



REVIEW OF

DRIVE THRU HISTORY AMERICA: FOUNDATIONS OF CHARACTER

A REPORT BY STEVEN K. GREEN, J.D., PH.D.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Steven K. Green, J.D., Ph.D. is a Professor of Law and Adjunct Professor of History at Willamette University, in Salem, Oregon, where he teaches courses in Constitutional Law, Legal History, First Amendment Law, and Church and State. Green also serves as Director of the Willamette Center for Religion, Law and Democracy, an interdisciplinary academic program.¹ He holds a B.A. in History and Political Science (Religious Studies minor) from Texas Christian University, a J.D. from the University of Texas School of Law, a M.A. in American Religious History from the University of North Carolina, and a Ph.D. in Constitutional History, also from UNC. He also undertook graduate studies at Duke University Law School and Divinity School.

Green is the author of *The Second Disestablishment: Church and State in Nineteenth Century America* (Oxford University Press, 2010) and the co-author of *Religious Freedom and the Court* (Baylor University Press, 2008). He has recently completed his third book, *“A Republic of the Bible”: The Great Church-State Debate of the Nineteenth Century*. Green is the author of more than thirty scholarly articles and book chapters about church-state law and history that have been published in leading law and academic journals including *Cornell Law Review*, *Notre Dame Law Review*, *Emory Law Journal*, *Boston College Law Review*,

BYU Law Review, *Journal of Church and State*, *Journal of Law and Religion* and the *American Journal of Legal History*. Green previously taught at Vermont Law School and between 1992-2002 served as Legal Director and Special Counsel for Americans United for Separation of Church and State, a Washington, D.C., religious liberty organization. During his tenure at Americans United, he co-litigated several cases involving issues of religion and education, and he has participated in approximately two dozen cases at the United States Supreme Court. Green helped write “A Joint Statement of Current Law on Religion and Public Education,” in 1995, and through 2000 he periodically advised the Clinton White House and Department of Education on issues regarding religion and education. He has testified on church-state matters in the United States Congress and in approximately a dozen state legislatures.

Green is a member of the American Bar Association, the American Society for Legal History, serves on the editorial council of the *Journal of Church and State*, and previously served on the Religious Liberty Committee of the National Council of Churches. He is a frequent speaker on religion and education at organizations including the National and Oregon School Boards Associations and the National and Oregon Parent-Teachers Associations.

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INTRODUCTION

In July 2009 the Texas Freedom Network Education Fund provided me with a copy of *Drive Thru History America: Foundations of Character*, written by David Barton and Nita Thomason, to evaluate for religious content and historical accuracy, as well as its appropriateness for use in a public school classroom.² My evaluation is from the perspective of one who has taught, litigated, and written about church-state matters for more than twenty years. Although I am not a specialist in public school curriculum, I have studied and litigated matters related to religious expression in public schools involving both devotional and curriculum issues. Additionally, I am a historian of late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century America, specializing in its constitutional and religious influences.

In my opinion *Drive Thru History America: Foundations of Character* is inappropriate for use in public schools because it includes devotional religious content that seeks to impose particular religious truth-claims on students. Since 1962 the Supreme Court has consistently held that public schools cannot engage students in prayer, Bible reading, and other devotional activities.³ Public schools, like other government entities, lack the authority to promote religious fealty or interfere with a parent's right to control the religious upbringing of his or her children.⁴ Additionally, the Establishment Clause of the Constitution serves as a guarantor of religious non-coercion and religious equality.⁵ These concerns are most prominent within the public school environment, where school authorities exercise coercive power over children.⁶ The Court has also expressed concern about the subtle conforming pressures that exist within public schools when religious activity is directed by teachers or their surrogates, including fellow students.⁷

Based on these concerns and principles, the Court has forbidden public schools from not only engaging students in worshipful activities, but also from seeking to impress upon students the importance of particular religious

values through the curriculum.⁸ Even passive reminders of the importance of religious fealty violate the command of religious neutrality.⁹ Additionally, lower courts have held that schools may not, consistent with the Establishment Clause, expose students to religious materials that are of a proselytizing nature or seek to instill religious devotion in students.¹⁰

There is nothing objectionable with informing students about the role of religion in the nation's development – in fact, such instruction can be an important part of a well-rounded education. Nor is there anything wrong, pedagogically or legally, with informing students about the religious beliefs of historical figures and how those beliefs impacted their lives. These laudable objectives should not be interpreted, however, as granting license to curricular material that seeks to impress religious fealty and devotion among public school students.¹¹

Barton's and Thompson's history curriculum falls into this latter category and, accordingly, should not be approved for public schools. It displays a clear devotional tone and contains a number of religious truth-claims that cross the line into promotion of a particular religion. Beyond this, the curriculum presents a problematic historical account of the Founding period that falls well outside mainstream scholarly understanding, providing inaccurate, incomplete and biased profiles of various leading figures from that era. Instead of providing an evenhanded account of the religious aspects to the nation's founding, the series promotes a skewed and misleading view of the religious influences in the various figures' lives. It takes historical data out of context, offering it as proof of a figure's worldview. And most troubling, it crosses the constitutional line by encouraging students to consider devotional issues and make religious confessions of faith. Any school district adopting this curriculum would likely face a constitutional challenge.

OVERVIEW OF THE CURRICULUM

Drive Thru History America: Foundations of Character seeks to introduce students to the impact of religion in the lives of several important figures who lived in and around the time of the nation's founding. The materials attempt to present those religious and other character-building influences in their lives and how those forces impacted their respective worldviews.

The curriculum itself is part of a multi-episode "Drive Thru History" video series produced by ColdWater Media and is composed of

- a series of DVD lessons ("9 video and class-interactive sessions with humorous vignettes, man-on-the-street interviews and high-energy, engaging teaching from host Dave Stotts") and
- a curriculum guide, including both a student textbook and teacher guide.

The curriculum is available in two separate editions: a "Private/Home School" edition and a separate version, the latter clearly intended by the curriculum's developers for use in public schools. (The promotional website unabashedly markets the materials for use in both sectarian religious settings and public school classrooms: "This material can be used in a private or public school, home school, small group, or as a Sunday School curriculum."¹²) This report is a review of the student and teacher editions – along with an accompanying DVD – of this second version intended for use in public schools.

The textbook and curriculum website indicate that the project was authored by David Barton and Dr. Nita Thomason. Barton is a longtime conservative political activist, founder of the Christian advocacy group *Wallbuilders* and former vice chair of the Texas Republican Party. He does not, however, possess the academic credentials one might expect from the author of a history curriculum. Barton

has no advanced degree in American history (or a related field) and has never, to my knowledge, held a faculty position at an accredited college or university. Through his advocacy group *Wallbuilders*, Barton has self-published a number of books, tracts and DVDs on the subject of Christian influences on the nation's founding. These publications have been roundly criticized for their inaccuracy and biased view of history and are not generally regarded by scholars in the field as reliable historical resources.¹³

Dr. Nita Thomason, listed as the "curriculum specialist for the project," is less well known than Barton but apparently shares his conservative Christian worldview. The *Drive Thru History* website includes a fairly thin list of qualifications for Dr. Thomason but does indicate that she founded a "preschool program at Central Christian Church in Richardson, Texas," and authored publications in the *Christian Standard* and *Today's Christian Doctor*.¹⁴ It appears Dr. Thomason currently teaches child development courses at Collin County Community College in North Texas.

Much of the material presented in the book and accompanying DVD is not of an overtly religious nature. The information is of a general historical nature, describing incidents and events in the figures' lives that impacted their character development. This is not to say the materials cover this information well; much of the information is highly selective and oversimplifying in content.

The material relates an uncomplicated and glorified view of the founding period while omitting important information that would invite students to think more critically about the forces and events that informed the nation's founding (e.g., the framers' concerns with establishing a "democracy" and the status of women and African Americans). The book also contains several inaccuracies (e.g., listing Thomas Jefferson's party as "Anti-federalists" instead of "Republicans" and stating that Benjamin Franklin was

raised a Quaker rather than a Presbyterian).

The lessons generally follow a common pattern. They begin by describing formative events in the various figures' lives. For approximately the first half of each lesson there is little or no mention of religious influences, which are introduced only subtly after that point. Near the end of the lessons, the religious references change from being descriptive of the figures' beliefs to unsubstantiated religious truth claims. Following are some examples:*

- “God directs the course of history through the lives of individual men and women.” (p. 12)
- “The biblical worldview upon which this nation was founded led Americans to see that no separation existed between the sacred and the secular. Every area of life was sacred and was to be lived ‘as working for the Lord.’” (p. 12)
- Franklin “turned to God in order to know what was true.” (p. 29)
- “George Washington’s skillful maneuvering and strategic retreat and a providential intervention saved the Continental Army.” (p. 55)
- “The government designed by the Founding Fathers reflects the following Christian beliefs: (1) people are created in the image of God and have certain God-given rights; and (2) humans have a fallen nature and a natural tendency to depravity (a sinful/corrupt state). On the basis of the first belief, they established a government that balanced the need for an ordered society with protection for the God-given rights of every individual. The system of checks and balances in our government was created based on this second belief. The Founders truly looked – as Washington said – to ‘the eternal rules of order and right which Heaven itself has ordained’ as their guide.” (p. 59)
- “[A]s a Christian [Banneker] would have understood that his days were really in God’s hands and that only God knew when his life would end.” (p. 71)

- [After asserting the Christian credentials of Benjamin Rush and John Adams] “Other prominent Christian Founding Fathers – including George Washington, John Winthrop, and Elias Boudinot – held a similar respect for the Jews. This is why, historically speaking, America is describes as having a Judeo-Christian heritage.” (p. 78)

The lessons usually end with a religious quotation or scriptural passage under the directive “Map Your Way,” which seeks to have the student contemplate the religious material. (See pp. 12, 21, 29, 34, 45, 60, 65, 72, 84, 87, 96, 109, 110.) Of greater concern in a public school classroom, the concluding questions frequently invite the students to consider spiritual matters. For example:

- “Does your attitude toward God show respect for his holiness?” (p. 58)
- “Do you think God is real? If so, does he have a role in your day-to-day life?” (p. 60)

Although much of the material in each lesson does not cross the line into overt proselytizing, the overall organization just described can be effective to that end. The subtle and overt religious declarations (stated as “facts”) and questions at the latter parts of the lessons build on and incorporate the earlier information, suggesting continuity and making it difficult for the student to distinguish descriptive from religiously insinuating material. In several places, however, the book includes content clearly intended to proselytize students, making bold statements of faith and asking students to make their own confessions of faith. Asking students to consider spiritual matters or make a religious confession of faith violates the command of the U. S. Supreme Court that schools are to be neutral on religious matters.¹⁵

Another indication of the curriculum’s sectarian religious purpose can be found by looking at its marketing materials. According to the *Drive Thru History* website, the curriculum was produced by the National Day of Prayer Task Force in partnership with Focus on the Family.¹⁶ Both are conservative Christian advocacy groups known for their involvement in “culture war” political issues. Such organizations have every right to create and market a textbook, but in order for the materials to be suitable for use in public schools, they must be religiously neutral and non-

*Page numbers in *Drive Thru History* are indicated with a parenthetical “()”.

devotional. The marketing materials used to promote this curriculum, however, make no attempt to hide its religious purpose:

“*Drive Thru History: America* is a complete kit for educating students, grades 6-12, on:

- Character
- Social Studies
- Christian Worldview”¹⁷

Elsewhere, the promotional website features an endorsement from Del Tackett – president of the Focus on the Family Institute – that is even more explicit about the curriculum’s underlying goals and purposes:

“What we’re hoping to do with this project is to re-instill within a student the reality of the past. And that reality should begin to generate within them and within us as a people within this country that there is hope for the future. We’re not lost in our own little story. If we listen to God and we do remember, we repent, and we return, then we have all of God’s promises before us. We do have hope because we hope in God.”¹⁸

Inculcating a “Christian worldview” or persuading students to “repent” and “listen to God” is a responsibility that belongs solely with a parent or religious congregation. For a public school to utilize curricular materials toward this end is not only a clear Constitutional violation, it is a betrayal of the trust parents place in public schools.¹⁹

A SELECTIVE HISTORY: 'CHRISTIANIZING' AMERICA'S FOUNDING AND GOVERNMENT

Most likely, the authors of this curriculum would insist that they are merely seeking to provide students with a balanced view of American history, one that includes the role of religion in the nation's development. Indeed, the U.S. Supreme Court has confirmed that public schools may teach about the nation's religious heritage without violating constitutional norms.²⁰ If this is what the series attempts to achieve, however, it should be candid and even-handed with its information. Instead of presenting a balanced account of the various ideologies that informed the Founders and influenced the nation's founding, the series portrays the figures as monolithically religiously devout and implies that their faith was the sole or primary source of their character, fame and success.

Claims of a profound Christian influence on the Founding period and its participants should be approached with caution if not skepticism. For more than thirty years, arising with the nation's bicentennial, evangelical "historians" have published a plethora of books that seek to establish the nation's religious origins. James H. Huston, chief of the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress, has recently written about this phenomenon:

"In recent years, 'quote books' about religion and the Founding Fathers have appeared with regularity. . . . The quote books have been compiled by pious citizens with conservative religious views who are distressed by what they see as the pernicious secularization of American life, caused in their view by an unremitting and illegitimate campaign to banish Christianity from all areas of the public arena as well as from the writing and teaching of American history. The perceived purging of Christianity from the history of the Founding Period has seemed to the evangelical and conservative religious

community to be particularly unconscionable, because its members consider that the remarkable success of this country's republican experiment in government, launched in 1776 and constitutionalized in 1787, can be attributed in large measure to the religious convictions of the Founders. They believe that, if these convictions can be revived and restored as guiding principles in American public life, the nation can be healed from the host of social ills that afflict it."²¹

As Dr. Huston indicates, this effort has not merely been to correct omissions from or even biases contained in traditional historical accountings that have minimized the nation's religious heritage; rather, this effort seeks to renegotiate understandings of the nation's founding principles so as to (re)establish America as a "Christian nation," where societal norms and government policies are to be consistent with evangelical Christian values. Professor Stephen Stookey refers to this phenomenon as "quasi-mythical American history." The co-author of this curriculum, David Barton, is at the forefront of this movement.²² Frustration with this phenomenon led three noted religious historians, all of whom are evangelical, to write a book, *The Search for Christian America*. Their conclusion was that:

"careful study of the facts of history shows that early America does not deserve to be considered uniquely, distinctly or even predominately Christian, if we mean by the word 'Christian' a state of society reflecting the ideals presented in Scripture. There is no golden age to which American Christians may return."²³

The Barton/Thompson curriculum suffers from this

perspective. It implies that all figures were Christian in the sense of today's evangelical Protestants (except for Banneker), without exploring what that designation meant in late eighteenth-century America. Whereas the vast majority of early Americans would have self-identified as Protestant, many were only nominally religious. Church membership and attendance was abysmally low (10-15 percent).²⁴ Even then, many people attended orthodox churches – including most of the Founders – while holding heterodox religious views (George Washington being a case-in-point). Regular church attendance, a practice expected of colonial leaders, is not a dependable indicator of an individual's religious piety. While the use of religious discourse was common (see discussion below), it too is not an accurate measure of religious devotion or piety.²⁵

The presentation also fails to explore the other influences in the Founders' lives that affected their worldviews and personal character. The members of the founding generation were widely read and drew their ideas for republican government from many sources: the common law, Whig political theories, classical republicanism, and Calvinism. Without question, however, the most influential ideological source was Enlightenment rationalism. The Founders were most influenced by the Enlightenment political writers of the previous two generations: John Locke, Baron Montesquieu, Hugo Grotius, Henry St. John, Lord Bolingbroke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, among others. Most of these writers were religious nonconformists or skeptics. Also influential were those writers of the so-called Scottish Enlightenment – Frances Hutcheson, David Hume, and Thomas Reid – whose “common sense” rationalism influenced many of the Founders including James Madison, John Adams, and James Wilson. Secular theories were more influential in forming the Founders' ideas about natural law and civic virtue than was religion.²⁶

To be sure, religion – whether it is identified as Puritan, Calvinist, or evangelical – was one of the ideological sources that informed the nation's founding. As the unifying theological thread, Calvinism represented the “common religious faith” of Americans before the Revolution. A dynamic religious environment informed republican ideology by providing the Revolution a greater, trans-historical meaning, inviting some participants to draw parallels to biblical events or to explain unexpected successes to the inner workings of providence. In this way, religion contributed directly to the political rhetoric of the times. As a result, it should not be surprising that secular

leaders often used religious terminology in describing the significance of political events. Still, one should not draw too much meaning from this popular practice, as religious metaphor and allegory were common forms of discourse. Rhetoric aside, Enlightenment and Whig theories dominated the substantive political discussions, even among religious leaders.²⁷

Second, the curriculum engages in “proof-texting,” a practice refuted by professional historians. The writers extract selected religious quotations of the various figures without explaining the larger context of the statements (and usually without providing a citation to authority). The curriculum then uses the statement as “proof” of the speaker's sentiments, disregarding or omitting other likely influences. It fails to account for the sincerity of the speaker's statement (such as whether the speaker was using irony or pandering to his audience) or whether the speaker likely intended *that* particular statement on the subject to represent his views, as opposed to other possible statements on the subject. Dr. Hutson describes this practice:

What better way to prove that the Founders were grounded in and instructed by Christian principles than by calling the most important of them to the witness stand and letting them testify in their own words to the importance of Christianity in their lives? All quote book compilers employ this strategy, invariably focusing on Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Franklin, Adams, and a handful of lesser luminaries, culling statements from their writings that attest to the beneficial influence of Christianity on their lives and on the public welfare, and presenting theses pronouncements in serial form.²⁸

The additional problem with religious proof-texting is that it fails to explain the role of religious discourse during the founding period and early nineteenth century. As stated, religious rhetoric and imagery were ubiquitous in speeches and other writings because the Bible was one of the few generally available books. The narratives and allegories of the Bible were the stories that were most familiar to people. Unlike today, a person's use of religious rhetoric during the eighteenth century tells little about his or her own religious devotion. That religiously heterodox figures such as Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson and Thomas

Paine employed religious language should warn against drawing conclusions about a Founder's personal piety from his statements.²⁹

These general objections apply throughout the curriculum, and in particular to the introductory lesson. The lesson takes some undeniable facts – the Puritans were deeply religious and approached notions of governance from a distinctly religious worldview – and then extrapolates more general conclusions that apply to the entire pre-revolutionary period. The historical review is grossly incomplete, and the section is full of proof-texting quotes, including a misunderstood quote from an 1892 Supreme Court decision declaring that America is a “Christian nation,” a statement that later justices, including Justice Antonin Scalia, have rejected.³⁰ The lesson concludes with a discussion (“Worldview”) that is not factually descriptive but is full of religious truth-claims.

MISREPRESENTING THE FOUNDERS

Drive Thru History America presents a historically inaccurate and skewed account of the role of religion in the lives of several leading Founders and of how their faith impacted their worldviews. The following is a brief review of the Founders' profiles that appear in *Drive Thru History*, highlighting where the curriculum's description diverges from accepted historical scholarship.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

Drive Thru History portrays Benjamin Franklin as receiving his inspiration and motivation for scientific research and public service from his religious faith – in particular, to having read Romans 14:7 as a child. (p. 18) It notes that “religious faith was very important to Benjamin Franklin” and describes his rebuke of religious skeptic Thomas Paine for his secular views. (p. 26) It discusses Franklin's proposal for prayer during the Constitutional Convention, concluding that “Franklin strongly objected to a secular society that would exclude religion from public life.” (p. 27) The lesson concludes with the familiar quotation from Franklin's letter to Yale's Ezra Stiles in which he (Franklin) acknowledged his belief in God.³¹

Drive Thru History then asserts that “when [Franklin] considered the key concept of his life philosophy, he turned to God in order to know what was true,” and asks students to consider “why are you here” and “where are your going”? (p. 29)

Contrary to the impression created in *Drive Thru History*, Franklin's religious beliefs were unconventional and non-doctrinaire. Franklin was raised Presbyterian, not Quaker as claimed in *Drive Thru History* (p. 15), but rejected his Calvinist upbringing as a teenager. From that time on, Franklin was a religious skeptic.³² He rejected the divinity of Jesus, miracles and the Bible as divinely inspired. Franklin, like Thomas Jefferson, set out to revise the Bible, removing material he believed to be inaccurate and super-

stitious, such as accounts of miracles. His motivation was to demystify the Bible by making it consistent with Enlightenment rationalism and more accessible to the average person. Historians disagree over whether Franklin was an atheist, a deist (and then, whether he was a “warm” or “cold” deist, with the former believing in an active providence), a polytheist, or simply a rationalist-theist. Historians agree, however, that he was not “a Christian, orthodox or otherwise.”³³ Franklin did believe in the existence of a deity, and that he governed the world by his providence. Belief in God's providence was common for deists, as it suggested a general “divine” plan for humankind. But deists and many others viewed such providential influences as being indirect, not as representing the presence of a god who was an active agent in human affairs. According to biographer Gordon Wood, Franklin “came to believe that the only important thing about religion was morality, and the only basis for that morality was utility.”³⁴

Also, while Franklin was familiar with the Bible and no doubt had read Romans 14:7 (as had all educated people of the era), there is no evidence that that passage inspired or directed his scientific endeavors (p. 18). Because Franklin completely rejected his Calvinist upbringing, it is unlikely that he would have seen any early instruction in the Bible as determinative of his philosophy or worldview.³⁵

Franklin's appeal for prayer at the Constitutional Convention is attributed to his frustration with the divisions and intransigence among the delegates and his belief that it would be helpful to appeal “to the Father of lights to illuminate our understandings.” Too much can be read into this statement, as Franklin wrote frequently about providence, often in contradictory ways. (Franklin was infamous for using satire and irony to make a point.) The statement was a strategic move to embarrass the delegates to action rather than a declaration of faith.³⁶ Contrary to the assertion in *Drive Thru History* (p. 26), the delegates did *not* respond favorably to the proposal. According

to Madison's *Notes*, which are considered the authoritative source, delegates expressed concern that resorting to prayer would "lead the public to believe that the embarrassments and dissensions within the Convention had suggested this measure" and "bring on it some disagreeable animadversions." Also, the assertion in *Drive Thru History* (p. 26) that Franklin's speech "seemed to change the tone of the convention" and a "three-day recess was called, during which time many of the delegates attended church together" is outright fiction. Franklin's proposal occurred on Thursday, June 28. According to Madison's *Notes*, the Convention did not adjourn but met the following day (Friday, June 29) and again on Saturday (June 30), continuing with their rancorous debate over representation. As historian John Murrin has remarked, "Beyond any doubt, the Founding Fathers empathically refused to pray together while they were drafting the fundamental charter of the new nation. . . . The Constitution's failure to invoke God was no mere oversight. In that respect the document faithfully mirrored the attitudes of the delegates who wrote it."³⁷

BENJAMIN RUSH

Benjamin Rush was a pioneering physician of the Founding era and an acquaintance of many of the period's leading political figures. *Drive Thru History* asserts that Benjamin Rush was drawn to practice medicine because of his religious faith. ("He believed that God had called him to medical service . . ." (p. 32); "Because he was a Christian, he believed that it was his duty to help others . . ." (p. 33)). The curriculum also emphasizes Rush's involvement in early reform movements, many of which had a moral component. "Dr. Rush was an outspoken Christian and a diligent student of the Bible, and the teachings of Scripture regularly spurred him to acts of compassion." (p. 40)

Rush was a complex figure. In many respects, he more than any other Founder represents the melding of myriad and disparate ideological influences: Enlightenment rationalism, Scottish common sense philosophy, and millennial Christianity. For most of his life, Rush was a devout Christian but without orthodox denominational attachments. His religious beliefs evolved over time, from Presbyterian to Episcopalian, and finally to Universalism, the final stage involving a rejection of many traditional Christian doctrines, including Jesus' substitutional atonement for humans' sins. Most biographers document this transition away from his younger attraction to evangelical

Presbyterianism to what some have described as a "republicanism spiritualism" that rejected denominationalism and the reliance on creeds. One biographer of Rush's religion describes him as a "religious empiricist," who sought to establish empirically the capacity of religious sensation and faith within individuals and humanity generally. Rush integrated Enlightenment, scientific and religious terminology to explain the human social condition.³⁸

Rush became an advocate for various forms of reform in early America – prisons, temperance, slavery – but believed that moral reforms should take place through voluntary associations rather than through churches. Among other things, Rush was an education reformer committed to establishing a system of public schools with a curriculum that relied primarily on secular subject-matter. Like Franklin, Jefferson and (an early) Noah Webster, Rush criticized the stultifying use of Biblical passages common in early education. Unlike the other three, however, Rush did recommend using the Bible in the schools for the purpose of instilling morals and civic virtue in children. But he opposed its use for the purposes of proselytizing or teaching religious creeds. In a sense, Rush was the father of nineteenth century nonsectarian public education (promoted later by Horace Mann), which maintained that public schools could instruct in core, universal religious principles for teaching morals and character development. Rush and others were blind to the strong Protestant bias of nonsectarian instruction and to how it discriminated against Catholics, Jews and other religious minorities. Nonsectarianism fell into disuse in the latter part of the nineteenth century and has generally been discredited.³⁹

Drive Thru History discusses Rush's role in reconciling John Adams and Thomas Jefferson in 1809 (their break occurring after the bitter election of 1800) and attributes Rush's motives to his religious faith ("he pondered a way to be a middleman for reconciliation, for his Christian faith taught him that he was not only a peacemaker (see Matthew 5:9) but also that he was to bring about reconciliation whenever possible (see Corinthians 5:18)") (p. 35). Based on Rush's integrated belief-system, his faith no doubt informed his motives to act as a reconciler; however, there is nothing to indicate that this was his primary motive, let alone that he would have relied on Christian scripture to rationalize his actions. On the contrary, Rush's own account of the episode, written in an 1809 letter, does not attribute religious reasons for his actions. His biographers maintain that Rush was driven by his own disdain

for political partisanship and a belief that reconciliation was necessary to preserve national unity. Again, *Drive Thru History* misleads students by providing a slanted and incomplete account of an event.⁴⁰

An additional section in the Rush lesson is particularly troubling. On pages 35-36, Barton's book invites students to compare issues of the Democratic and Republican parties and then gives students limited choices that include the "hot-button" issues of abortion and traditional marriage (i.e., gay marriage). These two issues of course are of particular interest to religious conservatives who commonly identify with the Republican Party.⁴¹ Later, the book intimates that because Rush was a physician and Christian, he was "pro-life" in his perspective on abortion ("He loved life and admired the intricacies of the physical body, which he believed God had created and which he hated to see destroyed.") (p. 41). There is no evidence that this was Rush's position and, on the contrary, Rush was a strong advocate for women's rights, their medical health, and their civil equality.⁴²

GEORGE WASHINGTON

No Founder has received more attention than George Washington, and no other Founder has been the subject of greater mythologizing, particularly about his religious beliefs. James Thomas Flexner described Washington as the "indispensable man" for his contributions during the Revolutionary War, the Constitutional Convention, and as the nation's first president.⁴³ *Drive Thru History* strangely devotes a considerable portion of the lesson on George Washington to describing his involvement as a British officer in the French and Indian war and his "miraculous" escape from death in an ambush in 1755, an event Washington attributed to the interworking of divine providence. The lesson also relates other instances in Washington's military and political career in which he ascribed successes to "Providential occurrences." In several places, the lesson shifts in its discussions of providence from being ascriptive to making descriptive truth claims about God's hand in the nation's founding. (p. 55, 59) The lesson concludes with a defense of Washington's religious faith – against claims of his deistic beliefs – asserting that "Washington was known as a man of prayer, and he believed that God answered his prayers." (59)

The effort to canonize George Washington as a devout,

orthodox Protestant has been ongoing since his death. Washington was brought up in the Church of England (Episcopal) and attended services all of his life. As an adult, however, Washington did not receive the sacraments whenever he attended church. Leading historians concur that Washington doubted the divinity and resurrection of Jesus, his substitutional atonement for humans' sins, the miracles, and the divine inspiration of the Bible. He was likely unitarian or deist in his belief in God.⁴⁴

According to one Washington scholar:

Washington subscribed to the religious faith of the Enlightenment. Like Franklin and Jefferson, he was a deist. Although not believing in the doctrines of the churches, he was convinced that a divine force, impossible to define, ruled the universe, and that this "Providence" was good. . . . Speaking not for conventional effort but from his own heart, he avoided, as was his deistic custom, the word "God." He expressed "my fervent supplication to that Almighty Being who rules over the universe, who presides in the council of nations, and whose providential aids can supply every defect" for assistance.⁴⁵

Paul Boller and other leading historians have described Washington as a unitarian-deist in his beliefs. Boller even questions whether he could have been considered Christian by current standards. No reference to Jesus appears in his writings or speeches. "He never spoke of any personal faith in Christ but rather reserved his affirmations of faith in the Supreme Ruler of the Nations for his personal letters or civil religion occasions." Boller goes on to state: "Most American unitarian-deists regarded God as standing apart from his creation, not communicating directly with humanity, but somehow taking a hand in human affairs in the guise of fate, destiny, or Providence – terms used by Washington."⁴⁶

Drive Thru History disputes that Washington, and the other Founders, held deistic beliefs (pp. 59-60). First, this goes against the weight of historical opinion and scholarship, as addressed above. Second, it demonstrates a lack of understanding among the authors of the dynamics of religious belief during the founding period and the breadth and pervasiveness of deistic thought (see Frank-

lin discussion in preceding section). The authors set up a false syllogism: Washington believed in God and an interposing providence; deists believed in an impersonal, non-intervening providence; therefore, Washington and other Founders cannot be deists. But many deists believed in providence (see above). The *Drive Thru History* authors are fighting the same battle as the early nineteenth century evangelical revisionists who sought to rehabilitate the religious piety of Washington and other Founders by turning them into evangelicals, which they were not. Regardless, no educational series for public schools should ask students (as *Drive Thru History* does): “Do you think God is real? If so, does he have a role in your day-to-day life?” (p. 60). This is asking students to make a religious confession of faith, contrary to principles of religious freedom and the commands of the U. S. Supreme Court.⁴⁷

This is not to say that Washington was not a pious man. Washington had a “genuine but generalized faith in God as the Creator and Ruler of the universe.” He had an “unquestioning faith in Providence and voiced that faith on numerous occasions.” He was highly ethical and believed in the stabilizing influence of organized religion. Even though his theology was similar to that of Franklin and Jefferson, he did not approach religion abstractly or as topic of study as did the other two men. He held a personal, though unconventional, faith that included a belief in a more active providential force in the world than was held by many other deists (i.e., a “warm” deist).⁴⁸

This led Washington, like other pre-Kantians, to attribute unexplainable or “miraculous” events to the inner workings of providence. This was common for the day, even among Enlightenment deists, though the practice was so ubiquitous as to be done casually, such that little significance can be drawn from the use of such rhetoric. Washington, who was self-effacing and obsessed with his public image at the same time, was prone to attribute remarkable events in his life to “smiles of a kind Providence.” His story of escaping unscathed in the battle at Fort Duquesne in 1755 was one of his favorites. That Washington personally attributed that event and other unexplainable successes (or non-failures) during the Revolutionary War to the intervention of providence does not make it a *fact* as *Drive Thru History* maintains (“George Washington’s skillful maneuvering and strategic retreat and a *providential intervention* saved the Continental Army.”)(p. 55).⁴⁹ This presentation suffers from a lack of balance and analysis.

BENJAMIN BANNEKER AND HAYM SALOMON

These lessons discuss lesser-known figures of the Founding period, likely included to provide an appearance of ethnic and religious balance. As *Drive Thru History* relates, Benjamin Banneker was an African-American mathematician and astronomer who was involved in the planning of Washington, D.C., while Haym Salomon was a Jewish financier of the Revolutionary War. Much less has been written about Banneker and Salomon, so less information exists about their religious beliefs and perspectives. However, the available biographies do not indicate that either man was particularly devout or possessed a religious worldview, such that they attributed their character or achievements to religion.⁵⁰ One biography of Banneker does describe him as “deeply religious” but does not provide additional information as to how that impacted his career or daily life. As *Drive Thru History* relates, Banneker apparently learned to read from his grandmother’s Bible, and he treasured that book for the remainder of his life. Although Banneker was attracted to the Quakers, likely for their stance on the abolition of slavery, he apparently resisted affiliating with any church.⁵¹ Salomon was apparently an observant Jew, though the depth of his faith is impossible to gauge. But again, none of the biographies indicates that religion was significant in developing the character of either man.

As a result, *Drive Thru History* does not make the same bold claims about their religious faith as with the other figures. Rather, the curriculum relies chiefly on insinuation as to the role of faith, such as on page 71, in which the book makes the unsubstantiated declaration that “as a Christian [Banneker] would have understood that his days were really in God’s hands and that only God knew when his life would end.” On the same page, the book claims that being an astronomer, Banneker would lie on the ground and “drink in the beauty of the heavens above.” The book then asks students to consider how “spending time in quiet contemplation might add depth of meaning to [their lives].” (p. 71) The section ends with the declaration that Banneker “believed that life began with God,” and that numerous accomplished scientists believed in God, including Isaac Newton, who, as a leader of Enlightenment rationalism, held heterodox religious beliefs.⁵² In a not too subtle attempt to tie up matters, the lesson concludes with a quote from Psalms (“The heavens declare the glory of

God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands”), and then asks students to consider how a belief in God and scientific study can co-exist. (p. 72) The authors again provide no evidence to support these claims but rely instead on insinuations.

The same pattern of insinuation occurs with the lesson on Salomon. On page 82, the book lists his character traits – honesty, fidelity, integrity, generosity – and then implies that because these traits are taught in the Hebrew Scriptures, Salomon’s traits must be derived from that source. See also page 78 in the lesson on Salomon, where the book makes several declarations about the Christian faith of other Founders (“most of the Founding Fathers were Christians”) and then discusses their admiration of Jews like Salomon, as if their commendations are necessary to validate Judaism in the mind of the reader. This lesson also concludes with a passage from the Bible encouraging generosity, and then invites student to consider how they use their money. (p. 84) Such use of insinuation is common throughout the book. The claims, however, lack a factual basis.

ABIGAIL ADAMS

The lesson on Abigail Adams follows the now familiar pattern of describing formative events in Adams’ life, her early exposure to religion, her character traits, and then insinuating without documentation a causal connection. Of particular emphasis in this lesson is Adams’ upbringing as the daughter of a Congregational minister, with the claim that he “provid[ed] them with the foundation of an unshakable faith that remained throughout life.” (p. 88) *Drive Thru* fails to mention that Adams’ father, Reverend William Smith, was a religious liberal who had broken with the strict Calvinist wing of mid-eighteenth century Congregationalism. According to one biographer, Smith emphasized “the liberal precepts of a rational and practical Christianity including freedom of the will and the right of private judgment.” Abigail Adams also held this perspective, sharing her husband’s unitarian beliefs.⁵³ Adams was a religious pragmatist and utilitarian: “The basis of faith, in Abigail’s view, was its reasonableness and its purpose to the social order.”⁵⁴ Again, the book, through insinuation and selective use of quotes, implies that religion exerted a level of influence over Adams’ life that it likely did not have.

That said, there is no question that religion was important

to Adams, and she was likely more devout in her faith in God than her husband. She likely believed that religion was the foundation of morality and a guide to virtuous living. But Adams was a highly intelligent and inquisitive woman, exposed to myriad philosophical ideas that informed her “enlightened viewpoint on government and religion,” particularly Enlightenment rationalism. Her pragmatic faith informed her worldview, but it did not control it.⁵⁵ As a result, some of the book’s characterizations of Adams’ reliance on religion are unobjectionable; however, they are incomplete in minimizing the many influences in Adams’ life.

NOAH WEBSTER

Of all the figures profiled in *Drive Thru History*, Noah Webster is the only one who can accurately be described as an evangelical Christian or someone whose religious piety and perspective directed his worldview. The lesson contains several declarations by Webster that attest to the importance of the Bible and his religious faith. (pp. 108-110) But this characterization is only accurate for the final third of Webster’s life, after he had a “born-again” conversion experience in 1808. For the first fifty years of his life, contemporaneous to the nation’s founding, Webster held lukewarm religious views; religion was not at the center of his life. Historian Gary Nash describes Webster as essentially a mild deist. Webster was inspired chiefly by Enlightenment thought, and he approached the heady issues of the day – American Revolution, constitutional formation – from that perspective. Webster was also an early advocate of a secular educational system, and the virtues he advocated in his early schoolbooks – morals, manners, patriotism – were based chiefly on this rationalistic worldview.⁵⁶

Although *Drive Thru History* mentions his 1808 conversion (p. 109), the book does not distinguish Webster’s accomplishments by period, attributing all to his “Christian worldview.” (p. 106) This is a not-too-subtle attempt to deny the formation of values outside of Christian influences. Yet Webster’s primary impact on the nation’s formative attitudes and institutions took place when he adhered to a form of rationalist religion. Through this intentional blurring, *Drive Thru History* misses an opportunity to teach students about the impact of the Second Great Awakening on early nineteenth century American culture and how the religious perspectives of many people (like Webster) evolved from religious rationalism to evangelical piety. To

do so, however, would require *Drive Thru History's* authors to acknowledge that the impulses that “drove” the nation’s founding were not primarily religious.

There is no question that Webster had a significant conversion experience in 1808, and he remained a devout evangelical for the remainder of his life. His conversion was so complete, in fact, that he began to revise his previous accounts of the Revolution and other historical events, now attributing most everything to religious causes and divine providence. He lost his interest in educational reform; for Webster, the Bible became “the starting point and guiding light of true learning. . . . In 1790 Webster believed schools were the answer [for instilling republican virtue]; in 1823 they had been replaced by God.” Webster also wrote a poorly received *History of the United States* in which he engaged in extensive religious revisionism of the nation’s founding where all important events were attributed to religion and providence. Webster even rejected secular notions of popular sovereignty and democratic governance, claiming that all legitimacy for government was from God. In many respects, Webster was one of the first religious revisionists whom James Huston and other historians have criticized.⁵⁷ *Drive Thru History's* portrayal of Webster is skewed and sorely incomplete.

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

Drive Thru History's portrayal of John Quincy Adams continues the same pattern of an incomplete and skewed account of an important historical figure. It states that Adams’ “parents raised him with a deep respect for God” and that he was “a deeply committed and outspoken Christian.” (pp. 116, 118) It includes several quotations by Adams of a religious nature. Again by insinuation, the lesson implies that Adams’ religious devotion had a significant impact on his career and worldview.

While this claim is not inaccurate at a certain level, it is grossly overstated. John Quincy Adams shared much of his mother’s religious outlook. He too was unitarian in his faith, rejecting the divinity of Jesus, the doctrine of atonement, and the actuality of the miracles. He believed the Bible was inspired, but not inerrant or of divine revelation. He approached religion from a pragmatic and rational perspective, though he found that did not conflict with holding a personal faith. He was highly moral and believed that a primary source of virtue was to be found in

religion. More than any other figure in this series, however, Adams’ worldview was influenced by a wide spectrum of experiences. Based on his education, international travel and numerous government appointments, Adams was likely the most qualified person to be President during the nineteenth century. Adams’ sense of character and civic virtue cannot be attributed to any one source, particularly religion. Nor should undue emphasis be placed on the fact that Adams promoted the Bible as a source of morals or that he quoted occasionally from that text. His worldview was much broader. Again, like the depiction of his mother, this lesson is grossly incomplete.⁵⁸

ENDNOTES

- ¹ The contents of this report reflect the author's own professional views and not those of Willamette University or any other entity.
- ² The series, published by Tyndale House Publishers of Carol Stream, Illinois, in 2006, with the copyright being held by the National Day of Prayer Task Force. The home web page of Tyndale House Publishers states that "Tyndale's purpose is to minister to the spiritual needs of people, primarily through literature consistent with biblical principles." (last visited 12/15/09).
- ³ *Engel v. Vitale*, 370 U.S. 421 (1962).
- ⁴ *Abington School District*, 374 U.S. at 222: "[T]he [Establishment] clause withdrew all legislative power respecting religious belief of the expression thereof;" *Engel*, 370 U.S. at 431-432: "The Establishment Clause thus stands as an expression of principle on the part of the Founders of our Constitution that religion is too personal, too sacred, too holy, to permit its 'unhallowed perversion' by a civil magistrate." Accord *Edwards v. Aguillard*, 482 U.S. 578, 584 (1987).
- ⁵ *Engel*, 370 U.S. at 431: "When the power, prestige and financial support of government is placed behind a particular religious belief, the indirect coercive pressure upon religious minorities to conform to the prevailing officially approved religion is plain." Accord, *Santa Fe Independent School District v. Doe*, 530 U.S. 290, 305-306, 309-310 (2000).
- ⁶ *Edwards v. Aguillard*, 482 U.S. 578, 583-584 (1987): "The Court has been particularly vigilant in monitoring compliance with the Establishment Clause in elementary and secondary schools. . . . Students in such institutions are impressionable and their attendance is involuntary." Accord, *Lee v. Weisman*, 505 U.S. 577, 592 (1992).
- ⁷ *Lee*, 505 U.S. at 593, noting that peer pressure, "though subtle and indirect, can be as real as any overt compulsion." Accord, *Santa Fe*, 530 U.S. at 311-312; *Karen B. v. Treen*, 653 F.2d 897 (5th Cir. 1981), affirmed, 455 U.S. 913 (1982).
- ⁸ *Edwards*, 482 U.S. at 591 (striking a law adopting a curriculum that sought to advance a "religious viewpoint"); accord *Epperson v. Arkansas*, 393 U.S. 97 (1968).
- ⁹ *Stone v. Graham*, 449 U.S. 39 (1981) (striking the posting of the Ten Commandments in public school classrooms).
- ¹⁰ *C.H. v. Oliva*, 226 F.3d 198 (3rd Cir. 2000).
- ¹¹ *Abington School District*, 374 U.S., at 225; *Stone*, 449 U.S. at 42.
- ¹² http://www.dthamerica.com/about/index_90.cfm.
- ¹³ See Stephen M. Stookey, "In God We Trust? Evangelical Historiography and the Quest for a Christian America," *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 41 (Spring 1999): 41-69; Ronald B. Flowers, "In Search of a Christian Nation," *Liberty: A Magazine of Religious Freedom* 99 (July/August 2004): 16-21; Frederick Clarkson, *Eternal Hostility: The Struggle Between Theocracy and Democracy* (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 1997), 16-18.
- ¹⁴ http://www.dthamerica.com/about/index_57.cfm.
- ¹⁵ *Abington Township v. Schempp*, 374 U.S. 203 (1963); *Engel v. Vitale*, 370 U.S. 421 (1962).
- ¹⁶ http://www.dthamerica.com/catalog/detail.cfm?Prod_ID=4&series=1&brand=1.
- ¹⁷ <http://www.dthamerica.com/about/>.
- ¹⁸ http://www.dthamerica.com/video/index_246.cfm.
- ¹⁹ *Edwards*, 482 U.S. at 584: "Families entrust public schools with the education of their children, but condition their trust on the understanding that the classroom will not purposely be used to advance religious views that may conflict with the private beliefs of the student and his or her family. Students in such institutions are impressionable and their attendance is involuntary."
- ²⁰ *Abington Township*, 374 U.S. at 225 ("[I]t might well be said that one's education is not complete without a study of comparative religion or the history of religion and its relationship to the advancement of civilization.").
- ²¹ James H. Huston, *The Founders and Religion: A Book of Quotations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), ix.
- ²² See David Barton, *The Myth of Separation* (Aledo, TX: WallBuilder Press, 1992). Accord, Stephen M. Stookey, "In God We Trust? Evangelical Historiography and the Quest for a Christian America," *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 41 (Spring 1999): 41-69 ("Barton's background as a historian is murky: he provides little information concerning his academic credentials. Barton does not appear to have formal historical, legal or theological training, as his books and videos contain fundamental errors in each field of study."). *Ibid.*, 47-48.
- ²³ Mark A. Noll, Nathan O. Hatch, and George M. Marsden, *The Search for Christian America* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1983), 17.
- ²⁴ See generally, Edwin S. Gaustad, *Historical Atlas of Religion in America*, rev. ed. (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1976); Rodney Stark and Roger Finke, "American Religion in 1776: A Statistical Portrait" *Sociological Analysis* 49 (1988): 39-51. Scholars Patricia Bonomi and Peter R. Eisenstadt believe the numbers were much higher; inconsistencies among studies chiefly reflect differences in designations, i.e., actual member-

ship, versus occasional attendance, versus self-identification with a particular denomination. Bonomi and Eisenstadt, "Church Attendance in the Eighteenth Century British American Colonies," *William and Mary Quarterly* 39, no 2 (April 1982): 247.

²⁵ Huston, *The Founders and Religion*, xiii.

²⁶ Gordon S. Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1969), 152-153, 291-300; Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1967), 27-29, 35-54; John M. Murrin, "Fundamental Values, the Founding Fathers, and the Constitution," in *To Form a More Perfect Union: The Critical Ideas of the Constitution*, eds., Herman Belz, Ronald Hoffman, and Peter J. Albert (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1992): 1-37.

²⁷ Murrin, "Fundamental Values," 17-30; Edwin Scott Gaustad, *Faith of Our Fathers: Religion and the New Nation* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Pub., 1987), 76; John F. Berens, *Providence & Patriotism in Early America, 1640-1815* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1978), 51-111; Ruth H. Bloch, "Religion and Ideological Change in the American Revolution," in *Religion and American Politics*, ed. Mark A. Noll (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 50; Isaac Kramnick, "The 'Great National Discussion': The Discourse of Politics in 1787," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ed. 45 (1988): 1-15.

²⁸ Huston, *The Founders and Religion*, x.

²⁹ "Once past the obvious fact that the Bible was a ubiquitous presence, however, we discover that the country's biblical character was not simple at all." Mark A. Noll, "The Image of the United States as a Biblical Nation, 1776-1865," in *The Bible in America*, eds. Nathan O. Hatch and Mark A. Noll (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 41.

³⁰ See Steven K. Green, "Justice David Josiah Brewer and the 'Christian Nation' Maxim," *Albany Law Review* 63 (1999): 427-476.

³¹ *Drive Thru History* fails to include Franklin's statement denying the divinity of Jesus. Scholars concur that Franklin's letter, responding to Stiles' concerns about Franklin's salvation, was a subtle rebuke to prevailing religious claims advanced by orthodox Protestants of the day. Gordon S. Wood, *The Americanization of Benjamin Franklin* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004), 229; Jerry Weinberger, *Benjamin Franklin Unmasked: On the Unity of His Moral, Religion, and Political Thought* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005), 283-284.

³² Wood, *The Americanization of Benjamin Franklin*, 30; Norman Cousins, "In God We Trust": *The Religious Beliefs and Ideas of the American Founding Fathers* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958), 16; Alfred Owen Aldridge, *Benjamin Franklin and Nature's God* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1967); Kelly S. Walters, *Benjamin Franklin and His Gods* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999); Weinberger, *Benjamin Franklin Unmasked*, xiii.

³³ Compare Walters, *Benjamin Franklin and His Gods*, 9, passim; and Weinberger, *Benjamin Franklin Unmasked*, 308-309.

³⁴ Wood, *Americanization*, 30; Cousins, "In God We Trust", 20-22.

³⁵ Walters, *Benjamin Franklin and His Gods*, 26-27.

³⁶ James Madison, *Notes on the Debates of the Federal Convention of 1787*, ed. Adrienne Koch (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1966), 209; Weinberger, *Benjamin Franklin Unmasked*, 124-128; Alan Houston, *Benjamin Franklin and the Politics of Improvement* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 198-199; Murrin, "Fundamental Values," 1-4.

³⁷ Madison, *Notes on the Debates*, 210-231; Murrin, "Fundamental Values," 4. A committee announced the so-called "great compromise" on representation on July 5. Contrary to the statement in *Drive Through* of a "new positive attitude" that saved the convention (26), several leading delegates, including James Madison, James Wilson, and Gouverneur Morris, objected to the compromise, which continued to be hotly debated for several days. Madison, *Notes on the Debates*, 237-256. *Drive Through* presents an inaccurate and simplistic accounting of the episode.

³⁸ Huston, *The Founders and Religion*, xxiii; David Freeman Hawke, *Benjamin Rush: Revolutionary Gadfly* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1971), 259-261, 320-337, 358-372; John M. Kloos, Jr., *A Sense of Deity: The Republican Spirituality of Dr. Benjamin Rush* (Brooklyn: Carlson Pub., 1991), 2-3, 8, 553-55, 114-116.

³⁹ Kloos, *A Sense of Deity*, 6; Benjamin Rush, "Of the Mode of Education Proper in a Republic" (1798), and "The Bible as a School Book," (1791), in *The Selected Writings of Benjamin Rush*, ed. Dagobert D. Runes (New York: Philosophical Library, 1947), 87-96, 117-130; see Timothy L. Smith, "Protestant Schooling and American Nationality, 1800-1850," *Journal of American History* 53 (1966-67): 679; Noah Feldman, "Non-Sectarianism Reconsidered," *Journal of Law and Politics* 18(2002): 65.

⁴⁰ Kloos, *A Sense of Deity*, 19-20; Alyn Brodsky, *Benjamin Rush: Patriot and Physician* (New York: Truman Talley Books, 2004), 350-356.

⁴¹ It is my understanding that David Barton has been an official in the Texas Republican Party.

⁴² Brodsky, *Benjamin Rush*, 290-291

⁴³ James Thomas Flexner, *Washington: The Indispensable Man* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1974) (winner of the Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award).

⁴⁴ Paul F. Boller, Jr., "George Washington and Religious Liberty," *William and Mary Quarterly* 17 (Oct. 1960): 486-506, 488-489; Boller, *George Washington and Religion* (Dallas: S.M.U. Press, 1963), 90 and passim.

⁴⁵ Flexner, *Washington: The Indispensable Man*, 216.

⁴⁶ Boller, *George Washington and Religion*, 74-75; Richard V. Pierard and Robert D. Linder, *Civil Religion & the Presidency* (Grand Rapids, MI: Academic Books, 1988), 72-74.

⁴⁷ *Abington Township v. Schempp*, 374 U.S. 203 (1963); *Engel v. Vitale*, 370 U.S. 421 (1962).

⁴⁸ Pierard and Linder, *Civil Religion*, 72-74; Boller, *George Washington and Religion*, 92-93.

⁴⁹ Boller, *George Washington and Religion*, 92-115.

⁵⁰ Silvio A. Bedini, *The Life of Benjamin Banneker: The First African-American Man of Science*, 2d ed. (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1999); Charles A. Cerami, *Benjamin Banneker: Surveyor, Astronomer, Publisher, Patriot* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2002); Charles Edward Russell, *Haym Salomon and the Revolution* (New York: Cosmopolitan Book Corp., 1930); Laurens R. Schwartz, *Jews and the American Revolu-*

tion: *Haym Salomon and Others* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 1987).

⁵¹ Bedini, *The Life of Benjamin Banneker*, 156, 264-267; Cerami, *Benjamin Banneker*, 202.

⁵² James M. Byrne, *Religion and the Enlightenment* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 154-155.

⁵³ Rosemary Keller, *Patriotism and the Female Sex: Abigail Adams and the American Revolution* (Brooklyn: Carlson Pub., 1994), 10-11, 22. See also Charles W. Akers, *Abigail Adams: An American Woman* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1980), 6-7, 188; Edith B. Gells, *Portia: The World of Abigail Adams* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 147.

⁵⁴ Keller, *Patriotism and the Female Sex*, 125. "Like other eighteenth-century Christians of an enlightened outlook, she tended to believe in an impersonal Deity, the Architect and Governor of the Universe, who rules from the distant past by immutable law, not a personal being capable of love and wrath." *Ibid.*, 22.

⁵⁵ Keller, *Patriotism and the Female Sex*, 22-23; Akers, *Abigail Adams*, 7, 127.

⁵⁶ Gary Nash, "The American Clergy and the French Revolution," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser. 22 (1965): 400; Richard M. Rollins, *The Long Journey of Noah Webster* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980), 107-117; Richard J. Moss, *Noah Webster* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1984), 31-36.

⁵⁷ Moss, *Noah Webster*, 36-47; K. Alan Snyder, *Defining Noah Webster: Mind and Morals in the Early Republic* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1990), 250-258; Rollins, *Long Journey of Noah Webster*, 118-121. "The views Webster expressed during his last decade were diametrically opposed to those he had held in his youth. He was convinced that man was innately evil, depraved, and incapable of governing himself. Reason was an imperfect guide on any issue; man must look to God and his revelations for answers to any and all questions. It followed that popular sovereignty and other democratic ideals were absurd." *Ibid.*, 140.

⁵⁸ Greg Russell, *John Quincy Adams and the Public Virtues of Diplomacy* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1995), 14, 78, 82, 87; George A. Lipsky, *John Quincy Adams: His Theory and Ideas* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1950), 68-71.

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