American Experiment

stepping Stones

Ground Rules
1. We will not deify America
2. We will not deify the Founding Fathers
3. (later)

Then & Now

For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king. It is he who will save us.

Isaiah 33:22

“Though the year of its first appearance is disputed, it is estimated to have sold more than five million copies.”
...if the study of the Bible is to be excluded from all state schools; if the inculcation of the principles of Christianity is to have no place in the daily program; if the worship of God is to form no part of the general exercises of these public elementary schools; then the good of the state would be better served by restoring all schools to church control."

National Education Association (NEA)


Religion is the only solid basis of good morals; therefore education should teach the precepts of religion, and the duties of man towards God.

—Life of Gouverneur Morris, Vol. III


Let divines and philosophers, statesmen and patriots, unite their endeavors to renovate the age, by impressing the minds of men with the importance of educating their little boys and girls, of inculcating in the minds of youth the fear and love of the Deity, in short of leading them in the study and practice of the exalted virtues of the Christian system.

—Letter to John Adams, October 4, 1790

In contemplating the political institutions of the United States, I lament that we waste so much time and money in punishing crimes, and take so little pains to prevent them. We profess to be republicans and yet we neglect the only means of establishing and perpetuating our republican forms of government. That is, the universal education of our youth in the principles of Christianity by the means of the Bible.


“Article III. Religion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever by encouraged.”

—July 13, 1787

In my view, the Christian Religion is the most important and one of the first things in which all children, under a free government, ought to be instructed... that the Christian Religion must be the basis of any government intended to secure the rights and privileges of a free people.

—Reply to David McClure, Oct. 25, 1836

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*Foundations of the American State*

*Remember* the height from which you have fallen! *Repent* and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.

*Revelation 2:5*
The Will of the People: Readings in American Democracy
(Chicago: Great Books Foundation, 2001), 38.
Online Source: http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/infousa/facts/democrac/49.htm

Online Source: http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/religion/re106.html

Online Source: http://deila.dickinson.edu/cgi-bin/docviewer.exe?CISOROOT=/ownwords&CISOPTR=19843

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“...And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion...reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.”


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"The Americans combine the notions of Christianity and liberty so intimately in their minds that it is impossible to make them conceive one without the other."

Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America

"The religious atmosphere of the country was the first thing that struck me upon my arrival in the U.S. In France, I had seen the spirits of religion and freedom almost always marching in opposite directions, in America, I found them intimately linked together and joined and reigned over the same land…"

Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America

Religion should therefore be considered as the first of their political institutions. From the start, politics and religion have agreed and have not since ceased to do so."

Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America

"…only a virtuous people are capable of freedom. As nations become corrupt and vicious, they have more need of masters."

Letter of Benjamin Franklin to Messrs. The Abbes Chalut and Arnaud, dated April 17, 1787. Jared Sparks, ed., The Writings of Benjamin Franklin (Boston: Tappan, Whittmore and Mason, 1840) 10:297.

"...the moral principles and precepts contained in the Scriptures ought to form the basis of all our civil constitutions and laws.... All the miseries and evils which men suffer from vice, crime, ambition, injustice, oppression, slavery, and war, proceed from their despising or neglecting the precepts contained in the Bible."

Online Source: http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/religion/rej06.html

Daniel Webster, Fourth of July Oration Delivered at Fryeburg, ME, in the Year 1802 (A. Williams & Co. / A.F. & C.W. Lewis, Boston, Mass. / Fryeburg, Me., 1882), 12.
Online Source: http://digital.library.umsystem.edu/cgi/t/text/pageviewer-idx?c=jul;cc=jul;sid=bcf0884fcee38f535e4cd23d7d8513e09;rgn=full%20text;idno=jul000403;view=image;seq=1

Online source: http://www.archives.gov/national-archives-experience/charters/declaration_transcript.html
“...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 entitles them...”


Law of Nature Written on the Heart of Man
“...the law of nature is that which God at the time of creation of the nature of man infused into his heart, for his preservation and direction...the moral law, called also the law of nature.”

Sir Edward Coke
1552-1634

“...as man depends absolutely upon his Maker for everything, it is necessary that he should, in all points, conform to his Maker's will. This will of his Maker is called the law of nature...This law of nature...dictated by God himself, is of course superior in obligation to any other. It is binding over all the globe, in all countries, and at all times: no human laws are of any validity if contrary to this; and such of them as are valid derive all their force, and all their authority...from this original.”
“Commentaries on the Law” 1723-1780


“Upon these two foundations, the law of nature and the law of revelation, depend all human laws; that is to say, no human laws should be suffered to contradict these.”

Blackstone, 1723-1780, “Commentaries”. 2500 copies sold in America prior to the Rev War

“Human law must rest its authority ultimately upon the authority of that law which is Divine...Far from being rivals or enemies, religion and law are twin sisters, friends, and mutual assistants.”

James Wilson
“Of the General Principles of Law and Obligation” U.S. Supreme Court Justice Signed U.S. Constitution

Evolution of Law in America

1869
Eliot arrives as President of Harvard

1870
Langdell becomes head of Harvard Law School

Langdell’s Case Method

“Law, considered as a science, consists of certain principles or doctrines...Each of these doctrines has arrived at its present state by slow degrees; in other words, it is a growth, extending in many cases through centuries. This growth is to be traced in the main through a series of cases;...”

Preface to Langdell’s 1879, Cases on Contracts, cited in H.W.Titus, God, Man and Law

John Chipman Gray

“The law is a living thing, with a continuous history, sloughing off the old, taking on the new.”

Gray was one of Langdell’s colleagues in changing the view of law in America

H.W. Titus, God, Man and Law

Rise of Legal Positivism

“Langdell did not merely introduce a new method of teaching law, he introduced a new faith concerning law. He believed that man, led by the ablest scholars and judges, could discover and determine the laws governing human affairs. Because he believed that man did not need the aid of God and of the Holy Scripture...”

H. W. Titus, God, Man and Law

Rise of Legal Positivism

“...Langdell sought to eliminate both from legal education—not by default, but by design. He, along with president Eliot, had embraced the new faith that swept the academic world in the latter 1800’s—that Darwin’s theory of evolution was the key to all of life, including the law.”

H. W. Titus, God, Man and Law


The claim that the state is the ultimate authority for creating, interpreting and enforcing law. All legal truth is based on the decision of the state.


“The life of the law has not been logic; it has been experience... In order to know what it is, we must know what it has been, and what it tends to become.”


“[Law is] simply an embodiment of the ends and purposes of a society at a given point in its history... beliefs that have triumphed and nothing more.”


Noah Webster, *Letters to a Young Gentleman Commencing His Education* (New Haven, S. Converse, 1823) 18-19.

“Value of the Bible, 1824, #302


Online Source: [http://www.nhinet.org/ccc/docs/del-1776.htm](http://www.nhinet.org/ccc/docs/del-1776.htm)


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The United States was started by men we today would call pagans. They wrote a constitution without one word about God or Jesus in it. And in the amendments they said there should be no laws respecting the establishment of religion. This too is excluding God...Jefferson, Madison, Washington, John Adams, John Quincy Adams, Paine, Patrick Henry and most of our Founding Fathers were deists.

Bishop Paul P. O'Brien

"...how has it happened, Sir, that we have not hitherto once thought of humbly appealing to the Father of lights to illuminate our understandings? In the beginning of the contest with Great Britain, when we were sensible to danger, we had daily prayers in this room for Divine protection. Our prayers, Sir, were heard and they were graciously answered... And have we now forgotten that powerful friend? or do we imagine that we no longer need his assistance?...

Benjamin Franklin

"...I have lived, Sir, a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth—that God governs the affairs of men. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without his aid? We have been assured, Sir, in the sacred writings, that "except the Lord build the House, they labor in vain that build it." I firmly believe this, and I also believe that without his concurring aid we shall succeed in this political building no better, than the Builders of Babel...


Online Source: http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/debates/628.htm

We shall be divided by our little partial local interests; our projects will be confounded, and we ourselves shall become a reproach and by word down to future ages...I therefore beg leave to move—that henceforth prayers imploring the assistance of Heaven, and its blessings on our deliberations, be held in this Assembly every morning before we proceed to business...

Benjamin Franklin

Constitutional Convention, June 28, 1787
“More than half a century ago, while I was still a child, I recall hearing a number of older people offer the following explanation for the great disasters that had befallen Russia: ‘Men have forgotten God; that’s why all this has happened.’”

Templeton Address, 1983

“Since then I have spent well-nigh fifty years working on the history of our Revolution; in the process I have read hundreds of books, collected hundreds of personal testimonies, and have already contributed eight volumes of my own toward the effort of clearing away the rubble left by that upheaval...”

Templeton Address, 1983

...But if I were asked today to formulate as concisely as possible the main cause of the ruinous Revolution that swallowed up some sixty million of our people, I could not put it more accurately than to repeat: ‘Men have forgotten God; that’s why all this has happened.’

Templeton Address, 1983

When I fed them, they were satisfied; when they were satisfied, they became proud; then they forgot me.

Hosea 13:6

The path to Forgetting God

Remember
Destruction
Judgement
Forget God
Deuteronomy 8:10-20
Hosea 13:6

the Cycle of Nations

Blessings
Satisfied
Humbly, Thankfulness & Righteousness
Proud Heart
Repent
Return
Revelation 2:5

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2 Chronicles 7:13-14

“When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among my people, if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.”


Online Source: http://www.hti.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=lincoln;iel=4;view=text;idno=lincoln6;rgn=div1;cc=lincoln;node=lincoln6%3A3A336
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Revelation 2:5