



A BIBLICAL VIEW ON

# One Nation Under God



*Kerby Anderson*





# One Nation Under God



America will celebrate 250 years on July 4, 2026. We will see many celebrations and hear many messages. We believe that it is important that Americans know our history. This booklet is the first of many we will

produce so you will know the Christian foundations of American history.

G.K. Chesterton once said that “America is the only nation in the world that is founded on a creed. That creed is set forth with dogmatic and even theological lucidity in the Declaration of Independence.”<sup>1</sup> One book that provides a great overview is, *One Nation Under God: Ten Things Every Christian Should Know About the Founding of America*.<sup>2</sup> Here is a short list of those ten things.

The first thing every Christian should know is that “Christopher Columbus was motivated by his Christian faith to sail to the New World.” One example of this can be found in his writings after he discovered this new land. He wrote, “Let Christ rejoice on earth, as he rejoices in heaven, when he foresees coming to salvation so

many souls of people hitherto lost.”<sup>3</sup>

The second thing every Christian should know is “The Pilgrims clearly stated that they came to the New World to glorify God and to advance the Christian faith.” It could easily be said that America began with the words, “In the name of God. Amen.” Those were the first words of our nation’s first self-governing document—the Mayflower Compact.

The Pilgrims were Bible-believers who refused to conform to the heretical state Church of England and eventually came to America. Their leader, William Bradford, said, “A great hope and inward zeal they had of laying some good foundation, or at least to make some way thereunto, for the propagating and advancing the gospel of the kingdom of Christ in those remote parts

of the world; yea, though they should be but even as stepping stones unto others for the performing of so great a work.”<sup>4</sup>

British historian Paul Johnson said this about the Mayflower Compact: “What was remarkable about this particular contract was that it was not between a servant and a master, or a people and a king, but between a group of like-minded individuals and each other, with God as a witness and symbolic co-signatory.”<sup>5</sup>

The third thing every Christian should know is “The Puritans created Bible-based commonwealths in order to practice a representative government that was modeled on their church covenants.” At that time, there had been no written constitution in England. The British common law was a mostly oral

tradition, articulated as necessary in various written court decisions. The Puritans determined to anchor their liberties on the written page, a tradition taken from the Bible. They created the Body of Liberties which were established on the belief that Christ's rule is not only given for the church, but also for the state. It contained principles found in the Bible, specifically ninety-eight separate protections of individual rights, including due process of law, trial by a jury of peers, and prohibitions against cruel and unusual punishment.

The fourth thing every Christian should know is that "this nation was founded as a sanctuary for religious dissidents." Roger Williams questioned many of the Puritan laws in Massachusetts, especially the right of magistrates to punish Sabbath-

breakers. After he left Massachusetts and founded Rhode Island, he became the first to formulate the concept of “separation of church and state” in America.

Williams said, “The civil magistrate may not intermeddle even to stop a church from apostasy and heresy.”<sup>6</sup> In the 1643 charter for Rhode Island and in all its subsequent charters, Roger Williams established the idea that the state should not enforce religious opinion.

Another dissident was the Quaker William Penn. He was the main author of the founding governmental document for the land that came to be known as Pennsylvania. This document was called *The Concessions* and dealt with not only government matters, but was also concerned with social, philosophical, scientific, and



political matters. By 1680, The Concessions had 150 signers, and in the Quaker spirit, this group effort provided for far-reaching liberties never before seen in Anglo-Saxon law.

The fifth thing every Christian should know is that “The education of the settlers and founders of America was uniquely Christian and Bible-based.” Education was very important to the founders of this country. One of the laws in Puritan New England was the Old Deluder Act. It was called that because it was intended to defeat Satan, the Old Deluder, who had used illiteracy in the Old World to keep people from reading the Word of God. The New England Primer was used to teach colonial children to read and included the Lord’s Prayer, the Apostle’s Creed, and the text of many hymns and prayers.

We can also see the importance of education in the rules of many of the first colleges. The Laws and Statutes of Harvard College in 1643 said, “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).”<sup>7</sup>

Yale College listed two requirements in its 1745 charter: “All scholars shall live religious, godly, and blameless lives according to the rules of God’s Word, diligently reading the Holy Scriptures, the fountain of light and truth; and constantly attend upon all the duties of religion, both in public and secret.”<sup>8</sup>

The sixth thing every Christian should know is that “a religious revival was the key factor in uniting

the separate pre-Revolutionary War colonies.” Paul Johnson, author of *A History of the American People*, reports that the Great Awakening may have touched as many as three out of four American colonists.<sup>9</sup> He also points out that this Great Awakening “sounded the death-knell of British colonialism.”<sup>10</sup>

As John Adams was to put it afterwards, “The Revolution was effected before the War commenced. The Revolution was in the mind and hearts of the people: and change in their religious sentiments of their duties and obligations.”

The seventh thing every Christian should know is that “many of the clergy in the American colonies, members of the Black Regiment, preached liberty.” Much of this took place in so-called “Election Sermons”

of Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire, and Vermont. Often the ministers spoke on the subject of civil government in a serious and instructive manner. The sermon was then printed so that every representative had a copy for himself, and so that every minister of the town could have a copy.

Some of the most influential preachers include John Witherspoon, Jonathan Mayhew, Samuel West, and Reverend John Peter Muhlenberg. Reverend Mayhew, for example, preached a message entitled “Concerning Unlimited Submission to the Higher Powers, to the Council and House of Representatives in Colonial New England.”

The eighth thing every Christian should know is that “Biblical Christianity was the driving force behind

the key leaders of the American Revolution.”

In 1772, Samuel Adams created a “Committee of Correspondence” in Boston, in order to keep in touch with his fellow Americans up and down the coast. Adams had been telling his countrymen for years that America had to take her stand against tyranny. He regarded individual freedom as “the law of the Creator” and a Christian right documented in the New Testament. As the Declaration was being signed, Sam Adams said, “We have this day restored the Sovereign to Whom all men ought to be obedient. He reigns in heaven and from the rising to the setting of the sun, let His kingdom come.”

The ninth thing every Christian should know is that “Christian-

ity played a significant role in the development of our nation's birth certificate, the Declaration of Independence." For example, the Presbyterian Elders of North Carolina drafted the Mecklenburg Declaration in May 1775 under the direction of Elder Ephraim Brevard (a graduate of Princeton). One scholar says, "In correcting his first draft of the Declaration it can be seen, in at least a few places, that Jefferson has erased the original words and inserted those which are first found in the Mecklenburg Declaration. No one can doubt that Jefferson had Brevard's resolutions before him when he was writing his immortal Declaration."<sup>11</sup>

The relationship between the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution is crucial. The Declaration is the "why" of American government, while the Constitu-

tion is the “how.”

Another influence on the Declaration was George Mason’s “Virginia Declaration of Rights.” Notice how similar it sounds to the Declaration: “That all men are by nature equally free and independent and have certain inherent rights, of which, when they enter into a state of society, they cannot, by any compact, deprive or divest their posterity; namely, the enjoyment of life and liberty, with the means of acquiring and possessing property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety.”

Paul Johnson says, “There is no question that the Declaration of Independence was, to those who signed it, a religious as well as secular act, and that the Revolutionary War had the approbation of divine providence.”

The tenth thing every Christian

should know is that “the Biblical understanding of the sinfulness of man was the guiding principle behind the United States Constitution.” John Eidsmoe says, “Although Witherspoon derived the concept of separation of powers from other sources, such as Montesquieu, checks and balances seem to have been his own unique contribution to the foundation of U.S. Government”<sup>12</sup> He adds, “One thing is certain: the Christian religion, particularly Rev. Witherspoon’s Calvinism, which emphasized the fallen nature of man, influenced Madison’s view of law and government.”<sup>13</sup>





## Additional Resources

Kerby Anderson, *A Biblical View on The Federalist Papers*, Point of View Ministries, 2021.

Kerby Anderson, *A Biblical View on Patriot Preachers*, Point of View Ministries, 2018.

John Eidsmoe, *Christianity and the Constitution*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1987.

David C. Gibbs and Jerry Newcombe, *One Nation Under God: Ten Things Every Christian Should Know About the Founding of America*, Seminole, FL: Christian Law Association, 2003.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Gilbert K. Chesterton, *What I Saw in America* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1922).

<sup>2</sup> David C. Gibbs and Jerry Newcombe, *One Nation Under God: Ten Things Every Christian Should Know About the Founding of America* (Seminole, FL: Christian Law Association, 2003).

<sup>3</sup> Christopher Columbus, *Journal*,

1492, quoted in Federer, United States Folder, *Library of Classics*.

<sup>4</sup> William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation*, 1620-1647, edited and updated by Samuel Eliot Morison (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2001), 25.

<sup>5</sup> Paul Johnson, *A History of the American People* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1997), 29-30.

<sup>7</sup> Rules for Harvard University, 1643, from "New England's First Fruits," *The Annals of America*, Vol. 1, 176.

<sup>8</sup> Regulations at Yale College, 1745, from "New England's First Fruits," *The Annals of America*, Vol. 1, 464.

<sup>9</sup> Johnson, 115.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 307.

<sup>11</sup> N. S. McFetridge, *Calvinism in History* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1882), 85-88.

<sup>12</sup> John Eidsmoe, *Christianity and the Constitution* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1987), 89.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 101.



# *Point of View*

Point of View Ministries • PO Box 30 • Dallas, TX 75221

[pointofview.net](http://pointofview.net) • 800-347-5151

September 2025 • A Biblical View on

One Nation Under God

© Point of View Ministries 2025

