

GOD BLESS AMERICA!¹

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The September 11th tragedy had an interesting effect religiously on our nation. It presents a good case study of where America stands before God. There was a display of patriotism and religious expression. “God Bless America,” almost became our new national anthem. It was sung everywhere, even at the seventh inning stretch of baseball games. We saw TV productions around the song, and we witnessed the amazing sight of our congressmen and women singing it on the steps of the Capital. It was on billboards and bumper stickers.

“God Bless America!” The prayer expressed the desire that God protect and prosper the United States of America in the face of a new and formidable danger.

This religious and patriotic fervor didn’t last too long. Polls revealed that church attendance, for instance, returned to the pre-9/11 rate in the weeks after. Yet it could be said, even today, that Americans in general want God to bless America. Politicians still end their speeches with, “God bless America!”

What kind of blessing do we want? Generally, we can say that America wants the blessing of deliverance from the fear of weapons of mass destruction, hijacked airplanes and disrupted travel, vulnerability to terrorist intimidation, and a slumping economy. Positively, we would like to see America prospering economically and socially at home and the image of a triumphant America again recognized throughout the world. I would like to see these “blessings” myself. This is the blessing we want. But what is the blessing we really *need*? The greatest blessing America needs is spiritual. She needs a Spiritual Awakening. Let us consider,

I. GOD HAS BLESSED AMERICA.

“God, bless America” is a good prayer, if we are praying to the true God and have a relationship with Him whereby He will hear us. Certainly, *God has blessed America!* No other nation in history has had the bountiful spiritual and physical blessings that the United States of America has enjoyed. Revisionist historians to the contrary, God has been the source of America’s blessings. Her leaders have not all been “born again” Christians or even paragons of virtue, but the American society has been informed overall, until recent times, by the Judaeo-Christian ethic. What secular historians fail to recognize or often distort is the phenomenon of Evangelical Awakening that has taken place in our nation’s history, even at the most critical times. D’Souza writes:

For those who think of American history in largely secular terms, it may come as news that the greatest events of our history were preceded by massive religious revivals. The First Great Awakening, a Christian revival that swept the country in the mid-eighteenth century, created the moral foundation of the American Revolution . . . The Second Great Awakening, which started in the early nineteenth century and coursed through New England and New

York and then through the interior of the country, left in its wake the temperance movement, the movement for women's suffrage, and most important, the abolitionist movement . . .²

These have had a profound effect on the moral fiber of our country, an effect that has made us a beacon to the world.³ Let's take a brief bird's-eye view of our religious history.

1. The Awakenings and American history.

The late great historian of revival, J. Edwin Orr, identified five Evangelical Awakenings, all affecting America, all having increasing worldwide impacts. They have come as seasons of mercy, effusions of power from God to glorify His Son and bless the Church and the world. They are:

- **The First Evangelical Awakening, 1725-75,**
- **The Second Evangelical Awakening, 1792-1822,**
- **The Third Evangelical Awakening, 1830-47,**
- **The Fourth Evangelical Awakening, 1858-98,**
- **The Fifth Evangelical Awakening, 1900-15.**

Christian historians have identified a **Sixth Evangelical Awakening** in the period after World War II (1948-1950s). Note how God has given these "times of refreshing" at crisis times:

- **Our Colonial days,**
- **After the Revolution and the struggle of a new nation to survive,**
- **At the movement of our nation westward across the Continent,**
- **Through and after the Civil War,**
- **World War I and the new century,**
- **After World War II.**

Surely God has "*remembered mercy*" in sending revival to America (Habakkuk 3:2).

Why has He done this? Because the United States is an "Elect Nation" (as England claimed before her)? No. According to the Word of God, what would cause God to "bless" a nation? In Genesis 10 and 11 we have a genealogy of the nations that populated the earth after the Flood. Gen. 11:1-9 records the Babel judgment that scattered them over the face of the earth. God did not forget them, however, for in Gen. 12:1-3 we see His sovereign call of Abraham to produce a seed that would bring salvation to the world. "And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (v. 3). Those who help further this redemptive program will be blessed; those who hinder will be cursed.

First of all, the seed of Abraham refers to his physical seed, Israel ("a great nation," v. 2). Note that a nation's blessing or curse depends on its relation to Israel. Israel was to be a priestly nation to bless the world (Ex. 19:4-6). See how their blessing would mean the world's blessing:

God be merciful unto us, and bless us, and cause his face to shine upon us; Selah. That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations . . . God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him (Ps. 67:1-2, 7).

Israel failed in this calling, but will someday fulfill it when their Messiah returns (Rom. 11:15).

The Seed (singular) of Abraham through whom the Abrahamic Covenant is fulfilled is Christ (Gal. 3:16). Paul reveals that all believers, Jew or Gentile, are spiritual children of Abraham (Gal. 3:7, 9; Rom. 4:11-13), and that the blessing of Abraham is salvation by faith and the gift of the Holy Spirit upon the world (Gal. 3:8, 13-14).⁴ So, in this age the Church is the instrument of saving blessing to the world, commissioned to preach the gospel of salvation to all nations (Mk. 16:15; Lk. 24:47-48).

Why has God blessed America? Because she has proven to be raised up with the spiritual and material resources to further the evangelization of the world. America has also been the instrument to combat and defeat evil forces in the world that would prevent worldwide missions. Overall, God has done so out of His abundant grace. They have been seasons of mercy.

2. The Evangelical Awakenings.

The Great Awakening.

What Dr. Orr called the First Evangelical Awakening, in America, historians have called The Great Awakening. Sparked by men like Theodore Frelinghuysen in New Jersey (1726) and Jonathan Edwards in New England (1734) and spread by George Whitefield (1739+) and others, The Great Awakening (1726-56) has been recognized by even secular historians as “the most potent, constructive force in American life during the mid-[18th] century.” The Awakening was the first movement to cross colonial as well as denominational lines. It united the colonies spiritually. It was a movement for the common people and weakened traditional establishment dominance. Thus it contributed to the uniting of the new nation to come. The Awakening infused a long-lasting moral fiber of Christian values into the warp and woof of American society.⁵

The years following the Great Awakening saw spiritual declension plague the colonies and the emerging new nation. Enlightenment Rationalism from France increased in influence to compete with the revealed faith of the Church. Following the Revolution exponents of these two viewpoints formed a coalition and produced our *Constitution*.⁶ Though God is not named in the document (our inalienable rights are acknowledged to be endowed by our Creator in the *Declaration of Independence*), the documents that informed it are filled with biblical references and principles.⁷ Where, up to then, “rights” were given to or taken away from the people by the government, our nation is the first in history to have it declared that basic human rights come to us from God.

The influence of Christianity upon our founding as a nation cannot be denied, as testified to by Jedediah Morse:

To the kindly influences of Christianity we owe that degree of civil freedom, and political and social happiness which mankind now enjoys . . . whenever the pillars of Christianity shall be overthrown, our present republican forms of government, and all blessings which flow from them, must fall with them.⁸

But even though *The Constitution* is without doubt a masterpiece as a political document, it could not guarantee a holy people.⁹ This could come only from the God, who is able to change men's hearts. Many of our founding Fathers saw this. Note the additions Patrick Henry made to his will:

“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.” To the will he added a copy of the resolution he had written in 1765 in opposition to the Stamp Act and attached a new addendum: “Whether this will prove a blessing or a curse, will depend upon the use our people make of the blessings which a gracious God hath bestowed on us. If they are wise, they will be great and happy. If they are of a contrary character, they will be miserable. Righteousness alone can exalt them as a nation.”¹⁰

The Second Great Awakening.

Spiritual declension followed the Great Awakening and increased through the Revolutionary War period. Enlightenment rationalism challenged the churches, and the expanding population westward brought a moral crisis for the young nation. There were those who predicted the end of Christianity. The churches surely had their backs to the wall. God visited again in mercy in the Second Great Awakening (what Orr divided into the Second and Third Evangelical Awakenings).¹¹ Revival blessings visited the East from North to South and spread into the West, turning places like Kentucky into what one observer called “the most moral place on earth.” The results included abundant church growth, social institutions founded for human betterment (the Benevolent Empire), and a quickened anti-slavery movement.¹² Armstrong notes some of the results:

Many historians, both secular and Christian, have noted that this new wave of revival, sometimes called, The Second Great Awakening, put the young nation solidly upon a moral and religious footing that kept it from falling into a pit of lawlessness that might have destroyed it before it became strong and prosperous in the decades ahead. During the first half of the nineteenth century the nation's population increased fourfold. During these same years the church increased *tenfold!* Amazingly, by 1834 the total annual income of all the benevolent societies rivaled the budget of the entire federal government. We cannot say that the nation was converted; it never will be. Yet the effects of decades of divine visitation upon the churches were felt in every corner of society.¹³

Subsequent Spiritual Awakenings.

We will quickly mention subsequent blessing of America by God in spiritual awakening. There is the Fourth Evangelical Awakening (1858-98), also called the 1858-59 Revival and the Layman's Prayer Revival. After a time of declension its most visible beginning was with a noon prayer meeting started by a lay preacher named Jeremiah Lanphier on Fulton Street in New York City. It started with six and grew steadily to thousands. The Spirit of prayer moved from New York to Philadelphia and on across the nation to California. Conversions followed resulting in a million souls being added to the churches in two years. The revival continued through the Civil War, affecting both sides. An estimated one of every five Confederate soldiers was converted. J. Edwin Orr's last book he wrote before going to be with the Lord was on this awakening, which he entitled, *The Event of the Century: the 1857-1858 Awakening*.¹⁴

Dr. Orr documented a significant time of fruitfulness in 1905, the result of which placed two million people into the churches. Thus America shared in the world-wide wave of the Fifth Evangelical Awakening (1900-1915) that manifested itself in such outstanding ways in Wales, China, and Korea.¹⁵

I was a young Christian in ministerial training in the 50s and can remember how real the presence of the Holy Spirit was in the churches and how fruitful evangelism was compared to the present. There was a Sixth Evangelical Awakening (1948-1950s), and America shared in its blessings. Armstrong points out its missionary outreach:

The Second World War stimulated a rise in global missions like no previous era. Scores of American servicemen were converted, experienced first-hand parts of the world that needed to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ, and returned home to establish missions and faith ventures across the globe. This alone contributed significantly to the rise of one of the most mission-minded eras in church history.¹⁶

God has blessed America with the kind of blessing we need today. May this be what we mean when we pray: "God, bless America!"

But we must consider next,

II. WHAT GOD CAN BLESSED AMERICA?

After 9/11 there was a flurry and expression of what has been called America's *civil religion*. Ecumenical services were held with followers of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam joining together. We heard of young people praying around their high school flagpole, where one young man, because he didn't know to whom to pray, prayed to Mother Earth.

"God, bless America!" Is this a good prayer or not? It has its good points, and, to the Christian, its questionable side. Some questions need to be asked and some qualifications made. On the positive side, we see it as good for people to be acknowledging God in contrast to the secular humanism that dominates our educational, judicial, and media institutions today. Nations do not have souls, so in the Bible we have evidence of God responding to acknowledgements of Him, even though it is in an outward way. Examples that come to mind are Ahab (1 Kings

21:17-19), Nineveh (Jonah 3), and Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 4:27). It is still true today that “righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people” (Proverbs 14:34).

But what about the qualifications? We must remember that “God Bless America” isn’t a Christian hymn. Irving Berlin wrote it as a show tune for a Broadway Revue in 1918. America’s civil religion has been defined as “platitudes that reaffirm the religious base of American culture despite being largely void of theological significance.”¹⁷

Notice that in the biblical examples it was the God of the Bible, LORD God of Israel, that was acknowledged and obeyed. The main question that needs to be asked when we pray, “God, bless America,” is *to which God are we praying?* Are they all alike? Are God, Allah, Mother Earth, the millions of gods of Hinduism, *etc.*, all the same deity with different names? Many think so, thus it doesn’t matter whom or what we address in prayer. But the truth of the matter is that they are not all alike.¹⁸ They have different attributes as can be clearly seen by examining the teachings of the different religions.¹⁹ Monotheism, as taught by Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, is not the same as the polytheism of Hinduism with its millions of gods. The Creator God of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, that is separate from creation, differs from the pantheism of Hinduism, Mother Earth environmentalism, and New Age monism. Christianity claims a triune God, one God with three centers of personality: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, while both Judaism and Islam accuse Christians of believing in three gods. Christianity claims that the Lord Jesus Christ is God incarnate in human flesh, the only true revelation of God and the only way to God:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (John 1:1).

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth (John 1:14).

No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him (John 1:18).

Jesus saith unto them, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me (John 14:6).

Jesus saith unto him, . . . he that hath seen me hath seen the Father (John 14:9).

Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved (Acts 4:12).

For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus (1 Tim. 2:5)

Other religious faiths, of course, must deny this, for, if He is what He claims to be, the case is closed. Jesus Christ cannot be both God and not God. If He is, then all His claims are true, and

Christianity must be the only true way. There is only one true God, and only one way to God, the God-man, Christ Jesus (1 Tim. 2:5)!²⁰

Postmodernism tells us every religion is equally true. Relativism run amuck has thrown out all logic in the name of “tolerance.”²¹ Of course Christianity’s exclusive truth claims are not “tolerated.” Let’s be sensible. If there is no “Mother Earth,” what’s the use of praying to her? Can a non-entity bless America? If Allah is a false god, does it do any good to ask him to bless America? Has he ever blessed America before? Was he the god our nation’s fathers had in mind when they founded our country? Is he the God of “In God We Trust”? Does it do any good to pray to a “Heavenly Father” apart from praying “in the name of the Son,” when “whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: [but] he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also” (1 John 2:23)? Jesus said, “And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son” (John 14:13). If we want God to bless America, wouldn’t it wise to ask the true and living God through the way He has provided to come to Him? Can we glorify the Father by praying to other gods? After all, His first commandment states: “Thou shalt have no other gods before me” (Ex. 20:3). The Word of God is full of examples of God judging nations for worshipping false gods, including His own people Israel. In actuality praying to false gods really amounts to: “God, curse America!” Remember: “The wicked shall be turned into hell, and *all nations that forget God*” (Ps. 9:17).

What God has blessed America? Our history has made this plain. Though we have abundant evidence that our founding fathers made much emphasis upon God and the importance of religion to the nation’s stability and virtue, the coalition that produced the *Constitution* was made up of many who were not evangelical Christians. Noll points out that “in religious terms, the ideological founding of the United States was **deistic** or **theistic** rather than explicitly Christian.”²² He goes on to explain what kind of God they had and what God their new nation got:

The founders, though not particularly Christian in any narrow sense, were definitely republicans and because they were republicans, they were definitely moralists. They were committed to practices of distributed power, checks and balances, and other republican procedures. But above all they were committed to the idea that republics, when functioning properly, supported virtue, and that virtue, widely dispersed in a population, was the only sure guarantor of republican government. Very early in the history of the country, key founders also embraced principles of liberal, competitive individualism, but only as a way of building upon the republican foundation, not as a replacement for that foundation. Most of the founders—Jefferson, John Adams, Washington, Franklin, Alexander Hamilton for the most of his career, and even James Madison—held that a cerebral, enlightened, rational **Unitarian** God (i.e., as Daniel Borstein once said, “A God that looked quite a bit like their own best images of themselves.”) would supply sufficient motives for personal virtue in the American populace and so be the religion that guaranteed the morality required by their republican government. But on that last matter, they were wrong.

The kind of religion that both filled up the new American republic and that supplied the personal self-discipline and personal morality that the founders looked for as the basis of republican government was supplied by evangelical Protestants. As Yale professor Jon Butler

has documented in his important book from 1990, *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People*, this evangelicalism appeared in several, often competing, varieties, but its rising importance in the new nation was soon unmistakable . . . [The] evangelical tide rose fast and spread out to cover almost the entirety of the new country.²³

The *Constitution* provided an important step to establishing political social stability. The situation was, as one describes it, as a “roof without walls.” It produced a political framework but not a national culture. The Second Great Awakening produced a Christian culture, or as Noll describes it:

The key historical point to be made about these societies is that they provided a non-coercive, non-governmental, voluntary means of constructing civil society in the open national space in which hereditary European aristocracy had been cleared away but which was left vacant under the Constitutional roof . . . A series of comparisons suggests why a surge of evangelical religion, accompanied by a surge of voluntary evangelical social organization may be described as having created a “Christian nation” . . . But the important fact is comparative, as nicely summarized by Richard Carwardine: “This was the largest, and most formidable, subculture in American society.” No other organizer of values, no other generator of print, no other source of popular music or compelling public imagery, no other comforter (and agitator) of internal life—none came anywhere close to the organized strength of the evangelical churches in the three-quarters of a century after the dawn of the republic.²⁴

What Noll is describing as the effects of evangelical churches on American culture is in reality the result of revival poured out upon these churches by the Christian God of the Bible. America has been blessed by the triune God—the Father who sent His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to die on the cross for sinners, and raised Him from the dead the third day for their justification, and sent the Holy Spirit to empower the church to preach this good news of salvation (the evangel, the gospel) to the world, so that repentant believing sinners may be forgiven, saved and transformed into virtuous people zealous of good works.

The bond that the churches had that held the nation together was broken by the Civil War and various factors since, like industrialization, immigration, progressivism/liberalism, secularism. These have all eroded this influence of the churches to where we can no longer call America Christian. We desperately need again the “blessing” of revival from God.

Let me be clear, I am not advocating a theocracy with Christianity as the state religion. We have religious freedom in America.²⁵ Every religion has the equal right to propagate itself without government interference. An American can believe in any god or no god if he wishes. We must acknowledge, however, that no other religion in history could have produced such a country as ours, but Christianity.²⁶ This is revealed clearly in our history, official documents, and monuments. Efforts by militant atheists and secularists to remove every trace of God from our past are malicious bigotry, not to mention stupidity.

While American intellectuals have generally neglected or denied these facts, those of other nations have recognized them. German scholar, Jürgen Habermas writes:

Christianity and nothing else is the ultimate foundation of liberty, conscience, human rights and democracy, the benchmarks of Western Civilization. We continue to nourish ourselves from this source” (“A Time of Transition”).²⁷

The following is from a lecture given by a scholar from the Chinese Academy of Social Science in Beijing in 2002:

One of the things we were asked to look into was what accounted for the success, in fact, the pre-eminence of the West all over the world. We studied everything we could from the historical, political, economic, and cultural perspective. At first, we thought it was because you had more powerful guns than we had. Then we thought it was because you had the best political system. Next we focused on your economic system. But in the past twenty years, we have realized that the heart of your culture is your religion: Christianity. That is why the West has been so powerful. The Christian moral foundation of social and cultural life was what made possible the emergence of capitalism and then the successful transition to democratic politics. We don't have any doubt about this.²⁸

We are calling on the Church of Jesus Christ to be the Church of Jesus Christ. Revival is the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Church and the world. The outpouring on the Church issues into an overflow of blessing to the world in saving grace and even social change. Our history has verified this. May He bless us again! Our plea to the soul outside of Christ is “repent ye and believe the gospel” (Mk. 1:15). God’s blessing of forgiveness, salvation, and a transformed life will be yours (Acts 16:31; Eph. 2:8-10)!

Notes

¹ This message was in the 2002 *Grace Gazette*.

² Dinesh D’Souza, *What’s So Great About Christianity?* (Washington, DC: Regnery, 2007), 72, 73.

³ See Richard W. Cole, *The Mighty Acts of God: A Survey of Revival and Awakening in the United States of America* (Asheville, NC: Revival Literature, 2004); Earl Cairnes, *An Endless Line of Splendor: Revivals and their Leaders from the Great Awakening to the Present* (Wheaton: Tyndale House, 1986); *America’s Great Revivals: The Thrilling Story of Spiritual Revival in the United States* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, n.d.).

⁴ We do not mean that the Church is “spiritual Israel” or has replaced Israel. Because Abraham was justified before he was circumcised he is the father of all Gentiles who believe (Rom. 4:9-11). An Israelite is a descendent of Abraham through one of the tribes of Israel (Rom. 11:1), thus a spiritual Israelite is a Jew who has the faith of Abraham (Rom. 4:12). The Church is a distinctly New Testament supra-national people (Acts 15:14), composed of believing Jews and Gentiles in one Body (Eph. 3:4-6). National Israel will yet be saved and bless the world when Christ returns (Rom. 11:12-15, 24-27). See Barry E. Horner, *Future Israel: Why Christian Anti-Judaism Must be Challenged* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2009); Renald E. Showers, *The Coming Apocalypse: A Study of Replacement Theology Versus God’s Faithfulness in the End Times* (Bellmawr, NJ, Friends of Israel, 2012).

⁵ See Chapter 13, “The Great Awakening: The Paradigm Revival.” See also Thomas S. Kidd, *The Great Awakening* (New York: Basic Books); Joseph Tracy, *The Great Awakening* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, reprint ed. 1989).

⁶ Marvin Olasky, *Fighting for Liberty and Virtue: Political and Cultural Wars in Eighteenth Century America* (Washington: Regnery Publishing, Inc., 1996), 213.

⁷ Alvin J. Schmidt, *Under the Influence: How Christianity Transformed Civilization* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 254-270; Gary T. Amos, *Defending the Constitution: How the Bible and Christianity Influenced the Writing of the Declaration of Independence* (Brentwood, TN: Wolgenmuth and Hyatt, 1989); D. James Kennedy and Jerry Newcombe, *What if Jesus had Never Been Born? The Positive Impact of Christianity in History* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1994), 57-76; John Eidsmoe, *Christianity and the Constitution: the Faith of Our Founding Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987); David Barton, *The Myth of Separation: What is the Correct Relationship Between Church and State? A Revealing Look at What the Founding Fathers and Early Courts Really Said* (Aledo, TX: Wallbuilders, 1992); Paul Marshall, *God and the Constitution: Christianity and American Politics* (Bowman and Littlefield, 2002).

⁸ *Annals of the American Revolution* (Hartford, 1824).

⁹ Mark Ellingsen, *Blessed are the Cynical: How Original Sin Can Make America Better* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2003).

¹⁰ Olasky, *Fighting for Liberty and Virtue*, p. 213.

¹¹ J. Edwin Orr, *The Eager Feet: Evangelical Awakenings, 1790-1830* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1975).

¹² Schmidt, *Under the Influence*, pp. 278-290; Kennedy and Newcombe, *What if Jesus had Never Been Born?* pp. 77-90.

¹³ John H. Armstrong, *When God Moves* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publications, 1998), 107.

¹⁴ (Wheaton: International Awakening Press, 1989); also *The Fervent Prayer: the Worldwide Impact of the Great Awakening of 1858* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1974).

¹⁵ J. Edwin Orr, *The Flaming Tongue: The Impact of 20th Century Revivals* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1973).

¹⁶ John H. Armstrong, "Christians in a Barren Land: Christian Living in the New Century," *Viewpoint*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (January-February 2000), 2.

¹⁷ Stephen L. Carter, quoted in Vincent Carroll and David Shiflett, *Christianity on Trial: Arguments Against Anti-Religious Bigotry* (San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2002), xi.

¹⁸ Donald A. Carson, *The Gagging of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996).

¹⁹ Marvin Olasky, *The Religions Next Door: What We Need to Know about Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam—and What Reporters are Missing* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2004).

²⁰ Ronald H. Nash, *Is Jesus the Only Savior?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994); Ramesh P. Richard, *The Population of Heaven: A Biblical Response to the Inclusivist Position on Who Will Be Saved* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1994).

²¹ Josh McDonald and Bob Hostetler, *The New Tolerance: How a Cultural Movement Threatens to Destroy You, Your Faith, and Your Children* (Wheaton: Tyndale, 1998); Brad Stetson and Joseph G. Conti, *The Truth About Tolerance: Pluralism, Diversity and the Culture Wars* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005); Donald A. Carson, *The Intolerance of Tolerance* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011).

²² Mark A. Noll, "In What Sense Was Early America Christian?" *Sacred History Magazine* (November, 2005), 58.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 60.

²⁵ As a Baptist pastor I hold to Baptist distinctives, one of which is Soul Liberty. The First Amendment of the Constitution was called the “Baptist Amendment,” because they persisted in opposing a state-church being established for the United States. See Henry C. Fish, *The Price of Soul-Liberty and Who Paid It* (Rochester, NY: Backus Book Publ., 1983; reprint of 1860 edit.); Thomas S. Kidd, *God of Liberty: A Religious History of the American Revolution* (New York: Basic Books, 2010), 37-55.

²⁶ See Schmidt, *Under the Influence: How Christianity Transformed Civilization*; Kennedy and Newcombe, *What If Jesus had Never Been Born?*; and Rodney Stark, *The Victory of Reason: How Christianity Led to Freedom, Capitalism, and Western Success* (New York: Random House, 2005).

²⁷ Dinesh D’Souza, *What’s So Great About Christianity?* p. 41.

²⁸ David Aikman, *Jesus in Beijing: How Christianity is Transforming China and Changing the Global Balance of Power* (Washington, DC: Regnery, 2003), 5.