

By the President  
of the United States of America  
A Proclamation

Whereas it is the Duty of all Nations to acknowledge the Providence of Almighty God, to obey his will, to be grateful for his Benefits, and **humbly to implore his Protection and Favor**: And whereas both Houses of Congress have, by their joint Committee, requested me “To recommend to the People of the United States, a Day of public Thanksgiving and Prayer, to be observed by acknowledging with grateful Hearts the **many signal Favors of Almighty God**, especially by affording them an Opportunity peaceably to establish a Form of Government for their Safety and Happiness.”

NOW THEREFORE, I do recommend and assign Thursday the Twenty-sixth Day of November next, to be devoted by the People of these States, to the Service of that great and glorious Being, **who is the beneficent Author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be**: That we may then all unite in rendering unto him our sincere and humble Thanks **for his kind Care and Protection** of the People of this Country previous to their becoming a Nation;—**for the signal and manifold Mercies**, and the **favorable Interpositions of his Providence** which we experienced in the Course and Conclusion of the late war—for the great Degree of Tranquility; Union and Plenty, which we have since enjoyed;—for the peaceable and rational Manner, in which we have been enabled to establish Constitutions of Government for our Safety and Happiness, and particularly the national one now lately instituted;—for the civil and religious Liberty with which we are blessed, and the Means we have of acquiring and diffusing useful Knowledge;—and in general, for all the great and various **Favors** which he hath been pleased to confer upon us.

AND ALSO, That we may then unite in most humbly offering our Prayers and Supplications to the great Lord and **Ruler of Nations**, and beseech him to **pardon our national and other Transgressions**;—**to enable us all**, whether in public or private Stations, to perform our several and relative Duties properly and punctually;—**to render our national Government a Blessing** to all the People by constantly being a Government of wise, just and constitutional Laws, discreetly and faithfully executed and obeyed;—**to protect and guide** all sovereigns and Nations, (especially such as have shewn kindness unto us) and **to bless them** with good Government, Peace, and Concord;—**to promote** the Knowledge and Practice of true Religion and Virtue, and the Increase of Science among them and us;—and generally, **to grant unto all Mankind** such a Degree of temporal Prosperity as he alone knows to be best.

GIVEN under my Hand, at the City of New York, the third day  
of October, in the Year of our Lord One Thousand Seven  
Hundred and Eighty-nine.

**G. WASHINGTON**

*In the first year of his presidency, George Washington proclaimed a Day of Thanksgiving to be observed on Thursday November 26, 1789. Here is that proclamation.*

Source: *Providential Perspective*: The Teaching Journal of The Providence Foundation, Vol. 11, No 3, October 1996, p. 5. Also Internet sources such as <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/05-04-02-0091>.

Many uninformed, misinformed, misguided, and intentionally deceptive people try to teach and persuade others that the Founders of the United States, including our first President, George Washington, were non-Christians, including Deists. The highlighted statements in President Washington's above proclamation of a Day of Thanksgiving and Prayer point to beliefs contrary to Deism and that no Deist would say. See also *America's Godly Heritage* by David Barton for other documentation that the United States was founded as a Christian nation. Consider the following facts.

What were the sources the Founders consulted to construct their philosophy and form of government? A massive study of 15,000 writings for over 10 years by political science professors, revealed that individuals the Founders' most frequently quoted were political philosopher, Charles Montesquieu (8.3%); legal scholar, William Blackstone (7.9%); and political philosopher and theologian, John Locke (2.9%). However, the Founders' most quoted source by far was the Bible (34%).<sup>1</sup> Further study of these three scholars reveals that the Bible was a primary and strong influence on their writings.<sup>2</sup> Consider also John Adams who, writing to the Massachusetts Militia, said, "Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious People. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other."<sup>3</sup> At the end of the Constitutional Convention in 1787, Benjamin Franklin said, "I agree to this Constitution...and I believe, further, that this is likely to be well administered for a course of years, and can only end in despotism, as other forms have done before it, when the people shall become so corrupted as to need despotic government, being incapable of any other."<sup>4</sup>

John Jay was the President of the Continental Congress during the Revolution. He was one of the authors of the *Federalist Papers*, became President George Washington's first Secretary of State, and then the first Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court. Maintaining that Christian principles should prevail in the public square, Chief Justice Jay forthrightly proclaimed, "Providence has given to our people the choice of their rulers; and it is the duty—as well as the privilege and interest—of our Christian nation to select and prefer Christians for their rulers."<sup>5</sup> Subsequent Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) rulings have upheld and reiterated this precedent.

In 1892, the SCOTUS ruled in *Church of the Holy Trinity vs. U. S.*, "[N]o purpose of action against religion can be imputed to any legislation, state or national, because this is a religious

---

<sup>1</sup> Donald S. Lutz, *The Origins of American Constitutionalism* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: State University Press, 1988). David Barton, *America's Godly Heritage* (Aledo, Texas: WallBuilder Press, 1993), pp. 23-24.

<sup>2</sup> Barton, p. 24.

<sup>3</sup> John Adams, "From John Adams to Massachusetts Militia, 11 October 1798," <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/99-02-02-3102> (Accessed 8/14/20)

<sup>4</sup> Benjamin Franklin, "II. On the Federal Constitution," 1787 <https://www.bartleby.com/268/8/11.html>. (Accessed 8/14/20)

<sup>5</sup> William Jay, *The Life of John Jay* (New York: J. & J. Harper, 1833), Vol. II, p. 376, to John Murray, Jr., October 12, 1816, quoted in Barton, p. 21.

people.... [T]his is a Christian nation.”<sup>6</sup> David Barton explains the monumental significance of such decisions and other historical precedents.

What would lead the U. S. Supreme Court to conclude that America was a Christian nation? The simple answer is, America’s own history.

The Court’s decision was only sixteen pages long, but even in that short span, the Court provided almost eighty different historical precedents. The Court cited statements of the Founding Fathers, acts of Congress and state governments, and numerous others official documents, even noting that there were many additional volumes of historical precedents also proving that America was a Christian nation. Eighty precedents in a case is not only impressive but it is also important, for courts seek to base their decisions on precedent; this enables them to be consistent from ruling to ruling, thus contributing to a stable society.

Significantly, that 1892 Court decision was by no means the only Supreme Court decision that recognized and preserved America’s Biblical heritage; similar decisions were rendered both before and after that ruling.<sup>7</sup>

*The Founders thus recognized, as stated in the Declaration of Independence, that the country had to function under God for many reasons, including to have a moral base that would sustain the republic. This is also why we say the words, “under God,” when reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, and why our nation’s motto, “In God We Trust,” is visible every time we handle U. S. currency, important reminders of vital aspects of our nation, necessary for successfully functioning as a republic. If God is ignored, there is no ultimate criterion and rationale for righteousness or for appeal and reconciliation of moral disharmony.*

- For just one example of the need for God in such matters, if one only appeals to a secular human norm-reference to base an opinion about LGBTQ, abortion, cohabitation, or any other moral or spiritual issue, to decide whether it is right or wrong, and how to treat others on such matters, on what basis can that appeal be sustained?

Arguing only on a norm-reference secular human basis, especially in this age of widespread postmodernism, one set of opinions on a moral issue cannot offset another set of opinions on that same issue. The matter becomes a stalemate as they each say, “Who are you to tell me I’m wrong in how I want to look at and treat these people?!” similar to a “he said, she said” situation.

Instead, we need to appeal to a higher authority, which is the spiritual basis of our country’s founding. Thus, we love, care for, try to help, and respect those opposed to us, and treat them well, because they, too, bear the image of God, some aspects of which are the capabilities to love, to reason, and to have freedom of choice.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, that does not mean we respect and condone the values and behaviors that are counterproductive to their and society’s well-being.

---

<sup>6</sup> *Church of the Holy Trinity v. U. S.*, 143 U.S. 457, 465, 471 (1892), quoted in Barton, p. 25.

<sup>7</sup> Barton, pp. 25-26.

<sup>8</sup> The short answer to the meaning of the Biblical term, “image of God,” (e.g., Genesis 1:26-28) is that it refers to God’s creating human beings in such a way that he has given us some of his own attributes, albeit in finite and limited form, which he possesses in infinite and unlimited form; other examples include being a living being, and the capabilities of knowledge and wisdom, which in us are genuine yet finite and limited, but which are infinite and unlimited in God. For a more complete explanation, see Edward D. Seely, [Essential Christianity: Historic Christian](#)

Accordingly, the current 2019 Colorado state law HB 19-1032, pertaining to school sex education curricula, not only permits but encourages such deliberation. Section 2. 22-1-128 states,

(7) (a) Nothing in subsection (6) OR (6.5) of this section shall be interpreted to prohibit discussion of health, moral, ethical, or religious values as they pertain to comprehensive human sexuality, healthy relationships, or family formation. **SUCH DISCUSSION IS ENCOURAGED.** [The uppercase emphasis is in the law.]

These are some of the reasons why Jesus Christ calls those who believe in and follow him to proclaim his eternal life-giving and transforming Gospel (e.g., Matthew 28:18-20). While elections, government officials, and laws are very important, it is only through the change in human hearts and minds that comes through the operation of the Holy Spirit in those who believe in Christ Jesus and are credited with his righteousness, that such differences can be resolved and justice can characterize a nation. Furthermore, it is only through the extension and nurture of Christ's believers and followers that this unique country, the United States of America, and every other country, can survive and thrive, thus avoiding the destruction that has characterized nations throughout history, which have become so spiritually and morally corrupt that they have finally been punished as God's just and longsuffering, but divinely-limited, patience has concluded by bringing them to an end. See, e.g., Genesis 15:13-16.

We believers in and followers of Jesus Christ must obey him, live according to his will, and proclaim the Good News about his life, suffering, death, resurrection, second coming, and eternal reign over all creation. (Ephesians 1:19b-23) In Jesus' first coming, he inaugurated the kingdom of God, the rule of God in human hearts and minds. In his second coming, Jesus will bring the kingdom of God to fulfillment. Here we see how vitally important it is that we be his witnesses, in word and in obedient deeds (e.g., John 14:21), to facilitate the extension and nurture of God's kingdom for the accomplishment of his purposes, one of which is to save individuals and prolong the existence and well-being, the "peace and prosperity" (Jeremiah 29:7) of the country in which God has placed us.

Rev. Edward D. Seely, Th.M., Ph.D.  
Pastor, College and Seminary Professor  
[www.fromacorntooak12.com](http://www.fromacorntooak12.com)  
[www.edwardseely.com](http://www.edwardseely.com)  
<https://seelyedward.academia.edu/>

---

*Systematic Theology—With a Focus on Its Very Practical Dimensions, including God's Answers to Our Great Questions of Life—for Now and Eternity*, PowerPoint presentation, Slide 91 and other related slides using the Search bar or the Find feature.

Copyright © 2021 by Edward D. Seely. Permission is granted to use this document without changing the text, for church education and other church ministries worldwide.