

# History and America's Christian Heritage

## Supplement Contents

<b>Is History Important?.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b><i>Revisiting Reinhold Niebuhr's The Irony of American History</i> by Dr. Wilfred McClay.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The Secular Humanist View of History.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The Biblical View of History.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>The Postmodern View of History.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>The Marxist View of History.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>The Cyclical and Linear View of History.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>America's Christian History.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>The Role of the Bible and Christianity in American History.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>A Legacy to Leave.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Resources.....</b>	<b>18</b>

## Is History Important?

**“When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the Lord nor the work which He had done for Israel.” Judges 2:10**

**“In those days there was no king in Israel, everyone did what was right in his own eyes.”  
Judges 21:25**

“Take away the heritage of a people and they are easily persuaded.”—Karl Marx

“Those who control the present, control the past. Those who control the past, control the future.”  
--Big Brother slogan, 1984 by George Orwell

“In his 1932 novel *Brave New World*, Aldous Huxley described an atheistic utopia with chilling parallels to today’s society. The government he described subdued its members by keeping them entertained. No one had time to contemplate “antisocial” notions like freedom and faith. A visitor asked why the people never even suspected the existence of God. “It’s natural to believe in God,” he said, “when you’re alone in the night, thinking about death.” “But people are never alone now,” he was told. “We make them hate solitude; and we arrange their lives so that it’s almost impossible for them ever to have it.”

People socialized in groups every evening. The nights were for sexual encounters---promiscuity was the norm. If, between work and play and sex, one had spare time, he would just pop a gram of soma—a combination tranquilizer and hallucinogen—and send himself to a gentle world of thoughtless pleasure and limitless peace.

When the visitor objected to the waste of time, his numbly content hostess asked him, wide-eyed, “but what is time for, then?”

That’s a question the Christian can answer.”

--Charles Colson, *Redeeming the Time*

“According to Gordon Clark, the choice of any of the secular systems [of history] leads to a setting in which history has no significance; human hopes are to be swallowed up in oblivion; and all men, good, evil, and indifference, come to the same end. Anyone who chooses this view must base his life on unyielding despair. If however, he chooses the Christian view, then he can assign significance to history; human hopes and fears in this life contribute to the quality of a life after death, when two types of men will receive their separate destinies. Anyone who chooses this [Christian] view can look at the calamities of western civilization and say, “We know that all things work together for good to them that love God.” There has been no proof, but there is a choice.”—Ronald Nash, *The Meaning of History* quoting Gordon Clark’s *The Christian View of Men and Things*

**“The study of the past gives us hope...”—Apostle Paul to the Romans (Romans 15:4)**

## **Revisiting Reinhold Niebuhr's The Irony of American History**

*By Wilfred M. McClay*

*Dr. McClay delivered this WITHERSPOON LECTURE at the Family Research Council on November 9, 2001. Excerpt used by permission of the author. To read rest of lecture visit, [www.witherspoonfellowship.org/index.cfm?get=item&b=7&item=WT02C1](http://www.witherspoonfellowship.org/index.cfm?get=item&b=7&item=WT02C1).*

What does it mean to interpret current events and history through Christian eyes? This is a very complicated matter, precisely because the Christian faith has such a complicated, often paradoxical, relationship to this world. Christianity is an incarnational faith, which means that it is neither entirely transcendent nor entirely worldly in character. It steadily partakes of both. The Word became Flesh, and dwelt among us. And Christianity departs from its true nature when it leans too much in the direction of one or the other polarity, overemphasizing either the transcendent or the worldly. Both deserve to receive their proper weight. And the most influential of the classic Christian heresies are traceable not to wild-eyed distortions of orthodox doctrine but to more subtle errors of imbalance and one-sidedness. Arianism denied Christ's divine nature; Docetism denied his human nature. Each fell short of a full Christian understanding by failing to embrace the entire meaning of the Incarnation.

Christians are to cherish the world, then, and accord it a high degree of respect in keeping with the majesty and dignity of its Maker. This injunction applies not only to the things of nature, which is relatively easy, but also to the things of man, which can be rather more challenging—especially when one is talking about the realm of politics. Yet it is required. It is easy for us to see God's hand in a beautiful sunset, but rather harder to see it operating at meetings of the local Board of Public Works, let alone the United States Congress. Yet Jesus' great saying about the need to distinguish between what is Caesar's and what is God's is, among other things, a remarkable endorsement of the legitimacy of secular political authority. As such, it serves as a basis for one of the great distinguishing marks of Christianity: Caesar is accorded his own proper sphere of influence. We sometimes fail to take in the full significance of that fact, even though it is explicitly confirmed in the language of Romans 13. But Jesus' words also amount to an unyielding declaration, regarding the impassable limits upon Caesar's authority. So the honor and respect accorded the world, and its worldly authorities, are genuine but finite. And they become wrongheaded, sinful, and idolatrous if allowed to extend further than is their due.

The principle is clear enough. But sorting out the specific and practical implications of this position has always been exceedingly difficult. Just what does it mean, practically speaking, to be in the world but not of it? What are we to do when our Caesars turn vicious or corrupt? Why couldn't Jesus have given us more specific details, instead of all those elusive parables? Why didn't he spell out his positions on war, representative democracy, capitalism, the death penalty, term limits, and the Electoral College? But he didn't, and it seems the better part of wisdom to assume that the omission was intentional. Christ did not come to put an end to politics—at least not yet. We are not meant to rest easy in a faith that is reducible to a set of neat and inert propositions. We are meant to wrestle with this tense duality of flesh and spirit through all the days of our earthly lives—as even Jesus himself did in his own—and in the process we will be forced to fall back on the grace and mercy and unfathomable riches of God for guidance. Somehow, mysteriously, the endless wrestling of flesh and spirit is what shapes the character God wants to build in us, a character both humble and resilient.

EVERY DAY IS A GOOD DAY TO BE BORN . . . AND TO DIE

As part of this, we wrestle with the meaning of human history. There is no doubt that Christians and Jews accord singular importance to history, since they believe that God's purposes for humanity are expressed in the unfolding of time. They also believe that God intervenes in human history in ways both large and small—not only, let us say, to decide the fate of great wars, but also to heal the sicknesses of the lowly and bless the marriages of the historically obscure. It is not always clear which of these interventions is the more important, in the context of a faith that constantly delights in ironic reversals of status, and contends that the last shall be first, and the first last; and that the stone that was rejected shall become the cornerstone.

In other words, even for a historical and incarnational religion like Christianity, the meaning of human history must sometimes be sought outside of history, where it is revealed rather than discovered. The entire pageant of human history, painstakingly assembled by generations of historians, with all its glittering panoply of great eras, large events, and major figures, may be no more important in the mind of God than the plight of the single sparrow that falls to the earth. Perhaps even less so. We should remember that, and should accordingly have a keen sense of modesty about our grasp of the ultimate meaning of history—and of history's relation, if any, to the ultimate. We should be diligent in searching for meaning in history, but be modest and skeptical about what we believe we have found therein. After all, we might be wrong. God may have something new and unexpected up his sleeve.

### **The Secular Humanist View of History**

“Man’s destiny is to be the sole agent for the future evolution of this planet.”  
--Julian Huxley

In 1933, Secular Humanists were positively giddy about mankind’s potential. The Humanist Manifesto I, released that year, described history as one long story of humanity’s progress to paradise. Then came World War II followed by the knowledge of Stalin’s brutal tactics and suddenly the unbounded optimism of the Humanist seemed comical.

Today it seems impossible for the Humanist to view history with optimism. Assuming an atheistic stance, the Humanity must view mankind’s history as a bumbling, chancy, often immoral enterprise, with little hope for improvement in the future. The Humanist Manifesto II apparently describes the modern Humanist’s rejection of historical optimism. Or does it? We find a statement of incomparable historical optimism in the second Manifesto: Using technology wisely, we can control our environment, conquer poverty, markedly reduce disease, extend our life-span, significantly modify our behavior, alter the course of human evolution and cultural development, unlock vast new powers, and provide humankind with unparalleled opportunity for achieving an abundant and meaningful life. Humanists claim to have a realistic view of history, but more often than not he betrays himself with his unlimited faith in evolving mankind.

Despite their desire to hold a realistic view of history the Humanist must be unrealistically optimistic for two reasons. First, is his belief that all life evolved from non-life. He believes mankind’s history must also be a progressive march toward a better world. There was never an Eden or fall, but man has simply been climbing slowly up the ages from primitive to present civilization. The second adheres to the belief that because of the evolutionary pattern there is no God. This greatly reduces the importance of man’s actions. Oddly, this denial of source of meaning in history pushes the Humanist toward historical optimism. The Humanist atheism makes him dependent on the progress of human history to provide meaning for mankind.

Some Humanists believe that the man’s environment plays the largest role in shaping history. This causes problems, for it strips man of purpose. The Humanist could not encourage the individual to act nobly or work to change the world, because man, according to this view, is nothing but a leaf swept along by the stream of environmental change. According to the Human Manifesto II, though, it singles out mankind as the dynamic force in history—mankind must save itself for there is no one else to do it.

With these beliefs two new problems arise for the Humanist. First, it is inconsistent with the Humanist assertion that man is a product of his environment. Second, by allowing that man shapes history the Humanist opens the door for any individual to change the course of history—whether Humanist or Christian. This seriously hinders the cause of Humanism because it suggests that any view may bring about valuable changes in history. The Humanist, however, believes that only his ideology can usher mankind into a future paradise. The Humanist solves this dilemma in two steps. First men and their ideologies are the dynamic force in history. Second he declares that ideologies evolve. Humanists believe that the Humanism ideology is the dominant one to lead to paradise. Humanists believe that individuals embracing Humanism can affect history almost limitlessly.

Humanism labels man as the creator of the historical process. He is also the redeemer leading mankind to paradise on earth. This paradise may be populated by a species more highly evolved than humans. The Humanist believes he will be redeemed through history and his conviction that man can control future evolution. History is not only about the past but about the future paradise. The Humanist historian adheres to a religious creed: one holy god (mankind) offers a plan of salvation (Humanism) that ensures a future paradise (the global community).

Adapted from *Understanding the Times* by Dr. David Nobel.

<sup>1</sup> *Humanist Manifesto II* (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1980), p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Roger E. Greely, ed. *The Best of Humanism* (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1988), p.174.

<sup>3</sup> Erich Fromm, *You Shall Be as Gods* (New York: Rinehart, and Winston, 1966), p. 88.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p.123.

Christianity and history have always been allies. Leopold Von Ranke's observation that history, more often than philosophy, convinces more people that Christianity is true is certainly confirmed by the Christian view of this discipline. The Bible contains a great deal more history than philosophy (though they are interdependent). Christianity is rooted in history and without its historical roots there would be no Christian worldview (1 Corinthians 15:14).

Nearly all the key junctures of history, from the Christian perspective, can be summarized by reference to a few landmark historical events - the revelation of God through the creation of heaven and earth (Genesis 1:1); the special creation of male and female as body and spirit (Genesis 1:26-27); the rebellion of mankind against his Creator (Genesis 3:1-15); the revelation of God through the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) and Israel; the crossing of the Red Sea; the appearance of God in history in the person of Jesus Christ to redeem mankind from sin (1 Timothy 3:16); the resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15); the revelation of God through His Church, the Body of Christ; the judgment of the world (Acts 17:31); and the new heaven, new earth, and new Jerusalem for the redeemed of all ages (Revelation 21). Christian history, like Marxist and Humanist history, has past, present, and future characteristics. But Christians adhere to a distinctly linear, rather than a cyclical, view.

For Christians, the Bible is a work of beauty and truth - a word from God concerning His love for His creation - not a work of myth and legend. The Bible is accurate, describing events that actually occurred in history. Twentieth-century archaeology generally reinforces Biblical history, including the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible), the historicity of the patriarchs and the exodus, and the historical background surrounding the virgin birth, sinless life, vicarious death, and physical resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Of course, St. Paul's statement regarding history in 1 Corinthians 10:1f. ("I would not have you to be ignorant of [history]") is a solid base for a philosophy of history. Christians are certainly exhorted to learn from history (1 Corinthians 10:11). St. Paul also made it very clear that if Christ were not raised from the dead, there would be no Christian faith (1 Corinthians 15:14). Christians affirm the physical resurrection of Christ as an historical event which occurred in Jerusalem around A.D. 30.

Stephen's defense of the faith in Acts 7 is a lesson on God's redemptive history. Luke, author of two books in the Bible (the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts), was a meticulous historian. The historical Bible (the written Word of God) and Jesus Christ (the living Word of God made flesh) are the two cornerstones of the Christian worldview. If the Bible is not history, or if Jesus Christ is not "God with us" (Matthew 1:23), Christianity crumbles. Therefore, Christians are justified in investing a great deal of time and effort defending both foundation stones.

Naturally, Humanists (whether Secular, Marxist or Cosmic) cannot accept the Bible as an accurate historical document. The character and action of Christ shatter every basic tenet of an atheistic, naturalistic, evolutionary view of history. Instead of God planning and manifesting His creative and redemptive acts (history being a record of such acts), the Marxist has to trust the fateful dialectic, and the Secular Humanist must wishfully trust man's ability to direct future evolution. Neither of these two worldviews can satisfactorily account for the purpose manifest in the world - nor, for that matter, can the Cosmic Humanist (New Age) worldview. The Christian, has a simple yet profound answer - "In the beginning, God." The only wise and true God gives purpose and order to His creation. We are part of His vast creative order, and we are responsible to God. We cannot save ourselves - even from physical death. But God can, and history tells us He offered His Son as a perfect sacrifice for that special purpose.

It is the Christian position that God created the heavens and the earth and all things therein. It takes a blind faith - in essence, a darkness of mind (Romans 1:21, 22, 28) - to believe that everything is a result of chance. Christians understand God created history when He created time, and we know God controls the universe and will bring history to a fitting close (Acts 17:24-31).

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## Postmodern View of History

There are few events as historically well-documented as the Holocaust. The twentieth-century slaughter of six million Jews by the Nazis left behind a churning wake of historical evidence, and the waves created by the dark ship's passing can still be felt fifty years later. We can still inspect the camps, the gas chambers, and warehouses full of documentation, and many who were directly involved in the gruesome events remain to tell of it. Such are the kind of sources and documentation historians dream of: a vast number of eyewitnesses whose accounts are in agreement, and a whole corpus of virtually harmonious evidence. Historically speaking, it doesn't get any better than that.

In the last few years, however, thousands of people have bought into the remarkable suggestion that the **Holocaust was a grand hoax**. Most historians have brushed aside this theory as ridiculous, thinking that if the Holocaust is not historically proven, probably nothing else is. But surprisingly, the idea has established a firm foothold in the nation's universities and news rooms, and a Gallup poll conducted in January of 1994 showed **that 33 percent of Americans think it seems possible that the holocaust never happened**.

"Holocaust denial is only the most spectacular example of a broader assault on knowledge, facts and memory that is sweeping through the culture," writes John Leo in *U.S. News and World Report*. He lists several other unfounded ideas that have gained a following, such as the supposedly strong influence of Iroquois thought on the U.S. Constitution.

Some people are convinced the truth about their own history has been deliberately hidden. An HBO-Pepsi poster promoting Black History Month features a picture of the pyramids and the words, "*We are the builders of the pyramids, look what you did . . . so much to tell the world, the truth no longer hid.*"

### The Changing Face of Historical Research

The Holocaust did, unfortunately, occur. But increasingly among students of history and even in popular culture, the facts of history are becoming more flexible and can be bent to accommodate almost any argument. One historian remarked that he preferred a cloud of "great vague ideas" to the dust of "true little facts." **History, long held as an objective field of study like chemistry or physics, is now considered an ever-changing inquiry into the subjective viewpoints of past cultures.**

Scholars used to view 'history' as the investigation into what actually happened in the past and why. Today's postmodern historians view **history more as a study of people's images and thoughts about their society and their past**. What actually happened is no longer the historian's primary concern, and in fact, can never be known. Instead, what matters is what people *thought* happened.

Such a trend is frightening, **especially for Christians**, whose faith is based on God's character of love and mercy as proven in his actions in history. God repeatedly reveals himself, not as primarily the God of inner impressions or even as the God of nature, but as the God of history. "For the Lord our God is He who brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage . . ." (Joshua 24:17) and "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." (Exodus 3:6) Paul stresses that the historical resurrection is the lynch-pin of the Christian gospel, without which there is no Christianity. (1 Corinthians 15:17) No one has as much to lose from the postmodern approach to history as Bible-believing Christians.

### The Rise of Social History

History departments have changed this century under the influence of two schools of historical research. The schools were **Marxist history** and the **Annales School** of historical research. Both tried to interpret the flow of history by looking at things other than the traditional forces associated with historical change-- politics, war, economics and intellectual history. The new form of historical study saw history as being moved by forces beneath the surface, including class struggle. Historians called the fusion of these schools "social history."

By the late 1970's, history departments across the nation and Europe which had long focused solely upon political and church history, had fragmented into a plethora of interests. Major schools began to offer **black history, urban history, labor history, the history of women, criminality, sexuality, the oppressed, the inarticulate, and so on**. Entire new departments were founded for Black Studies, Women's Studies, Hispanic Studies, etc. Much of what these departments taught was in the category that used to be known as history.

For example, studies of women and their roles in past societies appeared. These studies often argued that the key to understanding history is to realize that women have been historical victims of an enduring patriarchal regime. Thus, **the struggle between women and their male oppressors is analogous to the struggle between the proletariat and the**

**bourgeoisie in Marxism.** Careful observers will find much truth in these studies, even when not reaching the same conclusions when it comes to the big picture. The important point for us in this survey, is that feminist and other types of social historical studies constitute a completely new way to approach the study of history.

Social history, with its emphasis on the more common aspects of human experience down through the ages, has been described as "**history from below.**" Instead of studies on the lives, for instance, of great political rulers or military campaigns, Social Historians focus on things like marriage, working conditions, and social organizations. Studies on these common areas of life increasingly appeared in historical journals. Between 1958 and 1978, the number of doctoral degrees in social history quadrupled and surpassed the number of dissertations written in political history.

### **Cultural History**

As social historians sought to discover the history of the voiceless masses, they faced a fairly obvious problem: how do we listen to the voiceless masses? How can we learn the story of segments of society which left no biographies, no chronicles, or any written data? Social historians claim that although such peoples have left no official history, they have left behind tracks which can be detected in their **cultural practices and forms.** The study of these forms and practices is **cultural history.** Cultural history consists mostly of studying symbolic behavior among the *inarticulate*--that is, the illiterate or voiceless people who manage to express themselves very well through their cultural forms, according to cultural historians.

Underlying cultural historian's references to the inarticulate in history, is the thought that **they are inarticulate because the powerful, in their own day and since, have silenced them.**

In recent years, studies of intellectual and cultural history have overtaken those done in economic and social history. This shift from social history to, more specifically, cultural history has come as a younger generation of historians have reacted against strictly Marxist models. More importantly, **the influence of postmodern literary theories** has drawn historians' attention away from economic and social matters toward an increasing interest in **language as the primary element of social reality.**

(From *Postmodernism and You: History*, Tom Dixon)

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## **Marxist View of History**

"It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but on the contrary; their social existence determines their consciousness."—Karl Marx

The Marxist view evolution "as continuously encouraging development and progress in living things," therefore he assumes that man is constantly bettering himself and will continue in this progression into the future. This leaves no room for God, especially a God who might influence history. The Marxist view of history is termed historical materialism, only matter exists and therefore history is merely the account of matter in motion.

To understand the Marxist perspective on history, one must understand their philosophy of the dialectic. The idea was originally formed by Georg Hegel and later expanded on by Marx and Engels. The dialectic is an ongoing process where a thesis (an idea) attracts and clashes with its antithesis (opposing idea) and they syntheses (come together) into a new third thesis. This third phase then figures in turn as the first step in a new dialectical process, leading to a new synthesis and so on. All life is in a constant upward spiral evolving process resulting from the clash of opposing forces. The dialectic applies to all areas of life and the Marxist believe we can see proof of it everywhere (nature). Engels makes this clear, "All nature, from the smallest thing to the biggest...is in constant state of coming into being and going out of the being in a constant flux, in a ceaseless state of movement and change."

To the Marxist true reality exists beyond the ideas of man to the material world. Economics is the driving force in history. The Marxist believes that economics are the foundation for man's whole social superstructure, including the thoughts of man. For the Marxist, governments, courts, philosophies, and religions are based on a society's economic system and these only affect history only to the extent that economics allow. Economics are the only dynamic force in history and all other aspects of life and society are defined by it.

Marx wrote, "Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances directly chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past." Marx believes that individuals can still possess free will under these constraints. This view is self-contradictory. Marx appears to admit this when he says,

“Are men free to choose this or that form of society for themselves? By no means... Assume particular stages of development in production, commerce and consumption and you will have a corresponding social structure, a corresponding organization of the family, of orders or of classes, in a word, a corresponding civil society... It is superfluous to add men are not free to choose their productive forces—which are the basis of all their history...”

If man cannot choose these things, then what can man choose? It would seem that man could choose only to go along with the flow of history as determined by the economic structure. Definite laws govern history and allow the Marxist to abandon morality and reason, since he can justify whatever he does by predetermined “hidden laws”. Such laws will guide history through a series of economic systems to a system on which the perfect society can build. This redemption is guaranteed, regardless of the action or inaction of individuals. This paradise to which all history is leading to, Marx discovered to be a socialist/communist society. Salvation for the Marxist lies in the consummation of the historical process in a one-world utopia. The individual is still insignificant in the Marxist view of history, but classes of mankind can play a role in the development of mankind. Men’s actions matter, but only with regard to their movements as a class, and even then only if they are working in accord with the laws of history. Thus, a man really has to do nothing because history will progress—indeed, historical laws guarantee the eventual achievement of paradise.

Both the Marxist and Humanist view of history from an evolutionary perspective, and therefore both believe mankind’s history will always progress, just as the development of life constantly progress. The Marxist believes that history operates according to specific, discoverable laws of the dialectic, changing man’s economic structures and thereby revolutionizing men’s societies and ideas. Man has little input in the outcome of history, whatever direction mankind goes, the final outcome of history is always the same. The Marxist believes his worldview alone adheres to the scientific conception of history and that natural laws guarantee inevitable progress. Marxism grants all power to the historical/dialectical process and calls for the individual only to work in submission to this omnipotent force.

Adapted from *Understanding the Times* by Dr. David Nobel.

1 Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*, p.13.

2 Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *On Historical Materialism* (New York: International, 1976), p.120.

3 Karl Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy* (New York: International, 1936), pp. 152-3.

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### **Cyclical View of History:**

There are two types of cyclical history:

1. The sequence of historical events in the cycle we are living in has repeated itself many times over and will continue to be repeated in the future. This was demonstrated in the Stoic school of thought. (Stoicism-greatest influence between 100 B.C. and A.D. 200, stoics believed they lived in a material universe controlled by an impersonal, pantheistic Reason. Eliminate emotion from your life and accept whatever fate sends your way.) Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) a German Philosopher revived the ancient view of cyclical history, but he also included the belief that history will reoccur precisely that same sequence an infinite number of times. This is called the doctrine of Eternal Recurrence. Many Asian religions and New Age believers subscribe to this theory as seen in their belief of reincarnation and karma.
2. History is repetitive but each subsequent repetition is different in important ways. This approach will be found in the twentieth-century writings of Oswald Spengler and Arnold Toynbee.

The problem with a cyclical view of history:

- “If history goes round and round, never getting anywhere, forever repeating itself, there can be no goal either for individual humans or for the species. Whatever happens to humans will happen again; whatever humans accomplish, they must accomplish again and again—forever. It was Christianity that sought to counter the pessimistic view of history found in pagan philosophy with a theory that lent meaning and significance to history.”—Ronald Nash, *The Meaning of History*
- “The first question that ought to occur...concerns how advocates of a cyclical pattern of history can come to know that the theory is true. Surely, it seems, someone would have to possess a memory of an earlier cycle as the basis for the belief that the pattern is repeating itself...Even if we could find a proponent of the theory who posited some connection between an earlier and later cycle, we would still have a problem...[the events] cannot be identical, event A\* includes a memory belief not found in A. This precludes any consistent cyclist from

positing memories of the earlier cycles...How can anyone possibly know that the doctrine of cycles is true?"  
—Ronald Nash, *The Meaning of History*

- “It is impossible to find any basis for hope or optimism about the future. A nihilistic approach to history...declares that life has no meaning. Such a view clearly denies any goal to history. What awaits the human race is extinction and oblivion.”—Ronald Nash, *The Meaning of History*

### Linear View of History:

Two classifications of Linear History:

1. Secular Linear History- This idea took form with Immanuel Kant's writings and philosophy of history. He was an Enlightenment thinker who presented a linear view of history that encourages optimism about the future. The ultimate goal of history is usually a global government or religion. This is the idea of progress leaves no room from God, but the very idea of progress finds its roots in the Judaeo-Christian idea of history. Rejecting the belief that God controls history, they touted individual humans as the primary agents. This has several flaws: no one in the present times benefits from the progression and leads to serious questions of injustice, it fails to even question human evil, and it places all hope and confidence on the future upon us and posterity.

2. Biblical Linear History- St. Augustine's of Hippo *City of God* lays the foundation for the Biblical view of history. Augustine sets the last half of *City of God* as two cities in battle with one another, the city of God and the city of Man. They coexist until the last judgment where the two cities will finally be separated in their appointed destinies of heaven or hell. This is determined by the object of their love. People belong to the City of God by virtue of their love of God; the rest of humanity belongs to the City of Man because of their “love of self, even to the contempt of God.” Augustine grounds his philosophy of history on four worldview presuppositions.

- 1) The Nature of God
- 2) Creation *Ex nihilo*
- 3) Human sinfulness
- 4) Redemption by Christ.

History begins with the creation and is hinged on the incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection of Christ and culminates with the second coming of Jesus Christ. Augustine describes a state in which there is no pain—physical, mental, or emotional. More important than the absence of pain is the presence of positive joy, fulfillment, blessedness, in short, *peace*.

“The special people who are citizens of the City of God derive their right as citizens through their personal relationship to the person and work of Christ...

**The incarnation, the crucifixion, and the resurrection of Christ are unique events, and on them the significance of history turns.”—Augustine, *City of God* (emphasis added)**

Adapted from Dr. Ron Nash, *The Meaning of History*

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## America's Christian History

“He who shall introduce into public affairs the principles of Christianity shall change the face of the world.”—Benjamin Franklin

“America is great because America is good. If America ever ceases to be good, she will cease to be great.”—Alexis de Tocqueville

“It is certainly true that a popular government cannot flourish without virtue in the people.”—Richard Henry Lee

“It is religion and morality alone which can establish the principles upon which freedom can securely stand. The only foundation of a free constitution is pure virtue.”—John Adams

The Worldview in the Declaration of Independence: Judeo-Christian

- Professes faith in the creator
- Because man is a fallen creature, he cannot be his own lawgiver and judge

- Therefore, it is to God that the appeal for justice must be made

The Worldview of the Constitution: Judeo-Christian

- God has created, “endowed by the Creator...”
- Man is flawed, “the separation of powers”
- It is written, “fixed” and “supreme”

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“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: We shall be divided by our partial local interests; our projects will be confounded, and we ourselves shall become a reproach and by word down to future ages. And what is worse, 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 leave to move that henceforth prayers imploring the assistance of Heaven, and its blessings on our deliberations be held in this Assembly every morning before we proceed to business, and that one of more of the clergy of this city be requested to officiate in that service.” –Benjamin Franklin

“It’s a crime for Christians everywhere to insist that this is not a question of church and state but of historical accuracy—a task that grows all the more crucial as we realize that law cannot survive without a moral and religious foundation. If we deny that foundation, then law loses its compelling force. And the result is evident before us today: crime and bloodshed taking over our street.”—Charles Colson, “Ye Olde Ten Commandments”

## 1. The Role of the Bible and Christianity in America

- A. Biblical Christianity is being systematically excluded from the public sphere. The Bible, and Christian principles in general, are being censored from our public schools--in fact, from the whole "public square." Under the guise of adhering to the "separation of church and state doctrine," judges and other government officials are disallowing Christianity in the growing number of arenas administered by the United States government. The censorship is swift and complete, effectively compartmentalizing the church's influence in the world. As John Eidsmoe says, "Those who object to Christian expression in public life frequently use the phrase as a code-word to mean, *separation of church from reality*. They say, `Christians can stay in church and pray and sing, but leave the *real* problems of the world to us'" (John Eidsmoe, *Christianity and the Constitution*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1987, p. 408).
- B. There is no such thing as a value-free society or institution--someone's values must prevail. Some worldview must "fill the vacuum" left by the eradication of the Christian worldview from public education, social services, courtrooms, etc. By distorting the First Amendment, the United States government has allowed Humanist values to prevail. As Tim LaHaye points out, "The true meaning of the first amendment has been turned on its head during the past fifty years: In this decade, those who practice the religion of secular humanism are able to use the power of the federal government to impose their religion on the vast majority of the population" (Tim LaHaye, *Faith of Our Founding Fathers*, Brentwood, TN: Wolgemuth and Hyatt, 1987, p. 96).
- C. The moral framework of our universe guarantees terrible consequences for the country that grants sovereignty to something other than God--because in such circumstances sovereignty ultimately becomes the property of the state. "Man is a spiritual being," says Benjamin Hart, "when one faith is eliminated, a new god will rush in to fill the spiritual void. Throughout history, this has been a man-made god called the state (Benjamin Hart, *Faith and Freedom*, Dallas, TX: Lewis and Stanley, 1988, p. 24). When the state holds ultimate authority, government officials may commit whatever atrocities they like, because only the state may determine what is right and wrong.
- D. The “separation of church and state” is a myth. The First Amendment does not include the phrase "separation of church and state." It reads: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the

right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances." Nowhere does the First Amendment suggest that Christianity cannot be heard in the public square.

- E. The purpose of the First Amendment was to prevent governmental preferences of one religion over another. Robert L. Cord accurately describes the true intention of the religion clause in the First Amendment: "[R]egarding religion, the First Amendment was intended to accomplish three purposes. First, it was intended to prevent the establishment of a national church or religion, or the giving of any religious sect or denomination a preferred status. Second, it was designed to safeguard the right of freedom of conscience in religious beliefs against invasion solely by the national Government. Third, it was so constructed in order to allow the States, unimpeded, to deal with religious establishments and aid to religious institutions as they saw fit (Robert L. Cord, *Separation of Church and State*, New York, NY: Lambeth Press, 1982, p. 15). The founding fathers did not include the First Amendment in the Constitution to disallow Christianity from influencing state-established institutions; on the contrary, America's founding fathers expected our nation to be (on the whole) Christian, and our government to reflect that bias.
- F. Historical evidence demonstrates the importance of Christianity to the founders.
1. The *first* act of the United States Congress was to authorize the printing of 20,000 Bibles for the Indians (Tim LaHaye, *Faith of Our Founding Fathers*, Brentwood, TN: Wolgemuth and Hyatt, 1987, p. 96).
  2. "When our first President, under the new Constitution, received the request of both Houses of Congress concerning a national declaration of a public day of 'Thanksgiving and Prayer,' George Washington . . . issued a 'National Thanksgiving Proclamation' without any apparent concern that he might be mixing government and religion" (Cord, *Separation of Church and State*, p. 51).
  3. The men who founded our country clearly wedded it to Christian principles. "By today's standards," as syndicated columnist Don Feder says, "the founding fathers were the religious right (Don Feder, "America's Founding Fathers Were Men of Firm Faith," *Colorado Springs Gazette-Telegraph*, February 2, 1993).
  4. Tim LaHaye says that, "This Christian consensus is easily verified by the fact that prior to 1789 (the year that eleven of the thirteen states ratified the Constitution), many of the states still had constitutional requirements that a man must be a Christian in order to hold public office (LaHaye, *Faith of Our Founding Fathers*, pp. 33-4).
  5. This Christian consensus was understood by leaders long after the American Revolution, as well. Abraham Lincoln, in 1863, called for a "National Fast Day," citing the fact that "We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven. . . . But we have forgotten God" (Abraham Lincoln, "Proclamation Appointing a National Fast Day," March 30, 1863, cited in *A Treasury of Lincoln Quotations*, ed. Fred Kerner, Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co., 1965, p. 124).

## 2. The founding fathers saw America as a Christian nation

- A. Mayflower Compact. "... Having undertaken for the Glory of God, and the Advancement of the Christian Faith, and the Honour of our King and Country, a Voyage to plant the first colony in the northern Parts of Virginia; Do by these Presents, solemnly and mutually in the Presence of God and one another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil Body Politick...." (*The Mayflower Compact*, Nov. 11, 1620, reprinted in *Documents of American History*, ed. Henry Steele Commager, 9th ed., Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1973, pp. 15-16).
- B. John Adams. "The general principles, on which the Fathers achieved independence, were ... the general principles of Christianity." (John Adams, in a letter to Thomas Jefferson, June 28, 1813, reprinted in *The Adams-Jefferson Letters*, ed. Lester J. Cappon, Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1959, vol. 2, pp. 339-40).
- C. Alexis de Tocqueville. "There is no country in the whole world, in which the Christian religion retains greater influence over the souls of men than in America. and there can be no greater proof of its utility, and of its conformity to human nature, than that its influence is most powerfully felt over the most enlightened and free nation of the earth [1835]" (Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, (New Rochelle, NY: Arlington House, n.d., vol. 1, p. 294).
- D. George Washington. "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, Religion and

morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of Patriotism, who should labour to subvert these great Pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of Men and citizens.... And let us with caution indulge the supposition, that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that National morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle. Tis substantially true, that virtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular government. The rule indeed extends with more or less force to every species of free Government. Who that is sincere friend to it, can look with indifference upon attempts to shake the foundation of the fabric" (George Washington, "Farewell Address," September 19, 1796, in *George Washington: A Collection*, Compiled and Edited by W. B. Allen, (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Classics, 1988, pp. 521-22).

### 3. Evidence of America's Christian heritage through the ages

- A. **1620:** ". . . Having undertaken for the Glory of God, and Advancement of the Christian Faith, and the Honour of our King and Country, a Voyage to plant the first colony in the northern Parts of Virginia; Do by these Presents, solemnly and mutually in the Presence of God and one another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil Body Politick . . ." *The Mayflower Compact*, Nov. 11, 1620, reprinted in *Documents of American History*, ed. Henry Steele Commager, ninth edition (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1973), pp. 15-16.
- B. **1621:** The following is William Bradford's account of the Plymouth Plantation's fight against disease during their first winter in the New World: "[I]n the time of most distress, there was but six or seven healthy persons, who, to their great commendations be it spoken, spared no pains, night or day, but with abundance of toil and hazard of their own health, [tended to the sick in the following ways:] gathered wood, made fires, prepared their meat, made their beds, washed their loathsome clothes, clothed and unclothed them; in a word, did all the menial and necessary offices for them which dainty and queasy stomachs cannot endure to hear named; and all this willingly and cheerfully, without any grudging in the least, showing herein their true love unto their friends and brethren. A rare example and worthy to be remembered. Two of these seven were Mr. William Brewster, their reverend Elder, and Miles Standish, their Captain and military commander, unto whom myself, and many others, were much beholden in our low and sickly condition. And yet the Lord so upheld these persons, as in this general calamity they were not at all infected either with sickness, or lameness. And what I have said of these, I may say of many others who died in this general visitation, and others yet living, that while they had health, yea, or any strength continuing, they were not wanting to any that had need of them. And I doubt not that their recompense is with the Lord." William Bradford, *Of Plimouth Plantation*, reprinted in *Bradford's History "Of Plimouth Plantation"* (Boston: Wright and Potter, 1898), pp. 111-2. (Bradford's English, in this and in following citations, has been modernized by J.F. Baldwin). Bradford was elected governor of Plymouth Plantation in 1621.
- C. **1623:** "But God gave them health and strength in a good measure; and showed them by experience the truth of the word, Deuteronomy 8:3: `Man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.'" William Bradford, in BHOPP, p. 175.
- D. **1642:** "Marvelous it may be to see and consider how some kind of wickedness did grow and break forth here, in a land where the same was so much witnessed against, and watched so closely, and severely punished when it was discovered; as much or more than in any place I have known or heard of . . . And yet all this could not suppress the breaking out of various notorious sins, (as this year, among others, gives us too many sad precedents and instances) especially drunkenness and impurity; not only incontinence between unmarried persons, for which many men and women have been punished sharply enough, but some married persons also. But that which is worse, even sodomy and buggery (things fearful to name) have broken forth in this land, more often than once. I say it may justly be marvelled at, and cause us to fear and tremble upon considering our corrupt natures, which are so poorly bridled, subdued, and mortified; which in fact cannot be by any other means but the powerful work and grace of God's Spirit. But (besides this) one reason may be, that the Devil may bear a greater spite against the churches of Christ and the gospel here, for how much they endeavor to preserve holiness and purity among the people, and strictly punish the opposite when it arises either in church or the commonwealth; that he might cast a blemish and stain upon them in the eyes of the world, who usually are rash in judgment. I would rather think thus, then that Satan has more power in these heathen lands,

as some have thought, than in more Christian nations, especially over God's servants in them." William Bradford, in BHOPP, pp. 459-60.

- E. **1755:** "The original shield of Columbia University, New York, was adopted in 1755. Its commitment to a biblical world order is evident. Over the head of the seated woman is the (Hebrew) Tetragrammaton, YHVH (*Jehovah*); the Latin motto around her head means 'In Thy light we see light' (Psalm 36:10); the Hebrew phrase on the ribbon is *Uri El* ('God is my light'), an allusion to Psalm 27:1; and at the feet of the woman is the New Testament passage commanding Christians to desire the pure milk of God's word (1 Peter 2:1-2)." Gary DeMar, *America's Christian History: The Untold Story* (Atlanta, GA: American Vision, 1993), p. 44.
- F. **1770:** "*The people are Protestants*; and of that kind which is the most adverse to all implicit submission of mind and opinion. . . . This is a persuasion not only favorable to Liberty, but built upon it. . . . All Protestantism, even the most cold and passive, is a sort of dissent. But the religion most prevalent in our northern colonies is a refinement on the principle of resistance; it is the dissidence of dissent, and the protestantism of the Protestant religion." Edmund Burke, an Englishman, in a speech to Parliament in 1770, cited in Tim LaHaye, *Faith of Our Founding Fathers* (Brentwood, TN: Wolgemuth & Hyatt, 1987) p. 67.
- G. **1773:** "[A]lways keep the Ministry obliquely in View whatever your profession be. This will lead you to cultivate an acquaintance occasionally with the most sublime of all Sciences and will qualify you for a change of public character if you should hereafter desire it. I have sometimes thought there could not be a stronger testimony in favor of Religion or against temporal Enjoyments even the most rational and manly than for men who occupy the most honorable and gainful departments and are rising in reputation and wealth, publicly to declare their unsatisfactoriness by becoming fervent Advocates in the cause of Christ, and I wish you may give in your Evidence in this way." James Madison, in a letter Sept. 25, 1773 to William Bradford, reprinted in *The Papers of James Madison*, eds. William T. Hutchinson and William M.E. Rachal (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962), vol. 1, p. 96.
- H. **1775:** "We shall not fight alone. God presides over the destinies of nations, and will raise up friends for us. The battle is not to the strong alone; it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave . . . Is life so dear, or peace so sweet as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it Almighty God! I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!" Patrick Henry, in a speech March 23, 1775.
- I. **1787:** "Religion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged." Article III of the Northwest Ordinance of 1787.
- J. **1787:** "During that crisis period [of the Constitutional Convention], when the temperature and tempers threatened to go through the ceiling, eighty-one-year-old Benjamin Franklin, the second-most-respected man in the colonies, rose to make what has become a famous plea: that prayers be held in the assembly every morning before delegates proceeded with the agenda. In his address he also requested that one or more of the city's clergy be present to officiate in that service. Prayers have opened both houses of Congress ever since." LaHaye, in FFF, p. 57.
- K. **1788:** "I believe that there is one only living and true God, existing in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the same in substance equal in power and glory. That the scriptures of the old and new testaments are a revelation from God, and a complete rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him." Roger Sherman, who signed the Declaration of Independence and attended the Constitutional Convention, provided suggestions for a creed for his church. This excerpt of his creed, written in his own handwriting, was cited in FFF, p. 136.
- L. **1789:** "It would be peculiarly improper to omit, in this first official act, my fervent supplication to that Almighty Being, who rules over the universe, who presides in the councils of nations, and whose providential aids can supply every human defect, that His benediction may consecrate to the liberties and happiness of the people of the United States. . . . No people can be bound to acknowledge and adore the invisible hand which conducts the affairs of men more than the people of the United States. Every step by which they have advanced to the character of an independent nation seems to have been

distinguished by some token of providential agency. . . . We ought to be no less persuaded that the propitious smiles of Heaven can never be expected on a nation that disregards the eternal rules of order and right, which Heaven itself has ordained." George Washington, in his first inaugural address (April 30, 1789), reprinted in *The Writings of George Washington*, ed. John C. Fitzpatrick (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1931-44), vol. 30, pp. 292-6.

1. "Let us with caution indulge the supposition, that morality can be maintained without religion." George Washington, ca. 1789, in *Maxims of Washington*, ed. John F. Schroeder (Mt. Vernon: Mt. Vernon Ladies Association, 1942), p. 106.
  2. "Religion, or the duty we owe to our Creator, and the manner of discharging it, can be directed only by reason and conviction, not by force or violence; and, therefore, that all men should enjoy the fullest toleration in the exercise of religion according to the dictates of conscience, unpunished and unrestrained by the magistrate, unless under color of religion any man disturb the peace, the happiness, or safety of society, and that it is the mutual duty of all to practice Christian forbearance, love, and charity toward each other." James Madison, ca. 1789, cited in Gaillard Hunt, *James Madison and Religious Liberty* (Washington: American Historical Association, Government Printing Office, 1902), p. 166.
- M. **1794:** "God's will be done; to him I resign--in him I confide. Do the like. Any other philosophy applicable to this occasion is delusive. Away with it." John Jay, first Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, in a letter to his wife, Sally Jay, April 20, 1794, reprinted in *The Correspondence and Public Papers of John Jay*, ed. Henry P. Johnston (New York, NY: Burt Franklin, 1970), vol. 4, p. 7.
- N. **1796:** "I have long been of opinion that the evidence of the truth of Christianity requires only to be carefully examined to produce conviction in candid minds . . ." John Jay, in a letter to Rev. Uzal Ogden, Feb. 14, 1796, in CPPJJ, vol. 4, p. 203.
- O. **1811:** "While in France . . . I do not recollect to have had more than two conversations with atheists about their tenets. The first was this: I was at a large party, of which were several of that description. They spoke freely and contemptuously of religion. I took no part in the conversation. In the course of it, one of them asked me if I believed in Christ? I answered that I did, and that I thanked God that I did." John Jay, in a letter to John Bristed, April 23, 1811, in CPPJJ, vol. 4, p. 359.
- P. **1813:** "The general principles, on which the Fathers achieved independence, were . . . the general principles of Christianity." John Adams, in a letter to Thomas Jefferson, June 28, 1813, reprinted in *The Adams-Jefferson Letters*, ed. Lester J. Cappon (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1959), vol 2, pp. 339-40.
- Q. **1822:** "The same merciful Providence has also been pleased to cause every material event and occurrence respecting our Redeemer, together with the gospel he proclaimed, and the miracles and predictions to which it gave occasion, to be faithfully recorded and preserved for the information and benefit of all mankind." John Jay, in an address to the American Bible Society, May 9, 1822, in CPPJJ, vol. 4, p. 480.
- R. **1829:** "Christianity becomes not merely an auxiliary, but a guide, to the law of nature; establishing its conclusions, removing its doubts, and evaluating its precepts." Joseph Story, "The Value and Importance of Legal Studies," a lecture delivered August 25, 1829 at his inauguration as Dane Professor of Law at Harvard University, cited in James McClellan, *Joseph Story and the American Constitution* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma, 1971), p. 66. Story served as Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court from 1811-1845, and founded the Harvard Law School.
- S. **1831:** The August 23, 1831 issue of the New York *Spectator* carried the following story about a witness who was denied the right to present his testimony because he was an atheist: "The Court of Common Pleas of Chester County (New York) a few days since rejected a witness who declared his disbelief in the existence of God. The presiding judge remarked, that he had not before been aware that there was a man living who did not believe in the existence of God; that this belief constituted the sanction of all testimony in a court of justice; and that he knew of no cause in a Christian country where a witness had been permitted to testify without such belief." Cited in Alexis de Tocqueville,

*Democracy in America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), vol. 2, p. 306.

- T. **1833:** "My own private judgment has long been (and every day's experience more and more confirms me in it) that government cannot long exist without an alliance with Religion *to some extent*, and that Christianity is indispensable to the true interests and solid foundation of all governments. . . . I know not, indeed, how any deep sense of moral obligation or accountability can be expected to prevail in the community without a firm foundation of the great Christian truths." Joseph Story, in a letter to Jasper Adams, May 14, 1833, in JSAC, p. 139.
- U. **1833:** "The American population is entirely Christian, and with us Christianity and Religion are identified. It would be strange indeed, if with such a people, our institutions did not presuppose Christianity, and did not often refer to it, and exhibit relations with it." John Marshall, in a letter to Jasper Adams, May 9, 1833, in JSAC, p. 139. Marshall was Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court from 1801-1835.
- V. **1835:** "There is no country in the whole world, in which the Christian religion retains a greater influence over the souls of men than in America: and there can be no greater proof of its utility, and of its conformity to human nature, than that its influence is most powerfully felt over the most enlightened and free nation of the earth." Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (New Rochelle, NY: Arlington House, n.d.), vol 1, p. 294.
- W. **1837:** "You have no longer any cause to fear danger from abroad . . . It is from within, among yourselves--from cupidity, from corruption, from disappointed ambition and inordinate thirst for power--that factions will be formed and liberty endangered. It is against such designs, whatever disguise the actors may assume, that you have especially to guard yourselves. You have the highest of human trusts committed to your care. Providence has showered on this favored land blessings without number, and has chosen you as the guardians of freedom, to preserve it for the benefit of the human race. May He who holds in His hands the destinies of nations make you worthy of the favors He has bestowed and enable you, with pure hearts and pure hands and sleepless vigilance, to guard and defend to the end of time the great charge He has committed to your keeping." Andrew Jackson, Farewell Address, March 4, 1837, reprinted in *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, vol. 3 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1896), pp. 307-8.
- X. **1860:** "Christianity is not the legal religion of the State, as established by law. If it were, it would be a civil or political institution, which it is not; but this is not inconsistent with the idea that it is in fact, and ever has been, the religion of the people. This fact is everywhere prominent in all our civil and political history, and has been, from the first, recognized and acted upon by the people, as well as by constitutional conventions, by legislatures and by courts of justice." *The New York Supreme Court, in Lindenmuller v. The People*, 33 Barbour 561.
- Y. **1863:** "We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven. We have been preserved these many years in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth and power as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God. . . . We have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us!" Abraham Lincoln, "Proclamation Appointing a National Fast Day," March 30, 1863, reprinted in *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, ed. Roy P. Basler (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1953), vol. 6, p. 156.
- Z. **1864:** "All the good the Saviour gave to the world was communicated through this book [the Bible]. But for it we could not know right from wrong." Abraham Lincoln, "Reply to Loyal Colored People of Baltimore," Sept. 7, 1864, in CWAL, vol. 7, p. 542.
- AA. **1892:** This U.S. Supreme Court decision cites a number of examples that America was founded on Christian principles, and concludes, "There is a universal language pervading [these examples], having one meaning; they affirm and reaffirm that this is a religious nation. These are not individual sayings, declarations of private persons: they are organic utterances; they speak the voice of the entire people. . . . 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" *Church of the Holy Trinity v. United States*, 143 U.S. 457, 9-10.

- BB. **1905:** "It is not exaggeration to say that Christianity in some of its creeds was the principal cause of the settlement of many of the colonies . . ." David J. Brewer, Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court from 1889-1910, *The United States, a Christian Nation* (Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Co., 1905), p. 19.
1. "Christianity came to this country with the first colonists; has been powerfully identified with its rapid development, colonial and national, and to-day exists as a mighty factor in the life of the republic." David J. Brewer, in USCN, p. 40.
  2. "In the common schools the Bible has been as much a text-book as the New England primer. It is only within very late years that any objection has been raised to its daily use . . ." David J. Brewer, in USCN, p. 61.
  3. "In no other way can this republic become a world power in the noblest sense of the word than by putting into her life and the lives of her citizens the spirit and principles of the great founder of Christianity." David J. Brewer, in USCN, p. 70.
- CC. **1947:** "[T]his is a Christian Nation. More than a half century ago that declaration was written into the decrees of the highest court in this land. It is not without significance that the valiant pioneers who left Europe to establish settlements here, at the very beginning of their colonial enterprises, declared their faith in the Christian religion and made ample provision for its practice and for its support. The story of the Christian missionaries who in earliest days endured perils, hardship--even death itself in carrying the message of Jesus Christ to untutored savages is one that still moves the hearts of men." Harry S. Truman, in a letter to Pope Pius XII, August 6, 1947, from the papers of Myron Taylor in the Harry S. Truman Library.
- DD. **1951:** "*The First Amendment . . . does not say that in every and all respects there shall be a separation of Church and State.* Rather, it studiously defines the manner, the specific ways, in which there shall be no concert or union or dependency one on the other. That is the *common sense* of the matter." William O. Douglas, Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Zorach v. Clausen*, 343 U.S. 306.
- EE. **1952:** "[W]e are a religious people and our institutions presuppose a Supreme Being." William O. Douglas, in ACHUS, p. 21.
- FF. **1954:** "The words 'under God' were inserted into the pledge of allegiance by Congress on June 14, 1954. On that day President Dwight D. Eisenhower stood on the steps of the Capitol Building and, for the first time, recited the revised pledge to the flag that included the phrase 'one nation under God.'" DeMar, in ACHUS, p. 53.
- GG. **TODAY:** The Ten Commandments hang in the U.S. Supreme Court courtroom, ACHUS, p. 54, and Thomas Jefferson's words are still inscribed in the Jefferson Memorial: "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." ACHUS, p. 55.

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### **A Legacy to Leave**

The sheer weight of historical facts—the preponderance of evidence—empirically validates the positive influence of Christianity on the liberties of mankind. It is the foundation of Western Civilization and the buttress of liberty. The contributions of Christianity to the societies, governments, and laws of nations have provided the only **true** freedom, justice, equality, opportunity, and progress that citizens have enjoyed throughout the world.

**CONSIDER THESE CONTRIBUTIONS OF CHRISTIANITY:**

<b>Hospitals:</b>	Began in the Middle Ages
<b>Charities and Benevolence:</b>	St. Luke's, St. Mary's, Methodist & Baptist Hospitals Salvation Army, Red Cross, Catholic Charities
<b>Universities:</b>	<i>Uni versus</i> - "one turning", most began as seminaries
<b>Civil Liberties:</b>	A direct corollary between the translations, printing, and distribution of the Scriptures to the lasting documents of Human Rights and the civil liberties of man.
<b>Sanctity of Human Life:</b>	Man made in the image of God
<b>Elevation of Women And protection of Children:</b>	Truly revolutionary—unknown in ancient world (Rome, Greece) and in modern Arab world
<b>Literacy and Education:</b>	Gutenberg Bible; Wycliffe and Tyndale translations
<b>Art, Literature, Music:</b>	Its greatest development "Christendom" (Europe) Italy and France—the most fabulous works of art
<b>Abolition of Slavery:</b>	Ancient (Rome) Modern (19 <sup>th</sup> century northern pulpits)
<b>The Modern Science:</b>	Copernicus Newton Pascal Kepler Faraday
<b>Equal Justice under Law:</b>	Preservation and security of God-given rights
<b>The Free Market:</b>	Classless societies "all men created equal"

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## Resources:

### *Books:*

- \*Cahill, Thomas. *A Gift from the Jews*, New York: Anchor and Doubleday, 1998.
- Guinness, Os. *Time for Truth*
- Bastiat, Frederic, *The Law*
- Bloom, Alan. *The Closing of the American Mind*, Simon & Schuster, 1983.
- Lewis, C.S. *The Abolition of Man*, Simon & Shuster, 1944.
- Nash, Ronald. *The Meaning of History*, Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1998.
- \*Orwell, George. *1984*, Penguin Publications, 1949.
- \*Huxley, Aldous. *Brave New World*, 1932.

\*These authors are not Christians (and may contain false premises).

### *Articles:*

- “Clio’s Makeshift Laboratory” by Dr. Wilfred McClay © 2001 First Things 111.
- “Tradition, History, and Sequoias” by Dr. Wilfred McClay © 2003 First Things 131.
- “Filling the Hollow Core: Religious Faith and the Postmodern Academy” by Dr. Wilfred McClay in Gregory Wolfe, ed., *The New Religious Humanist: A Reader* (Free Press, 1997), 231-40.
- “Clio in Sacred Grab: Telling the Story of Gospel-People Encounters in Our Time” By Dr. Ogbu Kalu. This is Dr. Ogbu Kalu's address on the occasion of his inauguration as the Hery Winters Luce Chair of World Christianity and Mission at McCormick Theological Seminary, May 22, 2002.