

How Christianity Changed the World

Liberty and Justice for All

1. American Liberty (continued):

Our founders believed that Christianity produced the public morality without which civil government would not long survive. On this basis, they neither created nor tolerated anything that would have diminished Christianity's effects on the people.

The entire purpose of the 1st Amendment means this. It also meant to prevent us from becoming like England, which had a national denomination. States were free to have their own state-supported religions but the federal government wasn't. John Adams, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, and 2nd President of the U.S. saw the American Government as "grounded on reason, morality and the Christian religion."

To skeptics of Christianity's rightful influence on our government, please answer this question:

Where does one find the greatest amount of religious freedom? Is it in Western countries where Christianity has had its greatest and longest influence or is it in countries where Christianity has had little or no influence?

Alexis de Tocqueville (the Frenchman who wrote 'Democracy in America' in 1831) said "Americans combine the notions of Christianity and liberty so intimately that it is impossible for them to conceive of one without the other."

Suggested reading:

'Original Intent' by David Barton ~ very detailed and heavily footnoted...

Suggested website: www.wallbuilders.com

Lesson 2

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2. The American Philosophy of Government:

The Declaration of Independence was written in 1776 and the US Constitution was written in the late 1780's. Below is a table of where the founding fathers quoted from in writing these documents.

Most cited sources:

Category:	1770's:	1780's:
Bible	44%	34%
Enlightenment	18%	24%
Whig	20%	19%
Common-Law	4%	9%
Classical	11%	10%
Other	3%	4%
Total	100%	100%

Even the Enlightenment quotes are from the more Christian-based thinkers like Montesquieu, Blackstone, Locke, Puffendorf, etc. – with the remainder coming from the more radical thinkers like Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, etc.

Most cited thinkers:

Name:	1770's:	1780's:
Montesquieu	7%	14%
Blackstone	3%	7%
Locke	7%	1%
Hume	1%	1%
Plutarch	3%	1%
Beccaria	1%	3%
Cato	1%	3%
DeLolme	0%	3%
Puffendorf	0%	1%

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Montesquieu was a French attorney and author, as well as a Christian, who gave us the “checks and balances” and “separation of powers” concepts that made it into our constitution. These are based on **Jeremiah 17:9** which says that man tends naturally toward corruption...

Blackstone was an English attorney and author, as well as a Christian, whose ‘Commentaries on the Law’ was a required manual for every American law college for over a century. His major contribution was in the preamble of our Declaration: “When in the course of human events...” and “the Laws of Nature and of Nature’s God...” He clearly identified his use of “the Laws of Nature and of Nature’s God” as being the God of the Bible.

While Locke may not have been an evangelical Christian, he drew heavily from the Bible in developing his political theories. In his first treatise on government, he cited the Bible 1,349 times; in his second treatise, he cited it 157 times. Not surprising Locke was a theologian whose two major books were ‘The Reasonableness of Christianity’ (1696) and ‘A Vindication of the Reasonableness of Christianity’ (1697).

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3. Labor and Economic Freedom:

GRC had an extremely low view of physical labor, namely that it was suitable only for slaves and the lower classes. At one time, Athens had five times as many slaves as citizens. The Roman philosopher Cicero said: "...vulgar are the means of livelihood of all hired workers whom we pay for mere manual labor..."

Christians assigned work honor and dignity for 3 reasons:

1. Jesus was a carpenter, a lowly profession.
2. Paul earned a living from a trade, tent-making.
3. They believed **2nd Thessalonians 3:10, Luke 10:7**

Hence, Christians saw work as a "calling" that was under the Lordship of Christ...
Colossians 3:17,23, 24

This view of work being honorable set them apart from the prevailing view but it also earned them derision because they prospered economically as a result of their strong work ethic.

In today's world, it is simply assumed that all workers deserve a fair wage for the work that they perform. Until the Judeo-Christian view of work came to be, this wasn't true at all, as the majority of residents worked as slaves. As a result, there wasn't much of a middle-class in the GRC. The middle-class arose due to the Christian work ethic, especially the Puritan work ethic in the 1600's. The Christian work ethic has been rightly credited with greatly reducing poverty and its by-product, disease.

As an example, after WWII, Japan intentionally adopted Western economic and industrial values that were largely the product of the Christian work ethic. Once the effects of a cause have become operative, they can be utilized apart from the original cause.

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4. Property Rights and Individual Freedom:

For the most part, private property rights (PPR) for the common man were non-existent in the GRC. PPR are vital to people's freedom. The two cannot be separated. Where there are no PPR, there can be no human or civil rights.

Exodus 20:15, 17 "...you shall not steal and you shall not covet..." Both of these commandments assume the person has the right and freedom to acquire, retain and sell his property at his discretion.

Matthew 20:15 also supports this. Jesus only spoke against the over-attachment to material things; never to their exclusion.

Capitalism (or more accurately, free markets or free enterprise) is a by-product of Christianity's value of spiritual freedom applied to economic life and activities. In countries where the free market is not permitted to operate, the gap between rich and poor is the widest – exactly the opposite of what we currently hear. Because of man's fallen nature, we may need to place some barriers on this system, but not too many. (give example of the old Standard Oil corporation or tax deductions for charitable contributions).

Is it coincidence that the greatest amount of freedom and economic prosperity exist in countries where Christianity has had a dominant presence? As Rabbi Daniel Lapin said, "It's no accident that a capital market has never arisen indigenously in any non-Christian country."

By giving dignity to work and accenting the spirit of individual freedom, Christianity has produced profound economic effects...