



Principle Approach Education

PRINCIPLE APPROACH[®] HISTORY CURRICULUM

by James & Barbara Kilkenny

EDITOR'S NOTE: This article offers a curriculum unit for Principle Approach education which builds the subject in the context of providential history—upon the Biblical principles of education and government, and in the model lesson, identifies Christian scholarship through the life of an individual who contributed to this area of knowledge by his own character. A model lesson and application of the material for the teacher's use is included at the end of the article.

Now there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel: for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make them sword or spears: But all the Israelites went down to the Philistines, to sharpen every man his share, and his coulter, and his axe, and his mattock . . . So it came to pass in the day of battle, that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people.

I Samuel 13:19–20, 22

EDUCATION

In the time of Samuel, God's people had neither blacksmiths nor weapons because they sent their tools to the Philistines for sharpening. Today we send our children to *secular* schools to sharpen their skills for life. 'Could we be disarming ourselves just as the Israelites of Samuel's day did? In the day of battle, will our children, having neither sword nor spear, be spoiled educationally "through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ?" [Colossians 2:8]

The comparison of *secular schools* to *Philistine blacksmiths* may at first seem extreme, but the definition of the word *secular* suggests the validity of the analogy:

secular, [. . . from *seculum*, the world . . .] 1. Pertaining to this present world, or to things not spiritual or holy; relating to things not immediately or primarily respecting the soul, but the body; worldly.¹

The Webster's New World Dictionary (Second College Edition) defines the noun form of *secular* in a way that also confirms the analogy:

secularism . . . 1. worldly spirit, views or the like; esp., a system of doctrine and practices that disregards or rejects any form of religious faith and worship. 2. the belief that



religion and ecclesiastical affairs should not enter into the functions of the state, esp. into public education.

The word *secular* comes from the Latin word for *world* and its connotation is *without reference to God or to either spiritual or religious aspects*. So we speak of secular institutions, secular governments, secular education, etc. As regards education, the implication is that, from a secular view, every subject of study (i.e., every “aspect of the universe”) must be considered without reference to the Creator of the universe, or to His purposes for these subjects, or to His loving, intimate involvement throughout all time, preserving, blessing and bringing forth truth in each subject. By omitting God, secular education undermines the faith of children because it divorces each subject from its source and origin, end and purpose, in God.

HISTORY

The secularization of *history* most endangers faith because secular history attempts to portray the story of man without God. Failing to give recognition and gratitude to God for all human progress, it fosters both pride and ingratitude in the hearts of the learners. (See Deuteronomy, Chapters 6 through 11, which deal with education.) Chapter 8, verse 14 warns:

Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage;

Verse 17:

And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth.

These verses are clear statements of the danger of pride and ingratitude. Verse 18 identifies the cure:

But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he stsure unto thy fathers.

SECULAR HISTORY CURRICULUM CONTRASTED WITH CHRISTIAN

History is “An account of facts, particularly of facts respecting nations or states; a narration of events in the order in which they happened, *with their causes and effects*.” [Webster’s 1828 *American Dictionary*] A secular history curriculum, because it must omit God, can identify only secondary causes for the events of history. A Christian history curriculum identifies God as the first cause for He is the Creator of the universe; He maintains control of the direction and purpose of history; and He maintains a Providential care over His creation. Noah Webster’s definition of *Providence* eloquently expresses the Christian reasoning:

Providence, . . . 3 . . . the care and superintendence which God exercises over his creatures. He that acknowledges a creation and denies a providence, involves himself in a palpable



contradiction; for the same power which caused a thing to exist is necessary to continue its existence. Some persons admit a *general providence*, but deny a *particular providence*, not considering that a *general providence* consists of *particulars*. A belief in divine providence, is a source of great consolation to good men. By *divine providence* is often understood God himself. [1828 *American Dictionary*]

What determines whether a history is secular or Christian? It is Christian when it identifies Christ as the origin of history and as the One who “maintains the identity and individuality of every thing which He created.”² It is secular when it does not reveal God’s over-ruling Providence and tell His-story. Because secular education considers everything in the world (i.e., its curriculum) without considering the relationship of the world to its Creator and Maintainer, it can never consider first causes and, consequently, is incapable of teaching any convincing basis for value or morality. One might say that the only thing wrong with secular education is that it is secular.

HOW TO IDENTIFY GOD’S PURPOSE IN HISTORY

Christian history curriculum begins with creation; for example, the first sentence of Noah Webster’s *History of the United States*³ is, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” This opening identifies God as the first cause of history. The words, “Let us make men in our image, after our likeness,” identify relationship with God as the purpose of man’s creation, because quality of relationship is proportional to “likeness” of nature and character. Therefore God’s purpose in history is to perfect the relationship between God and man and between man and man.

Man’s created nature is like God’s nature in many ways: God will exist for all eternity; when the individual human personality comes into existence upon its creation it will continue to exist for all eternity; God has abilities of reason, will and emotion; man possesses an infinitely small reflection of God’s abilities of reason, will and emotion, yet these enable man to have a personal relationship with the Creator. Therefore, the relationship between God and man is that of Creator and creature.

God’s character is loving, wise, kind, etc. Although man’s ability of reason obligates him to form his own character after God’s, his ability of will enables him to become either loving, wise and kind like God (if he chooses truth)—or hateful, foolish and cruel like Satan (if he chooses wickedness). If he chooses wickedness, he exalts his own limited intelligence above God’s infinite intelligence. Adam and Eve allowed the serpent to deceive them into foolishly believing that they would become “as gods, knowing good and evil.” Man began the degenerative process of forming ungodly character and destroying his own opportunity for relationship with God, yet God continued to love him. In these words addressed to the serpent, He declared His purpose to send a Redeemer: “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” This statement is God’s declaration of war on Satan, sin and death and against all that enslaves man. History cannot be understood except in the light of this declaration. The Life, Death and Resurrection of



Jesus is therefore the *focal point of all history*. Jesus became the living demonstration of GOD'S PURPOSE IN HISTORY. He is The Truth, and He declared "*Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*" [John 8:32] Jesus here identifies His intent for mankind to live in liberty. John Quincy Adams perceived that Liberty is the fruit of Truth through Jesus Christ when he identified the source and origin of American liberty in these words:

"Is it not that, in the chain of human events, the birthday of the nation is indissolubly linked with the birth-day of the Saviour?"⁴

Before the first sin had been committed, God had declared the value of relationship between equals: "And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." He had also identified the relationship between man and the earth: "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."

From this account one can conclude that God's purpose in history is relationship with man, and, because man's ability for relationship was damaged by the entrance of sin into the world, His purpose became the restoration of individual ability for relationship with God, with one another, and with the earth. Here we see the fundamental fallacy of secular history. It omits the very truth which all of history is to reveal. What follows are *secular religion, secular government, secular education, secular ecology, etc.*, with their futile attempts at restoration without the direction of God; but man cannot succeed without God. He must submit his broken relationships and his broken world to God just as one would send a broken computer to the manufacturer for repair.

LIBERTY: THE THEME OF HISTORY

Jesus Christ is the measure of God's historical purpose of redemption and restoration of the individual. He said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." [Matthew 11:28] These are words of invitation and presume the ability of the hearer to accept or to refuse. This ability, which is an element of liberty, is a constant theme which graces both the Old and the New Testaments. The theme of liberty is seen in the following prophecy which foretells the coming of Jesus and He reaffirmed His purpose by quoting the prophecy with the explanation, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." [Luke 4:21]

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. [Luke 4:18-19]

Indeed, a study of both the words and the work of Jesus shows that He never forsook His purpose to bring liberty for relationship with God and with others, "To bring liberty to the individual, both internal and external."



The historian Dr. Augustus Neander in *Memorials of a Christian Life* described first century Christians who walked in unyielding internal liberty through the power of Jesus Christ. These are his words:

This divine power of the gospel revealed itself to the heathen in the lives of Christians, which showed forth the virtues of Him who had called them out of darkness into his marvellous light, and enabled them to walk as the children of God, in the midst of a perverse generation, among whom they shone as lights in the world! . . . The whole life of the Christian, from the beginning to the end, is a conflict with the world and the powers of darkness, a conflict within and without. [*Teaching and Learning*, p. 123]

His description portrays Christians who understood *liberty of conscience* and whose commitment to that liberty caused their lives to shine in a dark world. They understood not only *God's purpose*, but also *God's method* for bringing forth that purpose, both internally and externally. Neander continues:

Again, Christianity, from its nature, must pronounce sentence of condemnation against all ungodliness, but at the same time appropriate to itself all purely human relations and arrangements, consecrating and ennobling, instead of annihilating them . . . That religion which aimed nowhere to produce violent and convulsive changes from without, but led to reforms by beginning in the first place within,—whose peculiar character it was to operate positively rather than negatively,—to displace and destroy no faster than it substituted something better.

But Christianity brought about that change in the consciousness of humanity, from which a dissolution of this whole relation [slavery], though it could not be immediately effected, yet by virtue of the consequences resulting from that change, must eventually take place. This effect Christianity produced, first by the facts of which it was a witness; and next by the ideas which, by occasion of these facts, it set in circulation. By Christ, the Saviour, belonging to all mankind, the antagonisms among men resulting from sin were annulled; by him the original oneness was restored. These facts must now continue to operate in transforming the life of mankind.

Yet Christianity nowhere began with outward revolutions and changes, which, in all cases where they have not been prepared from within, and are not based upon conviction, fail of their salutary ends. The new creation to which Christianity gave birth, was in all respects an inward one, from which the outward effects gradually and therefore more surely and healthfully, unfolded themselves to their full extent. It gave servants first the true, inward freedom, without which the outward and earthly freedom is a mere show, and which, wherever it exists, can be cramped by no earthly bond, no earthly yoke. The apostle Paul says, “He that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord’s freeman.” [Augustus Neander, “General History of the Christian Religion and Church,” in *Teaching and Learning*, pp. 213-214]



WHY TEACH PROVIDENTIAL HISTORY?

A Christian history curriculum is therefore one which traces the mighty Hand of God bringing forth liberty for the individual, both internal and external, through men, events, and nations, from creation to the present.

A powerful warning against failing to teach such a curriculum is given by Rev. A. W. Foljambe, January 5, 1876:

The more thoroughly a nation deals with its history, the more decidedly will it recognize and own an over-ruling Providence therein, and the more religious a nation will it become; while the more superficially it deals with its history, seeing only secondary causes and human agencies, the more irreligious will it be. [*Christian History*, p. 1A]

The tragic truth of the cause-effect relationship described by Foljambe is illustrated in Judges 2:10–13:

. . . and there arose another generation . . . which knew not the LoRD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in sight of the LORD, and served Baalim: And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, . . . And they forsook the LORD, and served Baal and Ashtaroth.

In order to avert this terrible effect, Christians must both teach and learn a Christian history curriculum, which might be called, A Providential View of History.

PROVIDENTIAL HISTORY AND “CONSENT”

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name. [John 1:12]

The Providential View, reasoning from Scripture, identifies consent as an essential element not only of relationship with God but also of all Godly relationships in society. (The theological word for a contingent relationship based upon consent is *covenant*.) Forced marriages are ungodly; forced church memberships are ungodly; forced economic transactions are ungodly; forced governments are ungodly. In fact, any such contract is not binding or recognized as legitimate. Evidence of force in marriage is grounds for annulment, and the same principle applies to all institutions. Regarding civil government the statement, “No taxation without representation,” implies the invalidity of government by force. Therefore the existence of nations whose institutions are free is evidence of the Hand of God in history. Benjamin Franklin expressed his understanding of this truth in the statement, “Resistance to tyranny is obedience to God.”



“If Sinners Entice Thee, Consent Thou Not”

Although consent is an essential measurement of liberty, consent to evil will destroy both individual and national liberty. Proverbs 1:10 warns: “If sinners entice thee, consent thou not.” So the consent that characterizes a Godly nation is consent to righteousness. Joshua warned his nation against consenting to evil in these words:

And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, *choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.* [Joshua 24:15]

Mankind, when denied truth, fall into the snare of consenting to evil through deception. Therefore they must be taught not only facts, but also their causes and effects, and God’s purpose for them. Romans 12:2 warns, “. . . be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” This enlightenment of the mind in every aspect of life characterizes a Providential view of history.

HOW TO TEACH PROVIDENTIAL HISTORY

David Gregg in his sermon “Makers of the American Republic” explained the principle like this:

The church, in teaching American citizens begins with God. The first essential is to get into right relation with God, to get His law . . . incorporated in the life. Institutions must harmonize with His will, and so must rulers, and so must voters. [*Teaching and Learning*, p. 41]

Steeped as he is in secular philosophy of history, how is the Twentieth Century teacher to teach and learn a Providential View of History? He must focus all of his efforts on God’s role in history and on man’s response. Providential History is an account of the events in God’s war against sin and death. Concerning these events, Noah Webster asks, “What is the history of nations but a narrative of the follies, crimes and miseries; a narration of the works of God bringing redemption, resurrection, and liberty?” God’s work must be the focus of the Twentieth Century teacher.

By analogy, if one is to understand the technology which produced a Stradivarius violin, he must first know that the purpose of this technology was to make instruments capable of producing certain tones. This purpose governed the choice of wood, glue, lacquer, etc., as well as design and tools. The maker must have been intimately familiar with the tones that he was working to produce. Just so, the teacher of history must be intimately familiar with God’s purpose in Creation and in all of history before he can produce students characterized by faith, knowledge of God, hope, courage, wisdom, diligence, etc. This great theme, played in endless variations, at times in different keys, in different voices, instruments, tempos, etc., will bring forth a symphony of praise to God, our Maker.



PSALM 78

Psalm 78 describes the theme of Providential history, the reason for teaching it, the consequence of teaching that theme and the consequence of failure to teach it.

The Theme Of Providential History

⁴ . . . showing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and *his wonderful works* that he hath done.

The Reason For Teaching This Theme

⁶ That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children.

The Consequence Of Teaching The Theme

⁷ That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments.

The Consequence Of Failure To Teach It

⁸ And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not steadfast with God.

Verses 9 to 11 of this Psalm provide an illustration of the consequence of failure to teach history as the works of God:

⁹ The children of Ephraim, being armed, and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle. ¹⁰ They kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in his law; ¹¹ And forgot his works, and his wonders that he had shown them.

These *Children of Ephraim* were guilty of the worst cowardice—desertion in the face of the enemy. They were armed and prepared for battle, but they lacked courage because they lacked the only sufficient, intelligent reason for courage: faith in God, and “faith cometh by hearing.” [Romans 10:17] They had not heard, so they “turned back in the day of battle, [and] kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in his law . . .” By contrast, young David, in the midst of a faithless and cowardly generation, showed a very different character when he faced Goliath. He remembered the works of God and he had faith not in his own ability, but in the Lord who had delivered him. This faith was courage to him. He said:

The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear,
he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine.” [I Samuel 17:37]



Scripture is full of such examples of courage. In each example, courage is built on faith, and faith is built upon hearing the wonderful works of God. Teaching Providential History is the way to produce a generation of Davids and Esthers.

CONCLUSION

Providential History is the evidence of God's unfailing love for His creation. As Christian teachers of history we must accept the responsibility of inspiring our students with the inescapable conclusion of this evidence; that God loves each of us just as He has loved every individual and every nation, throughout all time, ". . . for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." [Hebrews 13:5–6]

RESOURCES FOR LEARNING A PROVIDENTIAL VIEW OF HISTORY

The best resources for help in learning a Providential View of History are the publications of the Foundation for American Christian Education (F.A.C.E.). Each year, after completing their study of *Christian History* and *Teaching and Learning*, the teacher-training students at Christian Heritage School do a project to express the advancement of liberty accomplished by each of the links on Christianity's chain as identified by Miss Rosalie J. Slater [*Teaching and Learning*, pp. 115, *et seq.*]. Some write children's books, some ballads, some poems, some television documentaries, some illustrated time lines, etc.

Following is a poem written by Miss Monica Schumann for this assignment. The reader may want to open *Teaching and Learning* to page 115 and follow from stanza to stanza as Miss Schumann expands upon the links suggested there by Miss Slater.

DEL MAGNUM OPUS LIBERTATIS

by Monica Schumann

Hearken, and I will set down for posterity
 Almighty God's purpose in history,
 And trace what He did in nations and men
 To bring about freedom, without and within,
 Salvation through Christ and true liberty.

God's most precious creation, the individual man,
 He made uniquely for His sovereign plan
 To love his Creator with all of his heart
 Then by this great love, himself he would govern
 In his actions with others, thus showing he's smart;
 The free man, the "dread and redoubtable sovereign."



Through the fall of man, it seems that he missed
That all were created equal in value and worth.
“Men are naturally unequal,” pagan man would insist,
“And some men are better, indeed, from their birth.”

Thus the state was above those it should serve
And the monarchs who ruled were sure they deserved
Unquestioned obedience, with no guarantee
To those who submitted, they’d have prosperity.

But actually, in truth, man ought to rule himself best
In affairs which alone are his own interest;
For God has bestowed enough reason on each
To direct his own life, by his own sovereign will.
This is local self-government, which eventually would reach
This land through the Pilgrims, God’s plan to fulfill.

Now the English found a method of making a nation
Containing the principle of representation
With a chosen assembly to speak for the folk
Who had given consent to these when they spoke
To transact what they could not transact on their own
Authority given, and liberty known.

But centuries would pass before this would occur;
The process would actually create quite a stir.
God had created the world with His plan in mind
The continents formed, and very defined
To fit each for a purpose that related to man
The geography consciously shaped by His hand.

Of the “continents of history” there are especially three
That stand out in the advancement of man’s liberty;
In Asia, it was, where mankind was born
Then on into Europe developed, performed,
Until, in America, he would fully express
Christian civilization that all men would bless.

In this special land, His Kingdom would bloom
Where the people were free, with plenty of room
To pursue all that they could, to be all they could be,
Protected from the wicked, and old tyranny
By division of powers and the governed’s consent
Dependent on virtue, and self-government.



Now let us look back, see how all this was wrought
Through Christianity itself this freedom was brought
From the east to the west, like links on a chain
Individuals and nations through struggle and strain
Waited until Christ's salvation brought them the seed
Of all that was needed for them to be freed.

First the law was given "in tables of stone"
To the people of God, through Moses alone.
These commandments it turns out, are the basis for law
In many societies, without even one flaw.
The law was a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ,
Who atoned for our sin, through His one sacrifice.

This gospel would, "in fleshly tables of the heart,"
Set men free inwardly, and this was a start
To the mission of God, all men to redeem
Back to Himself and His original dream
That men would be free in time and eternity;
This would happen through Christ, the focus of all history.

God was careful to plan just when Christ was conceived;
Preparing the world His Lamb to receive.
The Jews were the masters in religious affairs,
So the promised Messiah it seemed was all theirs.

But the Greeks gave their efforts in the things of the mind
And especially in language which was very refined.
This tongue was expressive, thus in matters divine
It excelled and became the one to define.

The Romans were ruling the world with such force
That the people were groaning with pain and remorse,
Crying out for a Consoler, "Come free us at last,"
From Caesar came laws, for this empire, so vast.

They also built roads, in that time, unsurpassed
Which allowed for the Gospel to travel quite fast.
So Christ came, He died, and rose from the dead
And the church was established, the great light was shed.

But the church seemed to lose its way in the dark
"Til the "morning star" rose and created a spark.
Changing Latin to English, John Wycliffe began
To see the Bible delivered to the heart of each man.



The access to Scripture, its supreme authority
Has been crucial in moving man to liberty.
Martin Luther knew this, gave the Germans the Word
In the language they spoke. Then his conscience was heard
As he challenged the pope and said, "Here I stand,"
Convinced that the Scriptures were for all to understand.

John Calvin went further, "Truth affects society;"
The freedom it brings is not just for piety.
The Bible applies to the civil law, too;
It ought people, churches and cities renew.

Tyndale's English translation caused many a strife.
He fled his dear land, yet still lost his life.
Prayers of this martyr were fulfilled through King James
Since the Authorized Version is mostly the same
As what Tyndale had written eight decades before:
The impact of this work will remain evermore.

Back before all the work on the Scriptures began
God was working as well on the laws of the land.
On the 15th of June in the year 1215
At Runnymede, twenty-five barons convened
Who had written the Magna Charta, thus limiting
The power of John Lackland, the rights of the King.

The rights of the subjects came clear in view
When the English Bill of Rights was said to be true.
It protected the rights of each person by law
And gave Parliament power as it oversaw
How the monarch would rule by the law of the land.
So, freedom marched on in the old fatherland.

The divine right of kings was a doctrine quite strong
"Til Locke wrote his treatise and proved it was wrong.
The preservation of property is the role of government
And it always is based on the people's consent.
That's why he is honored for his contribution
As the Philosopher of the American Revolution.

Another link yet, was Charles de Montesquieu;
He wrote the "Spirit of Laws" on what laws ought to do.
The power must be separate for freedom to live;
Judicial, legislative and executive.



Blackstone's "Commentaries of Laws" would eventually call
The law of the land to be equal for all,
For throughout the earth when men's laws are made,
The Maker's will must be matched before laws are obeyed.

Before these books were written, God had moved groups of men
To the American continent to settle, and when
In 1607 in Jamestown they arrived,
It was very precarious; they barely survived.
These Englishmen brought the seed of representation
Their rights and traditions to this new location.

Some years later, the Pilgrims attempted to land
In Jamestown, on the Mayflower, but instead found the sand
Of Plymouth, which we now see was God's sovereign hand.
They sought liberty of conscience, this tenacious small band
Of Christians, whose faith by their lives was confirmed;
"Reform without tarrying for any" they affirmed.

"We can only be free, through the cross, from our sin
And govern, through Christ, ourselves from within."
Before they stepped onto the shore from the boat
On November 11th, the Compact they wrote.
'Twas a covenant signed with each one's consent;
A first in America, Christian self-government.

Then the colonists in 1776 would declare
Their independence from Britain, for they knew where
The rights of the people were continually rejected
They and their property would be unprotected.

Thus King George forfeited his right to reign;
For them to submit to tyranny was insane.
So the people united and took up their arms
From the northern cities and the southern farms
To defend what was rightfully theirs, this they knew,
For the seed had been planted, so the liberty grew.

So you see, Christianity made its way to this nation
And through it the freedom that came through salvation.
Thus, external liberty comes from this source,
Under God it is love that will rule, not force.



MODEL HISTORY LESSON

(NOTE: Lesson Plan for three sessions in a high school schedule.)

LESSON TITLE: THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

BIBLICAL REFERENCES: Romans 13:1-8:

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

LEADING IDEA: A One-Hundred-Year Spiritual and Governmental Debate

GOALS:

1. To demonstrate the hand of God in America's History as He moved to establish America as an independent nation.
2. To understand and appreciate God's Providential preparation of individuals like Thomas Jefferson as the chief architect of the Declaration, and John Adams as an eloquent proponent, etc.; to acquaint students with and encourage them to learn the great oratory of our Founders.
3. To gain a knowledge of the basic philosophy of America's Christian government.
4. To gain a better understanding of the application of the Seventh Principle of America's Christian History and Government: The Christian Principle of American Political Union.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

1. Each student and teacher needs a Bible, and copies of *The Christian History of the Constitution of the United States of America: Christian Self-Government and Teaching and Learning America's Christian History: The Principle Approach*^{*}.
2. A picture of the signing of the Declaration of Independence is helpful but not necessary.
3. The teacher should have a copy of *A Guide to American Christian Education for the Home and School: The Principle Approach* by James Rose, A.C.H.I. On page 321, Miss Katherine Dang gives an excellent example of how the Seven Principles of America's History and Government may be identified in a key document. (See suggested homework assignment below.)
4. Other suggested materials: *They Signed for Us* by Merle Sinclair and Anabel Douglas McArthur, Durell, Sloan and Pearce: New York (1957); also biographical selections and documents illustrating Christian scholarship through the lives of individuals who contributed to the Declaration.

SESSION I: BACKGROUND AND SETTING from *Teaching and Learning*—Why the Colonists separated from the mother country.

1. The Biblical basis of God's purpose for magistrates in government is found in Romans 13:1–8. In



this passage on subjection to magistrates, what are the major points which God makes through His Word? See especially verses 1,2,3 and 4.

2. “One-hundred-year spiritual and governmental debate.” Read in *Teaching and Learning*, pages 180–183. Were the Colonists rebellious when they decided to dissolve “the Political Bands” which connected them to the mother country? In what sense were our American Colonists “revolutionary?” Why was it important that not just Congress, but each state legislature, should vote on the decision to form a new nation under God?
3. The book *They Signed for Us* by Sinclair and McArthur, teaches us how much these “signers” suffered for their courage.
4. See Editor’s Supplement on pages 30–32: “Jefferson Writes the Declaration of Independence;” “John Adams’ Oration for the Declaration of Independence: *Survive or Perish*.”

SESSION II: BACKGROUND from *Christian History*—Read together in class, *Christian History*, pp. 347–360. Ponder and discuss the following questions, as time allows:

1. By whom and how was American independence from England decided?
2. What are the purposes given for our independence?
3. Upon what key idea was the Declaration of Independence established? Describe and discuss.
4. What kind of government was being urged by the popular leaders? Point out its internal and external aspects.
5. What character qualities (or qualities of virtue) were needed both to educate the people and to practice independence? Are these relevant for today? Why?
6. Why would it be important to examine the process and procedures for the movement of independence in each colony? What principle of America’s Christian history and government do these demonstrate? (7th Principle)

NOTE: One or more of these questions may be assigned for homework.

SESSION III: THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE—Read the text together in class from *Christian History*, p. 346B. This document has four main parts. As you read it together, draw out the following material by asking leading questions.

- A. The first paragraph is the Preamble, which states the reasons for the document itself. What are these reasons?
- B. Second paragraph states the points of America’s philosophy of government:
 1. All men are created equal.
 2. They are endowed by God with the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness. Discuss the meaning of “inalienable.”



3. The purpose of government is to secure these rights. Is this a Christian or pagan idea of government? Discuss.
 4. Whenever existing government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the people's right to change or abolish it and to create a new government whose principles and organization will secure these rights. If there is time, you may discuss this point in light of Romans 13:1–4 and apply it to existing American governmental practice today.
- C. Third paragraph enumerates the reasons for separation from England. Were these righteous in light of Romans 13:1–4?
- D. The last paragraph demonstrates the covenantal aspect of the Declaration. What is a covenant? Who are the parties involved here? What principle of America's Christian history does this illustrate? (5th Principle)
1. Appeal to God as supreme Judge of the righteousness of their intentions and as Divine Providence for support (vertical relationship).
 2. Mutual pledging of their lives, fortunes and sacred honor to carry out this philosophy (horizontal relationship).

CONCLUSION:

1. What is the importance of the Declaration of Independence for Americans? (It is that it provides a written statement of America's philosophy of government.)
2. What is the evidence of the hand of God in the writing and the timing of this document? (It illustrates God's preparation of key individuals to carry out His purpose in history. It demonstrates realistically the faith of the framers of the Declaration in the power and Providence of God and in the practical application to civil government of the principles of His Word. It also demonstrates the ability of those who were not sure they agreed with the idea of independence at first, to reason Biblically from the same principles as did their leaders and reach the same conclusions and convictions.)
3. How does the process of this reasoning, colony by colony, demonstrate the American Christian principle of political union?

Suggested Assignment: Assuming that the students are familiar with the seven principles of America's Christian history and government (cf *Teaching and Learning*, pp. 113ff), have them research the Declaration of Independence for evidence of these principles. Have them write exact quotes from the document, and next to these quotes, the principle(s) they demonstrate. (cf. *Guide*, p. 321, as an example of how this may be done)



EDITOR'S SUPPLEMENT

JEFFERSON WRITES THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

When Richard Henry Lee presented his famous resolutions in Congress that the “delegates from Virginia” should “declare that these United colonies are & of right ought to be free & independent states, that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British crown,” a committee was appointed to write such a document. As one writer indicates: “. . . it was inevitable that a Virginian should be appointed to the committee and, despite his youth, Jefferson was a natural choice.” [Dumas Malone, *Jefferson: the Virginian*, p. 219,220]

In the seventeen days between June 11, 1776, when the committee was appointed, and June 24, when they reported to Congress, Jefferson labored at his draft “Years later Jefferson recalled that he consulted ‘neither book nor pamphlet’ He had no desire to find out ‘new principles or new arguments never before thought of.’ His purpose was to ‘place before mankind the common sense of the subject in terms so plain and firm as to command their assent’ . . . The declaration ‘was intended to be an expression of the American mind and to give to that expression the proper tone and spirit called for by the occasion.’” [Thomas Fleming, *The Man from Monticello: An Intimate Lift of Thomas Jefferson*, William Morrow and Company, Inc., New York (1969), p. 53]

Can't we, in our mind's eye, just see the earnest, red-haired, scholar-lawyer, with his self-designed, “portable desk” which Jefferson described as “plain, neat, convenient and taking no more room on the writing table than a moderate quarto volume,” laboring over what was to become our nation's most important and eloquent document of freedom? Because of his deep commitment to human freedom, and his passionate loathing of slavery, Jefferson included a clause to remove slavery, which later Congress wrenched out. He also had to endure the editing of both Benjamin Franklin and his fellow delegates in Congress. But when all was said and done, Jefferson had incorporated into the document the deepest sentiments on human rights, to which both Englishmen and Americans had lent their reason, and which were to continue to inspire mankind for centuries as they labored to establish the Christian idea of man in government.

JOHN ADAMS' ORATION FOR THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

In a climactic moment, John Adams made his greatest and most eloquent speech, “Survive or Perish.” Even the Heavens seemed to join in the seriousness of the occasion, for the “smiling summer sky above the State House had slowly changed to an ominous black. Thunder rumbled and crashed, shaking the windows, lightning streaked the gloom.” [Fleming, p. 19] As the candles on the tables flickered, the voice of John Adams outroared the storm:

Sink or swim, live or die, survive or perish, I give my hand and my heart to this vote.

It is true, indeed, that in the beginning we aimed not at independence. But there's a Divinity which shapes our ends. The injustice of England has driven us to arms; and,



blinded to her own interest for our good, she has obstinately persisted, till independence is now within our grasp. We have but to reach forth to it, and it is ours. Why, then, should we defer the Declaration? Is any man so weak as now to hope for a reconciliation with England, which shall leave either safety to the country and its liberties, or safety to his own life and his own honor?

The war, then, must go on. We must fight it through. And if the war must go on, why put off longer the Declaration of Independence? That measure will strengthen us. It will give us character abroad. The nations will then treat with us, which they never can do while we acknowledge ourselves subjects, in arms against our sovereign.

Sir, the Declaration will inspire the people with increased courage. Instead of a long and bloody war for the restoration of privileges, for redress of grievances, for chartered immunities, held under a British king, set before them the glorious object of entire independence, and it will breathe into them anew the breath of life. Read this Declaration at the head of the army; every sword will be drawn from its scabbard, and the solemn vow uttered, to maintain it, or to perish on the bed of honor. Publish it from the pulpit; religion will approve it, and the love of religious liberty will cling round it, resolved to stand with it, or fall with it. Send it to the public halls; proclaim it there; let them hear it who heard the first roar of the enemy's cannon; let them see it who saw their brothers and their sons fall on the field of Bunker Hill, and in the streets of Lexington and Concord, and the very walls will cry out in its support.

Sir, I know the uncertainty of human affairs, but I see, I see clearly, through this day's business. You and I, indeed, may rue it. We may not live to the time when this Declaration shall be made good. We may die; die colonists; die slaves; die, it may be, ignominiously and on the scaffold. Be it so. Be it so. If it be the pleasure of Heaven that my country shall require the poor offering of my life, the victim shall be ready, at the appointed hour of sacrifice, come when that hour may. But while I do live, let me have a country, or at least the hope of a country, and that a free country.

But whatever may be our fate, be assured, be assured that this Declaration will stand. It may cost treasure, and it may cost blood; but it will stand, and it will richly compensate for both. Through the thick gloom of the present, I see the brightness of the future, as the sun in heaven. We shall make this a glorious, an immortal day. When we are in our graves, our children will honor it. They will celebrate it with thanksgiving, with festivity, with bonfires, and illuminations. On its annual return they will shed tears, copious, gushing tears, not of subjection and slavery, not of agony and distress, but of exultation, of gratitude, and of joy. Sir, before God, I believe the hour is come. My judgment approves this measure, and my whole heart is in it. All that I have, and all that I am, and all that I hope, in this life, I am now ready here to stake upon it; and I leave



off as I begun, that live or die, survive or perish, I am for the Declaration. It is my living sentiment, and by the blessing of God it shall be my dying sentiment, Independence, now, and INDEPENDENCE FOR EVER.

[As paraphrased from quotes and the known arguments of Adams by Daniel Webster in “A Discourse in Commemoration of the Lives and Services of John Adams and Thomas Jefferson,” delivered in Faneuil Hall, Boston, on the 2d of August, 1826; published in *The Works of Daniel Webster*, Volume I, Charles C. Little and James Brown, Boston (1851), pp. 133–136]

July 2, 1776 was the date of the vote for independence, as John Adams wrote to his wife Abigail, the day which would be “the most memorable epoch in the history of America.” But it was July 4, the date on which the Declaration was actually published and went forth into the entire world, that became the date which we shall forever celebrate. “It is a testimony to the enormous power of the written word.” [Fleming, p. 60]

¹ Noah Webster, *American Dictionary of the English Language* (1828), Fascimile Edition, Foundation for American Christian Education, San Francisco (1967).

² Rosalie Slater, *Teaching and Learning America’s Christian History: The Principle Approach*, Foundation for American Christian Education, San Francisco (1965), p. 113.

³ Noah Webster, *History of the United States*, Durrie & Peck (1833).

⁴ *Christian History of the Constitution of the United States of America: Christian Self-Government*, compiled by Verna M. Hall, Foundation for American Christian Education, San Francisco (1960), p. xi.