

Pensacola Christian College

**Maintaining the Foundations**

Research Paper

A Project Submitted to

Teacher's Name

in Partial Fulfillment of

the Requirements for the Course

EN 126-1

English Grammar and Composition II

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by

**Student's Name**

Pensacola, Florida

April 20, 2024

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Set top, bottom, and  
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## Maintaining the Foundations

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*Thesis:* America's foundation is based on a rich, biblical heritage.

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- I. America's biblical foundation is evident in the original documents of America.
  - A. The Mayflower Compact demonstrates biblical principles.
  - B. The Declaration of Independence demonstrates biblical principles.
- II. America's biblical foundation is demonstrated in the lives of her Founding Fathers and early statesmen.
  - A. The influence of the Bible is evident in the lives of the majority of the founders.
    1. Dr. Benjamin Rush, signer of the Constitution, embraced the Christian faith.
    2. Samuel Adams, a zealous American patriot, spent much time with his Heavenly Father in prayer.
  - B. A belief in Christianity is demonstrated through the statements and actions of America's leading statesmen.
    1. Daniel Webster advocated preserving America's godly heritage.
    2. George Washington's actions revealed his faith in God.
- III. America's biblical foundation is demonstrated in the Congressional acts of the nineteenth century.
  - A. Congress recommended a national day of prayer in 1863.
  - B. Congress added "In God We Trust" to American coins in 1865.

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## Maintaining the Foundations

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Western conservative thought has a long religious history. Many of its principles were derived from the writings of the prominent Englishmen Edmund Burke and William Blackstone. Their works were firmly rooted in the Bible, and their belief that government should follow biblical guidelines was passed on through the many English generations and thus to the United States of America. Many modern day historians like to deny America's biblical heritage. However, their position is inaccurate. America's foundation is based on a rich, biblical heritage.

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First, America's biblical foundation is evident in America's original documents. These documents, which were the building blocks for first colonial, then national, government, contain references to a strong belief in biblical principles. One of the earliest was the Mayflower Compact. According to *The American Covenant* by Marshall Foster and Mary-Elaine Swanson (1983, 81), examples of biblical principles in early documents go back even to 1620 when the

When author's name is used in the introduction, place just year and page number in the parentheses after the author's name in the sentence.

Pilgrims crossed the Atlantic Ocean seeking religious freedom. As they neared the end of their torturous journey, divisions occurred within the band of colonists, causing the Pilgrim leaders to write the Mayflower Compact, establishing a government in the New World. William Bradford (1985, 77) in *Of Plymouth Plantation* recorded for future generations that the reason for the Mayflower Compact was "occasioned partly by the discontented and mutinous speeches that some of the strangers [non-Separatists on the *Mayflower*] amongst them had let fall from them in the ship: That when they came ashore they would use their own liberty, for none has power to command them, the patent they had being for Virginia and not for New England." In fact, the "strangers" were right in believing that the new colonists did not have a government to answer to; the *Mayflower* had been blown off course in a storm, placing the colonists outside the jurisdiction of the London Company. The Pilgrims understood that man's sinful human nature

needed the restraining effects of government. Stanton M. Evans (1994, 33-34) explains that the Pilgrim fathers knew that without some form of binding government established upon religious principles, they would have no hope of succeeding in the New World. As a result, the Pilgrims' dependence on God and government is just one biblical principle obvious in the Mayflower Compact.

The Mayflower Compact also demonstrates the Pilgrims' understanding of the Great Commission. One of the objectives that the Pilgrims had in coming to the New World was evangelism: the Compact states this desire as "having undertaken, for the glory of God and advancement of the Christian Faith" (Bradford 1985, 77). The Pilgrims understood that man was placed on this earth to glorify God. One of the most basic ways that a Christian can glorify God is through obedience to God's commands. The Pilgrims desired to fulfill Christ's command in Mark 16:15 (KJV): "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." The Pilgrims were literally going "into all the world" when they settled in New England. It is hard to understand why anyone would try to deny America's biblical foundation when one has such obvious proofs as the Mayflower Compact.

Another famous original American document that reflects the Christian faith of the founders is the Declaration of Independence. The Declaration closes by stating that the people had "a firm reliance on the Protection of divine Providence." *American Government and Economics in Christian Perspective* points out the significance of the acknowledgment of God in the Declaration of Independence:

**Block quotations:** Minimum 5 lines.  
Single-space the quotation.  
Do not use quotation marks.

The Christian elements in the Declaration of Independence are seen in the acknowledgement that God is the Creator and the Sovereign of the universe. Only when the doctrine of Creation is affirmed can individuals have true worth. When a society denies the doctrine of Creation, the individual has no meaning apart from his ability to benefit the state. The signers in the last paragraph are willing to risk their lives, their

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fortunes, and their honor because of their confidence in Divine Providence. (Hicks et al 1984, 62)

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Belief in a Creator and in that Creator's sovereignty are two of the most foundational Christian beliefs. Another of these foundations is the belief that God judges mankind. *American Government and Economics in Christian Perspective* goes on to state that "the Declaration also recognizes God as the Supreme Judge of men and nations" (Hicks 1984, 62). The signers of the Declaration knew that God judges man for his actions, and they had no fear that their Declaration of Independence would incur the wrath of God. Since this nation's beginning in 1776, God has blessed America because of her biblical foundation.

Second, America's biblical foundation is evident in the lives of the Founding Fathers and early statesmen. Faith was not limited only to the best known of the Founding Fathers, but was so widespread that it would be unusual to find one of the founders who did not believe in the God of the Bible. According to John Eidsmoe (1987, 51), in *Christianity and the Constitution*, 34 percent of all quotations by the Founding Fathers are directly from the Bible; if both indirect and direct quotations are combined, 94 percent of their quotations are derived from Scripture. If those men were not avid students of the Bible, they would not have referred to it with the frequency and reverence that they did.

One Founding Father whose life demonstrates America's biblical foundation is Dr. Benjamin Rush. Dr. Benjamin Rush was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence; he was also a delegate to the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia. According to B. J. Lossing (1995, 103), this doctor was dedicated to fulfilling his calling regardless of the circumstances because he had a firm belief in the sovereignty of God. He esteemed his study of Scripture as one of his most important studies; it was his faith in God that kept him unmoving in the face of turmoil. Thus, the principles of the Bible influenced all of Dr. Rush's choices.

Lossing (1995, 103) goes on to describe Dr. Rush as "zealous and consistent in his Christian faith." Rush's dedication to the Bible and the Christian faith helped to establish this country's biblical foundation.

Another fervent Christian patriot is Samuel Adams. *The Christian History of the Constitution* (Hall 1973, 332) quotes historian George Bancroft who states that Adams spent so much time in prayer that "his house was a house of prayer." Consequently, Adams's faithfulness prepared him to lead others in America's fight for independence. Catherine Millard (1995, 67) records that Adams was trusted and respected by his fellow Americans because they knew that his actions were governed by God. That respect and honor given to Adams by his fellow countrymen was not shared, however, by the British. Lossing (1995, 35) records that they wanted the colonial patriot silenced, and they made him considerable offers to keep silent, but Adams staunchly refused, content in his "peace with the King of kings" to defend his people against the British monarchy. Adams was just one of many men who helped to establish America's biblical foundation.

Early statesmen also contributed to America's biblical foundation through their beliefs and lives. The lives these men led speak volumes about their faith. After all, Christianity was the driving force of their lives, and they could not help but speak of it. Daniel Webster, one of America's greatest statesmen and orators, is a perfect example of a political figure influencing America's spiritually. Catherine Millard (1995, 165, 169) records that this influential figure in American history said that the Bible had always been an integral part of his life and a primary part of his education; even his final words indicated that doing the will of his Heavenly Father had been the main desire in his life. Consequently, Webster's consuming dedication to God was evident as he served his country. According to Foster and Swanson (1983, vi), Webster was not

only aware of the important role that Christianity played in the life of a nation, but patriotism also flowed strongly through his heart. Webster wanted America to remain free and strong, far surpassing any nation on earth; but he knew America's success was only possible through God's blessings. As a result, Webster urged people to remember the biblical heritage of their country and implored them to hold tightly to those principles of Christianity which had permeated the lives of the Founders. His life was just one more that helped to establish America's biblical foundation.

Another early statesman whose life contributed to America's biblical foundation is George Washington. Throughout his life, Washington's actions often revealed his personal faith, but his inauguration ceremony exhibits Washington's desire to set his country on a godly course. During his Inaugural Address, Washington repeatedly referred to God's influence on this nation, and, as J. Michael Sharman (1995, 18-19) records, Washington publicly acknowledged that ignoring biblical principles would cause America to lose God's blessing. Washington was acutely aware that America's success came from God and that America would continue to succeed only with God's help. He requested to be sworn in on an open Bible and, according to Millard (1995, 85), concluded his oath with the phrase "so help me God," thereby setting precedents that are still followed more than two hundred years later. Washington's choices in his inauguration ceremony reflect his desire to establish America on a biblical foundation.

Third, America's biblical foundation is evident in the Congressional acts of the nineteenth century. These Congressional acts illustrate the continuing dependence that America had on God. Robert Flood (1976, 70), in *Men Who Shaped America*, states that in 1863 the Senate asked President Lincoln to declare a day of prayer because of the Civil War. The president willingly complied and chose April 30 as the National Day of Prayer. This was not the



first time that America had turned to God in prayer. Benjamin Franklin is one of the best-known examples of an early Founding Father praying for guidance from God. Almost a century later, Congress was still turning to God in prayer during crises. During that same era, Catherine Millard (1991, 380-381) records that Congress passed another act to reflect its continuing dependence on God. In 1861, Congress sent a proposal to the Honorable Salmon P. Chase, Secretary of the Treasury, suggesting that American coins reflect America's faith in order to prevent any from proposing that America is not a Christian nation. The Secretary of the Treasury concurred with Congress's proposition; and on March 3, 1865, Congress passed an act to inscribe "In God We Trust" on America's coins. These are but a few examples of Congress acknowledging America's biblical roots.

The Christian faith of this nation is clearly evident in America's early documents and men and in her Congressional acts. The original documents of the American government were written to reflect the Bible's principles and to illustrate the founders' desires to form a Christian nation. But one cannot forget that America's heritage is also evidenced through the actions of her people and her government. Therefore, when conservatives uphold traditional American values, the heritage of their belief comes straight from the Holy Scriptures. This Christian faith is truly an integral part of America's survival.

## References

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Use a long dash (3-em dash or 6 hyphens) in place of author's name since this source is by the same author as previous entry (see *Turabian*, sect. 16.2.2.)