

Deist or Christian: Who Were the 56 Men Who Founded America? with Bill Federer

(June 30, 2026)

FRANK:

Ladies and gentlemen, we're about to celebrate 250 years of our independence from Britain. We are living under the longest serving constitution in history.

And what do we know about our founding and what does it matter what we know? First of all, we're going to deal with this question and many questions with one of our favorite guests. I'll get to him in a minute. But one thing we're going to deal with today and investigate today is what led the colonies, the colonists, to want their independence from King George?

I mean, what were their basic complaints? Hint, all that is in the Declaration of Independence. We'll talk about that. Secondly, there are people out there today who are historical revisionists. They're claiming that the 56 founders of the Declaration of Independence and our other founders, they were mostly deists.

How do we know they were mostly Bible believing Christians? And what does it matter that they were Bible believing Christians? Aren't we supposed to be religiously neutral today? And then how did these, if they were Bible believing Christians, how did they justify going to war biblically?

I mean, were they supposed to throw off their British, or the, the British crown? Was that biblical? Are you supposed to do that? Take up arms against your own government? We're going to talk about that today and so much more because I've noticed that so many of us really don't know our history.

And it's important to know our history because ladies and gentlemen, I've been to many countries around the world. Of course, America is not perfect, but this is the greatest country in the history of the world. We're blessed to live here.



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We're blessed to be here. We're blessed to have the freedoms that we have. And we just take all that for granted. And if we continue to take it for granted, we're ultimately going to lose it, and we're going to lose our ability to preach and live the gospel from the United States of America if the United States of America suddenly collapses or does so in a gradual way.

And I think it has been. So we're going to have to deal with our history now. And there's no better person to help us do that than the great Bill Federer, ladies and gentlemen. [Applause] Yes, he is probably our favorite guest of all time here. At least that's what you guys tell us.

You love Bill Federer because he is just so knowledgeable and wise. Bill, it's always great having you on the show. Happy 250th.

BILL:

Frank, great to be with you.

FRANK:

It's always a pleasure because you just have so many great stories of history and how we got to where we are. Let me start with the top question. Bill set it up for us, because we don't know our history. What was it that made these people who came over to the new land in the early 1600s, by the time they got to the, you know, 1770s or so, they're fed up with King George.

They want to establish their own government and throw off his shackles. Why did they want to do that?

BILL:

Yeah, well, one of the... I like zooming out and looking at all the history. And so, from the beginning of the invention of writing around 3300 BC, Sumerian cuneiform on clay tablets, the Mesopotamia Valley.

You have gangs, and a gang leader with enough weapons, we call a king or a pharaoh, Caesar, Kaiser, sultan, Czar. It's a hierarchical system. If you're friends with the king, you're more equal. If you're not friends with the king, you're less equal. If you're an enemy of the king, you're dead. It's called treason, or you're a slave.

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And so it's a hierarchical system. It's basically a gang structure. If you're friends with the gang leader, you're in. If you're not friends, you're not. And if you're an enemy of the gang leader, they killed you or enslaved you, whatever. And so the first gang leader king is Nimrod. Tower of Babel in the plains of Shinar, Mesopotamia, just down the mountain from Ararat where Noah's Ark landed.

And Nimrod, according to Josephus, wanted to build a tower so high that if God destroyed the world again with a flood, he could survive on top. And Nimrod said that he made everybody bake bricks and bring them or he would kill them. So he's defiant against God and oppressive over...

He wanted people to fear him more than fear God. And so, since the population of the world is centered there, according to most archaeologists and anthropologists and etymologists, that civilization began in the Mesopotamia between the Tigris, Euphrates rivers.

And since civilization began there and Nimrod wanted to control it, in a sense, Nimrod was the first globalist. He was the first one wanting to control world population. God comes down and confuses the languages, and the people scatter into language groups that turn into nations.

Lo and behold, nations were God's invention to postpone a one world government. But every generation you have some Nimrod, Pharaoh Caesar, Kaiser, Sultan, Tsar, that wants to conquer other nations. And if left unchecked, if they didn't die off, they'd have been happy to keep conquering until they conquered them all.

You know, Attila the Hun had an army of a half a million men. Genghis Khan kills 30 million people. I mean, and if they hadn't died, you know, it's one common thing is all these kingdoms are ruled through fear, that ultimately the dictator king can kill you.

And so, that's the fear. And so, these kingdoms keep getting bigger because with the latest military advancements, kings can kill more people. So instead of Cain killing Abel with a rock, they can kill with a bronze weapon, an iron weapon, a phalanx spear. The Greeks had a scimitar sword that the Muslims had, a composite bow that the Mongols had.

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Right? These kingdoms keep getting bigger and bigger until the king of England had the biggest. The sun never set on the British Empire. The King of England was a globalist. He was a one world government guy with him at the top. And America's founders decided they did not like one world government guys.

And so they broke away and flipped it and made the people the king. The question is, where did America's founders get the idea of ruling themselves without a king? And so, long story short, it's ancient Israel. Now when you study world history and I've written about it, with the gang leader king being the norm, there's this movement to want to limit his power.

So you first limit a king by his own words. And that's where you have the story of Persia. And there's the king, and he's having a party, and his wife Vashti wouldn't come out.

And he says, I'll never see her again. Later, feels bad, and his advisors tell him, you can't see her again. You said you wouldn't see her again. You can't. And so, that's when they bring in, you know, all the girls, and he picks Esther. But I mean, he's limited by what? His own words. And then you have Daniel.

And the bad guys go to Darius and say, hey, nobody can pray to anybody but you for 30 days. And Darius signs off on it. And then they say, haha, we found Daniel is praying to somebody else. You've got to throw him in the lion's den. It says the king spent all day trying to get Daniel off the hook, but he couldn't.

It's like, what was the big deal? It was his word, but he was limited by his own word. And then kings are limited by past king's words. And that's called traditions and customs. And so you have Cyrus of Persia lets the Jews go back and rebuild.

Later, the neighboring people stop the Jews from rebuilding. And the Jews send, a message to the new king saying, hey, search through the records. And sure enough, they find Cyrus's order. And the current king honors the past king's words.

And so all of the past king's words compiled turn into customs and traditions. Well, this is the way it's always been done king. It's like okay, I guess I have to do it that way. And then kings are

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limited by the religious class. Now, in pagan cultures, in Egypt, when the pharaoh took the land away from everybody, he did not take the land away from the religious Egyptian priests.

Why? Because he needed them to give the stamp of approval that the pharaoh was divinely appointed. And so you have all these pagan cultures need a religious class to rubber stamp the king. And then they Christianized it in Europe, and the pope was the one who would crown the kings.

And the pope always held off that he could excommunicate the king and take away his approval if the king didn't line up just right. So kings were limited by their words, by their past king's words. And then limited by the religious class. And then you have kings need money, so they have tax collectors, and these tax collectors need to be armed.

And so the king would let his favorites have some arms and weapons and armies to go out and collect taxes. Well, in England, you had King John and these tax collector, they were called barons. He would just arbitrarily get rid of one, put in another, right?

He'd take one guy's castle, give it to another, and these [cough], excuse me, 25 barons surround King John on the fields of Runnymede in 1215 AD and make him sign the Magna Carta, which says, you can't arbitrarily get rid of one of us. If you do, the other 24 will gang up on you.

But what's the whole deal? It's limiting the power of a king. And then these barons turn into the House of Lords, and you got the House of the Commons. And then finally America comes along and we cut the umbilical cord and we say, why put all this effort into limiting a king?

Let's not have one. Matter of fact, let's flip it and make the people the king. So a republic is where you have citizens. And the word citizen means co- king, co-ruler, co-sovereign. Right? City means city and zen means an inhabitant of.

But that actually comes from the Greek word polities. So pol, P O L, means, is the word for the people in the city. And so they were called polities, was the citizen. And so that's where we get the word polis.

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Like Indianapolis, Minneapolis, polis means city. And politics is the business of the city. But that politics word is where we get the word citizen, which, where we get the word co-ruler, co-sovereign, co-king. So we pledge allegiance to the flag and to the republic for which it stands.

We're basically pledging allegiance to us being charged with in charge of ourselves. So in America, the people are the ruled and the rulers. Right? It's a rare dynamic in world history. And so the question is, where did America's founders get the idea that you could have people ruling themselves without a king?

They got some ideas from John Locke. Two treaties on government, Age of Enlightenment. Before that, from the Magna Carta tying the hands of the king. Before that, the Roman Republic. For 500 years, Rome was a Republic SPQR, Senatus Publicus Romanus, no king with these 600 senators.

But before that, you had the Athenian democracy, where 6,000 citizens with no king. Before that, the Hebrew Republic. So around 1400 BC, millions of Israelites come out of Egypt. They come into the promised land. And for 400 years, there's no king.

This is literally the first instance in world history of millions of people and no king. And so, it worked because every citizen was taught the law and they were personally accountable to God to follow it.

So you have an opportunity to steal. There's no king, there's no police. And then you think, God is watching me, he wants me to be fair, he's going to hold me accountable in the future. Maybe I should hesitate stealing. And it creates a tiny thing in your head called a conscience.

If everybody in the country believes this, you can maintain order with no king, with no police. And so the verse in the Bible that everyone has memorized is love your neighbor as yourself, Leviticus 19:18. The verse immediately before it, confront your neighbor directly so you will not be held accountable for their sin.

It's like, what? Yeah, you love your neighbor, and you confront your neighbor. So like a parent, you love your kid, you love your kid, but every now and then you got to confront your kid,

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you've got to correct them. Well, in ancient Israel, there was no king, there was no police for 400 years. Everybody was taught the law, everybody helped enforce the law, right?

FRANK:

Until, as you put it before, Bill, on a previous program, until the priests went woke.

BILL:

Yeah.

FRANK:

It worked until the point where everyone was doing right in their own eyes as the Book of Judges ends. But I just want to amplify something you said a second ago, because it's so important in our culture today.

So many in our culture today think love means approval. Love does not mean approval, ladies and gentlemen. Love seeks what's best for the loved one according to the will of God. And that requires you, as Bill just said, to sometimes confront the loved one, to say, no, what you're about to do is not good.

It's going to hurt you, it's going to hurt others. It's against God's will. Do not do it. Love does not mean approval. Love rejoices not in wrongdoing. Love rejoices in the truth. Love always protects, love always perseveres, as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13. So it's critically important that we understand that, and so this persisted in ancient Israel, and that became the ultimate model for our government today.

Bill, but you're saying our government that was established 250 years ago, this July 4th, at least, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution came later, that was unique in world history? How is it different than, say, the Roman Republic?

BILL:

Right, so the Roman gods were fickle. I mean, how could you be accountable to Aphrodite, the goddess of love, when her temple has temple prostitutes? It's like they had no concept of a just

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God and they had no concept of rights from a creator. The rights were given by the country, the group, right? The social contract type of thing.

And so, when you have rights from a creator, then the purpose of government is to guarantee to you your creator given rights. If there's no creator and it's just what the group agrees upon, well, that can change. And so—

FRANK:

Well, let's read that because that's part of our declaration. In fact, speaker Mike Johnson, a month or so ago was talking about that our rights come from God. And the folks over there at MS Now, used to be MSNBC, were shocked that Johnson thinks that rights come from God and not government.

Well, I guess they haven't read the Declaration of Independence because here's what it says. We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, and that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights. 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. So notice, ladies and gentlemen, here, Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence is saying rights come from God, they don't come from government. Governments secure rights.

That's what good governments do, they secure rights. According to the apostle Paul, it would be by punishing wrongdoers, Romans 13. Anyway, the Declaration goes on to say this, that whenever any form of government becomes destructive to these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new government, laying its foundations on such principles and organizing its powers in such form as to them shall seem most likely to affect their safety and happiness.

Prudence indeed will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes. And then it goes on to list the causes that are not light, they're not transient causes that cause these colonists to say, we've had enough of the rule of King George.

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He is usurping our rights. In fact, a little bit further down in the Declaration it says this. The history of the present king of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these states.

To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world. And then if you read the rest of the Declaration of independence, it's basically a rap sheet against King George, as to why he's been governing them like a tyrant.

And maybe, Bill, we could talk about some of those reasons. What was he doing to the colonists here? And why did they say we need a new government?

BILL:

Yeah, well, it goes back to John Calvin. So you have Reformation 1517, Martin Luther, and then you had John Calvin in Switzerland. And in 1536, he writes his institutes. And in there he says, we are subject to the men who rule over us, but subject only in the Lord. If they command anything against him, let us not pay the least regard to it.

What's he talking about? Well, you obey the king as long as the king is telling you to do something that lines up with God's word. So think of it for a second. There's a verse in The Bible, Ephesians 6, that says, children obey your parents.

But what if there's a bad parent and he tells the kid to sell themselves into prostitution and kill the neighbor? Is the child supposed to obey that parent? No, the child obeys the parent as long as the parent's telling them to do something that lines up with God's word. So you obey the king as long as the king is telling you to do something that lines up with God's word.

And when the king stops lining up with God's word, according to Jonathan Mayhew, one of the black robe regiment pastors in Boston, he says the king effectively unking himself, he takes away his right to rule.

Just like a parent who tells the kid, hey, you know, go sell some drugs and kill your neighbors. No. He loses. And so with that concept, you had John Calvin influencing the covenant form of government, which is a way to have order in society without a king.

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So, what's the best king ever in the Bible? King David? Well, let's look at his sons. His oldest son Amnon rapes a daughter, Tamar, is murdered by a son, Absalom, who tries to overthrow David.

And then Adonijah tries to overthrow David. And then Solomon's good for a while until he marries a thousand wives and starts building pagan temples. And this is the best king ever. His own sons go off rails. So the dilemma is if you could have a great king, but his sons can be terrible.

And in Europe, you had things like, in 1572, the king of Spain did not like the fact that the Netherlands had Dutch reformed protestants.

And so he sends his Iron Duke of Alba, in 1572, to commit the Spanish fury. He kills 10,000 Dutch reformed in Antwerp, Belgium. And then the same year, it was a bad year, 1572. The Queen of France, Catherine de Medici, does not like the fact that 10% of France is Huguenot Protestant.

And she kills 30,000 of these Huguenot Protestants, called the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre. And so they're wrestling with what to do with Romans 13. Let everyone be subject to the governing authority, for there's no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.

It's like, yeah, but what if the authority that exists wants to kill you and your wife and kids? Are you supposed to turn over? Hey, here's my wife. I found her praying the wrong way. No. And so, John Calvin's teaching provided a way for people to come up with exploring how to have a government without a king.

And so, this was embraced by the Puritans, who were the main ones, then the Dutch Reformed and then the Presbyterians. And so they developed this idea in England. And so in England, they actually had an American experiment from 1640 up until 1660.

It's called the English Commonwealth. So they have a civil war, the Puritans win, and they chop off the head of Charles I. And so they do not have a king in England for around 15, 20 years.

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And you have the Parliament, and they're making rules, but this has never happened before. And so, you have some really strict Puritans, and then some semi strict Puritans. I mean, the strict ones actually tore down Shakespeare's Globe Theater and they outlawed Christmas.

I mean, they were like super strict. And then you have other ones that are a little bit more moderate. Then you have some of them that are super moderate. And Oliver Cromwell was able to keep it together, but then when he dies, his son Richard couldn't keep it together, turns into chaos. And William Penn Senior, the dad, is an admiral.

He goes across the English Channel, he puts King Charles II on his boat, brings him back to England, and reestablishes the monarchy. And the English Commonwealth experiment is over. But that teaching, that concept came to America.

And so we sort of had the same exact English Commonwealth, but we kept ours going. But it's that same Puritan John Calvin teaching that was inculcated. It first came over with the pastors. The Pilgrims were going to land in Virginia.

They get blown off course to Massachusetts, and the captain, Christopher Jones, says, it's too dangerous to sail. Get off the boat. And the Pilgrims are like, who's going to be in charge? There's 102 of us in the boat. Nobody's been picked by the king. We were going to go to Jamestown, submit to the king's government.

They do something unique. It's called the Mayflower Compact. We, in the presence of God, covenant ourselves together into a civil body politic. You have a little church group covenanting itself into a civil body politic group. In the womb of the Mayflowers, conceived the child of self-government, set a top down rule by a king and his administrators, bottom up ruled by just 102 of us.

And so, that became the model. So the King Charles I, the one who got his head chopped off, before he got his head chopped off, he caused the great Puritan migration. He said, I will make, them conform or I will hurry them out of the land. And that's what he did.

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About 20,000 Puritans from 1630 to 1640 are leaving England and flooding into Massachusetts. And they're founding cities. And so the First Baptist church in America founded the city of Providence, Rhode Island. The First Congregational Church founded the city of Hartford, Connecticut.

And you have churches founding cities. So everybody's involved in church and they have a covenant form of government. And everybody's involved in the city because it's the church founding the city. And the word for city is polis. And so politics is the business of the city. So everybody in church is involved in politics.

And that was the way it was for a century. Why? Because there was no gold in North America. What do we have? Beaver skins, tobacco, dried fish. Not very much of a moneymaker like the Caribbean with gold. And so, the King of England... I mean, Jamestown, one winter they had 500 die.

I mean, America was a financial loser. And so the king sent over a royal governor and said, you've got to raise your own money. And so he comes to Virginia, he gets all the landowners together called the House of Burgesses.

And he says, you have to cough up money to pay me. I don't care how you do it, but you got to do it. And so they would meet, and while they're meeting, deciding the taxes of who's going to pay what, they would start talking about other things. Oh, we've got to fix the road, and we've got to defend against the Indians. And as long as the royal governor got paid, he really didn't care what else they talked about.

And so it backdoored Virginia into some semblance of a representative government, but it still had the king's representative. But in New England, it was just the covenant churches. And then around the 1640s, they had a covenant of the four New England colonies.

And they said, for the propagating of the gospel, but we'll have this mutual defense. And so New England is contrasted with Virginia because Virginia was an Anglican colony up until Lord Dunmore was chased out and Patrick Henry became the first governor.

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But New England was this congregational colony, a series of colonies. And that's where we draw our heritage of self-government, covenant. So the word federal is Latin for covenant, right? Fidelis. So we have a covenant form of government.

Great quote from Os Guinness. He said covenantal ideas in England were the lost cause, but they became the winning cause in New England. Covenant shaped constitutionalism. The American Constitution is a nationalized, secularized form of covenant.

Covenant lies behind constitution. And so this was the origins of New England. And then it became the origins of our covenant form of government. And it goes back ultimately to ancient Israel, that first 400 years out of Egypt before they got a king.

FRANK:

Now, some of the statements in the Declaration of Independence, Bill, about what King George was doing to the colonists show that they thought they had really good grounds for throwing him off. Here are a couple of them.

He has abdicated government here by declaring us out of his protection and waging war against us. He has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burned our towns and destroyed the lives of our people. He is at this time transporting large armies of foreign mercenaries to complete the works of death, desolation, and tyranny already begun with circumstances of cruelty and perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages and totally unworthy of a head of a civilized nation.

It also talks about the fact that they're being taxed without representation. And it says, he has excited. You just mentioned the Indians. He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us and has endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers the merciless Indian savages.

Well, that's a little politically incorrect, isn't it? Whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes, and conditions. And then, after stating a few more problems, they say this.

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We, therefore, the representatives of the United States of America in general Congress assembled, appealing to the supreme judge of the world. That would be God, ladies and gentlemen, for the rectitude of our intentions, do in the name and by the authority of the good people of these colonies, solemnly publish and declare that these united colonies are end of right, ought to be free and independent states.

That they are absolved from all allegiance to the British crown and that all political connection between them and the state of Great Britain is and ought to be totally dissolved. And that as free and independent states, they have full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and do all other acts and things which independent states may of right do.

And for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine providence, that's God, ladies and gentlemen, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor. This was signed by 56 colonists, many of whom paid the ultimate price for signing it, which we'll get to actually in the next podcast with the great Bill Federer.

But before we get there, Bill, I want to ask you, how do we know that these men, the 56 signers, actually were Bible believing Christians? And then I want to ask you about how did they biblically, justify the idea that they were going to go to war against King George?

So let's, let's, let's start with some of the founders and why do we, why do we know that they're Christians and not Deists, as so many today say?

BILL:

Yeah, well, Europe was Catholic, and then you had the 1517 Reformation, and then, you had the Muslims invade and the King of Spain, did the Peace of Augsburg of 1555 that said every king got to decide what's going to be believed in his kingdom.

Let's just work together against this Muslim invasion because they've wiped out Christianity off of two continents. And so that gave birth to Germany being Lutheran and Sweden being

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Lutheran and Switzerland being Calvinist and Scotland being Presbyterian, Holland being Dutch Reformed, England Anglican.

And then of course, Greece was Greek Orthodox, Russia was Russian Orthodox, and Italy, Spain, France, Austria, Poland stayed Catholic. But it was whatever the king believed the kingdom had to believe. Let's just work together against this Muslim invasion. Well, if you did not believe the way your king did, it was considered treason and you were persecuted and you fled.

Now one group, they were sort of like a Quaker type group. There was Menno Simmons, and so his followers were called Mennonites, and they were nonviolent and they didn't want to get involved, so they didn't get their own country in Europe.

And then the king of Russia said, hey, come over to Russia and I'll give you Mennonites some land. Well, he did. It was buffer land between Russia and the Ottoman Empire. So, so they got overrun one time after another after another after another.

And they lasted until Lenin came and they were called Kulaks. And Lenin wiped out millions. And then many of them came to America. But if you didn't believe the way your king did in Europe, you were persecuted, you fled. And so that many of them spilled over and founded colonies in America.

And so every colony was started by a different Christian denomination. Now Canada was founded. So Spain controlled all the new world until 1588, when their Spanish Armada sank, invading England in a hurricane.

They tried it again and even a third time, and it bankrupted Spain. And so that made it so they couldn't defend the New World. And it was like an Oklahoma land rush. All the countries of Europe began to rush over and settle colonies.

So the French Catholics settled New France, which became Canada. Nova Scotia means New Scotland. New England, right? Was founded by the England. Virginia was named after the Virgin Queen Elizabeth. You had, obviously Florida was part of New Spain.

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But then you had Massachusetts, was founded by Puritans. So where Virginia was Anglican, Massachusetts was Puritan. Then Rhode island was founded by Baptists, and New York was founded by Dutch Reformed. Delaware, New Jersey were originally New Sweden, Lutheran.

And then they became Dutch Reformed, and then they were taken over by the British. And then Connecticut and New Hampshire were Congregationalist. And did I mention Maryland Catholic? Yeah. And then Pennsylvania was Quaker, and the Quakers were tolerant.

William Penn, he was in the Tower of London for eight months and then he finally got out and he said, force makes hypocrites. Tis persuasion only that makes converts. So he pioneered the concept of different Christian denominations living together in the same geographic area.

So prior to this, the attitude in America was, if you don't like our denomination, fine. Start your own colony.

FRANK:

This is what I think a lot of us don't recognize, Bill, is that the colonies were sort of mimicking what was going on in Europe in terms of religious belief.

You came to a particular colony because it lined up with your religious belief. And five of the 13 original colonies, when the Constitution, including the Bill of Rights was signed in 1791, five of the 13 colonies, the new states, had their own state churches.

So the First Amendment did not prevent a state from having a state church. It just didn't want a federal church. So it would seem to me, and obviously to people observing this, if you're just looking at the facts, that of course these people were not Deists, because they're exporting their denomination to the United States of America, the colonies which become the United States of America.

And they are even establishing their own churches in these states. The churches are establishing cities within the states. Am I missing something here Bill, or is it quite obvious that these people...? We haven't even looked at what they've said or what they wrote. We can, but it would seem just on the face of things, these people are all Christians. Correct?

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BILL:

Yeah, yeah. You couldn't even hold office unless you were a Christian. So just tacking on to what you were saying. New York was Dutch Reformed. They chased out Lutherans. Right? You had the Flushing remonstrance. Right? And then the Puritans of Massachusetts, chased out Quakers, and then the Virginia Anglicans chased out Puritans.

And you had different, the tarn feathering ministers chasing them out of town. And so, when the revolution starts, they all had to work together against the king. And that was the beginning of them tolerating each other.

That's why they met in Philadelphia. Because since Philadelphia allowed all the different denominations... You read John Adams and when he was raised in Massachusetts, his whole entire life, and it was a Puritan congregational colony.

And so he comes to Philadelphia and so he visits other denominations like for the first time ever. And he describes going to this church and he goes to the Catholic Church, and he saw the pomp and circumstance. And the first English speaking Catholic church in the entire world was in Philadelphia.

Right? St. Joseph's, the first synagogue. Right? And so John Adams... Now Quakers were like, they were sort of like Baptists without a pastor. They were a Society of Friends. So, lots of the Quaker Societies of Friends, didn't even have a pastor.

It was just a group of Christian friends getting together. And they would sit there and wait for someone to be moved upon by the Holy Spirit to give an exhortation. And so, John Adams said, we went to the Quaker meeting house, and we sat there for two hours, but nobody was moved upon.

So we left and went down the street to the pub. But this was the first time that he experienced... And so, when they had a motion, for the... So you have the British. They, if I can give a little background.

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FRANK:

Sure.

BILL:

You have the French and Indian War. So the French had everything west of the Appalachians, the British east. And they fought. It went on for decades. You had the first Great Awakening revival going on during this time. It ended. But The British wanted to leave troops on American soil so that in case there was another flare up. But we didn't have barracks. And so the British troops would quarter in American homes.

FRANK:

So this is like 15... I mean, sorry, 1750s, 1760s?

BILL:

Well, this would be 1765. And so you had, people didn't like these soldiers because they looked down the nose on the colonists. You know, you'd have an Anglican soldier in the house of the Congregationalists or the Baptist or the president. And they're ugh...And some of the soldiers would take their liberties with the girls. And obviously the people did not like that.

And so you had a winter, and some of the soldiers were marching back to their barracks to, you know, there in Boston. And some kids start throwing snowballs at the British soldiers with rocks in the snowballs and started hitting them.

And then a crowd gathers around, and they start yelling at the soldiers, and it gets louder and louder. And the captain, one group said that he said fire. And the other group said that he said, hold your fire.

But since everybody was shouting... I didn't hear the hold your part. I just heard the fire. And so John Adams actually was the attorney to defend the soldiers. And he got them all off the hook, except, one. And then you had something that people may not be familiar with.

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It's called the Bengal Famine. And so the British went on to become the biggest empire in the world. 1714 they started a trading post in Bengal, turned into a trading fort, turned into them having guns.

They would give guns to one kingdom, give guns to another kingdom, stir up animosity between the kingdoms so they'd fight each other to weaken each other, and the British would conquer both kingdoms and disarm them.

And they would do this again and again until the British took over all of India, a quarter of the world's population. And so, they rearranged their economy because people were growing their subsistence farming or whatever, and the British were interested in cash crops.

And so, it was all going fine until there was a famine. And since the people weren't growing their normal staple foods, 10 million die in Bengal in 1770, and there's no products coming out for a long time.

And the British East India Company is on the verge of bankruptcy. It's like the biggest company in England, one of the biggest companies in world history, and it's going to go belly up. And so they ask for a government bailout from the king and from Parliament, and the king says, okay, but I'm not going to give you money out of my treasury.

I'll just let you tax the colonies. And so, you have a sugar tax of 1764, a currency tax of 1764, a stamp tax of 1765, a Declaratory Act, 1766, the Townshend Revenue Acts of 1767, taxing glass and paint and paper.

And then the cry goes up in America, no taxation without representation. It's like we don't even have a representative. Ben Franklin goes over to Parliament and he's like, you don't understand the Stamp Acts. America is a rural country. It would take more money to ride a horse to a town and collect somebody stamping a letter for 2 cents then it would be the money you get out of it.

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And so James Otis is the precursor to John Adams. He gives an address for five hours and against the writs of assistance. What's a writ of assistance? That was where the government could read your emails.

Well, not really, I mean but read your letters. So it allowed the government to open and read a citizen's personal correspondence. It allowed the government to arrest anybody, anytime, anywhere on any suspicion and detain them indefinitely. And so you would have the British simply coming to somebody's house and saying, I'm going to confiscate all this stuff and another house, and another house.

And so James Otis gives his five hour address. And he says, I will to my dying day oppose all the powers and faculties God has given me and such instruments of slavery on one hand and villainy on the other, as is writ of assistance.

It appears to me the worst instrument of arbitrary power, the most destructive of English liberties. And so sitting in the stands is John Adams, all five hours. And John Adams is the most popular attorney in Boston. And John Adams writes after witnessing James Otis's speech, the child of independence was then and there born, for every man of an immense crowded audience appeared to me to go away as I did, ready to take arms against the writs of assistance.

And so, then the British passed the Quartering Act of 1765, where they'll put their troops in your home and you gotta live in the attic or the barn. And then when the colonists became resistant, the British send over a commander in chief, Thomas Gage, to Boston and he outlaws meeting houses, right? Because they would have a building in the middle of town where they would have church, and that's also where they do their city business.

The word synagogue means meeting house. That's where the rabbi would teach the law, and that's where they do their city business, in the same building. And Edmund Burke wrote of Gage's job. He says, an Englishman is the unfittest person on earth to argue that another Englishman should be put into slavery.

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So it's like, okay, you're sending an Englishman over to the colonies to force them to give up their English rights. And so they outlaw town hall meetings. And then you have the Boston Massacre in 1770, where they fire into the mob, killing five people and wounding others.

One of the ones killed was Crispus Attucks. He was a black man, so he's the first martyr in the cause of the revolution. Then, 1772, you have the head of the Massachusetts Congress. His name is Dr. Joseph Warren, and he's the one who sent Paul Revere on his midnight ride.

And then he was later killed at the battle of Bunker Hill. But Joseph Warren said, if you perform your part, you must have the strongest confidence in the same almighty being who protected your pious and venerable forefathers, that he'll still be with you. May our land be a land of liberty until the last shock of time will bury all the empires in the world in one common, indistinguishable grave.

And then you have 1773, the Tea Act. And so tea was the most popular drink in America. And you had tea shops, and the British, not only, they allowed the British East India Company to sell directly to the customer and cut out all these shops and put them out of business.

And so that's when you have, the Boston Tea Party with Samuel Adams and his guys dressed as Indians underneath the Liberty Tree. And they throw 342 chests of East India Tea into the harbor. And the king and Parliament don't like that. And so they decide to blockade Boston's harbor until they pay it all back.

And they have the intolerable coercive acts. And so the king keeps tightening the screws and tightening the screws. And then you have on the fourth anniversary of the Boston Massacre in 1774, and John Hancock, who was one of the wealthiest merchants in Boston, he has one of his ships seized by the British.

So the British taxed Madeira wine. And so there was a boatload of it coming over. And when John Hancock's boat comes into the harbor, it's only half full. And so the British said, well, nobody sends a half full ship over, so you must have had somebody unloaded before you came to the harbor so you could skip on the taxes.

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So the British confiscate his entire ship. And so, John Hancock then begins to call for a well-trained militia. And then you have a spy named Dr.

Benjamin Church. And he is cozying up to the British, but yet he's there with the Americans. And lo and behold, he is seen coming out of the British general's house. And this person witnesses them talking like they're buddies.

And then he would basically be somebody that would come along the Americans and say, oh, I'm going to help you but... And so, we had this situation going on in the colonies. John Hancock, then is the president of the Continental Congress at the time they do the Declaration of Independence.

So when they're blockading Boston's harbor, June 1, 1774, Thomas Jefferson, in the next colony over, a couple columns over is Virginia. And Thomas Jefferson introduces a day of fasting and prayer for Virginia to go into effect on January-- Excuse me, June 1, 1774.

The very day Boston's harbor is going to be blockaded. And so the whole Virginia legislature is doing this day of fasting and prayer. George Washington writes in his diary, went to church, fasted all day. And so you have the royal governor, Lord Dunmore, views this day of fasting as a protest against the king, because it's the king blockading the Boston's harbor.

So he cancels the Virginia legislature. He says, you're all fired, go home. Well, they don't go home. They go down the street in Williamsburg to Raleigh Tavern and in the back room they decide to have a continental congress.

The first continental congress meeting September 1, 1774. And so that's when they meet and they have a motion to open with prayer. And Rutledge, the delegate from South Carolina, and Jay, the delegate from New York, object.

And John Adams writes, he says, we were so divided in our religious sentiments that we could not join together in the same act of worship. And Sam Adams stands up and he goes, I'm no bigot. I can hear a prayer of any man of piety who at the same time is a patriot friend of our nation.

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And so they get Reverend Jacob Boucher come over from Christchurch in Philadelphia. He opens with prayer and then he breaks out into an extemporary prayer. And John Adams says, it stirred the bosom of every man there. He says, there were tears in the eyes of the Quakers.

And Washington was on his knees. And this prayer meeting went on for a long time. And they had gotten word that New York was being invaded. And he writes that the psalm that they had read according to the Anglican Book of prayer was Psalm 35.

And it says, fight those O Lord, who fight against us. And so John Adams writes about all this to his wife Abigail. And so this is the beginning of our country. Now they were all Christians of different denominations.

Most of them were Anglican, about a good third. The next biggest was Congregational from New England. And then you had a couple Baptists, couple Lutherans, one Catholic signed the Declaration of Independence.

And you had Ben Franklin. Now Ben Franklin was raised Presbyterian and he was from Boston. He was like, what, 15th of 17 children, I think. And he remembers reading in his dad's library all these religious books. And he says they were polemics. And polemic is a written argument. And it was all over doctrine. And at the time you had the old light versus the new light doctrine.

The old lights were the Calvinists. And they had a great plan, a covenant plan of how to rule without a king. But after a century, it got a little dry. And they taught this plan academically and intellectually at Yale and Harvard.

God has a plan for your life, your marriage, your family, church, your government. Find out what the plan is, put into place. And some took it the next step and said, God in his infinite wisdom already knows who's going to wind up in heaven, so don't even bother preaching the gospel. Whoever's supposed to get saved will get saved. Whoever's supposed to get... And it became this que sera sera, fate type of thing.

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And people would just hear sermons on dissecting. And so Ben Franklin, after he apprenticed for his brother and then ran away and then went to Philadelphia, and then he... Ben Franklin was going to the First Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia.

And they got a new pastor who was a new light. So George Whitefield was a new light. And he said, it's more than a plan. You have to have an experience with Jesus. And when you do, your life will change and you won't do worldly things anymore like bars and brothels and government.

And so you had some say, it's not only a personal experience, it's only a personal experience. And that's where you get this idea that I'm not going to be involved in politics. I'm just going to enjoy my own personal relationship with God. And I care less about what kind of country I'm leaving my kids.

So that's the origins of these churches today that say, oh, I don't want to get involved in politics and I'm holier than you are because I don't care about what kind of country I'm leaving my kids while the Muslims are coming in and voting 100%. But that's a whole nother talk. [Laughter] Anyway, back to Ben Franklin. So, there's a Samuel Hemphill is a new light preacher.

And Franklin said he was a great preacher but a lousy writer. So I lent him my pen and Franklin wrote a half a dozen really good scriptural articles and published them in the Pennsylvania Gazette. And you read them, they're all on fire, solid evangelical things.

But then when Samuel Hemphill gets voted out as pastor, Ben Franklin drops out of church, and in his autobiography says, the new pastor came by my house. And I said I agreed to go back to church. And I actually went five Sundays in a row. And all he did was dissect the finer points of our doctrine.

And he says, I have to admit the concept of predestination was unintelligible to me. And he says I wish the sermons would produce more good works than that you actually do. So Franklin was into starting hospitals and libraries and medical. He was doing all this stuff.

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And so Franklin, absented himself from divine service. He was never anti-Christian. He wrote letters to George Whitfield saying how I wish you and I could start a colony on the northern Ohio river and thereby show the Indians a better sample of Christians than we commonly see in our Indian traders.

That's like writing to the Billy Graham of the day saying, you and I can really show these Indians how Christians should act. And then he prints all of George Whitefield's sermons. So he was a friend of the gospel, but he began to do what was called political religion.

It was realizing the usefulness of the Christian faith to keep order in society. And so if we're going to have a country without a king who rules through fear and can threaten to kill you, for us to have a country without a king, we need to have a moral populace with self-control.

That's where you get John Adams's quote, our constitution was made only for a moral and religious peoples, wholly inadequate for the government of any other. And Thomas Jefferson even used this when he sent Lewis and Clark out west to the Indians. And he thought a way to get the Indians to not be violent is to go through the New Testament and pull out all the verses of Jesus talking about loving your enemies, turning the other cheek, blessing those that are cursing you.

And he called it a book of ethics for use amongst the Indians. Sometimes they call it Jefferson's Bible, but he called it a book of ethics for use amongst the Indians. But he said look, if you give them the whole Bible, they'll get stuck in Joshua, wiping out the tribes in the promised land. And he says we want to sort of skip past that and just get to the New Testament.

But they saw the ethical usefulness of Christian teaching as compared to... Jefferson said I read all the ancient and modern philosophers on religion. He read the Quran, he had a Quran.

He says, but out of all of them, the ethics of Jesus are by far the best. And he says if the whole world would follow Jesus's teachings, it would all be Christian by now. And of course Jefferson fought the Barbary pirate wars against the Muslims, and he had to read the Quran to find out what's in this book that makes them want to kill us, you know.

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FRANK:

Well and when Jefferson became president, he actually used federal tax revenue to build churches for them up in Michigan.

BILL:

Yeah, yeah, and Kaskaskia.

FRANK:

Yeah, the Kaskaskian Indians. So the kind of stuff that you hear out there Bill, about these were all deists is just total nonsense.

And even if Jefferson was a deist, certainly the Declaration of Independence is not a deistic document. You don't have supreme judge of the world in divine providence because deism by definition thinks God created the world and then left it and isn't concerned about the affairs of men. Of course, Ben Franklin at the Constitutional Convention with his famous prayer says God governs in the affairs of men.

That's not a deistic statement. So these men definitely were Christians. You know, I was just watching a presentation by our media mutual friend David Barton.

BILL:

He's great, we love David.

FRANK:

...on this bill. And he said his son Tim goes to a lot of college campuses and there's a famous picture, it's in the rotunda of the Capitol, a painting. Their mall at the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the 56 signers. And he said his son Tim goes to college campuses, and he has a gift of card that he says I'll give anybody here a gift card if you can name five of the people in this picture.

And everyone gets Jefferson and everyone gets Franklin. But very few go beyond that. He said, my son Tim has had the same gift card for nine years. He's never given it to anyone because nobody at these major colleges, these major universities, can name more than two of the

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founding fathers, yet they're all sure that they were all deists. Now, how can you...? How can you be sure they're all deists when you don't even know who they are? So, I mean, it's ridiculous.

BILL:

My wife and I put together a series of books called Miracles in American History. And so we go through... So two months before the same Continental Congress did the Declaration of Independence, they had a day of fasting and prayer that was unanimously passed.

And here's an excerpt. We recommend the 17th of May 1776, to be observed as a day of humiliation, fasting and prayer to confess and bewail our manifold sins and transgressions, and by sincere repentance and amendment of life, appease God's righteous displeasure, and through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, obtain pardon and forgiveness.

And so this is unanimous, through the mediation of Jesus Christ. And so they rush a copy of this proclamation of fasting to George Washington. He's in New York. This is after the battle of Bunker Hill. And the British are filling up the harbor with their ships.

And Washington says, congress having ordered a day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer humbly to supplicate the mercy of Almighty God that it would please him to pardon all man able sins. The general commands all soldiers to pay strict obedience to the orders of the Continental Congress that they may incline the Lord and giver of victory to prosper our arms.

And then Washington appoints chaplains to every regiment. And he says the general wants every officer and man to live and act as becomes a Christian soldier, defending the dearest rights and liberties of our country.

And so, this was a given. I mean, you know, I've studied numbers and polling, and they, you they didn't have polling back then, but you can look at the numbers and the types of the churches in every area. Again, Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Lutheran, Dutch Reformed, Congregationalist.

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There were seven. So at the time of the founding, 98% of the country was Christian. Three million people, 98% Protestant, 1% Catholic. Only 30,000 Catholics. in a country with 3 million people. Catholics were only allowed in three colonies originally: Maryland, Pennsylvania and New York.

The first Catholic church in Virginia was 1795. Why 1795? Why not earlier? Because it was an Anglican Colony. They didn't allow the other denominations. Right? They did allow the Presbyterians, like west of the Blue Ridge Mountains, to sort of be a buffer between them and the Indians and everything.

And then at the time of the founding, one tenth of a percent Jewish. Three thousand Jews in a country with 3 million people. There were only seven synagogues in the entire nation. But it was 100% Judeo-Christian. And the Jews got involved in the revolution, which was a rare thing because after they were scattered, after the dispersion, they had a Rabbi Samuel, in Babylon, Persia.

And he said, look, our goal is to stay alive. God said pray for the country that you're in, that it may prosper, and you'll prosper with it. And so he came up with a phrase. The law of the land is the law. So whatever country you're in, just live by the laws of that country. And then do your Jewish stuff privately at home or in your own neighborhood.

They called the neighborhood the ghettos. Many countries, they wouldn't allow the Jews to live outside of their neighborhood. So they had to live there, which allowed their rabbi to be in charge. And it preserved their culture for 2000 years until Napoleon changed it and let the Jews live everywhere.

And it was good on one side because they had the freedom, but on the other side, it deemphasized the role of the pastor. So that's when you get some... But anyway, but the Jews wouldn't get involved in politics, because the next town over might have a different king. And if you're getting involved, you'd be fighting your own relatives.

And so they wouldn't get involved in the politics or the military of whatever town they were in. And so as a result, they were held suspect by everybody. Well, you're not helping us. Maybe

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you're helping the other side. And then in Europe, since they had their own neighborhoods, whenever there was something bad, they would blame the Jews.

There's a plague. It's the Jews' fault. There's a famine, it's the Jews' fault. And they would, you know, do these sporadic killings and pogroms and chase them out. They'd go from one country to another to another to another. But they didn't get involved in politics in any of those countries until they came to America.

And that's when you had Haim Solomon use his own personal credit to borrow money and give it to George Washington. Because the Declaration broke us from. From Europe. But we didn't have a government.

We had Articles of Confederation, but it gave zero power to the central government. Zero. So Washington had no way of having taxes. So it was up to the thirteen colonies to voluntarily donate money to Washington. But they were fighting their own battles and own militias.

And so Washington was always short of money. But here's this Jewish financier, Haim Solomon, and he's raising money. Another chapter that people often overlook is when the French were getting into the war. The King of Spain, Carlos III, set up a front company in Paris, Rodrigo Hartoles & Co.

And the King of Spain was funneling millions of dollars through this French front company to America. Supplies and arms and uniforms and rifles and gunpowder. Right? I mean, millions of dollars. The King of Spain financed the American Revolution for the first two years.

FRANK:

The enemy of my enemy is my friend kind of thing? They're going to take out Great Britain? Yeah.

BILL:

Because the Spanish wanted the Strait of Gibraltar. Right? And it was a ten year war where the Spaniards were trying to get back the Strait of Gibraltar from the British.

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And so they... But the Spanish were capturing British ships headed toward America with supplies. I mean they were like, and then you had the royal governor of New Spain, who's Bernardo de Galvez. And he raises an army of Spaniards from Cuba, and Puerto Rico, and Costa Rica, and he defeats the British at Pensacola, at Baton Rouge, at Natchez, and he drives the British out.

Yet he lets ships supplying Americans go up through the Mississippi River and Louisiana, up to the Ohio to supply Washington. And then you had the ladies of Havana. So when Rochambeau is coming over, finally the French navy, they stop off in Haiti looking for money, but there's no money.

And so he sends General Lafayette to Havana. And when the ladies of Havana heard that Lafayette was on his way to help George Washington, they donated their jewelry, their candelabras, their silverware, \$28 million...

[FRANK]:

Wow.

BILL:

...worth of gold and silver. And so Washington had the British cornered at Yorktown, but he was out of money, and his soldiers were leaving and he's like almost this victory but is almost going to be losing it. But then Rochambeau brings this big chest of gold and silver from the ladies of Havana with a note that the American mother's son shall not be born as slaves.

FRANK:

I wish you knew more about history, Bill, because if so, this would have been an interesting show. But it's fabulous as always and we're only halfway through ladies and gentlemen. This Friday we're going to do part two where I think we've established pretty securely that these men were Christians, and they relied on the Bible for a lot of what they put in our documents.

In fact, Bill, you've had, you have several books on this topic we can get into, but the next show we're going to deal with, okay, who were these founders and what happened to them? Because

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at the end of the Declaration, as we read earlier, it says that we rely on the protection of divine providence.

We mutually pledged each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor. Did they really have to pledge their lives and their fortunes and their sacred honor? Yeah, you're going to be shocked to learn what happened to some of the men that signed the Declaration of Independence. And that should tell us in this day that we always have to defend freedom.

Evil is always on the march. If we don't stop evil, evil will overrun us. As Edmund Burke, it's attributed to him anyway, famously said, the only thing necessary for evil to prevail is for good people to do nothing. We just can't sit here and do nothing.

We have to defend the freedoms that have been established in our founding documents. If we do not, eventually they will go away. And so, Bill, it's been a fascinating discussion. I love everything you know about this topic. And we're going to come back next show and continue by addressing those questions. Before we do, tell, our listeners your website and a book or two that they might get to read further.

BILL:

Well, thank you, Frank. One of the books is called Miracles in American History, and it's 32 stories of times in our country's past where there's a crisis. They pray, things turn around. During the revolution, rivers rising, fogs coming in, just exciting stories. The website is AmericanMinute.com

FRANK:

Also mention, Bill, I've had this book for a long time. You wrote it many years ago. It's a collection of quotations from the history of our leaders, even up to the more modern day. It's God and Country. Some... I don't have the title in front of me. What is the name of that book?

BILL:

Yeah, it's called America's God and Country Encyclopedia of Quotations. So it's 845 pages arranged alphabetically. So Abigail Adams at the front, and Booker T. Washington is at the back, has all the end notes so you can quote it with confidence.

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But it's just a great resource. Focus on the Family sold hundreds of thousands of copies of it. And I've had many congressmen and senators tell me that they've used it on the floor of Congress. Even the Supreme Court cited it by name. In 2003, there was a city of Greece, New York, opening with prayer in Jesus' name.

ACLU sues. And the justice Anthony Kennedy said, nothing wrong. Our Continental Congress opened with prayer in Jesus' name. Here's the prayer. And then it gives the source W. Federer, America's God and Country. And it's like, my friends that write history books, like Jerry Newcombe in Florida, and he's like, how did you get the Supreme Court to mention your book by name in the decision? It's like... [Laughter]

FRANK:

Divine providence. That's how. You did the hard work and it's paid off. So check out those two resources. In fact, we'll put them in the show notes, ladies and gentlemen, so you can just click on them and get them. Don't forget americanminute.com. You can get an email from Bill almost once a day on so much of our history, especially if you have kids, you ought to be able to teach them this.

They ought... They need to know this. Because if we don't know the past, we're going to be doomed to repeat history, bad history. We have to know what really happened and what we have to do to defend the truth. So tune in this coming Friday for part two of our celebration of the 250th anniversary of the founding of our nation. How it happened, what happened, and what we need to do now. And Lord willing, then we'll see you here then next time. God bless.

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