


June 2018

# Cast Off the Yoke of Tyranny!: The Influence of the Reformation upon the Enlightenment and World Revolution

Kevan D. Keane

*Liberty University*, [kdkeane@liberty.edu](mailto:kdkeane@liberty.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/ljh>

 Part of the [European History Commons](#), [History of Christianity Commons](#), [History of Religion Commons](#), [Intellectual History Commons](#), [Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

## Recommended Citation

Keane, Kevan D. (2018) "Cast Off the Yoke of Tyranny!: The Influence of the Reformation upon the Enlightenment and World Revolution," *Bound Away: The Liberty Journal of History*: Vol. 2 : Iss. 1 , Article 1.  
Available at: <http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/ljh/vol2/iss1/1>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@Liberty University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Bound Away: The Liberty Journal of History by an authorized editor of DigitalCommons@Liberty University. For more information, please contact [scholarlycommunication@liberty.edu](mailto:scholarlycommunication@liberty.edu).

---

# Cast Off the Yoke of Tyranny!: The Influence of the Reformation upon the Enlightenment and World Revolution

## **Abstract**

This paper explores the connection between the Protestant Reformation and the Revolutions in America and France during the eighteenth century. When the Reformation started, with it came a strong opposition to absolutism and other forms of perceived tyranny. Over time, this culminated in both the American and French Revolutions. An oft-neglected subject in the history of these events, however, is the influence of the Reformation upon Enlightenment philosophers such as John Locke. Locke lived in seventeenth-century England at a time when the Geneva Bible outdid the King James Bible in popularity. The Geneva Bible contained marginal notes that promoted the deposition of tyrannical monarchs. The author begins with tracing revolutionary events since the Lutheran Reformation in Germany, including the Peasants' Revolt and eventually the English Civil War, and finally the American and French Revolutions. Rather than show the Reformation and the Enlightenment as two distinct streams leading to the river of the Revolutions, the author shows that the Reformation, Enlightenment and the Revolutions all come from one stream, with its head at the Reformation.

Keane: Cast Off the Yoke of Tyranny!

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

CAST OFF THE YOKE OF TYRANNY!: The Influence of the Reformation upon the  
Enlightenment and World Revolutions

Submitted to Dr. Douglas Mann in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the completion of

HIWD 560-B01

History of the Atlantic World

By

Kevan D. Keane

June 27, 2015

### Abstract

This paper explores the connection between the Protestant Reformation and the Revolutions in America and France during the eighteenth century. When the Reformation started, with it came a strong opposition to absolutism and other forms of perceived tyranny. Over time, this culminated in both the American and French Revolutions. An oft-neglected subject in the history of these events, however, is the influence of the Reformation upon Enlightenment philosophers such as John Locke. Locke lived in seventeenth-century England at a time when the Geneva Bible outdid the King James Bible in popularity. The Geneva Bible contained marginal notes that promoted the deposition of tyrannical monarchs. The author begins with tracing revolutionary events since the Lutheran Reformation in Germany, including the Peasants' Revolt and eventually the English Civil War, and finally the American and French Revolutions. Rather than show the Reformation and the Enlightenment as two distinct streams leading to the river of the Revolutions, the author shows that the Reformation, Enlightenment and the Revolutions all come from one stream, with its head at the Reformation.

## Contents

Introduction.....	3
<b>The Reformation as a Political Movement.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Geneva Intensifies the Resistance.....</b>	<b>6</b>
The Spread of the Genevan Reformation.....	8
<b>Revolutionary Fever Spreads to England.....</b>	<b>9</b>
The Reformed Secret Weapon: The Geneva Bible and its Marginal Notes.....	11
War Breaks Out in England and Scotland.....	13
The Next Phase of Revolution: A Temporary Revival of the Republic.....	14
<b>The Revolution Crosses the Atlantic.....</b>	<b>16</b>
John Locke in Context: His Philosophy and His Background in Puritan England.....	16
<b>Reformed Revival: Calvinism, the Great Awakening, and the     American Revolution.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>The Relationship of the Reformation to the French Revolution.....</b>	<b>21</b>
Reflections.....	24
Conclusion.....	26
Bibliography.....	30



## Introduction

When Martin Luther nailed the Ninety-Five Theses to the door of the Castle Church at Wittenberg, this began the chain of events later known as the Protestant Reformation. The Reformation replaced multiple foundations of European political, sociocultural, and religious life, which previously had the Roman Catholic Church for its foundations. Of all of the areas which experienced radical change from the Reformation, one that often escapes scholarly notice is the Reformation as the root of revolutions around the Atlantic world. From its beginning, one key fruit of the Reformation anywhere it went was revolution. The revolutions in America and France, among others, were the fruit of the Protestant Reformation.

Scholars who undertake research in this area often turn to the political theory of John Locke or other Enlightenment philosophers. However, even the Enlightenment is not without Reformation influence. John Locke was born in England during a time period in which the Geneva Bible was still heavily popular. Scholars of Atlantic World revolutions often study the political history behind the events without paying enough attention to the religious history. In fact, the two are one. The Atlantic World revolutions are a continuation of the history of Protestantism.

The Geneva Bible, a key translation of the Scriptures during the English Reformation, included marginal notes that contained much Calvinist doctrine, including many of the sentiments that John Locke espoused when denouncing tyranny in his writings. Additionally, several of the American revolutionaries were part of various churches that came out of the Reformation, particularly that of Geneva, and spent much of their lives hearing Reformation doctrine that they eventually used as support for the revolution. In France, revolution was as much a nationwide destruction of Christianity as it was a revolt against the monarchy. However,

the origins of the French Revolution are not exclusively found in the Enlightenment. The Protestant Reformation in France was the start of a long chain of events that began with a revolt against Catholicism and ended with the violent outbreak against the monarchy and Christianity in general. The latter was the fruit of the former. Ultimately, it was the Reformation, and not the Enlightenment, that planted the revolutionary seeds that forever transformed the Atlantic World.

### **The Reformation as a Political Movement**

Luther's nailing of the Ninety-Five Theses was an event that had far more meaning than simply challenging the Roman Catholic Church. Luther challenged the entire religious and political structure on which society was built in Western Europe. He did so initially because of the corruption present in the sale of indulgences. Luther contended that if the Pope truly had the power to save souls from purgatory with indulgences, then he should save everyone.<sup>1</sup> In effect, Luther was not simply calling the Pope to task on hypocrisy, but was essentially accusing him of tyranny by making this statement. By challenging the Roman Catholic Church, he also challenged the Holy Roman Empire itself. Luther's unwillingness to surrender his newfound convictions eventually earned him excommunication from the Church. However, his views won wide support in most of Germany, and many saw in them an application that transcended all levels of society.<sup>2</sup>

One group which drew inspiration and courage from Luther was the peasants, who revolted against the nobility in 1524. They gained access to Luther's writings, among others.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Martin Luther, "The 95 Theses," 81, 91, accessed June 30, 2015, <http://www.luther.de/en/95thesen.html>.

<sup>2</sup> For more information concerning Luther and the Reformation in Germany, see Roland H. Bainton, *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1978).

<sup>3</sup> The peasants drew their influence from several of the early reformers, including Martin Luther, Ulrich Zwingli, Andreas Karlstadt, etc.



The peasants admired Luther's courageous stand against the Catholic Church and his refusal to back down even when demanded to recant. They desired freedom from the oppression from the nobility, and took even greater courage when Luther said in *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church* that "no one...may justly impose laws upon Christians without their consent, for we are free from all things."<sup>4</sup> However, Luther sharply denounced their actions and made clear that he not only did not condone their revolt but supported their suppression.<sup>5</sup> The peasants thus lost their revolt in a brutal massacre.

Nevertheless, the printing press aided in the spread of the Reformation to different parts of Europe, and with it the notions that government is by the consent of the governed and tyranny should be forcefully resisted.<sup>6</sup> Ulrich Zwingli, the initial Reformer of Zurich, Switzerland, also taught that Christians should not obey tyrannical governments but should prefer death instead.<sup>7</sup> As the Reformation progressed, war broke out between Catholics and Protestants all over

---

<sup>4</sup> Martin Luther, "On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church," 3.31.1, accessed July 1, 2015, <http://www.lutherdansk.dk/Web-babylonian%20Captivitate/Martin%20Luther.htm>. They also had access to his other major treatise, *Concerning Christian Liberty*, which they further used to support the idea of a revolution, taking such statements as "a Christian man is the most free lord of all, and subject to none," forgetting that Luther said immediately afterwards that "a Christian man is the most dutiful servant of all, and subject to everyone" (Martin Luther, "Concerning Christian Liberty," accessed July 1, 2015, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1911/1911-h/1911-h.htm>).

<sup>5</sup> Martin Luther, *Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants*, accessed June 30, 2015, <http://www.scrollpublishing.com/store/Luther-Peasants.html>. It is also noteworthy that the peasants actually took the above quote from the *Babylonian Captivity* out of context. Luther wrote this about the papacy and their unjust imposition of spiritual laws upon Christians rather than earthly rulers. He followed the statement with: "If any laws are laid on us, we must bear them in such a way as to preserve the consciousness of our liberty. We must know and strongly affirm that the making of such laws is unjust, then we will bear and rejoice in this injustice. We will be careful neither to justify the tyrant nor to complain against his tyranny" (Luther, *Babylonian Captivity*, 3.31.2-4).

<sup>6</sup> The Reformation would not have become as popular as it did without the assistance of the printing press. For more information on the printing press and its effects on Europe, see Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*, (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

<sup>7</sup> Andries W. G. Raath and Simon De Freitas, "Calling and Resistance: Huldrych Zwingli's Political Theology and His Legacy of Resistance to Tyranny," (University of the Free State, 2001), accessed October 24, 2015, <http://www.koersjournal.org.za/index.php/koers/article/viewFile/362/325>. Zwingli's views were not fully developed until John Calvin's ministry in Geneva, another canton of Switzerland.

Western Europe.<sup>8</sup> The fighting finally came to a temporary halt with the Peace of Augsburg in 1555, in which the Roman Empire ruled that whosoever had the rule in any given territory, the same also held the dominant religion of that land.<sup>9</sup> This brought an end to some of the conflict, but war continued to dominate Europe as Catholics and Protestants contended for supremacy over the course of the next century.

### **Geneva Intensifies the Resistance**

Though the Swiss Reformation began with Ulrich Zwingli in the canton of Zurich, John Calvin eventually became its leader in the canton of Geneva. Among Calvin's most significant works is the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, which he revised several times during his life and ministry. In this monumental work, Calvin espoused some ideas similar to Luther's.

In the *Institutes*, Calvin indisputably calls for obedience and the maintaining of the public order, no matter how wicked or unjust the ruler may be.<sup>10</sup> To prove his point, he cites the thirteenth chapter of Romans, in which Paul writes "Rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same. For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid, for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, an avenger to

---

<sup>8</sup> These conflicts include the second battle of Kappel, in which Ulrich Zwingli fought and died, and the Schmalkaldic War (Lutherans vs. the Holy Roman Empire). For more information on the second war of Kappel, see G. R. Potter, *Zwingli* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1976). For more information on the Schmalkaldic War, see Henry Smith, *The Age of the Reformation* (New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company, 1920), and James D. Tracy, *Charles V: Impresario of War* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

<sup>9</sup> Justo L. González, *The Story of Christianity*, vol. 2 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1985), 135.

<sup>10</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 4.20.22-29,31-32, accessed July 1, 2015, <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/institutes.vi.xxi.html>.

execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.”<sup>11</sup> However, this in itself does not represent completely what Calvin believed about submission to tyrannical government.

Calvin, despite his teaching, did recognize that tyrannical rulers existed. While not denying that even a wicked ruler derives his governmental power from God, he adamantly affirmed that there were some times when a ruler could and should be lawfully deposed:

...When popular magistrates have been appointed to curb the tyranny of kings...So far am I from forbidding these officially to check the undue license of kings, that if they connive at kings when they tyrannise and insult over the humbler of the people, I affirm that their dissimulation is not free from nefarious perfidy, because they fraudulently betray the liberty of the people, while knowing that, by the ordinance of God, they are its appointed guardians.<sup>12</sup>

While Calvin affirmed that rulers had power derived from above that necessitated citizens' obedience, he also affirmed that their power had limits. This did not mean that all revolution by the people won Calvin's approval. He did not believe that private citizens had any right to rebel.<sup>13</sup> This power, he believed, was within the authority of the “popular magistrates,” who exercised delegated authority over the people. Calvin attributed absolute power only to God, and believed that obedience to an earthly ruler should never be chosen over obedience to God.<sup>14</sup> “We were redeemed by Christ at the great price which our redemption cost him, in order that we might not yield a slavish obedience to the depraved wishes of men...”<sup>15</sup> The people were to resist the commands of a wicked ruler if he required them to be disobedient to God. David W. Hall

---

<sup>11</sup> Romans 13:3. Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references will be taken from the King James Version (KJV).

<sup>12</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.20.31.5-6.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.20.31.4.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.20.32.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.20.32.17.

comments on these injunctions of Calvin, “The obvious exception to any of these rules... was that persons were not only free but also obligated to resist the magistrate who compelled ungodly activity.”<sup>16</sup>

### The Spread of the Genevan Revolution

Calvin wrote the *Institutes* to the king of France in order to petition him for amnesty for Reformed Protestants. His efforts bore fruit, and more people in France began to embrace Calvinism. These people became known as the Huguenots. However, France, unlike most other countries whose Protestant population increased, did not fully embrace Protestantism. For most of its history, France remained Catholic. Huguenots struggled with the French monarchy for decades over securing basic rights and freedoms for themselves. These conflicts are known as the Wars of Religion, and they recurred throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>17</sup>

Protestantism eventually entered the Netherlands, during Catholicism’s stronghold. While many Dutch remained Catholic, Calvinism gained a great deal of influence, especially in the North (namely, Holland and Zeeland). As the Dutch continued embracing Protestantism in greater numbers, more and more people went against the ambitions of King Philip II of Spain, who “believed that the Spanish monarchy as well as the Catholic Church represented Absolute Truth.”<sup>18</sup> They eventually came to see Philip as a tyrant and no longer desired exclusively

---

<sup>16</sup> David W. Hall, *The Genevan Reformation and the American Founding* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2003), 98.

<sup>17</sup> For more information about the French Wars of Religion, see David L. Potter, ed., *French Wars of Religion: Selected Documents* (London, UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 1997), Owen Chadwick, *The Reformation* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1964), 137-188, and J. H. M. Salmon, ed., *The French Wars of Religion: How Important Were Religious Factors?* (Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath and Company, 1967). The Huguenots enjoyed periods of amnesty, but eventually some had to come to America in order to avoid further persecution.

<sup>18</sup> Bernard H. M. Vlekke, *Evolution of the Dutch Nation*, (New York, NY: Roy Publishers, 1945), quoted in Wilson Quarterly, “Background Books: The Dutch,” *The Wilson Quarterly*, vol. 11, no. 2 (Spring 1987): 84, accessed October 18, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40257839>.

Catholic rule over their lives. The ensuing tension climaxed in the Eighty Years' War, which characterized Dutch relations with Spain for nearly eighty years.<sup>19</sup> During that time, the Dutch gained from their revolt against tyranny an alternate identity from Spain's Catholic economic stronghold.<sup>20</sup>

The results of the Eighty Years' War were diverse. Some places tolerated Catholicism, while others rejected its status as the national church and persecuted it into a minority. Over time, religious identity was so loose in the Netherlands, that a wide variety of Protestant dissidents found a safe haven within some of its borders, particularly Holland.

The Reformation, as it advanced through Europe, proved more than just a declaration of freedom from papal dominance. It was a call to arms. It effectively called political authority into question as well as religious, and effectively exhorted deposition of tyrannical governments, political or religious. In early modern Europe, religion and politics were inextricably linked. The fires only became fiercer as they advanced further west toward the Atlantic.

### **Revolutionary Fever Spreads to England**

When the Reformation finally reached England (also a previous Catholic stronghold), the Church of England split from Roman Catholicism and made some changes. Change came

---

<sup>19</sup> For more information about the Eighty Years' War, see Geoffrey Parker, *The Dutch Revolt*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977); Henk van Nierop, *Treason in the Northern Quarter: War, Terror, and the Rule of Law in the Dutch Revolt* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), trans. by J. C. Grayson; James D. Tracy, *The Founding of the Dutch Republic: War, Finance, and Politics in Holland, 1572-1588* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008).

<sup>20</sup> The Dutch initially declared their resistance to Spain in the form of the Act of Abjuration of 1581. The wording is quite similar to the later American Declaration of Independence. In it, they declare that a ruler is only allowed to serve on the basis of his care for his subjects, and that self-interest automatically negates a ruler's legitimacy and makes him a tyrant. For more information, see "Act of Abjuration 1581," Age-of-the-Sage, [http://www.age-of-the-sage.org/history/dutch\\_independence\\_1581.html](http://www.age-of-the-sage.org/history/dutch_independence_1581.html), accessed May 1, 2016.

particularly under King Edward VI, the son of King Henry VIII.<sup>21</sup> Upon Edward's death, his older sister, Mary Tudor, succeeded him. As she attempted to restore Catholicism to England, many Protestants were executed. Some, however, fled to Geneva. There, they were able to learn personally from John Calvin and his followers and fellow Reformers. They also took the Bible that Calvin and his followers translated (which included marginal notes explaining Calvinistic doctrine) and translated it themselves into the English language. This was the "Geneva Bible" (named such for the location of translation), and it was a primitive study Bible, though the notes were not by any means as extensive as a typical study Bible today. The Geneva Bible not only was a new Bible translated into English in addition to those already available, but it also facilitated the spread of Calvinist doctrine from Switzerland to England. Those advocating for reform in the Church of England beyond what the monarchy was willing to allow (including a strong emphasis on Reformed theology and adherence to *sola Scriptura* [Scripture alone] rather than tradition) began to receive identification as "Puritans" from their opponents due to their desire to "purify" the Church of England. It was the "Puritans" who, through the lessons learned in Geneva and their new Bible, primarily carried the revolutionary fever of the Reformation into England.<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> Initially, King Henry VIII was "defender of the [Catholic] faith". However, he split from the Roman Catholic Church when the Pope refused to give him an annulment for Catherine of Aragon, his wife, who could not produce a male heir. After his split from Catholicism, he married several more wives, and one eventually produced him a male heir, Edward VI. It was not until Edward's reign that many of the prominent Protestant theologians arose. However, Edward's reign was short-lived due to sickness. For more information on King Henry VIII, the English Reformation in its early years, and King Edward VI, see Derek Wilson, *A Brief History of the English Reformation: Religion, Politics, and Fear: How England was Transformed by the Tudors* (Philadelphia, PA: Running Press, 2012); Peter Ackroyd, *Tudors: The History of England from Henry VIII to Elizabeth I* (Washington, D.C.: St. Martin's Griffin, 2014).

<sup>22</sup> The Puritans were not going to compromise their beliefs, and initially sought to steer Queen Elizabeth I in the direction of their desired reforms. However, she did not go along. Elizabeth saw the Puritans as a threat to religion and society in England, and enacted a law against them to attempt to suppress them. For a copy of Elizabeth's Act against the Puritans, see Queen Elizabeth I, "1593 Act against the Puritans," accessed October 24, 2015, <http://www.scrollpublishing.com/store/Elizabethan.html>.

In Scotland, a parallel Reformation occurred primarily through the influence of John Knox. Knox himself was a staunch Calvinist and wrote some anti-monarchical works, particularly against Queen Elizabeth I of England and her cousin, Mary, Queen of Scots.<sup>23</sup> The Genevan Reformation was steadily gaining influence throughout western Europe.

#### The Reformed Secret Weapon: The Geneva Bible and its Marginal Notes

The Geneva Bible necessarily brought with it the political thought of the Reformers. It became increasingly popular throughout England, and remained so even after the translation of the Authorized Version in 1611, better known today as the King James Version. Naseeb Shaheen argues that the Geneva Bible was just as common in services in the Church of England as it was among groups like the Puritans or the Separatists (those who completely separated from the Church of England rather than attempt to “purify” it).<sup>24</sup> She notes that “Lancelot Andrews, not only a bishop but also one of the translators of the 1611 Authorized Version, almost always preached from the Geneva Bible and rarely from the Bishops’ or the version he helped translate.”<sup>25</sup>

Hardin Craig, Jr., further notes that the Geneva Bible was also a political weapon in England. The marginal notes leaned heavily on the notion that a ruler had to be godly and ready

---

<sup>23</sup> Among these works is John Knox, *The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* (1558), (Dallas, TX: Presbyterian Heritage Publications, 1995), accessed November 2, 2015, <http://www.swrb.com/newslett/actualNLS/firblast.htm>. For more information about the Scottish Reformation and John Knox, see D. M. Lloyd-Jones and Iain H. Murray, *John Knox and the Reformation* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 2011).

<sup>24</sup> Naseeb Shaheen, “Misconceptions about the Geneva Bible,” *Studies in Bibliography*, Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia, vol. 37 (1984): 158, accessed July 1, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40371798>.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

to defend the faith of the nation against all deviation/opposition: “They took it for granted that it was the duty of the subordinate magistrate to enforce true religion even if the enforcement meant opposition to the ruler.”<sup>26</sup> Citing Jehu’s coup of Israel, and subsequent violent overthrow of the family of Ahab, Craig notes that “the reformers were feeling their way to a more drastic doctrine: that the private and godly individual might judge and execute judgment on the idolatrous ruler.”<sup>27</sup> To the Calvinistic Puritans, the Geneva Bible was their sword in hand with which they could free themselves from the tyranny of Catholicism. As Hardin points out, “It was the most widely read English Bible, and hence the most widely read English book, before the Authorized version.”<sup>28</sup>

When turning to Romans 13 in the Geneva Bible, the reader can find a perfect example of Calvinistic reasoning when applied to Scripture passages on governmental authority. Romans 13:5 in the Geneva Bible reads “wherefore ye must be subject, not because of wrath only, but also for conscience’s sake.” The marginal note for Romans 13:5 reads: “For no private man can contemn that government which God hath appointed without the breach of his conscience: and here, he speaketh of civil magistrates: so that Antichrist and his can not wrest this place to establish their tyranny over the conscience.”<sup>29</sup>

To adherents of the Reformation, all governmental authority was divinely granted, but the power of the government lay in the hands of civil magistrates. The magistrates had the power to

---

<sup>26</sup> Hardin Craig, Jr., “The Geneva Bible as a Political Document,” *Pacific Historical Review*, vol. 7, no. 1 (March 1938): 40, 45, accessed July 1, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3633847>.

<sup>27</sup> Craig, “Geneva Bible,” 46.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>29</sup> Rom. 13:5 Geneva Bible, marginal note B. As noted above, the Reformers used the term “Antichrist” for the Pope. However, this marginal note makes very visible the Reformation teaching that resistance to tyrants is obedience to God.



depose rulers if necessary according to Calvin's teaching.<sup>30</sup> Dan Danner states that "throughout the notes there is a definite anti-tyrant motif. There are constant references to wicked craftiness, 'open rage', and oppression of the true religion of God."<sup>31</sup> Clearly, the revolutionary political thought of the Reformation found great expression in the Geneva Bible.

Another example of Reformed interpretation of the relationship between the government and the governed in the Geneva Bible is the marginal note on Jeremiah 29:7. The Scripture in question reads: "...Seek the prosperity of the city, whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it, for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace."<sup>32</sup> The footnote reads as follows:

The Prophet speaketh not this for the affection that he bare to the tyrant, but that they should pray for the common rest and quietness, that their troubles might not be increased, and that they might with more patience and less grief wait for the time of their deliverance, which God had appointed most certain: for not only the Israelites, but all the world, yea, and the insensible creatures should rejoice when their tyrants should be destroyed, as Isaiah 14:4.<sup>33</sup>

According to this note, it is within biblical grounds to rejoice at the tyrant's destruction, which meant the people should not pray for the welfare of said tyrant. To the Puritans, the English could not and should not simply pray for a Catholic king bent on bringing England back to the tyranny of Rome. They did not want to see another Marian persecution. This became very

---

<sup>30</sup> To any Protestant, obeying the Antichrist was not permissible. Protestants uniformly saw the Pope as the Antichrist, and taught their congregations accordingly. See, for example, Luther, *Babylonian Captivity*, which set the tone for other Protestant leaders. With the notion that the Pope was the Antichrist also came the notion that Catholicism was utter tyranny.

<sup>31</sup> Dan G. Danner, "The Contribution of the Geneva Bible of 1560 to the English Protestant Tradition," *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, vol. 12, no. 3 (Autumn 1981): 13, accessed July 1, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2539783>.

<sup>32</sup> Jer. 29:7, Geneva Bible

<sup>33</sup> Geneva Bible, Jer. 29:7 footnote

applicable with the coronation of King Charles I, the first Catholic since Mary Tudor to sit on England's throne.<sup>34</sup>

### War Breaks Out in England and Scotland

With a Catholic monarch on the British throne, the Puritans feared the tyranny of Rome. This fear climaxed when King Charles I ruled England independently of Parliament for eleven years, which his opponents called the "Eleven Years' Tyranny."<sup>35</sup> This worsened when Charles attempted to impose the tradition of the Church of England among Scottish Presbyterians, who wanted to maintain their newfound Protestant traditions.<sup>36</sup> The Puritans supported the idea of Parliament providing a check upon the monarch's power, and fought a series of intense conflicts with supporters of Charles I. At the end of the conflict, the Puritans tried and executed Charles I, and then briefly took over England with Oliver Cromwell as their leader. The Puritans thought they were getting what they wanted with the deposition of the monarchy. However, Justo González notes that they could not all agree on what government should look like.<sup>37</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> Both Elizabeth I and her successor, James I (James VI of Scotland) were staunchly Protestant.

<sup>35</sup> Lisa Rosner and Thiebault, John, *A Short History of Europe, 1600–1815: Search for A Reasonable World* (New York, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2000), 103. A detailed description of the English Civil War is beyond the scope of this paper. For more information concerning the origins of the English Civil War, see Conrad Russell, *The Causes of the English Civil War* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1990).

<sup>36</sup> Diane Purkiss, *The English Civil War: A People's History* (London, UK: HarperPerennial, 2007), 74-83.

<sup>37</sup> González, *The Story of Christianity*, 160-161. González details the different visions of government in the factions of Puritan England that made the new government less stable than its founders hoped.

### **The Next Phase of Revolution: A Temporary Revival of the Republic**

Despite its failure to maintain permanence, the Puritan revolution actually succeeded in temporarily producing a new form of government, unlike past revolutions. Other revolutions were either forcibly put down, or otherwise never completely deviated from a monarchical form of government. Rather than live under kingly rule, England, Scotland, and Ireland, lived instead under the Commonwealth of England, a republican form of government. Oliver Cromwell and his son both served as Lord Protector during this brief period, with the Protectorate Parliament supporting him instead of the royalist Rump Parliament.<sup>38</sup>

Like other aspects of revolutionary thought, the trend toward a republican government has its roots in the history of the Reformation. The Reformation came about in large part because of the Renaissance, a revival of classical studies that gripped the Roman Catholic Church and nearly all of Europe along with it. Several ideas deep within the realm of the Greek and Roman classics found their way into the political thought of the Reformers, including the idea of a republican government.<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup> A study of the political history of the Commonwealth of England is far beyond the scope of this paper. For more information about the Commonwealth of England and its rise and fall, as well as strengths and weaknesses, see Samuel R. Gardiner, *History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate: 1649-1656* (London, UK: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1903).

<sup>39</sup> Noteworthy, the Reformers themselves were very well versed in the classics and very acquainted with the ideas of the philosophers and poets of old. As the influence of classical studies continued to grow in Europe, more of the old ideas of antiquity found a revival with successive generations. Included in this was the fact that prior to being an Empire, the Roman Empire itself had been a republic. Further still, Greece had been a democracy. In England, and then in America and France much later, the revolutionaries had in common that they were not only attempting to overthrow governments they perceived as tyrannical, but also in the process trying to revive the ancient government of antiquity that they and their forefathers had all become educated on since the days of the Renaissance. For more information, see Markku Peltonen, *Classical Humanism and Republicanism in English Political Thought: 1570-1640* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995). For more information on the influence of humanism on the Reformation, see James Patrick, ed., *Renaissance and Reformation* (Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish Corporation, 2007) and Bard Thompson, *Humanists and Reformers: A History of the Renaissance and Reformation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996).

Eventually, the Puritans witnessed the restoration of the monarchy to power with Charles II and the royalist Rump Parliament, and once again saw some restrictions placed on their religious beliefs and practices. The struggle with the monarchy continued until many began to leave England for the Massachusetts Bay Colony, where they were able to freely practice their religious beliefs. However, their conflict with the British government was not yet entirely over. Rather, this was the calm before the storm. The Reformation crossed the Atlantic Ocean into the Thirteen Colonies. There, the idea of resisting tyrannical rulers played a large part in the birth of a new nation.

### **The Revolution Crosses the Atlantic**

By the close of the seventeenth century, England embraced a constitutional monarchy. This effectively placed a Parliamentary check on the Crown. The British often engaged in political squabbles over who should be elected to Parliament, but for a while resistance seemed to be over. It was not until the tumultuous period following the Seven Years' War that the thought of rising against the king was rekindled.<sup>40</sup> When the American Revolution finally broke out as a result of tension with the British, everything about English definition and constitution of citizenship was called into question.<sup>41</sup>

John Locke in Context: His Philosophy and His Background in Puritan England

Revolutionary political thought took hold in colonial America in the eighteenth century. Today, most attribute the political philosophy the Americans embraced to the Enlightenment and

---

<sup>40</sup> H.T. Dickinson, ed., *A Companion to Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), 104-106.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 104-109.

its thinkers, specifically men like John Locke. To be sure, John Locke's influential political works definitely influenced the founding of the American republic. However, this is not the entire story. John Locke himself was a product of Reformation England, with all of its political and religious upheavals, and the popularity of the Geneva Bible among ordinary Englishmen.

As noted above, John Locke was born into seventeenth-century in England (specifically 1632). During this time, it was compulsory to be a part of the Church of England. This included attending church services weekly. As also noted above, the Bible in common usage at the time was not the Authorized Version of 1611, but the Geneva Bible. Locke, whether during his childhood or during his academic studies, would more than likely have had access to a copy of the Geneva Bible, which he also would likely have read. Of Locke's religious upbringing, one of his biographers says this of his family in context of all of the tension during the English Civil War and Puritan coup: "...It seems likely that his family were Calvinists, with leanings to Presbyterianism. His grandfather, Nicholas Locke, did as a Calvinist might, and willed money to the church in Pensford for a weekly Bible lecture. Locke's description of his mother as having been 'a very pious woman' is some indication too, as perhaps is the ardent puritanism of the rector of Wrington, by whom his mother had him baptised."<sup>42</sup> While Locke indisputably received his education and developed his philosophy in large part because of his educational upbringing at Westminster School and eventually Oxford, the influence of Puritanism cannot go unnoticed in Locke's life.

Locke echoes the sentiments of the Geneva Bible in his own writings against tyranny. He compares the characteristics of wicked rulers to benevolent ones in order to prove his point:

"...Whereas the proud and ambitious tyrant doth think his kingdom and people are only ordained

---

<sup>42</sup> Roger Woolhouse, *Locke: A Biography* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 9.

for the satisfaction of his desires and unreasonable appetites, the righteous and just king doth...acknowledge himself to be ordained for the procuring of the wealth and property of his people.”<sup>43</sup> This echoes Paul’s identification with the rulers in Romans 13:4 as “the minister of God to thee for good.” Locke affirmed the legitimacy of human government,<sup>44</sup> but he also recognized, like Calvin, that there were times when a ruler was unfair to his subjects, and addressed the question of whether or not those subjects had the right to resistance by pointing out times when a ruler could be unfair. He also affirmed that no matter what, it was necessary for a ruler to show himself benevolent to the people he ruled and to keep their best interests at heart, rather than simply playing the role of a despot.<sup>45</sup>

In the Thirteen Colonies, revolutionary thought began to grip many of the colonists, resulting in a long and bitter conflict with British government that culminated in the War for Independence. The revolutionaries made use of a great deal of Reformation-esque rhetoric in order to justify rebellion against King George III. To the revolutionaries, George III was a ruthless and self-absorbed tyrant, and fit all of Locke’s and Calvin’s criteria for resistance. Jefferson echoes Locke when calling the king a tyrant who “refused his assent to laws wholesome and most necessary for the public good.”<sup>46</sup> Jefferson continues his appeal throughout the Declaration that the people can only be governed by laws that they have some sort of

---

<sup>43</sup> John Locke, “Second Treatise on Civil Government,” accessed July 2, 2015, <http://www.constitution.org/jl/2ndtr18.htm>.

<sup>44</sup> He did not, however, approve of the legitimacy of kingship in the sense in which it was determined in his day. He believed that only the legitimate “heir of Adam” was a rightful king. Since this person was impossible to identify, Locke advocated the civil magistracy over the monarchy (Locke, “First Treatise on Government,” Ch. X, accessed July 2, 2015, <http://www.bartleby.com/169/110.html>). Thus, Locke was only to that extent a believer in the divine right of kings.

<sup>45</sup> Locke, “Second Treatise on Civil Government.”

<sup>46</sup> Thomas Jefferson, “The Declaration of Independence,” accessed July 2, 2015, [http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration\\_transcript.html](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration_transcript.html).

representation in.<sup>47</sup> Even before the Colonies declared independence, Hall notes that all of the Colonies saw an increase in the number of Presbyterian immigrants.<sup>48</sup> These Presbyterians brought Protestant revolutionary thought with them to America that exploded in the American Revolution. Here, there was a united front. Both the Enlightenment (of which Thomas Jefferson was a student) and the Reformed immigrants of America had one common root—inspiration from John Calvin. King George III even called the War for Independence a “Presbyterians’ War,” recognizing its roots.<sup>49</sup>

### **Reformed Revival: Calvinism, the Great Awakening, and the American Revolution**

During the eighteenth century, only just prior to the Revolution, America witnessed one of the greatest revivals ever to reach its shores. The revival in question was the Great Awakening, and its non-traditional nature contributed to the stoking of revolutionary fires in the Colonies. While it affected Christians of all denominations, a key influence during the Great Awakening was Calvinism.

Patrick Henry, who gave the famous “Liberty or Death” speech, was raised in an Anglican home, but his mother was a Presbyterian who took him to the meetings of Samuel

---

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Hall, *Genevan Reformation*, 391-392.

<sup>49</sup> Kevin P. Phillips, *The Cousins’ Wars: Religion, Politics, Civil Warfare, and the Triumph of Anglo-America* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1999), 92. It is noteworthy that even as far back as King James I’s authorization of the Bible that now bears his name, he did not at all favor the Geneva Bible because of the marginal notes. King James I did not like the marginal notes because of their potential anti-monarchical statements that could cause him to lose the kingship if all of the people embraced such a revolutionary mindset. With the deposition of his son, Charles II, at the end of the English Civil War, it is easy to understand why. For more information, consult Marcus Betteridge, “The Bitter Notes: The Geneva Bible and its Annotations,” *The Sixteenth-Century Journal*, vol. 14, no. 1 (Spring 1983): 41-62, accessed July 2, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2540166>. Betteridge argues that James’s opposition only popularized the Geneva Bible all the more (48). This is one of several things that contributed to the translation of the Authorized Version of 1611.

Davies, a prominent Presbyterian minister whose revolutionary sermons became a key part of the Great Awakening. Henry himself later admitted that Davies's sermons had a strong influence upon him.<sup>50</sup> Patrick Henry no doubt drew some of his own revolutionary influence from the time he spent listening to Davies.

The Great Awakening was the key event in America that helped the Colonies break away from the Church of England. This became a major step in the advancement of religious freedom in the United States of America after the Revolutionary War was over. It also served as a forerunner to Revolution in that the next thing evangelicals in America separated from was Great Britain, and that via Revolution.<sup>51</sup> In the end, the colonists won the War, secured separation from Great Britain, and, after some tension, wrote a Constitution that established a republican form of government, including checks and balances on all levels of government.

The democratic republican form of government that America embraced was the natural result of their revolution. Though not all of the Founding Fathers were Reformed Protestants, the influence of Reformed Protestantism is clear. Anti-monarchic sentiment and the strong desire to put a check on potential tyranny directly influenced the system of checks and balances and the placing of the power into the hands of the people. This, as well as the anti-Catholic thought of European and American Protestants, influenced separation of church and state.<sup>52</sup> The

---

<sup>50</sup> Thomas S. Kidd, *The Great Awakening: The Roots of Evangelical Christianity in Colonial America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), Online Kindle Edition, Location 4298. See also Thomas S. Kidd, *Patrick Henry: First Among Patriots* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2011). Kidd argues that while evangelicalism was not monolithic, it nonetheless did contain a conservative stream of Calvinists who were also staunch revolutionaries.

<sup>51</sup> Several scholars see in this trend that the Great Awakening was, in effect, a “dress rehearsal” of sorts for the American Revolution. For more information on this subject see Patricia U. Bonomi, *Under the Cope of Heaven: Religion, Society, and Politics in Colonial America* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2003) and Harry S. Stout, *The New England Soul: Preaching and Religious Culture in Colonial New England* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012).

<sup>52</sup> During the colonial period, Puritans in Massachusetts celebrated an annual “Pope Day” in which they commemorated their freedom from Catholic dominance by publicly burning an effigy of the Pope (Martin E. Marty,



colonists did not want to endure papal tyranny or royal tyranny. In their desire to completely separate from monarchy, the American revolutionaries separated church from state and unknowingly stayed true to the Reformation in their political influence. Alexis de Tocqueville even noted the connection when he spoke of the Christianity that most of the later American revolutionaries embraced, calling it a “democratic and republican religion.”<sup>53</sup>

### **The Relationship of the Reformation to the French Revolution**

After the American Revolution, revolutionary thought began to spread back around the Atlantic World. The next nation to embrace revolutionary ideals was France. France was an ally

---

*Pilgrims in their Own Land* (New York, NY: Viking Penguin, Inc., 1984), 142). This was itself a direct carryover from Guy Fawkes Day in Great Britain. The latter was an annual celebration of the failure of a plot to blow up the House of Lords, which included the arrest of a guard named Guy Fawkes. It was an assassination attempt on King James I. In the future, it became a day of anti-Catholic sentiment, especially among Puritans. For more information about Guy Fawkes Day, see James A. Sharpe, *Remember, Remember: A Cultural History of Guy Fawkes Day* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005). See also David W. Bercot, *In God We Don't Trust* (Amberson, PA: Scroll Publishing Company, 2011), Online Kindle Edition, Location 2978-3005, for a brief analysis of colonial anti-Catholic sentiment. There were certainly other factors that influenced the development of American religious freedom, particularly among sects in America that descended from Separatist groups. Among these were the Baptists, who suffered imprisonment as a minority group in many colonies, particularly in Virginia, which directly influenced Thomas Jefferson and James Madison to push for the separation of church and state. For more information, see “A New Eden” in Marilyn Mellowes (prod.), *God in America* (documentary film), (New York, NY: PBS, 2010). Even after the framing of the U.S. Constitution, anti-Catholic sentiment still remained relatively strong. Thomas Jefferson, in a lament over the formation of the American Bible Society, wrote to John Adams, “What would they say, were the Pope to send annually to this country, colonies of Jesuit priests with cargoes of their Missal and translations of their Vulgate, to be put gratis into the hands of anyone who would accept them? and to act thus nationally on us as a nation?” (Lester Cappon, ed., *The Adams-Jefferson Letters* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1959), 496. Though the Constitution granted religious freedom, which necessarily included Catholics, it took the U.S. until 1960 to elect a Catholic President, in large part because of fear that through a Catholic holding office, the Pope would have a puppet by which to control America. Al Smith attempted in 1928, but lost to Herbert Hoover because of his inability to answer questions about the relationship of his Catholic faith to his political views. John F. Kennedy succeeded in 1960, in large part because he made clear that he would not allow the Pope to influence his decisions as the President of the United States of America. For more information about Al Smith and his failed presidential campaign, see Edmund A. Moore, *A Catholic Runs for President: The Campaign of 1928* (New York, NY: Ronald Press Co., 1956). For more information on Kennedy's struggle to get past the voters' bias against his Catholicism and win the 1960 election, see Shaun Casey, *The Making of a Catholic President: Kennedy vs. Nixon 1960* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2009).

<sup>53</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville, “Principal Causes Which Tend to Maintain the Democratic Republic in the United States” in *Democracy in America* (Online Edition), accessed November 2, 2015, [http://xroads.virginia.edu/~Hyper/DETOC/religion/ch1\\_17.htm](http://xroads.virginia.edu/~Hyper/DETOC/religion/ch1_17.htm).

of the Colonies during the American Revolution, and already saw an increasing number of students of the Enlightenment. In addition, the tension between the Roman Catholic Church and the rest of the state continued to increase. This trend had been in place since the Protestant Reformation spread to France. Soon, they saw a Revolution of their own, but this time with more of a decidedly anti-Christian outlook.

Dale Van Kley notes that from Calvin down to the French Revolution, there is, in the history of France, a continuing trend of revolutionary thought that finds its climax in the French Revolution. He claims that the French Revolution was really a shift in ideology. Faced with a king who insisted on maintaining absolute power despite France's extremely high poverty rate and national debt, the French revolutionaries began exploring other political thought. Naturally, this included the philosophy of the Enlightenment, from which came the *philosophes*, who gained popularity in eighteenth-century France during this time of tension.<sup>54</sup>

An anti-clerical faction arose in France that played a key role in the outbreak of revolution. They were known as the "Jansenists," and they echoed many of the anti-tyrannical sentiments that the Reformers, such as Calvin, and Enlightenment philosophers, such as Locke, had.<sup>55</sup> The Jansenists began as a politicized Christian faction during the period of the Reformation, but by the latter part of the eighteenth century had taken a more political focus that included less religious emphasis and more of a bias against any religion at the state level. However, Van Kley notes that despite their resistance of Christian ideals and trends toward atheism, they retained a tendency to imitate Calvinist ideals, such as iconoclasm, which was

---

<sup>54</sup> Enlightenment philosophy, without question, played a large role in the development of the French Revolution. The philosophy of John Locke found its way into the period leading up to the French Revolution, as did several more secular thinkers such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Denis Diderot, and Voltaire.

<sup>55</sup> Dale K. Van Kley, *The Religious Origins of the French Revolution: From Calvin to the Civil Constitution, 1560-1791* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996), 254.

evident in the “dechristianization” of the Committee of Public Safety after the execution of King Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette.<sup>56</sup>

Like the American Revolution, the French Revolution relied on the revolutionary political thought of Enlightenment philosophers, like Locke and his contemporaries and reformers, like Calvin. However, unlike America, it took an obvious secular turn with the measures against Christianity that were the result of the Catholic Church not giving its full support to everything about the Revolution.<sup>57</sup> Ultimately, Van Kley comes to the conclusion that despite the French revolutionaries’ attempt to distance themselves from religion, they “retained the ideological stigmata of religion.”<sup>58</sup> The French Revolution itself was, among other things, the result of the Catholic Church’s continued insistence on power in France and refusal to give some form of tolerance to religious dissidents, including Reformed Protestants. This, in turn, produced an alternate path to revolution and separation from tyranny that took on a shape and shocked the world as more people embraced secular forms of Enlightenment thinking.

Like England and America before them, once the French revolutionaries overthrew the monarchy, France became a republic. More so than their predecessors, the French took a humanistic outlook in the way they restructured the nation, now known as the French Republic, albeit temporarily.<sup>59</sup> The French so attempted to distance themselves from Roman Catholicism

---

<sup>56</sup> The Genevan Reformation came with a strong emphasis on removal of images and other iconic objects used in Christian worship. The attempted “dechristianization” took this to a different level and began to destroy church buildings and/or convert them to buildings for government use. See also Van Kley, *Religious Origins of the French Revolution*, 367.

<sup>57</sup> For more on this subject, see John McManners, *The French Revolution and the Church* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1982).

<sup>58</sup> Van Kley, *Religious Origins of the French Revolution*, 375.

<sup>59</sup> The Committee of Public Safety were the first who held the rule over the French Republic. It consisted of twelve men, and was very unstable due to different ideas of how the government should operate. Many of the twelve died before the end of the first year. It was eventually known as the Terror because of the number of people the Committee of Public Safety hunted and executed as potential suspects of treason. For more information about

and Christianity in general that they adopted a new calendar, renamed all days of the week, and in effect became devotees of the Cult of Reason, with Hercules as its symbol of the overthrow of tyranny.<sup>60</sup>

### **Reflections**

The significance of this research to the Christian faith in general is significant because of the connection between Protestant Christianity and revolution in the fifteenth through eighteenth centuries in European and American history. On the one hand, it shows that Christianity had a definite role in the development of early American ideology reflected in the Revolutionary War and the framing of the U.S. Constitution. While Christianity in general is certainly not linked to revolution (for example, the Anabaptists (Amish, Mennonite, Brethren, etc.) are nonresistant to this day and do not start revolutions), it shows that the period of the Reformation and its influence extends even into the eighteenth century and the development of the modern world both in Europe and America. While this does not mean that Christians should start revolutions to overthrow tyrannical governments, it does show what was going through the minds of sixteenth- to eighteenth-century Protestants.

The most difficult part of writing this article was finding more research needs everywhere I turned. For every historical problem that can be connected to the Protestant Reformation, there

---

the year of the Terror, see R. R. Palmer, *Twelve Who Ruled: The Year of the Terror in the French Revolution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969). A government known as the Directory briefly succeeded the Committee of Public Safety, but the French Republic soon became the French Empire when Napoleon Bonaparte came to power. The French continued to advance their revolutionary ideals through the French Revolutionary Wars, which were equally fought so that the French could conquer Europe and advance their cause, and because most of Europe thought the French had taken their revolution too far. For more information about the French Revolutionary Wars, see T. C. W. Blanning, *The French Revolutionary Wars, 1797-1802* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1996). When Napoleon came to power, he sought to restore France's greatness as its emperor, and continued conquest of Europe until his defeat in 1815. For more information about Napoleon Bonaparte, see Charles Esdaile, *Napoleon's Wars: An International History, 1803-1815* (New York, NY: Penguin Group, 2009).

<sup>60</sup> For more information about the cultural restructuring of France during the period immediately following the French Revolution, see Lynn Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2004).

is much more research needed on each individual period. For example, more research is needed on the relationship between Protestantism and the fears of plantation owners about slave revolts, or the change from revolutionary political thinking to Loyalism in Lutherans across the Atlantic World. The easiest part of writing this article came with my background in Reformation history. The Reformation is a crucial part of church history, of which I am a scholar already. I was already well acquainted with this and much of the history of the American Revolution, so I was able to use that knowledge as a starting point for this research project.

After researching this topic, I learned about the significance of the Geneva Bible in the development of modern European and American politics. I was aware that the Geneva Bible was a major translation of the Bible into English when the Puritans escaped Marian persecution by fleeing to Geneva. However, I was not aware that the marginal notes were as anti-monarchical as they were. It caused me to see the different English Bibles (Geneva and the Authorized (King James) Version of 1611) as a political as well as a religious conflict. In addition, the research gave me a proper perspective on the role of Protestant Christianity in the American Revolution, a concept very important to American history. I also see where this influenced the English Civil War, and how some of the skeletal elements of Christianity were retained in the French Revolution.

I also had never quite envisioned the Reformation as an Atlantic World concept. However, when studying the Reformation's revolutionary patterns, I could not help but notice that whatever happened in Europe directly influenced what happened across the Atlantic in America, and vice versa. The Protestants on one side of the Atlantic were just as anti-Catholic as the other. Anti-Catholicism also directly influenced the revolutions. This can be concluded from examining the tendency of the Protestants to associate the Roman Catholic papacy with the

Antichrist and to associate the Antichrist with tyranny in symbolic form. In addition, while I knew that humanism directly influenced the Reformation, I had not considered that humanism played as dominant a role in the politics that most Protestants advocated, particularly in the Reformed tradition (including Swiss Calvinists, Scottish Presbyterians, and English and American Puritans).

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, while John Locke's philosophy is responsible for much of the political thought dominant in America and France that led to revolution, revolutionaries drew as much on the Reformation as they did the Enlightenment, if not more so. To suggest otherwise is to take Locke out of his context in seventeenth-century England, which saw the raging of the Puritans against the Church of England, which they believed was far too close to Roman Catholicism. The latter they universally, along with other Protestants, saw as hopelessly corrupt and tyrannical. John Locke and the Enlightenment were byproducts that shared a common root—the Reformation, as the existence of the Geneva Bible shows, with its anti-monarchical notes.

The Protestant Reformers vigorously spread their ideology that resisting tyrants was obedience to God as well as the belief that government was only to be given by the consent of the governed. Ultimately, this was very anti-monarchical in nature, as John Calvin and his fellow Genevan Reformers showed when Calvin became the next main proponent of the Reformation. By the time England and Scotland began to embrace the Reformation, this had consequences for Puritans and Presbyterians. So much conflict ensued that the English Civil War finally broke out, resulting in a brief Puritan rule.

Even the notion of republican government has its roots in the history of the Reformation. Rome, prior to its imperial status, was a republic. Greeks invented the concept of a democracy.

The Reformers were very acquainted with classical Greek and Roman literature and philosophy/ideas and incorporated much of this into their religious belief and practice.

As revolutionary political thought began to spread around the Atlantic World, first to the Thirteen Colonies and then back to France, it became another legacy the Reformation left that extends even to modern day. The Reformation was the channel through which revolutionary political thought took hold throughout the Atlantic World. More research, however, is needed on the role of the Renaissance in these revolutions, with a more thorough examination of the intellectual history of the revolutions (only briefly explored in this paper). Another area these principles impacted was the relationship between slaves and their masters in colonial America. Many masters feared that if their slaves accepted Christianity, they would use it to justify revolt. Since the Reformation nearly always resulted in revolution when it traveled from place to place, this fear was not entirely unjustified, although it does not excuse the plantation owners. This would necessarily explore a study of the difficulties of Moravian missionaries and Anabaptists. These churches emerged during the Protestant Reformation, but were not necessarily Protestant themselves, and were not inclined to revolution as most Protestants were, as they were nonresistant. This will also necessarily involve some research on the Haitian Revolution.

Another Protestant group that changed between the Reformation and the American Revolution was the Lutherans. While some Lutherans did incite the Peasants' Revolt, and Lutherans were involved in early wars against Catholicism, Lutheranism did not remain a militant stronghold. By the time of the American Revolution, they were not opposed to war. However, most Lutherans in America sided with the British as Loyalists. More research is needed on how and why this change developed across the Atlantic World.

The early Stuart monarchs are also a key point for further research. King James I is widely known for the King James Bible and his belief in the divine right of kings, but his political views are important to how many of the revolutionary views surfaced and erupted in England. A study of King Charles I is also necessary, which will involve a thorough examination of his religious and political beliefs, as well as their role in the English Civil War (only briefly alluded to in this paper). Also noteworthy are the Puritans who remained in England after the emigration to America. This will make for an interesting study of the Atlantic World. How did the Puritans in America and their relationship with England affect their British counterparts? The study of Protestantism's influence around the Atlantic World, even when most places departed from having a state church is a broad topic, and one that could answer multiple questions in Atlantic World research.



Bibliography

- Ackroyd, Peter. *Tudors: The History of England from Henry VIII to Elizabeth I*. St. Martin's Griffin: Washington, 2014.
- "Act of Abjuration 1581." Age-of-the-Sage.  
[http://www.age-of-the-sage.org/history/dutch\\_independence\\_1581.html](http://www.age-of-the-sage.org/history/dutch_independence_1581.html).  
Accessed May 1, 2016.
- Bercot, David W. *In God We Don't Trust*. Scroll Publishing Company: Amberson, 2010.
- Betteridge, Marcus. "The Bitter Notes: The Geneva Bible and its Annotations." *The Sixteenth Century Journal*. Vol. 14. No. 1 (Spring 1983): 41-62. Accessed July 2, 2015.  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2540166>.
- Blanning, T. C. W. *The French Revolutionary Wars: 1797-1802*. St. Martin's Press: New York, 1996.
- Bonomi, Patricia U. *Under the Cope of Heaven: Religion, Politics, and Society in Colonial America*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2003.
- Calvin, John. "Institutes of the Christian Religion." Accessed July 1, 2015.  
<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/institutes.vi.xxi.html>.
- Cappon, Lester, ed. *The Adams-Jefferson Letters*. University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill, 1959.
- Casey, Shaun. *The Making of a Catholic President: Kennedy vs. Nixon 1960*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2009.
- Chadwick, Owen. *The Reformation*. Penguin Books Ltd.: Harmondsworth, 1964.
- Craig Jr., Hardin. "The Geneva Bible as a Political Document." *Pacific Historical Review*. Vol. 7. No. 1 (March 1938): 40-49. Accessed July 2, 2015.  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3633847>.
- Danner, Dan G. "The Contribution of the Geneva Bible of 1560 to the English Protestant Tradition." *The Sixteenth Century Journal*. Vol. 12. No. 3 (Autumn 1981): 5-18. Accessed July 2, 2015. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2539783>.
- De Tocqueville, Alexis. "Principal Causes which Tend to Maintain the Democratic Republic in the United States" in *Democracy in America*. Online Edition. University of Virginia. Accessed November 2, 2015.  
[http://xroads.virginia.edu/~Hyper/DETOC/religion/ch1\\_17.htm](http://xroads.virginia.edu/~Hyper/DETOC/religion/ch1_17.htm).
- Dickinson, H. T., ed. *A Companion to Eighteenth-Century Britain*. Blackwell Publishing:

- Malden, 2002.
- Eisenstein, Elizabeth L. *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*. Cambridge University Press: New York, 1979.
- Esdaille, Charles. *Napoleon's Wars: An International History, 1803-1815*. Penguin Group: New York, 2009.
- Gardiner, Samuel R. *History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate: 1649-1656*. Longmans, Green, and Co.: London, 1903.
- González, Justo. *The Story of Christianity, vol. 2: The Reformation to the Present Day*. Hendrickson Publishers: Peabody, 1985.
- Hall, David W. *The Genevan Reformation and the American Founding*. Lexington Books: Lanham, 2003.
- Hunt, Lynn. *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution*. University of California Press: Oakland, 2004.
- Jefferson, Thomas. "The Declaration of Independence." Accessed July 2, 2015. [http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration\\_transcript.html](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration_transcript.html).
- Kidd, Thomas S. *Patrick Henry: First among Patriots*. Choice Books: New York, 2011.
- . *The Great Awakening: The Roots of Evangelical Christianity in Colonial America*. Yale University Press: New Haven, 2007.
- Knox, John. *The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women*. Presbyterian Heritage Publications: Dallas, 1995. Accessed November 2, 2015. <http://www.swrb.com/newslett/actualNLs/firblast.htm>.
- Lloyd-Jones, David M. and Iain H. Murray. *John Knox and the Reformation*. Banner of Truth: Carlisle, 2011.
- Locke, John. "Two Treatises on Government." Accessed July 2, 2015. <http://www.bartleby.com/169/>.
- . "Second Treatise on Civil Government." Accessed July 2, 2015. <http://www.constitution.org/jl/2ndtr18.htm>.
- Luther, Martin. "Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of the Peasants." Accessed July 1, 2015. <http://www.scrollpublishing.com/store/Luther-Peasants.html>.
- . "Concerning Christian Liberty." Accessed July 1, 2015. <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1911/1911-h/1911-h.htm>.

- . “On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church.” Accessed July 1, 2015.  
<http://www.lutherdansk.dk/Web-babylonian%20Captivitate/Martin%20Luther.htm>.
- . “The Ninety-Five Theses.” Accessed June 30, 2015.  
<http://www.luther.de/en/95thesen.html>.
- Marty, Martin E. *Pilgrims in their Own Land*. Viking Penguin, Inc.: New York, 1984.
- McManners, John. *The French Revolution and the Church*. Praeger: Westport, 1982.
- Mellowes, Marilyn (prod.). *God in America* (documentary film). PBS: New York, 2010.
- Moore, Edmund A. *A Catholic Runs for President: The Campaign of 1928*. Ronald Press Co.: New York, 1956.
- Palmer, R. R. *Twelve Who Ruled: The Year of the Terror in the French Revolution*. Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1969.
- Parker, Geoffrey. *The Dutch Revolt*. Cornell University Press: Ithaca, 1977.
- Patrick, James, ed. *Renaissance and Reformation*. Marshall Cavendish Corporation: Tarrytown, 2007.
- Peltonen, Markku. *Classical Humanism and Republicanism in English Political Thought: 1570-1640*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1995.
- Phillips, Kevin P. *The Cousins' Wars: Religion, Politics, Civil Warfare, and the Triumph of Anglo-America*. Basic Books: New York, 1999.
- Potter, David L., ed. *French Wars of Religion: Selected Documents*. Palgrave MacMillan: London, 1997.
- Potter, G. R. *Zwingli*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1976.
- Purkiss, Diane. *The English Civil War: A People's History*. HarperPerennial: New York, 2007.
- Rosner, Lisa and John Thiebault. *A Short History of Europe, 1600-1815: The Search for a Reasonable World*. M. E. Sharpe: New York, 2000.
- Russell, Conrad. *The Causes of the English Civil War*. Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1990.
- Salmon, J. H. M. *The French Wars of Religion: How Important Were Religious Factors?* D. C. Heath and Company: Lexington, 1967.
- Shaheen, Naseeb. “Misconceptions about the Geneva Bible.” *Studies in Bibliography*.

- Bibliographical Section of the University of Virginia. Vol. 37 (1984): 156-158. Accessed July 2, 2015. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40371798>.
- Sharpe, James A. *Remember, Remember: A Cultural History of Guy Fawkes Day*. Harvard University Press: Cambridge, 2005.
- Smith, Henry. *The Age of Reformation*. Henry Holt and Company: New York, 1920.
- Stout, Harry S. *The Soul of New England: Preaching and Religious Culture in Colonial New England*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2012.
- Thompson, Bard. *Humanists and Reformers: A History of the Renaissance and Reformation*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company: Grand Rapids, 1996.
- Tracy, James D. *Charles V: Impresario of War*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2002.
- . *The Founding of the Dutch Republic: War, Finance, and Politics in Holland, 1572-1588*. Oxford University Press: New York, 2008.
- Van Kley, Dale K. *The Religious Origins of the French Revolution: From Calvin to the Civil Constitution, 1560-1791*. Yale University Press: New Haven, 1996.
- Van Nierop, Henk. Trans. by J. C. Grayson. *Treason in the Northern Quarter: War, Terror, and the Rule of Law in the Dutch Revolt*. Princeton University Press: Princeton, 2009.
- Vlekke, Bernard H. M. *Evolution of the Dutch Nation*. Roy Publishers: New York, 1945.
- Wilson, Derek. *A Brief History of the English Reformation: Religion, Politics, and Fear: How England was Transformed by the Tudors*. Running Press: Philadelphia, 2012.
- Wilson Quarterly. "Background Books: The Dutch". *The Wilson Quarterly*. Vol. 11. No. 2 (Spring 1987): 84-85. Accessed October 18, 2015. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40257839>.
- Woolhouse, Roger. *Locke: A Biography*. Cambridge University Press: New York, 2007.