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One Nation Under God: How Close A Separation?

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We the People

ONE
NATION
UNDER
GOD

HOW CLOSE A
SEPARATION?



BY
D.P. DIFFINE, PH.D.

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ONE NATION UNDER GOD

How Close a Separation?

by
D. P. Diffine, Ph.D.

INTRODUCTION -- A State Religion? -- Never

For all practical purposes, America's first schools were churches. America's first teachers were clergymen. And America's first textbook was the Bible.

Beyond that, what about those other things we know that aren't true? Example: The so-called "*...Constitutional separation of church and state...*" Stop the presses. The First Amendment of our United States Constitution does not use those words, "*...separation...church...state.*" Honest.

That First Amendment reads: "*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof...*" That's all. It appears that the First Amendment was not intended to remove religion from the public square, but rather to keep government out of religion. Big difference.

Over two centuries, fact and folklore have merged to give the "*...church and state*" issue more play than it probably deserves. In 1801, a political opponent of President Thomas Jefferson attacked Jefferson as being an "*atheist*," for not wanting to renew George Washington's Thanksgiving Day Proclamation.

In response, Thomas Jefferson, through private correspondence, communicated to the Danbury Baptist Association the following: *"...I contemplate with solemn reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should 'make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,' thus building a wall of separation between church and state..."*

Not a signer of the Constitution, nor present at the 1787 Constitutional Convention, Mr. Jefferson's above-mentioned correspondence appears to borrow the phraseology of well-known Baptist minister Roger Williams. It seems fairly clear that the "wall" was meant to protect churches from discrimination by the government by means of, God forbid, a state church.

So, where do we find the answers to our riddle, *"Was there, or is there, too much religion in our government?"* As a colleague of mine likes to put it: *"If we don't learn from history, we are destined to repeat it--next semester."* Therefore, let us each channel our inner historian.

In the 1830's, eminent French political observer, Alexis de Tocqueville, came to America searching for the key to our greatness. He concluded:

I sought for the greatness and genius of America in her commodious harbors and her ample rivers, and it was not there. I sought for the greatness and genius of America in her fertile fields and boundless forests, and it was not there.

I sought for the greatness and genius of America in her rich mines and her vast world commerce, and it was not there. I sought for the greatness and genius of America in her vast public school system and her institutions of learning, and it was not there.

I sought for the greatness and genius of America in her matchless constitution, and it was not there. Not until I went into the churches of America and heard her pulpits flame with righteousness did I understand the secret of her genius and power.

American church religion, he wrote, is "...a political institution which powerfully contributes to the maintenance of a democratic republic among the Americans..." by supplying a strong moral consensus amidst continuous political change.

Today, some historical revisionists would deny or obscure the fact that our nation was founded upon belief in God. But have they really done their homework? Don't think so. Consider just a few examples from yesteryear.

In 1647, the General Court of Massachusetts ordered every community of 50 families to have a school to teach children to read. The reason given by the court for establishing schools was: "*It being the chief project of the old deluder, Satan, to keep men from the knowledge of the Scriptures, effort must be made to thwart this old deluder.*"

Those Founding Fathers regarded religion as such a cornerstone of our new country that one of the first official acts of the Continental Congress was to requisition 20,000 Bibles to be printed and distributed to the Indians.

In his first inaugural address, George Washington clearly demonstrated the close relationship between God and the people of this country:

It would be peculiarly improper to omit in this first official act my fervent supplications to that Almighty Being who rules over the Universe, who presides in the Council of Nations, and whose providential aids can supply every human defect, that His Benediction may consecrate to the liberties and happiness of the people of the United States a government instituted by themselves.

In 1787, the year the Constitution was written and approved by Congress, that same Congress passed the famous Northwest Ordinance. In it they emphasized the importance of religion and morality in the schools:

Article 3: Religion, morality, and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools, and the means of education shall forever be encouraged.

In 1892, Supreme Court Justice Brewer, delivering the opinion of the Court, stated:

These, and many other matters which might be noticed, add a volume of unofficial declarations to the mass of organic utterances that this is a Christian nation.

Today, on the top of the Washington Monument are carved these words: "Praise be to God." Along its interior walls is inscribed: "In God We Trust; may Heaven to

this union continue its beneficence; Search the Scriptures."

Above the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, carved in marble, are the Ten Commandments. On the wall opposite the President of the Senate are the words, "*In God We Trust.*" Each session of Congress and our High Court starts with a prayer. Unconvinced? Read on.

I. THE WEIGHT OF TESTIMONY
Religion in the Statesman's Hearts?
Almost Always

Up to now, we have gone skiing along the surface of this great topic. Now, we shall immerse ourselves in it. The following 25 pages and over 100 quotations, both in volume and tenor, show in chronological fashion that our Forefathers, including the framers of the Constitution, were never confused about a separation of God and Country:

In the name of God, Amen, having undertaken for the Glory of God and advancement of the Christian faith...do...solemnly and mutually in the presence of God covenant and combine ourselves together ...

-- The Mayflower Compact, 1620

This love among Christians is a real thing, not imaginary...as absolutely necessary to the well-being of the Body of Christ, as the sinews and other ligaments of a natural body are to the well-being of that body...We are a company, professing ourselves fellow members of Christ, and thus we ought to account ourselves knit together by this bond of love. Thus out of small beginnings greater things have been produced by His hand that made all things of nothing, and gives being to all things that are; and, as one small candle may light a thousand, so the light here kindled hath shone unto many, yea in some sort to our whole nation; let the glorious name of Jehovah have all the praise.

**-- Plymouth Plantation,
Governor William Bradford**

That God's word should be the only rule for ordering the affairs of government in this commonwealth.

-- General Court of Connecticut, 1639

Let every student be plainly instructed and earnestly pressed to consider well, the main end of his life and studies is, to know God and Jesus Christ, which is eternal life, John 17:3; and therefore to lay Jesus Christ as the only foundation for our children to follow the moral principles of the Ten Commandments.

**-- Harvard University, 1836
Original Student Handbook**

Let...the main end of every student's life and studies be, to know God and Jesus Christ which is eternal life, and therefore to lay Christ in the bottom, as the only foundation of all sound knowledge and learning.

-- Harvard College Prospectus, 1642

Whereas we all come into these parts of America with one and the same end and aim, namely to advance the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ and to enjoy the Liberties of the Gospel in purity with peace.

**-- Constitution of the New
England Confederation, 1643**

Every one shall consider the main end of his life and studies to know God and Jesus Christ which is eternal life. Seeing the Lord giveth wisdom, every one shall seriously by prayer in secret seek wisdom of Him. Every one shall so exercise himself in reading the Scriptures twice a day that they be ready to give an account of their proficiency therein, both in theoretical

*observations of languages and logic,
and in practical and spiritual truths...*

**-- Rules and Precepts
Harvard College, 1646**

*In Adam's fall, Heaven to find,
We sinned all. The Bible Mind.*

*Job feels the rod. Peter denied
Yet blesses God, His Lord and
cried.*

*Zaccheus he
Did climb the tree
Our Lord to see.*

-- New England Primer, 1680

*If you are not governed by God,
you will be ruled by tyrants.*

-- William Penn, 1681

*Government seems to me to be a
part of religion itself--a thing sacred in
its institutions and ends. Let me be
good, and the government cannot be
bad....That, therefore, which makes a
good constitution must keep it
namely men of wisdom and vir-
tue....Whereas the glory of Almighty
God and the good of mankind is the
reason and end of government,
therefore, government in itself is a
venerable ordinance of God.*

-- William Penn, 1718

*No Man may put off
the Law of God.
The Way of God is no ill Way.
My Joy is in God all the Day.
A bad Man is a Foe to God.*

**-- New Guide to the English
Tongue, an 18th century reader**

I could say a thousand things to you, if I had leisure. I could dwell on the importance of piety and religion, of industry and frugality, or prudence, economy, regularity and even Government, all of which are essential to the well being of a family. But I have not time. I cannot however help repeating piety, because I think it indispensable. Religion in a family is at once its brightest ornament and its best security.

**-- Samuel Adams, 1771,
advice to future son-in-law**

The rights to freedom being the gift of God Almighty....The Rights of the Colonists as Christians...may be best understood by reading and carefully studying the institutes of the great Law Giver...which are to be found clearly written and promulgated in the New Testament.

-- Samuel Adams, 1772

Leviticus 25:10 Proclaim Liberty through all the land and to all the inhabitants thereof.

--Liberty Bell, 1752

We think it is incumbent upon this people to humble themselves before God on account of their sins, for He has been pleased in His righteous judgement to suffer a great calamity to befall us, as the present controversy between Great Britain and the Colonies, and also to implore the Divine Blessing upon us, that by the assistance of His grace, we may be able to reform whatever is amiss among us.

-- John Hancock, 1774

Religion is the only solid basis of good morals; therefore education should teach the precepts of religion, and the duties of man toward God.

**-- Governor Lewis Morris
(writer of the Constitution who originated the phrase, "We the people of the United States...")**

We have this day restored the Sovereign, to Whom alone men ought to be obedient. He reigns in Heaven and...from the rising to the setting sun, may His Kingdom come! Principally, and first of all, I resign my soul to the Almighty Being who gave it, and my body I commit to the dust, relying on the merits of Jesus Christ for the pardon of my sins.

-- Samuel Adams, 1776

...the laws of Nature and of Nature's God... that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights...appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions...with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence ...

Declaration of Independence, 1776

The day ought to be commemorated, as the Day of Deliverance, by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires and illuminations, from one end of this continent to the other, from this time forward forevermore.

-- John Adams, 1776

ANNUIT COEPTIS--Latin for "He (God) has favored our undertakings"

--Inscription on reverse of the Great Seal of the United States, 1777

I have examined all religions, as well as my narrow sphere, my straightened means, and my busy life, would allow; and the result is that the Bible is the best book in the world. it contains more philosophy than all the libraries I have seen. -- **John Adams**

It is essential, my son, in order that you may go through life with comfort to yourself, and usefulness to your fellow-creatures, that you should form and adopt certain rules or principles, for the government of your own conduct and temper.... It is in the Bible, you must learn them, and from the Bible how to practice them. Those duties are to God, to your fellow-creatures, and to yourself. -- **John Adams**

Suppose a nation in some distant region should take the Bible for their only law-book, and every member should regulate his conduct by the precepts there contained! Every member would be obliged in conscience to temperance, frugality, and industry; to justice, kindness, and charity towards his fellow men; and to piety, love, and reverence toward Almighty God.

-- **John Adams**

Before God, I believe the hour has come. My judgment approves this measure, and my whole heart is in it. All that I have, and all that I am, and all that I hope in this life, I am now ready here to stake upon it. And I leave off as

I began, that live or die, survive or perish, I am for the Declaration. It is my living sentiment, and by the blessing of God it shall be my dying sentiment. Independence now, and Independence forever!

-- John Adams

We have staked the whole of all our political institutions upon the capacity of mankind for self-government, upon the capacity of each and all of us to govern ourselves, to control ourselves, to sustain ourselves according to the Ten Commandments of God. --

James Madison, Primary Author, U.S. Constitution

As my children will have frequent occasion of perusing this instrument, and may probably be peculiarly impressed with the last words of their father, I think proper here, not only to subscribe to the entire belief of the great leading doctrines of Christian religion...but also in the heart of a father's affection, to charge and exhort them to remember "that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

-- Richard Stockton

A patriot without religion, in my estimation, is as great a paradox as an honest man without the fear of God. Is it possible that he whom no moral obligations bind, can have any real Good Will towards Men? Can he be a patriot who, by an openly vicious conduct, is undermining the very bonds of Society?...The Scriptures tell us righteousness exalteth a nation.

-- Abigail Adams, 1777

Providence has given to our people the choice of their rulers, and it is the duty, as well as the privilege and interest, of a Christian nation to select and prefer Christians for their rulers.

**-- Chief Justice of
New York, John May, 1777**

Almighty God, we make our earnest prayer that Thou wilt keep the United States in Thy Holy protection, and wilt most graciously be pleased to dispose us all to do justice, to love mercy, and to demean ourselves with that charity, humility, and pacific temper of mind which were the characteristics of the Divine Author of our blessed religion, and without a humble imitation of whose example in these things we can never hope to be a happy nation.

--General George Washington, 1783

To the distinguished character of a Patriot, it should be our highest glory to add the more distinguished character of a Christian.

**-- General George Washington in
his general order calling for
services every Sunday**

Here is my creed. I believe in one God, the Creator of the Universe. That He governs it by His providence. That He ought to be worshipped.

-- Benjamin Franklin, 1787

I therefore beg leave to move that henceforth prayers imploring the assistance of Heaven, and its blessings on our deliberations, be held in the assembly every morning.

-- Benjamin Franklin, 1787

Constitution Convention

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 men. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid?

-- Benjamin Franklin

He who shall introduce into public affairs the principles of primitive Christianity will change the face of the world.

-- Benjamin Franklin, U.S. Ambassador to France

For my own part, I sincerely esteem it as a system which without the finger of God, never could have been suggested and agreed upon by such a diversity of interests.

-- Alexander Hamilton, 1787

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 to implore His protection, aid and favors....Now, therefore, do I assign and recommend Thursday, the 26th day of November next...that we may then all unite in rendering unto Him our sincere and humble thanks for His kind care and protection of the people of this country, and for all the great and various favors which He has been pleased to confer upon us.

--George Washington, Thanksgiving Day Proclamation, 1789

Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports....And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion... reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.

-- George Washington

This is all the inheritance I can give to my dear family. The religion of Christ can give them one which will make them rich indeed.

-- Patrick Henry, 1798

An appeal to arms and the God of hosts is all that is left us. But we shall not fight our battle alone. There is a just God that presides over the destinies of nations. The battle sir, is not to the strong alone. Is life so dear or peace so sweet as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it almighty God. I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty, or give me death.

**-- Patrick Henry
March 23, 1775**

It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great Nation was founded not by religionists, but by Christians; not on religions, but on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For that reason alone people of other faiths have been afforded freedom of worship here.

-- Patrick Henry, 1776

Religion, or the duty which we owe to our Creator and the manner of discharging it, can be directed only by

reason and conviction, not by force or violence; and therefore all men are equally entitled to the free exercise of religion, according to the dictates of conscience....It is the mutual duty of all to practice Christian forbearance, love, and charity towards each other.

-- Patrick Henry

We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Avarice, ambition, revenge, or gallantry, would break the strongest cords of our Constitution as a whale goes through a net. Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.

--John Adams, 1797

God who gave us life gave us liberty. Can the liberties of a nation be secure when we have removed a conviction that these liberties are a gift of God?

--Thomas Jefferson, 1802

I have always said, and will always say, that the studious perusal of the sacred volume will make better homes, better citizens, better fathers, and better husbands.

--Thomas Jefferson

I am a real Christian, that is to say, a disciple of the doctrines of Jesus. I have little doubt that our whole country will soon be rallied to the unity of our Creator.

**-- Thomas Jefferson,
Chairman American Bible Society**

In my view, the Christian religion is...one of the first things in which all children, under a free government,

ought to be instructed....No truth is more evident to my mind that the Christian religion must be the basis of any government intended to secure the rights and privileges of a free people.

-- Noah Webster, 1807

The brief exposition of the Constitution of the United States will unfold to young persons the principles of republican government; and it is the sincere desire of the writer that our citizens should early understand that the genuine source of correct republican principles is the Bible, particularly the New Testament of the Christian religion

-- Noah Webster

We have staked the whole future of American civilization, not upon the power of government, far from it. We have staked the future of all our political institutions upon the capacity of mankind for self-government; upon the capacity of each and all of us to govern ourselves, to control ourselves, to sustain ourselves according to the Ten Commandments of God.

--President James Madison

I offer to a merciful God at the close of this year my humble tribute of gratitude for the blessings with which He has, in the course of it, favored me and those dear to me.

-- John Quincy Adams, 1812

The highest glory of the American Revolution was this; it connected in one indissoluble bond the principles of Christianity.

--John Quincy Adams

The first and almost the only book deserving the universal distinction is the Bible. I speak as a man of the world and I say to you, "Search the Scriptures." -- **John Quincy Adams**

More than all, a government and a country were to commence, with the very first foundations laid under the divine light of the Christian religion...who would wish that his country's existence had otherwise begun?

-- **Daniel Webster, in
Plymouth, Mass., 1820**

Our fathers were brought hither by their high veneration for the Christian religion. They journeyed by its light, and labored in its hope. They sought to incorporate its influence through all their institutions, civil, political, or literary. Let us cherish these sentiments, and extend this influence still more widely; in the full conviction that that is the happiest society which partakes in the highest degree of the mild and peaceful spirit of Christianity.

-- **Daniel Webster, 1820**

From the day of the Declaration...the American people were bound by the laws of God, which they all, and by the laws of the Gospel, which they nearly all, acknowledge as the rules of their conduct.

--**John Quincy Adams, July 4, 1821**

The religion which has introduced civil liberty is the religion of Christ and his apostles, which enjoins humility, piety, and benevolence; which acknowledges in every person a brother, or a sister,

and a citizen with equal rights. This is genuine Christianity, and to this we owe our free constitutions of government.

-- Noah Webster, 1828

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

**-- Samuel Francis Smith, 1832,
My Country `Tis Of Thee**

I know not how long a republican government can flourish among a great people who have not the Bible.... But this I do know: that the existing government of this country never could have had existence but for the Bible. And, further, I do in my conscience believe that if at every decade of years a copy of the Bible could be found in every family in the land, its republican institutions would be perpetuated.

**-- William Henry Seward,
Secretary of State, 1836**

The Christian religion is the religion of our country. From it are derived our notions on the character of God, on the great moral Governor of the universe. On its doctrines are founded the peculiarities of our free institutions. From no source has the author drawn more conspicuously than from the sacred Scriptures. From all these extracts from the Bible I make no apology.

**-- William Holmes McGuffey
(Forward from McGuffey's Reader, 1836)**

You have the highest of human trusts committed to your care. Providence has showered on this favored land blessings

without number, and has chosen you as the guardians of freedom, to preserve it for the benefit of the human race. May He who holds in His hands the destinies of nations, make you worthy of the favors He has bestowed, and enable you, with pure hearts and hands and sleepless vigilance, to guard and defend to the end of time, the great charge He has committed to your keeping.

-- Andrew Jackson, 1837

Is it not that, in the chain of events, the birthday of the nation is indissolubly linked with the birthday of the Saviour?...Is it not that the Declaration of Independence first organized the social compact on the foundation of the Redeemer's mission? That it laid the cornerstone of human government upon the first precepts of Christianity and gave to the world the first irrevocable pledge of the fulfillment of the prophecies announced directly from Heaven at the birth of the Saviour and predicted by the greatest of the Hebrew prophets 600 years before.

-- John Quincy Adams, 1837

The Bible came with them. And it is not to be doubted, that the free and universal reading of the Bible, in that age, men were much indebted for right views of civil liberty. The Bible is a book of faith, and a book of doctrine, and a book of morals, and a book of religion, of especial revelation from God; but it is also a book which teaches man his equality with his fellowman.

-- Daniel Webster, 1843

God, in His providence, has given us a Book of His revealed will to be with us

at the commencement of our career in this life and at its termination; and to accompany us during all chances and changes of this trying and fitful progress, to control the passions, to enlighten the judgment, to guide the conscience, to teach us what we ought to do here, and what we shall be hereafter.

**-- Lewis Cass, former
Secretary of State, 1846**

If religious books are not widely circulated among the masses in this country, I do not know what is going to become of us as a nation. If truth be not diffused, error will be; if God and His Word are not known and received, the devil and his works will gain the ascendancy; if the evangelical volume does not reach every hamlet, the pages of a corrupt and licentious literature will; if the power of the Gospel is not felt throughout the length and breadth of the land, anarchy and misrule, degradation and misery, corruption and darkness will reign without end.

-- Daniel Webster

If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible, our country will go on prospering, but if we and our posterity neglect its instruction and authority, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us and bury us and our glory in profound obscurity.

-- Daniel Webster

Should not the Bible regain the place it once held as a schoolbook? Its morals are pure, its examples are captivating and noble....In no Book is there so good English, so pure and so

elegant, and by teaching all the same they will speak alike, and the Bible will justly remain the standard of language as well as of faith.

**-- Fisher Ames, 18th
Century Statesman**

Fortune, by which I understand Providence, has showered blessings upon me profusely. But they have been blessings unforeseen and unsought. 'Non nobis, Domine, non nobis, sed nomini tuo da gloriam.' Not to us, Lord, not to us, but to your name be the glory.

-- John Quincy Adams, 1848

It was for the love of the truths of this great Book that our fathers abandoned their native shores for the wilderness. Animated by its lofty principles, they toiled and suffered till the desert blossomed as the rose. The same truths sustained them in their resolutions to become a free nation....If there were in that book nothing but its great precept, 'All things whatsoever you would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them,' and if that precept were obeyed, our government might extend over the whole Continent.

-- Zachary Taylor, 1849

Aside from Revelation, darkness rests upon the world and upon the future.... The Bible has shed a glorious light upon the world. It shows us that in the coming day we must answer for the deeds done in the body. It has opened to us a new and living way, so plainly marked out that no one can mistake it. The price paid for our redemption shows the value of our immortal souls.

--Supreme Court Justice

John McLean, 1852

If it were not for my firm belief in an overruling Providence, it would be difficult for me, in the midst of such complications of affairs, to keep my reason on its seat. But I am confident that the Almighty has His plans, and will work them out; and, whether we see it or not, they will be the best for us.

-- Abraham Lincoln

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...it behooves us then to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins and to pray for clemency and forgiveness.

-- Abraham Lincoln

Freedom is the natural condition of the human race, in which the Almighty intended men to live. Those who fight the purpose of the Almighty will not succeed. They always have been; they always will be beaten.

-- Abraham Lincoln, 1861

Unless the great God who assisted him (Washington) shall be with me and aid me, I must fail; but if the same omniscient mind and mighty arm that

directed and protected him shall guide and support me, I shall not fail--I shall succeed. Let us all pray that the God of our fathers may not forsake us now.

-- Abraham Lincoln, 1861

The will of God prevails. In great contests each party claims to act in accordance with the will of God. Both may be, and one must be wrong. God cannot be for and against the same thing at the same time. In the present civil war, it is quite possible that God's purpose is something different from the purpose of either party; and yet the human instrumentalities, working just as they do, are the best adaptation to effect His purpose.

-- Abraham Lincoln, 1862

*In the beauty of the lilies
Christ was born across the sea
With a glory in His bosom
That transfigures you and me;
As He died to make men holy
Let us die to make men free,
While God is marching on.*

-- Julia Ward Howe, 1862

I am glad to see so many of you out to hear preaching this Sabbath morning, and I would to God, that all the men of my command were true followers of Christ Jesus, the Lord. Soldiers, allow me to express with your chaplain the sincere desire of my heart, that we may meet at the right hand of the Great Judge in that day, which he has described to us.

**--Major General Oliver Howard,
127th Pennsylvania Volunteers, 1863**

I'm not at all concerned about that, for I know that the Lord is always on the side of the right. He paused. But it is my constant anxiety and prayer that I--and this nation--should be on the Lord's side.

--Abraham Lincoln, 1863

It is the duty of nations as well as of men to win their dependence upon the overruling power of God, to confess their sins and transgressions in humble sorrow yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon....Those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord.

-- Abraham Lincoln, 1863

It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us--that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom - - and that government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from the earth.

**--Abraham Lincoln at
Gettysburg, 1863**

In regard to this Great Book, I have but to say, it is the best gift God has given to man. All the good Saviour gave to the world was communicated through this book. But for it, we could not know right from wrong. All things most desirable for man's welfare, here and hereafter, are to be found portrayed in it.

-- Abraham Lincoln, 1864

Let us pray for our nation. Let us pray for those who have never known Jesus Christ and His redeeming love...for our national leaders. Let prayer be our passion. Let prayer be our practice. **-- Robert E. Lee**

Please thank them for that, sir--I warmly appreciate it. And I can only say that I am nothing but a poor sinner, trusting in Christ alone for salvation, and need all of the prayers they can offer for me.

**--General Robert E. Lee,
upon hearing that all the
chaplains were praying for him**

Nor should I forget to mention here that the last act of Congress ever signed by Lincoln was one requiring that the motto in which he sincerely believed, "In God We Trust," should hereafter be inscribed upon all our national coin.

**-- House Speaker Schuyler
Colfax, 1865**

Hold fast to the Bible as the sheet anchor of your liberties; write its precepts in your hearts, and practice them in your lives. To the influence of this Book are we indebted for all the progress made in true civilization, and to this must we look as our guide in the future. "Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people." **-- Ulysses S. Grant, 1868**

Men who see not God in our history have surely lost sight of the fact that, from the landing of the Mayflower to this

hour, the great men whose names are indissolubly associated with the colonization, rise, and progress of the Republic have borne testimony to the vital truths of Christianity.

-- Andrew Johnson, 1875

The citizen is a better businessman, if he is a Christian gentleman, and, surely, business is not the less prosperous and successful if conducted on Christian principles.

--Grover Cleveland, 1890

There is no currency in this world that passes at such a premium anywhere as good Christian character....The time has gone by when the young man or the young woman in the United States has to apologize for being a follower of Christ....No cause but one could have brought together so many people, and that is the cause of our Master.

-- William McKinley, 1894

On my honor, I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country; and obey the Scout Law. To help other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight.

Boy Scouts of America Oath, 1910

Almost every man who has by his life work added to the sum of human achievements of which the race is proud, almost every such man has based his life work largely upon the teaching of the Bible.

-- Theodore Roosevelt

A man had deprived himself of the best there is in the world who has deprived himself of this, a knowledge of the Bible. When you have read the Bible, you will know it is the Word of God, because you will have found it the key to your own heart, your own happiness and your own duty.

-- Woodrow Wilson

Here is the nation God has builded by our hands.

-- Woodrow Wilson, July 4, 1913

A nation which does not remember what it was yesterday, does not know what it is today, nor what it is trying to do. We are trying to do a futile thing if we do not know where we came from or what we have been about. America was born a Christian nation. America was born to exemplify that devotion to the elements of righteousness, which are derived from the revelations of Holy Scripture. There are a good many problems before the American people today, and before me as president. But I expect to find the solution to those problems just in the proportion that I am faithful in the study of the Word of God.

--President Woodrow Wilson

The foundations of our society and our government rest so much on the teachings of the Bible that it would be difficult to support them if faith in these teachings would cease to be practically universal in our country.

--Calvin Coolidge, 30th President

They (Puritans) were intent upon establishing a Christian commonwealth

in accordance with the principle of self-government. They were an inspired body of men. It has been said that God sifted the nations that He might send choice grain into the wilderness....Who can fail to see in it the hand of destiny? Who can doubt that it has been guided by a Divine Providence?

-- Calvin Coolidge, 1923

Praise the Power that has made and preserved us a nation. Conquer we must, when our cause it is just. And this be our motto--"In God is our Trust."

--Last verse of National Anthem, adopted by Congress, March 3, 1931

The foundations of our society and our government rest so much on the teachings of the Bible that it would be difficult to support them if faith in these teachings would cease to be practically universal in our country.

-- Calvin Coolidge, 1923

The fundamental basis of this nation's law was given to Moses on the Mount. The fundamental basis of our Bill of Rights comes from the teachings we get from Exodus and St. Matthew, from Isaiah and St. Paul. I don't think we emphasize that enough these days. If we don't have a proper fundamental moral background, we will finally end up with a totalitarian government which does not believe in rights for anybody except the States!

--Harry S. Truman

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands--one nation,

under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. (Words under God adopted by Congress for the Pledge of Allegiance, June 14, 1954.)

-- Adopted as the national motto by joint resolution of Congress on July 20, 1956

We in this country, in this generation are -- by destiny rather than choice--the watchmen on the walls of world freedom. We ask, therefore, that we may be worthy of our power and responsibility, that we may exercise our strength with wisdom and restraint, and that we may achieve in our time and for all time the ancient vision of peace on earth, goodwill toward men. That must always be our goal...For as was written long ago, "Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain."

**--John F. Kennedy
Speech he was to give
prior to his assassination**

A compulsory state educational system so structures a child's life that if religious exercises are held to be an impermissible activity in schools, religion is placed at an artificial and state-created disadvantage.... A refusal to permit religious exercises thus is seen, not as the realization of state neutrality, but rather as the establishment of a religion of secularism.

**-- Supreme Court Justice
Potter Stewart, 1964**

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and

darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light; and there was light....And God saw that it was good.

**-- Lunar Astronaut Frank Borman,
1968, quoting Genesis chapter 1**

Our lives should not be carefully compartmentalized, but...our trust in and loyalty to God should be the integrating factor in our day-to-day living--family, education, and career, politics included. I have often stated that, while I believe in the separation of church and state, I do not believe in the separation of church and statesman.

**-- Reubin Askew, former
Governor of Florida, 1984**

America was founded by people who believe that God was their rock of safety. I recognize we must be cautious in claiming that God is on our side, but I think it's all right to keep asking if we're on His side.

**-- President Ronald Reagan
Second Inaugural Address**

Religion and government are inevitably related...

-- President Ronald Reagan, 1984

During my lifetime, I have seen the rise of fascism and communism. Both philosophies glorify the arbitrary power of the state. These ideologies held, at first, a certain fascination for some intellectuals. But both theories fail. Both deny those God-given liberties that are the inalienable right of each person on this planet; indeed, they deny the

existence of God. Because of this fundamental flaw, fascism has already been destroyed, and the bankruptcy of communism has been laid for all to see—a system that is efficient in producing machines of war but cannot feed its people.

**-- Former President Ronald Reagan
Remarks to Chinese community
leaders in Beijing, China,
April 27, 1984**

The great faith that led our Nation's Founding Fathers to pursue this bold experience in self-government has sustained us in uncertain and perilous times; it has given us strength and inspiration to this very day.

Like them, we do very well to recall our "firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence," to give thanks for freedom and prosperity this Nation enjoys, and to pray for continued help and guidance from our wise and loving Creator.

**-- President George H. Bush
National Day of Prayer
May 3, 1990**

America stands for liberty, for the pursuit of happiness and for the unalienable right for life. This right to life cannot be granted or denied by government because it does not come from government, it comes from the Creator of life.

**-- President George W. Bush
November 5, 2003**

I also have this belief, strong belief that freedom is not this country's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty's gift to every man and woman in this world.

**-- President George W. Bush
April 13, 2004**

II. GOING FULL CIRCLE? The Rise and Fall of Great Civilizations

Two centuries ago, the British historian, Alexander Tyler, writing about the collapse of the ancient democracies of Athens and Rome, provided this warning:

A democracy cannot exist as a permanent form of government. It can only exist until the voters discover they can vote themselves largess out of the public treasury. From that moment on, the majority always votes for the candidates promising the most benefits from the public treasury...democracy collapses under the weight of loose fiscal policy. Always to be followed by a dictatorship.

Is there a definite cycle that most civilizations have historically gone through? Yes, historians have studied the rise and fall of great civilizations and have concluded two things. First, they can identify a definite cycle. Secondly, 21 of the 23 literally decayed from within -- becoming easy prey to predator nations. The cycle they have identified contains the following steps:

1. From bondage to spiritual faith
2. From spiritual faith to great courage
3. From courage to liberty: freedom
4. From freedom to initiative: production
5. From production to abundance
6. From abundance to selfishness
7. From selfishness to complacency
8. From complacency to apathy

9. From apathy to dependence

10. From dependence back to bondage

Here, again, is the cycle, with appropriate elaboration:

1. A person in **bondage** resents his bondage so he looks to some higher power than his bondage master. This usually results in **spiritual faith**.
2. As he recognizes and acknowledges a higher power, it gives him **courage** to try to become free from bondage.
3. This **courage**, based on a higher power, stimulates the desire for **freedom** and usually wins out through some means.
4. As a person becomes free, his **initiative** is released and he produces to help himself--usually helping others in the process.
5. Production under freedom will produce an **abundance** of goods and services if based on personal reward.
6. As abundance is produced, people tend to get **selfish**. Those without abundance covet what others have, whereas those that have are not motivated to share without compensation. This generally brings civil action to take from him who has and give to him who has not in exchange for votes or favors.

7. Once they have not have legal authority to live off of the goods of the producers, they become **complacent** since they now have legal sanction to live off the production of others.
8. Complacency leads to **apathy** or to a why-should-I-care attitude--I have a legal right to food, etc.
9. This apathetic attitude creates a nation of **dependents** on the handouts of others and on the force of government to see that they are taken care of.
10. When enough persons become dependent for their well-being on the production of others, and on the force of government to redistribute goods to them, they become critical of both government and the industrious. They criticize and refuse to defend their heritage of freedom and are ripe subjects to go back into **bondage**. National decay has set in and freedom is lost.

III. JUDEO-CHRISTIAN HERITAGE VERSUS ATHEISTIC COLLECTIVISM

The Judaic heritage is summarized, in part, as follows: God created all things; man worships God; human dignity results from creation; divine guidance is given; commandments are a part of Biblical law; divine judgement includes reward and punishment, etc.

Christian beliefs under the New Covenant are generally these: man is equal by creation; man is capable and responsible; love is greater than law; worship is by New Testament example; man is accountable to God; man is transcendent and is greater than all other creatures; man will do right without force; immortality is possible for man; and man has the inherent right to choose.

Taken together, the Judeo-Christian heritage provide a number of principles that can make any nation great:

The principle of dignity of human life (Exodus 20:13, Matthew 5:21, 22);

The principle of the traditional monogamous family (Genesis 2:21-24, Ephesians 5:22-33);

The principle of the work ethic (Genesis 3:19, Exodus 20:9-10, II Thessalonians 3:10)

The principle of Abrahamic covenant (Genesis 12:1-3, Romans 11:1-2);

The principle of God centered education (Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Ephesians 6:4); and

The principle of divinely ordained establishments--the home, state or civil government, religious institutions (Genesis 2:21-24, Genesis 10:32, Exodus 25:8-9, Ephesians 5:22-33, Romans 13:1-7, Matthew 16:17-19, Acts 2:1-47).

By contrast, the totalitarian, regimented state usually provides little status for religion: there is no divine power; worship shall be of the state or ruling authority; religion is decadent; religious services are tolerated and discouraged--sometimes outlawed; religion is subverted by "*state leaders*"; and religious belief is not a personal matter--no social, economic, or political significance is attached to it.

The political spectrum from "*left*" to "*right*," and in present day terms of freedom of the individual, places totalitarianism--which gives the individual only such rights and freedom as the rulers decree--at the extreme "*left*." The political spectrum places anarchism--which is complete absence of government, each individual "*doing his own thing*" as he sees fit, the law of the jungle--at the extreme "*right*."

The American political and economic systems (i.e., our republic and private enterprise economy) were designed to operate between these two extremes, giving to each citizen the greatest practical degree of freedom and protection of that freedom (and property).

What about those "*isms*"? I once asked an audience, "*What's the difference between capitalism and socialism?*" The reply came back, "*Under capitalism man exploits man. . . under socialism, it's just the opposite.*" Well, it has been said that if ignorance paid

dividends, most of us at one time or another could make a fortune on what we didn't know about economics.

Seriously, we could say that at one extreme is statism, a system by which everybody shares equally in getting the short end of the stick, spreading the misery evenly. *“Statism, and some religious factions,”* says Michael Novak, *“seems more concerned with the just distribution of available goods than with the morality of systems that produce new wealth and sustain economic growth.”*

Capitalism, then, as statism's opposite, is the system which makes the stick longer, and increases everybody's slice of the pie in the process (to mix metaphors). The capitalist sees the average American with his house, car, furniture, and says, *“All the people should have a chance to earn that.”* The socialist seeing the same reacts, *“No person should be allowed to have that much, while others do not.”*

A competitive environment does present possible attitudinal changes. Envy toward private property is a terribly rotten thing. Proverbs 14:30 describes envy as *“. . . rottenness of the bones.”* Envy is worse than mere jealousy. Both operate today. How are they different? Jealousy says, *“You have what I want, and I'm not going to be happy until I earn it too.”* Jealousy can be channeled through hard work as each generation pursues its dream.

Envy is much more toxic. Envy says, *“You have what I want . . . I know I'll never have it... and so I'll never be happy until I have destroyed you, me, and It...and go out in a blaze of glory.”* Some religions say, *“The way*

to have eternal glory in the hereafter is to send your enemy to blazes.” Envy is a scary notion, and it operates in various parts of the world today.

Where shall we stand? Robert Frost said it refreshingly well:

All men are born free and equal--free at least in their right to be different. Some people want to homogenize society everywhere. I'm against the homogenizers in art, in politics, in every walk of life. I want the cream to rise.

Has American prosperity been a by-product of the moral principles under which people of honor produce and exchange goods and services? I think so. The strategy of those who would diminish our nation is to weaken our faith in our principles. People without faith in a higher moral authority readily place their allegiance to governmental authority.

IV. WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE? Duties To Caesar and God

How can we, people of faith, and our religious friends, heed our Creator's admonition to be a positive, leavening influence in the government sector? Again, let's learn from our own history.

In 1787, James Madison's illustrious political career almost came to an abrupt early end when he broke an important promise to the religious people of Virginia. He had promised to get the free exercise of religion written into the Constitution, but he changed his mind.

Patrick Henry and George Mason branded him to be unreliable and unfit for election to public office because of that one scandalous broken promise. Consequently, Madison promised the preachers and voters that he would never break his promise again and he would work hard to correct his mistake.

There are those who say that the incident resulted in our First Amendment liberties, and the entire Bill of Rights! The lesson? Politicians do their best when the decent voters of the land level with them. Englishman Edmond Burke said it best, "*The only thing necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing.*"

Christians are strangers and sojourners on this earth. We are but passing through; not one of us is staying. We look to the city whose builder is God. Our citizenship is in heaven. We also have earthly responsibilities--duties to each other, to Caesar as well as God.

In fact, in the duty which we owe to God, He has bound on us obedience to civil government. Yet, we know that even the apostle Paul, when he was not pleased with the treatment he received at the hands of regional government leaders, appealed to Caesar in Rome itself.

Governments were ordained by God. Religion provides moral values that can make a country great. Government provides the climate and protections that make that greatness possible and sustainable. Christians are therefore responsible to try to make sure their governments function well.

This includes taking time to pray for our leaders *"...that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good and pleases God...(1 Tim. 2:1-4)"* Countries prosper when governments work well and honorably. Therefore, it is both out of tribute to God and compassion for our fellow citizens that we try to keep our leaders accountable.

Yes, there are times when Christians do wonder how to act. Here we live in a representative, democratic republic that is *"of, by, and for the people."* "How can we fully answer God's call to be *'salt and light,'* if we don't exercise our influence in public policy?" There is no shortage of issues: the definition of family--the meaning of human life.

And how shall we gauge the future of our own land so recently visited with terrorism against our twin pillars of capitalism? Since then, there have been some very dark days, but also some incredibly bright hours. Words such as *"prayer," "God,"* and *"America"* are now being used in the same sentence in

many public forums. Thankfully, few seem to object.

It turns out, we don't just live in America. America lives in us, crowned with good through Brotherhood. The Scriptures (Romans 13) certainly hint that, in clashes between good and evil on this earth, duly constituted governments are the vehicle through which to right the wrong done to the innocent public.

Much of the mid 19th Century momentum for the Abolitionist movement in America, and the launching of the Salvation Army in Britain, came from people of faith who chose to get involved. Hopefully, we as citizens can continue to be in the forefront of those on this planet who are trying to communicate a better understanding of the relationship between politics, economics, and morality. After all, Jesus did.

V. A BIBLICAL REMEDY? Righteousness Exalts a Nation

Scores of famous Americans have been quoted herein. Yet each was a fallible, mortal human being. What does our nation's first textbook say of the subject, "*One Nation Under God*"?

*Righteousness exalteth a nation;
but sin is a reproach to any people.*

-- **Proverbs 14:34**

*Blessed is the nation whose God is
the Lord; and the people whom he hath
chosen for his own inheritance.*

-- **Psalms 33:12**

*In those days there was no King in
Israel: every man did that which was right
in his own eyes.*

-- **Judges 21:25**

*If my people, which are called by
my name, shall humble themselves, and
pray, and seek my face, and turn from
their wicked ways; then I will hear them
from heaven, and will forgive their sin,
and heal their land.*

-- **II Chronicles 7:14**

*Remove not the ancient landmark,
which thy father set.*

-- **Proverbs 22:28**

*The wicked shall be turned into hell
and all the nations that forget God.*

-- **Psalms 9:17**

*When the righteous triumph, there
is great elation; But when the wicked rise
to power, men go into hiding.*

-- **Psalms 28:12**

*When the righteous thrive, the
people rejoice; when the wicked rule,
the people groan.*

-- **Proverbs 29:2**

If you will return, O Israel, return to me, declares the Lord. If you put your detestable idols out of my sight and no longer go astray, and if in a truthful, just and righteous way you swear, As surely as the Lord lives, then the nations will be blessed by him and in him they will glory. -- **Jeremiah 4:1-2**

Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. -- **Psalm 127:1**

Oh that my people had harkened unto me...and had walked in my ways. -- **Psalm 81:13**

Then saith he unto them, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's." -- **Matthew 22:21**

Let every soul be subject unto the highest powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. -- **Romans 13:1**

Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the King. -- **I Peter 2:17**

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

-- **I Timothy 2: 1-4**

VI. DIVIDED WE STAND? Time to Retake the Pledge

In 1969, the year that Americans first walked on the moon, the Dean of American entertainers, Red Skeleton, made this touching televised tribute to “*The Pledge of Allegiance*.”

...Getting back to school, I remember a teacher that I had. Now, I only went through the seventh grade. I left home when I was 10 years old because I was hungry. I'd work in the summer and go to school in the winter. But I had this one teacher at Harrison School in Indiana - to me this was my time, anyhow. He had such wisdom.

We were all reciting the Pledge of Allegiance one day. And he walked over, this little old teacher, Mr. Laswell was his name, and says, “I've been listening to you boys and girls recite the Pledge of Allegiance all semester; and it seems as though it's becoming monotonous to you. If I may, may I recite it and try to explain to you the meaning of each word:

I - Me, an individual, a committee of one;

Pledge - Dedicate all my worldly goods;

Allegiance - My love and devotion;

To the Flag - Our standard, Old Glory, a symbol of freedom. Wherever she waves

there's respect, because your loyalty has given her a dignity that shouts, 'Freedom is everybody's job;'

United - That means that we have all come together;

States - Individual communities that have united into 48 great, 48 individual communities with pride and dignity and purpose, all divided with imaginary boundaries, yet united to a common purpose - and that's love for country;

And to the Republic - A state in which sovereign powers are vested in representatives, chosen by the people to govern; and government is the people, and it's from the people to the leaders, not from the leaders to the people;

For which it stands, One Nation - Being so blessed by God, individuals incapable of being divided;

With liberty - Which is freedom, the right of power to live one's own life without threat, fear, or some sort of retaliation;

And justice - The principles or qualities of dealing fairly with others;

For all - Which means, Ladies and Gentlemen, it's as much your country as it is mine."

Red Skelton concluded, *"Since I was a small boy, two states have been added to our country and two words have been added to the Pledge of Allegiance - 'under God.' Wouldn't it be a pity if someone said that is a prayer and that it would be eliminated from school, too?"*

Frankly, as long as there are teachers giving exams, prayer in some form will always be found in schools.

EPILOGUE
A Prayer to the God of Our Fathers

A dozen years ago, I told my college-age son, "...*America is a privileged nation.*" He said, "*I disagree.*" I replied, "*That's the privilege.*"

Former Chaplain of the U.S. Senate, Peter Marshall, once delivered this Independence Day prayer. Consider his perspective:

God of our Fathers, whose Almighty Hand has made and preserved our Nation, grant that our people may understand what it is they celebrate.

May they remember how bitterly our freedom was won, the down payment that was made for it, the installments that have been made since this Republic was born, and the price that must yet be paid for our liberty.

May freedom be seen not as the right to do as we please, but as the opportunity to please do what is right. May it ever be understood that our liberty is under God and can be found nowhere else. May our faith be something that is not merely stamped upon our coins, but expressed in our lives.

To the extent that America honors Thee, will Thou bless America and keep her as Thou has kept her free, and make her good as Thou hast made her rich....

Acknowledgments

The *ENTREPRENEUR* is a quarterly journal and monograph addressing contemporary economic issues from a moral perspective. One may not agree with every word printed in the *ENTREPRENEUR* series, nor should feel he needs to do so. It is hoped that the reader will think about the points laid out in the publication, and then decide for himself. Hopefully, the material herein will motivate people to further study and also toward a greater understanding of God's will on life's issues.

Having collected scores of relevant quotes on this subject for two decades, this monograph still remained on this author's "back burner" until a delightful publication made its way onto shelves in 1991. Titled *The Glory of America* by Peter Marshall and David Manuel, it also contained quotes about the religious roots of great heroes of our United States. Then, in 2001, in gratitude for receiving my second edition of this monograph, an individual in Florida sent me a gift copy of the outstanding book *America's God and Country: Encyclopedia of Quotations* by William J. Federer (who, incidentally, quotes my 1992 version of this monograph). A few select quotes from both publications are gratefully cited herein.

Care has been taken to trace authorship of select quotes, with gratefulness to past writers and collectors for their preserving and supplying us with such a valuable literary heritage. Every effort has been made to include only reliable information and sound commentary. Quite possibly there still exists a yet untapped reservoir of additional and relevant quotes on the subject. The reader is encouraged to send them, and other materials, for inclusion in subsequent revisions of this commemorative digest.

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In 2000, Diffine was inducted into the Samuel Moore Walton Free Enterprise Hall of Fame. He received the "Champion of Enterprise" award in 1995 from the Students In Free Enterprise Hall of Fame in Kansas City. The First Annual Distinguished Scholar Award was also presented in 1988 to Dr. Diffine in Cleveland, Ohio, by the Association of Private Enterprise Education. He is also the recipient of the New Constellation Award from the National Flag Foundation.

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