

Spiritual Destiny of America and the West

**Building World Commonwealth:
Common Norms, Science, National
Policy and Regulatory Standards for
Sustainable Natural Resources**

Webinar Two – February 4, 2018

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Webinar Goals for Session 2

Deepen knowledge and understanding of common Christian norms, socio-economic values and institutional foundations of America and the West

Central leadership role in achieving the following Baha'i principles and goals;

- Unity of Mankind – Races, Peoples, Faiths and Nations**
- World Commonwealth**
- Science for the Public Interest and Collective Good of Society and the Community of Nations**
- Socio-Economic Development of Society, Nations and Industry Based on Sustainable Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment**

Historical Contexts and Contributions to Development and Evolution of Christian Nations in Europe and Americas

Lessons and Contributions from Antiquity: Eastern Civilizations and Empires

- Old and New Testaments: Ten Commandments, Rights and Obligations for Government, the “Good Society,” Rule of Law and Free Market Economy**
- Ancient Greece, Rome: Role of Citizens, City-States and Rulers**
- Natural Science, Medicine and Mathematics: Ancient Egypt, Arab, Eastern Civilizations**
- Indigenous Knowledge: Native and Indigenous Peoples, Nations and American Indians**

Modernization of Christian European and American Nation States and National Government

- **Magna Carta = The Great Charter in England (1215):** King John of England and Barons Establish Rights and Responsibilities of Rulers to Subjects, Citizens and the Nations. Balances power of monarchy, executive rulers and serves as foundation for representative government

***Contributes to US Bill of Rights (1791), UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and European Convention of Human Rights (1980)**

- **Peace Treaty of Westphalia 1648 (Germany):** Establishes European peace and reconciliation of peoples, faiths and nations through diplomatic relations and cooperation, ends religious war in Europe, establishes system of recognition and formal cooperation by sovereign nation-states

***Creates foundation for international law, emerging world society, international organization and world order**

Spiritual and Scientific Enlightenment in Europe

- European intellectual movement in 17th and 18th century which examined **the roles of God, faith, reason, nature and humanity**
- Elevated **rational humanity, knowledge, freedom and happiness** as the goals of society and nations
- **Emphasized the role of reason** to allow mankind to understand and integrate the natural environment, spirituality and worldview
- **Exploration, discovery and integration** of natural and applied sciences
- Converging chemistry, biology, medical and industrial revolutions based on cooperation of natural and applied sciences
- Expanded arts, philosophy, and politics

Atlantic World and Transatlantic Region: Creation of the United States, North America and the Americas/Western Hemisphere

- **Indigenous Peoples, Nations, Inuit and Native American Indians**
- **European Arrivals and Trade Expeditions in Americas: Vikings--Leif Eriksson, Iberian Powers of Southern Europe (Spain, Portugal and Italy) and Christopher Columbus, Great Britain, France**
- **Indentured White European Labor – English and Celtic Prisoners and Poor Debtors/ Irish, Scottish, Smaller Numbers of Dutch and German**
- **Transatlantic Slave Trade – African prisoners of tribal war, and human sale of workers (Legal and Used by All European Colonies in the Americas)**

Investigation of Human, Animal, and Plant Environments for Collective and Public Good of Society, Industry and Nations

Rise of science as a public good for society, nations, and industry in Europe and the World

European governments and nations convene international conferences, national government and science cooperation for global trade, public health, sanitation, trade and industry regulation in Europe, America and the World

- Growing focus on unity and integration of natural world:
Human/Plant/Animal – Alexander von Humboldt and Charles Darwin
- Exploitation versus Sustainability of Natural Environment and Natural Resources in Europe and colonies in the Americas, Africa and Asia

Baha'i' Writings and Teachings on Responsibilities of Rulers and Governments

- [Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh](#)

“God hath committed into your hands the reins of the **government** of the people, that ye may rule with justice over them, safeguard the rights of the downtrodden, and punish the wrongdoers. If ye neglect the duty prescribed unto you by God in His Book, your names shall be numbered with those of the unjust in His sight. Grievous, indeed, will be your error.”

Bahá'u'lláh / CXVI: “O kings of Christendom! Heard ye not the...”

Representative Government

Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh

“Although a republican form of government profiteth all the peoples of the world, yet the majesty of kingship is one of the signs of God. We do not wish that the countries of the world should remain deprived thereof. If the sagacious combine the two forms into one, great will be their reward in the presence of God.”

Bahá'u'lláh / 3. Bishárát (Glad-Tidings)

Tablet of the World

“The system of government which the British people have adopted in London appeareth to be good, for it is adorned with the light of both kingship and of the consultation of the people.”

Bahá'u'lláh / 7. Lawḥ-i-Dunyá (Tablet of the World)

The Future of National Government

[The Promulgation of Universal Peace](#)

“It is very evident that in the future there shall be no centralization in the countries of the world, be they constitutional in government, republican or democratic in form. The United States may be held up as the example of future government—that is to say, each province will be independent in itself, but there will be federal union protecting the interests of the various independent states..”

`Abdu'l-Bahá / 60. Church of the Ascension

European Territorial Expansion, Western Colonization and Creation America and the Atlantic World

- **Religious Conflict and Competition Between Catholic Church/Vatican and Protestant/Anglican Churches**
- **European Imperial Competition for Regional Power, Global Market, Territory and Culture: Seven Years War in Europe**
- **Competition for the Territory and Extension of Empire in North and South America: Great Britain, France, Spain, Portugal, Holland (now the Netherlands), Habsburg Dynasty (Austria), German Princes**

Creation of the United States of America

- The United States is created from the 13 colonies of the Great Britain
- Virginia is the first English colony in North America
- Three Americas emerge from European colonization of North America;
- British America/ New Britain
- French America/New France
- Spanish America/ New Spain
- The English colonies originate as markets and territories that result from negotiation and trade with indigenous Native American tribes and nations

Colonial Transition: French and Indian War

- English colonies are market structures for the British Empire
- In contrast to France and Spain, Protestant faith and systems of governance, society and economy are the foundation for British colonies
- Agriculture, natural resources and land are new sources of European wealth, global markets and trade
- American colonies establish English culture, system of law, language and trade in North America
- Parallel systems and strategies for territory and trade are negotiated by King of England for colonies and the Native American tribes

- European conflicts between Protestant and Catholic Kingdoms and Churches result in American and global war between France and England
- English colonies in America and native Indian tribes of the Iroquois Confederation form alliance with Great Britain to push French settlements into what is now Canada
- French-Indian War causes conflict over:
 - unfair, non sustainable tobacco and agriculture trade
 - taxation of English colonies to cover war debts in Europe and failed trading companies in India
 - competing land treaties between King George III/ British Empire, Native American Indian tribes and American colonies

American Revolution and Independence

- **American colonies fight the strongest empire, army and navy in the world** to win liberty from Great Britain
- The goal of the revolution is **self-governance, representative government for and by the people to achieve life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness**
- George Washington is a loyal English subject, Virginia tobacco plantation owner and farmer who becomes the leader of the Founding Fathers and American Revolution for Independence
- Continental Congresses are held to plan the goals and terms of the American Revolution for Independence from Great Britain
- As Commander and Chief of the Continental Army, George Washington resigns his commission after the revolution and **calls for formal union of the 13 new states**
- The Iroquois Confederation of Indian Tribes provide a model used for the creation of state and federal system of government by the Founding Fathers – Common national norms, rules and laws are used to uphold and protect the union of united states
- Constitutional Convention is held to establish a formal elected civilian government – George Washington is elected the First President of the United States of America

Foundations for the Spiritual Destiny of America

The nation is created and government upholds the existence of God and Divine Providence

- Proclamation of universal norms and principles in the **Declaration of Independence** is a spiritual revolution “*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.*”

The Constitution of the United States articulates American and Western values and norms that are based on Christian values, beliefs and universal spiritual principles

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America

- **Bill of Rights – First Ten Amendments to Constitution**
 - spells out Americans’ rights in relation to their government
 - guarantees civil rights and liberties to the individual such as freedom of speech, press and religion
 - establishes rules for due process of law
 - reserves all powers not delegated to the Federal Government to the people or the States
 - specifies that “the enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.”

Freedom of religion is a defining principle of the nation – which emerges from religious conflict in Europe

Commonwealth: Sustainable Agriculture, Natural Environment, Science and Skilled Trades/Labor

“Bahá’u’lláh set forth principles of guidance and teaching for economic readjustment. Regulations were revealed by Him which ensure the welfare of the commonwealth. As the rich man enjoys his life surrounded by ease and luxuries, so the poor man must, likewise, have a home and be provided with sustenance and comforts commensurate with his needs. This readjustment of the social economy is the greatest importance inasmuch as it ensures the stability of the world of humanity..”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, The Promulgation of World Peace

- Foundations for World Commonwealth are created and mobilized by European and American/Transatlantic and international cooperation
- First English Colony of Virginia was established as a Commonwealth
- America and the Americas are abundant in agriculture, land and natural resources: George Washington views the Destiny of America to become the “granary and storehouse to the world,” self- sufficiency and self-reliance based on free skilled trades and labor, and sustainable agriculture and natural resource based industries and commerce
- All American nations were former colonies of Christian European nations/culture/faith traditions and are based on knowledge, land and wealth of indigenous peoples and nations
- Sustainable agriculture, environment and natural resource based industries are the source of wealth and well being of citizens, communities, society, economy and nations

Baha'i' Faith and George Washington's Prayers for America

“May this American democracy be the first nation to establish the foundation of international agreement. May it be the first nation to proclaim the universality of mankind. May it be the first to upraise the standard of the Most Great Peace, and through this nation of democracy may these philanthropic intentions and institutions be spread broadcast throughout the world. Truly, this is a great and revered nation. Here liberty has reached its highest degree. The intentions of its people are most praiseworthy. They are, indeed, worthy of being the first to build the Tabernacle of the Most Great Peace and proclaim the oneness of mankind. I will supplicate God for assistance and confirmation in your behalf.”

Abdu'l Baha

“I now make it my earnest prayer, that God would have you, and the State over which you preside, in his holy protection, that he would incline the hearts of the Citizens to cultivate a spirit of subordination and obedience to Government, to entertain a brotherly affection and love for one another, for their fellow Citizens of the United States at large, and particularly for their brethren who have served in the Field, and finally, that he would most 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 Characteristicks 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.”

George Washington

Summary and Conclusion

- Europe nations used their Christian traditions to build communities, societies, market economies and nations
- Over several centuries, and periods of history, Europe gained knowledge and access to resources for social and economic development, science innovation and advancement from ancient civilizations of antiquity, and indigenous peoples in Asia, the Middle East, Africa and the Americas
- The Enlightenment in Europe changed the order of society, industry and nations in Europe and the world – the emergence of reason affected Christian traditions and expanded understanding and knowledge of the role of God, the natural world and the place of man in the universe
- Religious conflict between the Catholic and Protestant Faiths, and competing royal Kingdoms and Empires led to the establishment of European colonies in the Americas, and the creation of the United States
- The goal of the European colonies was to extract agricultural and natural resource wealth from the vast territories and indigenous peoples of the Americas with indentured white European and enslaved African labor

- The revolt and revolution for independence by the 13 American colonies changed established European and world order
- A new age of scientific revolution, industry, global markets and trade resulted in the focus on regulation of society, economy, the natural environment and nations to achieve public welfare and the collective good
- The United States builds on belief in God and Christian traditions to proclaim universal rights, obligations, and principles
- For this reason the spiritual destiny of America and the West is to establish the oneness of mankind, the Most Great Peace and to build a world system based on common norms, principles and rule of law

Session 3 – Final Webinar – Sunday, February 21, 2018

Spiritual Destiny of America and the West - International Cooperation

Achieving Oneness of Mankind- Unity of Races, Peoples and Nations, Global Commonwealth for World Society and World Peace

Suggested Readings will be posted to website.