

DISCUSSION & REVIEW QUESTIONS:

- Mr. Charles begins the video by asking, “What role should religion play in a free society? ...To them [the founders] the issue of religion and freedom were inextricably linked. You couldn’t have freedom without religion.” How would you answer Mr. Charles’ question? Why do you think that the Founders believed religion to be so fundamental to freedom?
- Later in the video, Mr. Charles points out that, “The purpose of government, Jefferson and his compatriots believed, was not to bestow rights; rather, it was to protect those rights already endowed upon human beings by God.” Do you agree with the Founders premise regarding the purpose of government? Why or why not? In what ways do you think the controversy over President Jefferson’s line in his letter to the Danbury Baptists regarding the ‘wall of separation between church and state’ has been detrimental to people correctly understanding the larger picture of what President Jefferson and the other Founders intended for the role of religion in American society?
- Mr. Charles explains in the video that, “...government isn’t enough for a free society. A moral people is also required; that is, a people moral enough to police itself... for the Founders, liberty was not merely the ability to do what one wanted; it came with moral demands and boundaries... The Founders knew that the absolute enemy of freedom was, ironically, a freedom that was absolute and unrestrained.” Why shouldn’t anyone just be allowed to do whatever they want to? Why is ‘absolute and unrestrained’ freedom not really freedom? Explain.
- Mr. Charles goes on to share with us that, “John Adams believed that ‘the doctrine of a supreme, intelligent, wise, almighty sovereign of the universe,’ a doctrine he credited to Judaism, was the ‘great essential principle of all morality, and consequently of all civilization.’ And he applied this thinking specifically to the new nation he helped to create: ‘Our Constitution,’ he said, ‘was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.’” Why do you think President Adams believed that a doctrine of the Divine was essential for morality? Explain. Why do you think that President Adams characterized the U.S. Constitution as inadequate for any society devoid of ‘moral and religious people?’ Explain.
- At the conclusion of the video, Mr. Charles warns, “The Founders did not demand that anyone believe in any particular religion or even in God – quite the contrary. But while they understood the value of a secular government, they feared a secular society –one without religion. So should we.” What do you think that the value of a secular government is? Explain. Do you agree with Mr. Charles that we should fear a secular society? Why or why not?

EXTEND THE LEARNING:

CASE STUDY: Alexander Hamilton

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the article “What Did Alexander Hamilton Think of the French Revolution?” then answer the questions that follow.

- What examples did Hamilton provide as proof of the French disavowing Christianity and embracing atheism? What was Hamilton’s criticism of Napoleon, in terms of influencing the French to despise religion? What did Hamilton state about depravity and religion? What do you think Hamilton meant in the last line of the transcript given in the article?
- Why was Hamilton so scornful about the French trading out religion for secularism? Do you agree with Hamilton’s premise that a society cannot be moral without religion? Why or why not?
- Why do you think that so many people are ignorant in terms of the Founders intentions and motivations regarding the creation of the United States, especially in regards to the role religion should play? Do you think tempered and restrained freedom can exist without the moral boundaries that religion provides? Why or why not? Do you think that the thoughts and ideals of the Founders should still be important today, especially in terms of guiding our modern nation? Why or why not?



QUIZ

WAS AMERICA FOUNDED TO BE SECULAR?

- 1. The Founding Fouders of the United States believed _____.**
 - a. in the tyranny of the majority
 - b. you couldn't have freedom without religion
 - c. religion was useful, but unnecessary
 - d. England was a better place to live

- 2. What does a free society need in addition to government?**
 - a. A socialistic model.
 - b. High tariffs.
 - c. A people moral enough to police itself.
 - d. A strong sense of entitlement.

- 3. The Founders demanded everyone believe in the same religion.**
 - a. True
 - b. False

- 4. What did the Founders fear?**
 - a. A secular society.
 - b. A religious society.
 - c. A Catholic society.
 - d. An English society.

- 5. According to Alexander Hamilton, why did the French Revolution devolve into violence and chaos?**
 - a. Greater access to weaponry.
 - b. It was driven by religion.
 - c. The French people were being tortured.
 - d. It released an anti-religious force.



QUIZ - ANSWER KEY

WAS AMERICA FOUNDED TO BE SECULAR?

1. The Founding Fouders of the United States believed _____.
 - a. in the tyranny of the majority
 - b. you couldn't have freedom without religion
 - c. religion was useful, but unnecessary
 - d. England was a better place to live

2. What does a free society need in addition to government?
 - a. A socialistic model.
 - b. High tariffs.
 - c. A people moral enough to police itself.
 - d. A strong sense of entitlement.

3. The Founders demanded everyone believe in the same religion.
 - a. True
 - b. False

4. What did the Founders fear?
 - a. A secular society.
 - b. A religious society.
 - c. A Catholic society.
 - d. An English society.

5. According to Alexander Hamilton, why did the French Revolution devolve into violence and chaos?
 - a. Greater access to weaponry.
 - b. It was driven by religion.
 - c. The French people were being tortured.
 - d. It released an anti-religious force.

<http://thefederalistpapers.org/current-events/what-did-alexander-hamilton-think-of-the-french-revolution>

What Did Alexander Hamilton Think of the French Revolution?

July 28, 2013 By Bill Fortenberry

An acquaintance of mine recently returned from a trip to Europe where he had the opportunity to visit Paris on Bastille Day. Bastille Day is the English name given to the Le quatorze juillet (14th of July) celebration of the French Revolution.

As my friend described the various festivals and parades, I was reminded of Alexander Hamilton's assessment of the French Revolution. Here is an excerpt from Hamilton's lengthy condemnation of the actions of the French people:

“In reviewing the disgusting spectacle of the French revolution, it is difficult to avert the eye entirely from those features of it which betray a plan to disorganize the human mind itself, as well as to undermine the venerable pillars that support the edifice of civilized society. The attempt by the rulers of a nation to destroy all religious opinion, and to pervert a whole people to Atheism, is a phenomenon of profligacy reserved to consummate the infamy of the unprincipled reformers of France. The proofs of this terrible design are numerous and convincing.

“The animosity to the Christian system is demonstrated by the single fact of the ridiculous and impolitic establishment of the decades, with the evident object of supplanting the Christian Sabbath. The inscription by public authority on the tombs of the deceased, affirming death to be an eternal sleep, witness the desire to discredit the belief of the immortality of the soul. The open profession of Atheism in the Convention, received with acclamations; the honorable mention on its journals of a book professing to prove the *nothingness* of all religion; the institution of a festival to offer public worship to a courtesan decorated with the pompous title of “Goddess of Reason;” the congratulatory reception of impious children appearing in the hall of the Convention to lisp blasphemy against the King of Kings; are among the dreadful proofs of a conspiracy to establish Atheism on the ruins of Christianity—to deprive mankind of its best consolations and most animating hopes—and to make a gloomy desert of the universe.

“Latterly the indications of this plan are not so frequent as they were, but from time to time something still escapes which discovers that it is not renounced. The late address of *Buonaparte* to the Directory is an example. That unequalled conqueror, from whom it is painful to detract; in whom one would wish to find virtues worthy of his shining talents, prophanely unites religion (not superstition) with royalty, and the feudal system as the scourges of Europe for centuries past. The decades likewise remain the *catapulta* which is to batter down Christianity.

“Equal pains have been taken to deprave the morals as to extinguish the religion of the country, if indeed morality in a community can be separated from religion. It is among the singular and fantastic vagaries of the French revolution, that while the Duke of Brunswick was marching to Paris, a new law of divorce was passed; which makes it as easy for a husband to get rid of his wife, and a wife of her husband, as to discard a worn out habit. To complete the dissolution of those ties, which are the chief links of domestic and ultimately of social attachment, the Journals of the Convention record with guilty applause accusations preferred by children against the lives of their parents.

“It is not necessary to heighten the picture by sketching the horrid groups of proscriptions and murders which have made of France a den of pillage and slaughter; blackening with eternal opprobrium the very name of man.

The pious and the moral weep over these scenes as a sepulchre destined to entomb all they revere and esteem. The politician, who loves liberty, sees them with regret as a gulph that may swallow up the liberty to which he is devoted. He knows that morality overthrown (and morality *must* fall with religion) the terrors of despotism can alone curb the impetuous passions of man, and confine him within the bounds of social duty.”

Alexander Hamilton was just one of the many founders who condemned the results of the French Revolution. The French were intent on making changes to their country in order to gain more liberty and freedom for the common man, but in the process, they rejected the source of freedom by turning against the God of the Bible. Now, in our time, many Americans are desperately seeking relief from the tyranny which has been forced upon us. As we search for the best path back to freedom, let us not forget the example of the French. Let us always keep God at the center of our plans so that other nations looking to our example will have no reason to condemn us as our forefathers condemned the French.



About [Bill Fortenberry](#)

Bill Fortenberry is a native of Birmingham, AL where he currently resides with his wife and young son. He has been debating and writing in defense of the Christian faith for more than 20 years, and his articles have been featured in publications around the globe. He is the author of *Hidden Facts of the Founding Era*, a book which answers some of the most difficult challenges to the claim that America was founded as a Christian nation. Bill is also the founder of the [PersonhoodInitiative.com](#) website where his research on ectopic pregnancies has changed the nature of the pro-life debate, and he shares articles on a variety of topics on his personal website [IncreasingLearning.com](#).