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To cite this article: William B. Allen (2011) THE MORAL FOUNDATIONS OF POLITICAL CHOICES: GEORGE WASHINGTON, FOREIGN POLICY, AND NATIONAL CHARACTER, The Review of Faith & International Affairs, 9:4, 3-12, DOI: [10.1080/15570274.2011.630189](https://doi.org/10.1080/15570274.2011.630189)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15570274.2011.630189>



Published online: 06 Dec 2011.



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THE MORAL FOUNDATIONS OF POLITICAL CHOICES: GEORGE WASHINGTON, FOREIGN POLICY, AND NATIONAL CHARACTER

By William B. Allen

Reason, Religion, Philosophy, Policy, disavow the spurious and odious doctrine that we ought to cherish and cultivate enmity with any Nation whatever ... If you consult your true interest Your Motto cannot fail to be "Peace and Trade with All Nations; beyond our present engagements, POLITICAL CONNECTION WITH NONE."

—Horatius No. II¹

The extent and nature of George Washington's personal faith are a perennial source of contentious argument; everyone from Deists to conservative evangelicals have attempted to claim him as one of their own. But regardless of whatever particular theological doctrines Washington did or did not embrace privately, it is clear that religion and religiously grounded morality had a profound influence on key dimensions of his thought and action in the public sphere. Washington believed that (1) God's Providential hand had made the founding of the new republic possible, and that (2) the survival and success of this experiment was of enormous moral significance to world history, first and foremost because the nation held out

the promise of securing civil and religious liberty. But Washington also believed that (3) a republic, especially one in infancy like the fledgling United States, was very vulnerable, thus requiring vigilance to protect and strengthen, and that (4) God might withdraw the blessings of Providence if Americans did not exhibit character worthy of a republic.

My argument here is that these aspects of Washington's beliefs are essential to understanding his approach to foreign policy decision making. He discerned moral goods and moral imperatives, and was responsive to them, but at the same time he was no simplistic foreign policy moralist. In what follows I discuss two distinct foreign policy crises during his presidency that illustrate these dynamics. First, I discuss briefly a crisis that occurred in 1795–96 when John Jay ended a long negotiation with Britain to settle outstanding issues from the revolutionary war and the unenforced Treaty of Paris of 1783. The terms of the Jay treaty evoked a wrenching

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domestic political debate of great moral import. Second, I discuss at more length a crisis that occurred in 1792–93 as Europe became engulfed in the precursor of modern world wars, the confrontation between revolutionary France and the allied princes of Europe. I conclude with a discussion of how Washington’s beliefs were manifest in his many efforts to strengthen the new nation, not just in terms of enumerated powers on constitutional paper, but also in broader political, economic, and moral terms.

The Jay Treaty

The Jay Treaty debate demanded much deliberation and resolve on Washington’s part. What lay at the heart of the dispute helps reveal how far Washington was willing to respond to moral imperatives. The purpose of the Jay Treaty was to settle outstanding claims on both sides of the revolutionary struggle, to get Britain once and for all to evacuate the western territories of the United States, to settle reasonable terms of commercial exchange, and to effectuate appropriate compensations for damaged or appropriated properties on both sides. Within this last area a sensitive issue arose, triggering immense opposition to the Treaty, albeit usually under other pretexts. One extant claim for compensation was for runaway or “carried away” slaves. The abolitionist Jay simply did not honor this expectation and returned a treaty silent on the question. Washington’s decision to ratify the treaty was effectively a decision to dismiss the justice of the claims for compensation or repatriation of the slaves.

The basis for this decision is laid out in compelling clarity by Alexander Hamilton, who at Washington’s request produced a series of 38 “Defence” essays (under the pseudonym “Camillus”) devoted to the Jay Treaty, and several other essays under the names of “Horatius” and “Philo Camillus.” In short, Hamilton here made a contribution to the literature of the founding fully as substantial as his contribution to *The Federalist Papers*.²

Hamilton saw the problem of slavery as a moral problem, in which terms the request for a repatriation of slaves (the original request by the Confederation Congress in reference to the Treaty of Paris [1783]) was “odious” to the law of

nations and natural right. The slaves, whether captured or induced to defect, received their liberty from the British, and the demand for their return amounted to a demand to reduce free men to slavery. Insofar as they were in fact free men, and not property, the demand for compensation was inconsistent with legal norms. More importantly still, if they were taken “as property,” then the laws of war would have treated them as booty, and therefore also not subject to reclaim.

Washington set Hamilton to work on defending the Jay Treaty with a long list of considerations to which he sought a response, just as he launched the preparation of the “Farewell Address” with a “draft” that he charged Hamilton to perfect. By such directions Washington revealed his intentions. Thus, it was Washington’s decision to ratify and defend the Jay Treaty without the slavery provision and on the grounds announced by Hamilton in the Horatius letter, which declared that “*Reason, Religion, Philosophy, Policy*” guided the decisions.³

War in Europe 1792–93

The central question during the European war resulted from the 1778 treaty of mutual defense with France, obligating each to come to the defense of the other. Those terms contributed decisively to the successful outcome of America’s revolutionary war, and the issue in 1793 was whether the United States would honor during France’s hour of peril both its debt of gratitude and its putative legal obligation.

Critical questions arose, however, around the issues of (1) whether the France to which the United States had plighted itself (the monarchy of Louis XVI) still existed, and (2) whether a treaty of mutual defense could properly be evoked in the instance of an aggressive war rather than a defensive one. The first question was important to Washington morally, inasmuch as from the beginning he harbored doubts about the legitimacy of the French Revolution of 1789, based not upon affection for the monarchy but concern that the revolution’s radicalism threatened the very foundations of republican government. Not the least source of these doubts was the anti-clericalism of the French Revolution.

To Washington's mind this was a direction alien to the progressive affirmation of civil and religious liberty that had anchored his commitment in America. The idea of rising to the defense of a nation whose every bearing ran counter to the expectations of justice and prosperity to which Washington clung presented an unpalatable prospect.

More broadly, and more importantly, Washington believed that the United States owed foremost to secure its own national character before putting itself at risk in an hour of weakness. The first counsel of national interest, therefore, was to secure the United States as far as possible from foreign embroilments. Washington's response to the crisis was accordingly a "Proclamation of Neutrality" issued in 1793.⁴

In his "Farewell Address" in 1796, Washington defended this foreign policy approach, famously warning the nation against foreign entanglements. "Why," asked Washington, "by interweaving our destiny with that of any part of Europe, entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition, rivalry, interest, humor or caprice?"⁵ That same year French Minister Pierre Adet labeled Washington a "Machiavellian" for his refusal to aid France.⁶ But this decision was not mere *realpolitik*. Rather, it was in large part a product of his belief in a moral imperative to preserve and strengthen the fragile young republic. The "Farewell Address" describes the founding of a free society and the conditions of its preservation in a world that offers no sinecure for freedom. Washington held that the free society did not arise spontaneously but required building. The principles of its architecture alone could provide the basis for judging the uses and practices to which it would be put.

Washington was also explicit in invoking the roles of divine providence and morality in nation-building. In his first inaugural address he described the hand of God as "that Invisible Hand" which authors "every public and private good." To merit the "propitious smiles" of the "Invisible Hand," however, the nation must show regard for the "rules of order and right." These rules establish a strict relationship, "in the

economy and course of nature," between "virtue and happiness" or "duty and advantage" and between "the genuine maxim of an honest and magnanimous policy and the solid rewards of public prosperity and felicity."⁷ Referring to the "great assemblage of communities and interests" represented in the government, he discerned a pledge that

the foundations of our national policy will be laid in the pure and immutable principles of private morality; and the pre-eminence of a free government be exemplified by all the attributes which can win the affection of its citizens and command the respect of the world.⁸

Washington believed the republic required people of "enlightened opinion," who were in possession of a national morality capable of appreciating transcendent interests rather than merely transient or partisan ones. To Washington, America's independence of ties of fidelity to foreign nations was not rooted in Machiavellianism, or the ready will to do what serves one's momentary interest. Rather the independence was for Washington an expression of the permanent quest for justice. Parties and foreign interests are regarded in identical terms by Washington: as wills competing with the will of the society.

The free society's pursuit of its interest, guided by justice, is dependent upon the assurance of its safety. That means assuring the freedom to choose peace or war. Washington believed that America should recognize its own way as good and deserving of defense against all dangers. This posture requires distinguishing forms of safety necessary to the free society. In this regard Washington provided enduring guidance for the foreign policy of a republican regime.

In Washington's view, the danger was that instead of republican government America would devolve into an unstable form of democracy in which men and their parties take turns using one another for their own ends. The differences among parties always reflect at least the germ of these extremes; or, what makes parties in fact

parties is that their aims, like their interests, are by definition mutually exclusive. But no community can recognize interests mutually exclusive within itself without thereby diluting, poisoning, its wholeness. It can have no will; its voice will always speak the will of another, whether a mere part of the community or some power external to it. It is possible neither to love, nor to defend a city which has no voice, which is only a city in name. That is the reason that Washington's "Farewell" warnings against excessive partisanship are the reciprocal of his warnings against permanent attachments or enmities to foreign states.

Now, "public and private felicity" (as he put it) are the outcomes or rewards of the "virtue or morality" that engenders the free society.⁹ While virtue and morality do not tell the whole story of the motive principle of republican government, they do in large measure serve to provide its necessary motion. The aim of this government is human happiness, but the public opinion which its structure enthrones conduces to that end only when it is nurtured in principles of decency based on the transcendent expression of interest. Stated in practical terms: Civil order and future peace are subject to necessities to which public opinion must be reconciled, else government will lack such ordinary powers, even, as that of raising sufficient revenues.

This might suggest an instrumental account of virtue. That virtue, however, only becomes possible in the presence of "public happiness," or the consummation of a transcendent expression of interests. Thus, the virtue which preserves the power of government is at the same time the expression of principles of humanity and civilization as the basis of the people's relationships with all other peoples. The consummation of a transcendent expression of interests makes it possible for America to deal with others, not on considerations of mere

interest, but on the basis of sentiments "which ennoble human nature."¹⁰

The bottom line for Washington was that the United States should only consider European embroilment in cases of absolute necessity, e.g., if a threat to America's existence might make a political connection the means of defense. But the absence of such necessity at the close of the 18th century created a necessity of its own: That America may so strengthen herself as to be ever independent of political connections for her defense. That eventuality would make permanent the aim of pursuing the course of humanity in foreign relations; that is, America could pursue her own interests, guided by justice. The nation is

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at liberty to make justice its guide in choosing peace or war only to the degree that it suffers no compulsion in regard to the safety of its citizens.

In closing the "Farewell" Washington invoked his deeds to affirm the degree of his success in pursuing these principles. Washington chose the 1793 Proclamation of Neutrality as his central deed.

According to Washington, the mutual defense treaty served its purpose in the Revolutionary War; without it America may have died aborning. But the refusal to apply it in France's hour of need also served its purpose; it both preserved the fragile, infant republic from ravages of war that may have been fatal to it and preserved to it the British commerce that was vital for it. The breaking, as the plighting of faith preserved the transcendent interest of the United States.

The people were not wholly aware of the nature of their experiment in free government. Washington was so. He had a design, he admitted, to assure the country's capacity to rule its own fate, pursue its own interest. That design depended on two things. The country needed time to build strength sufficient to pursue its interests freely. But secondly, it also needed to discover the interest it had as a country, its transcendent interest.

Constituting a Nation

Bearing these observations in mind, we may then find special vigor in the formulations Washington provided in the most important of his letters and political papers. Washington almost never relented in his labors to encourage a strengthening of the national government.¹¹ He maintained an extensive private correspondence devoted largely to this purpose; he pursued projects such as the Potomac–Ohio canal scheme specifically with the view in mind of strengthening the union; and he lost no chance to further opportunities to build the powers of the Confederation or, ultimately, to call a new convention.

Prior to the end of the war, also, Washington had been instrumental in pushing for reform. From his vantage point as Commander in Chief of the American forces he not only lobbied incessantly for a strengthened Congress (and more talented representatives) but also pushed ideas of union over provincialism. As early as 1775, just after being named supreme commander, he addressed his troops with the hope that “all distinctions of colonies will be laid aside; so that one and the same spirit may animate the whole.” He named this whole the “United Provinces of North America,”¹² indicating thereby the substance of his appeal to Canadians later that same year:

Come, then, my Brethren, Unite with us in an indissoluble Union ... We look forward with pleasure to that day not far remote (we hope) when the Inhabitants of America shall have one sentiment and the full enjoyment of the blessings of a free government.¹³

While the first of these appeals may be read as indicating an appeal only to a notion of contingent union, when combined with the second it seems clear that Washington meant to lay aside the “distinctions” of separate colonies once and for all. He had already defined the “united states of America,” which did not get its name officially until July 2, 1776 in the Declaration of Independence. Washington

understood the union to follow from reposing on the hope of a specific form of government: republican government. When he was called upon to vindicate his honor and rank against that of General Gage, he did so by invoking that most honorable rank “which flows from the uncorrupted Choice of a brave and free People, the purest source and original Fountain of all power.”¹⁴

Such an ambition would have required, over and above the vague hope of union, some specific notions of the form to be instituted. That it must be republican is the first level of specificity. That the goal was susceptible of further refinement was suggested by Washington’s continued recourse to it throughout the war. From Valley Forge he returned to the general notion:

If we are to pursue a right system of policy, in my opinion, there should be none of these distinctions. We should all be considered, Congress, Army, etc. as one people, embarked in one cause, in one interest; acting on the same principle and to the same end.¹⁵

This end entailed not only the framing of a specific constitution, but a constitution understood as creating a *regime*—a characteristic way of life. Washington and his troops were struggling “for every thing valuable in society” and “laying the foundation of an *Empire*.”¹⁶ Not surprisingly, therefore, he had considered long before what that may entail in the way of considerations:

To form a new government, requires infinite care, and unbounded attention; for if the foundation is badly laid the superstructure must be bad. Too much time, therefore, cannot be bestowed in weighing and digesting matters well ... Every man should consider, that he is lending his aid to frame a constitution which is to render millions happy, or miserable, and that a matter of such moment cannot be the work of a day.¹⁷

That he saw this as a continental effort may be gathered from his invocation of the fate of future “millions” (since Virginia alone was only a few hundred thousand).

The *locus classicus* for Washington’s ideas is the renowned 1783 “Circular Address to the Governors of the Thirteen States,” which argued for a specific character of the regime to be founded. According to the “Circular Address,” the situation was such that the American people enjoyed “a vast tract of continent,” assuring “all the necessities and conveniences of life,” and possessing “absolute freedom and independency.”¹⁸ In short, Americans lacked nothing of what could be called the ordinary incidents or conditions of prosperity. They did, however, lack the one extraordinary condition for the full exploitation of these blessings—namely, “political happiness.” Washington conveyed this bad news in a characteristically positive fashion; he said that “Heaven” left them the “opportunity” for political happiness.¹⁹

The notion of an “opportunity for political happiness” was not mere rhetorical gloss, however, for Washington meant by it, also, the availability of those distinctive conditions and instruments for the attainment of the end. Added to the material conditions of American life were those “treasures of knowledge” which had superseded the “gloomy age of ignorance and superstition” and provided specific tools to establish “forms of government.” The tools: “the free cultivation of letters; the unbounded extension of commerce; the progressive refinement of manners; the growing liberality of sentiment, and above all, the pure and benign light of Revelation.”²⁰

One might ask why, with such blessings, this remained for Washington a time of “political probation” for Americans. Washington’s answer was that they had not yet applied the tools available to them to give themselves a “national character”—a regime. He did not fail, therefore, to recommend immediate steps to that end:

WASHINGTON’S
UNWAVERING GOAL IN THIS
ENDEAVOR WAS TO CREATE A
NATION DEDICATED TO AND
CAPABLE OF SUSTAINING
CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

1st. An indissoluble Union of the States under one Federal Head

2dly. A sacred regard to Public Justice

3dly. Adoption of a proper Peace-Establishment. And,

4thly. The prevalence of that pacific and friendly disposition among the people of the United States, which will induce them to forget their local prejudices and policies, to make those mutual concessions which are requisite to the general prosperity, and, in some instances, to sacrifice their individual advantages to the interest of the community.²¹

Before the citizens could become “the purest source, and original Fountain of all power,” they required to be welded into something more than just an aggregate of individual wills. When Washington warned in the “Circular Address” that Americans might learn that

“there is a natural and necessary progression from the extreme of anarchy to the extreme of tyranny,” he meant above all to arraign the notion that individuals could enjoy self-government as anything other than citizens of a common regime.²²

Washington made clear in the address that the conditions for achieving the status of “a people” in the United States hinged completely upon the establishment of a rule of justice, not only within the institutions, but within the souls of its people. A spirit of moderation, understood as a moral proposition—i.e., the acceptance of self-government as an objective not only in institutional terms but within the soul of each—is that without which “we can never hope to be a happy nation.”²³

Moreover, Washington’s unwavering goal in this endeavor was to create a nation dedicated to and capable of sustaining civil and religious liberty—the intertwined end of politics as he saw it. The work itself was relentlessly pragmatic, but Washington made clear in a July 20, 1788 letter to Jonathan Trumbull that he saw the hand of

God at work in the establishment of the nation, as he instructed Trumbull to

trace the finger of providence through those dark and mysterious events, which first induced the States to appoint a general Convention and then led them one after another (by such steps as were best calculated to effect the object) into an adoption of the system recommended by that general Convention; thereby, in all human probability, laying a lasting foundation for tranquility and happiness; when we had but too much reason to fear that confusion and misery were coming rapidly upon us.²⁴

Do not think these invocations of Providence and of religious liberty to confirm mere pieties. For Washington was prolix on the subject and made clear that it was more than a nicety. Perhaps the best way to assess this dimension of Washington's founding contribution and his basic political thought would be to trace from beginning to end the genetic connection between his political goals and the justifications he typically offered for them. Of these justifications none were more frequently and emphatically repeated than "to afford a capacious asylum for the poor and persecuted of the earth."²⁵ When Washington embraced the idea of rescuing the "poor and persecuted" he embraced the twin goals of fostering prosperity and religious liberty. Nor did he ever conceive that they could be separated, as his encouragements to a wide diversity of religious sects revealed.

These are all elements of a grand design. This was made retrospectively manifest in the instruction Washington provided Alexander Hamilton regarding the crafting of the "Farewell Address":

Let me pray you, therefore, to introduce a Section in the Address expressive of these sentiments, and recommendatory of the measure [a national university]; ... *Such a Section would come in very properly after the one which relates to our religious obligations,*

or in a preceding part, as one of the recommendatory measures to counteract the evils arising from Geographical discriminations.²⁶

It was natural for Washington to connect his ideas with his understanding of religious liberty and religious obligations, for he already aimed to emphasize in the "Farewell" that,

[o]f all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, Religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of Patriotism, who should labour to subvert these great Pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of Men and citizens ... And let us with caution indulge the supposition, that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that National morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle...

Promote then as an object of primary importance, institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge. In proportion as the structure of a government gives force to public opinion, it is essential that that public opinion should be enlightened.²⁷

Religion, then, constituted a fundamental element and background for "the general diffusion of knowledge," and both were necessary "in proportion" as the government was founded in "public opinion."

In his "Eighth Annual Message" Washington had declared the goal of assimilating "the principles, opinions, and manners, of our countrymen,"²⁸ and that goal coincided with the goal declared in the "Circular Address of 1783." He argued that whatever would dissolve the Union or lessen the sovereign authority of the United States would in fact be hostile to liberty. It was no accident, then, that within the same time frame as the "Circular Address" he could write to

the Reformed German Congregation that “The establishment of Civil and Religious Liberty was the Motive which induced me to the Field,” adding to that declaration of intent his “earnest wish and prayer, that the Citizens of the United States would make a wise and virtuous use of the blessings placed before them.”²⁹

In short, Washington conceived of religious liberty not as a side benefit of independence but rather as the objective for which independence was sought. “In war He directed the sword and in peace He has ruled in our councils,” he told the Hebrew Congregations in January 1790.³⁰ And to Roman Catholics in March of that same year he wrote:

America, under the smiles of a Divine Providence, the protection of a good government, and the cultivation of manners, morals, and piety, cannot fail of attaining an uncommon degree of eminence in literature, commerce, agriculture, improvements at home and respectability abroad.³¹

Washington was modest about his own agency in the transformation of the United States into the land of a chosen people. On the other hand, he was bold in consistently asserting his understanding of what was necessary and his determined pursuit of the goal. In a 1789 letter to Marquis de LaFayette he wrote that the goal was

to establish a general system of policy, which if pursued will ensure permanent felicity to the Commonwealth. I think I see a *path*, as clear and as direct as a ray of light, which leads to the attainment of that object. Nothing but harmony, honesty, industry and frugality are necessary to make us a great and happy people. Happily the present posture of affairs and the prevailing disposition of my countrymen promise to co-operate in establishing those four great and essential pillars of public felicity.³²

The “four great pillars” that Washington *discerned* in this letter just happen to correspond

perfectly with the four “pillars” that he *prescribed* in the 1783 “Circular Address:” indissoluble union, justice, “a proper peace establishment,” and that harmony among the people that occasions prosperity and sometimes requires “sacrifice of individual advantages” in the interest of the community.

Conclusion

By analogy we might apply to Washington the words written by Paul about Abraham: He looked forward to the well-founded city, one ultimately designed and built by God (see Hebrews 11:9–11). Washington’s deep religious faith and profound political vision are too little acknowledged today. Indeed, for two centuries, the world has celebrated Washington largely for his actions, especially on the battlefield, more than for his words and thought. Washington’s actions do speak to us and in them we can discern, readily enough, the fine political vision that guided his entire public life. But Washington’s words also eloquently and powerfully declare a vision—a lofty design for the just city.

Washington was realistic about the nature of power and the affairs of governments, but he was no mere Machiavellian. His religiously grounded moral beliefs were a critically important factor shaping his foreign policy actions and his enduring vision of the kind of national character that would be pleasing to God and genuinely earn respectability abroad. If there is any one quotation that best encapsulates Washington’s approach, it is the closing of the 1783 “Circular Address.” Instead of reaching for the kind of religious triumphalism that is all too common in political rhetoric throughout history, Washington adapted the humble prayer from Micah 6:8 (“What does God ask of man, but to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?”) into an ambitious program to build the city of justice.

That [God] would graciously be pleased to dispose us all, to do justice, to love mercy, and to demean ourselves with that Charity, humility and pacific

temper of mind, which were the
characteristics of the Divine author of
our blessed Religion, and without an

humble imitation of whose example in
these things, we can never hope to be a
happy nation.³³ ♦

1. Hamilton, July 1795 essay. In Syrett, *Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, 76.
2. See, Hamilton, Madison, and Jay, *The Federalist Papers*.
3. Hamilton, July 1795 essay. In Syrett, *Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, 76.
4. This attitude also explains his dealing with the Barbary pirates through the payment of “consular representation fees” that amounted to tacit ransom payments. As the United States was not in a position to “bid defiance” to the world, the nation had of necessity to accommodate to unsavory practices.
5. Washington, “Farewell Address,” 1796. In Allen, *George Washington*, 525.
6. Turner, *Correspondence of the French Ministers*, 954. For the counter-Machiavellian tendency of the American founding, or at least Washington’s founding, see Allen, “Machiavelli and Modernity.”
7. Washington, “First Inaugural Address,” April 30, 1789. In Allen, *George Washington*, 462.
8. Ibid.
9. Washington, “Farewell Address,” 1796. In Allen, *George Washington*, 521.
10. Ibid., 522–3.
11. See Freeman, *George Washington*, vols. V & VI. Also, see Risjord, *Chesapeake Politics*, chapters 3–8, especially pages 84–5. Compare with Marshall, *The Life of George Washington*, chapters III & IV.
12. Washington, “General Orders,” July 4, 1775, from Cambridge. In Allen, *George Washington*, 42.
13. Washington, “To the Inhabitants of Canada” [1775]. In Allen, *George Washington*, 47.
14. Washington, “To General Thomas Gage,” August 20, 1775. In Fitzpatrick, *The Writings of George Washington*, 431.
15. Washington, “To John Bannister,” April 21, 1778, Valley Forge. In Allen, *George Washington*, 98–104.
16. Washington, “General Orders,” March 1, 1778, Valley Forge. In Allen, *George Washington*, 95 (original emphasis).
17. Washington, “To John Augustine Washington,” May 31, 1776. In Allen, *George Washington*, 69–70.
18. Washington, “Circular Address to the Governors of the Thirteen States,” June 14, 1783. In Allen, *George Washington*, 240.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid., 241.
21. Ibid., 242.
22. Ibid., 243.
23. Ibid., 249.
24. Washington, “To Jonathan Trumbull,” July 20, 1788. In Allen, *George Washington*, 411–2.
25. Washington, “To Thomas Jefferson,” August 31, 1788. In Allen, *George Washington*, 418. Consider also what Washington said to his troops five years earlier: “Happy, thrice happy shall they be pronounced hereafter, who have contributed any thing, who have performed the meanest office in erecting this stupendous *fabrick of Freedom and Empire* on the broad basis of Indipendency; who have assisted in protecting the rights of humane nature and establishing an Asylum for the poor and oppressed of all nations and religions.” Washington, “General Orders,” April 18, 1783. In Allen, *George Washington*, 237 (original emphasis).
26. Washington, “To Alexander Hamilton,” September 1, 1796. In Allen, *George Washington*, 650 (emphasis added).
27. Washington, “Farewell Address,” 1796. In Allen, *George Washington*, 521–2.
28. Washington, “Eighth Annual Address,” December 7, 1796. In Allen, *George Washington*, 243.
29. Washington, “To the Reformed German Congregation of New York,” November 27, 1783. In Allen, *George Washington*, 270.
30. George Washington, “Letter to the Hebrew Congregations”, January 1790, TeachingAmericanHistory.org, <http://www.teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?documentprint=395> (accessed August 31, 2011).
31. Washington, “To Roman Catholics,” March 1790. In Allen, *George Washington*, 546.
32. Washington, “To Marquis de LaFayette,” January 29, 1789. In Allen, *George Washington*, 428.
33. Washington, “Circular Address to the Governors of the Thirteen States,” June 14, 1783. In Allen, *George Washington*, 249.

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