

# One Nation, Under God

Dr. John Ankerberg, Dr. John Weldon

Do you think our Founding Fathers believed in God and founded America as a Christian nation? The Supreme Court answered this question in 1892 and cited 50 historical examples to prove America was indeed a Christian nation. These are just a few:

**Governor Bradford**, in writing of the Pilgrims' landing, describes their first act: "Being thus arrived in a good harbor and brought safe to land, they fell upon their knees and blessed the God of heaven...."

**The New England Charter**, signed by King James I, confirmed the goal of the first settlers to be: "...to advance the enlargement of Christian religion, to the glory of God Almighty."

The goal of government based on Scripture was affirmed by individual counties, such as is found in the **Rhode Island Charter of 1683**, which begins: "We submit our persons, lives and estates unto our Lord Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords and to all those perfect and most absolute laws of His given us in His holy Word."

**Benjamin Franklin** stood and addressed the Continental Congress with these words: "In the beginning of the contest with Britain, when we were sensible of danger, we had daily prayers in this room for divine protection. Our prayers, sir, were heard and they were graciously answered. All of us who were engaged in the struggle must have observed frequent instances of a superintending Providence in our favor.... Have we now forgotten this powerful friend? Or do we imagine we no longer need His assistance? I have lived, sir, a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth: that God governs in the affairs of man. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid?"

**George Washington**, in his inaugural address to Congress as the first President of the nation stated: "No people can be bound to acknowledge and adore the invisible hand which conducts the affairs of men more than the people of the United States. Every step by which they have advanced to the character of an independent nation seems to have been distinguished by some token of providential agency...."

One of **George Washington's first official acts** was the first Thanksgiving proclamation, which reads, "Whereas, it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly implore His protection and favor..." It goes on to call the nation to thankfulness to Almighty God.

**Thomas Jefferson** said: "Indeed, I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just, and that His justice cannot sleep forever."

**President John Quincy Adams**: "The first and almost the only book deserving of universal attention is the Bible."

**Andrew Jackson:** “Go to the Scriptures ...the joyful promises it contains will be a balsam to all your troubles.”

From **President Abraham Lincoln’s Proclamation for a National Day of Fasting, Humiliation and Prayer, April 30, 1863:** “We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven. We have been preserved, these many years, in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth and power, as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace, and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us! It behooves us, then, to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins, and to prayer for clemency and forgiveness.”

**The Supreme Court Decision 1892—Church of the Holy Trinity vs. The United States:** “Our laws and our institutions must necessarily be based upon and embody the teachings of The Redeemer of mankind. It is impossible that it should be otherwise; and in this sense and to this extent our civilization and our institutions are emphatically Christian.... This is a religious people. This is historically true.”

**President Woodrow Wilson:** “...the Bible...is the one supreme source of revelation of the meaning of life, the nature of God and spiritual nature and need of men. It is the only guide of life which really leads the spirit in the way of peace and salvation.”

In spite of the above statements, many people today say that the Founding Fathers never intended for religious principles to be part of public life or public affairs. They add: Doesn’t being a Christian nation really threaten pluralism? Interestingly, the Founding Fathers discuss that and they felt that it enhanced it.

**Patrick Henry** made a very clear statement: “It cannot be emphasized too often or too strongly that this great nation was founded not by religionists but by Christians; not on religions but on the gospel of Jesus Christ.... It is for this reason that people of other faiths have been afforded asylum, prosperity and freedom of worship here.”

Thus, we conclude that our Founding Fathers **did** believe in God and founded America as a Christian nation.

(For documentation, see *The Founding Fathers Series* of the John Ankerberg Show.)