

Welcome to Week 3

- As you enter class this week please
 - Get yourself some snacks and coffee
 - Fill out a name tag and introduce yourself to others at the table
 - Read through the primary sources for this week.

Christian History in America

Visions, Realities, and Turning
Points

Class 3: Resistance to Tyrants is
Obedience to God?

The Role of Religion in
The American Revolution

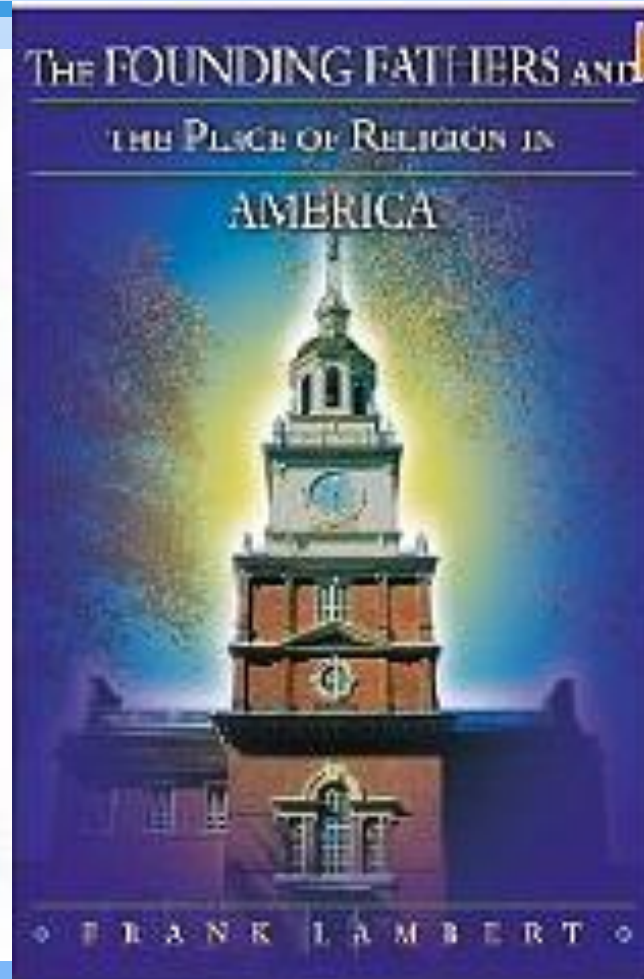
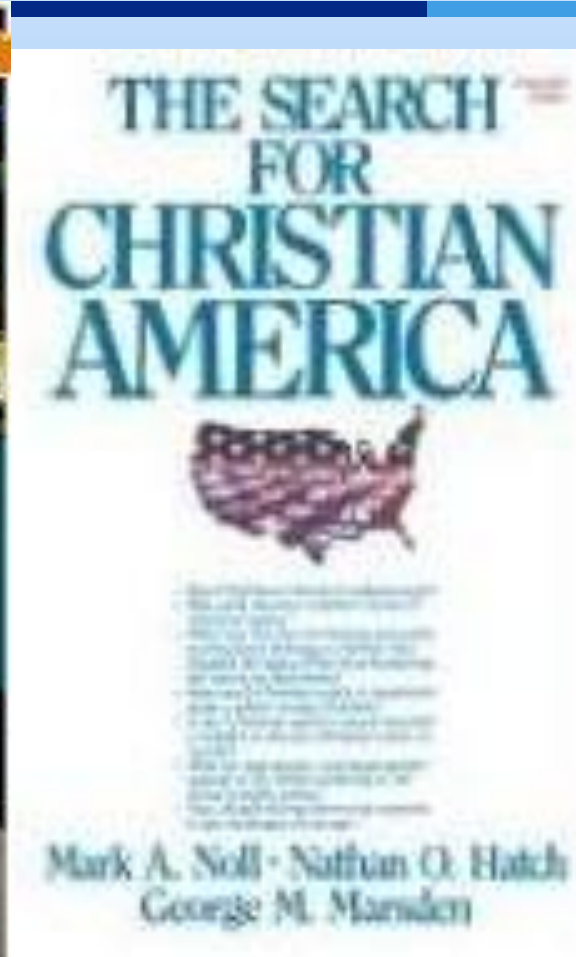
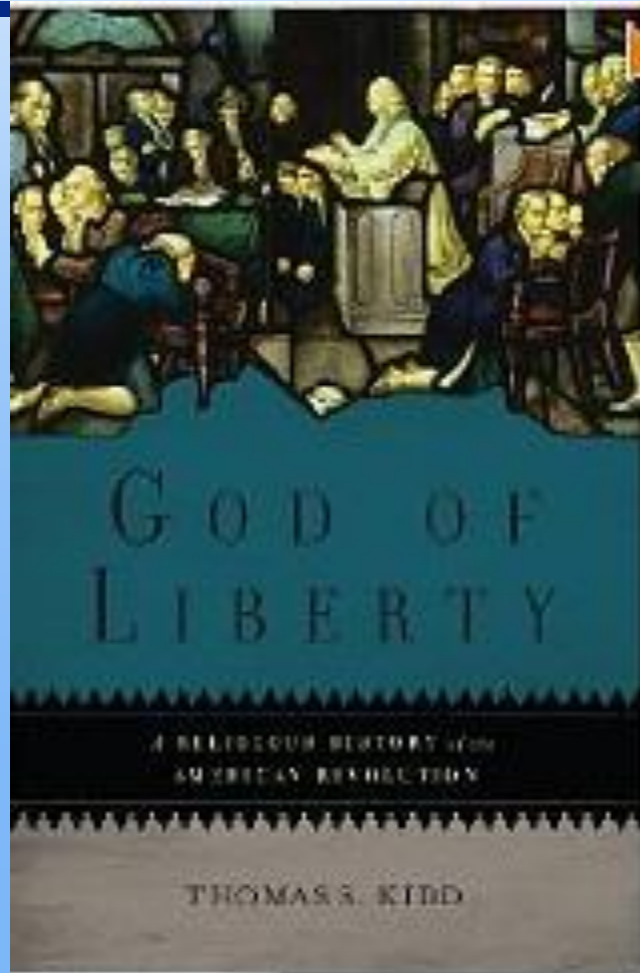
Organizational Information

- Please fill out Course Registration forms.
- Information about Handouts and Videos
 - <http://www.grace.org/adulthooddiscipleship>
- Contact information for Questions –
thcastner@comcast.net
- Index Cards: There are index cards located on each table. If you have specific questions about American Christian History that you want to make sure are answered please be sure to write down your questions and then leave them on the table.

Class 3 Goals

- Understand the role of religion in the coming of the American Revolution.
- Get a deeper understanding of the role of religion in the Constitution and in public life as imagined in the new society.

Suggested Readings



Opening Question:

- Imagine a colleague approaches you at work one day and says, “Why are you Christians always trying to use the state to impose your religion upon us. Don’t you realize the American Revolution was inspired by the Enlightenment and created a government based on the separation of Church and State.” How would you respond?

Revolution

(Shared by Deists and

Evangelicals)

- The Disestablishment of State Churches
- The Doctrine of Equality by Creation
- A belief in human sinfulness or corruptibility that mandated checks and balances to prevent tyranny
- Republics are maintained by virtuous citizens
- God or (Providence) works through nations to achieve His purposes

Legacies of Colonial Fears

- Association of political oppression with religious oppression and fears of Catholicism
 - At time of Great Migration 1630s
 - During the English Civil War 1640s
 - During the Glorious Revolution 1680s
 - A Century of Wars with Catholic France
- At the end of the French and Indian War
 - “. . . Safe from the hand of arbitrary sway and cruel superstition.” MA Pastor Thomas Bernard

Amplifiers of Tensions

- The Great Awakening
 - The sense that God was doing something dramatic increased people's apocalyptic expectations.
- King George's War
 - Saw New England Regiments capture the important French fort of Louisburg.
 - Britain's decision to return the Fort was seen as a betrayal of New England and the Protestant Interest

Jonathan Mayhew

- *Discourse on Unlimited Submission*
 - Provides the theological justification for resistance to unjust governments.
 - The Question of Bishops
 - Apthorp Controversy
 - The Stamp Act
 - Riots provoked by his sermon?
 - How far can you preach
- Resistance?



Response to the Quebec Act



Adams and Religious Liberty

“It excited a general and just apprehension that bishops and dioceses and churches and priests and tithes were to be imposed upon us by Parliament. It was known that neither king, nor ministry, nor archbishops could appoint bishops in America without an act of Parliament; and if Parliament could tax us they could establish the Church of England with all its creeds, articles, tests, ceremonies, and tithes, and prohibit all other churches as conventicles and schism shops.”

Other Factors and Legacies

- Enlightenment Principles of Natural Rights
- Lockean Liberalism
- Renaissance Republicanism (Machiavelli)
- Radical Whig thought from the English Opposition
- Economic opposition to mercantilism.
- Different development in the colonies than the mother country.
- Reactions to parliamentary legislation
- The will of God?

Samuel Adams 1776

There are instances of, I would say, an almost astonishing Providence in our favor; our success has staggered our enemies, and almost given faith to infidels; so we may truly say it is not our own arm which has saved us. . .

The hand of Heaven appears to have led us on to be, perhaps, humble instruments and means in the great providential dispensation, which is completing. Thus by the beneficence of Providence, we shall behold our empire arising, founded on justice and the voluntary consent of the people, and giving full scope to the exercise of those faculties and rights which most ennoble our species. . .

Religious Interpretations of Events

- Many ministers saw the crisis with England as God's judgment upon the people for their sins.
- Others saw a diabolical plot hatched by Satan to reduce the colonists to slavery.
- For Table Discussion
 - How should we respond to these interpretations as Christians?
 - What tools are available to us from the Bible or the historical profession to make these judgments?

Chaplain William Rogers

“Politically as a nation we are exhorted to trust in the Lord. God hath hitherto blessed our arms and smiled on our infant rising states . . . Provided we fear God and are publicly as well as individually hones; what have we now to alarm us? American exertions have hitherto been crowned with success; let us still under the banners of liberty, and with a Washington for our head, go on from conquering to conquer. . . . “Our fathers trusted and the Lord did deliver them; they cried unto him and were delivered; they trusted in him and were not confounded.” Even so may it be with us, for the sake of Christ Jesus, who came to give freedom to the world.”

The results of his exhortation?

- William Rogers was a Baptist pastor and chaplain addressing the Continental army on July 4, 1779.
- After hearing him the troops attacked and burned 40 Iroquois villages, destroying their fields and orchards.

C O N G R E S S,
J U L Y 4, 1776.
A D E C L A R A T I O N
B Y T H E
R E P R E S E N T A T I V E S
O F T H E
U N I T E D S T A T E S O F A M E R I C A,
I N G E N E R A L C O N G R E S S A S S E M B L E D.

WHEN in the Course of human Events, it becomes necessary for one People to dissolve the political Bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the Powers of the Earth, the separate and equal Station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent Respect to the Opinions of Mankind requires that they should declare the Causes which impel them to the Separation.

We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness:—That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed, that whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these Ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its Foundation on such Principles, and organizing its Powers in such Form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient Causes; and accordingly all Experience hath shewn, that Mankind are more disposed to suffer, while Evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the Forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long Train of Abuses and Usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object, evinces a Design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their Right, it is their Duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future Security. Such has been the patient Sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the Necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The History of the present King of Great-Britain is a History of repeated Injuries and Usurpations, all having in direct Object the Establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States.

To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid World.

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public Good.

He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing Importance, unless suspended in their Operation until his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to assent to Laws for the Accommodation of large Districts of People, unless those People would relinquish the Right of Representation in the Legislature, a Right inestimable to them, and formidable to Tyrants only.

He has called together Legislative Bodies at Places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the Depository of their public Records, for the sole Purpose of fatiguing them into Compliance with his Measures.

He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly Firmness his Invasions on the Rights of the People.

He has refused for a long Time, after such Dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative Powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their Exercise; the State remaining in the mean Time exposed to all the Dangers of Invasion from without, and Convulsions within.

He has endeavored to prevent the Population of these States; for that Purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their Migrations hither, and raising the Conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary Powers.

He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the Tenure of their Offices, and the Amount and Payment of their Salaries.

He has erected a multitude of new Offices, and sent hither Swarms of Officers to harass our People, and eat out their Substance.

He has kept among us, in Times of Peace, Standing Armies, without the Consent of our Legislature.

He has affected to render the Military independent of, and superior to the Civil Power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a Jurisdiction foreign to our Constitution, and unacknowledged by our Laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:

For quartering large Bodies of armed Troops among us;

For proceeding in a most cruel and oppressive manner to the Punishment of any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States;

For cutting off our Trade with all Parts of the World;

For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent;

For depriving us, in many Cases, of the Benefits of Trial by Jury;

For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended Offences;

For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an arbitrary Government, and enlarging its Boundaries, so as to render it at once an Example and fit Instrument for introducing the same absolute Rule into these Colonies;

For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments;

For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with Power to legislate for us in all Cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.

He has plundered our Seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our Towns, and destroyed the Lives of our People.

He is, at this Time, transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to complete the Works of Death, Desolation, and TYRANNY, already begun with Circumstances of Cruelty and Perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous Ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized Nation.

He has constrained our Fellow Citizens, taken Captive on the high Seas, to bear Arms against their Country, to become the Executioners of their Friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.

He has excited Domestic Insurrections amongst us, and has endeavored to bring on the Inhabitants of our Frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known Rule of Warfare, is an undistinguished Destruction of all Ages, Sexes, and Conditions.

In every Stage of these Oppressions we have petitioned for Redress, in the most humble Terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated Injury.—A Prince, whose Character is thus marked by every Act which may define a TYRANT, is unfit to be the Ruler of a FREE PEOPLE!

Not have we been wanting in Attention to our British Brethren. We have warned them from Time to Time of Attempts by their Legislature to extend an unwarrantable Jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the Circumstances of our Emigration and Settlement here. We have appealed to their native Justice and Magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the Ties of our common Kindred to disavow these Usurpations, which would inevitably interrupt our Connections and Correspondence. They too have been deaf to the Voice of Justice and of Consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the Necessity which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of Mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace, Friends.

We, therefore, the REPRESENTATIVES of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, in GENERAL CONGRESS assembled, appealing to the SUPREME JUDGE of the World for the Rectitude of our Intentions, do, in the Name and by the Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly Publish and Declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be, FREE AND INDEPENDENT STATES; that they are absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown; and that all political Connexion between them and the State of Great-Britain, is, and ought to be, totally dissolved; and that as FREE AND INDEPENDENT STATES, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which INDEPENDENT STATES may of Right do. And for the Support of this Declaration, with a firm Reliance on the Protection of DIVINE PROVIDENCE, we mutually pledge to each other our LIVES, our FORTUNES, and our SACRED HONOR.

Signed by ORDER and in BEHALF of the CONGRESS,

JOHN HANCOCK, PRESIDENT.

ATTEST, CHARLES THOMPSON, SECRETARY.

IN COUNCIL, JULY 17th, 1776.

ORDERED, That the Declaration of Independence be printed; and a Copy sent to the Ministers of each Parish, of every Denomination, within this State; and that they severally be required to read the same to their respective Congregations, as soon as divine Service is ended, in the Afternoon, on the first Lord's-Day after they shall have received it.—And after such Publication thereof, to deliver the said Declaration to the Clerks of their several Towns, or Districts; who are hereby required to record the same in their respective Town, or District Books, there to remain as a perpetual MEMORIAL thereof.

In the Name, and by Order of the COUNCIL,

R. DERBY, Jun. President.

A true Copy Attest, JOHN AVERY, Dep. Secy.

SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS-BAY: Printed by E. RUSSELL, by Order of AUTHORITY.

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Religion in the Declaration

- References to God
- “. . .laws of nature and of nature’s God”
- **“. . .all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights; that among them are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. . . .”**
- But also . . .“That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government” (Romans 13?)
- “. . .appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions. . . .”
- “. . .with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence. . . .”

Virginia Disestablishment

- Anglican Established Church
- Later surge of the Great Awakening
- Severe persecution of dissenting sects, especially Baptists.
- Coalition of Enlightenment Deists and Evangelicals against establishment.
- Rejection of the MA option of reassigning your tax dollars to the church of your choice.
- Final Disestablishment in New England not until 1820s-1830s

Madison – Memorial and Remonstrance

“Because experience witnesseth that ecclesiastical establishments, instead of maintaining the purity and efficacy of Religion, have had a contrary operation. During almost fifteen centuries has the legal establishment of Christianity been on trial. What have been its fruits? More or less in all places, pride and indolence in the Clergy, ignorance and servility in the laity, in both, superstition, bigotry and persecution. Enquire of the Teachers of Christianity for the ages in which it appeared in its greatest lustre; those of every sect, point to the ages prior to its incorporation with Civil policy. Propose a restoration of this primitive State in which its Teachers depended on the voluntary rewards of their flocks, many of them predict its downfall. On which Side ought their testimony to have greatest weight, when for or when against their interest?”

Jefferson's Bill for Religious Freedom

“ . . . Almighty God hath created the mind free, and manifested his supreme will that free it shall remain by making it altogether insusceptible of restraint; that all attempts to influence by temporal punishments, or burthens, or by civil incapacitations, tend only to beget habits of hypocrisy and meanness, and are a departure from the plan of the holy author of our religion, who being lord of both body and mind, yet chose not to propagate it by coercions on either.”

An Alternate Preamble?

We the people of the United States, humbly acknowledging Almighty God as the source of all authority and power in civil government, the Lord Jesus Christ as the Ruler among the nations, and His revealed will as the supreme law of the land, in order to constitute a Christian government and, in order to form a more perfect union . . .

An Alternate Preamble 2

We the people of the United States, in a firm belief of the being and perfections of the one living and true God, the creator and supreme governor of the world, in his universal providence and the authority of his laws: that he will require of all moral agents an account of their conduct, that all rightful powers among men are ordained of, and immediately derived from God, therefore in a dependence on his blessing and acknowledgement of his efficient protection in establishing our independence . . .

William Williams of Connecticut

A Godless Constitution?

- “. . .in the Year of our Lord on thousand seven hundred and Eighty seven. . .”
- No religious tests for office holding
- 1797 Treaty of Tripoli – Unanimously ratified by Senate
 - **Art. 11.** As the Government of the United States of America is not, in any sense, founded on the Christian religion; as it has in itself no character of enmity against the laws, religion, or tranquillity, of Mussulmen; and, as the said States never entered into any war, or act of hostility against any Mahometan nation, it is declared by the parties, that no pretext arising from religious opinions, shall ever produce an interruption of the harmony existing between the two countries.

Structural Assumptions

- Sinfulness or corruptibility of human nature requires checks and balances and separation of powers.
- “Ambition must be made to counteract ambition. . . It may be a reflection on human nature, that such devices should be necessary to control the abuses of government. 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. A dependence on the people is, no doubt, the primary control on the government; but experience has taught mankind the necessity of auxiliary precautions.”
Madison, Federalist 51

Religion, Virtue, and Public Morality

- Washington's Farewell Address: "Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that National Morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle."
- Jefferson's Inaugural: "The liberties of a nation [cannot] be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that their liberties are a gift of God."

Massachusetts Constitution

- It is the right as well as the duty of all men in society, publicly, and at stated seasons to worship the Supreme Being, the great Creator and Preserver of the universe.
- As the happiness of a people, and the good order and preservation of civil government, essentially depend upon piety, religion and morality. . .
 - Allow for mandatory church attendance laws and taxes to support ministers' salaries

Revolution

(Shared by Deists and

Evangelicals)

- The Disestablishment of State Churches
- The Doctrine of Equality by Creation
- A belief in human sinfulness or corruptibility that mandated checks and balances to prevent tyranny
- Republics are maintained by virtuous citizens
- God or (Providence) works through nations to achieve His purposes