

We Hold  
These Truths



*We Hold These Truths*  
Edited by Ray Notgrass and John Notgrass

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# Introduction

*We Hold These Truths* gives you handy access to significant original documents and provides the opinions and ideas of others so that you can develop your own informed thinking about government. This compilation includes ancient, medieval, and American colonial documents; foundational documents of American government; letters, speeches, and opinions by political figures; and finally modern essays and commentaries on government.

We created *We Hold These Truths* for students to use in conjunction with the text *Exploring Government*. The student who is using that text will find each of these readings assigned at the end of the appropriate lesson. The order of the documents reflects the order in which they are assigned in *Exploring Government*.

Several entries are taken from *Imprimis*, the monthly speech journal published by Hillsdale College. The title is pronounced im-PRY-mis. It comes from Latin and means “in the first place.” Hillsdale is a private, liberal arts college in Michigan that accepts no government money of any kind, not even federal loans and grants to students. The college decided some years ago that it did not want to deal with the strings that come with accepting federal money. Each month *Imprimis* presents the essence of a speech given at a recent Hillsdale-sponsored function. The publication is available free of charge, and it is also available on the Internet ([imprimis.hillsdale.edu](http://imprimis.hillsdale.edu)). The website has an archive of several years of *Imprimis* issues.

Hillsdale provides a valuable service with *Imprimis* by presenting thoughtful, relevant, conservative thinking; by offering the publication free; and by generously giving permission for the material to be reproduced without charge provided that the publication using it includes the appropriate credit line. The *Imprimis* material is copyrighted as of the date of original publication by Hillsdale College and is used here by permission of Hillsdale. Occasionally a speech will include a few comments that are inappropriate; but generally *Imprimis* is worth reading every month. I strongly encourage anyone who is interested in government and politics to subscribe to it or to read it online.

We have used excerpts of some documents, indicated by ellipses. Our explanations are enclosed in brackets. For the most part, we have left variations in spelling and the citations of other works as they appear in the originals.

You may read some documents in *We Hold These Truths* that include ideas with which you disagree. Notgrass History does not endorse every idea included in this volume. The documents we have included provide good food for thought to accompany the lessons in *Exploring Government* and encourage you to firm up and clarify your own beliefs.

Soon you will be able to vote and even run for office yourself. You will influence our political process and our government. Our aim in *Exploring Government* and in this collection is to help you prepare for that right and that responsibility. We pray that you will discharge your duty in light of God's truth.

*Ray Notgrass*  
*October 2023*

therefore undertaken on no occasion to prescribe the religious exercises suited to it. But I have left them as the Constitution found them, under the direction or discipline of state or church authorities acknowledged by the several religious societies.

Jefferson made the same point a few years later to a Presbyterian clergyman, who inquired about his attitude toward Thanksgiving proclamations:

I consider the government of the United States as interdicted from inter-meddling with religious institutions, their doctrines, discipline, or exercises. This results from the provision that no law shall be made respecting the establishment of religion or the free exercise thereof, but also from that which reserves to the states the powers not delegated to the United States. Certainly no power over religious discipline has been delegated to the general government. It must thus rest with the states as far as it can be in any human authority.

The irresistible conclusion is that there was no wall of separation between religious affirmation and civil government in the several states, nor could the First Amendment, with or without the Fourteenth Amendment, have been intended to create one. The wall of separation, instead, was between *the federal government and the states* and was meant to make sure the central authority didn't meddle with the customs of local jurisdictions.

As a matter of constitutional law, the Court's position in these religion cases is an intellectual shambles—results-oriented jurisprudence at its most flagrant. An even greater scandal is the extent to which the Justices have rewritten the official record to support a preconceived conclusion: a performance worthy of regimes in which history is tailored to the interests of the ruling powers. In point of fact, America's constitutional settlement—up to and including the First Amendment—was the work of people who believed in God, and who expressed their faith as a matter of course in public prayer and other governmental practice.

*Reprinted by permission from Imprimis, the national speech digest of Hillsdale College, www.hillsdale.edu.*

# Constitution of the United States

(1787)

## Preamble

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

## Article I.

**Section 1.** All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

**Section 2.** The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members chosen every second Year by the People of the several States, and the Electors in each State shall have the Qualifications requisite for Electors of the most numerous Branch of the State Legislature.

No Person shall be a Representative who shall not have attained to the Age of twenty five Years, and been seven Years a Citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when elected, be an Inhabitant of that State in which he shall be chosen.

Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole Number of free Persons, including those bound to Service for a Term of Years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other Persons. The actual Enumeration shall be made within three Years after the first Meeting of the Congress of the United States, and within every subsequent Term of ten Years, in such Manner as they shall by Law direct. The number of Representatives shall not exceed one for every thirty Thousand, but each State shall have at Least one Representative; and until such enumeration

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*U.S. House of Representatives in Session (1890)*





shall be made, the State of New Hampshire shall be entitled to chuse three, Massachusetts eight, Rhode-Island and Providence Plantations one, Connecticut five, New-York six, New Jersey four, Pennsylvania eight, Delaware one, Maryland six, Virginia ten, North Carolina five, South Carolina five, and Georgia three.

When vacancies happen in the Representation from any State, the Executive Authority thereof shall issue Writs of Election to fill such Vacancies.

The House of Representatives shall chuse their Speaker and other Officers; and shall have the sole Power of Impeachment.

**Section 3.** The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two Senators from each State, chosen by the Legislature thereof, for six Years; and each Senator shall have one Vote.

Immediately after they shall be assembled in Consequence of the first Election, they shall be divided as equally as may be into three Classes. The Seats of the Senators of the first Class shall be vacated at the Expiration of the second Year, of the second Class at the Expiration of the fourth Year, and of the third Class at the Expiration of the sixth Year, so that one third may be chosen every second Year; and if Vacancies happen by Resignation, or otherwise, during the Recess of the Legislature of any State, the Executive thereof may make temporary Appointments until the next Meeting of the Legislature, which shall then fill such Vacancies.

No Person shall be a Senator who shall not have attained to the Age of thirty Years, and been nine Years a Citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when elected, be an Inhabitant of that State for which he shall be chosen.

The Vice President of the United States shall be President of the Senate, but shall have no Vote, unless they be equally divided.

The Senate shall chuse their other Officers, and also a President pro tempore, in the Absence of the Vice President, or when he shall exercise the Office of President of the United States.

The Senate shall have the sole Power to try all Impeachments. When sitting for that Purpose, they shall be on Oath or Affirmation. When the President of the United States is tried, the Chief Justice shall preside: And no Person shall be convicted without the Concurrence of two thirds of the Members present.

Judgment in Cases of Impeachment shall not extend further than to removal from Office, and disqualification to hold and enjoy any Office of honor, Trust or Profit under the United States: but the Party convicted shall nevertheless be liable and subject to Indictment, Trial, Judgment and Punishment, according to Law.

**Section 4.** The Times, Places and Manner of holding Elections for Senators and Representatives, shall be prescribed in each State by the Legislature thereof; but the Congress may at any time by Law make or alter such Regulations, except as to the Places of chusing Senators.

The Congress shall assemble at least once in every Year, and such Meeting shall be on the first Monday in December, unless they shall by Law appoint a different Day.

**Section 5.** Each House shall be the Judge of the Elections, Returns and Qualifications of its own Members, and a Majority of each shall constitute a Quorum to do Business, but a smaller Number may adjourn from day to day, and may be authorized to compel the Attendance of absent Members, in such Manner, and under such Penalties as each House may provide.

Each House may determine the Rules of its Proceedings, punish its Members for disorderly Behaviour, and, with the Concurrence of two thirds, expel a Member.

Each House shall keep a Journal of its Proceedings, and from time to time publish the same, excepting such Parts as may in their Judgment require Secrecy; and the Yeas and Nays of the Members of either House on any question shall, at the Desire of one fifth of those Present, be entered on the Journal.

Neither House, during the Session of Congress, shall, without the Consent of the other, adjourn for more than three days, nor to any other Place than that in which the two Houses shall be sitting.

**Section 6.** The Senators and Representatives shall receive a Compensation for their Services, to be ascertained by law, and paid out of the Treasury of the United States. They shall in all Cases, except Treason, Felony and Breach of the Peace, be privileged from Arrest during their Attendance at the Session of their respective Houses, and in going to and returning from the same; and for any Speech or Debate in either House, they shall not be questioned in any other Place.

No Senator or Representative shall, during the Time for which he was elected, be appointed to any civil Office under the Authority of the United States, which shall have been created, or the Emoluments whereof shall have been increased during such time; and no Person holding any Office under the United States, shall be a Member of either House during his Continuance in Office.

**Section 7.** All Bills for raising Revenue shall originate in the House of Representatives; but the Senate may propose or concur with Amendments as on other Bills.

Every Bill which shall have passed the House of Representatives and the Senate, shall, before it becomes a Law, be presented to the President of the United States; If he approve he shall sign it, but if not he shall return it, with his Objections to that House in which it shall have originated, who shall enter the Objections at large on their Journal, and proceed to reconsider it. If after such Reconsideration two thirds of that House shall agree to pass the Bill, it shall be sent, together with the Objections, to the other House, by which it shall likewise be reconsidered, and if approved by two thirds of that House, it shall become a Law. But in all such Cases the Votes of both Houses shall be determined by Yeas and Nays, and the Names of the Persons voting for and against the Bill shall be entered on the Journal of each House

respectively. If any Bill shall not be returned by the President within ten Days (Sundays excepted) after it shall have been presented to him, the Same shall be a Law, in like Manner as if he had signed it, unless the Congress by their Adjournment prevent its Return, in which Case it shall not be a Law.

Every Order, Resolution, or Vote to which the Concurrence of the Senate and House of Representatives may be necessary (except on a question of Adjournment) shall be presented to the President of the United States, and before the Same shall take Effect, shall be approved by him, or being disapproved by him, shall be repassed by two thirds of the Senate and House of Representatives, according to the Rules and Limitations prescribed in the Case of a Bill.

**Section. 8.** The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States;

To borrow Money on the credit of the United States;

To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes;

To establish an uniform Rule of Naturalization, and uniform Laws on the subject of Bankruptcies throughout the United States;

To coin Money, regulate the Value thereof, and of foreign Coin, and fix the Standard of Weights and Measures;

To provide for the Punishment of counterfeiting the Securities and current Coin of the United States;

To establish Post Offices and post Roads;

To promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts, by securing for limited Times to Authors and Inventors the exclusive Right to their respective Writings and Discoveries;

To constitute Tribunals inferior to the supreme Court;

To define and punish Piracies and Felonies committed on the high Seas, and Offenses against the Law of Nations;

To declare War, grant Letters of Marque and Reprisal, and make Rules concerning Captures on land and Water;

To raise and support Armies, but no Appropriation of Money to that Use shall be for a longer Term than two Years;

To provide and maintain a Navy;



*Old Post Road in Fishkill-on-Hudson, New York (1907)*

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# *Wesberry v. Sanders*

**Hugo Black (1964)**

*For many years, federal courts did not want to become involved in what they called “political questions” regarding state legislatures and Congress. The Court set aside this principle in Baker v. Carr (1962), in which the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the Tennessee state legislature had to reapportion its seats in keeping with population changes so as to make the legislative districts as nearly equal in population as possible. The state legislature had not redrawn its districts in some 60 years, and the state’s growing urban areas were grossly underrepresented in the legislature.*

*The principle used in that decision and confirmed in Wesberry v. Sanders was “one man, one vote”; that is, the value of one person’s vote should be as nearly equal as possible to every other person’s vote. A failure by a state to do this prevented citizens from receiving equal protection under the law and thus violated the U.S. Constitution. This made malapportionment a constitutional issue and not simply a political question. Two years after Baker, the Court applied the same principle in Wesberry, which dealt with congressional districts in Georgia that the state legislature had not reapportioned in 30 years. Justice Hugo Black delivered the opinion of the Court. Here is an excerpt.*

Appellants are citizens and qualified voters of Fulton County, Georgia, and as such are entitled to vote in congressional elections in Georgia’s Fifth Congressional District. That district, one of ten created by a 1931 Georgia statute, includes Fulton, DeKalb, and Rockdale Counties and has a population according to the 1960 census of 823,680. The average population of the ten districts is 394,312, less than half that of the Fifth. One district, the Ninth, has only 272,154 people, less than one-third as many as the Fifth. Since there is only one Congressman for each district, this inequality of population means that the Fifth District’s Congressman has to represent from two to three times as many people as do Congressmen from some of the other Georgia districts.

Claiming that these population disparities deprived them and voters similarly situated of a right under the Federal Constitution to have their votes for Congressmen given the same weight as the votes of other Georgians, the appellants brought this action . . . asking that the Georgia statute be declared invalid and that the appellees, the Governor and Secretary of State of Georgia, be enjoined from conducting elections under it. The complaint alleged that appellants were deprived of the full benefit of their right to vote, in violation of (1) Art. I, 2, of the Constitution of the United States, which provides that “The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members chosen every second Year by the People of the several States . . .”; (2) the Due Process, Equal Protection, and Privileges and Immunities Clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment; and (3) that part of Section 2 of the Fourteenth Amendment which provides that

“Representatives shall be apportioned among the several States according to their respective numbers . . . .”

The case was heard by a three-judge District Court, which found unanimously, from facts not disputed, that:

It is clear by any standard . . . that the population of the Fifth District is grossly out of balance with that of the other nine congressional districts of Georgia and in fact, so much so that the removal of DeKalb and Rockdale Counties from the District, leaving only Fulton with a population of 556,326, would leave it exceeding the average by slightly more than forty per cent.

Notwithstanding these findings, a majority of the [District] Court dismissed the complaint, citing as their guide Mr. Justice Frankfurter’s minority opinion in *Colegrove v. Green*, an opinion stating that challenges to apportionment of congressional districts raised only “political” questions, which were not justiciable. . . . We noted probable jurisdiction [and thus agreed to hear the case. We believe] that in debasing the weight of appellants’ votes the State has abridged the right to vote for members of Congress guaranteed them by the United States Constitution, that the District Court should have entered a declaratory judgment to that effect, and that it was therefore error to dismiss this suit. The question of what relief should be given we leave for further consideration and decision by the District Court in light of existing circumstances.

*Baker v. Carr* considered a challenge to a 1901 Tennessee statute providing for apportionment of State Representatives and Senators under the State’s constitution, which called for apportionment among counties or districts “according to the number of qualified voters in each.” The complaint there charged that the State’s constitutional command to apportion on the basis of the number of qualified voters had not been followed in the 1901 statute and that the districts were so discriminatorily disparate in number of qualified voters that the plaintiffs and persons similarly situated were, “by virtue of the debasement of their votes,” denied the equal protection of the laws guaranteed them by the Fourteenth Amendment. The cause there of the alleged “debasement” of votes for state legislators— districts containing widely varying



*Hugo Black served as a U.S. senator from Alabama before President Franklin Roosevelt appointed him to the Supreme Court in 1937. Black served on the court until a few days before his death in 1971.*

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numbers of people—was precisely that which was alleged to debase votes for Congressmen in *Colegrove v. Green* and in the present case. The Court in *Baker* pointed out that the opinion of Mr. Justice Frankfurter in *Colegrove*, upon the reasoning of which the majority below leaned heavily in dismissing “for want of equity,” was approved by only three of the seven Justices sitting. After full consideration of *Colegrove*, the Court in *Baker* held (1) that the District Court had jurisdiction of the subject matter; (2) that the qualified Tennessee voters there had standing to sue; and (3) that the plaintiffs had stated a justiciable cause of action on which relief could be granted.

The reasons which led to these conclusions in *Baker* are equally persuasive here. . . . [N]othing in the language of [Article I of the Constitution] gives support to a construction that would immunize state congressional apportionment laws which debase a citizen’s right to vote from the power of courts to protect the constitutional rights of individuals from legislative destruction. . . . The right to vote is too important in our free society to be stripped of judicial protection by such an interpretation of Article I. This dismissal can no more be justified on the ground of “want of equity” than on the ground of “nonjusticiability.” We therefore hold that the District Court erred in dismissing the complaint.

This brings us to the merits. We agree with the District Court that the 1931 Georgia apportionment grossly discriminates against voters in the Fifth Congressional District. A single Congressman represents from two to three times as many Fifth District voters as are represented by each of the Congressmen from the other Georgia congressional districts. The apportionment statute thus contracts the value of some votes and expands that of others. If the Federal Constitution intends that when qualified voters elect members of Congress each vote be given as much weight as any other vote, then this statute cannot stand.

We hold that, construed in its historical context, the command of Art. I, 2, that Representatives be chosen “by the People of the several States” means that as nearly as is practicable one man’s vote in a congressional election is to be worth as much as another’s. This rule is followed automatically, of course, when Representatives are chosen as a group on a statewide basis, as was a widespread practice in the first 50 years of our Nation’s history. It would be extraordinary to suggest that in such statewide elections the votes of inhabitants of some parts of a State, for example, Georgia’s thinly populated Ninth District, could be weighted at two or three times the value of the votes of people living in more populous parts of the State, for example, the Fifth District around Atlanta. We do not believe that the Framers of the Constitution intended to permit the same vote-diluting discrimination to be accomplished through the device of districts containing widely varied numbers of inhabitants. To say that a vote is worth more in one district than in another would not only run counter to our fundamental ideas of democratic government, it would cast aside the principle of a House of Representatives elected “by the People,” a principle tenaciously fought for and established

at the Constitutional Convention. The history of the Constitution, particularly that part of it relating to the adoption of Art. I, 2, reveals that those who framed the Constitution meant that, no matter what the mechanics of an election, whether statewide or by districts, it was population which was to be the basis of the House of Representatives. . . .

*[Here follows a review of the debates in the Constitutional Convention regarding the election of members to the U.S. Congress.]*

The debates at the Convention make at least one fact abundantly clear: that when the delegates agreed that the House should represent “people” they intended that in allocating Congressmen the number assigned to each State should be determined solely by the number of the State’s inhabitants. The Constitution embodied Edmund Randolph’s proposal for a periodic census to ensure “fair representation of the people,” an idea endorsed by Mason as assuring that “numbers of inhabitants” should always be the measure of representation in the House of Representatives. . . .

It would defeat the principle solemnly embodied in the Great Compromise—equal representation in the House for equal numbers of people—for us to hold that, within the States, legislatures may draw the lines of congressional districts in such a way as to give some voters a greater voice in choosing a Congressman than others. The House of Representatives, the Convention agreed, was to represent the people as individuals, and on a basis of complete equality for each voter. The delegates were quite aware of what Madison called the “vicious representation” in Great Britain whereby “rotten boroughs” with few inhabitants were represented in Parliament on or almost on a par with cities of greater population. Wilson urged that people must be represented as individuals, so that America would escape the evils of the English system under which one man could send two members to Parliament to represent the borough of Old Sarum while London’s million people sent but four. . . .

While it may not be possible to draw congressional districts with mathematical precision, that is no excuse for ignoring our Constitution’s plain objective of making equal representation for equal numbers of people the fundamental goal for the House of Representatives. That is the high standard of justice and common sense which the Founders set for us.

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*Sticker Given to Voters in Georgia*





# Election of Hattie Caraway

## (1932)

*Senator Thaddeus Caraway of Arkansas died in 1931, and the governor appointed his widow, Hattie Caraway, to fill the seat. Mrs. Caraway won a special election on January 12, 1932, to finish the term. She is pictured at left in the Senate Chamber that year.*

*Caraway surprised many when she decided to run for a full six-year term. While she was working in Washington, D.C., Caraway wrote a letter to her friend Griffin Smith in Arkansas for an update on the political situation.*

May 27, 1932

Hon. Griffin Smith,  
Marianna, Arkansas.

Dear Mr. Smith:

I will appreciate it greatly if you will write me frankly what the political situation is there relative to the Senatorial race. In order to map out a campaign, one requires all possible data.

I have to depend upon my friends to tell me what the real situation is, and if you can give me this information at once, it will be appreciated.

Thanking you in advance for the favor, I am,

Sincerely yours,  
Hattie W. Caraway

*Smith replied with discouraging news, referring to some of her opponents in the Democratic primary.*



June 1, 1932

Senator Hattie W. Caraway,  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mrs. Caraway:

Referring to your letter of May 27th, let me say that the political situation is in a nebulous state.

Vint Miles and Doctor Brough are making close campaigns, while our antiquated jurist-friend hangs around the lobby of the Marion Hotel and tells smutty jokes that he thinks are funny. It is an exclusive opinion.

I hear very little said, other than that Doctor Brough seems to be making considerable headway. Unless there is an expensive organization set up for you, I am frank to say that the chances of your success are negligible. I take it that what you want is a reflection of the conditions as I see them, and not as I would have them.

I have spent considerable time in Little Rock during the past two or three weeks, and think that I have gotten a cross-section of political opinion, if there is any such thing at the present time. Nobody is excited about anything except taxes, and in view of the pauperized condition of those who are victims of excessive assessments, the excitement doesn't amount to very much in a financial sense.

I will be tied up in Little Rock on occasional days in Futrell's headquarters for the next few weeks, but shall always have time to respond to any request from you.

Sincerely your friend,  
GS:WV

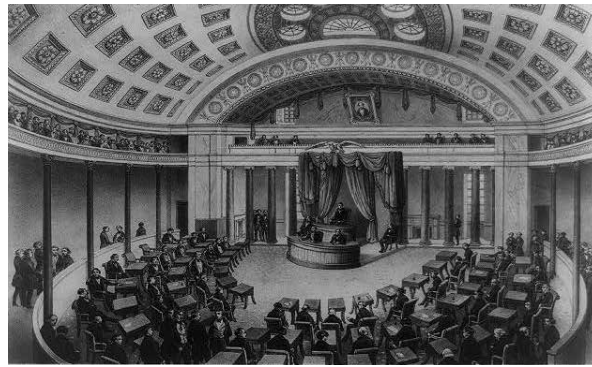
*With support from Louisiana Senator Huey Long, Caraway went on to win the Democratic primary and the general election. She was the first woman elected to serve in the U.S. Senate.*

*Senator Caraway served two full terms in the Senate. During the Great Depression, she supported Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal programs. She sided with other southern senators in opposing anti-poll tax and anti-lynching legislation. During World War II, she worked to locate military bases, war-related factories, and two Japanese internment camps in Arkansas.*

*Caraway lost her reelection bid in 1944. President Roosevelt appointed her to a federal commission, and she continued to work in civil service until 1950, the year of her death.*

# On a Visit to the Senate When He Was Twelve

Henry Adams (1907)



Senate Chamber (1850)

*Henry Adams was the great-grandson of John Adams and the grandson of John Quincy Adams.*

*His family was prominent in Massachusetts and American government and politics for well over a century. The Education of Henry Adams was his autobiography. Completed in 1905, it was not published until after his death in 1918. Adams had a skeptical perspective about many things, including religion; but he shared some interesting insights on American history and government. The following excerpt is his recollection of being taken by his father (a prominent figure in his own right) onto the floor of the U.S. Senate in 1850 when Henry was 12 years old. The book is written in the third person.*

His father took him to the Capitol and on the floor of the Senate, which then, and long afterwards, until the era of tourists, was freely open to visitors. The old Senate Chamber resembled a pleasant political club. Standing behind the Vice-President's chair, which is now the Chief Justice's, the boy was presented to some of the men whose names were great in their day, and as familiar to him as his own. Clay and Webster and Calhoun were there still, but with them a Free Soil candidate for the Vice-Presidency had little to do; what struck boys most was their type.

Senators were a species; they all wore an air, as they wore a blue dress coat or brass buttons; they were Roman. The type of Senator in 1850 was rather charming at its best, and the Senate, when in good temper, was an agreeable body, numbering only some sixty members, and affecting the airs of courtesy. Its vice was not so much a vice of manners or temper as of attitude. The statesman of all periods was apt to be pompous, but even pomposity was less offensive than familiarity—on the platform as in the pulpit—and Southern pomposity, when not arrogant, was genial and sympathetic, almost quaint and childlike in its simple-mindedness; quite a different thing from the Websterian or Conklinian pomposity of the North.

The boy felt at ease there, more at home than he had ever felt in Boston State House, though his acquaintance with the codfish in the House of Representatives went back beyond distinct recollection. Senators spoke kindly to him, and seemed to feel so, for they had known his family socially; and, in spite of slavery, even J. Q. Adams in his later years, after he ceased to stand in the way of rivals, had few personal enemies. Decidedly the Senate, pro-slavery though it were, seemed a friendly world.

# Party Terrorism

## *Harper's Weekly (1868)*

*Harper's Weekly, based in New York City, was published from 1857 to 1916. Subtitled "A Journal of Civilization," it included national and international news, fiction, essays, humor, and many illustrations. This editorial appeared on May 30, 1868, four days after President Andrew Johnson was acquitted in his impeachment trial.*

A thousand-fold more important to the welfare of this country and to human liberty than the removal of any President, for any offense whatever, is the conscientious discharge of duty by public men. Party-spirit, inflamed into ferocity, lost to reason and the moral sense, is the perpetual menace of free institution. We are at this moment seeing it in its worst aspect. The point of national interest and concern has suddenly changed. It is not whether the President shall be removed—it is whether public men shall be honest.

Our history has given us the most fearful and memorable example of the perils of party-spirit in the career of the Democratic party, beginning with the claim of the rights of man, and ending in a desperate struggle to overthrow the best of governments for the purpose of perpetuating human slavery. The party behest was the only rule of action allowed, and the party order was issued by the most unscrupulous of party leaders. "I would vote," said one of the Democratic orators, "for the Devil himself if he were the regular nominee." The party drill was marvelous. The rule of the Democratic Party became almost a tradition. There were those who really supposed that any effort to throw off its supremacy was hopeless. In 1856 Mr. Seward made a speech at Detroit, one of the few that he made during the Fremont campaign, in which he showed in startling detail the absolute possession of every part of the Government by the Democratic party and its policy. Every little rural Northern and Western Post-office was an outpost of slavery, which was then the Democratic Party policy. Every Custom-house berth was a point of advantage for it. Every committee of both Houses of Congress was controlled by it. Unquestioning fidelity to it was the tenure of national office everywhere. All the patronage, and prestige, and habit of the Government were with the Democratic party and its policy. Men, it was reluctantly thought by many, must always as a mass be ignorant, and their moral sense must be torpid. Trade also is timid, and we are an enormously trading and prosperous people. Moreover, there are constitutional doubts and perplexities, and what on earth can you do with millions of foreign and degraded slaves? So the Democratic party and its policy of Slavery seemed to be as firmly fastened upon the country as the Old Man of the Sea upon Sinbad's shoulders.

But in 1848 the break had begun. Democrats of strong convictions grew restive under the party despotism. They would not be yoked to fetch and carry for slavery, and protested that they would not submit to a party rule that preferred docile acquiescence in the interested whims of certain leaders to honest independence of thought. These men left the party, and took with them its hereditary prestige. From that moment the party policy became even more violent, and unreasonable, and inhuman. The extreme Southern leaders prescribed a still more revolting course; and the party which, in 1856, was in supreme possession of the Government, in 1860 was thrown out of power, and for four years was engaged in a war of malignant hate upon the Government and its principles; the Southern wing in arms, and the Northern wing embarrassing in every way, as a party, the methods pursued by the Government for its salvation.

Any party which is so abandoned to party-spirit as to ostracize and slander those of its friends who honestly differ upon points of detail and method, while they sympathize with the great party aims, will necessarily fall to pieces. Parties undoubtedly are essential in a free Government. Unquestionably every man must make his choice between one or the other. But there are times when party-spirit is so fierce, and the character of party leaders so destructive of moral confidence, that a man can act heartily with neither. And when there are many men who feel so the formation of a new party is at hand.

It is a profound and perilous mistake, made by many citizens, that they must support their party under all circumstances lest the party should lose ground and be defeated. A defeat is often the best possible event that can occur. For we must remember that under our system we are in the hands of certain party managers who presume, upon the theory that the party nominations will be supported in any case, to nominate bad and unworthy men. Now, no Government is safe, liberty is not safe, nothing is safe, in the hands of bad and unworthy men. And the only way in which the party managers can learn that truth, and understand that honest men will not vote for dishonest men, is to suffer the dishonest men of our own party to be beaten. And what is true of honesty is true of policy. An unwise policy must be criticized in the same way. Otherwise certain party leaders will dictate their crude, or furious, or corrupt will as the party policy, and depend upon whipping in the voters by slander, denunciation, and vituperation.

Of course it is often difficult to say what really is the party policy, because there is no universally recognized supreme party authority. It is generally held in this country that the platform of a national convention is the standard of party faith. But between the assembly of such conventions there is generally some legislative policy which is accepted as a party measure. Such, for instance, were the Civil Rights Bill and the Reconstruction Bill. But whatever the authority may be, the tone of the party can be maintained only by the individual independence of the members. For then only such measures as are sure to command the assent of the whole are likely to be proposed, and only such men as are honest and capable to be nominated. It

was said of the old Whig party that it could not count upon its own members in a pinch, and that it had no daring. This was merely to say that it was partly composed of men who valued conscience and country more than party. You could not count upon such men if the Devil were the regular nominee, and party managers did not dare to propose what might be repugnant to many partisans. In a certain way the charge of timidity was true. The Whigs did not dare to adopt a strong slavery policy, and were equally destroyed. Mere daring is cheap. The important point is not to dare to do, but to dare to do right.

This country is now undergoing one of its severest trials in the effort to crush the individual conscience by party terrorism. But as we show elsewhere there are enough sagacious and influential members of the party to protest against so fatal a course, and to prevent the party of liberty from destroying by general consent the most sacred and essential rights of free citizens of a free nation.

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*The Republican National Convention also took place in May of 1868. This illustration from Harper's Weekly shows delegates arriving in Chicago.*



# A Career in Foreign Service

**Danny Toma (2023)**

*Danny Toma is a graduate of the University of Mississippi and the UM Law School. In this essay, he mentions that he taught high school for a couple of years; he does not mention that this took place in Choctaw tribal schools in Mississippi. Toma spent 22 years as a foreign service officer with the U.S. Department of State, including 16 months in Basra, Iraq, during the fierce conflict there. He received numerous Superior Honor and Meritorious Honor awards and has written two books.*

Foreign Service: the very title of the career sums it up, as a person who wishes to work as a diplomat is serving his country in foreign lands. But when I was in high school, I had little idea that I would end up doing this kind of work. No indeed—I felt that God was calling me to become the Governor of Mississippi. Sometimes, however, what we think God has in store for us is quite different from the direction He would like us to take.

After high school, I became a student at the University of Mississippi, finishing a degree in education before going on to law school. Academic work always came easy for me, and I never really had to study very hard to get good grades; but law school was different. Here I was with some of the top students from universities all over the country, and it was a struggle to stay afloat. Still, I appreciated my time there, as it taught me discipline I did not have before and also helped me to learn to think in a more logical fashion.

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*Danny Toma in Washington, D.C.*



But law school was just a means to an end. Sure, I would get out and practice law, but that was just a placeholder until I could get into politics and wield real power—for the glory of the Kingdom of God, naturally. I pretty much had my life figured out—at least for the next fifty years.

Someone once said that if you want to make God laugh, tell Him your plans. Scripture reminds us that, oftentimes, our ways are not His ways (see Isaiah 55:8-9). But it is so very easy to convince ourselves that our motives are pure, and that what we want for ourselves is really what God would want for us as well.

Prior to going to college, I had been blessed with the opportunity to travel, thanks to an uncle who worked in a variety of jobs overseas as I was growing



*In 2014, in Berlin, Germany, Danny Toma and two of his sons presented a wreath in honor of Baron Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben, the Prussian soldier who joined the American cause during the Revolutionary War.*

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up. I decided that I needed to try to get back over to Europe “one last time,” since with my budding political career, I probably wouldn’t have time for all of that. I would soon come to realize that had I followed through in politics, I probably would not have had much time for anything or anyone at all—except myself, that is.

So, just when I was figuring how I could best spend my money for a trip to Europe, I learned of an opportunity to study Italian in northern Italy for part of the summer. What a great way to spend my time there—not so much as a tourist, but as a student. I would get a more in-depth understanding of the country and learn a language to boot. What I did not realize was that this was God’s way of getting me to reflect on my career choices and guide me to where He knew my talents were—to take me to a career that centered on service rather than on myself.

That summer, I understood that, while some good people can go into politics and also grow in holiness, I was not one of those people. Rather, I sought political power primarily for the exaltation of myself. The whole world out there was much bigger than my own ego, and I began to question how I might better utilize the talents that God had given me to be of service to others in that great, big world He had created.

I still had to finish law school and did; I don’t regret it for an instant, as it taught me vital thinking skills. I taught high school for a couple of years, and then took the Foreign Service examination to see if that was perhaps the direction I needed to go. I passed the written test, which is given every year, and then went on to do well on the oral examination that one also

has to pass. It looked like working for the United States Department of State would be my destiny.

I had little idea of what to expect. Like many people, I had visions of diplomats as being educated, worldly types in pinstriped suits attending countless cocktail parties in order to make contacts with shadowy foreign figures, full of intrigue and mystery. To be fair, there is a little of that in the Foreign Service, but only a very little. The reality is both much more prosaic, and also much more exciting.

Most of my time as an American diplomat was spent as a consular officer, one of five “cones” or specializations in the Foreign Service (the others are political, economic, management, and public diplomacy). All these “cones” have an important role to play, but I was drawn to consular work because this, it seemed to me, was where the “service” part of Foreign Service really was apparent. Consular officers not only do the work of issuing visas to foreign nationals wishing to visit the U.S. (nonimmigrant visas), or live here (immigrant visas), making sure that those who travel to America will cause us no harm, but also help out our fellow citizens who get into difficulty in distant lands. This is more than just approving passports for Americans who have lost them. Consular officers also provide services to our countrymen in need, whether it be assisting with those who are destitute, to help them get home, visiting them in prison when they have had problems with the law, taking care of family members when tragedy or illness strikes, or even arranging for the shipment of the body of a deceased loved one from abroad—and making the phone call to let the folks back home know that their family member is no more.

I found that God had given me a knack for this kind of work, and it was extremely satisfying. Not only that, but I was able to travel to some amazing and interesting places, serving twice in Italy (my Italian course came in handy!), in Poland, Israel, Ireland, Iraq, and Germany.

I did not do it alone. God had also provided me a helpmate—my lovely wife, originally from what was then called Czechoslovakia, who had, as a child, fled with her family from the evils of Communism and settled in West Germany prior to her becoming a graduate student at the University of Mississippi where we met. Our travels across the world brought us closer together, as it did with our four children, who cherish the time they spent overseas, even if all but one of them have since chosen to remain Stateside for their careers (the exception, our daughter, would end up studying in Ireland).

Of course, not every assignment was easy. Even in the best of places, especially in dealing with the public, there are times that will try one’s soul. And not every place I have been was necessarily “the best of places.” We were in Israel during the Second Intifada (Palestinian Uprising), and constant suicide bombings meant that my family had to be evacuated while I stayed behind. I was sent to Basra during the Iraq War, again alone, to work on a Provincial Reconstruction Team for over a year, in a place where rockets were a weekly, if not daily,



occurrence, and the threat of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) were such that there was always the real possibility of not returning to see my family again.

Still, I don't regret it at all. It was certainly never dull, and, despite—or perhaps because of—the difficulties, my family became stronger, as did my faith. I knew that I could never do it on my own but had to trust in His Divine Providence to see me through. And, at the end of the day, I truly felt that I was serving in precisely the job He wanted me to have.

The Foreign Service is certainly not for everyone. Apart from the constant traveling and uncertainties about where one might be living from this year to the next, in our current political atmosphere, there are concerns for Christians in particular about what direction our government may take and what one might be called to do or to promote on behalf of that government. That being said, for someone strong in faith and with a desire to serve his fellow citizens, a Foreign Service career is certainly something to consider.

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*Danny Toma in Iraq in 2010*



# Morality and Foreign Policy: Reagan and Thatcher

**Edwin Meese III (2002)**

*Edwin Meese III served as attorney general under President Ronald Reagan from 1985 to 1988. Prior to that, he served in several positions in the Reagan White House. This article is adapted from two speeches Meese delivered in 2002.*

Ronald Reagan revitalized the American economy and began an unprecedented period of economic growth. He rebuilt our armed forces. He restored the spirit of the American people. But most important to our discussion today, he developed a new set of strategic principles to deal with the Soviet Union and the threat of communist imperialism. According to those principles, the United States would oppose rather than accommodate the Soviet Union, insofar as it sought to expand its power and impose totalitarianism around the globe.

The first way in which Reagan took on the Soviet Union—and the basis of everything else—was to defend strongly the moral superiority of freedom. He rejected absolutely the idea of moral equivalence—the idea, prevalent at the time, and still prevalent today, that there is no moral difference between free government and tyranny. Second, Reagan stood up to Soviet aggression. In 1979 and 1980, before he took office, the Soviets had marched into Afghanistan with virtual impunity. Reagan made it clear, through his discussions with the Soviet ambassador and through other means, that the United States would not allow the Soviet Union to occupy one square foot of additional ground anywhere in the world. And third, Reagan adopted the policy of rolling back communism wherever possible, by supporting freedom fighters in Poland, Angola, Nicaragua and elsewhere around the world.

The public unveiling of Reagan's anti-communist strategy took place 20 years ago today, [on June 8, 1982], when he spoke to the British Parliament at Westminster Palace. It was in that speech that he announced his battle plan for dealing with communism in the future. Writing about that speech later, he said,

When I came into office, I believed there had been mistakes in our policy toward the Soviets in particular. I wanted to do some things differently, like speaking the truth about them for a change, rather than hiding reality between the niceties of diplomacy.

So he spoke openly about the conflict between the principles of constitutional government and those of communism. In retrospect, I'm amazed that previous national leaders had not attacked the ideas behind Marxism-Leninism in this direct way. We had come to be too worried that we would offend the Soviet leaders if we did so. Reagan portrayed Marxism-Leninism as an "empty cupboard." Everyone knew this by the 1980s, he believed, but no one was saying it. Being honest about it, he thought, would help the Soviets to face up to their own weaknesses, and to their uncertain future.

## Scaring the "Striped-Pants Diplomats"

It was in that speech that Reagan said,

What I am describing now is a plan and a hope for the long-term. The march of freedom and democracy will leave Marxism-Leninism on the ash heap of history, as it has left other tyrannies which stifled the freedom and muzzled the self-expression of the people.

As you might imagine, those words scared . . . the people whom Reagan used to call "striped-pants diplomats." It was not at all what the State Department would have preferred him to say in such a widely broadcast speech. But honesty was Reagan's way, and it turned out to be effective.

The following year, in March of 1983, Reagan gave a speech to the National Association of Evangelicals, in which he said that those who promote the total sovereignty of the state over the individual are the focus of evil in the modern world. This is the speech in which he called the Soviet Union an "evil empire"—again, much to the dismay of the State Department. And in that same month, and in the same spirit, Reagan declared the importance of the Strategic Defense Initiative—what we know today as ballistic missile defense—and announced his intention to begin to develop it.

There are several other milestones in Reagan's campaign against communism. In October of 1983, at the request of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, the United States used military force for the first time since Vietnam, rescuing nearly a thousand American citizens and putting down an oppressive totalitarian regime on the island of Grenada.

After that there was the series of meetings with Mikhail Gorbachev, beginning in 1985, in which Reagan set forth the understanding that the United States posed no threat to the Soviet Union, but that we would not accept peace at the expense of other peoples' freedom.

The most important of these meetings—which came to be called "summits"—was at Reykjavik in 1986. It was at this meeting that Gorbachev put on the table what would have been the greatest reduction of offensive weapons in the history of the world. But he had one



*Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev in Iceland (1986)*

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requirement: the United States would have to give up the Strategic Defense Initiative. Reagan already knew that ballistic missile defense was important, and had explained why to the American people. But it wasn't until that moment that he realized how important it was to the Soviets. The Soviet Union had been cheating on the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty—the 1972 treaty which forbade the Soviet Union and the United States from going beyond a certain level of ballistic missile defense—for 10 or 15 years. But already in 1986, Gorbachev recognized that the United States was eclipsing the Soviet Union in its technological development of missile defense.

Reagan turned down Gorbachev's offer. At the time, the news media, along with many others in our country and around the world, argued that Reagan had made a mistake by not giving in to Gorbachev's demand. But in hindsight, we can say that this was one of the critical moments in the entire Cold War. The Soviets realized the importance of SDI. They also knew, because of Reagan's refusal to give it up—as many Soviet leaders have written since that time—that they would never be able to prevail over the United States.

Following Reykjavik was Reagan's visit to Berlin on June 12, 1987. In his speech that day at the Brandenburg Gate, Reagan reviewed the history of the Cold War. He compared the progress that was taking place in the West with the technological backwardness and privation in the communist world. He suggested that the Soviets themselves may be coming to understand the importance of freedom, noting that under Gorbachev there had been some changes. Political

prisoners had been released. Economic enterprises had been permitted to operate with greater freedom from state control. “Are these the beginnings of profound changes in the Soviet state,” Reagan asked, “or are they token gestures intended to raise false hopes in the West, or to strengthen the Soviet system without changing it?”

“We welcome change and openness,” he continued. “We believe that freedom and security go together, that the advance of human liberty can only strengthen the cause of world peace.” And then Reagan went on to make the challenge that we’ve heard repeated so many times since, and that turned out to be so momentous in the history of Berlin and of the Cold War:

There is one sign the Soviets can make that would be unmistakable, that would advance dramatically the cause of freedom and peace. General Secretary Gorbachev, if you seek peace, if you seek prosperity for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, if you seek liberalization, come here to this gate. Mr. Gorbachev, open this gate. Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!

That was in many ways the beginning of the end of the Cold War. From that point on, there was a marked difference in the goings-on within the communist world. Reagan had accurately perceived the weaknesses of the Soviet Union. He had formulated American policy in a way that those weaknesses couldn’t be hidden. He had been honest about the immoral reason for those weaknesses. And so, as he predicted at the end of his speech at the Brandenburg Gate, the Berlin Wall—and all it represented—fell. “For it cannot withstand faith,” Reagan said. “It cannot withstand truth. The Wall cannot withstand freedom.”

## **Reagan and Thatcher**

Ronald Reagan said that his principles were formed out of his upbringing in middle America. His boyhood was in a poor, but very upright, family. He learned religious faith from his mother. He learned friendship and respect toward others, including a strong opposition toward racial discrimination, from his father. He learned the importance of public service, and of neighbors helping each other, from the community in which he lived.

Margaret Thatcher came from a similar, although slightly more affluent, background. She learned a great deal from her father’s work as a grocer—particularly the lesson that letting people make their own decisions was vastly superior to government-controlled economic systems. It was this background, she said, that gave her the mental outlook and tools of analysis for reconstructing an economy in England that had been ravaged by socialism.

Reagan and Thatcher were of like mind in world affairs, particularly in regard to dealing with the Soviet Union. Their joint leadership during the Cold War resembled in many ways the collaboration between Roosevelt and Churchill during World War II. But there was one

big difference: Churchill knew the importance of United States participation and support of Britain in World War II, and he was tremendously grateful to Roosevelt for his leadership in that war and for his friendship toward Britain. Together, they agreed on most major decisions about international affairs. But concerning a philosophy of government and domestic policy, Churchill did not share Roosevelt's penchant for centralizing power and regulating the economy. By contrast, Reagan and Thatcher saw eye-to-eye on both international affairs and government generally—particularly on the need for limited government as a protection for individual liberty.

Thatcher wrote about Reagan,

Above all, I knew that I was talking to someone who instinctively felt and thought as I did. Not just about policies, but about a philosophy of government, a view of human nature.

The key element of Reagan's strategy in dealing with the Soviet Union was NATO. He had exerted his leadership to move NATO policies into line with a more assertive response to the Soviet Union, inaugurating the principle that an attack on one would be an attack on all. He also worked with the other NATO leaders to gain support for freedom fighters in places such as Poland, and to give hope to captive nations. In all of this, Thatcher had a very important role. She was, as she described herself, Reagan's principal cheerleader in NATO—not only in NATO councils, but also privately as she met with other NATO leaders, and also, perhaps even more importantly, as she met with leaders of the Warsaw Pact. In talking to leaders in Hungary, Czechoslovakia and other places, she explained that the United States and NATO were not threats to the Warsaw Pact, but that they would resist any actions by the Soviets to engage in aggression. In a sense, she was trying in these meetings to create a wedge between the leaders of the Warsaw Pact countries and the Soviet Union itself.

Nowhere was Thatcher's help to Reagan more pronounced than in his dealings with Gorbachev. Reagan had delayed meeting with Soviet leaders until 1985, largely because he wanted the United States to be able to negotiate from a position of strength, and it had taken a few years to build up our military forces to the point where he was in a position to do so. Thatcher agreed with and supported this strategy, whereas other leaders, particularly in Europe, were pressing for Reagan to meet immediately with the Soviet leadership.

When Gorbachev came to power in 1985, Mrs. Thatcher met with him first. She had studied his statements and his background. She knew of his education, and knew that he understood the West better than his predecessors. After she had talked with him and before he had met with Reagan, she shared with Reagan her view that he was "a man we can do business with." Her insights helped Reagan greatly in preparing for his first meeting with Gorbachev.

She was of critical help also in demonstrating to Gorbachev that she and Reagan were in total agreement. By presenting a united front, she was instrumental in creating the right background for Reagan's meetings with Gorbachev in Geneva, Reykjavik, Washington, D.C. and Moscow.

The close personal and political friendship between Reagan and Thatcher had obvious long-term significance for world history. It also illustrates an important lesson to keep in mind as we navigate the future. It embodied the principles that have characterized the histories of the United States and England. The origins of those principles date back many centuries to a common beginning, and to the fundamental ideas which guide both our countries today—the ideas of freedom and the rule of law.

Thatcher put it well recently when she said—at a Hillsdale event, interestingly enough—“Being democratic is not enough, for a majority cannot turn what is wrong into right. In order to be considered truly free, countries must also have a deep love of liberty and an abiding respect for the rule of law.”

That is a moral creed to which both Reagan and Thatcher subscribed, and which both preserved. And our world is the better for it.



*Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher (1981)*

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# Rights and Responsibilities

**Ray Notgrass (2023)**

We live in a great country. America is great for many reasons. We enjoy many rights and freedoms that people in other parts of the world do not have. Along with the rights and freedoms we enjoy, however, come responsibilities. We must consider both our rights and our responsibilities to get an accurate assessment of what it means to be an American.

## **Our Greatest Right and Responsibility**

As Christians in America, our greatest right, which is at the same time our greatest responsibility, is to pray for our government leaders (1 Timothy 2:1-4). Prayer is a recognition of the ultimate and sovereign power of God, who rules over the affairs of men. It is also an appeal to God to accomplish His will through the minds and hearts of those who wield the powers of government. Governments, like nations, are not inanimate objects. They are made up of people, created in the image of God and capable of wonderful good and terrible evil. Prayer brings together the greatest Power for good in the universe with those who guide the nations every day.

Praying for our leaders is a precious right that God has given to us. We can do it privately in our own homes and hearts; but we also have the freedom to do it in public, in our churches, and in other settings. Prayer is a responsibility because God has given us this ability and the instruction to do it. To fail to pray would be to fail our country. Never think that you have no say in government. By exercising your right and responsibility to pray, you can exert the greatest influence any human being can have on the workings of government.

## **Our Rights**

Among the rights we have as Americans:

- ★ We have the right to practice our religion without interference from the state according to our individual consciences.
- ★ We have the right to participate in the choosing of our elected leaders by voting, by participating in campaigns, and by running for office ourselves.
- ★ We have the right to speak and publish our opinions freely and to assemble peaceably to voice our concerns.



- ★ We have the right to keep and bear arms.
- ★ We have the right to the fair and equitable due process of law: no unreasonable search and seizure, no imprisonment without knowing why, no requirement to testify against oneself, a speedy trial by jury, and no fear of having to be tried more than once for the same charge.
- ★ We have the right to live anywhere in the country and to move about freely from place to place.
- ★ We have the right to educate our children in the way we think best.
- ★ We have the right to work in a job or run a business of our choice.
- ★ We have the right to confidentiality in our personal and business activities.

## **Our Responsibilities**

Among the responsibilities we have as Christians in America:

- ★ We have the responsibility to live as Christians because in this way we will do the most good for our country.
- ★ We have the responsibility to influence others for good while not allowing the world to influence us for evil.
- ★ We have the responsibility to pay the taxes that we legitimately owe.
- ★ We have the responsibility to serve when called upon, such as in times of emergency.
- ★ We have the responsibility to obey the laws and to face the consequences when we do not.
- ★ We have the responsibility to respect our leaders, whether or not we voted for them.
- ★ We have the responsibility to inform our leaders of our opinions for the purpose of helping and not for tearing down.
- ★ We have the responsibility to engage in civil debate and to consider other points of view respectfully.
- ★ We have the responsibility to use our freedoms, such as the right of free speech and the right to keep and bear arms, in a way that shows respect for other people and for our society as a whole.

## Help America to Be a City on a Hill

You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Matthew 5:14-16

After a large number of Jews had been taken into exile in Babylon, Jeremiah sent to them the word of the Lord concerning how they were to live. The prophet told them to go about their lives with hard work and noble purpose. “Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf; for in its welfare you will have welfare” (Jeremiah 29:7). This principle has application today. As Christians, we should work for the good of our communities. Doing so will bless us and others.

Christians live today as aliens and strangers in the world (1 Peter 2:11). This world is not our home because “our citizenship is in heaven” (Philippians 3:20). Nevertheless, we are to live well as God’s light to the world. As we seek the welfare of the city, state, and country where we live, we will bless others and ourselves. We have the opportunity and the responsibility to do good for God’s glory and to further His kingdom in the world. This is the freedom and the responsibility that we have not from government but from God.

The Old Testament book of 1 Chronicles describes a group that understood the times and knew what they should do. May that be said of God’s people today.

Of the sons of Issachar, men who understood the times, with knowledge of what Israel should do, their chiefs were two hundred; and all their kinsmen were at their command.

1 Chronicles 12:32

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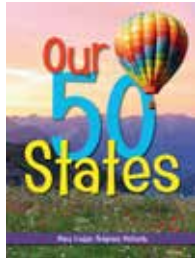
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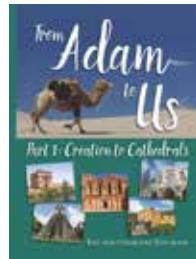
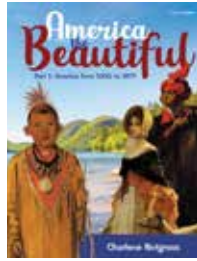
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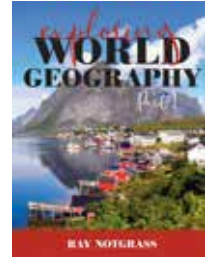
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