice of their rulers, and it is the duty, as well as the privilege and interest of **our Christian nation** to select and **prefer Christians for their rulers.***

John Jay wrote a letter to Peter Jay in 1784:

The Bible is the best of all books for it is the Word of God and teaches us the way to be happy in this world and in the next. Continue therefore to read it and to regulate your life by its precepts.

January, 1793, President Washington wrote to the **Hebrew Congregations** of Savannah, Georgia,

May the same wonder-working Deity, who long since delivering the Hebrews from their Egyptian Oppressors planted them in the promised land -- whose providential agency has lately been conspicuous in establishing these United States as an independent Nation -- still continue to water them with the dews of Heaven and to make the inhabitants of every denomination participate in the temporal and spiritual blessings of that people whose God is Jehovah.

On March 4, 1797, our second President, John Adams, said in his Inaugural Address:

And may that Being who is supreme over all, the Patron of Order, the Fountain of Justice, and the Protector in all ages of the world of virtuous liberty, continue His blessings upon this nation.

October 11, 1798, President John Adams wrote a letter to the officers of the First Brigade of the Third Division of the Militia of Massachusetts:

*We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Avarice, ambition, revenge, or gallantry, would break the strongest cords of our Constitution as a whale goes through a net. Our Constitution was **made only for a moral and religious people.** It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.*

November 20, 1798, supposedly "anti-faith" Patrick Henry in his "Last Will and Testament" wrote:

This is all the inheritance I give to my dear family. The religion of Christ will give them one which will make them rich indeed.

The Nation Grows – 1800 onwards

Westward Expansion

November 2, 1800, President Adams became the first president to move into the White House. He offered this prayer, now engraved on the mantel in the state dining room:

I pray Heaven to bestow THE BEST OF BLESSINGS ON THIS HOUSE and All that shall hereafter inhabit it, May none but Honest and Wise Men ever rule under This Roof.

[Undated:] John Quincy Adams:

- *“The first and almost the only Book deserving universal attention is the Bible.”*

July 12, 1804, President Alexander Hamilton's dying words were

I have a tender reliance on the mercy of the Almighty; through the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ. I am a sinner. I look to Him for mercy; pray for me.

In 1821, Daniel Webster (1782-1852), Member of the US House of Representatives, defined the rules of longevity with

If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible, our country will go on prospering and to prosper; but if we and our posterity neglect its instructions and authority, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us and bury all our glory in profound obscurity.

The Honorable Judge Bushrod Washington (1762-1829), Associate Justice, US Supreme Court, nephew of President George Washington, was also the Vice President of the American Sunday School Union (ASSU) from 1826 until his death. In a letter to the ASSU in 1829, he closed with:

...that heaven may prosper the benevolent work(s) in which the Sunday School Union are engaged, so honorable to them and so beneficial to our country, and to those particularly who are the objects of their solicitude - is the ardent prayer of their faithful friend and admirer, - Bushrod Washington. [He added that such work] was exerting a moral influence that would regenerate the land.

In Philadelphia in 1831, Daniel Webster proposed the Mississippi Valley Enterprise, an ambitious effort to establish Sunday Schools throughout the valley of the Mississippi River in two years. Later that year, Webster helped lead a rally in Washington DC and raised \$75,000 to support the project (sufficient funds to support almost 100 missionaries). He stated:

There are other plans of benevolence about which man may differ, but there can be no danger of error here. If we are sure of anything, we are sure of this, that the knowledge of their Creator, their duty and their destiny is good to men; and that whatever, therefore, draws the attention of the young to the consideration of those objects, and enables them to feel their importance, must be advantageous to human happiness in the highest degree and in all worlds. (Ref: Ron Mattocks, AMF, 1980)

July 4, 1848, when the cornerstone was laid for the Washington Monument, many citizens and dignitaries were present. President James Polk led the ceremony along with House Speaker, Robert Winthrop. Winthrop spoke eloquently about President Washington's life and impact, referring to his greatness and to the influence of Christianity.

After Winthrop's address, Rev. J. McJilton prayed:

And now, O Lord of all power and majesty, we humbly beseech Thee to let the wing of Thy protection be ever outspread over the land of Washington! May his people be Thy people! May his God be their God! Never from beneath the strong arm of Thy providence may they be removed; but, like their honored chief, may they acknowledge Thee in peace and in war, and ever serve Thee with a willing, faithful acceptable service!

Hear our prayer, we beseech Thee, that the glory of this nation may never be obscured in the gloom of guilt; that its beauty may never be so marred by the foul impress of sin that the light of its religious character shall be dimmed.

Open the eyes of the people, and let them see that it is their true interest to study Thy laws, to seek Thy favor, and to worship Thee with a faithful worship. All these mercies and blessings we ask in the name and mediation of Jesus Christ, our most blessed Lord and Savior. Amen.

Not So Civil War

After the disastrous first battle of Bull Run, President Abraham Lincoln declared a **National Day of Prayer and Fasting**. He wrote

It is fit and becoming in all people, at all times, to acknowledge and revere the Supreme Government of God; to bow in humble submission to His chastisement; to confess and deplore their sins and transgressions in the full conviction that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; and to pray, with all fervency and contrition, for the pardon of their past offenses, and for a blessing upon their present and prospective action.



After the war ended, James Pollock (1810-1890), Pennsylvania Governor and Director of the Philadelphia Mint, proposed a motto of America's new coinage. The suggested motto, "Our Trust Is In God," was shortened to "**God Our Trust**." In 1864, a revised motto, "**In God We Trust**" first appeared on a two-cent coin. In 1865 and 1866, Congress passed legislation to place the "**In God We Trust**" message of faith and healing on all other coins.

[Undated Quotes:] President Lincoln wrote:

-o- It is the duty of nations, as well as of men, to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God and to recognize the sublime truth announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord.

-o- All the good from the Saviour of the world is communicated through this Book; but for the Book, we could not know right from wrong. All things desirable to man are contained in it.

Between Times

In 1892, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in "Church of the Holy Trinity v. United States":

Our laws and our institutions must necessarily be based upon the teachings of the Redeemer of Mankind. It is impossible that it should be otherwise; and in this sense and to this extent, our civilization and our institutions are emphatically Christian ...

From the discovery of this continent to the present hour, there is a single voice making this affirmation ... we find everywhere a clear recognition of the same truth ... These, and many other matters which might be noticed, add a volume of unofficial declarations to the mass of organic utterances that this is a Christian nation.

[Undated:] President Andrew Jackson:

- *"The joyful promises [the Scriptures] contains will be a balsam to all your troubles."*

[Undated:] President Calvin Coolidge:

The foundations of our society and our government rest so much on the teachings of the Bible that it would be difficult to support them if faith in these teaching would cease to be practically universal in our country.

World War II

[1940's - Date unknown], General Douglas MacArthur (1880-1964) was our nation's last five-star general. His fiery command of many campaigns in WWI, WWII, and Korea distinguished him as a true patriot.

But salty MacArthur was a man of prayer. Here is "A Father's Prayer," written by the General "during the early days of the desperate campaigns in the Far East in WWII".

Build me a son, O Lord, who will be strong enough to know when he is weak, and brave enough to face himself when he is afraid; one who will be proud and unbending in honest defeat, and humble and gentle in victory. Build me a son whose wishbone will not be where his backbone should be; a son who will know Thee and that to know himself is the foundation stone of knowledge.

Lead him I pray, not in the path of ease and comfort, but under the stress and spur of difficulties and challenge. Here let him learn to stand up in the storm; here let him learn compassion for those who fail. Build me a son whose heart will be clear, whose goal will be high; a son who will master himself before he seeks to master other men; one who will learn to laugh, yet never forget how to weep; one who will reach into the future, yet never forget the past.

And after all these things are his, add, I pray, enough of a sense of humor, so that he may always be serious, yet never take himself too seriously. Give him humility, so that he may always remember the simplicity of true greatness, the open mind of true wisdom, the meekness of true strength.

Then, I, his father, will dare to whisper, have not lived in vain.

Post-Christian Era

On 2/1/2003, in a national broadcast message upon the loss of the Space Shuttle "Columbia", President George W Bush quoted Isaiah 40:26 in full, concluding it with:

*The same Creator who named the stars, knows the names of the seven souls who died ...
Our astronauts did not return to earth, but they have returned home.*

Postscript for 2015

Progressives see this parade of quotes as "back then" and we have improved to no longer need a God. When a culture puts man above God, it runs the frequent risk of tyranny in which absolute power corrupts absolutely. When man becomes his own highest authority, the historical record is replete with tyrants bringing order through sheer external force and suppression. Marxism saw spiritual life as a crutch, but our early Republic saw it as a stabilizing leg of a self-governing people. We ignore the wisdom in these quotes at our own peril.

John Whitehead (Rebirth of America, p.36-37):

To the men of that time, it was self-evident that if there were no God there could be no absolute rights. ... Law cannot be simply what a judge or a fuhrer says it is.

-o-o-o-

American History of Thanksgiving

Some of the following history of Thanksgiving came from an article by Mark Alexander in the November 24, 2004 issue of the Patriot Post. I presented this second article to open the Thanksgiving Gathering of the Bible Study Groups at LLNL.

Other countries have limited observances of thankfulness, but ours is unique by officially weaving in God. This national holiday, more than any other, has retained aspects of the first celebration and acknowledges, sometimes unintentionally, the Author of life who has helped us beyond our deserving.

The first recorded thanksgiving celebration in America was in the mostly secular Jamestown of Virginia, in 1607, four hundred years ago.

The celebration that we learned about in school was the Puritan settlers. These Pilgrims, on December 11, before disembarking from the Mayflower, signed the "Mayflower Compact," America's first civil document. Through very supportive Indian friends, the Pilgrims survived an awful winter and reaped a rich harvest in the **summer** of 1621.

We rarely hear that the settlers, under pressure from their investors, held all fruit of their labors in common. Predictably, their work yielded little, and the Colony almost foundered after two years. Governor Bradford recorded:

After much debate of things, the Governor ... gave way that they should set corn every man for his own particular ... And so, it was assigned to every family a parcel of land, ...

With new ownership rights, the families working together for their own betterment quickly paid off their investors. Thus, for the first time in their democratic Calvinist faith, during the **summer of 1623**, they declared a Thanksgiving holiday.

On June 20, 1676, the governing council of Charlestown, Massachusetts, met to determine how best to express thanks that their town was spared during the fight-to-the-death Indian Wars. By unanimous vote they instructed Edward Rawson, the clerk, to proclaim **June 29** as an official day of Thanksgiving.

The Holy God having by a long and Continual Series of his Afflictive dispensations in and by the present War with the Heathen Natives of this land, written and brought to pass bitter things against his own Covenant people in this wilderness,

yet so that we evidently discern that in the midst of his judgments he hath remembered mercy, [...] in the day of his sore displeasure against us for our sins, with many singular Intimations of his Fatherly Compassion, [... such as]; reserving many of our Towns from Desolation, Threatened, and attempted by the Enemy,

and, [...] if it be the Lord's mercy that we are not [entirely] consumed, It certainly bespeaks our positive Thankfulness, when our Enemies are in any measure disappointed or destroyed;

***and** fearing the Lord should take notice [... that] we should be found [to be] an Insensible people, as not standing before Him with Thanksgiving, [and instead, foolishly] lading him with our Complaints in the time of pressing Afflictions:*

***[Thus]** The Council has thought meet to [...] set apart the 29th day of this instant June, as a day of Solemn Thanksgiving and praise to God for such his Goodness and Favor, [...] and that the Lord may behold us as a People offering Praise and thereby glorifying Him;*

***[Therefore]** the Council doth commend it to the Respective Ministers, Elders and people of this Jurisdiction; Solemnly and seriously [...] that being persuaded by the mercies of God we may all, even this whole people "offer up our bodies and souls as a living and acceptable Service unto God by Jesus Christ." (Romans 12:1).*

Thanksgiving then spread to the other colonies during the Revolution, and the Continental Congresses proclaimed annual Thanksgiving days from 1777 through 1783.

Samuel Adams, on behalf of the Continental Congress, said in November 3, 1778

That all the People may with united Hearts on that Day express a just Sense of His unmerited Favors -- Particularly in that it hath pleased Him, by His over ruling Providence to support us in a just and necessary War for the Defense of our Rights and Liberties; [...] -- and by the Continuance of that Union among these States, which by his Blessing, will be their future Strength & Glory.

After adopting the Bill of Rights in 1789, both chambers of Congress next asked President George Washington to act as follows:

***Whereas** it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly to implore His protection and favor.*

***and whereas** both Houses of Congress have by their joint committee requested me to commend to the people of United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many signal favors of Almighty God, especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness,*

***Now, therefore,** I do recommend and assign Thursday, the 26th day of November next, to be devoted by the people of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being who is the Beneficent Author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be;*

***that** we may then all unite in rendering unto Him our sincere and humble thanks for His kind care and protection of the people of this country previous to their becoming a nation; for the signal and manifold mercies and the favorable interpositions of His providence in the course and conclusion of the late war;*

[...] for the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed, and the means we have of acquiring and diffusing useful knowledge; and, in general, for all the great and various favors which He has been pleased to confer upon us.

And also that we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplication to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations, and beseech Him to pardon our national and other transgressions; [...] to render our national government a blessing to all the people by constantly being a government of wise, just and constitutional laws, discreetly and faithfully executed and obeyed; [...] to promote the knowledge and practice of true religion and virtue, and the increase of science among [nations]; and, generally, to grant unto all mankind such a degree of temporal prosperity as He alone knows to be best.

*Given under my hand, at the city of New York, the **3rd day of October**, AD 1789.*

President James Madison called for three national observances of fasting and grateful prayer for deliverance during the War of 1812.

There were no more proclamations for nearly 50 years, - - - until Abraham Lincoln declared **November 26**, 1863, a Day of Thanksgiving, saying in part,

[... It is] announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations are blessed whose God is the Lord.... It has seemed to me fit and proper that [...God's blessings] should be solemnly, reverently, and gratefully acknowledged, as with one heart and one voice, by the whole American people.



Ever since, Thanksgiving has been an annual November event. Unlike colonial times, we are rarely on the edge of hunger. Nonetheless, these times are politically and morally treacherous, pushing us to seek hard after God with our whole being.

-O-O-O-

Additional Evidences

Escaping from Europe to the New World

Some migration intended a continuation of state-supported state-enforced churches

Anglican (Jamestown, Williamsburg)

Some intended to build self-contained utopias with a local theocracy in place.

Puritans/Congregationalists (New England), Mennonites (Pennsylvania)

Some intended to be left alone within a larger non-sectarian government structure

Separatists, Baptists, Quakers (Rhode Island)

Definition of "Religion"

In all early charters and legal commentary, religion always referred to Protestant branches of the Christian faith. Catholicism was uncomfortably tolerated given the past centuries of its oppression using the might of the various kings of Europe. Jewish, Islamic, Indian Shamanism, and African Spiritism were not considered the "religion" covered in the founding documents.

First Great Awakening

The Church of England denomination in the United States was renamed Episcopalian in 1783.

Methodists did not formally break from the Church of England (Anglican) until 1784.

- George Whitefield (Anglican/Methodist evangelist, 1738-1740 Colonies)
- John Wesley (Anglican leader of British Methodists)
- Francis Asbury (Anglican leader of American Methodists)

The First Great Awakening began in the 1730s and lasted to about 1743 (edited):

The great British Evangelist George Whitefield arrived in Georgia in 1738, and returned in 1739 for a second visit of the Colonies, making a "triumphant campaign north from Philadelphia to New York, and back to the South." In 1740, he visited New England, and "at every place he visited, the consequences were large and tumultuous."

Ministers from various Protestant denominations supported the Great Awakening. In the middle colonies, he influenced British, Dutch, and German churches.

In the late colonial period, most pastors read their sermons, which were theologically dense and advanced a particular theological argument or interpretation. The leaders of the Great Awakening, such as James Davenport, Jonathan Edwards, Gilbert Tennent and George Whitefield, had little interest in merely engaging intellects; rather, they sought a strong emotional response that might yield the experiential evidence of saving grace.

This movement played a role in democratic thought (the belief that information should be shared and completely unbiased and uncontrolled). These concepts ushered in the American Revolution and contributed to a demand for religious freedom [across the Christian spectrum]. It was the first time that African Americans embraced Christianity in large numbers. - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Awakening

Faith of Continental Congress

“Each year, information about those who signed the Declaration of Independence is circulated, not all of which is accurate” says <http://patriotpost.us/documents/505>

Although two had been clergy previously, John Witherspoon of New Jersey was the only active clergyman --he wore his pontificals to the sessions. Almost all were Protestant Christians; Charles Carroll of Maryland was the only Roman Catholic.

John Adams wrote that the signers of the Declaration of Independence were “*Episcopalians, some Quakers, some Anabaptists, some Presbyterians, and some Congregationalists*”

<http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/news/2546951/posts> tallies these church connections:

Religious Affiliation	# of	% of
Episcopalian/Anglican	32	57.1%
Congregationalist	13	23.2%
Presbyterian	12	21.4%
Quaker	2	3.6%
Unitarian or Universalist	2	3.6%
Catholic	1	1.8%
TOTAL	56	100%

The signers were a profoundly intelligent, religious and ethically-minded group.

Four of the signers were current or former full-time preachers, and many more were sons of clergymen. These were for the most part active churchgoers and many contributed significantly to their churches both financially as well as their service as lay leaders. The signers were members of religious denominations at a rate [100%!] significantly higher than average for the American Colonies during the late 1700s.

The signers inspired both secularists (who appreciate the non-denominational nature of the Declaration) and by traditional religionists (who appreciate the recognition of God as the source of the rights enumerated).

B.J. Lossing's seminal 1848 collection of biographies of the signers echoed widely held sentiments that there was divine intent or inspiration behind the Declaration. Lossing identified the signers as "instruments of Providence" who have "gone to receive their reward in the Spirit Land."

Atheist-Favored Deists - Their Contrary Quotes and Actions

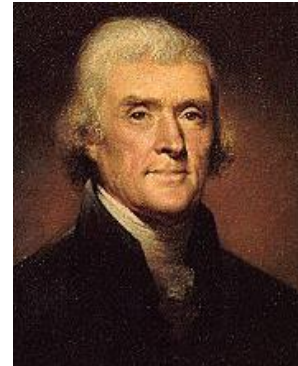
The atheist/secular media enjoys parading their favored signers, Ben Franklin and especially Thomas Jefferson. Both were openly Deist in theology but worshipped in the Episcopal Church. These two, along with John Adams, were the central committee that drafted the Declaration. The many references to God are theirs and were not removed during vetting by Congress. See my first article in this document for poignant quotes that go contrary to the modern image.

The two most worrisome outliers in faith that I thought secularists would have promoted were the two Unitarian Congregationalists: John Adams and Robert Paine. Unfortunately, John Adams is almost impossible to quote without stumbling into his many references about God.

Thomas Jefferson: An enigmatic Deist (Rev.7/3/2018)

Jefferson proudly authored the "Act for Religious Freedom" in Virginia in 1777 (adopted in 1786) to encourage freedom for (not from) religious expression as a natural right. He considered this one of his signature achievements, as engraved on his tombstone.

For 200 years, the Muslim "Barbary Coast" rulers had enslaved over a million Europeans and Americans. Jefferson was shocked to hear their ambassador in 1786 claim it was their right and duty to enslave non-Muslims. In 1765, he had already bought a Koran, and probably earnestly read it 1786-1789 while Minister to France to understand how to best defeat them as President in 1801-1806.



His 1802 letter to the Danbury Baptists contained his "separation of church and state" clause. Never adopted into federal laws, the letter does not support "freedom from exposure to religious expression".

In 1802, Jefferson's administration extended a 1787 Congressional act about lands: "*For the sole use of Christian Indians and Moravian Brethren missionaries for ... promoting Christianity*"

Diaries of attendees for worship at the Capitol Building noted that he regularly attended weekly Christian worship as Vice President and later as President arriving on horseback. He saw nothing evil for using federal property, indeed the Capitol itself, for a worship service.

In 1804 and in 1820, he clipped aspects from the Gospels to reflect his non-supra-natural Deism. Never a Bible, the full title of this 1804 version was "*The Philosophy of Jesus of Nazareth, being Extracted from the Account of His Life and Doctrines Given by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; Being an Abridgement of the New Testament for the Use of the Indians, Unembarrassed with Matters of Fact or Faith beyond the Level of their Comprehensions*"

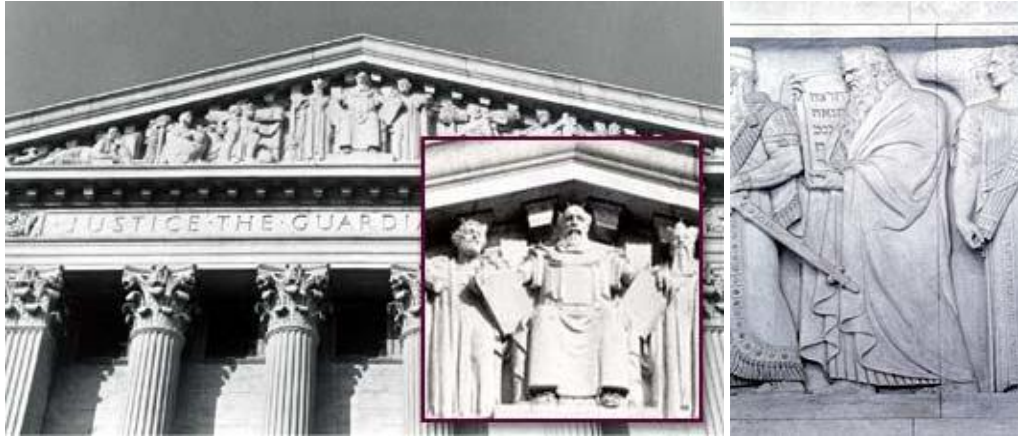
Panel three in the Jefferson Memorial on the Washington DC mall, has chiseled part of his 1781 advice into the marble panel. It is vital that Americans deeply contemplate that panel.

*God, who gave us life, gave us liberty. Can the liberties of a nation be secure when we have removed a conviction that these liberties are the gift of God? **Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just, that his justice cannot sleep forever***

Memorial Stones in Washington DC

Eugene Hemrick has a fine book of photographs with explanations concerning the many Biblical engravings, artwork, and statuary in Washington DC. While locals soon ignore anything but the traffic, an observant Christian tourist will chance upon Biblical quotes and images at every turn.

As a solitary example, the outside pediment of the Supreme Court Building shows historical figures looking towards Moses at the peak. Inside, engraved in stone above the head of the Chief Justice are the Ten Commandments. Moses is included among the great lawgivers in a marble sculpture relief on the East Portico.



The Library of Congress hosts quotations painted on its interior walls. At least three separate inscriptions quote from Micah 6:8, Psalm 19:1, and John 1:5

The north wall of the Lincoln Memorial, shrouded in shade and not well lit, is chiseled the text from his Second Inaugural Address. I stood in awe reading the selected portions of the text one late evening. Every other foot-high word seemingly shouted out about the Bible and God.

I was bemused that most tourists did not raise their eyes up at that huge canvas of stone dedicated to Lincoln's text. Most tourists, eyes downward, turned into that darkened area only to access the door on the right edge to the gift shop.

Establishing Denomination of the Nine Colonial Universities

The educated classes set up the first universities for the training of American pastors without having to depend upon recruiting suitable pastors from Europe.

College	Establishing Denomination
Harvard	Puritan (Congregational)

"Rules and Precepts" of Harvard in 1646 (when 52% of their graduates became ministers):

-o- *Every one shall consider the main end of his life and studies to know God and Jesus Christ which is eternal life.*
 -o- *Seeing the Lord giveth wisdom, every one shall seriously by prayer in secret seek wisdom of Him.*
 -o- *Every one shall so exercise himself in reading the Scriptures twice a day that they be ready to give an account of their proficiency therein, both in theoretical observations of languages and logic, and in practical and spiritual truths.*
 "The Rebirth of America" (page 41)

Yale Puritan (Congregational) – Christians established Yale in 1701 when they observed that the spiritual climate at Harvard had declined.

In 1783, President of Yale, Ezra Stiles spoke to the Assembly of Connecticut, after reviewing remarkable near misses and providential rescues during 1776-1777:

[The entire American system would prosper only as] *men, not merely nominal Christians (Christians in name only), make it work. ... The United States are under peculiar obligations to become a holy people unto the Lord our God.*

Dartmouth	Puritan (Congregational)
Princeton	Presbyterian (officially non-sectarian)
Rutgers	Dutch Reformed
William and Mary	Church of England
Columbia	Church of England (commitment to religious liberty)

Penn Church of England (officially non-sectarian via Benjamin Franklin. Unlike its peers, this university was not initially set up to train clergy)

Brown Baptist (no admissions religious requirement, but the charter required that its president and twenty-two of the thirty-six trustees be Baptists, and that the remainder consist of "five Friends [Quakers], four Congregationalists, and five Episcopalians.")

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- Colonial Religious Diversity
- The Great Awakening
- Religion and Revolution

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