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Vindiciae, Contra Tyrannos: The Influence of the Reformed Tradition in the American Founding

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Abstract and Keywords

In his magisterial history of religion in America, Yale historian Sydney Ahlstrom estimated that the Reformed tradition was “the religious heritage of three-fourths of the American people in 1776.” This chapter traces the development of Reformed or Calvinist political thought from John Calvin to the American founding. It highlights ways in which Reformed ideas and concerns exacerbated tensions between the American colonies and Great Britain, provided a theological rationale for resisting British rule, and proposed a political framework for republican self-government.

Keywords: Reformed tradition, Calvinist, founding, John Calvin

IN *ORIGINAL MEANINGS*, Jack Rakove observes that the “larger intellectual world within which the Constitution is often located—the Enlightened world of Locke and Montesquieu, Hume and Blackstone, plain whigs and real whigs, common lawyers and Continental jurists—has been the subject of extensive analysis.” Significantly, he does not mention religion in this context. Historians are better than political scientists and law professors at recognizing that faith mattered to many Americans in the founding era, but even they have a tendency to treat America’s founders as Deists who embraced a rationalist approach to politics and who produced secular documents such as the Declaration of Independence, Constitution, and Bill of Rights. Although there are important exceptions, scholars are still too prone to neglect the significant influence of Christianity, generally, and the Reformed theological and attendant political traditions, more specifically, on the founding generation.¹

One reason Calvinism is neglected is that students of the founding often view the era through the eyes of southern Anglican gentlemen: Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and George Washington; men born outside America: Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Paine; and the cosmopolitan Benjamin Franklin, who lived most of the last thirty-five years of his life in Europe. The only member of a Congregational or Presbyterian church among the famous founders is John Adams, but like some of his **(p.35)** fellow Congregationalists (especially in and around Boston) he was moving rapidly toward Unitarianism. These men were brilliant and influential, but they are not representative of the many American leaders who were firmly rooted in the Reformed tradition.²

Sydney Ahlstrom, in his magisterial history of religion in America, estimates that the Reformed tradition was “the religious heritage of three-fourths of the American people in 1776.” Similarly, Yale historian Harry Stout states that prior to the War for Independence “three out of four colonists were connected with Reformed denominations (mostly Congregational and Presbyterian).” These figures may be high—neither scholar explains or defends them—but numerous studies make it clear that Calvinist churches dominated New England and were well represented throughout the rest of the nation. Although some scholars have asserted that few Americans

attended these or other churches in the founding era, as we shall see this claim does not survive close scrutiny.³

Not only were well over a majority of all Americans in the founding era associated with Calvinist churches, adherents of this tradition exercised significant influence through a variety of venues. New England was the intellectual and cultural center of America until well into the nineteenth century. Literally millions of Americans learned to read using the explicitly Calvinist *The New-England Primer* (more than two million copies were printed in the eighteenth century alone, and in spite of its name the text was used throughout America).⁴ As well, many pedagogues throughout the nation were members of Reformed faiths. For instance, James Madison was educated by the Scottish Presbyterian minister Donald Robertson (about whom he later said, “all that I have been in life I owe largely to that man”), the Anglican rector Thomas Martin (a graduate of the Presbyterian College of New Jersey), and the Presbyterian minister John Witherspoon. Under President Witherspoon, the College of New Jersey produced “five delegates to the Constitutional Convention; one U.S. President (Madison); a vice president (the notorious Aaron Burr); forty-nine U.S. representatives; twenty-eight U.S. senators; three Supreme Court Justices; eight U.S. district judges; one secretary of state; three attorneys general; and two foreign ministers.” It is noteworthy that only two of the 178 students who studied under Witherspoon between 1769 and 1775 became Loyalists.⁵

The primary purpose of this chapter is to introduce readers to the Reformed political tradition, show how the tradition manifested itself in colonial American politics (especially in New England), and demonstrate that Calvinism was still a vibrant and influential force in late-eighteenth-century **(p.36)** America. I conclude by suggesting that shifting our focus from a handful of elites to a broader range of founders (emphasizing for the purposes of this chapter members of Reformed congregations) helps scholars better understand key founding documents such as the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the First Amendment.

Reformed Political Theory

Reformed political theory is a branch of Christian political theory, so it is not surprising to find significant overlap between how Calvinists and other Christians view politics. General Christian propositions with implications for politics include the ideas that humans are created in the image of God, men and women are sinful, and God has established different institutions for various purposes: notably, the family, church, and state. Virtually all Christian political thinkers have recognized that civil authorities are ordained by God and that there is a biblical obligation to obey them, but that the obligation is not absolute. Although generalizations can be dangerous, it is fair to say that between Constantine and the Protestant Reformation most Christians who thought about politics assumed that monarchy was the preferred form of government, saw rulers as playing an important role in promoting the common good, and paid little attention to subjective individual rights. While they believed that Christians should refuse to obey an unjust law, virtually none of them contended that the people had a right to revolt against unjust rulers.

Reformed political theory broke in significant ways from previous Christian views. Of course Reformed thinkers borrowed from earlier thinkers, and the tradition evolved over time. However, in the same way that scholars are comfortable speaking of a “liberal tradition” that includes John Locke, John Stuart Mill, John Rawls, and, according to numerous scholars, many founders, so too is it possible to speak of a Reformed tradition that includes John Calvin, John Knox, Samuel Rutherford, John Winthrop, and many of America’s founders. Because some readers may be unfamiliar with this tradition, I offer a brief introduction to it below. Obviously a few pages on a tradition that spans centuries and involves a contentious and wordy people cannot do it justice, but it does allow me to introduce key themes that had a significant impact on American political ideas.

The Protestant Reformation was a wide-ranging movement opposed to perceived abuses by the Roman Catholic Church. It may be conveniently **(p.37)** traced to 1517, when Martin Luther nailed his *Ninety-Five Theses* to the Wittenberg castle church door. For our purposes, the work of John Calvin is of particular interest. Calvin was born in France but lived most of his adult life in Geneva, Switzerland, which he helped govern

from 1536-1538 and 1541-1564. In 1536, he published the first edition of his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, a volume he revised several times until the final 1559 edition. The work, along with his voluminous biblical commentaries, has proven enormously influential among his followers, who were represented most prominently in America by the Puritans.

Calvin's work echoed the great battle cries of the Reformation, such as *sola fide* and *sola scriptura*, and it reinforced the seminal notion of the priesthood of all believers. Reformers rejected the idea that the church and her priests were necessary intermediaries between common persons and God, and that the Church as an institution possessed the authority to speak for God. Individuals were told that they were responsible for their relationship with God, and that His will for them is most clearly revealed in the Holy Scriptures. This belief led to widespread male literacy and a commitment to translating and printing the Bible in the vernacular. These views and practices helped undermine existing hierarchies and nurtured a desire for self-government. Although ecclesiastical structures varied, Reformed churches leaned heavily toward republican forms of government, and nowhere was this more true than among the Separatists and Puritans who immigrated to America. New England Calvinists debated the relative merits of pure congregationalism versus more presbyterian forms of church governance, but under both models church members played critical roles in governing themselves.⁶

Particularly significant within the Reformed tradition is the insistence that God is sovereign over all creation. Reformers attempted to apply their faith to all elements of life, including activities such as raising children, conducting business, and participating in politics. This "sanctification" of every aspect of life contributed to the tremendous economic and social development that marked most countries in which Reformed Protestants became a majority. From their earliest days in power, Calvinists were concerned with creating Christian political institutions and practices. Yet they were not theocrats, and they even expanded contemporary distinctions between church and state. Reformers believed that both church and civil state were divinely mandated institutions and that the two should work closely together to create a Christian society. They believed, however, that those functions divinely delegated to the church should not be exercised **(p.38)** by the civil state or vice versa. Because only God is sovereign, and

because of their commitment to the doctrine of total depravity, they insisted that both ecclesiastical and civil authority be limited. As well, Calvinist thinkers retained the traditional Christian idea that governments should promote the common good.⁷

Calvinist movements sprang up throughout Europe, and they were particularly successful in Switzerland, Holland, Scotland, and England. In these and other countries—notably France, where the Huguenots were a persecuted minority—they faced hostile regimes. Although the Reformers initially advocated passive obedience, they rapidly developed a resistance theology unlike anything ever seen on a widespread level in Christendom. Calvin, one of the most politically conservative of the Reformers, cautiously contended that in some cases inferior magistrates might resist an ungodly ruler. However, Reformers such as John Knox (1505–1572), George Buchanan (1506–1582), and Samuel Rutherford (1600–1661) of Scotland; Theodore Beza (1519–1605) of France and Switzerland; David Pareus (1548–1622) of Germany; and Christopher Goodman (1520–1603) and John Ponet (1516–1556) of England argued that inferior magistrates should resist unjust rulers, and even permitted or *required* citizens to do so.⁸

Among the most famous pieces of resistance literature is Stephanus Junius Brutus's *Vindiciae, Contra Tyrannos* (1579). Written by a Huguenot, probably Philippe du Plessis Mornay (1549–1623) or Hubert Languet (1518–1581), the *Vindiciae* contends that men originally exist in a state of natural liberty, and that “the natural law [*ius Naturale*] teaches us to preserve and protect our life and liberty—without which life is scarcely life at all—against all force and injustice.” Humans are “free by nature, impatient of servitude,” and they create civil governments to promote the common good. Legitimate rulers are established only by virtue of a twofold covenant (*duplex foedus*). The first of these, between God, king, and people, commits the people and ruler to obey God. If either the king or the people turn from God and so violate this covenant, it is void. The second covenant, which is between the ruler and the people, stipulates that the consent of the people is necessary for government to be legitimate. The people promise to obey the king as long as he rules justly. Rulers who are illegitimate, negligent, unjust, or tyrannical break this covenant and forfeit

their right to rule. When the people resist ungodly or unjust rulers, they are “procuring that which is their natural right [*droit naturel*].”⁹

For Reformers, families, churches, and civil governments should be grounded in agreements between humans that are witnessed and enforced **(p.39)** by God. Of course, they did not invent covenants, but they emphasized their use and significance—particularly with respect to civil and ecclesiastical authorities. Moreover, as represented well by Brutus’s first covenant, they believed that God makes covenants with peoples, much as He did with the ancient Jews. These covenanted people then have an important role to play in God’s plan to bring about His kingdom on earth. Failure to keep these covenants, clergy routinely warned in sermons known as jeremiads, would result in God’s punishment. The rights and responsibilities associated with such covenants would have an important influence in America.¹⁰

One might object that nothing in the preceding section is *distinctive* to the Reformed tradition. Indeed, Quentin Skinner has argued that even works like *Vindiciae* are not “specifically Calvinist at all,” but that ideas contained in them were borrowed from Scholastic authors.¹¹ As a matter of the genealogy of ideas this may be the case, but what is critical for the purposes of this chapter is that these ideas were most extensively developed, defended, and applied within the Reformed tradition. Within a generation of Calvin, virtually every Reformed civil and ecclesiastical leader was convinced that the Bible taught that governments should be limited, that they should be based on the consent of the governed, that rulers should promote the common good and the Christian faith, and that unjust or ungodly rulers should be resisted or even overthrown. Whether or not these ideas are inherently connected to Calvinism, the Reformed tradition became a major means by which they became a part of American political culture.

The Reformed Tradition in America

Protestantism's progress began inauspiciously in England when Henry VIII severed ties with Rome and created an independent Church of England in 1534. This institution, however, remained too "popish" for many Calvinists, who became known as Puritans because of their desire to purify completely this church. Some Separatists, known today as the Pilgrims, eventually gave up hope for reformation of the English church and, facing increasing persecution in their homeland, fled to Holland in 1608 and then to America in 1620. Before they disembarked from the Mayflower, they created a covenant that represents important aspects of early Puritan political thought. This agreement, known today as the **(p.40)** Mayflower Compact, committed the people and the rulers to "the Glory of God, and the Advancement of the Christian Faith, and the Honour of our King and Country." Its legitimacy stemmed from the consent of the 41 men heading households on the Mayflower, and it required rulers to govern justly.¹²

The Mayflower Compact is the most famous early civil covenant made in America, but it is not unique. As David A. Weir illustrates in his exhaustively researched book, *Early New England: A Covenanted Society*, hundreds of ecclesiastical and civil covenants were created whereby people joined together before the eyes of God to pursue different projects ultimately aimed at glorifying God.¹³ Each of these covenants reinforced the idea that governments are legitimate and binding because they were established by the consent of the governed. This view is reflected well by Henry Wolcott's notes of a 1638 election sermon by one of Connecticut's founders, Thomas Hooker:

Doctrine. I. That the choice of public magistrates belongs unto the people by God's own allowance.

II. The privilege of election, which belongs to the people, therefore must not be exercised according to their humors, but according to the blessed will and law of God.

III. They who have the power to appoint officers and magistrates, it is in their power also to set the bounds

and limitations of power and place unto which they call them.

Reasons. 1. Because the foundation of authority is laid, firstly, in the free consent of the people.¹⁴

Not only did the people consent to the original form of government, but also most men could participate in town meetings and freemen elected representatives to the colonial legislatures. Of course there was an expectation that citizens would elect and defer to godly, talented magistrates. John Winthrop famously lectured Massachusetts Bay's General Court on this point in 1645, and thirty-five years later Connecticut's Samuel Willis reiterated the sentiment with a greater emphasis on class when he declared that "[t]he making of rulers of the lower sort of people will issue in contempt, let their opinion be what it will." Such statements have led some scholars to overemphasize the importance of social class in the era, but others such as Joy and Robert Gilsdorf have persuasively argued that eighteenth-century Connecticut citizens were more concerned with **(p.41)** competence (and, I would add, godliness) than social standing or wealth. Moreover, the colonies, led by those in New England, clearly grew more democratic in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.¹⁵

Early Puritan societies are often described as theocracies, and their founders and leaders undoubtedly attempted to create thoroughly Christian social and political institutions. This mission is illustrated well by a 1672 declaration by the Connecticut General Court that "[w]e have endeavoured not only to ground our capital laws upon the Word of God, but also all other laws upon the justice and equity held forth in that Word, which is a most perfect rule." Within these societies, however, the institutions of church and state were kept separate and distinct. In early Massachusetts, clergy could not hold political offices or otherwise serve in a civil capacity (this restriction was eventually lifted), and the Massachusetts Body of Liberties (1641) specifically banned European practices such as ecclesiastical courts and made it clear that ecclesiastical sanctions such as excommunication had no impact upon holding civil office. Civil magistrates were to be "nursing fathers" to the church (a phrase taken from Isaiah 49:23), by creating a society that encouraged true Christianity. Throughout New England (with the exception of Rhode

Island), the Congregational church was supported financially through taxation, there were religious tests for officeholders, and statutes required church attendance and punished vice. Protestant dissenters in the region were tolerated if they remained quiet and did not disturb the public order. However, vocal and disorderly dissenters such as the Quakers and perceived troublemakers, including Roger Williams (1635) and Anne Hutchinson (1638), were banished, exiled, or, on rare occasions, hanged.¹⁶

The Puritan conviction that rulers should promote true religion might suggest a powerful state, but this possibility was tempered by the view that civil power should be strictly limited. Fear of arbitrary power exercised by fallen human actors led the Puritans to devise and adopt a variety of democratic institutions and checks on rulers. For instance, the 1641 Massachusetts Body of Liberties contained many protections later found in the American Bill of Rights, including prohibitions against double jeopardy, torture, and “in-humane Barbarous or cruell” bodily punishments. Seven years later these laws were revised and published as *The Book of the General Lawes and Liberties Concerning the Inhabitants of Massachusetts*. This was one of the first times a legal code had ever been printed in the Western world—a practice that made it possible to distribute the laws more widely than if they were copied by hand.¹⁷

(p.42) More broadly, Puritans believed the power of the state also was constrained by what John Davenport called in 1669 “the Law of Nature,” which is “God’s law.”¹⁸ Rulers who violated natural law could legitimately be resisted. A striking expression of this idea is found in a 1678 sermon by Massachusetts’s Samuel Nowell entitled “Abraham in Arms,” in which he contended that the “Law of nature . . . teachth men self-preservation.” Moreover, he proclaimed that there “is such a thing as Liberty and Property given to us, both by the Laws of God & Men, when these are invaded, we may defend our selves.”¹⁹ Puritans were less likely to make natural rights arguments than later Calvinists, but the essential elements for such arguments were all present in earlier Reformed political theory.²⁰

Long before the War for Independence, Reformed Americans had experience resisting tyrannical political power. New England Puritans supported Parliament against abuses of the

British Crown during the English Civil War, and John Cotton even preached a sermon defending the execution of Charles I. After the Restoration, England attempted to “improve” the governance of New England by combining all of the colonies into a single entity known as the Dominion of New England (1686–1689). The first governor of the new entity, Sir Edmund Andros, immediately made himself unpopular by demanding that a Congregational Meeting House in Boston be made available for Anglican services and by restricting town meetings. On April 18, 1689, shortly after news of the Glorious Revolution reached Boston, colonial leaders arrested Andros and returned him to England for trial. The new monarchs and Lords of Trade wisely abandoned the Dominion, but the new Massachusetts charter did require toleration of other Protestants.²¹

Like their descendants, Puritans were concerned with “liberty.” David D. Hall argues in *A Reforming People: Puritanism and the Transformation of Public Life in New England* that these Calvinists had an “animus against ‘tyranny’ and ‘arbitrary’ power that pervaded virtually every sermon and political statement.” But it is critical to recognize that they never understood the concept to include the excessively individualistic idea that men and women are free to do anything except physically harm others. They distinguished between liberty and personal license. Puritans were primarily interested with freedom from sin, but they also understood liberty as the ability of a people to govern themselves and to do what God requires. They came closest to embracing modern notions of liberty with respect to freedom of conscience, but even here religious *actions* judged by the community to be disruptive could still be restricted. As Barry Alan Shain has **(p.43)** demonstrated, this constrained understanding of liberty remained dominant in America until well into the eighteenth century.²²

Few scholars question the influence of the Reformed tradition on the Puritans, but some have argued it declined rapidly. Clearly, the way New England colonists thought about society and politics changed in response to increased prosperity and events like the English Civil War, the Restoration, the Glorious Revolution, and the English victory in the Seven Years’ War. The First Great Awakening was particularly significant as it led to discord between supporters of the revivals (e.g., New Light Congregationalists and New Side Presbyterians) and

their more traditional coreligionists. These tensions led to a weakening of religious establishments in New England and, according to some scholars, helped pave the way for the War for Independence. But in spite of a variety of significant changes, both civic and ecclesiastical leaders in the Reformed tradition remained committed to the political principles discussed above, and many became even more convinced that America had a special role to play in God's advancing kingdom.²³

The Bible and Reformed Literature in the American Founding

As one would expect of a people who believed in the principle of *sola scriptura*, the Bible was virtually omnipresent in New England. Connecticut even required households to possess a Bible, and selectmen were instructed to provide one to families who could not afford the Holy Scriptures. In his chapter for this volume, Daniel L. Dreisbach shows that founders from throughout the nation looked to the Bible for guidance and regularly used it in their writings and speeches. Indeed, the political literature of the era contains more references to the Bible than the works of all Enlightenment thinkers combined (34 percent to 22 percent).²⁴

In addition to the Bible, books containing the essential elements of Reformed political thought were accessible to political and ecclesiastical elites from the colonies' inception. A thorough and systematic study of which Reformed books were available at what time has yet to be attempted, but Herbert D. Foster has documented the availability of classic texts by John Calvin, John Knox, Theodore Beza, Stephanus Junius Brutus, Peter Martyr, and others.²⁵ The respect Puritan leaders had for their European predecessors is reflected well by John Cotton's statement that "I have read **(p.44)** the fathers and the school-men, and Calvin too; but I find that he that has Calvin has them all." Yet, as Perry Miller pointed out, "[i]f we were to measure by the number of times a writer is cited and the degrees of familiarity shown with his works, Beza exerted more influence than Calvin, and David Pareus still more than Beza."²⁶ This is significant for our purposes because the latter two thinkers expressed significantly more radical theories of resistance than did John Calvin.

Moving to the founding era, political leaders generally, but particularly those from New England, often owned or referred to Reformed literature. It is not surprising that Princeton President John Witherspoon owned Calvin's *Institutes*, Beza's *Rights of Magistrates* (1757) and Buchanan's *The Law of Scottish Kingship* (1579). More intriguing is that John Adams declared that John Poynt's *Short Treatise on Politike Power* (1556) contains "all the essential principles of liberty, which were afterwards dilated on by Sidney and Locke." Similarly, late in life he wrote, "I love and revere the memories of Huss Wickliff Luther Calvin Zwinglius Melancton and all the other reformers how muchsoever I may differ from them all in many theological metaphysical & philosophical points. As you justly observe, without their great exertions & severe sufferings, the USA had never existed."²⁷

Unlike his cousin, Samuel Adams was a latter-day Puritan. In 1740, well before John Locke's *Second Treatise* was popular in America, he returned to Harvard to defend the thesis that "it is lawful to resist the Supreme Magistrate, if the Commonwealth cannot be otherwise preserved" in order to receive his master's degree. Twenty-eight years later he wrote three essays for the *Boston Gazette* under the pseudonym of "a Puritan." In them, he urged Americans to guard their rights carefully and to beware of British attempts to appoint a Bishop for America lest the nation be subjected to "Popery." The following year the famous political cartoon "An Attempt to Land a Bishop in America" was published in *The Political Register*. It depicted an erstwhile bishop who is not allowed to disembark in America because of a rioting mob wielding works by Locke and Sidney. Notably, the fleeing bishop is about to be struck in the head by a copy of "Calvin's Works," which had apparently been thrown at him by a member of the mob. In 1766, George Buchanan's *De Jure Regni: or the due right of Government* was reprinted in Philadelphia—seven years before the *Second Treatise* was first published in America. Finally, at the Constitutional Convention Luther Martin (who, in spite of his name, was hardly an exemplar of the Protestant Reformation) read passages from "Locke & Vattel, (p.45) and also Rutherford [presumably *Lex, Rex*]" to show that states, like people, are equal. In short, there is no shortage of evidence that civic leaders in the founding era were aware of Reformed political thinkers and their major doctrines.²⁸

Adherence Rates, Calvinism, and the American Founding

A significant argument made by scholars who dismiss the influence of Christianity, generally, or Reformed theology, specifically, in the founding era is that the founding generation was not particularly religious. In recent years, the most important advocates of this position are the sociologists Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, who claim that on “the eve of the Revolution only about 17 percent of Americans were churched.” Such assertions have made their way into polemical literature, as evidenced by Isaac Kramnick and R. Laurence Moore’s statement that “Americans in the era of the Revolution were a distinctly unchurched people. The highest estimates from the late eighteenth century make only about 10-15 percent of the population were church members.” Although all of these authors acknowledge that “adherence” rates varied by region, Finke and Stark still conclude that New England adherence rates were no more than 20 percent of the total population.²⁹

James H. Hutson, chief of Manuscripts Division at the Library of Congress, has demonstrated that Finke and Stark make numerous factual, methodological, and historical errors. For instance, they misstate Ezra Stiles’ estimate of the population of New England in 1760, and they ignore the best calculations of the American population in 1776. More significantly, by relying on church membership rates in an era when it was difficult to join many churches (particularly in New England), they grossly undercount the number of Americans who were “churched.” As well, Hutson notes that many of Finke and Stark’s data come from decades after the era about which they write, and that some of the data comes from fledgling denominations such as the Methodists.³⁰ Using their methodology but the more reliable data offered by Ezra Stiles, Hutson contends that 82 percent of New Englanders were involved in Congregational churches—and this does not include New Englanders who were active in Baptists, Anglican, or other churches.³¹ Patricia U. Bonomi and Peter R. Eisenstadt similarly conclude that in late-eighteenth-century America “from 56 to 80 percent **(p.46)** of the [white] population were churched, with the southern colonies occupying the lower end of the scale and the northern colonies the upper end.”³²

In New England, citizens overwhelmingly attended churches firmly within the Reformed tradition. In 1776, 63 percent of New England churches were Congregationalist, 15.3 percent were Baptist, and 5.5 percent were Presbyterian. Virtually all Baptists were Calvinists in this era, so approximately 84 percent of the region's churches were in the Reformed tradition. Moreover, the Congregational churches generally had the largest congregations. In Connecticut, for instance, Bruce Daniels estimated that in 1790 "dissenting societies comprised about one-third of the total number, [but] they were only about 20 percent of the population." And members of Congregational churches tended to have more influence in their communities and states than did dissenters.³³

It is worth noting as well that 95 percent of Congregational ministers were college graduates—usually from Harvard or Yale—and they were among the most educated and influential members of their communities. Within these churches, congregants would gather twice on Sunday to hear theologically and exegetically rich sermons lasting about one-and-a-half hours and to engage in other acts of worship. Where possible, congregations would gather on Thursday as well for an additional sermon. Harry S. Stout calculated that the "average 70-year old colonial churchgoer would have listened to some 7,000 sermons in his or her lifetime totaling nearly 10,000 hours of concentrated listening. This is the number of classroom hours it would take to receive ten separate undergraduate degrees in a modern university, without even repeating the same course!"³⁴

Outside of New England, Calvinism was less dominant, but by 1776 Reformed congregations accounted for 51 percent and 58 percent of the churches in the middle and southern colonies respectively. Particularly noteworthy in these regions were Scottish and Scotch-Irish immigrants, most of whom were Presbyterian. In Pennsylvania, for instance, Presbyterians accounted for 30 percent of the population by 1790 and held 44 percent of the seats in the state legislature by the late-1770s. In the South, most political elites were Anglicans, but in the late-eighteenth century Presbyterianism was the fastest growing faith in the region and its adherents were rapidly becoming a significant factor in state politics. J.

C. C. Clark points out that well over a majority of the leaders of North Carolina's militia were Presbyterian elders.³⁵

(p.47) Case Studies

Because scholars and popular writers have tended to focus on founders who were not part of the Reformed tradition, and because they often simplistically attribute any reference to natural rights, government by consent, and the right to resist tyrannical authority to a secularized Locke, they have neglected the influence of Calvinist political thought on the American founders. However, if we take the tradition seriously and look beyond a few elite founders, a more complete and textured picture of the founding era comes into focus. Within the academy, historians have done a better job of doing this than have political scientists and law professors. The latter two groups are far more likely to focus on a few texts, such as the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, *The Federalist Papers*, and the Bill of Rights. Moreover, they tend to interpret public documents in the light of the privately held views of a few elites rather than as a product of communities—for our purposes, communities that included a significant number of Reformed Christians. In the following sections I indicate ways that taking this tradition seriously can help scholars better understand key public documents, such as the Declaration, Constitution, and Bill of Rights. Each study is necessarily brief and is meant only to be suggestive.

The Declaration of Independence

Puritans and their descendants had always been in the precarious position of maintaining what was in effect a dissenting establishment. One of their chief fears was that an Anglican bishop would be sent to America to take over all colonial churches and set up oppressive ecclesiastical courts. The Stamp Act's reference to courts "exercising ecclesiastical jurisdiction within the said colonies" was taken by many to imply that a bishop would be sent shortly, and that for the first time ecclesiastical courts would operate in the American colonies. In retrospect this possibility seems unlikely, but it is important to recognize that Calvinists had often struggled against unfriendly governments and the Puritans had come to New England precisely because they were unable to reform completely the Church of England. Moreover, some Anglicans continued to argue that Congregationalist and Presbyterian churches were not "true" churches because bishops had not ordained their ministers. The extent to which Church of England leaders supported the plans of Americans who desired **(p.48)** a bishop has been extensively debated; but there is little reason to doubt that Reformed Christians genuinely feared an Anglican episcopate. Ill-conceived actions by the Church of England, such as founding a "mission" in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1759, did little to calm their fears.³⁶

Calvinists were troubled by the possible appointment of a bishop, but they were incensed by the Quebec Act of 1774. From Parliament's perspective, this innocuous piece of legislation simply provided for the efficient governing of territory won from France after the Seven Years' War. The act, however, extended the colony of Quebec into what is now the American Midwest, permitted the use of French civil law, and allowed Catholics to practice their faith freely and take oaths without reference to Protestantism. To many Protestants, these steps constituted a significant retreat for the kingdom of God in North America. Reformed Protestants of the era considered Roman Catholics to be, at best, seriously deceived and, at worst, in league with Satan. Connecticut minister Samuel Sherwood reflected the views of many Calvinists when he interpreted the Quebec bill as attempting "the establishment of popery" and as part of a pattern of "violent and cruel attempts of a tyrannical and persecuting power," the

main goal of which is the destruction of Protestant Christianity.³⁷

Calvinists had long been on their guard against tyrannical rulers desiring to stamp out the true gospel. Although they believed that God is sovereign, they were haunted by events such as the massacres of French Huguenots, where “evil” rulers seemed to succeed. When tyrannical rulers had failed it was, from a human perspective, because Protestants had resisted them with arguments, laws, and force. As Reformed Americans began to perceive a pattern of tyranny by Parliament and the Crown, they reacted forcefully against the threat.

The influence of Reformed political ideas on Americans is often ignored because students of the era focus on the Declaration of Independence as *the* statement of why separation from Great Britain was justified. Moreover, they read the document in the light of the views of its primary drafter, Thomas Jefferson, who was more heavily influenced by the Enlightenment than virtually any other American.³⁸ The Declaration of Independence deftly employed language and arguments that resonated with diverse constituents and traditions, one of which was the Reformed tradition. Although the Declaration of Independence is compatible with the Reformed political theory, this tradition’s influence is more evident in other public documents stating the Patriots’ case. These latter texts are not narrowly Reformed—indeed, they might be better characterized as **(p.49)** articulating Protestant concerns. However, a large majority of Protestants in America at the time were, in fact, Calvinists, and these Protestants were more likely to support the Patriot cause and use such language than, say, Anglicans.

On September 17, 1774, Paul Revere delivered the Suffolk Resolves to the Continental Congress. The Resolves recognized the sovereignty of King George, but challenged the legality of recent acts and practices by the British Parliament. They proclaimed

[t]hat it is an indispensable duty which we owe to God, our country, ourselves and posterity, by all lawful ways and means in our power to maintain, defend and

preserve those civil and religious rights and liberties, for which many of our fathers fought, bled and died, and to hand them down entire to future generations.

As well, they condemned

the late act of parliament for establishing the Roman Catholic religion and the French laws in that extensive country, now called Canada, [because it] is dangerous in an extreme degree to the Protestant religion and to the civil rights and liberties of all America; and, therefore, as men and Protestant Christians, we are indispensably obliged to take all proper measures for our security.³⁹

The Suffolk Resolves played a significant role in encouraging congressional delegates to take a strong stand against Parliament. Shortly after receiving the Resolves, they adopted the “Declaration of Rights,” which asserted the colonists’ constitutional and natural rights. They objected specifically to the act passed

for establishing the Roman Catholick Religion in the province of Quebec, abolishing the equitable system of English laws, and erecting a tyranny there, to the great danger, from so total a dissimilarity of Religion, law, and government of the neighbouring British colonies, by the assistance of those whose blood and treasure the said country was conquered from France.⁴⁰

Congress’s “Appeal to the People of Great Britain,” approved at the same time, expanded on the significance of the Quebec Act and challenged **(p.50)** Parliament’s ability “to establish a religion, fraught with sanguinary and impious tenets, or, to erect an arbitrary form of government, in any quarter of the globe.” These and other congressional documents highlight concerns that are only vaguely represented in the Declaration of Independence’s charge that the king abolished “the free System of English Laws in a neighboring Province. . . .” The difference had something to do with the person who drafted the latter document, but even more relevant was a critical audience for the text—Roman Catholic France. The eventual intervention of France on the Patriots’ side did much to diminish the vehement anti-Catholicism of many Americans in this era, but suspicion of “papists” remained a powerful force

in the American imagination well into the twentieth century.⁴¹ On July 4, 1776, Congress approved the Declaration of Independence. Its most famous lines proclaim that

all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness.⁴²

These words reflect arguments long made by Patriots, relatively few of whom read Locke and many of whom were active Calvinists. Of course their primary drafter, Thomas Jefferson, definitely read Locke and was most certainly not a Calvinist, but he later acknowledged that he was not attempting to “find out new principles, or new arguments” and that the Declaration’s authority rests “on the harmonizing sentiments of the day.” Jefferson indisputably borrowed language from Locke, but the ideas to which he referred predated Locke by years. There is simply no evidence that signers from Reformed backgrounds such as Josiah Bartlett, William Whipple, Matthew Thornton, John Hancock, Samuel Adams, John Adams, Robert Treat Paine, William Ellery, Roger Sherman, William Williams, Samuel Huntington, Oliver Wolcott, William Floyd, Philip Livingston, Richard Stockton, John Witherspoon, John Hart, Abraham Clark, James Smith, James Wilson, Thomas McKean, and Lyman Hall understood the **(p.51)** “Creator” to be “nature” or thought they were approving a document that mandated a strictly “secular politics,” as some scholars have claimed.⁴³

With the exception of John Witherspoon, no active clergyman is listed above. Yet observers have long recognized that Reformed ministers were among the most important supporters of the Patriot cause. The Loyalist Peter Oliver railed against “Mr. Otis’s black Regiment, *the dissenting Clergy*, who took so active a part in the Rebellion.” King George himself reportedly referred to the War for Independence as “a Presbyterian Rebellion,” and historians

have recognized that there was an “almost unanimous and persistent critical attitude of the Congregational and Presbyterian ministers toward the British imperial policy.” Indeed, before real bullets were exchanged at Lexington and Concord, the Congregationalist minister Jonathan Mayhew fired “the MORNING GUN OF THE REVOLUTION, the *punctum Temporis* when that period of history began.” The gun in question was Mayhew’s influential sermon “A Discourse Concerning Unlimited Submission and Non-Resistance to the Higher Powers,” delivered and published in Boston in 1750. The sermon powerfully and eloquently reiterated arguments that governments are ordained by God, that their powers are limited, and that citizens have a duty to resist rulers who do evil. Mayhew is not a good representative of Calvinist theology, but his sermon is an excellent example of Calvinist political thought. And it is only one of many sermons preached, printed, and circulated that encouraged Reformed Christians to be wary of and to resist tyrannical governments.⁴⁴

The Constitution

According to Isaac Kramnick and R. Laurence Moore, the Constitution is “godless.” This observation would have come as quite a shock to Roger Sherman, Nathaniel Gorham, Caleb Strong, John Langdon, Nicholas Gilman, Abraham Baldwin, James Wilson, Gunning Bedford, James McHenry, William Livingston, William Paterson, Hugh Williamson, Jared Ingersoll, Oliver Ellsworth, John Lansing Jr., Robert Yates, James McClurg, William Blount, William Houston, William Davie, and Alexander Martin—delegates to the Federal Convention who were raised in the Reformed tradition. Not all of these men played significant roles at the Convention, and a few ended up opposing the Constitution. Yet some of them, notably Roger Sherman, James Wilson, William Paterson, and **(p.52)** Oliver Ellsworth, were intimately involved in key debates and served on important committees. Political scientist David Brian Robertson has recently demonstrated that in many respects Sherman was a more effective delegate than Madison, and he suggests that the “political synergy between Madison and Sherman . . . very well may have been necessary for the Constitution’s adoption.”⁴⁵

At first glance the Constitution may appear to be “godless” as the deity is only referred to in Article VII—where the document is dated “in the Year of our Lord. . . .” Article I presumes that Congress will not conduct business on Sunday, but this provision is more than balanced by Article VI’s prohibition on religious tests for national office.⁴⁶ Yet the argument for the influence of Reformed political ideas on the Constitution does not depend on explicitly religious references. It is more profitable instead to consider the ways in which Calvinist political thought may have influenced the men and women who wrote, debated, and ratified the document.

John Witherspoon’s student James Madison wrote in *Federalist* 51 that “if men were angels, no government would be necessary.” Almost to a person America’s founders were convinced that humans are self-interested or, in theological language, sinful. Of course one can reach this conclusion for a variety of reasons, but it would seem likely that the 50–75 percent of Americans connected to Reformed traditions adhered to this idea because they heard it from the pulpit since childhood. It is true that every major Christian tradition in America in this era agreed that humans are sinful, but few emphasized it as much as the Calvinists who taught the doctrine of total depravity. In contrast, many Enlightenment thinkers believed that humans are basically good, and that through proper education they could be perfected. As Louis Hartz recognized, “Americans refused to join in the great Enlightenment enterprise of shattering the Christian concept of sin, [and] replacing it with an unlimited humanism.”⁴⁷

America’s founders believed that because humans are sinful it is dangerous to concentrate political power. The Constitution thus carefully separates powers and creates a variety of mechanisms whereby each institution can check the others. Critically, the power of the national government itself was limited by Article I, section 8. Indeed, the very notion of federalism, some scholars have argued, was itself modeled after Reformed approaches to church governance (especially Presbyterianism) and New England civic arrangements which, as we have seen, were themselves heavily influenced by Calvinist political ideas. It is noteworthy that the **(p.53)** authors of the Connecticut Compromise, Roger Sherman and Oliver Ellsworth, were both serious Reformed Christians who were leaders in their Congregational churches. Enlightenment

thinkers, on the other hand, generally embraced unicameralism and the centralization of power in a national government.⁴⁸

Federalism helps explain why religion is not mentioned in the Constitution. The founders recognized that it would be impossible to agree upon a single Christian denomination that could be established at a national level, and many feared giving the national government power in this area. Moreover, many founders were beginning to question the wisdom of establishments altogether (usually because they feared that they hurt rather than helped Christianity). There was almost complete agreement that if there was going to be an establishment it should be at the state or local level.⁴⁹

The First Amendment

America's founders differed with respect to whether and/or how civic authorities should support Christianity. On balance, Reformed Christians were more sympathetic to significant state support for religion, as suggested by the survival of establishments in Vermont (1807), Connecticut (1819), New Hampshire (1819), Maine (1820), and Massachusetts (1833). Yet when Supreme Court justices have turned to founding era history to shine light on the meaning of the religion clauses, they have overwhelmingly relied on the views of two Southern Anglicans—Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. This approach is particularly ahistorical as Jefferson was not even involved in crafting or ratifying the First Amendment.⁵⁰

In contrast to Jefferson, Roger Sherman—a latter-day Puritan if there ever was one—was intimately involved in framing the First Amendment. Sherman served on the committee of eleven that compiled the list of rights first debated by the House of Representatives (the only handwritten draft of the Bill of Rights is in his hand), he actively participated in debates over the amendments, and he served on the six-person conference committee that put the Bill of Rights into its final form. On some issues, such as whether amendments should be interspersed throughout the Constitution or attached to the original text, Congress sided with Sherman rather than Madison. Given Sherman's extensive involvement in drafting the First **(p.54)** Amendment and Jefferson's absence from the country at the time, it is striking that when US Supreme Court justices have used history to help them interpret the First

Amendment's religion clauses they have made 112 distinct references to Jefferson but have mentioned Sherman only three times.⁵¹

James Madison may have been a driving force behind the Bill of Rights, but the document was ultimately a product of a community—a community that included the following members of Reformed churches: Roger Sherman, Oliver Ellsworth, John Langdon, Caleb Strong, Paine Wingate, Philip Schuyler, Abraham Baldwin, Jonathan Elmer, Elias Boudinot, Fisher Ames, Abiel Foster, Benjamin Huntington, James Jackson, Jeremiah Wadsworth, Nicholas Gilman, Egbert Benson, James Schureman, Henry Wynkoop, Daniel Hiester Jr., Daniel Huger, Benjamin Bourne, William Paterson, William Smith, and Hugh Williamson. Certainly these men were not all equally influential, but at least Sherman, Ellsworth, Huntington, Baldwin, Boudinot, Paterson, and Ames played important roles in key committees and/or debates. None of these seven men advocated anything like a wall of separation between church and state, and they all thought that states and localities should encourage Christianity. They agreed with their colleagues that the nation should not have an established church, but even at the national level they supported things like hiring congressional and military chaplains and requesting President Washington to issue a Thanksgiving Proclamation.⁵²

Conclusion

Students of the American founding often view the era through the eyes of elites such as Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, George Washington, Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Paine, Benjamin Franklin, and John Adams. These men were brilliant, well educated, and influential, but they are not good representatives of the many Americans who were associated with Reformed congregations in the founding era. Franklin and Adams, the only founders in this group who were raised in the Reformed tradition, clearly came to reject basic tenets of orthodox Christianity—something that was rare for any American of that era. Yet even among this small, unrepresentative group a reasonable argument can be made that at least some of these men (most obviously Adams and Madison) were influenced by Reformed political ideas.

(p.55) Tracing intellectual influence is a messy business. Different people may express similar ideas for completely different reasons, or they may use similar words but mean different things by them. Even within the realm of Christianity, members of different denominations may adhere to similar ideas, so it is problematic to label almost anything as *distinctively* Reformed. Yet if we recognize that Calvinists shared a basic set of political ideas, and that a large majority of Americans were steeped in this tradition, it is only reasonable to consider the impact of this tradition on America's founders. I suggest above how taking this tradition seriously might qualify the widespread view that the Declaration, Constitution, and First Amendment are fundamentally secular documents.

Let me reiterate that I am *not* arguing that America's constitutional order is simply and solely a product of Reformed political thought. There were clearly other intellectual influences at work in the era, and founders often acted for nonideological reasons. As well, although the Reformed tradition was dominant in New England, it was less influential in the middle and southern colonies. My point is simply that there are good reasons to believe many founding era Americans were influenced by Reformed political thought. If scholars can pull their eyes away from indisputably fascinating men like Washington, Adams, Madison, Jefferson, Hamilton, Paine, and Franklin long enough to consider the many

members of the Continental Congress, Constitutional Convention, and First Federal Congress who were comparatively drab Calvinists, they will gain a fuller and richer understanding of this critical era in American history.

Notes

(1) . “Reformed” in this context means “Calvinist” and refers to the intellectual tradition developed by John Calvin (1509–1564) and his followers. Jack Rakove, *Original Meanings: Politics and Ideas in the Making of the Constitution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997), 7, 18. The preface to Daniel L. Dreisbach, Mark David Hall, and Jeffrey H. Morrison, eds., *The Forgotten Founders on Religion and Public Life* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009), xiii–xxi, provides numerous examples of scholars who describe the founders as Deists dedicated to creating a secular commonwealth. I offer an extensive discussion of secondary literature related to this chapter in *Roger Sherman and the Creation of the American Republic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013). For reasons of space, I keep this discussion to an absolute minimum in this chapter.

(2) . Like Franklin, Jefferson and Adams lived for extended periods of time in Europe. Franklin was raised in the Reformed tradition but rejected it at an early age. For details on the religious views of these founders, see Daniel L. Dreisbach, Mark David Hall, and Jeffrey H. Morrison, eds., *The Founders on God and Government* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004) and Dreisbach, Hall, and Morrison, *The Forgotten Founders on Religion and Public Life*.

(3) . Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975), 1: 426; Harry S. Stout, “Preaching the Insurrection,” *Christian History* 15 (1996), 17. Presumably, both figures are for white Americans. According to Charles O. Paullin, 56 percent of churches in America in 1776 were in the Reformed tradition. Paullin, *Atlas of the Historical Geography of the United States* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Institution, 1932), 50. Roger Finke and Rodney Stark rely heavily on his study when they discuss denominations in the era in *The Churching of America, 1776–1990: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 25. According to Edwin Gaustad and Philip Barlow, 63 percent of the

churches in 1780 were in the Reformed tradition. Gaustad and Barlow, *New Historical Atlas of Religion in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 8. The two estimates for 1776 (56 percent and 75 percent) are not necessarily contradictory if Reformed churches had larger congregations than non-Reformed churches.

(4) . *The New-England Primer*, Paul Leicester Ford, ed. (1727; reprint, New York: Dodd, Mead, and Company, 1897); Stephanie Schnorbus, "Calvin and Locke: Dueling Epistemologies in *The New England Primer*, 1720-1790," *Early American Studies* 8 (Spring 2010), 250-287.

(5) . Ralph Ketcham, *James Madison: A Biography* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1971), 17-50; Jeffrey H. Morrison, *John Witherspoon and the Founding of the American Republic* (Notre Dame, IN : University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 4; Joseph S. Tiedemann, "Presbyterianism and the American Revolution in the Middle Colonies," *Church History* 74 (June 2005), 339.

(6) . Kenneth A. Lockridge, *Literacy in Colonial New England* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1974), 98. Lockridge calculates that 60 percent of males in New England were literate in 1660, and that this percentage rose to 85 percent by 1760 (13). James F. Cooper, Jr., *Tenacious of Their Liberties: The Congregationalists in Colonial Massachusetts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999) and David A. Weir, *Early New England: A Covenanted Society* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005).

(7) . John Witte, Jr., *The Reformation of Rights: Law, Religion, and Human Rights in Early Modern Calvinism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 1-80. There is a debate among students of Reformed thought concerning the extent to which early Reformers believed civic government can be redeemed. David VanDrunen provides an excellent overview of this literature and makes a good, but in my mind not persuasive, case that the early Reformers adhered to the two kingdom doctrine of Augustine and Luther. VanDrunen, *Natural Law and the Two Kingdoms: A Study in the Development of Reformed Social Thought* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010).

- (8) . Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought: vol. 2 : The Age of Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), especially chapters 7-9.
- (9) . Stephanus Junius Brutus, *Vindiciae, Contra Tyrannos*, George Garnett, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 149, 92, 37-40, 129-131; Skinner, *Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, 2: 329 (quoting Brutus).
- (10) . The exact nature of these covenants was hotly contested among New England ministers. See Perry Miller, "From Covenant to the Revival," in Miller, *Nature's Nation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966); Sacvan Bercovitch, *The American Jeremiad* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978); and Jonathan D. Sassi, *A Republic of Righteousness: The Public Christianity of the Post-Revolutionary New England Clergy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 19-83.
- (11) . Skinner, *Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, 2: 321. But see Michael Walzer, *Revolution of the Saints* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965).
- (12) . Daniel L. Dreisbach and Mark David Hall, eds., *The Sacred Rights of Conscience: Selected Readings on Religious Liberty and Church-State Relations in the American Founding* (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund Press, 2009), 86.
- (13) . Weir, *Early New England*. See also Daniel J. Elazar, *The American Constitutional Tradition* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988).
- (14) . Perry Miller, ed., *The American Puritans: Their Prose and Poetry* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956), 89; Alice M. Baldwin, *The New England Clergy and the American Revolution* (1928; reprint, New York: Frederick Ungar, 1965), 26-27; and Richard L. Bushman, *From Puritan to Yankee: Character and the Social Order in Connecticut, 1690-1765* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), 154-159.

(15) . John Winthrop, "Speech to the General Court" (1645), in Miller, *The American Puritans*, 90-93; Bushman, *From Puritan to Yankee*, 12; Joy B. and Robert R. Gilsdorf, "Elites and Electorates: Some Plain Truths for Historians of Colonial America," in David D. Hall, John M. Murrin, and Thad W. Tate, eds., *Saints and Revolutionaries: Essays on Early American History* (New York: W.W. Norton: 1984), 207-244; David D. Hall, *A Reforming People: Puritanism and the Transformation of Public Life in New England* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), 90; J. S. Maloy, *The Colonial American Origins of Modern Democratic Thought* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), esp. 86-170; Robert E. Brown, *Middle-Class Democracy and the Revolution in Massachusetts, 1691-1780* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1955); and Perry Miller, "Hooker and Connecticut Democracy," in *Errand Into the Wilderness* (New York: Harper & Row, 1956), 16-47.

(16) . *The Public Records of Connecticut* (Hartford: Case, Lockwood & Brainard, 1894), 2: 568; Dreisbach and Hall, *Sacred Rights of Conscience*, 83-213; Edmund S. Morgan, *Puritan Political Ideas, 1558-1794* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), xiii-xlvii; T.H. Breen, *The Character of the Good Ruler: A Study of Puritan Political Ideas in New England, 1630-1730* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1970).

(17) . Bruce Frohnen, ed., *American Republic: Primary Sources* (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund Press, 2002), 15-22; Hall, *A Reforming People*, 107, 147-154, and *passim*; *The Laws and Liberties of Massachusetts* (1648; reprint, San Marino, CA: The Huntington Library, 1998), 46, 50.

(18) . John Davenport, "A Sermon Preach'd at The Election of the Governour" (Boston, 1670), 4. See generally Baldwin, *New England Clergy*, 13-21. Similarly, two years earlier Jonathan Mitchel declared in his election sermon that "the Law of Nature, is part of the Eternal Law of God." Mitchel, "Nehemiah on the wall in troublesome times . . ." (Cambridge, 1671), 11. Note that in these examples (and numerous others could be given) indisputably orthodox clergy appealed to "the law of nature" as a source of authority.

(19) . Samuel Nowell, "Abraham in Arms" (Boston, 1678), 10-11; Baldwin, *New England Clergy*; Martha Louise Counts, "The Political Views of the Eighteenth Century New England Clergy as Expressed in Their Election Sermons" (PhD diss., Columbia

University, 1956). Some scholars consider any hint of a right of self-preservation to be evidence of the influence of Thomas Hobbes and/or John Locke. However, the right to protect oneself had long been a part of the natural law tradition, and it is clearly present in Reformed works written well before Hobbes's *Leviathan*.

(20) . Scholars differ as to the origin of the concept of subjective natural rights. John Witte provides a brief overview of this literature in *The Reformation of Rights* and argues persuasively that they were used well before Hobbes and Locke and that early Calvinists contributed significantly to their development. See also Georg Jellinek, *The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of Citizens: A Contribution to Modern Constitutional History*, Max Farrand, trans. (1901; reprint, Westport, CT: Hyperion Press, 1979).

(21) . Francis J. Bremer, "In Defense of Regicide: John Cotton on the Execution of Charles I," *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser. 37 (1980), 103-124; John Cotton, *The Keyes to the Kingdom of Heaven . . .* (London, 1644; reprint Boston: Tappan and Dennet, 1843), 97-100; Richard Dunn, *Puritans and Yankees: The Winthrop Dynasty of New England, 1630-1717* (1962; reprint, New York: W.W. Norton, 1971), 30-36, 229-257.

(22) . Barry Alan Shain, *The Myth of American Individualism: The Protestant Origins of American Political Thought* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), esp. 155-288; Hall, *A Reforming People*, 193 and passim; Witte, *Reformation of Rights*, 1-37, 277-319.

(23) . *God of Liberty: A Religious History of the American Revolution* (New York: Basic Books, 2010); Alan Heimert, *Religion and the American Mind: From the Great Awakening to the Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966); Thomas S. Kidd, *The Protestant Interest: New England after Puritanism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004); Nathan O. Hatch, *The Sacred Cause of Liberty: Republican Thought and the Millennium in Revolutionary New England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1977).

(24) . *Acts and Laws Of His Majesties Colony of Connecticut in New-England* (New London, 1715), 207. For the 1784 version of this statute, see *Acts and Laws of the State of Connecticut, in America* (New London: Timothy Green, 1784), 258. Donald

S. Lutz, "The Relative Influence of European Writers on Late Eighteenth-Century American Political Thought," *American Political Science Review* 78 (1984), 189-197, esp. 192-193; Clark, *Language of Liberty*, 26. There are a variety of problems with relying on citations, and accounts of which books were available at what time are woefully incomplete. Responses to arguments denying Locke's availability and influence in colonial America include Zuckert, *Natural Rights and the New Republicanism*, 18-25, and Steven M. Dworetz, *The Unvarnished Doctrine: Locke, Liberalism, and the American Revolution* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990).

(25) . Herbert D. Foster, *Collected Papers of Herbert D. Foster: Historical and Biographical Studies* (Privately Printed, 1929), 77-105.

(26) . Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana* (Hartford: Silas Andrus and Son, 1885), 1: 274; Miller, *The New England Mind*, 1: 93.

(27) . Morrison, *John Witherspoon*, 81; Charles Francis Adams, ed., *The Works of John Adams* (Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1850), 6: 4; John Adams to F.C. Schaeffer, November 25, 1821, in James H. Hutson, *The Founders on Religion: A Book of Quotations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 15-16.

(28) . John Dunn, "The politics of Locke in England and America in the eighteenth century," in John Yolton, ed., *John Locke: Problems and Perspectives: A collection of new essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 45-80, see esp. 69-71; Gary Scott Smith, "Samuel Adams: America's Puritan Revolutionary," in Dreisbach, Hall, and Morrison, *Forgotten Founders*, 40-64; Ira Stoll, *Samuel Adams: A Life* (New York: Free Press, 2008), 23; *The Writings of Samuel Adams*, Harry Alonzo Cushing, ed. (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1904), 1: 201-212; James B. Bell, *A War of Religion: Dissenters, Anglicans, and the American Revolution* (Houndmills, UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), 100-101; Max Farrand, ed., *The Records of the Federal Convention of 1787* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1911), 1: 438.

(29) . William Warren Sweet, "The American Colonial Environment and Religious Liberty," *Church History* 4 (March 1935), 43-56; Finke and Stark, *The Churching of America, 1776-1990*, 15, 27; Isaac Kramnick and R. Laurence Moore, *The Godless Constitution: The Case Against Religious Correctness* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1996), 17.

(30) . James H. Hutson, "The Christian Nation Question," in James H. Hutson, *Forgotten Features of the Founding: The Recovery of Religious Themes in the Early American Republic* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2003), 111-132. Scholars who argue for a lack of religiosity among Americans in the founding era are often led astray by laments about the lack of denominational commitments among Americans or jeremiads decrying what was perceived to be insufficient attention to religious and moral concerns. The point applies with equal force to claims by Calvinists that other ministers, university professors, or parishioners were embracing "Arminianism" or "Arianism." Of course some of these laments were accurate, but often they were overstated. For further discussion, see Patricia Bonomi, *Under the Cope of Heaven: Religion, Society, and Politics in Colonial America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 1-127.

(31) . Hutson, "The Christian Nation Question," 118. Hutson also provides an excellent critique of historian Jon Butler's work, which purports to build upon and offer additional evidence for Finke and Stark's figures (120-125). See Jon Butler, "Why Revolutionary America Wasn't a 'Christian Nation,'" in James H. Hutson, ed., *Religion and the New Republic* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), 187-202, and *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990).

(32) . Patricia U. Bonomi and Peter R. Eisenstadt, "Church Adherence in the Eighteenth-Century British Colonies," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 39 (April 1982), 275.

(33) . Finke and Stark, *Churching of America*, 29; Bruce C. Daniels, *The Connecticut Town: Growth and Development, 1635-1790* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1979), 104 and passim.

(34) . Finke and Stark, *Churching of America*, 45; Mary Latimer Gambrell, *Ministerial Training in Eighteenth-Century New England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1937); Stout, "Preaching the Insurrection," 12. James Cooper notes that Congregational "ministers frequently addressed questions of church government in their sermons," which is significant as there are important similarities between Reformed approaches to ecclesiastical and civic government. Cooper, *The Tenaciousness of the Their Liberties*, 31.

(35) . Finke and Stark, *Churching of America*, 29; David Hackett Fisher, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 431, 606, 608; Howard Miller, "The Grammar of Liberty: Presbyterians and the First American Constitutions," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 54 (1976), 151-152; Clark, *The Language of Liberty*, 351-363.

(36) . Carl Bridenbaugh, *Mitre and Sceptre: Transatlantic Faiths, Ideas, Personalities, and Politics: 1689-1775* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), 207-287, 256; Frohnen, *American Republic*, 110; Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Republic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), 95-96; Heimert, *Religion and the American Mind*, 351-352.

(37) . Kidd, *The Protestant Interest*, passim, and *God of Liberty*, esp. 67-74; Samuel Sherwood, "The Church's Flight into the Wilderness . . ." (1776), in Ellis Sandoz, *Political Sermons of the American Founding Era, 1730-1805*, 2nd ed. (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund Press, 1998), 1: 514; Martin I. J. Griffin, ed., *Catholics and the American Revolution* (Rideley Park: self-published, 1907), 1: 1-40; 3: 384-392.

(38) . See especially Zuckert, *Natural Rights Republic*, 76, 141, and Alan Dershowitz's *Blasphemy: How the Religious Right is Hijacking Our Declaration of Independence* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2007).

(39) . *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789*, Worthington C. Ford et al., eds. (Washington, DC, 1904-37), 1: 33-35 [hereinafter *JCC*].

(40) . Adams, ed., *Works of John Adams*, 2: 16; *JCC*, 1: 68-70, 72.

(41) . *JCC*, 1: 83, 87–88.

(42) . Adrienne Koch and William Peden, eds., *Life and Selected Writings of Thomas Jefferson* (New York: Random House, 1993), 24.

(43) . Thomas Jefferson to Henry Lee, May 8, 1825, in *ibid.*, 656–657; Zuckert, *Natural Rights Republic*, 76, 141. Of course some of the founders listed above (and in the following lists) were better Calvinists than others—for example, John Adams was a lifelong Congregationalist, but privately he came to embrace Unitarian theology. On the other hand, he specifically claimed to be heavily influenced by Reformed political theory (*supra*, 21). As well, some joined other denominations later in life (e.g., Wilson eventually became an Anglican). I have compiled each list of Reformed founders myself, but where possible I cite a printed account of the denominational affiliation of the founders. William Stevens Perry, “The Faith of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence,” *Magazine of History* (1926), 215–237.

(44) . Douglass Adair and John A. Schutz, eds., *Peter Oliver’s Origin and Progress of the American Rebellion* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1961), 41; Paul Johnson, *A History of the American People* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997), 173; Baldwin, *New England Clergy*, 91; John Wingate Thornton, ed., *The Pulpit of the American Revolution*, 2nd ed. (Boston: D. Lothrop, 1876), 43; and Sandoz, *Political Sermons*, *passim*. By way of contrast, many Anglican ministers were Loyalists. Bell, *War of Religion*, 240, 244.

(45) . Kramnick and Moore, *The Godless Constitution*; M. E. Bradford, *Founding Fathers: Brief Lives of the Framers of the United States Constitution*, 2nd ed., rev. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1994); David Brian Robertson, “Madison’s Opponents and Constitutional Design,” *American Political Science Review* 99 (May 2005), 225–243, 242.

(46) . Article VI’s ban on religious tests is often taken as evidence that the founders desired a secular civil order. For a different view, see Daniel L. Dreisbach, “The Constitution’s Forgotten Religion Clause: Reflections on the Article VI Religious Test Ban,” *Journal of Church and State* 38 (Spring 1996), 261–295. During the ratification debates and into the nineteenth century, some Calvinists warned that the

Constitution's failure to acknowledge God would lead to, or was the cause of, disasters. See Dreisbach and Hall, *Sacred Rights*, 346–363.

(47) . Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay, *The Federalist Papers*, Clinton Rossiter, ed. (New York: New American Library, 1961), 322; Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America*, 39.

(48) . Elazar, *American Constitutional Tradition*, 144; Shain, "Afterword," in Dreisbach, Hall, and Morrison, *The Founders on God and Government*, 274–277.

(49) . Mark David Hall, "Religion and the American Founding," in Richard A. Harris and Daniel J. Tichenor, eds., *A History of the U.S. Political System: Ideas, Interests, and Institutions* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2010), 1: 99–112; Daniel L. Dreisbach, "In Search of a Christian Commonwealth: An Examination of Selected Nineteenth-Century Commentaries on References to God and the Christian Religion in the United States Constitution," *Baylor Law Review* 48 (1996), 927–1000.

(50) . Numerous scholars and jurists have asserted that Madison's Memorial and Remonstrance and Jefferson's Virginia Statute for Religious Liberty influenced the authors and ratifiers of the First Amendment. I demonstrate that there is little evidence to support this proposition in "Madison's Memorial and Remonstrance, Jefferson's Statute for Religious Liberty, and the Creation of the First Amendment," *American Political Thought*, forthcoming.

(51) . Mark David Hall, "Jeffersonian Walls and Madisonian Lines: The Supreme Court's Use of History in Religion Clause Cases," *Oregon Law Review* 85 (2006): 568–569. Of course Reformed Christians often opposed established churches if their churches were not established, but even then they seldom supported a strict separation between church and state. See, for instance, Thomas E. Buckley, *Church and State in Revolutionary Virginia, 1776–1787* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1977), *passim*.

(52) . Dreisbach and Hall, *Sacred Rights of Conscience*. 426–433, 441–487; Hall, *Roger Sherman and the Creation of the American Republic*, chapter 6; Charlene Bangs Bickford et al.,

eds., *Documentary History of the First Federal Congress* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 11: 1500-1501.

Notes:

(1) . “Reformed” in this context means “Calvinist” and refers to the intellectual tradition developed by John Calvin (1509-1564) and his followers. Jack Rakove, *Original Meanings: Politics and Ideas in the Making of the Constitution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997), 7, 18. The preface to Daniel L. Dreisbach, Mark David Hall, and Jeffry H. Morrison, eds., *The Forgotten Founders on Religion and Public Life* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009), xiii-xxi, provides numerous examples of scholars who describe the founders as Deists dedicated to creating a secular commonwealth. I offer an extensive discussion of secondary literature related to this chapter in *Roger Sherman and the Creation of the American Republic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013). For reasons of space, I keep this discussion to an absolute minimum in this chapter.

(2) . Like Franklin, Jefferson and Adams lived for extended periods of time in Europe. Franklin was raised in the Reformed tradition but rejected it at an early age. For details on the religious views of these founders, see Daniel L. Dreisbach, Mark David Hall, and Jeffry H. Morrison, eds., *The Founders on God and Government* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004) and Dreisbach, Hall, and Morrison, *The Forgotten Founders on Religion and Public Life*.

(3) . Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975), 1: 426; Harry S. Stout, "Preaching the Insurrection," *Christian History* 15 (1996), 17. Presumably, both figures are for white Americans. According to Charles O. Paullin, 56 percent of churches in America in 1776 were in the Reformed tradition. Paullin, *Atlas of the Historical Geography of the United States* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Institution, 1932), 50. Roger Finke and Rodney Stark rely heavily on his study when they discuss denominations in the era in *The Churching of America, 1776-1990: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 25. According to Edwin Gaustad and Philip Barlow, 63 percent of the churches in 1780 were in the Reformed tradition. Gaustad and Barlow, *New Historical Atlas of Religion in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 8. The two estimates for 1776 (56 percent and 75 percent) are not necessarily contradictory if Reformed churches had larger congregations than non-Reformed churches.

(4) . *The New-England Primer*, Paul Leicester Ford, ed. (1727; reprint, New York: Dodd, Mead, and Company, 1897); Stephanie Schnorbus, "Calvin and Locke: Dueling Epistemologies in *The New England Primer, 1720-1790*," *Early American Studies* 8 (Spring 2010), 250-287.

(5) . Ralph Ketcham, *James Madison: A Biography* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1971), 17-50; Jeffrey H. Morrison, *John Witherspoon and the Founding of the American Republic* (Notre Dame, IN : University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 4; Joseph S. Tiedemann, "Presbyterianism and the American Revolution in the Middle Colonies," *Church History* 74 (June 2005), 339.

(6) . Kenneth A. Lockridge, *Literacy in Colonial New England* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1974), 98. Lockridge calculates that 60 percent of males in New England were literate in 1660, and that this percentage rose to 85 percent by 1760 (13). James F. Cooper, Jr., *Tenacious of Their Liberties: The Congregationalists in Colonial Massachusetts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999) and David A. Weir, *Early New England: A Covenanted Society* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005).

(7) . John Witte, Jr., *The Reformation of Rights: Law, Religion, and Human Rights in Early Modern Calvinism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 1-80. There is a debate among students of Reformed thought concerning the extent to which early Reformers believed civic government can be redeemed. David VanDrunen provides an excellent overview of this literature and makes a good, but in my mind not persuasive, case that the early Reformers adhered to the two kingdom doctrine of Augustine and Luther. VanDrunen, *Natural Law and the Two Kingdoms: A Study in the Development of Reformed Social Thought* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010).

(8) . Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought: vol. 2 : The Age of Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), especially chapters 7-9.

(9) . Stephanus Junius Brutus, *Vindiciae, Contra Tyrannos*, George Garnett, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 149, 92, 37-40, 129-131; Skinner, *Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, 2: 329 (quoting Brutus).

(10) . The exact nature of these covenants was hotly contested among New England ministers. See Perry Miller, "From Covenant to the Revival," in Miller, *Nature's Nation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966); Sacvan Bercovitch, *The American Jeremiad* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978); and Jonathan D. Sassi, *A Republic of Righteousness: The Public Christianity of the Post-Revolutionary New England Clergy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 19-83.

(11) . Skinner, *Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, 2: 321. But see Michael Walzer, *Revolution of the Saints* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965).

(12) . Daniel L. Dreisbach and Mark David Hall, eds., *The Sacred Rights of Conscience: Selected Readings on Religious Liberty and Church-State Relations in the American Founding* (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund Press, 2009), 86.

(13) . Weir, *Early New England*. See also Daniel J. Elazar, *The American Constitutional Tradition* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988).

(14) . Perry Miller, ed., *The American Puritans: Their Prose and Poetry* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956), 89; Alice M. Baldwin, *The New England Clergy and the American Revolution* (1928; reprint, New York: Frederick Ungar, 1965), 26-27; and Richard L. Bushman, *From Puritan to Yankee: Character and the Social Order in Connecticut, 1690-1765* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), 154-159.

(15) . John Winthrop, "Speech to the General Court" (1645), in Miller, *The American Puritans*, 90-93; Bushman, *From Puritan to Yankee*, 12; Joy B. and Robert R. Gilsdorf, "Elites and Electorates: Some Plain Truths for Historians of Colonial America," in David D. Hall, John M. Murrin, and Thad W. Tate, eds., *Saints and Revolutionaries: Essays on Early American History* (New York: W.W. Norton: 1984), 207-244; David D. Hall, *A Reforming People: Puritanism and the Transformation of Public Life in New England* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), 90; J. S. Maloy, *The Colonial American Origins of Modern Democratic Thought* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), esp. 86-170; Robert E. Brown, *Middle-Class Democracy and the Revolution in Massachusetts, 1691-1780* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1955); and Perry Miller, "Hooker and Connecticut Democracy," in *Errand Into the Wilderness* (New York: Harper & Row, 1956), 16-47.

(16) . *The Public Records of Connecticut* (Hartford: Case, Lockwood & Brainard, 1894), 2: 568; Dreisbach and Hall, *Sacred Rights of Conscience*, 83-213; Edmund S. Morgan, *Puritan Political Ideas, 1558-1794* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), xiii-xlvii; T.H. Breen, *The Character of the Good Ruler: A Study of Puritan Political Ideas in New England, 1630-1730* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1970).

(17) . Bruce Frohnen, ed., *American Republic: Primary Sources* (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund Press, 2002), 15-22; Hall, *A Reforming People*, 107, 147-154, and *passim*; *The Laws and Liberties of Massachusetts* (1648; reprint, San Marino, CA: The Huntington Library, 1998), 46, 50.

(18) . John Davenport, "A Sermon Preach'd at The Election of the Governour" (Boston, 1670), 4. See generally Baldwin, *New England Clergy*, 13-21. Similarly, two years earlier Jonathan Mitchel declared in his election sermon that "the Law of Nature, is part of the Eternal Law of God." Mitchel, "Nehemiah on the wall in troublesome times . . ." (Cambridge,

1671), 11. Note that in these examples (and numerous others could be given) indisputably orthodox clergy appealed to “the law of nature” as a source of authority.

(19) . Samuel Nowell, “Abraham in Arms” (Boston, 1678), 10–11; Baldwin, *New England Clergy*; Martha Louise Counts, “The Political Views of the Eighteenth Century New England Clergy as Expressed in Their Election Sermons” (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1956). Some scholars consider any hint of a right of self-preservation to be evidence of the influence of Thomas Hobbes and/or John Locke. However, the right to protect oneself had long been a part of the natural law tradition, and it is clearly present in Reformed works written well before Hobbes’s *Leviathan*.

(20) . Scholars differ as to the origin of the concept of subjective natural rights. John Witte provides a brief overview of this literature in *The Reformation of Rights* and argues persuasively that they were used well before Hobbes and Locke and that early Calvinists contributed significantly to their development. See also Georg Jellinek, *The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of Citizens: A Contribution to Modern Constitutional History*, Max Farrand, trans. (1901; reprint, Westport, CT: Hyperion Press, 1979).

(21) . Francis J. Bremer, “In Defense of Regicide: John Cotton on the Execution of Charles I,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser. 37 (1980), 103–124; John Cotton, *The Keyes to the Kingdom of Heaven . . .* (London, 1644; reprint Boston: Tappan and Dennet, 1843), 97–100; Richard Dunn, *Puritans and Yankees: The Winthrop Dynasty of New England, 1630–1717* (1962; reprint, New York: W.W. Norton, 1971), 30–36, 229–257.

(22) . Barry Alan Shain, *The Myth of American Individualism: The Protestant Origins of American Political Thought* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), esp. 155–288; Hall, *A Reforming People*, 193 and passim; Witte, *Reformation of Rights*, 1–37, 277–319.

(23) . *God of Liberty: A Religious History of the American Revolution* (New York: Basic Books, 2010); Alan Heimert, *Religion and the American Mind: From the Great Awakening to the Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966); Thomas S. Kidd, *The Protestant Interest: New England after Puritanism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press,

2004); Nathan O. Hatch, *The Sacred Cause of Liberty: Republican Thought and the Millennium in Revolutionary New England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1977).

(24) . *Acts and Laws Of His Majesties Colony of Connecticut in New-England* (New London, 1715), 207. For the 1784 version of this statute, see *Acts and Laws of the State of Connecticut, in America* (New London: Timothy Green, 1784), 258. Donald S. Lutz, "The Relative Influence of European Writers on Late Eighteenth-Century American Political Thought," *American Political Science Review* 78 (1984), 189-197, esp. 192-193; Clark, *Language of Liberty*, 26. There are a variety of problems with relying on citations, and accounts of which books were available at what time are woefully incomplete. Responses to arguments denying Locke's availability and influence in colonial America include Zuckert, *Natural Rights and the New Republicanism*, 18-25, and Steven M. Dworetz, *The Unvarnished Doctrine: Locke, Liberalism, and the American Revolution* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990).

(25) . Herbert D. Foster, *Collected Papers of Herbert D. Foster: Historical and Biographical Studies* (Privately Printed, 1929), 77-105.

(26) . Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana* (Hartford: Silas Andrus and Son, 1885), 1: 274; Miller, *The New England Mind*, 1: 93.

(27) . Morrison, *John Witherspoon*, 81; Charles Francis Adams, ed., *The Works of John Adams* (Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1850), 6: 4; John Adams to F.C. Schaeffer, November 25, 1821, in James H. Hutson, *The Founders on Religion: A Book of Quotations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 15-16.

(28) . John Dunn, "The politics of Locke in England and America in the eighteenth century," in John Yolton, ed., *John Locke: Problems and Perspectives: A collection of new essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 45-80, see esp. 69-71; Gary Scott Smith, "Samuel Adams: America's Puritan Revolutionary," in Dreisbach, Hall, and Morrison, *Forgotten Founders*, 40-64; Ira Stoll, *Samuel Adams: A Life* (New York: Free Press, 2008), 23; *The Writings of Samuel Adams*, Harry Alonzo Cushing, ed. (New York: G.P. Putnam's

Sons, 1904), 1: 201-212; James B. Bell, *A War of Religion: Dissenters, Anglicans, and the American Revolution* (Houndmills, UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), 100-101; Max Farrand, ed., *The Records of the Federal Convention of 1787* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1911), 1: 438.

(29) . William Warren Sweet, "The American Colonial Environment and Religious Liberty," *Church History* 4 (March 1935), 43-56; Finke and Stark, *The Churching of America, 1776-1990*, 15, 27; Isaac Kramnick and R. Laurence Moore, *The Godless Constitution: The Case Against Religious Correctness* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1996), 17.

(30) . James H. Hutson, "The Christian Nation Question," in James H. Hutson, *Forgotten Features of the Founding: The Recovery of Religious Themes in the Early American Republic* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2003), 111-132. Scholars who argue for a lack of religiosity among Americans in the founding era are often led astray by laments about the lack of denominational commitments among Americans or jeremiads decrying what was perceived to be insufficient attention to religious and moral concerns. The point applies with equal force to claims by Calvinists that other ministers, university professors, or parishioners were embracing "Arminianism" or "Arianism." Of course some of these laments were accurate, but often they were overstated. For further discussion, see Patricia Bonomi, *Under the Cope of Heaven: Religion, Society, and Politics in Colonial America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 1-127.

(31) . Hutson, "The Christian Nation Question," 118. Hutson also provides an excellent critique of historian Jon Butler's work, which purports to build upon and offer additional evidence for Finke and Stark's figures (120-125). See Jon Butler, "Why Revolutionary America Wasn't a 'Christian Nation,'" in James H. Hutson, ed., *Religion and the New Republic* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), 187-202, and *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990).

(32) . Patricia U. Bonomi and Peter R. Eisenstadt, "Church Adherence in the Eighteenth-Century British Colonies," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 39 (April 1982), 275.

(33) . Finke and Stark, *Churching of America*, 29; Bruce C. Daniels, *The Connecticut Town: Growth and Development, 1635-1790* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1979), 104 and passim.

(34) . Finke and Stark, *Churching of America*, 45; Mary Latimer Gambrell, *Ministerial Training in Eighteenth-Century New England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1937); Stout, "Preaching the Insurrection," 12. James Cooper notes that Congregational "ministers frequently addressed questions of church government in their sermons," which is significant as there are important similarities between Reformed approaches to ecclesiastical and civic government. Cooper, *The Tenaciousness of the Their Liberties*, 31.

(35) . Finke and Stark, *Churching of America*, 29; David Hackett Fisher, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 431, 606, 608; Howard Miller, "The Grammar of Liberty: Presbyterians and the First American Constitutions," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 54 (1976), 151-152; Clark, *The Language of Liberty*, 351-363.

(36) . Carl Bridenbaugh, *Mitre and Sceptre: Transatlantic Faiths, Ideas, Personalities, and Politics: 1689-1775* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), 207-287, 256; Frohnen, *American Republic*, 110; Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Republic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), 95-96; Heimert, *Religion and the American Mind*, 351-352.

(37) . Kidd, *The Protestant Interest*, passim, and *God of Liberty*, esp. 67-74; Samuel Sherwood, "The Church's Flight into the Wilderness . . ." (1776), in Ellis Sandoz, *Political Sermons of the American Founding Era, 1730-1805*, 2nd ed. (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund Press, 1998), 1: 514; Martin I. J. Griffin, ed., *Catholics and the American Revolution* (Rideley Park: self-published, 1907), 1: 1-40; 3: 384-392.

(38) . See especially Zuckert, *Natural Rights Republic*, 76, 141, and Alan Dershowitz's *Blasphemy: How the Religious Right is Hijacking Our Declaration of Independence* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2007).

(39) . *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789*, Worthington C. Ford et al., eds. (Washington, DC, 1904-37), 1: 33-35 [hereinafter *JCC*].

(40) . Adams, ed., *Works of John Adams*, 2: 16; *JCC*, 1: 68-70, 72.

(41) . *JCC*, 1: 83, 87-88.

(42) . Adrienne Koch and William Peden, eds., *Life and Selected Writings of Thomas Jefferson* (New York: Random House, 1993), 24.

(43) . Thomas Jefferson to Henry Lee, May 8, 1825, in *ibid.*, 656-657; Zuckert, *Natural Rights Republic*, 76, 141. Of course some of the founders listed above (and in the following lists) were better Calvinists than others—for example, John Adams was a lifelong Congregationalist, but privately he came to embrace Unitarian theology. On the other hand, he specifically claimed to be heavily influenced by Reformed political theory (*supra*, 21). As well, some joined other denominations later in life (e.g., Wilson eventually became an Anglican). I have compiled each list of Reformed founders myself, but where possible I cite a printed account of the denominational affiliation of the founders. William Stevens Perry, "The Faith of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence," *Magazine of History* (1926), 215-237.

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(51) . Mark David Hall, "Jeffersonian Walls and Madisonian Lines: The Supreme Court's Use of History in Religion Clause Cases," *Oregon Law Review* 85 (2006): 568-569. Of course Reformed Christians often opposed established churches if their churches were not established, but even then they seldom supported a strict separation between church and

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(52) . Dreisbach and Hall, *Sacred Rights of Conscience*. 426-433, 441-487; Hall, *Roger Sherman and the Creation of the American Republic*, chapter 6; Charlene Bangs Bickford et al., eds., *Documentary History of the First Federal Congress* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 11: 1500-1501.