

The Declaration and Constitution: Their Christian Roots

The Declaration of Independence

Many are unaware of the writings and documents that preceded these great works and the influence of biblical ideas in their formation. In the first two sections of this article, I would like to examine the Declaration of Independence. Following this, we'll look at the Constitution.

On June 7, 1776, Richard Henry Lee introduced a resolution to the Continental Congress calling for a formal declaration of independence. However, even at that late date, there was significant opposition to the resolution. So, Congress recessed for three weeks to allow delegates to return home and discuss the proposition with their constituents while a committee was appointed to express the Congressional sentiments. The task of composing the Declaration fell to Thomas Jefferson.

Jefferson's initial draft left God out of the manuscript entirely except for a vague reference to "the laws of nature and of nature's God." Yet, even this phrase makes an implicit reference to the laws of God.

The phrase "laws of nature" had a fixed meaning in 18th century England and America. It was a direct reference to the laws of God in a created order as described in John Locke's *Second Treatise on Civil Government* and William Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws of England*.

What Jefferson was content to leave implicit, however, was made more explicit by the other members of the committee. They

changed the language to read that all men are “endowed by their Creator” with these rights. Later, the Continental Congress added phrases which further reflected a theistic perspective. For example, they added that they were “appealing to the Supreme Judge of the World for the rectitude of our intentions” and that they were placing “firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence.”

The Declaration was not drafted in an intellectual vacuum, nor did the ideas contained in it suddenly spring from the minds of a few men. Instead, the founders built their framework upon a Reformation foundation laid by such men as Samuel Rutherford and later incorporated by John Locke.

Rutherford wrote his book *Lex Rex* in 1644 to refute the idea of the divine right of kings. *Lex Rex* established two crucial principles. First, there should be a covenant or constitution between the ruler and the people. Second, since all men are sinners, no man is superior to another. These twin principles of liberty and equality are also found in John Locke’s writings.

John Locke and the Origin of the Declaration

Although the phrasing of the Declaration certainly follows the pattern of John Locke, Jefferson also gave credit to the writer Algernon Sidney, who in turn cites most prominently Aristotle, Plato, Roman republican writers, and the Old Testament.

Legal scholar Gary Amos argues that Locke’s *Two Treatises on Government* is simply Samuel Rutherford’s *Lex Rex* in a popularized form. Amos says in his book *Defending the Declaration*,

Locke explained that the “law of nature” is God’s general

revelation of law in creation, which God also supernaturally writes on the hearts of men. Locke drew the idea from the New Testament in Romans 1 and 2. In contrast, he spoke of the “law of God” or the “positive law of God” as God’s eternal moral law specially revealed and published in Scripture.[{1}](#)

This foundation helps explain the tempered nature of the American Revolution. The Declaration of Independence was a bold document, but not a radical one. The colonists did not break with England for “light and transient causes.” They were mindful that they should be “in subjection to the governing authorities” which “are established by God” (Romans 13:1). Yet when they suffered from a “long train of abuses and usurpations,” they argued that “it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new government.”

The Declaration also borrowed from state constitutions that already existed at the time. In fact, the phraseology of the Declaration greatly resembles the preamble to the Virginia Constitution, adopted in June 1776. The body of the Declaration consists of twenty-eight charges against the king justifying the break with Britain. All but four are from state constitutions.[{2}](#)

Jefferson no doubt drew from George Mason’s Declaration of Rights (published on June 6, 1776). The first paragraph states that “all men are born equally free and independent and have certain inherent natural Rights; among which are the Enjoyment of Life and Liberty, with the Means of Acquiring and possessing property, and pursuing and obtaining Happiness and Safety.” Mason also argued that when any government is found unworthy of the trust placed in it, a majority of the community “hath an indubitable, inalienable, and indefensible Right to Reform, alter, or abolish it.”

Constitution and Human Nature

The influence of the Bible on the Constitution was profound but often not appreciated by secular historians and political theorists. Two decades ago, Constitutional scholars and political historians (including one of my professors at Georgetown University) assembled 15,000 writings from the Founding Era (1760-1805). They counted 3154 citations in these writings, and found that the book most frequently cited in that literature was the Bible. The writers from the Founding Era quoted from the Bible 34 percent of the time. Even more interesting was that about three-fourths of all references to the Bible came from reprinted sermons from that era.[\[3\]](#)

Professor M.E. Bradford shows in his book, *A Worthy Company*, that fifty of the fifty-five men who signed the Constitution were church members who endorsed the Christian faith.[\[4\]](#)

The Bible and biblical principles were important in the framing of the Constitution. In particular, the framers started with a biblical view of human nature. James Madison argued in *Federalist* #51 that government must be based upon a realistic view of human nature.

But what is government itself but the greatest of all reflections on human nature? If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary. In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself.[\[5\]](#)

Framing a republic requires a balance of power that liberates human dignity and rationality and controls human sin and depravity.

As there is a degree of depravity in mankind which requires a certain degree of circumspection and distrust, so there are other qualities in human nature, which justify a certain portion of esteem and confidence. Republican government presupposes the existence of these qualities in a higher degree than any other form.[*{6}*](#)

A Christian view of government is based upon a balanced view of human nature. It recognizes both human dignity (we are created in God's image) and human depravity (we are sinful individuals). Because both grace and sin operate in government, we should neither be too optimistic nor too pessimistic. Instead, the framers constructed a government with a deep sense of biblical realism.

Constitution and Majority Tyranny

James Madison in defending the Constitution divided the problem of tyranny into two broad categories: majority tyranny (addressed in *Federalist* #10) and governmental tyranny (addressed in *Federalist* #47-51).

Madison concluded from his study of governments that they were destroyed by factions. He believed this factionalism was due to "the propensity of mankind, to fall into mutual animosities" (*Federalist* #10) which he believed were "sown in the nature of man." Government, he concluded, must be based upon a more realistic view which also accounts for this sinful side of human nature.

A year before the Constitutional Convention, George Washington wrote to John Jay that, "We have, probably, had too good an opinion of human nature in forming our federation." From now on, he added, "We must take human nature as we find it."

Madison's solution to majority tyranny was the term *extended republic*. His term for the solution to governmental tyranny

was *compound republic*. He believed that an extended republic with a greater number of citizens would prevent factions from easily taking control of government. He also believed that elections would serve to filter upward men of greater virtue.

Madison's solution to governmental tyranny can be found in *Federalist* #47-51. These include separation of powers, checks and balances, and federalism.

Madison realized the futility of trying to remove passions (human sinfulness) from the population. Therefore, he proposed that human nature be set against human nature. This was done by separating various institutional power structures. First, the church was separated from the state so that ecclesiastical functions and governmental functions would not interfere with religious and political liberty. Second, the federal government was divided into three equal branches: executive, legislative, and judicial. Third, the federal government was delegated certain powers while the rest of the powers resided in the state governments.

Each branch was given separate but rival powers, thus preventing the possibility of concentrating power into the hands of a few. Each branch had certain checks over the other branches so that there was a distribution and balance of power. The effect of this system was to allow ambition and power to control itself. As each branch is given power, it provides a check on the other branch. This is what has often been referred to as the concept of "countervailing ambitions."

Constitution and Governmental Tyranny

James Madison's solution to governmental tyranny includes both federalism as well as the separation of powers. Federalism can be found at the very heart of the United States Constitution. In fact, without federalism, there was no practical reason for the framers to abandon the Articles of Confederation and draft

the Constitution.

Federalism comes from *foedus*, Latin for covenant. “The tribes of Israel shared a covenant that made them a nation. American federalism originated at least in part in the dissenting Protestants’ familiarity with the Bible.”[\[7\]](#)

The separation of powers allows each branch of government to provide a check on the other. According to Madison, the Constitution provides a framework of supplying “opposite and rival interests” (*Federalist* #51) through a series of checks and balances. This theory of “countervailing ambition” both prevented tyranny and provided liberty. It was a system in which bad people could do least harm and good people had the freedom to do good works.

For example, the executive branch cannot take over the government and rule at its whim because the legislative branch has been given the power of the purse. Congress must approve or disapprove budgets for governmental programs. A President cannot wage war if the Congress does not appropriate money for its execution.

Likewise, the legislative branch is also controlled by this structure of government. It can pass legislation, but it always faces the threat of presidential veto and judicial oversight. Since the executive branch is responsible for the execution of legislation, the legislature cannot exercise complete control over the government. Undergirding all of this is the authority of the ballot box.

Each of these checks was motivated by a healthy fear of human nature. The founders believed in human responsibility and human dignity, but they did not trust human nature too much. Their solution was to separate powers and invest each branch with rival powers.

Biblical ideas were crucial in both the Declaration and the Constitution. Nearly 80 percent of the political pamphlets

published during the 1770s were reprinted sermons. As one political science professor put it: "When reading comprehensively in the political literature of the war years, one cannot but be struck by the extent to which biblical sources used by ministers and traditional Whigs undergirded the justification for the break with Britain, the rationale for continuing the war, and the basic principles of Americans' writing their own constitutions."[\[8\]](#)

Notes

1. Gary Amos, *Defending the Declaration* (Brentwood, TN: Wolgemuth and Hyatt, 1989), 57.
2. Donald S. Lutz, *The Origins of American Constitutionalism* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988, 114.
3. Ibid., 140.
4. M.E. Bradford, *A Worthy Company: Brief Lives of the Framers of the United States Constitution* (Marlborough, NH: Plymouth Rock Foundation, 1982).
5. James Madison, *Federalist*, #51 (New York: New American Library, 1961), 322.
6. Ibid., *Federalist* #55, 346.
7. Lutz, *Origins*, 43,
8. Ibid., 142.

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Slavery in America – How Did the Founders and Early

Christians Regard It?

Kerby Anderson presents a thoughtful review of the attitude towards slavery held by many of our founders and early Christian leaders. Although a tragic chapter in our history, he encourages us to understand that many opposed slavery from the beginning believing that all men are in fact created equal.

Introduction

Slavery has been found throughout the history of the world. Most of the major empires in the world enslaved millions. They made slaves not only of their citizens but of people in the countries they conquered.

Slavery is also a sad and tragic chapter in American history that we must confront honestly. Unfortunately, that is often not how it is done. History classes frequently teach that the founders and framers were evil men and hypocrites. Therefore, we no longer need to study them, nor do we need to study the principles they established in founding this country and framing the Constitution.

In fact, I have met many students in high school and college who have no interest in learning about the founders of this country and the framers of the Constitution merely because some were slaveholders. But I have also found that they do not know the whole story of the struggle over slavery in this country.

In reaction to this secular revisionist teaching in the public schools and universities, a Christian perspective has been offered that does not square with history. Some Christians, wanting to emphasize the biblical principles of the founding of this country, seem to have turned a blind eye to the evil of slavery. Slavery was wrong and represented an incomplete

founding of liberty in this country.

In this article we will look at slavery in America and attempt to tell the story fairly and honestly. At the same time, we will bring forth facts and stories that have been lost from the current revisionist teaching on slavery.

First, let's put slavery in America in historical perspective. Historians estimate that approximately 11 million Africans were transported to the New World. Of these 4 million went to Brazil, 2.5 million to Spanish colonies, 2 million to the British West Indies, and 500,000 to the United States.

Although it is sometimes taught that the founders did not believe that blacks were human or deserved the same rights as whites, this is not true. Actually, the founders believed that blacks had the same inalienable rights as other persons in America. James Otis of Massachusetts said in 1764 that "The colonists are by the law of nature freeborn, as indeed all men are, white or black."[{1}](#)

Alexander Hamilton also talked about the equality of blacks with whites. He said, "their natural faculties are probably as good as ours. . . . The contempt we have been taught to entertain for the blacks, makes us fancy many things that are founded neither in reason nor experience."[{2}](#)

As we will see, many worked tirelessly for the abolition of slavery and wanted a society that truly practiced the belief that "all men are created equal."

The Founders' View of Slavery

Let's see what the founders and framers really thought about slavery and what they did to bring about its end. Here are a few of their comments.

Slavery was often condemned from the pulpits of America as

revolutionary preachers frequently spoke out against it. One patriot preacher said, "The Deity hath bestowed upon them and us the same natural rights as men."[\[3\]](#)

Benjamin Franklin said that slavery "is an atrocious debasement of human nature."[\[4\]](#) He and Benjamin Rush went on to found the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery.

Benjamin Rush's desire to abolish slavery was based on biblical principles. He stated: "Domestic slavery is repugnant to the principles of Christianity." He went on to say, "It is rebellion again the authority of a common Father. It is a practical denial of the extent and efficacy of the death of a common Savior. It is an usurpation of the prerogative of the great Sovereign of the universe who has solemnly claimed an exclusive property in the souls of men."[\[5\]](#)

John Adams said, "Every measure of prudence, therefore, ought to be assumed for the eventual total extirpation of slavery from the United States I have, through my whole life, held the practice of slavery in . . . abhorrence."[\[6\]](#)

James Madison in his speech before the Constitutional Convention said, "We have seen the mere distinction of colour made in the most enlightened period of time, a ground of the most oppressive dominion ever exercised by man over man."[\[7\]](#)

During the American Revolution, many slaves won their freedom. Alexander Hamilton served on George Washington's staff and supported the plan to enlist slaves in the army. He wrote to John Jay that "An essential part of the plan is to give them their freedom with their muskets . . . for the dictates of humanity and true policy equally interest me in favor of this unfortunate class of men."[\[8\]](#) Blacks from every part of the country (except South Carolina and Georgia) won their freedom through military service.[\[9\]](#)

After the Revolution, many Americans who were enjoying new

freedom from England were struck by the contradiction that many blacks were still enslaved. John Jay said “That men should pray and fight for their own freedom and yet keep others in slavery is certainly acting a very inconsistent as well as unjust and perhaps impious part.”[\[10\]](#)

In *Federalist* #54, James Madison stated that Southern laws (not nature) have “degraded [the slaves] from the human rank” depriving them of “rights” including the right to vote, that they would otherwise possess equally with other human beings. Madison argued that it was a “barbarous policy” to view blacks “in the unnatural light of property” rather than persons entitled to the same rights as other men.

Slavery and the Founders

When America was founded, there were about half a million slaves. Approximately one third of the founders had slaves (George Washington and Thomas Jefferson being the most notable). Most of the slaves lived in the five southern colonies.

Benjamin Rush and Benjamin Franklin (both signers of the Declaration of Independence) founded the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery in 1774. Rush went on to head a national abolition movement.

John Jay was the president of a similar society in New York. He said: “To contend for our own liberty, and to deny that blessing to others, involves an inconsistency not to be excused.” John Adams opposed slavery because it was a “foul contagion in the human character” and “an evil of colossal magnitude.” His son, John Quincy Adams, so crusaded against slavery that he was known as “the hell-hound of abolition.”

It’s important to note that when these anti-slavery societies were founded, they were clearly an act of civil disobedience. In 1774, for example, Pennsylvania passed a law to end

slavery. But King George vetoed that law and other laws passed by the colonies. The King was pro-slavery, and Great Britain (at that time) practiced slavery. As long as the colonies were part of the British Empire, they would also be required to permit slavery.

When Thomas Jefferson finished his first draft of the Declaration of Independence, it included a paragraph condemning the King for introducing slavery into the colonies and continuing the slave trade. It said: "He [King George] has waged cruel war against human nature itself, violating its most sacred rights of life and liberty in the persons of a distant people who never offended him, captivating and carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere or to incur miserable death in their transportation thither." Unfortunately, this paragraph was dropped from the final draft because it was offensive to the delegates from Georgia and South Carolina.

After America separated from Great Britain, several states passed laws abolishing slavery. For example, Vermont's 1777 constitution abolished slavery outright. Pennsylvania passed a law in 1779 for gradual emancipation. Slavery was abolished in Massachusetts and New Hampshire through a series of court decisions in the 1780s that ruled that "all men are born free and equal." Other states passed gradual abolition laws during this period as well. By the time of the U.S. Constitution, every state (except Georgia) had at least prohibited slavery or suspended the importation of slaves.

Most of the founders (including many who at the time owned slaves) wanted to abolish the slave trade, but could not do so at the founding of this country. So, what about the compromises concerning slavery in the Constitution? We will look at that topic next.

Slavery and the Framers

We have noted that some of the founders were slaveholders. Yet even so, many of them wanted to abolish slavery. One example was George Washington.

In 1786, Washington wrote to Robert Morris that “there is not a man living who wishes more sincerely than I do, to see a plan adopted for the abolition of [slavery].”[\[11\]](#) Later in his life he freed several of his household slaves and decreed in his will that his slaves would become free upon the death of his wife. Washington’s estate even paid for their care until 1833.

What about the compromises in the U.S. Constitution? When the delegates came to Philadelphia, there were strong regional differences between northern and southern states concerning slavery.[\[12\]](#)

The first compromise concerned enumeration. Apportionment of representatives would be determined by the number of free persons and three-fifths of all other persons. Many see this as saying that blacks were not considered whole persons. Actually, it was just the opposite. The anti-slavery delegates wanted to count slaves as less in order to penalize slaveholders and reduce their influence in Congress. Free blacks were considered free persons and counted accordingly.

The second compromise dealt with the slave trade. Congress was prohibited until 1808 from blocking the migration and importation of slaves. It did not prevent states from restricting or outlawing the slave trade. As I pointed out previously, many had already done so. It did establish a temporary exemption to the federal government until President Jefferson signed a national prohibition into law effective January 1, 1808.

A final compromise involved fugitive slaves that guaranteed

return of slaves held to service or labor “under the laws thereof.” The wording did not imply that the Constitution recognized slavery as legitimate but only acknowledged that states had laws governing slavery.

It is notable that the words “slave” and “slavery” cannot be found in the U.S. Constitution. James Madison recorded in his notes on the constitutional convention that the delegates “thought it wrong to admit in the Constitution the idea that there could be property in men.”

Slavery was wrong, and it is incorrect to say that the U.S. Constitution supported it. Frederick Douglass believed that our form of government “was never, in its essence, anything but an anti-slavery government.” He argued, “Abolish slavery tomorrow, and not a sentence or a syllable of the Constitution need be altered.”

Nevertheless, the seeds of a future conflict were sown in these compromises. The nation was founded on the ideal that “all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights.” John Quincy Adams later admitted that: “The inconsistency of the institution of slavery with the principles of the Declaration of Independence was seen and lamented.” The conflict eventually broke out into a great civil war.

The Bible and Slavery

How does the Bible relate to slavery in America? While it is true that so many of the leaders in the abolition movement were Christians, there were others who attempted to use their particular interpretation of the Bible to justify slavery. That should not be surprising since today we see people trying to manipulate the Bible to justify their beliefs about issues like abortion and homosexuality.

The Bible teaches that slavery, as well as other forms of

domination of one person over another, is wrong. For example, Joseph was sold into slavery (Genesis 37), and the Egyptians oppressed the Israelites (Exodus 1). Neither these nor other descriptions of slavery in the Bible are presented in a favorable light.

The Old Testament law code made it a capital crime to kidnap a person and sell him into slavery (Ex. 21:16). It also commanded Israel to welcome a slave who escaped from his master and not be returned (Deut. 23:15-16).

Nevertheless, some pointed to other passages in the Old Testament to try to justify slavery. For example, those who needed financial assistance or needed protection could become indentured servants (Ex. 21:2-6; Deut. 15:12-18). But this was a voluntary act very different from the way slavery was practiced in America. Also, a thief that could not or would not make restitution could be sold as a slave (Ex. 22:1-3), but the servitude would cease when restitution had been made.

In the New Testament, we see that Paul wrote how slaves (and masters) were to act toward one another (Eph. 6:5-9; Col. 3:22-25, 4:1; 1 Tim. 6:1-2). Since nearly half of the population of Rome were slaves, it is understandable that he would address their attitudes and actions. Paul was hardly endorsing the Roman system of slavery.

Paul's letter to Philemon encouraged him to welcome back his slave Onesimus (who had now become a Christian). Christian tradition says that the slave owner did welcome him back as a Christian brother and gave him his freedom. Onesimus later became the bishop of Berea.

It is also true that many of the leaders of the abolition movement were Christians who worked to abolish slavery from America. Lyman Beecher, Harriet Beecher Stowe, William Lloyd Garrison, and Charles Finney are just a few of the 19th century leaders of the abolition movement. Finney, for

example, not only preached salvation but called for the elimination of slavery. He said, "I had made up my mind on the question of slavery, and was exceedingly anxious to arouse public attention to the subject. In my prayers and preaching, I so often alluded to slavery, and denounced it."[\[13\]](#)

Slavery is a sad and tragic chapter in American history, and we must confront it honestly. But the way the subject of slavery is taught in America's classrooms today often leaves out many important facts. I encourage you to study more about this nation's history. Our founders have much to teach us about history, government, and morality.

Notes

1. *Rights of the Colonies* in Bernard Bailyn, ed. *Pamphlets of the American Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), 439.
2. Alexander Hamilton writing to John Jay, March 14, 1779 in Philip B. Kurland and Ralph Lerner, eds. *The Founders' Constitution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), I:527.
3. Samuel Stillman, *The Duty of Magistrates* (1779) in Frank Moore, ed., *Patriot Preachers of the American Revolution* (New York: Charles T. Evans, 1892), 285.
4. "An Address to the Public from the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition Slavery" in J.A. Leo Lemay, ed., *Benjamin Franklin, Writings* (New York: Library of America, 1987), 1154.
5. Benjamin Rush, *Minutes of the Proceedings of a Convention of Delegates from the Abolition Societies Established in Different Parts of the United States Assembled at Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Zachariah Poulson, 1794), 24.
6. John Adams to Robert J. Evans, June 8, 1819, in Adrienne

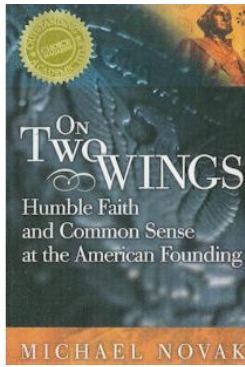
Koch and William Peden, eds., *Selected Writings of John and John Quincy Adams* (New York: Knopf, 1946), 209.

7. Speech at Constitutional Convention, June 6, 1787 in Max Farrand, ed., *Records of the Federal Convention of 1787* (New Haven: Yale University, 1937), 1:135.
8. Hamilton, in Kurland and Lerner, eds., *The Founders' Constitution*, I:527.
9. Benjamin Quarles, *The Negro and the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1961).
10. John Jay writing to Richard Price, September 27, 1785 in *The Founders' Constitution*, 538.
11. Letter of April 12, 1786, in W. B. Allen, ed., *George Washington: A Collection* (Indianapolis: Library Classics, 1989), 319.
12. Matthew Spalding, *The Founders' Almanac* (Washington, DC: Heritage, 2002), 285-6.
13. Charles G. Finney, *Memoirs* (New York: A.S. Barnes, 1876), 324.

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On Two Wings

Introduction



Michael Novak has been and continues to be one of the most influential intellectuals of our time. Author of more than thirty books, he has been a professor at Harvard, Stanford, and Notre Dame and was awarded the \$1 million Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion.

So it is significant that his recent book, *On Two Wings*, documents the Judeo-Christian foundations of this country and disputes the teaching that the American Founders were secular Enlightenment rationalists. Instead, he persuasively argues that they were the creators of a unique American blend of biblical faith, practical reason, and human liberty.

In his preface, Michael Novak says, "Although I have wanted to write this book for some forty years, my own ignorance stood in the way. It took me a long time, time spent searching up many byways and neglected paths, and fighting through a great deal of conventional (but mistaken) wisdom, to learn how many erroneous perceptions I had unconsciously drunk in from public discussion."[\[1\]](#)

Novak believes that "most of us grow up these days remarkably ignorant of the hundred men most responsible for leading this country into a War for Independence and writing our nation's Constitution."[\[2\]](#)

The way American history has been told for the last century is incomplete. Secular historians have "cut off one of the two wings by which the American eagle flies." The founding generation established a compact with the God of Israel "and relied upon this belief. Their faith is an *indispensable* part of their story."[\[3\]](#)

Historical research by a number of scholars documents the significant influence of the Bible on the founders. Two decades ago, Constitutional scholars and political historians (including one of my professors at Georgetown University) assembled 15,000 writings from the Founding Era. They counted 3154 citations in these writings. They found that the two political philosophers most often quoted were Montesquieu and Blackstone. But surprisingly, the reference most quoted was the Bible. It was quoted 34 percent of the time. This was nearly four times as often as Montesquieu or Blackstone and 12 times more often than John Locke.

While secular historians point to Locke as the source of the ideas embodied in Thomas Jefferson's Declaration of Independence, they usually fail to note the older influence of other authors and the Bible. "Before Locke was even born, the Pilgrims believed in the consent of the governed, social compacts, the dignity of every child of God, and political equality."[\[4\]](#) By forcing a secular interpretation onto America's founding history, these secular historians ignore the second wing by which the American eagle took flight.

Philosophical Assumptions of the Founders of this Country

First, the Bible was the one book that literate Americans in the 18th century could be expected to know well. Biblical imagery was a central part of American life. For example, Thomas Jefferson suggested as a design for the Seal of the United States a representation of the children of Israel in the wilderness, led by a cloud by day and pillar of fire by night.

Second, the founders believed that time "was created for the *unfolding of human liberty*, for human emancipation. This purpose requires humans to choose for or against building cities worthy of the ideals God sets before them: liberty,

justice, equality, self-government, and brotherhood.”{5}

The first paragraph of *The Federalist* describes this important moment with destiny:

It seems to have been reserved to the people of this country, by their conduct and example, to decide the important question, whether societies of men are really capable or not of establishing good government from reflection and choice, or whether they are forever destined to depend for their political constitutions on accident and force.{6}

The founders believed that they could learn from history and put together piece by piece what they called “an improved science of politics.” History, they believed, was a record of progress (or decline) measured against God’s standards and learned from personal and historical experience.

Third, the founders also held that everything in creation was intelligible and thus discernible through reason and rational evaluation. They also believed that God was The Creator and thus gave us life and liberty. Thomas Jefferson said, “The God Who gave us life gave us liberty at the same time.”

Novak concludes that without this philosophical foundation, “the founding generation of Americans would have had little heart for the War of Independence. They would have had no ground for believing that their seemingly unlawful rebellion actually fulfilled the will of God – and suited the laws of nature and nature’s God. Consider the jeopardy in which their rebellion placed them: When they signed the Declaration, they were committing treason in the King’s eyes. If their frail efforts failed, their flagrant betrayal of the solemn oaths of loyalty they had sworn to their King doomed them to a public hanging. Before future generations, their children would be disgraced. To still their trembling, they pled their case before a greater and wholly undeceivable Judge, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the Rectitude of our

Intentions.”{7}

Seven Events in the Founding of this Country

The first event was the first act of the First Continental Congress in September 1774. When the delegates gathered in Philadelphia, their purpose was to remind King George of the rights due them as Englishmen. But as they gathered, news arrived that Charlestown had been raked by cannon shot while red-coated landing parties surged through its streets.

The first motion of the Congress proposed a public prayer. Some of the delegates spoke against the motion because, they argued, Americans were so divided in religious sentiments (Episcopalians, Quakers, Anabaptists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists). Sam Adams arose to say he was no bigot and could hear the prayer from any gentleman of piety and virtue. He proposed that Reverend Duch had earned that character.

The next day, a white-haired Episcopal clergyman dressed in his pontificals pronounced the first official prayer before the Continental Congress. Before this priest knelt men like Washington, Henry, Randolph, Rutledge, Lee, and Jay. The emotion in the room was palpable. John Adams wrote to his wife Abigail that he “had never heard a better prayer, or one so well pronounced.” He went on to say that it was “enough to melt a heart of stone. I saw tears gush into the eyes of the old, grave pacific Quakers of Philadelphia.”{8}

The second event was the sermon by John Witherspoon of Princeton on May 17, 1776. In this pivotal sermon, Witherspoon who had opposed the rebellion went over to the side of independence. His influence cannot be overstated. He was James Madison’s teacher and he is credited with having taught one vice-president, twelve members of the Continental Congress, five delegates to the Constitutional Convention, forty-nine

U.S. representatives, twenty-eight U.S. Senators, three Supreme Court justices, and scores of officers in the Continental Army. His sermons were printed in over 500 Presbyterian churches throughout the colonies.

His message centered on the doctrine of divine providence. He argued that even things that seem harmful and destructive may be turned to the advantage of the patriots. Even the enemies of law and morality cannot escape being the instruments of Providence. Witherspoon argued that liberty is God's gift and all of creation has been contrived so that out of darkness and despair, freedom will come to fruition.

Michael Novak concludes that, "During the years 1770-1776, the fires of revolution were lit by Protestant divines aflame with the dignity of human conscience. 'To the Pulpit, the Puritan Pulpit,' wrote John Wingate Thornton, 'We owe the moral force which won our independence.'" [\[9\]](#)

The third event was the writing of the Declaration of Independence. Its very form was that of a traditional American prayer, similar to the Mayflower Compact. In essence, it was only the latest in a long series of local and regional covenants which put all governmental bodies on notice by establishing a national compact.

The fifty-six signers of the Declaration were mostly Christian and represented mostly Christian people. The four names that these signers gave to God were: Lawgiver (as in "Laws of Nature and Nature's God"), Creator ("endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights"), Judge ("appealing to the Supreme Judge of the World for the Rectitude of our Intentions"), and Providence ("with a firm Reliance on the Protection of divine Providence").

Novak points out that "Three of these names (Creator, Judge, Providence) unambiguously derive from Judaism and came to America via Protestant Christianity. The fourth name for God,

'Lawgiver,' could be considered Greek or Roman as well as Hebraic. But Richard Hooker showed that long tradition had put 'Lawgiver,' too, in a Biblical context."[\[10\]](#)

The fourth event was a national day of prayer. Only five months after the Declaration, "the pinch and suffering of war and a poor harvest seriously imperiled morale." Congress set aside December 11, 1776 as a Day of Fasting and Repentance.

The fifth event occurred when George Washington became commander of the amateurs who became the Continental Army. He knew he had to prepare them for the adversity to come. "To stand with swollen chests in a straight line, beneath snapping flags, to the music of fife and drums is one thing; to hold your place when the British musketballs roar toward you like a wall of blazing lead, and all around you the flesh of screaming friends and brothers is shredded, is another."[\[11\]](#)

Washington knew there would be bitter winters and hot summers with no pay and little food. Often the soldiers would have to frequently retreat rather than face frontal combat from the enemy. He knew his only hope was to fashion a godly corps whose faith was placed in the Creator not battlefield victories. So Washington gave orders that each day begin with formal prayer, to be led by officers of each unit. He also ordered that officers of every unit "to procure Chaplains according to the decree of the Continental Congress." Washington knew that prayer and spiritual discipline were essential to his army's success.

The sixth event occurred toward the end of the fighting season in late August, 1776. George Washington had assembled 12,000 local militiamen of the Continental Army on Long Island. British Generals Howe, Clinton, Cornwallis, and Percy along with the German Major General von Heister landed a royal detachment twice as large to the rear of the Continental Army. The British took up positions to march swiftly toward the East River to trap Washington's entire army and put an end to the

American insurrection.

Seeing that they might lose everything, Washington put out a call for every available vessel so that he might ferry his troops by cover of night back to Manhattan. All night the men scoured for boats, marched in silence, and rowed. But by dawn, only a fraction had made their escape. The Americans prepared for the worst. As if in answer to their prayers, a heavy fog rolled in and lasted until noon.

By the time the fog lifted, the entire Army escaped. Many gave thanks to God. And Washington and many others considered it one of those “signal interventions” by Divine Providence that saved the army and allowed the revolution to continue.

The seventh event was the establishment of Thanksgiving near the end of the third year of the war. Congress had many reasons to express thanksgiving to God and to seek His continued mercy and assistance. John Witherspoon was called upon to draft a Thanksgiving Day recollection of those events. The Congress urged the nation to “humbly approach the throne of Almighty God” to ask “that he would establish the independence of these United States upon the basis of religion and virtue.”

Following the wartime precedent of the Congress, Washington issued his first Thanksgiving Day Proclamation shortly after becoming president in 1789. He reminded the nation of God’s protection and provision in the Battle of Long Island all the way to their victory at Yorktown. Years later Abraham Lincoln, after annual presidential proclamations of Thanksgiving waned, reinstituted a national day of Thanksgiving on November 26, 1863 and the tradition has continued ever since.

Conclusion

Michael Novak has provided Americans with a great service in documenting the Christian influence in the founding of this

country. This religious influence is the second wing that tapped into the deepest energies of the human spirit and propelled this nation forward through difficult times and great challenges.

It is also fitting that we remember these important religious concepts and their influence on our nation. If we take seriously the words of George Washington in his Farewell Address to the Nation, then our ignorance of our nation's past may yet be our destruction. That is why we must study our history and teach it correctly to the next generation so we may keep the torch of freedom alive for generations to come.

Notes

1. Michael Novak, *On Two Wings: Humble Faith and Common Sense at the American Founding* (San Francisco: Encounter, 2002), 1.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., 5.
4. Ibid., 6-7.
5. Ibid., 8-9.
6. *The Federalist Papers*, Number 1.
7. Novak, 12.
8. William Federer, ed. *America's God and Country* (Coppell: TX: FAME, 1994), 137.
9. Novak, 17.
10. Ibid., 17-18.
11. Ibid., 19.

Terrorism and Just War

America's war on terrorism has once again raised important questions about the proper use of military action. President George W. Bush said on September 20, 2001, "Whether we bring our enemies to justice, or justice to our enemies, justice will be done." This message and following statements by President Bush and Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld articulated portions of what has come to be known as *just war theory*. This 1600-year-old Christian doctrine attempts to answer two questions: "When is it permissible to wage war?" and "What are the limitations on the ways we wage war?"

Historically, Christians have adopted one of three positions: (1) **Activism** – it is always right to participate in war, (2) **Pacifism** – it is never right to participate in war, or (3) **Selectivism** – it is right to participate in some wars. The just war theory represents the third position and was articulated initially by Augustine who developed it as a logical extension of Romans 13:1-7.

1 Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.

2 Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.

3 For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same;

4 for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for

nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil.

5 Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake.

6 For because of this you also pay taxes, for rulers are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing.

7 Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.

Augustine argued that not all wars are morally justified. He said, "It makes a great difference by which causes and under which authorities men undertake the wars that must be waged."

This seven-point theory provides a framework for evaluating military action. A just war will include the following conditions: just cause, just intention, last resort, formal declaration, limited objectives, proportionate means, and noncombatant immunity. The first five principles apply as a nation is "on the way to war" (*jus ad bellum*) while the final two apply to military forces "in the midst of war" (*jus in bello*). Let's look at each of these in more detail.

Seven Points of a Just War

- **Just cause** – All aggression is condemned in just war theory. Participation must be prompted by a just cause or defensive cause. No war of unprovoked aggression can ever be justified.
- **Just intention** – War must be to secure a just peace for all parties involved. Revenge or conquest are not legitimate motives.
- **Last resort** – War must be engaged as a last resort only after diplomacy and economic pressure have been exhausted.
- **Formal declaration** – War must be initiated with a formal declaration by properly constituted authorities.

- **Limited objectives** – War must be characterized by limited objectives such as peace. Complete destruction is an improper objective. War must be waged in such a way that once peace is attainable, hostilities cease.

- **Proportionate means** – Combatants may not be subjected to greater harm than is necessary to secure victory. The types of weapons and amount of force used should be limited to what is needed to repel aggression and secure a just peace.

- **Noncombatant immunity** – Military forces must respect individuals and groups not participating in the conflict. Only governmental forces or agents are legitimate targets.

Objections to Just War

Two types of objections often surface against the idea of just war theory. First, there is the moral objection. Pacifists argue that it is never right to go to war and often cite biblical passages to bolster their argument. For example, Jesus said believers should “turn the other cheek” (Matt. 5:39). He also warned that “those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword” (Matt. 26:52).

However, the context of the statements is key. In the first instance, Jesus is speaking to individual believers in his Sermon on the Mount, admonishing believers not to engage in personal retaliation. In the second instance, He tells Peter to put down his sword because the gospel should not be advanced by the sword. But at the same time, Jesus actually encouraged his disciples to buy a sword (Luke 22:36) in order to protect themselves.

Two political objections have been cited in the last few months against the application of just war theory to our war on terrorism. Critics say that the idea of a just war applies only to nations and not to terrorists. Even so, that would not invalidate American military actions in Afghanistan or Iraq.

But the criticism is incorrect. It turns out that Christian thought about just war predates the concept of modern nation-states. So the application of these principles can apply to governments or terrorist organizations. Moreover, the very first use of American military force in this country was against Barbary Pirates (who were essentially the terrorists of the 18th century).

Critics also argue that since terrorism is an international threat, the concept of just war would require an international declaration of war. This is not true. The U.S. or any other country does not need to get international approval to defend itself. Even so, both President George H. W. Bush and President George W. Bush have brought the issue of Iraq to the United Nations for a vote. But as the current president made clear, he sought UN approval, not permission. He would like multilateral approval and help, but the U.S. is prepared to go it alone if necessary.

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Condoms, Clinics, or Abstinence

Introduction

For more than thirty years proponents of comprehensive sex education have argued that giving sexual information to young children and adolescents will reduce the number of unplanned pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases.

Perhaps one of the most devastating popular critiques of

comprehensive sex education came from Barbara Dafoe Whitehead. The journalist who said that Dan Quayle was right also was willing to say that sex education was wrong. Her article, "The Failure of Sex Education" in *Atlantic Monthly*, demonstrated that sex education neither reduced pregnancy nor slowed the spread of STDs.

Comprehensive sex education is mandated in at least seventeen states, so Whitehead chose one of those states and focused her analysis on the sex education experiment in New Jersey. Like other curricula the New Jersey sex education program rests on certain questionable assumptions.

The first tenet is that children are "sexual from birth." Sex educators reject the classic notion of a latency period until approximately age twelve. They argue that you are "being sexual when you throw your arms around your grandpa and give him a hug."

Second, children are sexually miseducated. Parents, to put it simply, have not done their job, so we need "professionals" to do it right. Third, if miseducation is the problem, then sex education in the schools is the solution. Parents are failing miserably at the task, so "it is time to turn the job over to the schools. Schools occupy a safe middle ground between Mom and MTV."

Learning about Family Life is the curriculum used in New Jersey. While it discusses such things as sexual desire, AIDS, divorce, and condoms, it nearly ignores such issues as abstinence, marriage, self-control, and virginity.

Whitehead concludes that comprehensive sex education has been a failure. For example, the ratio of teenage births to unwed mothers was 67 percent in 1980 and rose to 84 percent in 1991. In the place of this failed curriculum, Whitehead describes a better program. She found that "sex education works best when

it combines clear messages about behavior with strong moral and logistical support for the behavior sought.”

One example she cites is the Postponing Sexual Involvement program at Grady Memorial Hospital in Atlanta, Georgia, which offers more than a “Just say no” message. It reinforces the message by having adolescents practice the desired behavior and enlists the aid of older teenagers to teach younger teenagers how to resist sexual advances. Whitehead also found that “religiously observant teens” are less likely to experiment sexually, thus providing an opportunity for church-related programs to help stem the tide of teenage pregnancy.

Condoms

Are condoms a safe and effective way to reduce pregnancy and STDs? Sex educators seem to think so. Every day sex education classes throughout this country promote condoms as a means of safe sex or at least safer sex. But the research on condoms provides no such guarantee.

For example, Texas researcher Susan Weller, writing in the journal *Social Science Medicine*, evaluated all research published on condom effectiveness. She reported that condoms are only 87 percent effective in preventing pregnancy and 69 percent effective in reducing the risk of HIV infection. This 69 percent effectiveness rate is also the same as a 31 percent failure rate in preventing AIDS transmission.

To be effective, condoms must be used “correctly and consistently.” Most individuals, however, do not use them “correctly and consistently” and thus get pregnant and get sexually transmitted diseases.

Contrary to claims by sex educators, condom education does not significantly change sexual behavior. An article in the *American Journal of Public Health* stated that a year-long effort at condom education in San Francisco schools resulted

in only 8 percent of the boys and 2 percent of the girls using condoms every time they had sex.

Even when sexual partners use condoms, sometimes condoms fail. Most consumers do not know that the FDA quality-control standards allow for a maximum failure rate of four per 1,000 using a water fill test. And even if condoms are used correctly, do not break, and do not leak, they are still far from 100 percent effective. The Medical Institute for Sexual Health reported that “medical studies confirm that condoms do not offer much, if any, protection in the transmission of chlamydia and human papillomavirus, two serious STDs with prevalence as high as 40 percent among sexually active teenagers.”

Nevertheless, condoms have become the centerpiece of U.S. AIDS policy and the major recommendation of most sex education classes in America. Many sex educators have stopped calling their curricula “safe sex” and have renamed them “safer sex”—focusing instead on various risk reduction methods. But is this false sense of security and protection actually increasing the risks young people face?

If kids buy the notion that if they just use condoms they will be safe from AIDS or any other sexually transmitted disease whenever they have sex, they are being seriously misled. They should be correctly informed that having sex with any partner having the AIDS virus is life-threatening, condoms or no condoms. It would be analogous to playing Russian roulette with two bullets in your six chambers. Using condoms removes only one of the bullets. The gun still remains deadly with the potential of a lethal outcome.

School-based Health Clinics

As comprehensive sex education curricula have been promoted in the schools, clinics have been established to provide teens greater access to birth control information and devices.

Proponents cite studies that supposedly demonstrate the effectiveness of these clinics on teen sexual behavior. Yet a more careful evaluation shows that school-based health clinics do not lower the teen pregnancy rate.

The most often-cited study involved the experience of the clinic at Mechanics Arts High School in St. Paul, Minnesota. Researchers found that a drop in the number of teen births during the late 1970s coincided with an increase in female participation at the school-based clinic. But at least three important issues undermine the validity of this study.

First, some of the statistics are anecdotal rather than statistical. School officials admitted that the schools could not document the decrease in pregnancies. Second, the total female enrollment of the two schools included in the study dropped significantly. Third, the study actually shows a drop in the teen birth rate rather than the teen pregnancy rate. The reduction in the fertility rate listed in the study was likely due to more teenagers obtaining an abortion.

Today, more and more advocates of school-based health clinics are citing a three-year study headed by Laurie Zabin at Johns Hopkins University, which evaluated the effect of sex education on teenagers. The study of two school-based clinics in Baltimore, Maryland, showed there was a 30 percent reduction in teen pregnancies.

But even this study leaves many unanswered questions. The size of the sample was small and over 30 percent of the female sample dropped out between the first and last measurement periods. Critics point out that some of girls who dropped out of the study may have dropped out of school because they were pregnant. Other researchers point out that the word *abortion* is never mentioned in the brief report, leading them to conclude that only live births were counted.

On the other hand, an extensive, national study done by the

Institute for Research and Evaluation shows that community-based clinics used by teenagers actually increase teen pregnancy. A two-year study by Joseph Olsen and Stan Weed found that teenage participation in these clinics lowered teen birth rates. But when pregnancies ending in miscarriage or abortion were factored in, the total teen pregnancy rates increased by as much as 120 pregnancies per one thousand clients.

Douglas Kirby, former director of the Center for Population Options, had to admit the following: "We have been engaged in a research project for several years on the impact of school-based clinics. . . . We find basically that there is no measurable impact upon the use of birth control, not upon pregnancy rates or birth rates."

Sex Education Programs

As we've seen, the evidence indicates that the so-called "solution" provided by sex educators can actually make problems worse.

The problem is simple: education is not the answer. Teaching comprehensive sex education, distributing condoms, and establishing school-based clinics is not effective. When your audience is impressionable teens entering puberty, explicit sex education does more to entice than educate. Teaching them the "facts" about sex without providing any moral framework merely breaks down mental barriers of shame and innocence and encourages teens to experiment sexually.

A Louis Harris poll conducted for Planned Parenthood found that the highest rates of teen sexual activity were among those who had comprehensive sex education, as opposed to those who had less. In the 1980s, a Congressional study found that a decade-and-a-half of comprehensive, safe sex education resulted in a doubling in the number of sexually active teenage women.

Our society today is filled with teenagers and young adults who know a lot about human sexuality. It is probably fair to say that they know more about sex than any generation that has preceded them, but education is not enough. Sex education can increase the knowledge students have about sexuality, but it does not necessarily affect their values or behavior. Since 1970 the federal government has spent nearly \$3 billion on Title X sex education programs. During that period of time nonmarital teen births increased 61 percent and nonmarital pregnancy rates (fifteen-to-nineteen-year-olds) increased 87 percent.

Douglas Kirby wrote these disturbing observations in the *Journal of School Health*:

“Past studies of sex education suggest several conclusions. They indicate that sex education programs can increase knowledge, but they also indicate that most programs have relatively little impact on values, particularly values regarding one’s personal behavior. They also indicate that programs do not affect the incidence of sexual activity. According to one study, sex education programs may increase the use of birth control among some groups, but not among others. Results from another study indicate they have no measurable impact on the use of birth control. According to one study, they are associated with lower pregnancy rates, while another study indicates they are not. Programs certainly do not appear to have as dramatic an impact on behavior as professionals once has hoped.”

So, if sex education is not the solution, what is? Let’s look at the benefits of abstinence and the abstinence message in the schools.

Abstinence

Less than a decade ago an abstinence-only program was rare in

the public schools. Today, directive abstinence programs can be found in many school districts while battles are fought in other school districts for their inclusion or removal. While proponents of abstinence programs run for school board or influence existing school board members, groups like Planned Parenthood bring lawsuits against districts that use abstinence-based curricula, arguing that they are inaccurate or incomplete.

The emergence of abstinence-only programs as an alternative to comprehensive sex education programs was due to both popularity and politics. Parents concerned about the ineffectiveness of the safe-sex message eagerly embraced the message of abstinence. And political funding helped spread the message and legitimize its educational value.

Parents and children have embraced the abstinence message in significant numbers. One national poll by the University of Chicago found that 68 percent of adults surveyed said premarital sex among teenagers is “always wrong.” A poll for *USA Weekend* found that 72 percent of the teens and 78 percent of the adults said they agree with the pro-abstinence message.

Their enthusiasm for abstinence-only education is well founded. Even though the abstinence message has been criticized by some as naive or inadequate, there are good reasons to promote abstinence in schools and society.

First, teenagers want to learn about abstinence. Contrary to the often repeated teenage claim, not “everyone’s doing it.” A study by the Centers for Disease Control found that 43 percent of teenagers from ages fourteen to seventeen had engaged in sexual intercourse at least once. Put another way, the latest surveys suggest that a majority of teenagers are *not* doing it.

Second, abstinence prevents pregnancy. Proponents of abstinence-only programs argue that abstinence will significantly lower the teenage pregnancy rate, and they cited

numerous anecdotes and statistics to make their case.

Third, abstinence prevents sexually transmitted diseases. After more than three decades the sexual revolution has taken lots of prisoners. Before 1960, doctors were concerned about only two STDs: syphilis and gonorrhea. Today there are more than twenty significant STDs ranging from the relatively harmless to the fatal.

Fourth, abstinence prevents emotional scars. Abstinence speakers relate dozens and dozens of stories of young people who wish they had postponed sex until marriage. Sex is the most intimate form of bonding known to the human race, and it is a special gift to be given to one's spouse.

Teenagers want and need to hear the message of abstinence. They want to promote the message of abstinence. Their health, and even their lives, are at stake.

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“What is a Christian Perspective on War?”

Is there anywhere in the Bible where God or Jesus speaks or justifies the Christian needing to go to war? I know we are to obey those who are in control of the government, unless the demands go against biblical principles. I also have read the various passages concerning loving our enemies and blessing those who persecute us. But what of war? What about the issues of defending our homes for the cause of freedom, right to worship, or when others infringe on the rights of those living

in other countries?

There are essentially three Christian views concerning war:

Activism – it is always right to participate in war.

Pacifism – it is never right to participate in war.

Selectivism – it is right to participate in some wars.

Most Christians generally hold to the third position. This led to the development of what has come to be known as the just war criteria.

A just war would include the following elements:

- Just cause (defensive war)
- Just intention (just peace)
- Last resort (negotiations)
- Formal declaration
- Limited objectives
- Proportionate means
- Noncombatant immunity

There are a number of books that have been written on this subject of war and the Christian. Here is a short list of books that you might find helpful.

- Clouse, Robert. *War: Four Christian Views*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, revised 1991.
- Holmes, Arthur, ed. *War: Christian Ethics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, revised 1991.
- Payne, Keith and Payne, Karl. *A Just Defense*. Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1987.
- Schaeffer, Francis; Bukovsky, Vladimir; and Hitchcock, James. *Who Is For Peace?* Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1983.

Kerby Anderson

“What About Those Who Cannot Believe?”

There were small children on the planes that were crashed in the 9-11 attacks on America. What happens to a baby or young child who dies? Do they go to heaven or hell?

When a young child dies, the bereaved parents will often ask, “Where is my baby now? Will my child go to heaven? The Bible does not give us a definitive answer to these questions; however, several statements seem to indicate that heaven is the destiny of those who can’t believe.

The critical issue is what God will do in His justice to those who were not able, because of age or mental inability, to respond to His revelation. If they are saved, how are they saved and on what basis are they saved? Wouldn’t the logic that says a child is saved say the same for an adult? In order to answer these questions, let us look at a few basic biblical principles.

First, God is loving (1 John 4:16), good (Nah. 1:7), just (Zeph. 3:5), compassionate, and gracious (Psalm 103:8). He “wants all men to be saved” (1 Tim. 2:4) and does not want “anyone to perish” (2 Peter 3:9). Therefore, it is inconceivable that God would damn an innocent child who is incapable of belief.

When we use the word innocent in this context we are not implying that the one who cannot believe is free from sin. The Bible clearly teaches that even infants inherit a sinful

nature (Psalm 51:5; Rom. 5:12, 18-19). Their salvation comes not from being innocent from sin but rather from their ignorance of God's revelation.

Second, Christ's death on the cross for our sins was for all of us unless we refuse to accept it. God gives us the ability to decide. This means that we can either accept or reject God's love for us.

But what about those who are unable to accept or reject God? We must first realize that everyone (including those who cannot believe) is lost (Luke 19:10), perishing (John 3:16), condemned (John 3:18), and under God's wrath (John 3:36). We must also realize that Christ's death on the cross paid the debt of sin for us. His death appeases God's wrath (Rom. 5:9), and this provision is available to all unless they reject it. As Robert Lightner says in *Heaven for Those Who Can't Believe*, "Since rejection of the Savior is the final reason why men go to Hell, those who do not reject Him because they are not able to make a conscious decision enter Heaven on the basis of the finished work of Christ." [Robert P. Lightner, *Heaven for Those Who Can't Believe* (Schaumburg, IL: Regular Baptist Press, 1977), 20.]

Third, there are examples in the Bible that seem to support the notion that children who die are bound for heaven. In 2 Samuel 12:22-23 David learned of the death of this son by Bathsheba. In this relationship with Bathsheba David broke four of the Ten Commandments: he coveted, he stole, he committed adultery, and he committed murder. As punishment, his child was to die. However, when he learned that the child had died, he took heart that his son was in heaven. He said, "I will go to him, but he will not return to me."

In Luke 18:16-17, Jesus used children as an object lesson for the kind of faith that leads to eternal life. He taught that the kingdom of God belongs to such as they (Luke 18:16) and that each believer must accept the kingdom of God as a little

child (Luke 18:17). He further taught that God was “not willing that any of these little ones should be lost” (Matt. 18:14).

Fourth, there are no biblical references that even hint that children will be in hell. While there are many references to adults in hell, there are none to children. This is admittedly an argument from silence. But in other passages in which the context might warrant such a reference, none is found. Consider, for example, the accounts of the death of mankind in the Flood (Gen. 7:21-23), the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:24-25), the slaying of the firstborn in Egypt (Exod. 12:29-30), the destruction of the Amalekites (1 Sam. 15:3), and the slaying of the little boys in Bethlehem (Matt. 2:16).

The character of God is such that He would not damn to hell those who cannot believe. Further, Christ’s death on the cross paid the debt of man’s sin and is available to all unless they reject it. We can declare with some certainty that those who cannot believe go to heaven when they die.

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Love Myths

Soul Mates

In this article we are going to focus on a few of the myths surrounding love and romance that can have a negative effect on dating and marriage. Some of these ideas have become so pervasive in our society that it may seem heretical to label

them as myths. But as we will see, they can have a devastating impact if they are accepted uncritically.

The first myth is the belief that you will know when you meet “the one.” Of course, this assumes that there is only one person who is right for you—a soul mate you must find and marry. Garry Friesen in his book *Decision Making & the Will of God* (along with many other Christian writers) question whether there is *only* one right person for you to marry. But I will set aside this theological question to focus on some relevant practical issues.

First, is the problem of a false positive. We have all heard stories about couples who met and immediately one or both of them knew they were going to marry the other person. Often we call this “love at first sight.” But we don’t hear as much about the many other people who met, thought they had met “the one,” but later decided not to get married or ended up getting married and then divorced.

Certain people come into our lives and we immediately “click” with them. Why? We carry around in our minds a template of what that certain ideal person may be. It is influenced by our family background, our own expectations, books, movies, and personal experiences. When that template comes into our lives sparks fly. We may not even know much about that person’s social, family, and religious background, but we are immediately attracted to him or her. We may feel that he or she is “the one,” but over time our relationship may surface concerns that might be detrimental to a successful marriage. Unfortunately, many people can be blinded by a belief that they have met “the one” and thus ignore important warning signs.

Second is the problem of the false negative. We also no doubt have heard stories of couples who weren’t attracted to each other when they first met. Many didn’t even like the other person. Only over time did they get to know each other and

began to see admirable qualities in what became their marriage partner.

Pepper Schwartz in her book *Everything You Know About Love and Sex Is Wrong* (New York: Pedigree, 2000) says we are a romance-addicted society. We love movies with Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan, but life is more complicated than what is portrayed in movies with skillfully written plots, blended music, beautiful actors, and exotic locations.

Choosing a marriage partner requires more than romance and emotion. For every story someone tells of finding “the one” and experiencing “love at first sight,” there are many more where those initial emotions turned out to be wrong.

Two Peas in a Pod

The second love myth is the belief that you should be similar to your partner. This myth is quite pervasive in part because there is some truth to it. Obviously, there should be some common basis of belief within a marriage. The Bible warns Christians not to be “unequally yoked together with unbelievers.” (2 Cor. 6:14) And there should be some common areas of social and cultural similarity.

But I believe we should question the prevailing belief that your life partner should be the same age, height, and race while having the same interests, gifts, and abilities. As some marriage counselors have said, “If your mate is exactly like you, then one of you is redundant.” Strong marriages celebrate the differences and work to have each person’s gifts and abilities complement the other. One partner may be good with the finances. The other partner may be good in the kitchen. One partner may be good at details. The other partner may be able to look at the bigger picture and plan for the future. Each partner’s gifts complement the other partner’s gifts.

In many cases, having a similar partner can actually be a

source of conflict. Kevin Leman has found that two “first-borns” bring their perfectionist tendencies into a marriage. They will often “pick” at each other leading to increased marital conflict. Does that mean that two first-born children should never marry? Of course not. But they might want to reconsider whether they want to marry someone who is so similar to them.

What about differences in age? Couples should obviously consider the implications of vast differences in age in terms of energy level, hobbies, activities, and friendships. But there is also good reason to begin to rethink the prevailing assumption that compatibility must be based upon similar ages. Once again different ages and life experiences might be a significant way to bring complementarity into a marriage.

The same could be said about difference in ethnicity. Not so long ago, society frowned upon so-called mixed marriages. Today, more and more marriage partners come from different ethnic and racial backgrounds. While we still tend to marry people who come from the same social and cultural background, this trend seems to be changing.

The key point is this: you don't have to be similar to your partner to have a good marriage. In fact, your differences might actually help you to complement each other in marriage.

Annoying Habits

Now I would like to focus on the question of whether little annoying habits are unimportant in a long-term relationship.

When we are in love, little things like bad manners or chronic lateness may seem insignificant. Besides, we reason, we can always change our partner later on so that this is no longer a problem. We may even convince ourselves that these little annoying habits are kind of cute.

Well, they may seem cute in the courtship phase of a

relationship, but they usually don't stay cute once you are married and have to deal with them every day. In fact, small habits often grow into bigger habits once they are indulged.

The book *Everything You Know About Love and Sex Is Wrong* describes a study done by Professor Diane Felmly at the University of California-Davis. The researcher asked people why they married and then why they divorced. The reasons for both were often quite similar. The only difference is that what was once sweet had now turned sour.

For example, a person might say: "I married him for his incredible sense of humor." When asked why they broke up, she might say: "He was always silly, he was a lightweight." Another person might cite her partner's creativity and spontaneity as a big attraction, but later said of her spouse that he was "a dreamer" who "couldn't stick with any one thing, couldn't plan anything ahead of time."

So it wasn't that these people didn't know who they married. Their spouse hadn't changed, but their tolerance of their habits had changed. What was a minor annoyance before they married, became a major reason for their breakup later on.

Frankly, I believe one of the real tests in a marriage are the minor annoyances of everyday life because they accumulate day after day. A quirky habit might be even attractive when you first encounter it, but with daily repetition can become annoying and irksome.

A related issue is the iceberg problem. Most of the mass of an iceberg is below the surface. Likewise, most of the really difficult problems a person may have will stay below the surface during the dating and courtship phase of a relationship. Many couples, in fact, awake on their honeymoons to an entirely different person than the one they thought they married.

Here are a few issues to consider:

- *Cleanliness: what might at first seem like an admirable lack of vanity may indicate a general lack of personal hygiene.*
- *Neatness: although keeping things in order may seem like a small thing, it can develop into a major problem in marriage reminiscent of scenes from “The Odd Couple.”*

The bottom line is this: consider the long-term impact these little annoying habits will have in your marriage, *before* you get married.

Living Together

Next I would like to look at the question of living together before marriage.

In our society today, cohabitation has become an extension of dating and courtship. Couples see living together as an audition for marriage, reasoning that you want to get to know someone intimately before you marry them. Although the logic seems sound, it not only goes against biblical injunctions but against sound sociological research.

A 1999 study by sociologists David Popenoe and Barbara Dafoe Whitehead released through the National Marriage Project at Rutgers University confirms earlier studies about the danger of cohabiting and added additional detail. They found that cohabiting appears to be so counterproductive to long-lasting marriage that unmarried couples should avoid living together, especially if it involves children. Whitehead says that living together is “a fragile family form that poses increased risk to women and children.”

Part of the reason for the danger is the difference in perception. “Women tend to see [living together] as a step toward eventual marriage, while men regard it more as a sexual opportunity without the ties of long-term commitment.” And

people who live together in uncommitted relationships may be unwilling to work out problems, and instead will seek less fractious relationships with a new partner.

The National Institute for Healthcare Research has found that couples who live together and then marry report less satisfaction in their marriages than other couples. Scott Stanley at the University of Denver has found that cohabiting couples who get married have a significantly higher rate of divorce than those who did not live together. (*A Lasting Promise: A Christian Guide to Fighting for Your Marriage*. Josey-Bass, 1998)

Couples argue that living together will provide important information about how a partner will behave and interact once married. But a cohabiting person may be quite different from a person within marriage. Marriage is a commitment for life, while cohabitation is usually a commitment for a season. That makes a big difference in a relationship. It's like the difference between being in a play and auditioning for the play. In the first example, you are in the stage production and working to make the play the best it can be. In the second example, you are trying out for the play and have much less invested.

Couples may also argue that they can live together and eventually get married when they are ready for children. But will that day ever come? The living together arrangement actually erodes a foundation of commitment rather than strengthening it. And if the woman becomes pregnant during cohabitation rather than marriage, it is less likely that the children will have a legal (and committed) father.

Living together before marriage may sound like a good idea, until you look at the facts.

Got Problems? Have Kids

Finally I would like to conclude by focusing on the idea that children bring a couple closer.

To begin, let's acknowledge that Psalm 127:3 says that children are a gift from the Lord. Children are wonderful. A Christian family with children is delightful.

The issue here is the prevailing belief that bringing a child into a relationship that has problems will improve the situation. There is good evidence to believe that is not the case. If anything, a child can increase the tensions that are already present. Pepper Schwartz in her book *Everything You Know About Love and Sex Is Wrong* believes this may be the most damaging myth of the 25 myths she addresses in her book.

The fantasy that children will increase love and intimacy needs to be balanced by the reality that child-rearing also involves time and energy that can increase stress, fatigue, and worry. It will also decrease privacy and communication between partners. Unfortunately, many young couples may underestimate the impact of children on their marriage and be unprepared for the constant daily attention necessary to be a successful parent.

While having a child may be one of the most intimate things a man and a woman can do, the erosion of intimacy after the child arrives often surprises many couples. Even before the child arrives, a pregnant mother often begins to feel fat and unattractive. Once the baby arrives, she must give most of her time and attention to the child. On the positive side, she is madly in love with the child but may tend to squeeze her husband out of the picture. On the negative side, she may be so exhausted from caring for a child all day that she has little energy left for her husband.

Even good marriages must work hard not to allow their marriage

to be pulled into two parallel worlds. It is natural to begin to divide tasks and focus on those, but couples need to schedule “date nights” and “talk times” to make sure their two worlds intersect. Isolation is a natural drift in any marriage. Children and children’s activities can increase isolation if marriage partners don’t attempt to counter-program against the pressures that naturally will push a couple apart.

Couples should also plan ahead for a time when children are not a constant focus of the marriage. In my article on [*The Second Half of Marriage*](#), I talk about the time when children begin to leave the nest. No longer does the marriage have to be child-focused. It should return to a partner-focused marriage. Even while a couple is traveling through “the valley of the diapers,” they should keep a clear focus on the need to invest time, energy, and emotions in their partner.

Children are a gift from the Lord, but couples should understand their impact on a marriage. If a marriage has problems, having children will not bring that couple closer.

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The Clash of Civilizations

Introduction

In the summer of 1993, Samuel Huntington published an article entitled “The Clash of Civilizations?” in the journal *Foreign Affairs*. The article generated more controversy than any other article in the journal since the 1940s. And Huntington says it stirred up more debate than anything else he wrote during that

time.

Three years later Samuel Huntington published a book using a similar title. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* came on the market in 1996 and became a bestseller, once again stirring controversy. Given the events of the last year, it seems worthy to revisit his comments and predictions, since in many ways he seems as accurate as an Old Testament prophet.

His thesis is fairly simple. In the future, world history will be marked by conflicts between three principal groups: western universalism, Muslim militancy, and Chinese assertion.

Huntington says that in the post-Cold War world, “global politics has become multipolar and multicivilizational.”^[1] During most of human history, major civilizations were separated from one another and contact was intermittent or nonexistent. That pattern changed in the modern era (around 1500 A.D.). For over 400 years, the nation states of the West (Britain, France, Spain, Austria, Prussia, Germany, and the United States) constituted a multipolar international system that interacted, competed, and fought wars with each other. During that same period of time, these nations also expanded, conquered, and colonized nearly every other civilization.

During the Cold War, global politics became bipolar, and the world was divided into three parts. Western democracies led by the United States engaged in ideological, political, economic, and even military competition with communist countries led by the Soviet Union. Much of this conflict occurred in the Third World outside these two camps and was composed mostly of nonaligned nations.

Huntington argues that in the post-Cold War world, the principal actors are still the nation states, but they are influenced by more than just power and wealth. Other factors like cultural preferences, commonalities, and differences are

also influential. The most important groupings are not the three blocs of the Cold War, but rather the major world civilizations.

To put it simply, the line has moved. For 45 years, the Iron Curtain was the central dividing line in Europe. "That line has moved several hundred miles east. It is now the line separating the peoples of western Christianity, on the one hand, from Muslims and Orthodox peoples on the other."[\[2\]](#)

So in this article we are going to describe and analyze Samuel Huntington's worldview of global politics in order to understand better the profound changes taking place in the 21st century.

Worldviews of Global Politics

In essence, Huntington is proposing a new worldview in the area of foreign policy. He argues that "worldviews and causal theories are indispensable guides to international politics."[\[3\]](#)

Huntington says that the post-Cold war world is a different world with a different set of issues and conflicts. "In this new world the most pervasive, important, and dangerous conflicts will not be between social classes, rich and poor, or other economically defined groups, but between people belonging to different cultural entities."[\[4\]](#) World history, he believes, will be marked by conflicts between three principal groups already mentioned: western universalism, Muslim militancy, and Chinese assertion.

Huntington's worldview stands in contrast to four other prominent perspectives that have been proposed to understand global politics. The view of Francis Fukuyama sees world events culminating in what he calls "the end of history." He believes that we may be witnessing the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the acceptance of western liberal

democracy as the final form of human government. Although first proposed at the end of the Cold War when a harmonious globalism seemed likely, there is little evidence that the war of ideas and ideologies is coming to an end as the events of the last year clearly demonstrate.

A second view is one of *us versus them*. "People are always tempted to divide people into us and them, the in-group and the other, our civilization and those barbarians. Scholars have analyzed the world in terms of the Orient and the Occident, North and South, center and periphery. Muslims have traditionally divided the world into *Dar al-Islam* and *Dar a-Harb*, the abode of peace and the abode of war."[\[5\]](#)

A third perspective could be called "184 states, more or less." According to this view, nation states are the primary (even the sole) actors on the world stage. Each state seeks power and wealth in the midst of anarchy. And while this is a somewhat accurate view of the world, it does not provide any model for understanding global politics.

A fourth and final view is one of chaos. This perspective is illustrated by the book titles "Out of Control" by Zbigniew Brzezinski and "Pandaemonium" by Daniel Patrick Moynihan. Recent history is replete with examples of the breakup of states, the loss of governmental authority, and numerous regional conflicts. But, as a model, this view provides little predictive value and also does not completely match reality. The world stage may be full of chaos but its not totally without order and direction.

Samuel Huntington's worldview, I believe, provides a better perspective on the world of the 21st century.

Major Contemporary Civilizations

Let's dedicate our attention to what separates these civilizations. The first is the Chinese civilization which

dates back to at least 1500 B.C. He describes this as a Sinic civilization in order to describe not only China and Chinese civilization, but also the Chinese communities in Southeast Asia and related cultures of Vietnam and Korea.

The second is Japanese to separate it from the Chinese culture. Most scholars recognize it as a separate entity that was an offspring of China, emerging between 100 and 400 A.D.

The third civilization is Hindu, which has existed on the Subcontinent since at least 1500 B.C. This is also referred to as Indian, Indic, or Hindu. One scholar says that Hindu is "more than a religion or a social system; it is the core of Indian civilization."[\[6\]](#)

The fourth is a distinct Islamic civilization which originated in the Arabian peninsula in the seventh century A.D. Islam rapidly spread across North Africa and the Iberian peninsula and also eastward into central Asia, the Subcontinent, and Southeast Asia.

A fifth civilization is a separate Orthodox civilization, centered in Russia and separate from western Christendom as a result of its Byzantine parentage. It also has limited exposure to the Renaissance, Reformation, Enlightenment, and other central western experiences.

Western civilization would be a sixth entity dated as emerging about 700-800 A.D. Scholars generally view it as having three major components (Europe, North America, and Latin America).

A seventh civilization would be Latin America, which has a distinct identity even though it emanates from the West. It has had a corporatist, authoritarian culture and has been primarily Catholic.

Two other civilizations could be added to this list. These would be an African civilization in the south of the continent. The north and east coasts belong to Islamic

civilization, but some scholars recognize a distinct African culture on the rest of the continent.

Also, a Buddhist culture could be defined. Although it did not survive in the country of its birth, it has been exported to other countries and regions in the East.

Samuel Huntington argues that in this post-Cold War world, people will identify themselves in terms of their ancestry and heritage. Ultimately they define themselves according to their civilization.

Culture and Civilizations

Samuel Huntington argues that in this new era as people identify themselves in terms of their ancestry and heritage, it will create a clash of civilizations. He says, "In the post-Cold War world, the most important distinctions among peoples are not ideological, political, or economic. They are cultural. Peoples and nations are attempting to answer the most basic question humans can face, who are we? And they are answering that question in the traditional way human beings have answered it, by reference to the things that mean most to them. People define themselves in terms of ancestry, religion, language, history, values, customs, and institutions. They identify with cultural groups: tribes, ethnic groups, religious communities, nations, and at the broadest level, civilizations."[\[7\]](#)

This is not surprising. We all tend to identify ourselves according to our culture, which includes our political, cultural, and religious heritage. In previous centuries, the major world civilizations were separated from each other. Contact was either non-existent or intermittent. Our global society has put us in contact with each other in ways never before experienced in our history. Cultural differences, therefore, should have a profound effect on how we interact.

Samuel Huntington says, "In the post-Cold War world, culture is both a divisive and unifying force. People separated by ideology but united by culture come together, as the two Germanys did and as the two Koreas and the several Chinas are beginning to. Societies united by ideology or historical circumstance but divided by civilization either come apart, as did the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Bosnia, or are subjected to intense strain, as is the case with Ukraine, Nigeria, Sudan, India, Sri Lanka, and many others."[\[8\]](#)

We should note that cultures and civilizations are not static but do change and evolve. And nations rise and fall. Most go through somewhat predictable stages and respond to challenges and opportunities.

Nation states will still remain important actors in global politics, but their interests and conflicts will become increasingly shaped by cultural forces and interactions between the major contemporary civilizations.

Samuel Huntington provides a compelling worldview for understanding the future of global politics as well as understanding the philosophical and spiritual interaction and conflict between Christianity and Islam. I believe that Christians need to begin to understand the implications of this major shift in countries and civilizations as we move into the 21st century.

Implications for Christians

The implications of this perspective on missions is profound. In the past, countries that were closed to the gospel tended to be communist countries. Even so, there was still a significant amount of Christian growth in countries behind the Iron Curtain and Bamboo Curtain. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, many of these countries are more open to the gospel than ever before. Meanwhile, persecution of Christians remains in China.

But a new phenomenon has emerged. Muslim countries are now the most resistant to the message of Christianity. Mission work is limited or even non-existent in many of these Muslim countries. This, I believe, represents the greatest challenge for missions in the 21st century: reaching the Muslim world for Christ. Already there are a billion Muslims in the world, making Islam the second largest religion in the world and one of the fastest growing.

A second implication is related to the first. Samuel Huntington predicts a growing conflict between western universalism and Muslim militancy. In other words, the conflict is between liberal western democracies and their cultures and Muslim countries.

This presents a major challenge for Christians trying to reach Muslims. When they see the West with its immorality and decadence, they reject it and Christianity. After all, they reason, these are Christian countries and this is what they produce.

As Christians, I believe it is crucial that we make a distinction between Christianity and western society. The political conflict may be between western democracies and Muslim militancy, but the spiritual battle is between Christianity and Islam. The two are not the same.

I have found it helpful to agree with Muslims about many of these criticisms of western culture. It is disarming, and also provides an opportunity to explain that many western countries (especially in Europe) are anything but Christian countries. Instead, I choose to focus the discussion on the Bible and Jesus Christ as a contrast to the Koran and Muhammed.

Whether we are missionaries overseas or missionaries in our backyard, we need to begin to understand the nature of Islam and bring the message of the gospel to the Muslims we meet. I believe Samuel Huntington is correct in his analysis, and we

should begin to understand the changing world around us so that we can be more effective for Christ. I hope that this article and the other materials on the Probe Web Site will be helpful to you in that regard.

Notes

1. Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 21.

2. Ibid., 28

3. Ibid., 30

4. Ibid., 28

5. Ibid., 32

6. Fernand Braudel, *On History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 226.

7. Huntington, 21.

8. Ibid., 28.

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“Is It a Sin For a Christian to be a Soldier in the Military?”

Is it a sin for a Christian to be a soldier (i.e. someone training to be on the frontlines to kill) in the military?

I have been reading some arguments on both sides of this coin, and both have some weight to them. The main argument from the peaceful side of this coin is that Jesus said "those who live by the sword, will die by the sword" and that first century christians did not serve in the military, except for a few, but they weren't in war at that time. The other side of the coin seperates personal responsibility from state responsibility and says that if you are serving in the military and kill, God holds the head of the state responsible. It also uses the Old Testament wars in many of its arguments.

It seems to me that there is power in not fighting, and that the Bible teaches that we should love our enemies, and not kill others just because a government tells you too. However, it would seem in such an evil world that if we didn't stand up and fight for the protection of others, all Christians would be oppressed. It just keeps flipping back and forth.

Thank you for your question about Christians serving in the military. Probably the three best known books dealing with this subject are:

- *Robert Clouse, ed., War: Four Christian Views (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1981).*
- *Arthur Holmes, ed., War and Christian Ethics (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1975).*
- *Keith Payne and Karl Payne, A Just Defense (Portland: Multnomah, 1987).*

I could go into the details of the various positions, but I think these books (especially the InterVarsity book) provide a good overview of the arguments on each side.

I might also mention that Tommy Nelson (the pastor of Denton Bible Church in Denton, TX) has put together a 90-minute video on the subject of Christians in the military. It is simply called "God and the Military: Is It Right to Bear Arms?" You

can contact him at www.dentonbible.org. Thanks for writing.

Kerby Anderson

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