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AMERICA, CHRISTIANITY, AND THE CULTURE WAR (PART III)

Dave Miller, Ph.D.

[EDITORS' NOTE: Parts I and II of this three-part series appeared in the June and July issues. Part III follows below, and continues, without introductory comments, where the second article ended.]

Presidential Oath of Office

Article 2, Section 1 of the *Constitution of the United States* gives the precise wording of the oath of office to be taken by every individual who is elected to the presidency ("Presidential Oaths..."). Conspicuously absent from the oath are the closing words so familiar to our ears: "So help me God." When did these final four words that affirm belief in the God of the Bible begin to be added to the presidential oath of office? The custom began on April 30, 1789 when the very first President sworn into office, George Washington, took it upon himself to add the words. **Every President thereafter** has followed Washington's lead by adding the words "so help me God." The oath mandated for the Vice President (and all other government employees), which is set out in the *U.S. Code*, actually mandates the phrase "so help me God" (2002, 5USC3331). What's more, history records that after taking the oath, George Washington then leaned down and **kissed the Bible** ("President George...", n.d.)! That tradition was followed by his successors until Benjamin Pierce broke the precedent in 1853, yet all have continued the traditions of placing their hand on the

Bible and repeating "so help me God" at the conclusion of the oath ("Inaugurals of Presidents..."). Unconstitutional? Separation of church and state?

Public Education

The public school system of today differs radically from the public education that was in effect from America's beginning. For all practical purposes, God and the Bible have now been banned from public schools and Christian connections have been largely purged. What a far cry from early American schools where **the religious and moral education of youth was paramount**. It is a historical fact that the Bible was the central focus of American education from the very beginning—the first book in the classroom. The Bible was used, not only to teach content, but to teach a child how to read, memorize, recite, and even write ("The Story of...", 2001).

New England Primer

The first textbook in the American school room was the *New England Primer*, extremely popular throughout the 1700s and 1800s. It was replete with Christian and Bible content (*New England...*, 1805). For example, page two of the 1805 edition has "A Divine Song of Praise to God, for a Child." Page eleven gives "Agur's Prayer," taken directly from Proverbs 30:8-9, and "Duty of Children towards their Parents," which simply quotes Matthew 15:4 and Ephesians 6:1. Pages 12-16 teach the alphabet using rhymed references to the Bible, including: "B—Thy life to mend, this Book attend"; "P—Peter denies, his Lord and cries"; "Q—Queen Esther comes, in Royal State, to save the Jews, from dismal Fate"; "R—Rachel doth mourn, for her First-born"; "S—Samuel anoints, whom God appoints"; "Z—Zaccheus he, did climb the tree, his Lord to see." Page 17 offers "Moral Precepts for Children" fol-



lowed by "The Lord's Prayer." Pages 19-21 have "A Cradle Hymn, by Dr. Watts" with numerous references to Christ. Page 21 has the familiar bedtime rhyme: "Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray thee, Lord, my soul to keep; If I should die before I wake, I pray thee, Lord, my soul to take." This rhyme is followed by: "Good Chil-

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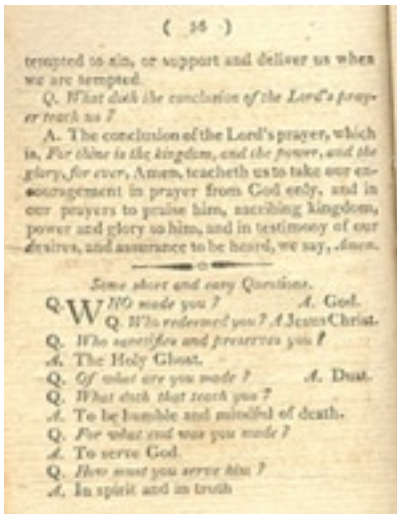
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President Reagan's Inauguration in 1984
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dren must: Fear God all day, parents obey, no false thing say, by no sin stray, love Christ always, in secret pray, mind little play, make no delay, in doing good." Pages 22-29 recount the death of John Rodgers, "minister of the gospel," who "died courageously for the gospel of Jesus Christ" at the hands of a Catholic queen. Pages 30-56 offer "The Shorter Catechism" consisting of scores of questions and answers from the Bible, concluding with "Some short and easy Questions":

- Q: Who made you? A: God
 Q: Who redeemed you? A: Jesus Christ
 Q: Who sanctifies and preserves you?
 A: The Holy Ghost
 Q: Of what are you made? A: Dust
 Q: What doth that teach you? A: To be humble and mindful of death.
 Q: For what end was [sic] you made?
 A: To serve God
 Q: How must you serve Him? A: In spirit and in truth



From pages 57-67, the student was treated to "A Dialogue Between Christ, a Youth, and the Devil" in which a child is encouraged to make the right decisions in life in preparation for death. Pages 68-70 consist of "Questions and Answers out of the Holy Scriptures." Page 71 has "A short Prayer to be used every Morning" and "A short prayer to be used every Evening"—the very thing banned by the U.S. Supreme Court in the 1960s. The final page (p. 72) closes with a poem that concludes with 1 Corinthians 15:55. This premiere American public school textbook is so thoroughly saturated with Bible teaching that it could just as easily be used in a church's Sunday morning Bible class!

Blue-Back Speller

The next significant American public school textbook, Noah Webster's *The American Spelling Book* published in 1787, revised in 1829 and renamed *The Elementary Spelling Book* (nicknamed "Blue-Back Speller"), dominated public education from the late 1700s through the Civil War, "selling some 70 million copies into the 20th century" (Monaghan, 2002, 25[2]; cf. Monaghan, 1983). It, too, is literally laced with references to God, the Bible, Christianity, and Christian moral principles—all now deemed politically incorrect and unconstitutional. For example, the following sample sentences were designed to develop the student's ability to read, pronounce, and build vocabulary [NOTE: Bold, bracketed material has been added to identify direct biblical citation]:

A rude girl will romp in the street (p. 24).



- Good boys and girls will act well (p. 24).
 The Holy Bible is the book of God (p. 26).
 To filch is to steal. We must not filch (p. 27).
 Strong drink will debase a man (p. 28).
 Teachers like to see their pupils polite to each other (p. 28).
 Good men obey the laws of God (p. 29).
 We go to church on the first day of the week (p. 30).
 God will bless those who do his will (p. 32).
 The preacher is to preach the gospel (p. 41).
 Felony is a crime that may be punished with death (p. 42).
 That idle boy is a very lazy fellow (p. 44).
 God made the ear, and He can hear (p. 46).
 The gambler wishes to get money without earning it (p. 49).
 Men devoted to mere amusement misemploy their time (p. 50).
 Washington was not a selfish man. He labored for the good of his country more than for himself (p. 50).
 We punish bad men to prevent crimes (p. 51).
 The drunkard's face will publish his vice and his disgrace (p. 51).
 The devil is the great adversary of man (p. 52). [1 Peter 5:8]
 Labor makes us strong and healthy (p. 58).
 A vagrant is a wandering, lazy fellow (p. 58).
 We are apt to live forgetful of our continual dependence on the will of God (p. 66).
 The drunkard's course is progressive; he begins by drinking a little, and shortens his life by drinking to excess (p. 67).
 Children should answer questions politely (p. 68).
 God governs the world in infinite wisdom; the Bible teaches us that it is our duty to worship Him (p. 69).
 It is a solemn thing to die and appear before God (p. 69).
 Children should respect and obey their parents (p. 70).
 Satan afflicted Job with sore boils (p. 72). [Job 2:7]
 "If sinners entice thee, consent thou not," [Proverbs 1:10] but withdraw from their company (p. 72).

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The chewing of tobacco is a useless habit (p. 74).
 We should be attentive and helpful to strangers (p. 75). [Hebrews 13:2]
 Parents deserve the kind treatment of children (p. 75).
 Prayer is a duty... (p. 75).
 Confess your sins and forsake them (p. 76). [Proverbs 23:10]
 The wicked transgress the laws of God (p. 76).
 Before you rise in the morning or retire at night, give thanks to God for his mercies, and implore the continuance of his protection (p. 79).
 The laws of nature are sustained by the immediate presence and agency of God (p. 80).
 The Heavens declare an Almighty power that made them (p. 80). [Psalm 19:1]
 How can a young man cleanse his way? (p. 82). [Psalm 119:9]
 Oh, how love I Thy law! (p. 82). [Psalm 119:97]
 Let us lay up for ourselves treasure in heaven, where neither moth nor rust can corrupt (p. 88). [Matthew 6:20]
 Humility is the prime ornament of the Christian (p. 91).
 A love of trifling amusements is derogatory to the Christian character (p. 92).
 God is the divine legislator... (p. 98).



It is the duty of every good man to inspect the moral conduct of the man who is offered as a legislator at our yearly elections. If the people wish for good laws, they may have them, by electing good men (pp. 98-99).
 Noah and his family outlived all the people who lived before the flood (p. 101).
 God will forgive those who repent of their sins, and live a holy life (p. 101).
 Thy testimonies, O Lord, are very sure; holiness becometh thine house forever (p. 101). [Psalm 93:5]
 Do not attempt to deceive God; nor to mock him with solemn words whilst your heart is set to do evil (p. 101)
 A holy life will disarm death of its sting (p. 101). [1 Corinthians 15:56]



God will impart grace to the humble penitent (p. 101). [1 Peter 5:5]
 Abusive words irritate the passions, but "a soft answer turneth away wrath" (p. 104). [Proverbs 15:1]
 Good manners are always becoming; ill manners are evidence of low breeding (p. 105).
 The heathen are those people who worship idols, or who know not the true God (p. 115).
 Those who enjoy the light of the gospel, and neglect to observe its precepts, are more criminal than the heathen (p. 115).
 It is every man's duty to bequeath to his children a rich inheritance of pious precepts (p. 115).
 Bad boys sometimes know what a whip is by their feelings. This is a kind of knowledge which good boys dispense with (p. 120).
 "Take away your exactions from my people." Ezek. xiv.9. (p. 121).
 Examine the Scriptures daily and carefully, and set an example of good works (p. 121). [Acts 17:11; Titus 2:7]
 The Bible, that is, the Old and the New Testament, contains the Holy Scriptures (p. 135).
 Whatever is wrong is a deviation from right, or from the just laws of God or man (p. 136).
 How happy men would be if they would always love what is right and hate what is wrong (p. 136). [Amos 5:15]



This volume also contains several fables that teach a variety of lessons. Consider Fable 1, titled "Of the Boy that Stole Apples":

An old man found a rude boy upon one of his trees stealing apples, and desired him to come down; but the young saucybox told him plainly he would not. "Won't you?" said the old man, "then I will fetch you down;" so he pulled up some turf or grass and threw at him; but this only made the youngster laugh, to think the old man should pretend to beat him down from the tree with grass only. "Well, well," said the old man, "if neither words nor grass will do, I must try what virtue there is in stones;" so the old man pelted him heartily with stones, which soon made the young chap hasten down from the tree and beg the old man's pardon (pp. 140-141).

By today's standards, one would expect the outcome of this story to be that the police arrived on the scene, arrested and jailed the old man for injury to a child, followed by a civil suit filed by the boy's parents for child abuse, thereby destroying the old man's reputation and sending him into bankruptcy. In contrast, the book gives the following moral: "If good words and gentle means will not reclaim the wicked, they must be dealt with in a more severe manner" (p. 141).

Observe that a central purpose of the "Blue-Back Speller" was to instill in children proper conduct (i.e., what is courteous and polite vs. what is rudely and socially unacceptable), moral integrity (evils of alcohol, lying, stealing, selfishness, etc.), and citizenship (patriotism, respect for the Founders, and love for God and country). Indeed, such truths and insights cultivate the soul, buoy the spirit, and prepare a child to lead a productive, disciplined, honorable life. In sharp contradistinction, the removal of these basic precepts from public education has had a catastrophic, deleterious effect on the moral sensibilities and social stability of the nation.

McGuffey's Reader

A third prominent source of public education was the *McGuffey's Reader*. First printed in 1836, the series consisted of six readers corresponding to six levels of difficulty. With some 120 million copies sold between 1836 and 1890, "[p]ractically every American who attended public schools during the second half of the nineteenth century learned moral and ethical lessons from *McGuffey's Reader*" (*McGuffey's Reader*, 2005). These volumes, like those already noted, were riddled with a biblical worldview and the essentiality of Christian morality. In fact, in the Publisher's Preface to the "Parent/Teacher Guide," the President of Mott Media made the following insightful assessment of the views of McGuffey and the corresponding impact on American civilization:



How would McGuffey teach reading if he were here today? First, he would be concerned about the content of pupils' reading. The content would promote moral growth and excellence of mind in habits, attitudes, and literary tastes. And **morality, in McGuffey's thinking, was closely aligned with the Christian religion; no other foundation could produce true morality** ("McGuffey Readers..." n.d., emp. added).

<p> 1. Praise to God 77 2. The Prince of the Emeralds 78 3. Story of Little Boy 87 4. About Little Boy 87 5. About Using Good or Bad 87 6. About the Ten 87 7. About the Ten 87 8. About the Ten 87 9. About the Ten 87 10. About the Ten 87 11. About the Ten 87 12. About the Ten 87 13. About the Ten 87 14. About the Ten 87 15. About the Ten 87 16. About the Ten 87 17. About the Ten 87 18. About the Ten 87 19. About the Ten 87 20. About the Ten 87 21. About the Ten 87 22. About the Ten 87 23. About the Ten 87 24. About the Ten 87 25. About the Ten 87 26. About the Ten 87 27. About the Ten 87 28. About the Ten 87 29. About the Ten 87 30. About the Ten 87 31. About the Ten 87 32. About the Ten 87 33. About the Ten 87 34. About the Ten 87 35. About the Ten 87 36. About the Ten 87 37. About the Ten 87 38. About the Ten 87 39. About the Ten 87 40. About the Ten 87 41. About the Ten 87 42. About the Ten 87 43. About the Ten 87 44. About the Ten 87 45. About the Ten 87 46. About the Ten 87 47. About the Ten 87 48. About the Ten 87 49. About the Ten 87 50. About the Ten 87 51. About the Ten 87 52. About the Ten 87 53. About the Ten 87 54. About the Ten 87 55. About the Ten 87 56. About the Ten 87 57. About the Ten 87 58. About the Ten 87 59. About the Ten 87 60. About the Ten 87 61. About the Ten 87 62. About the Ten 87 63. About the Ten 87 64. About the Ten 87 65. About the Ten 87 66. About the Ten 87 67. About the Ten 87 68. About the Ten 87 69. About the Ten 87 70. About the Ten 87 71. About the Ten 87 72. About the Ten 87 73. About the Ten 87 74. About the Ten 87 75. About the Ten 87 76. About the Ten 87 77. About the Ten 87 78. About the Ten 87 79. About the Ten 87 80. About the Ten 87 81. About the Ten 87 82. About the Ten 87 83. About the Ten 87 84. About the Ten 87 85. About the Ten 87 86. About the Ten 87 87. About the Ten 87 88. About the Ten 87 89. About the Ten 87 90. About the Ten 87 91. About the Ten 87 92. About the Ten 87 93. About the Ten 87 94. About the Ten 87 95. About the Ten 87 96. About the Ten 87 97. About the Ten 87 98. About the Ten 87 99. About the Ten 87 100. About the Ten 87 </p>	<p> 1. About the Ten 87 2. About the Ten 87 3. About the Ten 87 4. About the Ten 87 5. About the Ten 87 6. About the Ten 87 7. About the Ten 87 8. About the Ten 87 9. About the Ten 87 10. About the Ten 87 11. About the Ten 87 12. About the Ten 87 13. About the Ten 87 14. About the Ten 87 15. About the Ten 87 16. About the Ten 87 17. About the Ten 87 18. About the Ten 87 19. About the Ten 87 20. About the Ten 87 21. About the Ten 87 22. About the Ten 87 23. About the Ten 87 24. About the Ten 87 25. About the Ten 87 26. About the Ten 87 27. About the Ten 87 28. About the Ten 87 29. About the Ten 87 30. About the Ten 87 31. About the Ten 87 32. About the Ten 87 33. About the Ten 87 34. About the Ten 87 35. About the Ten 87 36. About the Ten 87 37. About the Ten 87 38. About the Ten 87 39. About the Ten 87 40. About the Ten 87 41. About the Ten 87 42. About the Ten 87 43. About the Ten 87 44. About the Ten 87 45. About the Ten 87 46. About the Ten 87 47. About the Ten 87 48. About the Ten 87 49. About the Ten 87 50. About the Ten 87 51. About the Ten 87 52. About the Ten 87 53. About the Ten 87 54. About the Ten 87 55. About the Ten 87 56. About the Ten 87 57. About the Ten 87 58. About the Ten 87 59. About the Ten 87 60. About the Ten 87 61. About the Ten 87 62. About the Ten 87 63. About the Ten 87 64. About the Ten 87 65. About the Ten 87 66. About the Ten 87 67. About the Ten 87 68. About the Ten 87 69. About the Ten 87 70. About the Ten 87 71. About the Ten 87 72. About the Ten 87 73. About the Ten 87 74. About the Ten 87 75. About the Ten 87 76. About the Ten 87 77. About the Ten 87 78. About the Ten 87 79. About the Ten 87 80. About the Ten 87 81. About the Ten 87 82. About the Ten 87 83. About the Ten 87 84. About the Ten 87 85. About the Ten 87 86. About the Ten 87 87. About the Ten 87 88. About the Ten 87 89. About the Ten 87 90. About the Ten 87 91. About the Ten 87 92. About the Ten 87 93. About the Ten 87 94. About the Ten 87 95. About the Ten 87 96. About the Ten 87 97. About the Ten 87 98. About the Ten 87 99. About the Ten 87 100. About the Ten 87 </p>
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A quick perusal of the various tables of contents demonstrates the point. In the second reader (dated 1836), the readings include "Praise to God" (p. 77), "About Doing Good at Play" (p. 87), "The Honest Boy and the Thief" (p. 142), "The Lord's Prayer" (p. 162), "The Disobedient Girl" (p. 166), "Story about Joseph" (p. 198), "The Ten Commandments" (p. 229), and "About Using Profane Language" (p. 233). In the third reader (dated 1837), the listing includes "The Goodness of God" (p. 157), "Touch not—Taste not—Handle not" [Colossians 2:21] (p. 208), and "Gospel Invitation" (p. 238). The fourth reader (dated 1838) includes "Divine Providence" (p. 168), "Scripture Lesson" (p. 182), "Thirsting after Righteousness" [Matthew 5:6] (p. 216), "Satan and Death at the Gate of Hell" (p. 232), "Christian Hymn of Triumph..." (p. 309), and "The Proverbs of Solomon" (p. 411). The revised edition of the fifth reader includes "The Bible the Best of Classics" (p. 350) and "My Mother's Bible" (p. 351).

The University

Moving to higher education, what has become of our universities? Sadly, over the last half century, many of the state uni-

versities of America have been infiltrated, subverted, and thoroughly transformed into intellectual cesspools advocating every imaginable left-wing, anti-Christian, anti-American, socialistic ideology. The universities are now controlled by political and social liberalism, and many of the professors are atheistic, agnostic, and humanistic. The universities bear a large share of the blame for the silencing of God and the jettisoning of the Bible that has taken place among the last three generations.

But it was not always so. Indeed, from the very beginning of the nation—and before—the colleges were founded by ardent advocates of Christianity who designed these institutions of higher learning for a singular purpose: **to promote the Christian religion** among the inhabitants of America. Such a claim sounds preposterous. Yet, the historical facts are plain and undeniable. As one example, simply visit the official Web site for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and see with one's own eyes the wording of the original state constitution as it related to the establishment and ongoing purpose of Harvard. Part the Second, Chapter V, Section 1 pertains to "THE UNIVERSITY AT CAMBRIDGE, AND ENCOURAGEMENT OF LITERATURE, ETC.":

Article I. Whereas our wise and pious ancestors, so early as the year one thousand six hundred and thirty-six, laid the foundation of Harvard College, in which university many persons of great eminence have, **by the blessing of God**, been initiated in those arts and sciences, which qualified them for public employments, both **in church** and state: and whereas the encouragement of arts and sciences, and all good literature, **tends to the honor of God, the advantage of the Christian religion**, and the great benefit of this and the other United States of America—it is declared, that the President and Fellows of Harvard College...shall have, hold, use, exercise and enjoy, all the powers, authorities, rights, liberties, privileges, immunities and franchises, which they now have or are entitled to have (*Constitution...*, emp. added).

What was the purpose of education? To encourage people to honor God and to demonstrate the "advantage," i.e., superiority of, the Christian religion to the benefit of the entire country! Indeed, the 1636 rules of Harvard included the following declaration:

Let every student be plainly instructed and earnestly pressed to consider well **the main end of his life and studies is to know God and Jesus Christ** which is eternal life (John 17:3) and therefore to lay Christ in the bottom as **the only foundation of all sound knowledge and learning**. And seeing the Lord only giveth wisdom, let every one seriously set himself **by prayer** in secret to seek it of Him (Prov. 2,3). Every one shall so exercise himself in **reading the Scrip-**

tures twice a day that he shall be ready to give such an account of his proficiency therein (as quoted in Pierce, 1833, p. 5, emp. added).

The other universities at the beginning of America possessed the same orientation. So the facts are that from the 1700s to the middle of the twentieth century, American public schools were Bible-oriented. The textbooks immersed the children in the moral principles and religious doctrines of Christianity. What a tragic, heartbreaking, lethal transformation has come over American public education!

National Songs

Many songs and hymns have come to characterize our national consciousness. "God of our Fathers" was selected as the official hymn of the Centennial observance commemorating the adoption of the *Constitution* (Smith, 2000). The lyrics reaffirm national sentiments regarding the role of God and the one true religion in America's history:

God of our fathers, Whose almighty hand leads forth in beauty all the starry band
Of shining worlds in splendor through the skies
Our grateful songs before **Thy throne** arise.

Thy love divine hath led us in the past, In this free land **by Thee** our lot is cast,

Be Thou our Ruler, Guardian, Guide and Stay, **Thy Word** our law, **Thy paths** our chosen way.

From war's alarms, from deadly pestilence, **Be Thy strong arm** our ever sure defense;

Thy true religion in our hearts increase, **Thy** bounteous goodness nourish us in peace.

Refresh **Thy** people on their toilsome way, Lead us from night to never ending day;

Fill all our lives with love and grace divine, And glory, laud, and praise be ever **Thine**.

Francis Scott Key, 35-year-old poet-lawyer, was aboard ship on September 13, 1814 eight miles away when he witnessed the valiant defense of Fort McHenry by American forces during the British bombardment in the war of 1812. The incident inspired him to write the words to



The Da Vinci Code and the Dead Sea Scrolls

Eric Lyons, M.Min.



Credit: The Schoyen Collection
MS 1655/1

In 1947, a number of ancient documents were found (by accident) in a cave on the north-west side of the Dead Sea. This collection of documents, which has become known as the Dead Sea Scrolls, was comprised of old leather and papyrus scrolls and fragments that had been rolled up in earthen jars for centuries. From 1949 to 1956, hundreds of Hebrew and Aramaic manuscripts and a few Greek fragments were found in surrounding caves, and are believed by scholars to have been written between 200 B.C. and the first half of the first century A.D. Some of the manuscripts were of Jewish apocryphal and pseudepigraphal writings (e.g., 1 Enoch, Tobit, and Jubilees); others are often grouped together as “ascetic” writings (miscellaneous books of rules, poetry, commentary, etc.). The most notable group of documents found in the caves of Qumran near the Dead Sea is the collection of Old Testament books. Every book from the Hebrew Bible was accounted for among the scrolls, except the book of Esther.

The Dead Sea Scrolls make up one of the greatest archaeological discoveries of all times. Jews and Christians often point to these scrolls as evidence for the integrity of the Old Testament text. Prior to 1947, the earliest known Old Testament manuscripts only went back to about A.D. 1000. With the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, Bible scholars have been able to compare the present day text with the text from more than 2,000 years ago. What they have found are copies of Old Testament books separated in time by more than a millennium that are amazingly similar. Indeed, the Old Testament text had been transmitted faithfully through the centuries. As Rene Paché concluded: “Since it can be demonstrated that the text of the Old Testament was accurately transmitted for the last 2,000 years, one may reasonably suppose that it had been so transmitted from the beginning” (1971, p. 191).

So what does all of this have to do with *The Da Vinci Code*? According to Dan Brown, author of *The Da Vinci Code*, “All descriptions of artwork, architecture, **documents**, and secret rituals in this novel **are accurate**” (2003a, p. 1, emp. added). Yet notice how Brown uses one of his main fictional characters (Leigh Teabing) in the book. In an attempt to disparage the

New Testament documents, Teabing alleged the following about them and their relationship to the Dead Sea Scrolls:

“[S]ome of the gospels that Constantine attempted to eradicate managed to survive. The Dead Sea Scrolls were found in the 1950s hidden in a cave near Qumran in the Judean desert” (Brown, 2003a, p. 234).

“These are photocopies of the Nag Hammadi and Dead Sea Scrolls, which I mentioned earlier,” Teabing said. “The earliest Christian records. Troublingly, they do not match up with the gospels in the Bible” (p. 244).

Although Brown asserted on the very first page of his book that “[a]ll descriptions of...documents...in this novel are **accurate**” (emp. added), and even though he claimed “absolutely all” of his book is based on reality in terms of things that actually occurred (see Brown, 2003b), among the many **inaccurate** statements he made in his book are those quoted above regarding the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Simply put, the Dead Sea Scrolls are not in any way “Christian records;” they are Jewish writings from a Jewish religious sect, most of which predate the time of Christ (and thus Christianity) by several decades, and in some cases one or two centuries. These scrolls contain no “gospels.” In fact, Jesus of Nazareth is never even mentioned in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Such a reckless use of one of the greatest biblical archaeological discoveries ever should cause readers to see *The Da Vinci Code* for what it really is—a fictional novel bent on raising unnecessary suspicion about the trustworthiness of the Bible. Interestingly, the “documents” Brown used in hopes of casting doubt on Christianity, are, in actuality, some of the greatest pieces of evidence for the reliability of the Old Testament. What’s more, the Old Testament was “the Bible” of the early church. It is from these “Scriptures” that first-century Christians gleaned a greater understanding about Jesus, Who, as taught in the Old Testament, was the Christ, the prophesied Messiah (Acts 8:32-35; 17:10-11; 2 Timothy 3:15-17). In that sense, the Hebrew Scriptures contained in the Dead Sea Scrolls collection marvelously “match up with the gospels in the Bible.”

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RESOURCES

R&R RESOURCES

Q What effect is culture having on religion in America?

A In the midst of heated discussion and hot debate, the Episcopalian Church met in Columbus, Ohio to consider, among other things, whether the organization should ban gays and lesbians from being bishops. In the media attention surrounding the Episcopal General Convention, Katharine Schori, the first female presiding Bishop in the denomination's history, had much to say about her beliefs regarding homosexuality. She stated: "I am fully committed to the full inclusion of gay and lesbian Christians in this church" (Clark, 2006). Ironically, Asian and African Anglican bishops are so appalled at the stance of their American counterparts that they have cried out: "Don't you believe the Bible you gave us?"

With such sentiments expressed by the prominent leader of the group, it is no surprise that the denomination did not pass the measure to ban homosexuals from being bishops. They did, however, institute a quasi-reversal of the non-ban and suggested that churches should "exercise restraint" in selecting openly gay bishops" (Clark, 2006). Such a policy would make it more difficult for homosexuals to be bishops, but not impossible.

The troubling thing about such news is the way in which decisions are being made by those who profess to be Christians. The Bible explains that Christ is the head of the church, His body (Ephesians 1:22-23). Scriptures further explain that anything done by His Church should be done in accordance with His revealed will, by His authority (Colossians 3:17,23-24). It has never been the prerogative of any group that supposedly follows Christ to vote on whether an action is a

sin or not. Furthermore, if someone is openly committing sin, it certainly is not the prerogative of "the body" to overrule "the head" and appoint such sinful individuals to leadership positions.

Inspired Scripture explains that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God. In the litany of activities that would be considered unrighteous, homosexuality is conspicuously and repeatedly included (1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Romans 1:26-28). Not only should openly homosexual individuals be banned from becoming bishops, they should be publicly marked and withdrawn from (along with adulterers, fornicators, thieves, etc.) until they repent of their sins and stop committing homosexual acts (1 Corinthians 5). Any group that presumes to vote on such issues and thinks that such a vote alters the way Heaven views sin is sadly mistaken. The church that Jesus died to save has no earthly headquarters, finds unity only through obedience to the New Testament, and is to function as an obedient body of Christ. All religious organizations that refuse to recognize the authority of Christ as revealed in the New Testament (Matthew 28:18) will hear these sad words spoken by Christ on the Day of Judgment: "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness" (Matthew 7:23).

Kyle Butt

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IN THE NEWS

By a whopping 81%, the people of the state of Alabama have joined the ranks of 19 other states in voting overwhelmingly to define marriage biblically, i.e., one man for one woman. Only Mississippi exceeds Alabama in the percentage of voters (86%) that passed the amendment (Wetzstein, 2006). Other states that have already passed a state constitutional amendment have done so with an average of 71 percent of the vote. These states include Alaska and Hawaii (in 1998), Nebraska (in 2000), Nevada (in 2002), Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, and Utah (all in 2004), Kansas and Texas (in 2005). States that are scheduled to vote on state constitutional marriage amendments in November are Idaho, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Virginia, and Wisconsin (Garris, 2006).

The country is in a literal life/death struggle over whether the moral principles of Chris-

tianity will continue to characterize American civilization. The outcome of this struggle will determine national survival (Jeremiah 18:7-10; Daniel 4:17). Christians must "fight the good fight" (1 Timothy 6:12), "wage the good warfare" (1 Timothy 1:18), and "endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2 Timothy 2:3).

Dave Miller

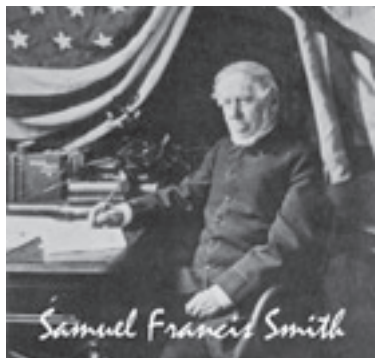
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“The Star-Spangled Banner.” He later stated: “Then, in that hour of deliverance, my heart spoke. Does not such a country, and such defenders of their country, deserve a song?” (“Fort McHenry...”). Though written in 1814, it was not until 1931 that the song was adopted by Congress as the official national anthem. Few Americans are aware that the fourth verse reaffirms the historic national attitude toward God:

Oh! thus be it ever, when freemen shall stand
Between their loved homes and the war's desolation!
Blest with victory and peace, **may the heaven-rescued land**
Praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation.
Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just,
And this be our motto: “**In God is our trust.**”
And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

While studying at Andover Theological Seminary in 1831, Samuel Francis Smith wrote the song “My Country ‘Tis of Thee,” also known simply as “America” (“Patriotic Melodies”). Observe the fourth verse:



Our fathers' God, to thee, Author of liberty, to thee we sing;
Long may our land be bright with freedom's holy light.
Protect us by thy might, Great God our King.

It was during the American Civil War in 1861, while visiting a Union Army camp on the Potomac River near Washington, D.C., that Julia Ward Howe received the inspiration to write the “Battle Hymn of the Republic” (“Battle Hymn...”). The song is replete with allusions to Christianity:

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of **the Lord**;
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;
He hath loosed the fateful lightning of **His** terrible swift sword;
His truth is marching on.
I have seen **Him** in the watch fires of a hundred circling camps.



They have builded **Him** an altar in the evening dews and damps;
I can read **His righteous sentence** by the dim and flaring lamps;
His day is marching on.
I have read a fiery **Gospel** writ in burnished rows of steel;
“As ye deal with **My** contemnners, so with you **My grace** shall deal”;
Let the Hero, born of woman, crush the serpent with His heel [Genesis 3:15],
Since **God** is marching on.
He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call retreat;
He is sifting out the hearts of men before **His judgment seat**;
Oh, be swift, my soul, to answer **Him!** be jubilant, my feet;
Our God is marching on.
In the beauty of the lilies **Christ was born across the sea**,
With a glory in **His bosom** that transfigures you and me:
As **He died to make men holy**, let us die to make men free;
While **God** is marching on.
He is coming like the glory of the morning on the wave,
He is wisdom to the mighty, **He is honor** to the brave;
So the world shall be **His footstool**, and the soul of wrong **His slave**,
Our God is marching on.
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah! Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah! **Our God** is marching on.

Few today realize that “hallelujah” is Hebrew for “praise the Lord.”

The words to “America the Beautiful” were written by Katharine Lee Bates in 1893, after an inspiring trip to the top of Pikes Peak, Colorado (“America the...”). It, too, acknowledges the historic national belief in and commitment to God:

O beautiful for spacious skies, for amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties above the fruited plain!
America! America! **God shed His grace** on thee,
And crown thy good with brotherhood from sea to shining sea.
America! America! **God mend thine ev'ry flaw**,
Confirm thy soul in self-control, thy liberty in law.



Suresnes, France

America! America! **May God** thy gold refine
Till all success be nobleness, and ev'ry gain **divine**.

Cemeteries

What will the ACLU do about our cemeteries, in which graves are frequently marked with crosses and words from the Bible? Even our **military** (i.e., government) cemeteries are characterized by their connection to the Christian religion. In fact, in our military cemeteries in foreign lands (eight World War I and twelve World War II), with the occasional exception of a star of David, each constitutes a visually stun-



Meuse-Argonne, France

ning sea of white, marble **crosses** (“Cemeteries”). The allusions to the Bible and the Christian religion in the cemeteries throughout America are legion.

Miscellaneous Indicators in Public Life

Other indications of the Christian religion characterizing public life in America thoroughly permeate history. For example, many Americans have some awareness of the famed Pony Express—a novel mail service that operated from April, 1860 to November, 1861, enabling letters sent from St. Joseph, Missouri to arrive in San Francisco in a phenomenal 10 days (as opposed to months later). But few know that **every Pony Express rider was required to carry in his saddle bags a copy of the Bible** (“The Bible,” n.d.)! Each rider was also required to take the following oath:



I, _____, do hereby swear, before **the Great and Living God**, that during my engagement, and while I am an employee of Russell, Majors and Waddell, I will, under no circumstances, use profane language, that I will drink no intoxicating liquors, that I will not quarrel or fight with any other employee of the firm, and that in every respect I will conduct myself honestly, be faithful to my duties, and so direct all my acts as to win the confidence of my employers, **so help me God** ("Pony Express History," n.d., emp. added).

What about the fact that a Bible (provided by the Gideons—see "History of the Association," n.d.) is located in virtually every hotel and motel room in the country? Not a Quran or the Buddhist Pataki. Further, consider the so-called "Blue laws" that were in force nationwide from before the beginning of the nation in which most businesses were required to close on Sunday in observance of the day of Christian worship ("Blue law," 2006). Yet, these, too, since the 1960s, have been nearly expunged by the systematic silencing of God in recent years (Miller, 2003). What about the placement of crosses on the nation's highways commemorating those who have died in automobile accidents? What about the myriad of names for geographical locations across the country that have come straight from the Bible? Everything from Bethlehem (in 19 states!) and Antioch (in 20 states) to Corpus Christi (Body of Christ), Texas and Las Cruces (The Crosses), New Mexico. All names that begin with San (San Francisco, San Antonio, San Diego, etc.) or Santa (Santa Fe, Santa Monica, Santa Anita, etc.) are of Christian derivation.

SUMMARY

Such manifestations of America's intimate affiliation with the God of the Bible and the Christian religion are legion. They could be multiplied many times over. From the very beginning of the country, and extending for some 180+ years, this country claimed that the God of the Bible was the God of the nation. But in just 50 years, subversive forces have been working overtime to expel God from culture and American civilization. They have accomplished so much that the America of the 21st century is in many respects a different country from the America of the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries. How so? Listen carefully to the words of Alexis de Tocqueville, French historian and politician, who visited America in 1831 and 1832, traveling the country, surveying American life. Upon his return to France, he penned his monumental *Democracy in America* (1835), which included the following astounding observations:

[T]here is no country in the world where **the Christian religion retains a greater influence over the souls of men**



than in America; and there can be no greater proof of its utility and of its conformity to human nature than that **its influence is powerfully felt over the most enlightened and free nation of the earth.... Christianity, therefore, reigns without obstacle, by universal consent**; the consequence is, as I have before observed, that **every principle of the moral world is fixed** and determinate.... [T]he revolutionists of America are obliged to profess an ostensible **respect for Christian morality** and equity, which does not permit them to violate wantonly the laws that oppose their designs.... [W]hile the law permits the Americans to do what they please, **religion prevents them** from conceiving, and forbids them to commit, what is rash or unjust.... I do not know whether all Americans have a sincere faith in **their religion**—for who can search the human heart?—but I am certain that **they hold it to be indispensable to the maintenance of republican institutions**. This opinion is not peculiar to a class of citizens or to a party, but **it belongs to the whole nation and to every rank of society....** The Americans **combine the notions of Christianity and of liberty** so intimately in their minds that it is impossible to make them conceive the one without the other.... **How is it possible that society should escape destruction if the moral tie is not strengthened in proportion as the political tie is relaxed?** And what can be done with a people who are their own masters **if they are not submissive to the Deity?** (1835, 1:303-307, emp. added).

Haunting questions, indeed.

CONCLUSION

What can be done with Americans when they no longer acknowledge or submit to the God of the Bible, when they no longer believe that a nation is blessed only if its God is the Lord? On March 11, 1792, the father of our country made the following statement—particularly chilling in view of the specter of terrorism that hangs over the nation:

I am sure there never was a people who had more reason **to acknowledge a Divine interposition in their affairs** than those of the United States; and I should be pained to believe that **they have forgotten that Agency** which was so often manifested during our revolution, or that they failed to consider **the omnipotence of that God who is alone able to protect them** (Washington, 1838, 10:222-223, emp. added).

In a speech delivered on February 23, 1852, second generation American, Daniel Webster, warned what would happen to America if she ever displaced God from His rightful position over the nation. His words were eerily prophetic in that they now describe America to a tee:

[I]f we and our posterity reject religious instruction and authority, violate the

SPEAKING SCHEDULES

Brad Harrub

August 2,9,16	Nashville, TN	(615) 833-8480
August 11-13	Odessa, TX	(915) 332-0926
August 18-20	Oklahoma City, OK	(405) 621-5962

Dave Miller

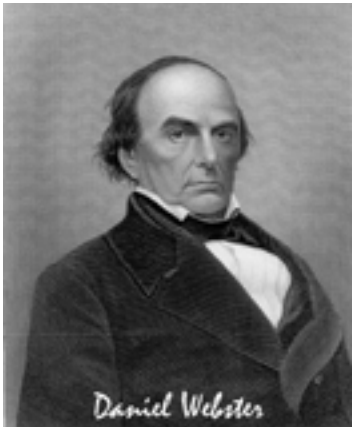
August 5-6	Lexington, KY	(859) 299-9511
August 13,20	Columbiana, AL	(205) 669-0244
August 27	Lorain, OH	(440) 477-1049

Kyle Butt

August 5	Cookville, TN	(931) 526-4605
August 18-20	Aurora, MO	(417) 678-4756

Eric Lyons

August 2	Montgomery, AL	(334) 834-4019
August 16	Dothan, AL	(334) 793-2280
August 20	Talladega, AL	(246) 362-8242



rules of eternal justice, trifle with the injunctions of morality, and recklessly destroy the political constitution which holds us together, **no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us that shall bury all our glory in profound obscurity** (1903, 13:492-493, emp. added).

Ask yourself four questions: Are Americans—on a widespread scale—**rejecting Christian instruction and authority**? *The polls show that fewer and fewer attend church service or follow the Bible.* Are Americans **violating the rules of eternal justice**? *Look at the unprecedented numbers of lawbreakers occupying overcrowded prisons, and the shift in the justice system that commenced in the 1960s favoring “criminal rights.”* Are Americans **trifling with the injunctions of morality**? *Unbelievably, we are actually having a national discussion on how to define marriage!* Are Americans **recklessly destroying the Constitution**? *Liberal Supreme Court justices are looking to the courts of the world for their opinions and federal judges are legislating from the bench—even overriding majority votes of the people.* The haunting answer to these four questions is a resounding “Yes!” **How, then, can we as a nation possibly escape catastrophe**? We cannot.

Observe carefully how the words of Judges 2:10 so aptly describe the cataclysmic shift that has taken place in America between the World War II generation—the greatest generation any society has ever produced (“Tom Brokaw...”)—and those that have come after: “When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the Lord nor the work which He had done for Israel.” Since World War II, succeeding generations of Americans no longer acknowledge God and Christ and they are woefully ignorant of what God has done for America. A similar uncanny resemblance may be seen in the warning God issued to Solomon and the nation over which he served as king:

[I]f My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their

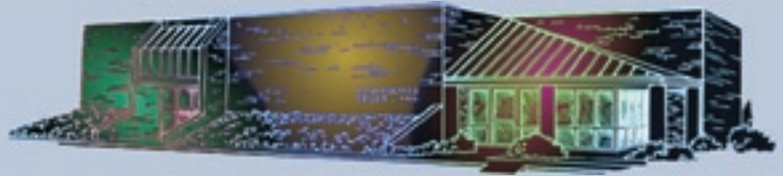
wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to prayer made in this place.... **But if you turn away and forsake My statutes and My commandments which I have set before you, and go and serve other gods, and worship them**, then I will uproot them from My land which I have given them; and this house which I have sanctified for My name I will cast out of My sight, and will make it a proverb and a byword among all peoples.... [E]veryone who passes by it will be astonished and say, “Why has the Lord done thus to this land and this house?” Then they will answer, “Because they forsook the Lord God of their fathers... and embraced other gods, and worshiped them and served them; **therefore He has brought all this calamity on them** (2 Chronicles 7:14-22, emp. added).

With the passing of the World War II generation, succeeding generations of Americans have come on the scene who have no interest in the higher, nobler aspects of human existence, cultivating moral excellence and the virtuous development of the human spirit. To show the extent to which Americans have degenerated in their sensibilities, who would have ever imagined that the day could ever come that an *American Idol* contestant would generate more votes than any U.S. President has received (August, et al., 2006, p. 23)? As the population of America continues its progressive entrenchment against God, the outcome is inevitable: “The wicked shall be turned into hell, and **all nations that forget God**” (Psalm 9:17, emp. added). Indeed, as Americans turn their back on the God of their fathers, so God will cease to bestow His protection and blessings. The only hope for America is to experience a nationwide spiritual awakening by returning to God and begging His forgiveness. Our only hope is for a sizeable percentage of Americans to rise up and act upon the factuality of the psalmist’s words: “Let all the earth fear the Lord; Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him.... **Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord**” (Psalm 33:8,12).

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NOTE FROM THE EDITORS



NEW A.P. STAFF MEMBER!

What American child—or for that matter adult—is not familiar with *Barney*® or *Sesame Street*®? Who has not heard of Kermit the Frog, Big Bird, or Oscar the Grouch? Such characters have been household names for many years. Imagine for a moment what impact could be made on the adolescent population of the United States if a comparable children's television program could be produced that is devoted to teaching basic Bible principles concerning God as Creator and the Earth as His creation. Friends, with the Lord's help, Apologetics Press is endeavoring to fill that very niche! In fact, the program is already airing on the Gospel Broadcasting Network (www.gbntv.org).

We are truly thrilled to announce the release of the pilot episodes of A.P.'s first children's television program: *Digger Doug's Underground*—complete with costumed animal characters, colorful sets, educational dialogue, and participatory singing. Based on the characters from our popular *Discovery* magazine for children, these first two episodes on DVD are so captivating, we believe that you will find your children and grandchildren watching them over and over again. To order your copy, call 1-800-234-8558.

Because we are so confident that the Lord is blessing this venture, with its outstanding potential to impact children, we have brought on board an individual who is perfectly suited and well-equipped to assist with this project. We are extremely pleased

to announce the addition of Caleb Colley to the A.P. staff. Caleb recently graduated as an Honors College Scholar Graduate, with University Honors (Summa Cum Laude), from Freed-Hardeman University, where he acquired two Bachelor's degrees (Communication and Bible). In fact, the FHU Bible Faculty selected Caleb as the outstanding senior Bible major for the 2005-2006 academic year. His wide range of skills includes familiarity with numerous computer programs, as well as video and audio production. Caleb interned at A.P. in the summer of 2004. He possesses considerable public speaking skills in addition to his teaching, writing, and research capabilities. Besides producing and directing *Digger Doug's Underground*, Caleb will participate in other A.P. activities, including writing for *Discovery* and the *Explorer Series*, assisting with the development of Bible School Curriculum, as well as producing additional A.P. home-schooling materials. Be looking for great things from Caleb as he compliments and strengthens the work of A.P.



Caleb Colley
Production Administrator

Brad Harrub
Dave Miller

*See the Center Spread
for Pricing & Order Details*