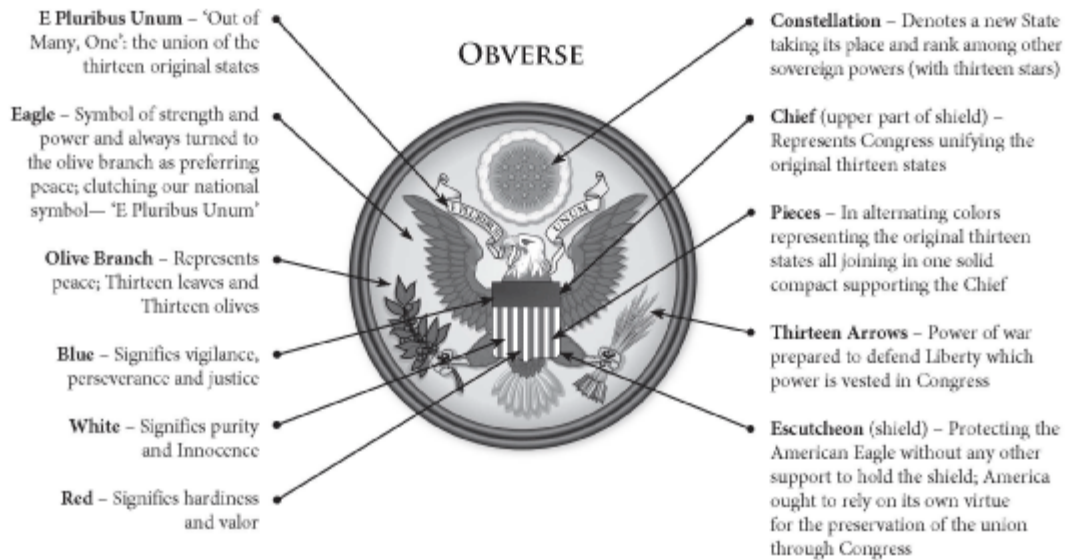


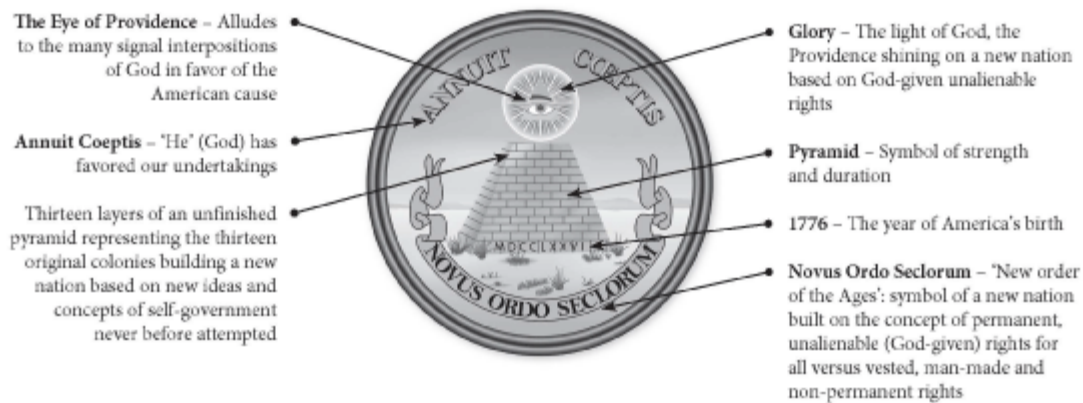
THE GREAT SEAL OF
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Design Began 1776 – Design Completed 1782



REVERSE

(Often referred to as the Spiritual side of the Shield)



THE MEANING OF THE GREAT SEAL OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

“Symbolically, the Seal reflects the beliefs and values that the Founding Fathers attached to the new nation and wished to pass on to their descendants.”

- U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs

CHARLES THOMSON’S “REMARKS AND EXPLANATION,” ADOPTED BY THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS, JUNE 20, 1782.

“The Escutcheon is composed of the chief [upper part of shield] & pale [perpendicular band], the two most honorable ordinaries [figures of heraldry]. The Pieces, paly [alternating pales], represent the several states all joined in one solid compact entire, supporting a Chief, which unites the whole & represents Congress. The Motto alludes to this union. The pales in the arms are kept closely united by the Chief and the Chief depends on that union & the strength resulting from it for its support, to denote the Confederacy of the United States of America & preservation of their union through Congress.

“The colours of the pales are those used in the flag of the United States of America; White signifies purity and innocence, Red, hardiness & valour, and Blue, the colour of the Chief, signifies vigilance, perseverance & justice. The Olive branch and arrows denote the power of peace & war which is exclusively vested in Congress. The Constellation denotes a new State taking its place and rank among other sovereign powers. The Escutcheon is born on the breast of an American Eagle without any other supporters [figures represented as holding up the shield] to denote that the United States of America ought to rely on their own Virtue.

“Reverse. The Pyramid signifies Strength and Duration: The Eye over it & the Motto allude to the many signal interpositions of providence in favour of the American cause. The date underneath is that of the Declaration of Independence and the words under it signify the beginning of the New American Era, which commences from that date.”

USES OF THE GREAT SEAL

The Great Seal is used to guarantee the authenticity of a U. S. document. It is used to seal documents several thousand times a year. Custody of the Seal is assigned to the U. S. Department of State with the master die produced by the U. S. Bureau of Engraving. The Seal can only be affixed to a document by an office of the Secretary of State.

HISTORY OF THE GREAT SEAL

It is extremely significant that the responsibility of the design of the Great Seal was first given in 1776 to Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin and John Adams, the primary author and contributors of the writing of the Declaration of American Independence. Artist Pierre Eugene du Simitiere assisted with his knowledge of shields and coats of arms.

A second committee of James Lovell, John Morin Scott and William Churchill Houston worked on the design with consultant Francis Hopkinson.

A third committee of John Rutledge, Arthur Middleton, Elias Boudinot and William Barton worked on the design with Charles Thomson, Secretary of Congress, considering all previous recommendations. Congress adopted the design on June 20, 1782, six years after the design began.

We certainly stand at a critical moment now. It is a moment at which significant voices have called deeply into question principles, both political and moral, that have been foundational to our civilization: marriage and the family, sanctity of human life, Rule of Law, true democratic participation, the market economy, limited government. Those principles have been radically called into question as never before in our country. Now which way are we going to go? Are we going to abandon those principles? To my mind, that would be such a tragedy, such a loss to the dignity of the human being that is supported by those principles. Or will we defend those principles? Will we reaffirm those principles? If we do that, we make the right choice, and this country will be a greater country than it has ever been.

The American experiment in republican liberty is truly a miracle. In her informative and well-written book, Angela Kamrath helps to explain why. I warmly commend it, especially to younger readers who will inherit the noble responsibility for sustaining the miracle of America.

Dr. Robert P. George
McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence
Director, James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions
Princeton University

Until now, there has not been a systematic analysis of the relationship between core American political principles and religious principles. Angela Kamrath's clearly written work, *The Miracle of America*, links these two sets of principles in a non-denominational presentation. The many references to the Bible are apt, well-explicated, and thorough. References to the scholarly literature are sensible and unusually free of academic jargon. The result is a highly informative analysis that is a page-turner.

Dr. Donald S. Lutz
Professor Emeritus, Political Philosophy
University of Houston

The Miracle of America is the most important book I have ever read, outside of the Bible. I have been in the Christian ministry since 1968, and I wish I had read this book back then. ... It is the very best resource for the study of America's Christian Heritage I have read, and it is worth a college semester of studies.

Pastor Billy Falling
U. S. Army Veteran, Pastor, and Author

I have very much enjoyed delving into *The Miracle of America* and think Angela Kamrath has done a fantastic job on it. Well done.

Jonathan Sandys
Great-Grandson of Sir Winston Churchill
Speaker & Author, *God & Churchill*

Well what can I say. I have just spent a few hours perusing *Miracle of America* and have been left fairly speechless. I cannot recall anything like this. Ever. If all young people in America could read this, I think we'd have a Second American Revolution and/or a Third Great Awakening.

The only real solution to the American crisis [of widespread ignorance and devaluing of America's founding and history] resides squarely in our ability to restore a Biblical worldview to our people. Now that is a daunting, exhaustive prospect, but it's where this book and others like it come to the fore. If we cannot restore that view, that heart, that vision, the republic may well fail.

Dr. Cliff Kelly
Online Professor of Communication
Liberty University

The Miracle of America provides all the background on which Russell Kirk based his work. Super documentation. Very thorough research. All factual, historical. ...A wonderful book which will not permit us to forget the essential Biblical roots underlying our American consensus. American Protestant Christian theology and belief inform all of the thinking that underlay the foundation of our Republic.

Rev. Donald Nesti
Director, Center for Faith and Culture
University of St. Thomas

The Miracle of America is a ground-breaking, foundational work. Angela Kamrath's research and work is magnificent in helping to build the case that this was a Christian nation at birth and should remain so. It is important, IMPORTANT, to bringing a new understanding of why America's history and heritage are fundamentally relevant to our nation's continued success. The book shows not only history but evidence of God's Providence, and it should help awaken this nation to our need for God, Christianity, and the Bible as a nation.

Mark K. Vogl
U. S. Army Veteran, Educator, and Author
Columnist, *America Today*, *The Nolan Chart*

Angela Kamrath has provided a well-researched contribution for the study of the foundations of American Government, especially detailing from primary source material the various philosophical and religious perspectives that helped promote revolution and shape those foundations. ***The Miracle of America*** provides much historic detail of argumentation that was adapted by our country's Founders from both Reformation and radical Reformation ideals and experiences. ...An excellent history source book that includes helpful student learning exercises and research questions with each chapter.

Dr. Brian H. Wagner
Instructor of History, Theology, and Biblical Languages
Virginia Baptist College

A counter to conventional teaching is Angela Kamrath's ***Miracle of America***, which shows how biblical understanding influenced the founding of the United States. Homeschooling parents will find it a valuable reference.

Dr. Marvin Olasky
Editor, *World Magazine*
Professor of Journalism
The University of Texas at Austin

Very original is Angela Kamrath's linking of political and philosophical concepts to specific Biblical passages. She is to be congratulated on taking on such an ambitious project, reading the enormous body of literature, and coming up with a well-reasoned argument that historians, students, and citizens need to hear.

Dr. Peter H. Gibbon
Senior Research Fellow
Boston University

In an age of historical amnesia, spiritual apathy, and political correctness, ***The Miracle of America*** is a sigh of relief and a breath of fresh air. It allows students and educators alike to appreciate and to understand America as an idea. It is a profound work, at once a model of intellectual, religious, and political history. The primary research is diligent. The activities at the end of each chapter reinforce major themes and should stimulate productive classroom discussions.

Dr. Brian M. Jordan
Professor of History
Sam Houston State University

Angela Kamrath gets the main ideas right. Many prominent scholars think that notions such as the importance of consent, the right to revolt, natural rights, and limited government sprang from the head of a secularized John Locke, with seemingly no recognition that these ideas had long been a part of Christian (particularly Reformed) communities. I also like many of the exercises at the end of each chapter. A beautiful book.

Dr. Mark David Hall
Herbert Hoover Distinguished Professor of Politics
George Fox University

Angela Kamrath provides a powerful demonstration of the strength of our republic's Judeo-Christian roots.

Dr. Stephen H. Balch
Director, Texas Tech Institute for the Study of Western Civilization
Founder and Former President, National Association of Scholars

The idea that we are all created equal with inherent, God-given dignity was a radical idea and came primarily from our Judeo-Christian background, not from the Enlightenment. Angela Kamrath's incredible work documents basic American ideas and ideals in a way that has not been accomplished before. It is a must-read for people of all faiths or no faith.

Dr. Robert C. Koons
Professor of Philosophy
Founding Director, Program in Western Civilization and American Institutions
The University of Texas at Austin

I am impressed with the amount of work that Angela Kamrath has done in assembling this material and in documenting the importance of the Bible and the Christian tradition in the thinking of the Founders, from the Puritans to the Framers of the Constitution. I agree that today's students should be aware of this important history and, regrettably, that most are not. I am happy to have this impressive work.

Dr. Bill Martin
Senior Fellow for Religion and Public Policy
Baker Institute for Public Policy, Rice Institute

The Miracle of America is excellently arranged for its argument. I've learned a lot unquestionably from reading this book. There was content new to me. ... The work is neutral and balanced. It puts truth on the table. The truth will shine. ... This book would be a great resource in an American political thought class.

Dr. Michael Bordelon
Professor of Government
Houston Baptist University

Angela Kamrath's *The Miracle of America* is rich in documenting the importance of biblical ideals, not only on America's founding generation and the Great Awakening that occurred before the War of Independence, but at the very beginning of the European settlements in America at the time of the New England Puritans. It used to be that in courses on American history and American political philosophy, students would begin with the Puritans and their wider influence on American culture that Tocqueville and so many other foreign observers noted. Angela has done everyone a great service in trying to restore knowledge of these early beginnings.

Dr. Russell Nieli
Senior Preceptor and Lecturer
James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions
Princeton University

The Miracle of America is a book with a point, a point it makes no attempt to hide and for which it makes no apologies. That point is that the founding principles of the United States of America are strongly and unequivocally based on Biblical ideals. The ideals leading to those founding principles can be traced to their sources and identified through the actions and communications of the founding members of the culture. The task of this book is to provide evidence supporting this central point. The book accomplishes this task substantially enough to be persuasive to those who respect the power of original documents to establish such facts. The support is expansive enough to meet the test of validity.

This book traces the lineage of governmental institutions in the United States to Christian principles and specifically to Biblical underpinnings. The lineage is undeniable. The work basically creates a documentary family-tree that shows us clearly how many of these founding concepts were carried torch-like from generation to generation. Just about anyone can benefit from reading this book.

Dr. Matthew Melton
Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Lee University

1
2
3
4
5
6
7 **The Miracle of America**

8
9 **The Influence of the Bible on the**
10 **Founding History and Principles of**
11 **the United States of America for**
12 **a People of Every Belief**
13

14
15 **Angela E. Kamrath**
16

17
18 **THIRD EDITION**
19 **E-Book Format**
20

21
22 **American Heritage Education Foundation**
23 **Houston, TX**
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47

**The Miracle of America:
The Influence of the Bible on the
Founding History and Principles of
the United States of America for
a People of Every Belief**

Copyright © 2013 American Heritage Education Foundation, Inc.

First Edition 2014

Second Edition 2015

Third Edition 2020

All Rights Reserved.

American Heritage Education Foundation, Inc.

Printed in the United States of America.

Cover design by The Marion Group: www.marion.com

ISBN: 978-0-692-45406-0

American Heritage Education Foundation, Inc.

3100 Wesleyan, Suite 375

Houston, TX 77027

www.americanheritage.org

Unless otherwise indicated, Bible quotations are taken from the New King James Version
in *The American Patriot's Bible: The Word of God and the Shaping of America*

Copyright © 2009 Thomas Nelson, Inc.

or at www.biblegateway.org

Copyright © 1995-2010 The Zondervan Corporation, LLC.

Text characteristics may differ between sources.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49

*To my family,
my teachers and mentors,
past, present, and future generations,
and the glory of God*

1
2 “Can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the
3 minds of the people that these liberties are of the gift of God? That they are not to be violated but with His
4 wrath?”¹

5
6 Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826)
7 Notes on the State of Virginia
8 1785

9
10 “Almighty God hath created the mind free. All attempts to influence it by temporal punishments or burdens, or
11 by civil incapacitations...are a departure from the plan of the Holy Author of our religion.”²

12
13 Thomas Jefferson
14 Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom
15 1786

16
17 Primary Author of and Signer of the Declaration of Independence
18 Third U. S. President
19 Statesman, Diplomat, and Congressman
20 Virginia State Legislator and Governor
21 Lawyer
22 Author, Statute of Virginia for Religious Freedom
23 Father of the University of Virginia
24

25
26 “I do not believe that the Constitution was the offspring of (divine) inspiration, but I am perfectly
27 satisfied, that the union of the states, in its form and adoption, is as much the work of divine
28 providence, as any of the miracles recorded in the Old and New Testament were the effects of a
29 divine power. ‘Tis done! We have become a nation.”³

30
31 Benjamin Rush (1745-1813)
32 Observations on the Federal Procession in Philadelphia
33 July 9, 1788

34
35 Signer of the Declaration of Independence
36 College of New Jersey (Princeton University) Graduate, Age 15
37 Medical Degree, University of Edinburg
38 Consultant to Thomas Paine and his writing of *Common Sense*
39 Physician, Surgeon General of the Continental Army
40 Professor of Chemistry, College of Philadelphia (Univ. of Pennsylvania)
41 Educator/Writer, Published first American textbook on Chemistry
42 Founder, Dickinson College
43 Founder, Bible Society of Philadelphia (Pennsylvania Bible Society)
44 “Father of Public Schools”
45 Abolitionist
46
47

1
2
3 *“Let us then search the Scriptures.... The Bible contains the revelation of the will of God; it contains the*
4 *history of the creation, of the world and of mankind; and afterwards the history of one peculiar nation, certainly*
5 *the most extraordinary nation that has ever appeared upon the earth.”*⁴
6

7 John Quincy Adams (1767-1848)

8 *Letter to his son, George Adams*

9 September 1 and 8, 1811
10

11 Sixth U. S. President

12 U. S. Secretary of State, considered one of America’s greatest Secretaries of State

13 Diplomat and Statesman

14 U. S. Senator and U. S. Representative

15 Harvard Professor

16 Abolitionist
17

18
19 *“But if we and our posterity reject religious instruction and authority, violate the rules of eternal*
20 *justice, trifle with the injunctions of morality, and recklessly destroy the political constitution*
21 *which holds us together, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us that shall*
22 *bury all our glory in profound obscurity.”*⁵
23

24 Daniel Webster (1782-1852)

25 *The Dignity and Importance of History,*

26 *An Address Delivered Before the New York Historical Society*

27 February 23, 1852
28

29 Constitutional Scholar and Orator, “Great Expounder of the Constitution”

30 Dartmouth College Graduate, Phi Beta Kappa

31 Educator, Headmaster, Fryeburg Academy

32 Attorney at Law and Statesman

33 U. S. Representative, New Hampshire

34 U. S. Senator, Massachusetts

35 U. S. Secretary of State under 3 Presidents

36 Named 1 of the 5 greatest U. S. Senators by 1957 U. S. Senate
37
38

Tributes

The roots of the miracle of America stem firstly from the Pilgrims who came to this land with only the clothes on their backs, a few tools, and a belief in God. They believed that if they worked hard and led dignified and biblically inspired lives that they would somehow survive and perhaps even thrive. Their incredible courage, resolve, and sacrifice require that we understand what and how they were thinking when they migrated to this virtually unknown land.

Secondly, the philosophers and early Americans who inspired and contributed to new ideas uplifting the common individual and to the founding of a new nation must be recognized. Such a nation based on Judeo-Christian principles and the equality of all human beings had never before been attempted on a large scale. History tells us that without such philosophical understandings, just and moral nations cannot germinate, grow, and endure. All Americans have a duty to themselves, their families, their communities, their states, and their nation to learn and know America's founding ideas and ideals.

Thirdly, during and after the American founding, the men and women who have defended American ideas and self-government of, by, and for the people—sacrificing their lives and limbs—are due the highest honor. They bring to mind an inscription on a World War II Memorial: “When you go home, tell them of us and say, for your tomorrow we gave our today.” Are the people of this nation today willing and able to make such sacrifices for their countrymen both physically and intellectually?

Fourthly, the teachers and professors who teach accurate, insightful American history and principles of Western Civilization to our nation's young students deserve a very special tribute. Amid growing ignorance, apathy, neglect, and misinformation regarding America's founding history and ideas, these patriot educators are priceless. Without their learned instruction in the true origins and history of our nation in the face of destructive criticisms and underminings against our country, America cannot survive as a bastion of Freedom, Unity, Progress, and Responsibility (FUPR™).

Finally, tribute is offered to the average American individual and family who take the time and effort to learn, understand, and promote the origins and meanings of our nation's great founding philosophy, principles, and values. In the face of ever-increasing demands on time and energy, the average American who understands the critical importance of the American idea for themselves, their friends, and their families is to be highly commended. Such citizens are the fiber of America, without whom the nation cannot endure as it was originally designed.

Acknowledgments



Richard J. Gonzalez (1912-1988), American Patriot
Jeannie S. K. Gonzalez (1912-2018), American Patriot

Special thanks go to my step-grandfather, Dr. Richard J. Gonzalez, and my grandmother, Eugenie S. K. Gonzalez, co-founders of the American Heritage Education Foundation, Inc. (AHEF), who stirred in me a love of country and an awareness of America's unique idea and ideals.

Dr. Gonzalez was the youngest son of a modest, hard-working San Antonio, Texas, family of Rafael and Catarina Gonzalez. Rafael stressed the importance of education to his six children and took them to public libraries to read books. As a barber, he put all of his children through college. All graduated, some with advanced degrees. Five became teachers.

In 1931, at the age of 18, Dr. Richard Gonzalez graduated with highest honors from The University of Texas at Austin with a B.A. in Mathematics. A year later, at 19, he received his M.A. in Economics. In 1934, at the age of 21, he completed his doctorate in Economics (Finance), Economic Theory, and Pure Mathematics. It is believed that he remains the youngest student to ever earn a Ph.D. at UT. He was recognized for outstanding achievement at his doctoral graduation ceremony by the graduate school dean, Dr. Henry W. Harper, who remarked as quoted in the Austin American-Statesman, "There is one among us (of 64 graduate students) whose record is most unusual. If the university were to name a graduate valedictorian, the honor would most likely have gone to Mr. Gonzalez."

In 1937, at the age of 25, Dr. Gonzalez was hired as chief economist by Humble Oil and Refining Company of Houston (now Exxon Mobil) to apply sound economic principles to the oil business and to plan future economic decisions for the company. During the Cold War following World War II, he wrote numerous articles and papers on the advantages of the American free-market, capitalist, incentive-based socio-economic system. He compared this system to other state-controlled, less incentivized economies and observed how the United States consistently out-produced countries like the USSR while having fewer natural resources. He defined the American system as Freedom, Unity, Progress, and Responsibility (FUPR) and often referred to it as the "miracle of America" for its limited government and free-market principles that produce more socio-economic advances for more citizens than any other system ever designed.

1 Dr. Gonzalez believed that America's socio-economic advances were supported by the American view that
2 "with the help of God" an individual could achieve unlimited advancement. He compared this incentive
3 philosophy in America to other countries' governments and philosophies which, as he observed from his world-
4 wide experience, often told their citizens that they should accept their rung on life's ladder, no matter how low,
5 as "the will of God."

6
7 Richard married my grandmother, Eugenie S. K. Gonzalez, in 1976. Richard and "Grandma Jean," a former
8 member of the Houston School Board, became alarmed in the early 1980s at the lack of teaching of America's
9 heritage and founding principles in Texas schools. They also noted the well-documented decline of patriotic,
10 pro-American textbooks and the prevalence of anti-American perspectives in school texts. In response, the two
11 of them and my father, Jack Kamrath, began the American Heritage Education Foundation, Inc. (AHEF) in
12 1994 to write, produce, and distribute free K-12 patriotic educational resources for teachers, students, and
13 families nationwide and worldwide. AHEF is now one of the largest producers of free, K-12 patriotic social
14 studies lesson plans in America, having distributed nearly 150,000 lesson plan resources to teachers, schools,
15 and families throughout America.

16
17 I have AHEF and its faithful supporters to thank for providing me with the opportunity to research and write
18 about America's philosophical origins. In particular, I wish to thank my father, AHEF Co-founder Jack
19 Kamrath, who made this project possible. I thank all of my family for their support. Many thanks also to all of
20 the reviewers who contributed time and knowledge to provide valuable feedback and intellectual support for
21 this book. Finally, I offer thanks to God in Christ for the honor and privilege of studying America's Bible-
22 based heritage and to you, dear reader, for endeavoring to preserve America's incomparable heritage—history's
23 first and greatest experiment in self-government among a diverse people that has endured for over 200 years.
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50

Table of Contents

Table of Contents 15, 17

Introduction 21

The Need and Legal Right to Teach Religious History in Public Schools 25

Goals and Objectives 29

Notes to the Reader and Group Facilitator 33

Facilitator Ideas 34

Chapter 1: The Roots of Popular Sovereignty 35

Chapter 2: The Pilgrims, the Mayflower Compact, and the First Thanksgiving in America 49

Chapter 3: The Puritans Create Bible Commonwealths in Early America 67

Chapter 4: Freedom of Conscience and Religious Tolerance in Early America 97

Chapter 5: The Great Awakening, An Evangelical Revival in the American Colonies 127

Chapter 6: The Bible-Centered Debate on Revolution 149

Chapter 7: The Rationale of America's Revolution 175

Chapter 8: The Making of a Nation Under God 241

Bibliography 301

Endnotes 329

Table of Contents with Subsections

[Table of Contents...15, 17](#)

[Introduction...21](#)

[The Need and Legal Right to Teach Religious History in Public Schools...25](#)

[Goals and Objectives...29](#)

[Notes to the Reader and Group Facilitator...33](#)

[Facilitator Ideas...34](#)

[Chapter 1: The Roots of Popular Sovereignty...35](#)

[1.1 The Protestant Reformation and Counter-Reformation...35](#)

[1.2 Popular Sovereignty...40](#)

[1.3 Conclusion: The Idea of Popular Sovereignty Emerges in Europe...45](#)

[Review: Checking Out the History...46](#)

[Activity: The Biblical Basis of Popular Sovereignty...47](#)

[Call to Action...48](#)

[Chapter 2: The Pilgrims, the Mayflower Compact, and the First Thanksgiving in America...49](#)

[2.1 A Royal Charter for the Colony of Virginia...49](#)

[2.2 The Pilgrims Come to America for Religious Freedom and Identify With the Israelites...50](#)

[2.3 The Pilgrims' God as Creator, Provider, and Supreme Ruler/Judge...50](#)

[2.4 The Mayflower Compact: The Pilgrims Practice Popular Sovereignty and Form a Civil Body Under God...53](#)

[2.5 The Pilgrims Practice Biblical Covenants...53](#)

[2.6 The Pilgrims Create a Civil Self-Government...58](#)

[2.7 Private Property and Perseverance in Adversity: The Pilgrims' Settlement at Plymouth and the First Thanksgiving...60](#)

[2.8 Conclusion: Early Bible-Based Influences in the Heritage of a Nation...61](#)

[Handout: Mayflower Compact...63](#)

[Review: Checking Out the History...64](#)

[Activity: The Mayflower Compact...65](#)

[Call to Action...66](#)

[Chapter 3: The Puritans Create Bible Commonwealths in Early America...67](#)

[3.1 John Winthrop and the Puritans Come to America with Their Charter and Found the Colony of Massachusetts...67](#)

[3.2 The Puritans Seek Religious Freedom and to Form a Bible Commonwealth, a "City on a Hill" ...67](#)

[3.3 The Puritans Identify With the Israelites and Practice Covenants...68](#)

[3.4 Thomas Hooker and the Puritans Found the Colony of Connecticut...69](#)

[3.5 The Puritans See the Need for Civil Government and Limited Power for Sinful Mankind...70](#)

[3.6 The Puritans Create Democratic Civil Government with a State Religion...73](#)

[3.7 God's Moral Law: The Puritans' Source of Moral Authority and Law...75](#)

[3.8 The Puritans Uphold Rule of Law...76](#)

[3.9 The Puritans Create Constitutions of Law...77](#)

[3.10 Thomas Hooker and the Puritans Assert Popular Sovereignty...78](#)

[3.11 The Puritans Choose Representatives to Govern, Implement Representative Government...80](#)

[3.12 The Puritans Support Education for Bible Literacy...84](#)

[3.13 The Puritans Value a Bible-Based Work Ethic...87](#)

[3.14 Challenges in the Puritans' Bible Commonwealths: The Dilemmas of Religious Laws and Religious Dissent...89](#)

[3.15 Conclusion: A Civil Society Practicing Many Bible-Based and Republican/Democratic Principles...90](#)

[Handout: Church Covenant & Consent as a Basis for Civil Self-Government...91](#)

[Review: Checking Out the History...92](#)

[Activity: The Massachusetts Body of Liberties and Our Rights Today...93](#)

[Call to Action...95](#)

Chapter 4: Freedom of Conscience and Religious Tolerance in Early America...97

- 4.1 [The Reformers Recognize Two Kingdoms—Spiritual and Civil...97](#)
- 4.2 [Roger Williams and a Quest for Religious Purity...98](#)
- 4.3 [The Westminster Confession Supports Freedom of Conscience...99](#)
- 4.4 [William Penn and a Quest for Religious Freedom...99](#)
- 4.5 [John Locke and Religious Tolerance...99](#)
- 4.6 [Freedom of Conscience and Religious Tolerance Defined...100](#)
- 4.7 [The Dilemma of Religious Freedom in a Combined Church-State System...100](#)
- 4.8 [Old Testament Literal Religious Law vs. New Testament Grace and Spiritual Law: Religious Laws Not to Be Applied to the Civil State...101](#)
- 4.9 [God as Creator, Ruler, and Judge of Conscience...103](#)
- 4.10 [Religious Coercion as Contrary to the Biblical Teachings of Christ...107](#)
- 4.11 [Religious Coercion Opposes the Order of Nature...109](#)
- 4.12 [Religious Coercion Opposes Reason...110](#)
- 4.13 [Religious Coercion Opposes Good Government's Purpose and Character...112](#)
- 4.14 [Freedom of Conscience Within Civil Peace and Order...112](#)
- 4.15 [A Call for Greater Separation Between Church and Civil Government...113](#)
- 4.16 [The Colony of Rhode Island and Freedom of Conscience...117](#)
- 4.17 [The Colony of Maryland and the Religious Toleration Act...117](#)
- 4.18 [The Colony of Carolina Supports Freedom of Conscience...118](#)
- 4.19 [The Colony of Pennsylvania, a "Holy Experiment" in Religious Tolerance for a Moral People...118](#)
- 4.20 [The Struggle with Sectarian Issues in Civil Government and Public Policy...120](#)
- 4.21 [The English Toleration Act of 1689...120](#)
- 4.22 [Conclusion: The Religious Landscape of the Thirteen Colonies...121](#)
- [Chart: Thirteen Colonies, Christian and Denominationally Diverse, 1600s-1700s...122](#)
- [Review: Checking Out the History...123](#)
- [Activity: Roles of Church and Government...124](#)
- [Call to Action...126](#)

Chapter 5: The Great Awakening, An Evangelical Revival in the American Colonies...127

- 5.1 [The Great Awakening Emerges in the Early 1700s...127](#)
- 5.2 [Jonathan Edwards—Theologian of the Great Awakening...127](#)
- 5.3 [George Whitefield—The Modern, Democratic Preacher of the Great Awakening...128](#)
- 5.4 [The Value and Dignity of the Human Being...129](#)
- 5.5 [All Men Equal Before God...132](#)
- 5.6 ["Born Again" Individual Spiritual Conversion...133](#)
- 5.7 [The Judeo-Christian Law of Love...134](#)
- 5.8 [The Unalienable Right to Freedom of Conscience...135](#)
- 5.9 [Eternal Happiness Found in God...136](#)
- 5.11 [The Godly Purpose of Moral Government...137](#)
- 5.11 [Revival Effects on Church, State, and Society: A New Church Landscape...138](#)
- 5.12 [Revival Effects on Church, State, and Society: Religious Choice in a Free Marketplace of Ideas...140](#)
- 5.13 [Revival Effects on Church, State, and Society: Empowering of the Church Laity...140](#)
- 5.14 [Revival Effects on Church and Society: Education, Missions and Humanitarianism, Women in Church and Society, and a Gospel for All People...140](#)
- 5.15 [Revival Influences on Unity, Democracy, and Revolution...141](#)
- 5.16 [Conclusion: The Awakening—A Significant Event in American Society...143](#)
- [Handout: Phyllis Wheatley Poem - "On the Death of Rev. George Whitefield, 1770"...144](#)
- [Review: Checking Out the History...145](#)
- [Activity: Causes and Effects of the Great Awakening...146](#)
- [Call to Action...147](#)

Chapter 6: The Bible-Centered Debate on Revolution...149

- 6.1 [Introduction: The American Revolution...149](#)
- 6.2 [The Influence of the Bible on the Founding Era...150](#)
- 6.3 [The Debate: Bible-Based Submission to Authority and Concept of Government...152](#)
- 6.4 [God's Desire for Freedom, Not Slavery, for His People...155](#)
- 6.5 [Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*: Popular Sovereignty and God's Opposition to Absolute Rule...157](#)
- 6.6 [God's Preference for Ancient Israel's "Republic" Over Absolute Monarchy...159](#)
- 6.7 [The Terms of Civil Covenants and the Right of Resistance...160](#)
- 6.8 [Obedience to God Over Man: Civil Laws Contrary to God's Moral Law Should Not Be Obeyed...164](#)
- 6.9 [Human Law Contrary to God's Law Should Be Actively Resisted...168](#)
- 6.10 [Ancient Israel's Resistance to Oppressive Rulers and Division as a Nation...169](#)
- 6.11 [The Lawfulness of Defensive War...170](#)
- 6.12 [Conclusion: The Bible as Central to American Thought and Debate...171](#)
- [Review: Checking Out the History...172](#)
- [Activity: Bible-Based Justification for Revolution...173](#)
- [Call to Action...174](#)

Chapter 7: The Rationale of America's Revolution...175

- 7.1 [The American Quest for Self-Government, Lack of a National Model, and New Justification for Liberty...175](#)
- 7.2 [The Creator God: The Basis of Authority, Law, and Rights for Mankind...176](#)
- 7.3 [The Law of Nature: The Universal Moral Law of Mankind...177](#)
- 7.4 [The Law of Nature in the Bible...180](#)
- 7.5 [The Law of Nature's God: The Written Law of God in the Bible...183](#)
- 7.6 [The Law of Nature and Nature's God: One Universal Moral Law Expressed Two Ways...184](#)
- 7.7 [Self-Evident Truth and Common Sense...188](#)
- 7.8 [The Law of Nature and Nature's God: Defended and Upheld During the American Revolutionary Era...191](#)
- 7.9 [The Law of Nature and God: A Foundation and Standard for Just Government and Human Civil Law...194](#)
- 7.10 [Algernon Sidney and John Locke, Natural Rights Philosophers of the American Revolution...197](#)
- 7.11 [All Men as Equal and Popular Sovereignty...198](#)
- 7.12 [God-Given Unalienable Rights: Life, Liberty, Religious Freedom, and the Pursuit of Happiness...201](#)
- 7.13 [The God-Given Right to Pursue Happiness...206](#)
- 7.14 [The Purpose of Civil Government to Enforce the Law of Nature and to Preserve Man's Natural Rights and Property...209](#)
- 7.15 [The Natural Right to Resist Tyranny and Oppression...210](#)
- 7.16 [Social Contract Theory and Consent of the Governed...211](#)
- 7.17 [The Influence of Locke and Sidney on the Revolution...216](#)
- 7.18 [God as Supreme Judge of the World and "No King But King Jesus"...218](#)
- 7.19 [The Protection of God as Divine Providence...220](#)
- 7.20 [The Declaration: A National Compact for a New People and Nation...220](#)
- 7.21 [The Bible and American Courage: The Continental Congress and the People Rely on God...221](#)
- 7.22 [The Bible and American Courage: Gen. George Washington and the Continental Army Rely on God...227](#)
- 7.23 [Conclusion: A New Nation Founded on Bible-Based Principles...229](#)
- [Handout: Declaration of Independence Excerpts...232](#)
- [Handout: Signers of the Declaration of Independence...233](#)
- [Handout: The History of Thanksgiving Day...234](#)
- [Review: Checking Out the History...236](#)
- [Activity 1: Concepts in the Declaration of Independence...237](#)
- [Activity 2: A Government and People Encouraging Voluntary Prayer, Fasting, and Thanksgiving...238](#)
- [Call to Action...239](#)

Chapter 8: The Making of a Nation Under God...241

- 8.1 [The Debate Over State Church Establishments, and Religious Freedom as a Natural Right...241](#)

1	8.2	<u>Virginia’s “Free Exercise of Religion” and the Gradual Elimination of Establishments in the States...246</u>
2	8.3	<u>A National Compact: Creation and Adoption of the United States Constitution and Bill of Rights...249</u>
3	8.4	<u>Why Government Is Necessary: Sinful Man’s Need for Restraint...252</u>
4	8.5	<u>The Purpose of American Government: The Protection and Preservation of the Individual’s God-Given Unalienable Rights...253</u>
5	8.6	<u>Constitutional Law and Government: Popular Sovereignty...254</u>
6	8.7	<u>Constitutional Law and Government: Rule of Law...255</u>
7	8.8	<u>A Constitutional Republic: American Government Aligned with Bible-Based Values...256</u>
8	8.9	<u>A Constitutional Republic: A Government for a Virtuous People...257</u>
9	8.10	<u>The Value of Religion, Particularly the Bible, for a Virtuous People...259</u>
10	8.11	<u>Separation of Powers and Checks and Balances: Limited Power in Government and No Earthly Absolute Power...263</u>
11	8.12	<u>The First Amendment’s Religion Clause: Separation of Church and Government, Religious Freedom as a Natural Right, and the Encouragement of Religion...266</u>
12	8.13	<u>No Religious Tests for Holding Federal Public Office...270</u>
13	8.14	<u>Ratification of the Constitution: Popular Sovereignty, Consent of the Governed, and Civil Covenant or Social Contract...270</u>
14	8.15	<u>The Founders Recognize God’s Role in the Adoption of the Constitution...272</u>
15	8.16	<u>The Founders Identify America with Ancient Israel...273</u>
16	8.17	<u>National Encouragement of Bible Education and the Northwest Ordinance of 1787...274</u>
17	8.18	<u>The Religion Clause and Thomas Jefferson’s “Wall of Separation” Between Church and Federal Government...278</u>
18	8.19	<u>The Civil War Amendments: 13th Amendment Abolishes Slavery, 14th Amendment Applies the First Amendment to the States...279</u>
19	8.20	<u>Conclusion: A Nation Applying Bible-Based Principles...280</u>
20		<u>Handout: Signers of the United States Constitution...284</u>
21		<u>Handout: Preamble of the U. S. Constitution...285</u>
22		<u>Handout: The Bill of Rights...286</u>
23		<u>Handout: Preamble Excerpts of 47 State Constitutions with Adoption Dates...287</u>
24		<u>Handout: The Great Seal of the United States...291</u>
25		<u>Review: Checking Out the History...293</u>
26		<u>Activity 1: The Constitution’s Application of Bible-Based Ideas, Stated and Implied...294</u>
27		<u>Activity 2: American Principles and Values in the Bible...295</u>
28		<u>Call to Action...300</u>
29		
30		
31		<u>Bibliography...301</u>
32		<u>Endnotes...329</u>
33		
34		
35		
36		
37		
38		
39		
40		
41		
42		
43		
44		
45		
46		
47		
48		
49		
50		
51		
52		
53		

1 Introduction

2
3 *“Do not remove the ancient landmark which your fathers have set.”*

4 *–Proverbs 22:28*

5
6 *“Where there is no vision, the people perish.”*

7 *–Proverbs 29:18 KJV*

8
9 *“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.” –Hosea 4:6*

10
11 *“If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from*
12 *their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”*

13 *–2 Chronicles 7:14*

14
15 *“Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people He has chosen as His own inheritance.”*

16 *–Psalm 33:12*

17
18 *“The advancement and diffusion of knowledge is the only guardian of true liberty.”*

19 *–James Madison⁶*

20
21 *“If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will*
22 *be.”*

23 *–Thomas Jefferson⁷*

24
25
26
27
28 America is a country founded on ideas. Yet research shows that, over the last thirty years, Americans have
29 become increasingly uneducated and uninformed about our country’s founding heritage and philosophical roots.
30 Numerous studies indicate that the American idea is eroding in an environment of ignorance, apathy, neglect,
31 divisiveness, lack of patriotism, opposition, and unbalanced and destructive negativity toward America.
32 America’s heritage and philosophical origins are at risk in our society, culture, institutions, and education today.

33
34 The Intercollegiate Studies Institute (ISI) recently found in its 2006 study, *The Coming Crisis of Citizenship*,
35 and its 2007 study, *Failing Our Students, Failing America*, that most graduating college students failed a basic
36 civic literacy exam on America’s history and institutions. Most students were ignorant of America’s founding
37 documents. Less than half of college seniors knew that the phrase “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that
38 all men are created equal” comes from the Declaration of Independence. The studies found that “America’s
39 colleges and universities failed to increase knowledge of America’s history and institutions.” This failure is
40 due, in part, to “inadequate college curriculum.” ISI found in its 2008 study, *Our Fading Heritage*, that 71% of
41 Americans of all backgrounds, incomes, and education failed a basic civic literacy test. Many elected officials
42 also performed poorly. Less than half of all Americans could name the three branches of government. This
43 ignorance is due, in part, to growing social and cultural challenges.⁸

44
45 A 2008 report by the Bradley Foundation, *E Pluribus Unum*, found that while most Americans believe we share
46 an important and unique national identity, more than half believe this identity is weakening. It states, “America
47 is facing an identity crisis. The next generation of Americans will know less than their parents know about our
48 history and our founding ideals. Many Americans are more aware of what divides us than of what unites us.
49 We are in danger of becoming not ‘from many, one’—E Pluribus Unum—but its opposite, ‘from one, many.’”⁹

1 In 2011, the National Association of Scholars (NAS) conducted a study called *The Vanishing West: 1964-*
2 *2010: The Disappearance of Western Civilization From the American Undergraduate Curriculum*. The study
3 traces “the decline and near extinction of the Western Civilization history survey course in America’s top
4 colleges and universities from 1964 to 2010.” The study found that Western Civilization and American history
5 survey courses have “virtually disappeared” from general education requirements and are rarely required even
6 for history majors. In 2012, NAS conducted a second study, *Recasting History: Are Race, Class, and Gender*
7 *Dominating American History? A Study of U. S. History Courses at the University of Texas and Texas A&M*
8 *University*, which examined assigned readings in lower-division American history courses at two universities in
9 Texas where students are required to take two American history courses. The study found that college course
10 readings gave such a strong emphasis to race, class, and gender social history that it “diminished the attention
11 given to other subjects in American history (such as military, diplomatic, religious, intellectual history).” As a
12 result, history departments excluded key concepts and documents of American history and “frequently offered
13 students a less-than-comprehensive picture of U. S. history.” These trends are shared by history departments
14 around the United States.¹⁰

15
16 In 2012, the Educational Testing Service (ETS), conducted a study called *Fault Lines in our Democracy* that
17 confirmed a lack of civic knowledge among K-12 students. This lack of knowledge, it states, “provides ample
18 concern for our future because civic knowledge has effects on voting and civic participation” and because
19 solutions to national problems require an educated, skilled citizenry. The study quotes Robert Maynard
20 Hutchins: “The death of democracy is not likely to be an assassination from ambush. It will be a slow
21 extinction from apathy, indifference, and undernourishment.” It also quotes William Damon, “The most serious
22 danger Americans now face—greater than terrorism—is that our country’s future may not end up in the hands
23 of a citizenry capable of sustaining the liberty that has been America’s most precious legacy. If trends continue,
24 many young Americans will grow up without an understanding of the benefits, privileges, and duties of citizens
25 in a free society, and without acquiring the habits of character needed to live responsibly in one.”¹¹

26
27 Americans today are largely ignorant about the principles and ideas that have shaped our nation. As a result, we
28 have become more fragmented as a nation and unclear and divided about what our nation stands for and where
29 it is headed—or where it should be heading. Without citizens’ learning of America’s positive founding
30 principles and values, the American idea is rapidly weakening.

31
32 Even fewer Americans understand or agree that the United States is founded on principles largely rooted in
33 Bible-based or Judeo-Christian thought. Americans today lack awareness and understanding about the essential
34 moral influence of the Bible and the Judeo-Christian ethic on America’s foundational ethic, order, purpose, and
35 freedoms. Yet history tells us that we are a nation and people distinctly shaped by the Bible’s teachings. Our
36 government, society, and values all reflect this influence. The American principles of self-government,
37 equality, and unalienable rights are strongly influenced by Bible-based or Judeo-Christian ideas. At the same
38 time, America is not a theocracy. It separates church and civil government and embraces free thought, free
39 speech, debate, and religious freedom for all. Some call ours a Christian nation, yet we have no national
40 religion. Others call it a secular society, yet we pledge “one nation under God.” This seeming contradiction is
41 often misunderstood and misrepresented.

42
43 What is the American ethic? Where does it come from? How does the Bible relate to this ethic, if at all? How
44 would we describe or present America and its ideals to a foreigner? The author and the American Heritage
45 Education Foundation, Inc. have endeavored to objectively and independently research and answer these
46 questions to further the advancement of America’s civilization. The findings allow every American free
47 thought and choice to contemplate and decipher America’s influences for themselves and to arrive at their own
48 conclusions. Such critical evaluation is in the best historical tradition of America.

Two of the most important ideas of the American ethic are God-given freedom and equality. From the settlement of America to the founding of an independent nation to the present day, Americans of many different beliefs have held that freedom and equality are unalterable states of human existence granted to every human being—not just in America but in the entire world—by a higher source of Moral Truth or a Creator God. Without such a God-oriented worldview, human rights could be granted or taken away by whoever had the most power. Early Americans came to understand that they were not free because a king declared them so or because they held positions of high rank in society—most were commoners—but because a Creator God endowed all men with certain unremovable or unalienable rights. Freedom was a gift from God, not a privilege granted by a ruler or government. Armed with this belief, Americans ultimately made the controversial decision to fight for independence from Britain when their only seeming options were freedom or subjection. The idea of a Creator God can be found in America’s public square—in the U. S. Pledge of Allegiance, in the display of the Ten Commandments in public buildings, in the motto “In God We Trust” on U. S. currency. Though Americans are free to believe or not believe in God, such public displays are reminders of America’s God-oriented basis of American rights and freedoms.

To be sure, America is imperfect. It took 100-200 years after 1776, for example, for black Americans to achieve full equality and freedom. However, Thomas Jefferson and George Washington, two Founders who owned slaves because they were born into a pre-existing system of slave labor, helped to design and implement a new governing system that ultimately led to freedom for every American including all slaves. It is also important to remember that it took 1776 years from Jesus’ birth (and thousands of years before that) for the common white man to achieve full freedom with America’s first large-scale experiment in self-government.

The Miracle of America is a comprehensive study of America’s philosophical origins or founding ethic and its relation to the Bible. Our research examines and presents documents, thinkers, and events in history, specific Bible references and scriptures as cited historically, and relevant scholarship. In doing so, it uncovers and articulates much of our nation’s philosophy, values, and founding principles as they are rooted in Bible-based or Judeo-Christian thought. Ultimately, it shows how the Bible and Judeo-Christian thought are arguably the nation’s most significant foundational root and its enduring source of strength.

The Miracle of America is recommended reading for all citizens, teachers, and students to whom the American Founders have entrusted our self-governing republic. It is vital that Americans learn, understand, discuss, share, teach, apply, and preserve the American idea—the great principles and values of our country—so that it may endure. This book is for people of all nations who would endeavor to preserve and promote Freedom, Unity, Progress, and Responsibility (FUPR™) in America and the world.

American Heritage Education Foundation, Inc.
Houston, TX

1
2
3
4
5
6

The Need and Legal Right to Teach Religious History in Public Schools

Liberty cannot be preserved without a general knowledge among the people, who have a right, from the frame of their nature, to knowledge, as their great Creator, who does nothing in vain, has given them understandings, and a desire to know....¹²

John Adams
Declaration signer and 2nd U. S. President

Knowing as we do that the moral foundations of national greatness can be laid only in the industry, the integrity, and the spiritual elevation of the people, are we equally sure that our schools are forming the character of the rising generation upon the everlasting principles of duty and humanity? ... Are they [children] so educated, that, when they grow up, they will make better philanthropists and Christians, or only grander savages? For, however loftily the intellect of man may have been gifted, however skilfully [sic] it may have been trained, if it be not guided by a sense of justice, a love of mankind and a devotion to duty, its possessor is only a more splendid, as he is a more dangerous, barbarian.¹³

Horace Mann
Massachusetts Secretary of Education (1837-1848) and “father of American public education”

Schools do more than train children’s minds. They also help to nurture their souls by reinforcing the values they learn at home and in their communities. I believe that one of the best ways we can help out schools to do this is by supporting students’ rights to voluntarily practice their religious beliefs, including prayer in schools.... For more than 200 years, the First Amendment has protected our religious freedom and allowed many faiths to flourish in our homes, in our work place and in our schools. Clearly understood and sensibly applied, it works.¹⁴

William Clinton, 42nd U. S. President (1993-2001)
Excerpt in Introductory Letter of U. S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley,
U. S. Department of Education *Legal Guidelines on Religious Expression in Public Schools* (1995, 1998)

U. S. Department of Education:

Teaching about religion: Public schools may not provide religious instruction, but they may teach **about** religion, including the Bible or other scripture: the history of religion, comparative religion, the Bible (or other scripture)-as-literature, and the role of religion in the history of the United States and other countries all are permissible public school subjects. Similarly, it is permissible to consider religious influences on art, music, literature, and social studies.¹⁵

U. S. Department of Education *Legal Guidelines on Religious Expression in Public Schools* (1995, 1998)

Teaching values: Though schools must be neutral with respect to religion, they may play an active role with respect to teaching civic values and virtue, and the moral code that holds us together as a community. The fact that some of these values are also held by religions does not make it unlawful to teach them in school.¹⁶

U. S. Department of Education *Legal Guidelines on Religious Expression in Public Schools* (1995, 1998)

Student Assignments: Students may express their beliefs about religion in the form of homework, artwork, and other written and oral assignments free of discrimination based on the religious content of their submissions. Such home and classroom work should be judged by ordinary academic standards of substance and relevance, and against other legitimate pedagogical concerns identified by the school.¹⁷

U. S. Department of Education *Legal Guidelines on Religious Expression in Public Schools* (1995, 1998)

U. S. Supreme Court Decision:

It might well be said that one's education is not complete without a study of comparative religion or the history of religion and its relationship to the advancement of civilization. It certainly may be said that the Bible is worthy of study for its literary and historic qualities. Nothing we have said here indicates that such study of the Bible or of religion, when presented objectively as part of a secular program of education, may not be effected consistently with the First Amendment.¹⁸

U. S. Supreme Court Justice Tom Clark, in *Abington v. Schempp*, 374 U.S. 203, 255 (1963), in the opinion of the court that public school education may include teaching about religion

The holding of the Court today plainly does not foreclose teaching about the Holy Scriptures or about the differences between religious sects in classes in literature or history. Indeed, whether or not the Bible is involved, it would be impossible to teach meaningfully many subjects in the social sciences or the humanities without some mention of religion.¹⁹

U. S. Supreme Court Justice William Brennan, in *Abington v. Schempp*, 374 U.S. 203, 255 (1963), in a concurring opinion of the court that public school education may include teaching about religion

National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS):

Omitting study about religions gives students the impression that religions have not been, and are not now, part of the human experience. Religions have influenced the behavior of both individuals and nations, and have inspired some of the world's most beautiful art, architecture, literature, and music. History, our own nation's religious pluralism, and contemporary world events are testimony that religion has been and continues to be an important cultural influence.

The NCSS Curriculum Standards for Social Studies state that "Students in social studies programs must study the development of social phenomena and concepts over time; must have a sense of place and interrelationships...; must understand institutions and processes that define our democratic republic...." The study about religions, then, has "a rightful place in the public school curriculum because of the pervasive nature of religious beliefs, practices, institutions, and sensitivities."

Knowledge about religions is not only a characteristic of an educated person but is absolutely necessary for understanding and living in a world of diversity. Knowledge of religious differences and the role of religion in

the contemporary world can help promote understanding and alleviate prejudice. Since the purpose of the social studies is to provide students with a knowledge of the world that has been, the world that is, and the world of the future, studying about religions should be an essential part of the social studies curriculum.²⁰

National Council for the Social Studies, *Study About Religions in the Social Studies Curriculum: A Position Statement of National Council for the Social Studies*

Religion in the Public School Curriculum Guidelines:

1. The school's approach to religion is *academic*, not *devotional*.
2. The school may strive for student *awareness* of religions, but should not press for student *acceptance* of any one religion.
3. The school may sponsor *study* about religion, but may not sponsor the *practice* of religion.
4. The school may *expose* students to a diversity of religious views, but may not *impose* any particular view.
5. The school may *educate* about all religions, but may not *promote* or *denigrate* any religion.
6. The school may *inform* the student about various beliefs, but should not seek to *conform* him or her to any particular belief.²¹

Charles C. Haynes and Oliver Thomas, First Amendment Center, *Religion in the Public School Curriculum*, guide to how to teach about religion and religious history in public schools (2002)

The Bible and Public Schools: A First Amendment Guide Guidelines:

To adopt any particular Bible—or translation—is likely to suggest to students that it is normative, the best Bible. One solution is to use a biblical sourcebook that includes the key texts of each of the major Bibles or an anthology of various translations.

At the outset, and at crucial points in the course, teachers should remind students about the differences between the various Bibles and discuss some of the major views concerning authorship and compilation of the books of the Bible. Students should also understand the differences in translations, read from several translations, and reflect on the significance of these differences for various traditions.²²

Bible Literacy Project and First Amendment Center, *The Bible & Public Schools: A First Amendment Guide*, guide to teaching the Bible in public schools (1999)

Goals and Objectives for Course or Group Study (if applicable)

General Goals and Objectives:

The student will...

- define and explain the inspired, noble, and virtuous ideals of our constitutional republic that is founded on certain unalienable rights and the equality and freedom of all persons.
- practice more patriotic, informed, responsible, active, enthusiastic, and united citizenship.
- associate ideas from the Bible with the principles we value as citizens in the United States of America.
- distinguish the role of the Bible and Bible-based philosophers in American political thought.
- detect and assess the relevance of the Bible to the founding documents in America including the Mayflower Compact, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights.
- illustrate America's political, social, cultural, and economic advances resulting from freedom and unity among citizens of the nation.
- sketch a personal plan of action in your daily civic life to demonstrate basic principles from the Bible and to promote the American idea.

Chapter 1 Objectives: The Roots of Popular Sovereignty

The student will...

- recognize the main events, issues, and effects or outcomes of the Protestant Reformation.
- distinguish the main tenets of Protestants and Catholics.
- examine important writings that came out of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation that influenced Western and American political thought.
- define and explain the principle of popular sovereignty.
- identify the sources of and scriptures used to support popular sovereignty.
- compare/contrast the principle of popular sovereignty and the doctrine of the Divine Right of Kings.
- examine how the principle of popular sovereignty affected Western views of church and government.
- identify and explain the Bible-based or Judeo-Christian principles evident and important in this part of America's heritage.

Chapter 2 Objectives: The Pilgrims, the Mayflower Compact, and the First Thanksgiving of America

The student will...

- identify the purposes of the Pilgrims in coming to America—for religious freedom, to create a godly, Bible-centered society, to advance the Christian faith, and to glorify God.
- specify and analyze the Bible-based influences on the Pilgrims and in the Mayflower Compact.
- explain the significance of the creation of a self-governing contract and document, the first of its kind in the world.
- describe compacts or covenants and their significance, purpose, benefits, and commitments as found in the Mayflower Compact.
- discuss the historical, religious, and socio-cultural significance of the first Thanksgiving in America.
- identify and explain the Bible-based or Judeo-Christian principles evident and important in this part of America's heritage.

Chapter 3 Objectives: The Puritans Create Bible Commonwealths in Early America

The student will...

- examine the Judeo-Christian religious/spiritual and civic/political views of the Puritans.

- analyze the relation between the Puritans' Judeo-Christian beliefs and their civic state, society, and political ideas including consent of the governed, popular sovereignty, self-government, rule of law, covenants, constitutions, chosen representatives, limited government, literacy, and work ethic.
- express the Puritans' views on individual rights, with consideration for how individual rights are addressed in today's laws in the United States government.
- examine the Puritans' Bible-centered self-government and society.
- analyze the influence of the Puritans' Judeo-Christian beliefs and principles on the United States and modern American life.
- identify and explain the Bible-based or Judeo-Christian principles evident and important in this part of America's heritage.

Chapter 4 Objectives: Freedom of Conscience and Religious Tolerance in Early America

The student will...

- indicate the reasons why religious dissidents and non-conformists came to America.
- analyze the Bible-based arguments of Roger Williams, William Penn, and John Locke against religious intolerance and coercion and in support of freedom of conscience.
- summarize the views of Williams and Locke on the use of state power to enforce religious laws, the purpose and principle of separation of church and civil government, and the distinction between civil government and church roles and representatives.
- explain how the beliefs, ideas, arguments, and/or actions of Williams, Penn, and Cecil Calvert contributed to the development and support of individual rights, limited government, religious tolerance, and freedom of conscience and religion in America.
- analyze the influence of early Americans' Bible-based or Judeo-Christian beliefs and principles on the United States and modern American life.
- identify and explain the Bible-based or Judeo-Christian principles evident and important in this part of America's heritage.

Chapter 5 Objectives: The Great Awakening, An Evangelical Revival in the American Colonies

The student will...

- discuss the important ideas and beliefs of the Great Awakening.
- recognize important thinkers and leaders during the Great Awakening.
- review and evaluate the religious, social, and political effects and influences of the Great Awakening in America.
- detect and indicate the links between the Great Awakening and America's path to independence.
- assess how the Great Awakening helped develop America as a democratic nation influenced by Bible-based values.
- analyze the influence of early Americans' Bible-based or Judeo-Christian beliefs and principles on the United States, its founding as a nation, and modern American life.
- identify and explain the Bible-based or Judeo-Christian principles evident and important in this part of America's heritage.

Chapter 6 Objectives: The Bible-Centered Debate on Revolution

The student will...

- compare and contrast the arguments of the Bible-centered debate among Americans over the American Revolution.

- recognize and evaluate the influence of the Bible on American thought, politics, and culture during the Founding era.
- analyze the influence of the Bible and Bible-based principles—as referenced by America Founders, revolutionaries, clergy, and influential thinkers—on the American Revolution.
- distinguish and examine founding-era Americans’ Bible-influenced views on the issues of submission to authority, freedom, resistance to tyranny, and revolution.
- identify and explain the Bible-based or Judeo-Christian principles evident and important in this part of America’s heritage.

Chapter 7 Objectives: The Rationale of America’s Revolution

The student will...

- describe the American rationale or philosophy for human rights and freedoms.
- determine the influence of the Bible, Christian philosophers, Founders, ministers, and other early Americans on the rationale of the American Revolution.
- explain the significance of the Declaration of Independence as a founding document of the United States of America.
- specify important phrases and principles expressed in the Declaration of Independence.
- define how the Bible and the Law of God and Nature are primary sources of American principles, freedoms, and natural, unalienable rights.
- identify and explain the Bible-based or Judeo-Christian principles evident and important in this part of America’s heritage.

Chapter 8 Objectives: The Making of A Nation Under God

The student will...

- examine and explain the influence of state constitutions on the U. S. Constitution—specifically regarding the relationship between church and civil government and religious freedom as a natural right.
- analyze the influence of the Bible and Judeo-Christian principles on the American Founders and thinkers who developed and/or influenced the forming of the Constitution and nation.
- analyze the influence of the Bible and Judeo-Christian principles on the Constitution and nation as a constitutional republic—including the need for government to restrain sinful man, Law of Nature and Nature’s God as the standard of civil law, Rule of Law, constitutional government, separation of powers, representative self-government, value of the individual, religious freedom as a natural right, consent of the governed, and civil covenants.
- relate and summarize the need for a virtuous citizenry in a republic and the Founders’ view of religion as the best means to achieve this virtuous citizenry.
- recognize and explain the Founders’ support for and encouragement of religion (specifically the Bible and Christianity) and education in society for a virtuous citizenry.
- analyze the meaning, purpose, and limits of the First Amendment’s Religion Clause with regard to separation of church and civil government and the free exercise of religion.
- identify and analyze important, relevant laws and documents that address religious issues—including the Northwest Ordinance and Thomas Jefferson’s “wall of separation” metaphor.
- review the effects of the 14th Amendment’s application of the First Amendment to the states.
- distinguish the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution as a national covenant or compact.
- identify and explain the Bible-based or Judeo-Christian principles evident and important in this part of America’s heritage.

Notes to the Reader and Group Facilitator (if applicable)

Resource Design

A reader or group facilitator (who wishes to guide study of this resource for educational purposes) is allowed flexibility in the reading and/or delivery of the study. The resource may be read and studied in sequence order, but it may also be read and studied in segments or by principle/topic. Please note that the first chapter introduces important historical background and primary source information relevant to the other chapters. Readings in each chapter provide historical content and excerpts, analysis and synthesis of information, and important points. Review/study questions in each chapter provide for review and discussion of content. Activities in each chapter give readers an opportunity to analyze, synthesize, and understand information. The activities may be done during the group meeting or between meetings. Call to action questions in each chapter are designed to encourage reflection, application, and action from readers. Some chapters include handouts with additional information.

Group or Class Discussion Format

This resource may be used in a group and/or class discussion setting. All discussion questions and activities may be completed by participants during or outside group meetings and then discussed and shared in the group meetings. For the subgroup format, a facilitator divides a large group into smaller subgroups to discuss all or assigned questions and activities. These questions and activities may be prepared by participants outside or during subgroup meetings. One person in each subgroup is assigned to take notes and/or share the responses, findings, and insights with the large group. When the large group convenes, subgroup representatives share their subgroup's insights with the large group. The large group and facilitator may further discuss/respond to questions and responses.

Discussion

Facilitators may encourage participants to freely contribute to group discussions. Discussions benefit from the different backgrounds, experiences, knowledge, references, thoughts, feelings, and ideas of group participants. These differences can enrich discussions and insights. Participants should listen to and encourage one another, not be afraid to ask difficult questions, and/or feel free to share various authentic viewpoints. The facilitator may lead groups to synthesize or bring together participant contributions and form insights and conclusions to further understand a question/issue.

Facilitator Ideas

(Note: If two people co-facilitate, one might agree to do most of the facilitating on a regular basis. Or, the two might decide to alternate weeks to facilitate. Because of the in-depth material, the two might help one another fill in gaps of information or understanding when needed during each session.)

1. Take care of administrative tasks.
2. Introduce the topic, book, layout, length, reading schedule, etc. of the study. The study might occur weekly, for example, with the participants reading one or part of a chapter per session. Express the purpose, need, and importance of studying this book or topic, why citizens must learn and know it, and citizen and church responsibility. Maybe a current event or article comes to mind that arouses the interest and curiosity of participants. Indicate, when applicable, how this study may also serve as a training for other teachers/group facilitators who wish to lead/facilitate their own class or group reading of the book at church or elsewhere.
3. Review and explain chapter content at the beginning of or at intervals during each session (as needed). The questions in "Review: Checking Out the History" at the end of each chapter help participants review, discuss, and assess learning of chapter content.
4. Facilitate the discussion, posing questions from the book and some of your own questions if you wish.
5. Guide discussion and questions through the main points or sections of the chapter.
6. Let participants freely talk about the reading and their thoughts and associations from it. Let the discussion be dynamic, but draw the discussion back to a question or topic when needed.
7. Address questions from the reading with the input of others in the group.
8. Direct the group to focus on and analyze some selected excerpt(s) or quote(s) in the chapter, with the group reading and analyzing the excerpt(s) together. Let the group read, decipher, explain, question, answer, discuss, react, respond, make associations, etc. This analysis will help the group to grasp the meaning and force of the material.
9. Direct the group to complete in writing (perhaps before class) and discuss the "Activity" at the end of each chapter to stimulate more thinking about and interaction with the ideas in the reading.
10. Direct the group to complete in writing (perhaps before class) and discuss the "Call to Action" questions at the end of each chapter to have participants think about, reflect on, and apply chapter concepts in their own lives as citizens in society today.
11. For each chapter, consider having the group closely read and analyze one key primary source (a sermon, letter, charter, personal writing, or state constitution, for example). Historical documents in the public domain can be found at libraries or at online sources such as Google Books.

Chapter 1

The Roots of Popular Sovereignty

Various strands of thought in history play a role in America's political thought and founding. Early American political thought was affected to some degree by the ancient Greeks and Romans. Unlike most early Americans, the Greeks and Romans were polytheists—those who worshipped many Gods. Yet these pagan peoples developed intellectual, moral philosophies that endured for centuries. These peoples also implemented various forms of self-government in their empires. The American Founders admired the Romans' civil republic—an empire governed by representatives of the people. American political thought was also influenced to some degree by the European Enlightenment of the late 1600s and 1700s. The Enlightenment was a largely secular, intellectual movement that emphasized reason and science.

At the same time, a close examination of America's formative documents and ideas in history reveal that one of the most significant sources of ideas in America's political thought and founding was the Judeo-Christian worldview and ethic that comes from the Bible. This strand of thought includes the teachings and practices of the ancient Israelites who formed their own nation, the man Jesus Christ, and the early Christians of the Bible. It consists of Bible-based or Judeo-Christian thought as it developed through history and notably flourished during the Protestant Reformation of the 1500s in Europe. As will be seen, the Judeo-Christian worldview and ethic emerged in the philosophical ideas and writings most influential to American thought, in the deeply-held beliefs and values of early colonial Americans, among many American Founders, and in the founding of the new nation. Even the Enlightenment-era thinkers who most influenced early Americans were those who held a pro-God if not Bible-based worldview. Moreover, many Scottish Enlightenment thinkers who influenced American thought emphasized an innate "moral sense" in mankind that easily aligned with Judeo-Christian thought. **It is the thesis of this book that the Bible is one of the most influential sources of ideas and thought in the foundational history, philosophy, values, and principles of the United States of America.**

1.1 The Protestant Reformation and Counter-Reformation

When considering the influence of the Bible and Judeo-Christian thought on the founding principles of America, it is important to consider the religious and political backdrop of Europe in the 1500s and 1600s. A brief look at Europe during this time, from which the first Europeans would emigrate to America, reveals that one of the most significant events affecting European religious and political beliefs was the Protestant Reformation that occurred in the 1520s and 1530s. The Reformation greatly impacted the beliefs of many early settlers who came to the American colonies.

Prior to and during this time, the Roman Catholic Church was and had been, for centuries, the dominant organized form of the Christian church in the kingdoms of Europe. The model of power that existed in European kingdoms was based on the medieval Roman Catholic theory of "two powers" or "two swords" of church and civil government. The two-swords theory held that two separate powers ruled the world—pope and emperor. The pope, as the highest person in the hierarchical Catholic church, was considered the representative or vicar of Christ in the world. The emperor was the highest civil magistrate who ruled over the empire. In this model, the pope and other church officials wielded the spiritual sword of the church, and the emperor and kings wielded the earthly or temporal sword of the civil state. To govern the churches of Europe, the Catholic church instituted canon laws. Canon laws were basically church laws to govern Christians in church matters. The civil state, in turn, enforced civil laws in line with the canon law and defended Christendom. The civil magistrates' power was limited by the church, the law, and the lower nobles. Emperors and kings were often elected and/or subject to a public oath to rule justly. They could be dismissed for unjust rule.²³ Over time, the pope gained more political and legal power, and the official church became the highest political authority in the kingdoms. The emperor and kings were accountable to the church, but the pope was accountable only to God. Since the

1 pope was Christ's vicar, as it was asserted, anyone's attempt to judge the pope was acting contrary to God's
2 will.
3

4 The Protestant Reformation ignited in Europe in 1517 when German monk and professor Martin Luther
5 nailed his 95 *Theses* to the Castle Church door in Wittenberg, Germany. Luther's 95 *Theses* was a list of
6 grievances against the Catholic Church. Luther, who had read the Bible, sought Bible-based reform by means
7 of academic debate of what had become, in his view, a corrupt church. He criticized the church for its
8 excessive clerical wealth and power, burdens on the poor, false teachings, and heretical sale of indulgences and
9 pardons to the people to take away God's judgment of their sins. He defended the authority of the Bible over
10 human institutions in matters of faith, salvation by faith alone, and peace with and access to God through Jesus
11 Christ.²⁴ Luther's *Theses* was copied, translated, and spread quickly throughout Europe. Since the Bible at that
12 time was only available in Latin, a language which only the clergy knew, the people, who spoke other regional
13 languages, had a limited understanding of the Bible's content apart from what the clergy taught. Upon reading
14 Luther's *Theses*, people were angered by what they saw as the church's exploitive, heretical practices and
15 doctrines and sought to do away with them. Religious civil wars broke out in Europe. Protesters or reformers
16 rose up all over Europe—including Luther of Germany who translated the Bible into German, John Calvin of
17 France, Ulrich Zwingli of Switzerland, John Knox of Scotland, and William Tyndale of England who translated
18 the Bible into English. Many reformers became martyrs. Due to the invention of the printing press in the 1440s
19 in Germany, affordable Bibles and books were able to be mass produced for the public. As a result of the
20 Protestant movement, some reforms occurred in the Catholic Church, and many new church groups emerged as
21 Protestant. The main Protestant groups were the Calvinists, Lutherans, Anabaptists who withdrew from civil
22 life, and moderate Anglicans.
23

24 In addition to his 95 *Theses*, Luther wrote two additional pieces that further exposed corruptions in the
25 Catholic church and called for greater religious and political freedom. In his 1520 *Appeal to the Ruling Class of*
26 *German Nationality*, addressed to the German emperor and nobles, he criticizes the church for making itself
27 unaccountable by the church's claim that its spiritual authority came from heaven above and, therefore, that it
28 was exempt from civil authority and law. The church had also asserted that no one could interpret the Bible
29 except the Pope. Further, no one could call a council except the Pope, though councils were the means to
30 initiate church accountability and reform. Luther calls for reforms to these doctrines and practices. He asserts
31 the priesthood and equal standing of all Christians or believers. In his 1523 *Secular Authority: To What It*
32 *Extent It Should Be Obeyed*, Luther explores the proper purpose and role of civil government. Politically
33 radical for his time, Luther favored greater distinction between roles of church and civil government. His
34 political ideas would influence future, more radical European and American political thinkers.
35

36 One French pastor and theologian, John Calvin, joined in protest against church corruption and set up a
37 Reformed church in Geneva, Switzerland. In 1536, Calvin wrote his well-known set of volumes, *Institutes of*
38 *the Christian Religion*, that presents a reformed Christian doctrine recovering many truths in the Bible that had
39 been lost or distorted. This doctrine became known as Reformed Theology or "Calvinism."
40

41 In the new context of the Reformation, Protestants generally believed that the Bible is the inerrant Word
42 of God and the final source of authority for all religious doctrine and church matters. The church approves and
43 exalts the Bible because the Bible is believed to be inspired by the Holy Spirit. The church's authority is
44 secondary to the Bible. The church has authority *only* when it is consistent with the Bible. The Bible,
45 Protestants also believed, is plain enough for all to read, and able to be freely interpreted by Christians.
46 Protestants believed in salvation by grace or God's unmerited favor toward humans. They also believed in
47 justification, or the gift of God's grace, by faith alone. Further, they believed in the "priesthood of all
48 believers," with Christ as the High Priest. All Christians can go directly to God through Christ who, in the New
49 Testament, clears the way for all Christians. All Christians have ministerial responsibilities as priests who can
50 intercede and pray for and minister to others. Protestant clergymen were viewed as "ministers" or "pastors"

1 who minister to and shepherd God's people but who do not play the role of high priest or mediator for the
2 church. The Protestants ultimately rejected the authority of the pope. Their Old Testament Bible included only
3 the books originally found in the Hebrew language. While most Reformed groups generally shared these basic
4 beliefs, some groups differed in their more specific interpretations of the Bible.

5
6 Calvinists, like other reformers, asserted the basic Protestant views. Specifically, Calvinists emphasized
7 Covenant Theology or the idea that God relates with creation and mankind through covenants—an idea largely
8 studied and presented by Calvinist thinkers. Calvinists believed in the total depravity or inability of sinful
9 mankind to redeem themselves. They upheld the idea of “predestination,” the view that God predestines some
10 humans, not all, to be saved by His mercy and grace. A person does not choose salvation on his or her own.
11 God elects who is saved. He grants the “elect” the gift of faith. Some Calvinists, however, believed that God
12 elects those whom He knows ahead of time will love or choose Him. Calvinists believed a Christian's salvation
13 is assured and, once gained, cannot be lost. In contrast, the Arminians, named after Dutch Reformed theologian
14 Jacobus Arminius, believed God's salvation is available to all humans who choose faith in Christ by free will.
15 A Christian can lose salvation by falling away from the faith. Arminianism later gained strength in America in
16 the 1800s as people emphasized freedom and the ability to choose. Yet many later Arminians, like John
17 Wesley, still emphasized that God's grace leads people to salvation and that a person needs to “cooperate” with
18 grace. Salvation occurs when a person surrenders to God's grace. Arminians also made important
19 contributions to Reformed Theology, namely in the area of salvation by free will.

20
21 Calvinism was widely studied and followed by many Christians in Europe and later America. Calvinism
22 influenced many Protestants like the French Huguenots, the European and Scottish Presbyterians, and the
23 English *Pilgrims and Puritans*. *American Puritan minister John Cotton exemplified Calvin's great influence on*
24 *the Puritans in stating, “I have read the fathers and the school-men, and Calvin too; but I find, that he that has*
25 *Calvin has them all.”*²⁵ *Calvin was not a radical political reformer, but his Reformed Theology did, in fact,*
26 *impact Western views of the church and civil state. Calvin's Reformed Theology, say some scholars,*
27 *contributed greatly to the transformation of Western religious and political ideas. It helped to lay the*
28 *foundation for the principles of natural law, religious freedom, individual rights, greater distinction between*
29 *church and civil government, and civil republicanism. Over the next two centuries, European and American*
30 *political reformers developed from Calvin's ideas a concept of civil republican government based on Rule of*
31 *Law, democratic process, and individual liberty.*²⁶ *These principles will be discussed in this book. Calvinism*
32 *affected a number of key European political thinkers who would, in turn, influence the early Americans. Some*
33 *of these thinkers include Johannes Althusius, Samuel Rutherford, Samuel von Pufendorf, Algernon Sidney, and*
34 *John Locke. Calvinism also affected, to some degree, the worldviews and religious beliefs of many American*
35 *Founders such as John Witherspoon, John Hancock, Benjamin Rush, Samuel Adams, John Adams, Benjamin*
36 *Franklin, Roger Sherman, John Trumbull, and Paul Revere.*²⁷

37
38 Not all reformers were as radical as Luther or Calvin. Some like Anglican clergyman Richard Hooker in
39 England were more moderate in calling for church reform and re-organization. Hooker looked to reason and
40 church tradition to interpret the Bible. He also took a moderated position on church organization between the
41 hierarchical Roman Catholics and the radically non-hierarchical Puritans. His work *Of the Laws of*
42 *Ecclesiastical Polity* of 1593 is one of the first major theological writings in English that examines church
43 governance and law. It represented the Anglican thought of the reformed Church of England. It would later
44 affect the social-political views of British philosopher John Locke who would be influential to the American
45 Founders and American political thought.

46
47 In response to the Reformation, the Catholic “Counter-Reformation” also arose during the 1540s to
48 1650s. The Counter-Reformation was a Catholic revival that rejected the Protestant view but promoted
49 institutional reform of the Catholic church. It was a return to the basic tenets of the early Roman Catholic faith.
50 It prompted the founding of seminaries for proper education and training of priests, a return to the spiritual life

1 of faith and a personal relationship with Christ, and a re-adherence to the Roman Catechism or Catholic
2 Christian teachings and the 300s Latin Vulgate or “commonly used” Bible. The Counter-Reformation upheld
3 the leadership of the pope but acknowledged that the pope is not infallible. The pope could err in some cases or
4 fall into heresy. A heretical pope could be deposed.

5
6 Counter-Reformation Catholics also believed that the Bible is the inerrant Word of God and their source
7 of authority in religious matters. However, Catholics believed the Bible has authority *because* the church has
8 said so. It is the church, empowered by the Holy Spirit, that declares the Bible to be authoritative. In other
9 words, the Bible is authoritative *because* the church is authoritative and filled with the Holy Spirit. Thus
10 Catholics believed the Bible as well as church tradition are authoritative in religious and church matters.
11 Further, the Bible needs to be interpreted correctly by the pope, deemed the highest person in the church.
12 Catholics, like Protestants, believed in salvation by grace. However, when it came to justification by faith,
13 Catholics believed there is no such thing as faith without works. Also, Catholics kept the Old Testament-
14 resembling practice of designated priests who mediate/intercede on behalf of God’s people. The priests in the
15 Old Testament were a class of men who studied God’s laws, devoted their lives to serving God, and interceded
16 and prayed for God’s people. Catholics read the Vulgate Bible that contained in its Old Testament the Hebrew-
17 originated books but also included some non-Hebrew books of the intertestamental period, the period between
18 the Old and New Testaments, which Protestants did not recognize as part of the sacred text.

19
20 When many religious reformers rejected the authority of the pope and the Catholic Church during the
21 Reformation, the kings and queens of the monarchies of Europe gained power. Monarchical power increased as
22 reformers, counter-reformers, and the people sought the protection of their monarchies during the religious civil
23 wars. During this time, the doctrine of the “Divine Right of Kings” gained strength. The Divine Right of Kings
24 was the belief that the king or queen derived his or her authority to rule directly and only from God and so was
25 not accountable for his or her actions to any earthly authority or to the people. To be sure, the monarch or
26 hereditary ruler was expected to abide by God’s moral law and civil laws, and he or she might also at times
27 answer to a church that held some power. For the most part, however, he or she could only be judged by God.
28 Any subject’s attempt to judge the monarch was considered defiant of God’s will. The monarchs, therefore,
29 tended to rule absolutely—without any real limit or restriction. Monarchs held the authority to determine and
30 enforce the religious doctrine of the official state church in his or her kingdom and to impose this doctrine on
31 the people. Religious oppression and persecution resulted for those who differed in their beliefs from the
32 official church.

33
34 **Subsequently, some Protestant thinkers rose up and challenged the Divine Right of Kings, calling**
35 **for not only religious but also political reform in the church and civil government. These reformers**
36 **included John Ponet, Theodore Beza, Philippe du Plessis-Mornay, and Samuel Rutherford among others.**
37 **Many of them advocated for greater religious and political freedom and the people’s right to resist civil**
38 **tyranny. Notably, they defended their positions from the Bible. Thus a clear line of modern, Western**
39 **political ideas with explicit roots in the Bible can be traced through their unprecedented writings.**
40 **Because many of their writings impacted later European and American thinkers who influenced**
41 **American ideas, their writings reveal the Bible’s significance to America’s principles and founding.**

42
43 In 1556, British Anglican bishop John Ponet wrote one such political tract entitled *A Short Treatise of*
44 *Political Power, and the True Obedience Which Subjects Owe to Kings and Other Civil Governors, with An*
45 *Exhortation to All True and Natural Englishmen*. This treatise, published in Strasbourg, is one of the first
46 advocating resistance to civil tyranny based on the Bible.²⁸ According to American Founder and second U. S.
47 President John Adams in his 1787 *A Defense of the Constitutions of Government of the United States of*
48 *America*, Ponet’s treatise impacted important philosophers of America’s Founding—John Locke and Algernon
49 Sidney—and American ideas of liberty. *Short Treatise*, Adams notes, “contains all the essential principles of
50 liberty, which were afterwards dilated on by Sidney and Locke.”²⁹

1
2 Then, in 1579, a radical political tract entitled *Vindiciae Contra Tyrannos* (Latin for *A Defense of*
3 *Liberty Against Tyrants*) was released in Europe by an anonymous French reformer under the pseudonym
4 “Stephen Junius Brutus” who also asserted resistance to civil tyranny based on the Bible. This tract became,
5 observe some historians, the most well-known and quoted writing of the French political thinkers in the 1600s.
6 British Calvinists like Samuel Rutherford—who affected philosopher John Locke—were influenced by
7 *Vindiciae*. The tract is attributed to a Huguenot political writer—thought most likely to be Philippe du Plessis-
8 Mornay but also possibly Theodore Beza or Hubert Languet, all of whom asserted a resistance theory. Beza,
9 Calvin’s protégé and successor in Geneva, had argued in his 1574 *On the Rights of Magistrates* for the right of
10 civil resistance based on a political covenant that existed among the people, rulers, and God. Brutus’s *Vindiciae*
11 expanded Beza’s arguments.³⁰ Beza and Brutus’s *Vindiciae* became some of the first of the modern era to
12 assert a Bible-inspired covenant theory, a principle that would later be taken up and secularized by Locke and
13 the American Founders. Many of the principles in *Vindiciae* are evident in the United States’ Declaration of
14 Independence.³¹ John Adams acknowledged Brutus’s *Vindiciae* along with Ponet and English author John
15 Milton as influential to America’s political thought and founding. He points out that between 1640 and 1660
16 “not only Ponnet and others were reprinted, but Harrington, Milton, the *Vindiciae contra Tyrannos*, and a
17 multitude of others came upon the stage.”³²
18

19 In 1644, Samuel Rutherford, a Scottish Presbyterian minister and member of the Westminster Assembly,
20 published his well-known tract *Lex Rex, or The Law and The Prince*. The title *Lex Rex* was interpreted by many
21 as a play on words, meaning *The Law Is King*. The idea that law is king, says Francis A. Schaeffer, was
22 “absolutely earthshaking.” Before that, the order of the day was *Rex Lex* or the king is law. The king or state
23 was held as God’s representative ruler, and so the king’s word was law. *Lex Rex* argued, however, that rulers
24 are not the law but rather are subject to the law—the concept of Rule of Law. The civil law is based on God’s
25 moral law.³³ *Lex Rex* applied the ideas in *Vindiciae* to the political situation in England.³⁴ *Lex Rex* significantly
26 impacted the English Civil War—the Puritan Revolution—of the mid 1600s. It drew on both Catholic and
27 Protestant sources.³⁵ Like *Vindiciae*, *Lex Rex* provided a Biblical basis for political covenants and resistance to
28 civil tyranny. *Lex Rex*, says Jon Roland, “systematized the Calvinistic political theories which had developed
29 over the previous century.”³⁶ It “reflected the theological and political ideas of Calvin,” affirm Gary Amos and
30 Richard Gardiner, “as they were transmitted through the French Huguenots to the Scottish Presbyterians and
31 English Puritans.”³⁷ Though Rutherford was not a supporter of religious tolerance as other political reformers
32 were, his *Lex Rex* served as a source of ideas on Rule of Law and resistance to tyranny for European reformers
33 like John Knox and Locke and for American Founders like John Witherspoon. Locke drew heavily from and
34 secularized concepts found in *Lex Rex*.³⁸
35

36 Additionally, the Westminster Confession of Faith of 1646, the doctrine of the Church of England and
37 Scotland, which Rutherford helped to write, would also affect early Americans’ religious and political thought.
38 It was written by the Westminster Assembly, a group of reformed, largely Calvinist clergymen assembled by
39 British parliament at Westminster Abbey in England to restructure the church. The Confession affirmed the
40 Bible as highest authority, God’s Biblical commandments and moral law, the Law of Nature, covenants,
41 freedom of conscience, and the right to resist tyranny. The Confession was, next to the Bible, the most widely
42 read document by early Americans in the pre-revolutionary colonies. It was required learning at all levels of
43 education in America and was known by nearly all colonists and American Founders. It became the core
44 statement of faith for many Protestants in America. The stated beliefs in the Confession undoubtedly
45 influenced early Americans’ thinking and values.³⁹
46

47 Religious reformers who were exiled in Geneva translated the Bible into English in 1560—producing
48 the Geneva Bible. Reformers John Calvin, Theodore Beza, and John Knox contributed to the translation.
49 Earlier English translations of the Bible by William Tyndale and Miles Coverdale also contributed to this
50 translation.⁴⁰ Easy to read and affordable, the Geneva Bible was accessible to the English-speaking public and

mass printed. It became the most popular edition of the Bible among English-speaking Protestants until the mid 1600s. This Bible was, in fact, studied by the Pilgrims and Puritans who brought it to America in 1620. The unique feature of the Geneva Bible was its marginal notes and commentaries. The Puritans taught from these notes. As such, this Bible is often known as the first study Bible. The marginal notes, however, presented the radical Reformed Theology that challenged absolute power, including the powers of the king. As a result, though the Bible was authorized in Scotland, it was rejected by King James I of England and the more moderate Church of England. King James, instead, called for a new Bible to be translated without such marginal notes. The King James Version (KJV) of the Bible came out in 1611 and became the authorized Bible of the Church of England. Puritan leader John Winthrop brought the King James Bible to America in 1629. By the late 1600s and 1700s, the King James Bible would become the most widely read Bible in the American colonies. Many clergy later preferred it for its more moderate tone.⁴¹

1.2 Popular Sovereignty

While many political thinkers of the Reformation era supported the idea that civil authority came from God, some argued that this political authority is given by God to the whole people of a community or state, not to select individuals or groups as is typically practiced in a monarchy. A monarchy is a state ruled by a sovereign monarch or head, like a king or queen, who often comes to power by hereditary succession. This ruler often holds absolute or unlimited power. The political reformers argued that God makes all humans equal and free. As such, God firstly and then the people are the source of earthly power. God holds supreme rule or “sovereignty” over all humans and earthly spheres, and the people hold power—“popular sovereignty”—to rule or govern in their state or nation. Importantly, this principle of popular sovereignty maintains God as the highest sovereign in the world. The people do not replace or remove God. Rather, God’s will is expressed through the action of the people. In the principle of popular sovereignty, the people may select rulers to govern for the people’s good and protection. They may also limit the power of their rulers as well as resist or remove rulers who are tyrannical. Popular sovereignty assumes that all who govern over the people do so by the people’s voluntary consent. Because if all humans are free and equal, no human has a right to rule over another without the other’s permission. Many thinkers asserted this principle based on the Bible.

A number of both Catholic and Protestant thinkers in Europe derived and recognized popular sovereignty from the Bible. Two modern Catholic churchmen of the 1500s and 1600s—Italian Jesuit priest Robert Bellarmine and Spanish Jesuit priest Francisco Suarez—notably presented and defended popular sovereignty from scripture. They were influenced by Catholic theologian Thomas Aquinas. Bellarmine and Suarez supported popular sovereignty based on the idea from the Bible that all humans are created free and equal by God. For in the Bible, Adam and Eve, the first human beings created by God, are given authority by God to multiply and to take dominion over the earth—according to Genesis 1, 2, and 9. Genesis 1:26-28 states,

Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in His *own* image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

During this period of mankind’s creation and reproduction in Genesis, observes Bellarmine, God does not appoint any particular individual, group, or lineage of humans to rule over other humans. Rather, all humans have equal standing before God and equal right to dominion on earth. Civil power then, he concludes, resides with the whole people or the multitude. However, the people may delegate political power to a person or group by their consent. In his 1580s/1590s *De Laicis*, Latin for “Of the Laity,” also known as his *Treatise on Civil Government*, Bellarmine defends popular sovereignty from the Bible:

1
2 Secular or civil power...is in the people, unless they bestow it on a prince. **This power is immediately**
3 **in the whole multitude...for this power is in the divine law [the Bible], but the divine law hath**
4 **given this power to no particular man**—if the positive law [man-made law] be taken away, there is
5 left no reason why amongst a multitude (who are equal) one rather than another should bear rule over
6 the rest. Power is given by the multitude to one man, or to more by the same law of nature.... It
7 depends upon the consent of the multitude to ordain over themselves a king, or consul, or other
8 magistrates....⁴²
9

10 Interestingly, Bellarmine supported monarchy, the position and power of the pope, and the Counter-
11 Reformation. Yet, as will later be seen, his view of popular sovereignty—including the consent of the
12 governed, limited power, and accountability of rulers who were fallible—would be defended by thinkers
13 important to the American Founding era like Locke and Sidney. As a result, this view would also be influential
14 to the early Americans. Suarez, considered one of the greatest Catholic thinkers after Aquinas, similarly argues
15 from Genesis that humans are created free and equal by nature, not slaves to one another.⁴³ In his 1612
16 *Tractatus de Legibus* or *Tract on Laws*, Suarez states,
17

18 By right of creation...Adam had only economical power, but not political. He had a power over his
19 wife, and a fatherly power over his sons.... ... But political power did not begin until families began to
20 be gathered together into one perfect community; ...as the community did not begin by the creation of
21 Adam, nor by his will alone, but of all them which did agree in this community, so we cannot say that
22 Adam naturally had political primacy in that community; ...because by the force of the law of Nature
23 alone it is not due unto any progenitor to be also king of his posterity. And...we cannot say, God...gave
24 him this power, for there is no revelation of this, nor testimony of Scripture.⁴⁴
25

26 Suarez notes that God does not give to anyone political power over another, not even to Adam. Rather, political
27 power begins when families, by agreement, gather together as a community. The whole people or multitude,
28 therefore, not any particular person or family line, holds political authority in the community. Suarez's view of
29 popular sovereignty, like Bellarmine's, would also influence Locke, Sidney, and the American Founders.
30

31 Popular sovereignty was also directly or indirectly supported by some of the Protestant reformers
32 mentioned—Luther, Calvin, Ponet, Beza, Brutus, and Rutherford. The reformers also supported popular
33 sovereignty from the Bible, though with different scriptures and strands of thought. Luther and Calvin
34 indirectly supported popular sovereignty by defending the equal standing of believers in the Bible and church.
35 Their views of the church undoubtedly influenced others' views of popular sovereignty among citizens in the
36 civil state. Luther, in particular, challenged the nearly absolute, unlimited power of church leaders. In his
37 *Appeal to the Ruling Class*, he argues that all believers, though exercising different functions in the church or
38 occupations in the world, are priests or intercessors of God. All share the same Christian status, regardless of
39 whether one's occupation is religious or secular. All are called to minister. This idea is often referred to as the
40 "priesthood of all believers." Luther derives this idea from 1 Peter 2:9 and Revelation 5:9-10. In 1 Peter 2:9-
41 10, the Apostle Peter says to believers in the church, "But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a
42 holy nation, His [God's] own special people...; who once *were* not a people but *are* now the people of God..."
43 In Revelation 5:9-10, believers sing of how Christ has made them "kings and priests to our God." Luther
44 explains from these verses, "The fact is that our baptism consecrates us all without exception, and makes us all
45 priests. As St. Peter says, I Pet. 2..., 'You are a royal priesthood and a realm of priests,' and Revelation, 'Thou
46 hast made us priests and kings by Thy blood'...."⁴⁵ Luther also echoes 2 Corinthians 4:13 in saying that "we all
47 have the one spirit of faith." As a result, he says, "each and all of us are priests because we all have the one
48 faith, the one gospel, one and the same sacrament...."⁴⁶ Luther further refers to Romans 12:4 and 1 Corinthians
49 12 to emphasize the diverse but necessary capacities and trades of believers in the "one body" of the church.
50 Romans 12:4-5 states, "For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same

function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.” 1 Corinthians 12:12 states, “For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.” All believers, Luther saw from these verses, may serve others through their varied capacities—whether as priest, bishop, pope, shoemaker, smith, farmer, etc. Every one, says Luther, ought to serve “in such a way that the various trades are all directed to the best advantage of the community, and promote the well-being of body and soul, just as all the organs of the body serve each other.”⁴⁷

A church leader or “office-bearer” differed from other church members only in his office or occupation, Luther argues, not in his Christian standing. Such a leader should be chosen by the consent and/or election of church members. Luther explains, “Just because we are all priests of equal standing, no one must push himself forward and, without the consent and choice of the rest, presume to do that for which we all have equal authority. Only by the consent and command of the community should any individual person claim for himself what belongs equally to all.” Furthermore, such leaders should not have absolute, unlimited powers in the church but should be held accountable to the members. A leader can be removed from his office if he abuses his position.⁴⁸

Calvin in his *Institutes* similarly addresses the equal standing among the believers in the early church of the Bible. Alluding to Acts, 1 Peter 5, and Galatians 1 and 2, he explains that in the early church the leading Apostles Peter and Paul practiced servant-leadership, not as absolute superiors but as equal church members. For example, in Acts 8:14-15, 11:2-4, and 15:6-29 and 1 Peter 5:1, Peter, a minister to the Jews, acts as a companion and colleague to the other believers, not as a master who has absolute authority over them. In 1 Peter 5:1, Peter reveals to the churches his equal position among the other elders, saying, “The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed.” Peter makes proposals and delivers opinions to the church and its pastors, but he also hears the observations of other members and lets them make decisions. He then honors and follows their decisions and commands. In Acts 8:14-15, when Peter is commanded by his colleagues to go with the disciple John to Samaria, he does not refuse. In Acts 8:14-15, the disciple Luke tells, “Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them [the people] that they might receive the Holy Spirit.” Calvin observes from this verse that “The apostles, by sending him [Peter], declared that they did not consider him as their superior. By his compliance and execution of the commission entrusted to him, he confessed that he was a colleague to them, but had no authority over them.”⁴⁹ In addition, Peter is held accountable to others in the church for his actions. When he associates with Gentiles or non-Jews, he is questioned by some of the Jewish Christians in the church. Consequently, Peter explains and vindicates his actions when necessary, as he does on this occasion. Acts 11:2-4 states, “And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those of the circumcision [Jewish believers] contended with him, saying, ‘You went in to uncircumcised men and ate with them!’ But Peter explained *it* to them in order from the beginning....” Further, in Galatians 1 and 2, Paul, a minister to the Gentiles, does not profess subjection to Peter but declares harmony with his teaching. Peter, on the other hand, does not ask for submission but only fellowship as a co-laborer of the Lord. In Galatians 2:9, Paul states that “when James, Cephas [Peter], and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me [Paul], they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we *should go* to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.” Moreover, Paul corrects Peter when necessary, and Peter stands corrected by Paul’s reproof. In Galatians 2:11-16, Paul addresses Peter’s hypocritical behavior. He explains,

Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; for before certain men came from James [a Jewish Christian leader in the church], he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision [Jewish believers]. And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy. But when I saw that they were not

1 straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before *them* all, “If you, being a Jew, live in
2 the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?”
3

4 “All these things fully prove,” concludes Calvin, “either that there was an equality between Paul and Peter, or at
5 least that Peter had no more power over the rest than they had over him.”⁵⁰
6

7 Luther’s and Calvin’s idea of the priesthood and equal standing of all believers had not only religious
8 but also political implications for both church and civil state. This religious view led to more democratic ideas
9 of church, society, and government in the world at large, though its application took time.⁵¹ It undoubtedly
10 contributed to many political reformers’ favor of popular sovereignty over absolute rule in civil government.
11

12 The more radical political reformers of the Reformation era more directly supported popular sovereignty
13 in the civil state, but also based on the Bible. Brutus in *Vindiciae* bases support for popular sovereignty on
14 Deuteronomy 17:14-15 in which Moses prophesies that the Israelites will set over themselves a king when they
15 entered the land of Canaan. In Deuteronomy 17:14-15 Moses says to the Israelites, “When you come to the
16 land which the LORD your God is giving you, and possess it and dwell in it, and say, ‘I will set a king over me
17 like all the nations that *are* around me,’ you shall surely set a king over you whom the LORD your God
18 chooses; *one* from among your brethren you shall set as king over you....” In these verses, Brutus thought, God
19 approves the people’s sovereignty or rule in selecting their own king. Brutus observes,
20

21 Several ages before the people of Israel petitioned God for a king, God had already sanctioned the law
22 of the kingdom which is found in Deuteronomy ch. XVII: “When”, says Moses, “you have come to that
23 land which the Lord your God has given you in possession, and when you have dwelt there, you will
24 say: ‘Let me constitute a king over myself, like the other nations round about.’ Then you will constitute
25 that king, whom your Lord will have elected from the midst of your bretheren, etc.” Here you see the
26 king’s election attributed to God, and his constitution to the people.⁵²
27

28 Brutus also cites 1 Samuel 10 and 11 to support the people’s authority from God in choosing a king or the view
29 that kings are made by the people. In these verses, the people of Israel ask God for a king via the prophet
30 Samuel. In response, Samuel anoints Saul following God’s direction, but Saul does not become king until he is
31 confirmed by the people. First, the king is nominated by the people, and then he is voted in by the people.
32 Brutus explains,
33

34 Partly because they [the people of Israel] were disgusted with Samuel’s sons, who judged unjustly, and
35 partly because they believed that their wars would be better conducted, they asked Samuel for a king [1
36 Samuel 8:4-5]. When consulted by Samuel, God revealed that He had elected Saul to rule the people [1
37 Samuel 9:16]. And so Samuel anointed Saul [1 Samuel 10:1]: for all these procedures pertained to the
38 election of a king made at the request of the people.

39 And perhaps it might have seemed sufficient, if Samuel had presented the king elected by God to
40 the people and admonished it to obey him. Nevertheless, in order that the king should know himself to
41 be constituted by the people, Samuel appointed an assembly [*comitia*] to meet at Mizpeh; there, as if the
42 matter were still wholly unopened and unsettled—as if, I say the election of Saul had not yet been
43 established—the lot was drawn. Out of the tribes, it fell on the tribe of Benjamin; out of the families, it
44 fell on the family of Matri; and from that family, upon Saul, the same whom God had elected. Then
45 finally, with the acclamation of the whole people, Saul was said to be nominated king [1 Samuel 10:17-
46 24]. ... Saul was confirmed as king in the presence of the Lord by all together [*universi*] at Gilgal,
47 despite the dissent of a few of the people [1 Samuel 11:14-15, 1 Samuel 10:27]. **Here you see the one
48 whom God Himself had elected, and who had been marked off from the rest by lot, constituted
49 king by the votes of the people.**⁵³
50

Brutus concludes that there is a scriptural basis for popular sovereignty, stating, “We have demonstrated... that God institutes kings, gives kingdoms to them, and elects them. We now say that the people constitutes kings, confers kingdoms, and approves the election by its vote.... Indeed, God willed that it should be done this way....”⁵⁴

In *Lex Rex*, Rutherford similarly espouses the principle of popular sovereignty. He also bases his argument on the practice of the Israelites. In addition to citing 1 Samuel 10, 11, and 12 like *Vindiciae*, he also cites numerous other scriptures to show how the people of Israel held political authority. For instance, he cites Exodus 18:21 in which the Israelites are instructed to select their rulers, Judges 8:22 in which the men of Israel say to their military commander Gideon, “Rule thou over us,” Judges 9:6 in which the men of Shechem make Abimelech their king, Judges 11:8,11 in which the people make Jephthah commander over them, 1 Chronicles 12:38 in which the men of war “came with a perfect heart to make David king of Hebron,” 1 Kings 1 in which the people make Solomon king, 2 Chronicles 23:3 in which the people make a covenant with King Joash, 1 Kings 16 in which the people choose kings Omri and Achab, 2 Kings 10:5 in which the people say “We will not make any king,” and 2 Kings 14:21 in which “The people made Azariah king.”⁵⁵ From such scriptures, the Bible reveals the people’s God-given authority, says Rutherford, by which they directly and God indirectly elect a ruler. Furthermore, since the people give political power to rulers to govern for the public good, the people have a right to resist that power when rulers become tyrannical. Rutherford argues this point based on 2 Chronicles 22 and 23. In these verses, Athaliah, mother of deceased King Ahaziah, tries to kill the royal line of Judah in the southern kingdom of Israel so no one else can take the throne after her son dies. She unlawfully usurps the throne and makes herself queen without the people’s consent. But the godly high priest Johoiada intervenes. He hides the rightful successor, the infant Joash, who survives. When Joash turns seven, the people crown him king. Still, Athaliah refuses to recognize Joash as rightful king, and she is overthrown by the people. Rutherford responds to this occurrence,

If the estates [ie. the people] of a kingdom give the power to a king, it is their own power in the fountain; and if they give it for their own good, they have power to judge when it is used against themselves, and for their evil, and so power to limit and resist the power that they gave. Now, that they may take away this power, is clear in Athaliah’s case.⁵⁶

Based on these observations from the Bible, Rutherford concludes that a ruler, though selected by God, must be elected and confirmed by the people. He asserts, “The power of creating a man a king is from the people” and “Expressly Scripture saith, that the people made the king, though under God.”⁵⁷ He points out that many others including Calvin “do all hence conclude that the people, under God, make the king.”⁵⁸

Popular sovereignty does not stem from some notion that the people replace God as the highest sovereign in the world or that God is absent from civil society. Rather, it is based on the idea that God as sovereign gives political power to the God-honoring people, and, ideally, that His sovereign purpose may be reflected in their actions. Rutherford explains,

The Scripture saith plainly, as we heard before, the people made kings; and if they do, as other second causes produce their effects, it is all one that God, as the principal cause, maketh kings.... God, by that same action that the people createth a king, doth also, by them, as by his instruments, create a king.... The people can, and doth, limit and bind royal power in elected kings, therefore they have in them royal power to give to the king.⁵⁹

Rutherford also says, “...[W]e cannot here find two actions, one of God, another of the people; but in one and the same action, God, by the people’s free suffrages and voices, createth such a man king....” Alluding to 1 Kings 1:38-40, Rutherford affirms the principle of popular sovereignty in bringing up how the people of Israel make Solomon king after David. 1 Kings 1:38-40 states,

1
2 So Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the Cherethites, and the Pelethites
3 went down and had Solomon ride on King David's mule, and took him to Gihon. Then Zadok the priest
4 took a horn of oil from the tabernacle and anointed Solomon. And they blew the horn, and all the people
5 said, "Long live King Solomon!" And all the people went up after him; and the people played the flutes
6 and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth *seemed to* split with their sound.
7

8 Rutherford reaffirms popular sovereignty from these scriptures, saying,
9

10 This is what we say, God by the people, by Nathan the prophet, and by the servants of David and the
11 states crying "God save king Solomon!" made Solomon king; and here is a real action of the people.
12 God is the first agent in all acts of the creature. Where a people maketh choice of a man to be their king,
13 the states do no other thing, under God, but create this man rather than another; and we cannot here find
14 two actions, one of God, another of the people; but in one and the same action, God, by the people's free
15 suffrages and voices, createth such a man.⁶⁰
16

17 Donald Lutz elaborates on the idea that government by the people is an expression of God's sovereignty. He
18 explains,
19

20 Consent becomes the instrument for establishing authority in the community and for expressing the
21 sovereignty of God. God transmits his sovereignty to the people through the broader covenants, and
22 they in turn convey His sovereignty to the rulers on the basis of the specific covenant creating the civil
23 community. The people's consent is the instrument for linking God with the rulers, whose authority
24 then is viewed as sanctioned by Him, but because this authority comes through the people, the rulers are
25 beholding to God through *them*.⁶¹
26

27 **1.3 Conclusion: The Idea of Popular Sovereignty Emerges in Europe**

28

29 The Reformation era prompted the spread of new religious and political ideas throughout Europe. Ideas
30 such as the priesthood of all believers, equal standing before God, and a Bible for all to read became more
31 widely accepted. In addition, the idea of popular sovereignty, or the people's God-given civil authority, found
32 Biblical support among both Protestants and Catholics. Absolute power in both the church and civil state was
33 challenged, and the consent of the governed was recognized. The corresponding view of the right to resist
34 tyranny also emerged. Subsequently, the Bible-inspired principle of popular sovereignty impacted those who
35 came to America and became an important principle in American political thought. As will be seen, popular
36 sovereignty would first be demonstrated in America by the Pilgrims when they signed the Mayflower Compact.
37 This principle would also be applied by the American Founders as they formed the new nation of the United
38 States. The Founders recognized in the U. S. Declaration of Independence that governments "derive their just
39 powers from the consent of the governed..."
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48

Review: Checking Out the History

Discuss questions in subgroups or whole group. As an option, the group may come up with main ideas or insights from each question. Responses may be shared and discussed in the whole group.

1. What was the Protestant Reformation? What happened? What issues were at stake?
2. What were the effects or outcomes of the Reformation?
3. What were/are the main tenets of Protestants and Catholics? Of Calvinists?
4. What important writings came out of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation that would influence Western and American political thought? Describe each.
5. What is “popular sovereignty” in your own words?
6. Who supported popular sovereignty during the Reformation era? What scriptures did they use to support it? Cite both Catholic and Protestant examples.
7. How did the principle of popular sovereignty affect Western views of the church and civil government?
8. What basic Bible-based or Judeo-Christian principles are evident and important in this part of America’s heritage?

1 **Activity: The Biblical Basis of Popular Sovereignty**

2

3 After reviewing/discussing Chapter 1 of *Miracle of America*, think about the scriptural basis for popular

4 sovereignty provided by both Catholic and Protestant thinkers in history. In the chart below, list the scripture(s)

5 historically cited in support of popular sovereignty (with verse number and, optionally, text), the thinkers who

6 cite them, the meanings and/or main ideas of the verses in your own words, and a brief explanation of the

7 thinkers' views in your own words. Draw lines across the chart to separate verses and meanings as needed.

8

Popular Sovereignty			
Scripture Verses Cited	Thinker(s)	Scripture Verse Meanings in your own words	Brief Explanation of Thinkers' Views in your own words

9

10

1 **Call to Action**

2
3 Each person will reflect on and write his/her responses to the questions below. Responses may then be shared
4 and discussed in the group.
5

6 1. What, if anything, about the Protestant Reformation did you find unusual? Surprising/shocking?
7 Beneficial? Admirable? Courageous? Positive/negative? Why?
8

9 2. What influences of the Protestant Reformation and Counter-Reformation do you see today in society and
10 culture?
11

12 3. What do you think life would be like under “absolute rule”? Would you want to live under such rule?
13

14 4. What do you think are the benefits/positives, if any, of “popular sovereignty”? What are the
15 problems/negatives, if any?
16

17 5. Give several examples in your community or state and/or in our nation in which the principle of popular
18 sovereignty is demonstrated:
19
20
21
22
23
24