



AMERICA'S ★ ★ ★ DESTINY

CHOOSING GOD'S WILL OR OURS

A HISTORICAL & LATTER-DAY SAINT PERSPECTIVE

BY TAD R. CALLISTER

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CHAPTER 1

WHAT ROLE HAS GOD PLAYED IN AMERICA'S ORIGIN AND DESTINY?



AMERICA—A REMARKABLE COUNTRY

The United States of America is a most remarkable country. President Gordon B. Hinckley declared: “I marvel at the miracle of America, the land which the God of Heaven long ago declared to be a choice land. . . . God bless America for it is His creation.”¹ Indeed, America is a choice land.

How many other countries have defeated their enemies in war and then immediately given them aid and resources to rehabilitate them, not as vassals of the victor but as independent countries that retain their national identity and sovereignty? Japan and Germany are classic examples. They were our bitter enemies in World War II, having taken scores of American lives, yet in victory we did not enslave their people or expropriate their land or resources. To the contrary, we invested billions of dollars in those countries to restore their economies and transform them into local democracies. America’s goal was not expansionism but liberty for all.

What other government and people have provided such staggering amounts of humanitarian aid for other nations in need? What other country has the equivalent in churches, service organizations, and other charities that freely give time, money, and needed resources to those who are disadvantaged?² What other nation has produced such astonishing advances in science that

have propelled our civilization to heights never before attained? And what other nation has more liberties or has done more to promote human rights on a worldwide basis?³ Suffice it to say, America—imperfect as it may be—is still a shining bastion of goodness, freedom, and progress.

David McCullough, best-selling author and highly respected historian, wrote of our nation's greatness: "It's said that everything has changed. But everything has not changed. This is plain truth. We are still the strongest, most productive, wealthiest, the most creative, the most ingenious, the most generous nation in the world, with the greatest freedoms of any nation in the world, of any nation in all time."⁴ What a tribute to America from one of the finest historians of our day.

Nikki Haley, daughter of immigrant parents and a former United States Ambassador to the United Nations with a worldwide perspective, wrote a concurring opinion: "America is, hands down, the best country in the world."⁴ She then concluded with this significant statement: "And remember: Even on our worst days, we are blessed to live in America."⁵ Hopefully, we will never lose sight of that fact or take this country for granted.

CRITICISM OF AMERICA

Despite America's remarkable ideals and achievements, some have sought to focus on its faults. But such an approach leads one to ask, "If the United States is so fault-ridden, as some claim, why do millions throughout the world seek to immigrate here, more than any other country? And why are the numbers who leave its shores so negligible? No doubt, you, like me, have met dozens, perhaps hundreds, who have immigrated here. On the other hand, how many do you know who have permanently left here? I can't name a single soul who has done so. Why is that?"

Because America is still the beacon of light on the hill—the most magnificent republic the world has ever known. In the most correct sense, the United States of America is a constitutional republic because it protects the minority from majority abuse, but the term *democracy* has been so frequently and commonly used to describe our form of government that the term is also used in this book to describe our form of government. The Merriam-Webster

dictionary defines a democracy as: “A government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or *indirectly through a system of representation usually involving periodically held free elections.*”⁶ The latter definition of democracy is how the term is used hereafter.

America offers economic opportunities, relief from oppression, freedom of speech, religious freedom, and other democratic benefits sought by those whose countries do not provide the same. No wonder there is a mass rush to its entrance gate while its exit gate is seldom, if ever, sought after.

Nonetheless, some are severely critical of America and argue that our nation’s history is blighted, for example, with its early and unfair treatment of Native Americans, the existence of slavery, and, for many years, unequal rights for women. That is fair criticism, but it is only half the equation. Just as people are imperfect, likewise nations are imperfect. The Founding Fathers understood this and accordingly put into place the finest democracy ever known to man—a system that possesses a self-correcting mechanism, that allows for adjustment and improvement via Constitutional amendments as determined by the will of the people, a system that proposes to “form a more perfect union.”

As a consequence, at least partial restitution was made for the Native Americans through Affirmative Action and the creation of federal bureaus to assist with education and health. Slavery was ended and Affirmative Action granted for many Black Americans, and many additional rights given to women. All this is a witness to the genius and workability of the democratic system crafted by our Founding Fathers. Some people still believe, however, that further restitution for these groups and other historically underprivileged groups is due, and if true, our democracy allows that discussion to continue and further remedies to be made if the electorate concurs.

Our Constitutional form of government is a brilliant pragmatic system that over time is designed to eliminate injustices and maximize opportunities for the life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness for all—a testament to America’s greatness.

Washington confirmed this truth: “Democratic States must always feel before they can see;—it is this that makes their Governments slow, but the people will be right at last.”⁷ President Harry S. Truman concurred, “The people have often made mistakes, but given time and the facts, they will make

the correction.”⁸ Our history is living proof of their observations. While our nation falls short of perfection, we have a system, thanks to our Founding Fathers, that has allowed us to make many corrections over time and thus make steady progress in that pursuit.

It is easy and tempting to be a political Monday-morning quarterback—to find fault with those in the past while remaining oblivious to our own current shortcomings. Who knows but what future generations, with the benefit of hindsight, will condemn our generation for taking innocent lives by legalizing and funding abortions, for the recurring breakdown in marriages and families, for the increase in fornication and adultery, for the expansion in drug usage, and for the explosion in pornography, abuse, suicides, and crime, but on the other hand forget the substantial advances we have made in reducing discrimination, poverty, and illiteracy. Hopefully, future generations will learn from the past and be grateful for a Constitution that provides an inspired system whereby we can build on our strengths and rectify our shortcomings.

David McCullough addressed the current criticism of America: “Let’s stop the mindless destruction of historic America. . . . In my experience, the more one learns of that founding generation of Americans—and I mean the real flesh-and-blood human beings, not the myths—the larger they become, the more one wonders what we’ve lost, or are in grave danger of losing.”⁹ Perhaps President John F. Kennedy had a perspective that should be adopted by us all: “I can assure you that we love our country, not for what it was, though it has always been great—not for what it is, though of this we are deeply proud—but for what it someday can and, through the efforts of us all, some day will be.”¹⁰ What a wonderful message—America is great, and it always has been, but let’s work together to make it even better.

WHAT IS AMERICA’S ORIGIN AND DESTINY?

As will be discussed in subsequent chapters, history presents compelling evidence that this country was divinely discovered and established and will be divinely guided so long as we worship God. Rudyard Kipling penned these lines about the British Empire that seem equally needed by America:

The tumult and the shouting dies

The Captain and the Kings depart
Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice
An humble and a contrite heart.
Lord God of Hosts be with us yet
Lest we forget—lest we forget.”¹¹

So that we will not forget God and our Founding Fathers who were so instrumental in the birth and establishment of our nation, we have Independence Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Presidents’ Day, Memorial Day, Veterans’ Day, the crosses at Arlington National Cemetery, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, the Washington Monument, the Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials, our national flag and anthem, and many other reminders. These holidays and symbols are a reminder of the heroes who laid the groundwork of this great nation, the ideals for which it stands, and most importantly, God’s influence in helping make these ideals a reality.

Author Gerald Lund shared an account of a climbing instructor, Alan Czenkusch, who ran a mountain-climbing school in Colorado. Climbers like Czenkusch rely on a safety system called belaying, in which one climber anchors the rope and himself to the mountain so he can hold his partner should he fall. Lund then quoted from the account:

“Belaying has brought Czenkusch his best and worst moments in climbing. Czenkusch once fell from a high precipice, yanking out three mechanical supports and pulling his belayer off a ledge. He was stopped, upside down, 10 feet from the ground when his spread-eagled belayer arrested the fall with the strength of his outstretched arms.

“‘Don saved my life,’ says Czenkusch. ‘How do you respond to a guy like that? Give him a used climbing rope for a Christmas present? No, you remember him. You always remember him.’”¹²

What a simple but poignant thought. How, then, do we respond to the Founding Fathers and the God of heaven who gave us the life and liberties we so abundantly enjoy? We remember them, honor them, and do all within our power to further the principles upon which they built this nation. In this way, we show our gratitude to them. With the passage of time, it is so easy to take for granted their sacrifices, focus on their weaknesses, and in the process

become ungrateful. In truth, they put their lives, their fortunes, and their reputations on the line for us.

Nonetheless, there exists a current crusade by some to denigrate and diminish our national heroes and the God-given values for which they stood by unduly focusing on their imperfections rather than their achievements, by attempting to maximize every flaw and minimize every strength. In addition, they seek to eliminate or alter some of our national holidays and symbols. For example, some propose changing Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples' Day or Exploration Day, removing the names of Founding Fathers from government buildings and monuments, removing the crosses from Arlington National Cemetery and other public places, eliminating the Pledge of Allegiance from public schools or at least removing the words *under God* and replacing the phrase *Merry Christmas* with *Happy Holidays*. In each of these examples, the consequences would compromise the heroes we honor or cause us to forget and put aside the values on which this country was founded. And in the process, these critics would convert us from a God-fearing nation to a Godless society—from a nation under God to a nation without God.

AMERICA'S ORIGIN AND DESTINY: SECULAR OR DIVINE?

What then is the origin and destiny of America? Is it secular or divine? Answers to the following questions may provide some insights:

- Does America have a divine role to play in God's plan for humanity, or is it just one more secular nation among many?
- Was America discovered and established by chance or by divine design?
- Were the Founding Fathers raised up by God, or are they a rare collection of brilliant minds serendipitously born at the same time and in the same locale?
- Must the Constitution have a moral people to fulfill its purpose? If so, who determines morality?
- Has God spoken on any of the critical moral issues that confront our nation such as the role of religion in the public sector, abortion, same-sex marriage, population control, and socialism? And if so, what has He said?

- What role, if any, should God play in the future of America?

The purpose of this book is to explore the answers to those questions and what effect those answers should have on our conduct. Accordingly, the following chapters discuss the extent to which God has been involved in the discovery, establishment, and preservation of America, why He is so concerned with the destiny of this country, His will on critical moral issues, and why we desperately need His help to preserve and maximize our freedoms.

NOTES

- ¹ Hinckley, *Standing for Something*, xxviii.
- ² Arthur Brooks, in his extensive study on charity, came to this conclusion: “It is clear that the stereotype of stingy Americans just doesn’t hold up. The American government is not the only giver. When we look at the overall charity of Americans, we see that by international standards we are an extraordinarily generous nation” (*Who Really Cares*, 121). Nikki Haley, former US Ambassador to the United Nations, concurred: “Don’t let anyone tell you America isn’t generous in our support of suffering people around the world. It’s a false and ungrateful statement. For decades, right up through today, America remains by far the most generous country in the world” (*With All Due Respect*, 235).
- ³ Haley observed: “The United States does more for human rights, both inside and outside of the United Nations, than any other country in the world. It’s not even close” (*With All Due Respect*, 225).
- ⁴ McCullough, *The American Spirit*, 92.
- ⁵ Haley, *With All Due Respect*, 248. Ben Carson expressed a similar sentiment: “God has opened many doors of opportunity throughout my lifetime, but I believe the greatest of those doors was allowing me to be born in the United States of America” (*America the Beautiful*, 180).
- ⁶ James Madison clarified the difference between a democracy and a republic as follows: “In a democracy, the people meet and exercise the government in person; in a republic, they assemble and administer it by their representatives and agents. A democracy, consequently, must be confined to a small spot. A republic may be extended over a large region” (*Federalist Papers*, no. 14, 42).
- ⁷ Washington, “From George Washington to Lafayette,” founders.archives.gov.
- ⁸ Meacham, *The Soul of America*, 255.
- ⁹ McCullough, *The American Spirit*, 41, 47.
- ¹⁰ Kennedy, “Address at a Luncheon Meeting of the National Industrial Conference Board,” presidency.ucsb.edu.
- ¹¹ Kipling, *Recessional*, 57.
- ¹² Lund, *The Grace and Mercy of Jesus Christ*, 48.

CHAPTER 2

THE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA—WAS COLUMBUS INSPIRED OF GOD?



WILL THE REAL COLUMBUS PLEASE STAND UP?

In well-known television game show, *To Tell the Truth*, panelists were presented with three contestants, each of whom claimed to be a key figure with a unique occupation or experience. Two of the contestants were counterfeits who were permitted to misrepresent the truth, while the third contestant—the real key figure—was required to tell the truth.

After asking questions, the panelists would then give their opinion as to which contestant was the real McCoy. Thereafter the moderator would say, “Would the real [key figure] please stand up?” The panelists were often surprised to discover they had picked the wrong contestant.

In a similar manner, we have many revisionist historians who have manufactured a counterfeit Columbus who has often fooled the audience. The purpose of this chapter is for the real Columbus to stand up and be revealed for who he really was, namely, an instrument in God’s hands in discovering America.

WAS COLUMBUS AN INSTRUMENT IN GOD’S HANDS?

To determine the extent of God’s hand in America, we need to go back to its discovery and the role played by Christopher Columbus in that effort. The

Prophet Nephi foresaw in vision the hand of God upon Columbus: “And I looked and beheld a man among the Gentiles, who was separated from the seed of my brethren by the many waters; and *I beheld the Spirit of God, that it came down and wrought upon the man*; and he went forth upon the many waters, even unto the seed of my brethren, who were in the promised land” (1 Nephi 13:12; emphasis added).

Who was that man? In referring to this specific scripture President Ezra Taft Benson said: “Though unnamed, the man this passage refers to is Columbus.”¹ President Gordon B. Hinckley added: “We interpret [1 Nephi 13:12] to refer to Columbus . . . I have no doubt that Christopher Columbus was a man of faith, as well as a man of indomitable determination.”²

What then were the primary motives of Columbus in sailing West—secular or spiritual? And what difference does it make?

WHAT WAS COLUMBUS’S MOTIVE?

For many years, Columbus sought financing and royal permission for his desired voyage to no avail. After rejecting Columbus’s request three times, Queen Isabella of Spain finally gave her approval. Even though the voyage would have profound financial benefits for Spain, Columbus knew it was much more than a secular quest. He knew it was an integral part of God’s divine master plan. He was not alone in this understanding. Gonzalo Fernandez de Oviedo, Spain’s royal historian, referred to the king and queen’s “faithful service to Jesus Christ and their fervent desire for the spread of His holy faith.” He then added, “It was for this purpose that the Lord brought Christopher Columbus to their notice.”³

Some historians suggest that Columbus was principally driven to discover a new trade route to the “Indies” by a desire for fame or power or wealth. He was indeed a mortal man, and no doubt some of these passions were motivating factors.⁴ Some argue that he could not have been inspired by God, pointing to evidence that he was ineffective as a colonizer and mistreated some of the native inhabitants of the Americas. Such conclusions, however, are difficult to support when all the known historical facts are taken in their

totality and in context, and when “presentism” (interpreting past events in terms of modern-day values) is excluded from the equation.

While fame and fortune may have contributed to Columbus’s interest in exploration, his main motivation, according to Pulitzer Prize-winning biographer Samuel Eliot Morison, was his belief that he was an instrument in God’s hands: There can be no doubt that the faith of Columbus was genuine and sincere, and that his frequent communion with forces unseen was a vital element in his achievement . . . *This conviction that God destined him to be an instrument for spreading the faith was far more potent than the desire to win glory, wealth and worldly honors, to which he was certainly far from indifferent.*⁵ This is consistent with Columbus’s own words: “I feel persuaded, by the many and wonderful manifestations of Divine Providence in my especial favour, that I am the chosen instrument of God in bringing to pass a great event—no less than the conversion of millions who are now existing in the darkness of Paganism.”⁶

Not only did Columbus desire to spread Christianity among the natives whom he encountered, but he also sought gold and wealth for a very specific purpose—to finance a crusade that would conquer Jerusalem and rebuild the temple. In his own words, Columbus said: “I urge your Highnesses to spend all the profits of this my enterprise on the conquest of Jerusalem.”⁷ Being a devoutly religious man, Columbus believed this conquest and the rebuilding of the temple was necessary in order to prepare the way for the Second Coming of Christ.

GOD WORKS THROUGH IMPERFECT MEN

At some point, this key historical question must be addressed: “Was Columbus divinely inspired, or were his voyages nothing more than secular quests?” Columbus certainly had his weaknesses, but if God could use only perfect men to advance His work, He would be left empty-handed.

To illustrate, suppose I were to tell you these four historical facts about a New Testament character and nothing more: first, Jesus said to him, “Get thee behind me, Satan” (Matthew 16:23).⁸ Second, the Lord reprimanded him as follows: “O thou of little faith” (Matthew 14:31). Third, in a fit of rage, this

man cut off the ear of the high priest's servant (John 18:10). And fourth, this man denied knowing the Savior on three occasions, even though he walked with Him daily (John 18:27). If that were all you knew or focused upon, would you deem this man a servant of God or a reprobate? A saint or a sinner? This man, of course, was Peter, Christ's chief apostle. Would his imperfections cause you to reject or abandon Christianity? Or would you say that his imperfections were only a small part of the total man? Would you put those events in context of his entire life so as not to lose proper perspective?

If we focus only upon Peter's weaknesses, we will have missed the real man, his mark and his mission—the man who left his fishing nets to follow Jesus, who saw angels, who became a mighty preacher of righteousness, who healed the infirm and even raised the dead, and who gave his life for his testimony of Jesus Christ.

The same rationale applies to other historical figures. George Washington and Thomas Jefferson made enormous contributions to the founding of this nation, yet they were slaveholders. Martin Luther King Jr. played a pivotal role in advancing racial equality, for which he should be commended, yet it is no secret he engaged in serious moral transgressions.² Sometimes we are blinded by our political prejudices. We see only the good in those who agree with our philosophy of life and only the bad in those who have opposing views. But the world is not so tidy, not so compartmentalized.

To illustrate this point, I share an observation made by my wife, Kathy: “In the Louvre Museum in Paris, France, there is a majestic marble statue commonly referred to as *Winged Victory*. A Greek sculpture from the 2nd century BC, it is one of the most famous statues in the world. Towering at the top of a sweeping staircase near the entrance to the museum, it is breathtaking at first sight. Even though severely damaged—missing her head, arms, and feet—with her gracefully outstretched wings and robes, seemingly fluttering in the wind, she is stunningly beautiful.” We have a replica of that statue in our home. Imperfect as it may be, it is nonetheless one of the masterpieces of all time. How shortsighted and tragic it would be if people focused only on that which is missing and failed to see the glorious work of art which remains.

Similarly, there are some who focus only on the weaknesses in the life of Columbus, but if this is their prime focus and they fail to put those weaknesses

in the context of his entire life, then they too will miss the real man, his mark, and his inspired mission. Fortunately, God uses imperfect men and women to advance His purposes. The critic sees only warts and blemishes. God sees the beauty and strengths, and then He uses them to further His cause.¹⁰ And so it was with Columbus.

To deny his essential and God-inspired role in events which ultimately made possible the birth and founding of the United States of America is to suffer from a severe case of historical myopia.

THE REVISIONIST VIEW OF COLUMBUS

For purposes of this book, the term *revisionist historians* refers to those historians who would rather promote their own prejudices and perspective of history than actual facts as reflected in primary sources (meaning original sources created during the historical time under discussion). In addition, revisionists often demean or vilify those historical figures with whom they disagree in an attempt to diminish their influence. Such a technique was used by the critics of the Savior who “mocked him” (Luke 22:63) and falsely referred to Him as “a man gluttonous, and a winebibber” (Matthew 11:19), a “malefactor” (John 18:30), a blasphemer (John 10:33), and a traitor (Luke 23:2).

Primary sources for learning the history of Columbus include such records as Columbus’s journal and letters, a biography by his son Ferdinand Columbus, an investigative report by his bitter enemy Francisco de Bobadilla, and writings from contemporary historians such as Peter Martyr of Angleria, Bartolome de las Casas, and Andrés Bernáldez. As I read about the life of Columbus, I realized that Columbus, like the rest of us, was certainly imperfect. However, I was surprised and disappointed at the many times revisionists quoted passages out of context, cited other revisionists without reference to primary sources, or simply failed to quote primary sources that disproved or weakened their position.

Lest there be any question, a partial truth presented as the whole truth is an untruth, and there is no doubt but that many revisionists have engaged in

partial truths. Following are but a few examples of such partial truths, each of which is designed to demean Columbus and his God-inspired mission

COLUMBUS DID NOT INTRODUCE SLAVERY INTO THE NEW WORLD.

Perhaps one of Columbus's greatest alleged sins is that he enslaved certain of the natives that he conquered in war and thus introduced slavery into the New World.¹¹ Historically, for centuries, the conquered often became the slaves of the victor. Slavery was not an invention of Columbus. In fact, some native tribes had slaves of their own. For example, historian Peter Martyr d'Anghiera recorded that the eldest son of Comogre (a native chief) presented seventy slaves to Spanish leaders as a gift.¹² He also noted, "When the Spaniards left his village, [Chief Taocha] not only furnished them guides, but also slaves who were prisoners of war."¹³ This is not to excuse slavery but to put it in perspective at the time of Columbus, a perspective often ignored by the revisionists.

COLUMBUS WANTED TO CONVERT ANY SLAVES TO CHRISTIANITY TO BLESS THEIR LIVES.

Furthermore, one needs to understand the context in which Columbus sent some slaves to Spain. King Guacanagari was a native chief who helped Columbus when the Santa Maria shipwrecked and who later sought the help of Columbus to defeat an enemy tribe of cannibals who were destroying his own tribe. Columbus did assist in this request and sent the captured cannibals as slaves to Spain.

Regarding these slaves, Columbus wrote to the monarchs: "We send by these two vessels some of these cannibal men and women, as well as some children, both male and female. Their Highnesses can order them to be placed under the care of the most competent persons to teach them the language." Columbus then explained his motive for sending these slaves: "that they may one day be led to abandon their barbarous custom of eating their fellow-creatures. By learning the Spanish language in Spain, they will much earlier receive baptism and ensure the salvation of their souls; moreover, it will be a great happiness to the Indians who do not practice the above-mentioned cruel custom

[cannibalism], when they see that we have seized and led captive those who injure them, whom they dread so much, that their name alone fills them with horror.”¹⁴

Columbus also said of the slaves that he sent to Spain that he “intended to reclaim” them and then “return them to their lands so they would instruct others.”¹⁵ This, of course, does not justify the slave trade, but it helps us understand the motives behind Columbus’s actions—to help civilize and save a people, some of whom practiced cannibalism. This is an important insight completely neglected by the revisionists who want only to paint Columbus in a negative light. Likewise, it is important to understand that Columbus never personally owned a slave, either in the Indies or in Spain.¹⁶ In other words, any natives sent to Spain were not for the personal benefit of Columbus but for what he thought might be their ultimate education and conversion to Christianity.

COLUMBUS WANTED TO MAKE FRIENDS, NOT ENEMIES OF THE NATIVES.

It is true that Columbus did kill some natives, but this was largely in response to the death of thirty-nine Spaniards (killed by these same natives) that Columbus had left behind to govern the island of Hispaniola. As to this event, Las Casas, a historian contemporary of Columbus, wrote, “Truly, I would not dare blame the admiral’s intention, for I knew him well and all I know his intentions were good.”¹⁷ This is consistent with Columbus’s own self-admission: “I know, assuredly, that the errors which I may have fallen into, have been done without the intention to do wrong.”¹⁸

This also seems consistent with the observation of Carol Delaney, emeritus professor at Stanford University and a lead historian on the life of Columbus, who indicated that Columbus wanted to make friends, not enemies of the natives. In a conversation with Delaney, Alton Pelowski noted that “the popular view today is that Columbus is responsible for countless atrocities against the native peoples.” Pelowski asked her if she felt “this is a fair assessment.” Delaney, after having reviewed all the available evidence on the subject and being as well-informed or perhaps better than any other on the subject, responded with impartiality: “*No, not at all . . .* The more I read of his

own writings and that of his contemporaries, *my understanding of him totally changed*. His relations with the natives tended to be benign. He liked the natives and found them to be very intelligent. *Christopher strictly told the crew not to do things like maraud [or] rape, and instead to treat the native people with respect. There are many examples in his writings where he gave instructions to this effect. Most of the time when injustices occurred, Columbus wasn't even there.*"¹⁹ What a difference in perspective when someone relies on primary sources not secondary sources and revisionist history!

On one occasion Columbus hanged two Spaniards for mistreating the natives. Delaney wrote: "These were men who had been punished for their rebellion and the hideous deeds they had committed against the Indians. Columbus intended their deaths to serve as an example not only to the rest of the colonists, but also to show the Indians that the rule of law also applied to his own men."²⁰ Why is it that the revisionists never report this event? Because it is contrary to their agenda claiming that Columbus mistreated the natives.

In my own reading of original sources, I came to the same conclusion as Delaney. Columbus pretty well summarized his attitude toward the natives in this diary entry: "I knew they were a people to be converted and won to our holy faith by love and friendship rather than by force."²¹ Peter Martyr, a contemporary historian, confirmed this belief of Columbus: "*As he had never mistreated the natives, the inhabitants [of Cuba], both men and women, gladly brought him gifts, displaying no fear.*"²² One must ask, "Why is it that these trusted original sources—the personal diary of Columbus and the impartial testimonies of contemporary historians—are so frequently in opposition to the conclusions of the revisionist historians and seldom, if ever, quoted? And why is it that contrary to the allegations of the revisionists, Columbus was usually quick to punish those responsible when bad things were done to the natives?"

COLUMBUS IS BLAMED FOR THE ACTS OF OTHERS EVEN WHEN HE WAS NOT PRESENT.

There were atrocities committed by the Spaniards, but the vast majority of these occurred by the Spaniards whom Columbus left behind while he returned to Spain and by the two Spanish leaders who governed in his absence,

namely, Francisco de Bobadilla and Frey Nicolás de Ovando y Cáceres.²³ Later, Columbus referred to Spaniards who mistreated the natives as “debauchees, profligates, thieves, seducers, ravishers, vagabonds,”²⁴ hardly descriptions of individuals whose conduct was approved by him. To the contrary, Columbus wanted the natives to be treated fairly. He wrote, “I do not think it would be well or desirable, on the part of your Highnesses, to take possession of it [gold] in the way of plunder; by fair dealing, scandal and disrepute will be avoided.”²⁵ One must wonder why revisionist historians often omit these mitigating details as set forth in primary sources.

On one occasion, Columbus left fifty men under the supervision of Pedro Margarit to mine gold on the island of Cibao. He sent Margarit instructions that the Indians were to “receive no injury, suffer no harm, and that nothing is [to be] taken from them against their will; instead make them feel honored and protected so as to keep them from becoming perturbed.”²⁶ Does this sound like a tyrant as asserted by the revisionists? As Carol Delaney noted, “What Columbus didn’t know was that Margarit, and the men under his command, had gone on rampages, marauding the native villages and raping the women.” These were actions for which the revisionists blame Columbus.²⁷ Delaney also said, “*They’re [the critics] blaming Columbus for the things he didn’t do . . . I just think he’s been terribly maligned.*”²⁸

In support of Delaney’s foregoing observation, Las Casas, who meticulously detailed the brutality of the Spaniards, nonetheless, made this exculpatory observation about Columbus: “[T]he desolation of these Isles and Provinces [Hispaniola] took beginning . . . about the year 1504 [*after* Columbus’s four voyages were completed and at a time when he had no administrative responsibilities in the New World], for before that time [when Columbus governed in part] very few of the Provinces situated in that Island were oppressed or spoiled with unjust Wars, or violated with general devastation as after they were.”²⁹ What a defense of Columbus—not to be found in the writings of the revisionist historians.

COLUMBUS’S INTENTIONS WERE GOOD. HE WANTED TO ENLIST THE NATIVES, NOT DESTROY THEM.

Columbus is accused of wide-scale genocide. It is true that many Native Americans died from diseases transmitted by the Spaniards because they had little, if any, immunity. This was a tragic occurrence, but there is no historical evidence that this was intentional in any way. Columbus came to America to find wealth to be used in the retaking of Jerusalem in the name of Christianity and to convert the natives to Christianity, not to exterminate them. The idea that Columbus purposely sought extinction is nowhere to be found in history. Delaney made this significant observation about Columbus: “He surely did not intend to commit genocide, of which he has been accused. He wanted to enlist the . . . people on his side, not to destroy them.”³⁰

It is true there were diseases transmitted and subsequent loss of life, but countering that, the revisionists have failed to mention a very significant fact—the rise of the magnificent Hispanic race numbering in the multimillions. Who are these people? They are the descendants and beneficiaries of the fusion between the Spanish and native cultures, made possible in the Americas because of Columbus.

REVISIONISTS MISQUOTE COLUMBUS AS ENDORSING RATHER THAN MERELY REPORTING SEXUAL SLAVERY.

An additional partial truth is that Columbus sanctioned and supervised the selling of native girls into sexual slavery. For support, the revisionists love to quote one sentence from a letter of Columbus: “For one woman they give a hundred castellanos, as for a farm; and this sort of trading is very common, and there are already a great number of merchants who go in search of girls; there are at this moment from nine or ten on sale; they fetch a good price, let their age be what it will.” But revisionists quote this statement out of context. Columbus was reporting an event, not endorsing it. He was writing about atrocities committed by those who had now settled in the Indies. In fact, before making reference to the sex slavery mentioned above, Columbus wrote, “It would be well to send people from Spain, and only to send such as are well known, that the country may be peopled with honest men.” After making reference to the women being sold into slavery, he observed, “I aver, that a great number of men have been to the Indies, who did not deserve baptism in

the eyes of God or men, and who are now returning thither.”³¹ In other words, it seems Columbus was condemning, not condoning such actions.

The Dartmouth Review made reference to the above comments by Columbus, and then concluded: “Although we can never be completely certain of Columbus’ actions in the Caribbean, it is clear in his writings that he wholeheartedly disavowed the sexual traffic of minor indigenous women.”³²

As further evidence of his motives, Columbus tells of two native girls sent to his ship, about seven and eleven years of age, very immodestly dressed. Did he take advantage of them? Sell them? No. In his own words, “I gave them some articles to dress themselves out with, and directly sent them back to the shore.”³³ In fact, we do not have one historical evidence of Columbus ever taking advantage of a native girl or woman. So much for the allegation of the revisionist historians that Columbus was personally involved in sex-slave trafficking.

COLUMBUS BROUGHT THE NATIVES A MUCH BETTER WAY OF LIFE.

Some revisionists would have us believe that the natives with whom Columbus interacted were all peace-loving, free of major diseases, and living in harmony and happiness before Columbus “destroyed” all that.³⁴ The facts reveal, however, that many tribes were continually at war.³⁵ The British historian Hugh Thomas responded to this so-called noble savage myth by offering this insight about the native tribes: “Had it not been for the Spanish invasions, it is likely that the Caribs [a native tribe] would have destroyed the Tainos as the Tainos had destroyed the Ciboneys. Some have written of the ancient Caribbean as if it had been Elysium. But it was an Elysium with savagery in the wings.”³⁶ Furthermore, the facts reveal that some of these natives were cannibals,³⁷ ate their own children,³⁸ were subject to major diseases,³⁹ possessed slaves, performed human sacrifices,⁴⁰ and practiced witchcraft,⁴¹ among other atrocities.⁴² To suggest that Columbus destroyed their peaceful, civilized, and harmonious societies is pure fiction.

To the contrary, Columbus brought them a much better way of life—Christianity. That is why the Americas today are filled with Christian nations where cannibalism has been eradicated, slavery abolished, human sacrifices

done away, major diseases minimized, life expectancies extended, poverty reduced, and education made available to most.⁴³ That is the true legacy of Columbus.⁴⁴ In many ways, he was the catalyst for Western civilization in the Americas.

WHAT DO THE IMPARTIAL WITNESSES SAY ABOUT COLUMBUS?

The revisionists have propagated partial truths in exponential degrees. And in the process, they have used such partial truths to denigrate a man who made a monumental contribution to the discovery and settlement of America and thus deserves to be honored by all Americans.

Perhaps one of the most impartial witnesses of Columbus was the contemporary historian Las Casas, who was concerned about the welfare and treatment of the indigenous natives and who was not afraid to point out Columbus's weaknesses. Nonetheless, taking Columbus's shortcomings into account, Las Casas summarized his life as follows: "I think Christopher Columbus was the most outstanding sailor in the world, versed like no other in the art of navigation, *for which divine Providence chose him to accomplish the most outstanding feat ever accomplished in the world until now.* Many is the time I have wished that God would again inspire me . . . to extol the indescribable service to God and to the whole world which Christopher Columbus rendered at the cost of such pain and dangers, such skill and expertise, when he so courageously discovered the New World."⁴⁵ What a compelling witness from a contemporary historian of God's hand in the life of Columbus and his significant contribution to the world.

Las Casas further wrote, "Truly this man had a good and Christian purpose."⁴⁶ Quotes such as these, however, are noticeably absent from the writings of the revisionists who seem to have an agenda at the cost of historical accuracy. I understand and agree with constructive criticism—that is fair and warranted—but the revisionists have become so one-sided, and in many cases historically inaccurate, that their credibility has become tenuous at best.

Las Casas was not naïve; he was keenly aware of the many false accusations against Columbus. He marveled why the king of Spain (after Queen Isabella died) was so unkind to Columbus, "one whose unparalleled services no other

monarch ever received.” He then gave this possible reason: “Perhaps he was unduly impressed by the arguments and false testimonies of the admiral’s enemies and rivals,”⁴⁷ a common malady suffered by many revisionist historians today.

Historian Carol Delaney exposed another of the revisionists’ fatal flaws—a resort to presentism, the superimposing of present-day values and cultural norms on previous generations: “The ‘presentist’ perspective that dominates the contemporary view, even among some academics, holds him responsible for consequences he did not intend, expect, or endorse. Judging Columbus from a contemporary perspective rather than from the values and practices of his own time misjudges his motivations and his accomplishment.”⁴⁸

If Columbus was an evil man, as some assert, one must wonder why he took no slaves for himself, why we have no record of him taking advantage of native women even though many Spanish sailors engaged in such conduct, why he did not personally hoard gold like those who succeeded him in administering the islands, and why he did not seek for uncontrolled power over a people who were inferior to him in military might. In addition, we must ask why we have so many firsthand accounts of him speaking well of the natives and treating them fairly, why his prime motivation for all his acts was the conversion of the natives to Christianity, and why, in his last will and testament, he donated money for a church and hospital for the benefit of the indigenous natives.

Las Casas, a contemporary historian, as well as Morison and Delaney, modern-day historians, summarized Columbus’s life in positive terms, not because they were blind to his weaknesses but because they were able to put them in proper perspective.

COLUMBUS WAS INSPIRED BY THE HOLY GHOST

What then is the real story of Columbus? Historical references to Columbus as an instrument in God’s hands are numerous. Nonetheless some historians minimize these references or altogether avoid them, perhaps in an effort to demonstrate some intellectual superiority that doesn’t fall victim to belief in divine things. Perhaps others want to promote their own creative view of history. And perhaps others can’t resist the affliction of presentism. In any case,

the facts are overwhelming in spite of one's ideological bent—God's hand was in the life of Columbus and his contribution in the discovery and settlement of America.

Clark Hinckley, who authored the book *Christopher Columbus: A Man Among the Gentiles*, wrote, “Most historians are comfortable writing about Columbus's skill as a mariner and his weaknesses as a colonial administrator but are considerably less comfortable writing about his deeply held religious beliefs and his scriptural insights, which portray a divine plan of history with Columbus as a central player.”⁴⁹

In his notebook of biblical prophecies, *Libro de las profecías*, Columbus shared his conviction that God's hand was in the discovery of the Americas: “With a hand that could be felt, the Lord opened my mind to the fact that it would be possible to sail from here to the Indies, and opened my will to desire to accomplish the project. This was the fire that burned within me . . . *Who can doubt that this fire was not merely mine, but also of the Holy Spirit . . . urging me to press forward?*”⁵⁰

Delno C. West and August Kling, who translated and gave commentary on *Libro de las profecías*, made this observation about the character of Columbus: “The documents surrounding the life of Christopher Columbus support the fact that he was the kind of person he claimed to be. His way of life and his dealings with all sorts and conditions of people, both in close relationships and in casual acquaintanceships, was generally consistent with that kind of profession of religious faith.”⁵¹

On March 15, 1493, Columbus wrote the king and queen concerning his first voyage to the Indies: “Of this voyage I observe that it hath miraculously been shown . . . by the many signal miracles that He [God] hath shown on the voyage and for me . . . which I hope in Our Lord will be to the greater glory of Christianity, which to some slight extent already has occurred.”⁵²

In further corroboration of Columbus's divine mission, Hinckley wrote, “In a letter to the monarchs of Spain dated 7 July 1503, Columbus records hearing a divine voice declaring that ‘since thou wast born, ever has He [God] had thee in His watchful care’ and that when he had reached an age which pleased God, ‘of the barriers of the Ocean Sea, which were closed with such mighty chains, He gave thee the key.’”⁵³ As confirmation to this, Las Casas, wrote, “God

granted to this man [Columbus] the keys to this awesome sea, and would not that any other should unlock the darkness.”⁵⁴

One must keep in mind that Columbus was not only an avid student of geography with supreme mariner skills, but he was also a devoted student of the Bible. His claims of divine intervention were not the hollow claims of a stranger to God but were the heartfelt sentiments of someone who loved God and diligently studied His teachings. Columbus honestly believed his mission was to open pathways that would allow the gospel of Jesus Christ to be preached to all people. He repeatedly advocated and advanced that cause.

There can be no dispute about Columbus’s religious nature. For all the sinister motives Columbus supposedly had, Las Casas made this observation: “He observed the fasts of the Church most faithfully; confessed and made communion many times; prayed at all of the required times like a churchman or member of a religious order, hated blasphemy and profane swearing.”⁵⁵ Columbus’s son Fernando, was in agreement: “[Columbus] was so observant of religious matters that when it came to fasting and saying all the canonical prayers, he might have been taken for a member of a religious order.”⁵⁶ All this is compatible with his claim that he was inspired by the Holy Ghost.

COLUMBUS BROUGHT CHRISTIANITY TO THE AMERICAS

During Columbus’s first voyage, he wrote to the king and queen of Spain about the native people: “May your Highnesses believe that in the whole world there cannot be a better or more gentle people. Your Highnesses should take much joy in that soon you will make them Christians and will have instructed them in the good customs of your realms, for neither better people nor land can there be.”⁵⁷ Columbus was not a racist. To the contrary, he wanted to bring joy to these natives through Christianity.⁵⁸ Some may disagree with his methods, but it would be hard to argue with his motives.

Fernando wrote of his father, “Just as it is said that St. Christopher [a Catholic saint] is said to have been so named for carrying Christ over the depths of the waters, with great danger . . . so the Admiral Christopher Columbus, requesting the aid of Christ, that He would favor him in the perils

of his voyage, completed the journey to convert the *indios* into members and inhabitants of the triumphant church of heaven.”⁵⁹

Alejandro Bermudez, a Peruvian American, wrote this op-ed in the *Wall Street Journal* in support of what Columbus accomplished:

“As a Catholic, I particularly value Columbus for bringing the first of many missionaries who showed millions of people the path to salvation.

“Human sacrifice was not unusual in my home country, as in much of the Americas. In what is now Peru, children were sacrificed by the Incas . . . Those who hate Columbus and his legacy still must acknowledge that this indigenous practice vanished thanks to the advent of Christianity in our hemisphere.

“The notion that indigenous life was perfect and Western culture is the locus of all evil is . . . absurd.”⁶⁰

Those who believe that Columbus mistreated the natives should ponder this observation of the historian Samuel Eliot Morison concerning the last will and testament of Columbus: “This document [which contains instructions by Columbus concerning disposition of his property] proves not only the Admiral’s loyalty to his native city, but his interest and faith in the future of the colony that he had founded. His heir is ordered to erect a church in Hispaniola [the island that was later divided into the states of Haiti and the Dominican Republic] . . . and a hospital ‘as well planned as may be like those in Castile and Italy.’ He must further ‘maintain and support in Hispaniola four good Masters of Sacred Theology,’ whose main object shall be to work for the conversion of the natives.”⁶¹ What a generous and loving expression of goodwill by Columbus on behalf of the people of Hispaniola!

COLUMBUS OPENED THE DOORS TO THE SETTLEMENT OF AMERICA

People may debate Columbus’s character. That is understandable. But there is little doubt that Columbus was inspired in his voyages and discoveries, as evidenced by multiple sources. And thus the question: “What was God’s purpose in this?”

Certainly, one important reason was for Columbus to introduce Christianity to millions in the western hemisphere. But perhaps of equal or even greater import, Columbus opened the doors to a land that had been kept by God

separate and apart from the superstitions, state-mandated religions, and regal dictators of Europe. The Lord needed a place that could spawn freedom of conscience, freedom of speech, and freedom of religion—a nation that would protect life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, a nation whose people would worship God and follow His will and thus be a light to the world. That nation would be the United States of America. Columbus made its founding possible as he was the first man to blaze the path across the seemingly impassible ocean that led to the Americas and their eventual European settlement.⁶²

And why was it so important to have a nation where freedom of conscience, speech, and religion could flourish? Because that was the environment necessary for the Restoration of Christ's gospel to the earth. President George Q. Cannon, speaking of Columbus and certain of the Founding Fathers, said that their work "was a preparatory work for the establishment of the Kingdom of God. This Church and Kingdom could not have been established on the earth if their work had not been performed."⁶³

The significance of Columbus' discovery is contained in an unsubstantiated story about Columbus that nonetheless teaches an important principle. A courtier, jealous of Columbus as a foreigner, and in an effort to demean his achievements, asked Columbus if it were not possible that other men could have accomplished the same goal as he had done. As the story goes, "Columbus made no immediate reply, but, taking an egg, invited the company to make it stand on one end. Every one attempted it, but in vain; whereupon he struck it upon the table so as to break the end, and left it standing on the broken part; illustrating, in this simple manner, that when he had once shown the way to the New World, nothing was easier than to follow it."⁶⁴ And in truth, he did open the gate to the New World and its ultimate settlement, which made possible the restoration of Christ's gospel to the earth.

Morison concluded his Pulitzer Prize-winning biography of Columbus with these words: "The whole history of the Americas stems from the Four Voyages of Columbus . . . Today a score of independent nations and dominions unite in homage to Christopher . . . who carried Christian civilization across the Ocean Sea."⁶⁵ Suffice it to say, Columbus was inspired by God to discover the New World and bring Christianity to its shores. Columbus had the courage to follow God's promptings, the daring to cross the seemingly impassible ocean

and discover the New World, and the righteous desire to share Christianity with the natives. His discoveries led to a people that eventually abandoned slavery, cannibalism, and human sacrifices, and replaced it with religion, education, and a more refined civilization. What a colossal contribution to society!

WHY DO WE NEED HEROES?

It is now time for the real Columbus to stand up and be recognized and honored for who he really was—an imperfect but bona fide hero—and for the counterfeit Columbus to be exposed as a myth of revisionist historians.

Heroes are anyone who bring out the best in us. Learning about heroes is much more than a history lesson, much more than an intellectual exercise or fact-finding mission. It causes a stirring of our heart and soul that refines and purifies our character. Heroes eliminate excuses and a victim mentality. They give us an enhanced vision of who we are and what we can become. And with that increased vision comes increased motivation to do the will of God.

Heroes help us know that a mere mortal with faults and weaknesses can rise above them and achieve greatness. They give us hope and strength to be better and carry on even in moments of despair or discouragement. Simply said, heroes inspire greatness in both individuals and nations.

Why then the concerted effort by some to denigrate our national heroes? Perhaps, some people try to tear others down in an effort to lift themselves up. If they can get rid of heroes and their moral values, they can better justify their own immoral behavior. Perhaps some want to get rid of our national heroes (most, if not all of whom were believers in God) so they can better advance their secular agenda. Perhaps others feel it is a sign of their intellectual brilliance to focus on a discovered or known weakness rather than one's obvious strengths. But whatever the reason, the emphasis on one's weaknesses to the exclusion of one's multiple strengths is nothing less than a historical misrepresentation—a form of revisionist history.

We have many heroes in American history who deserve our respect and admiration, such as Columbus and the Founding Fathers. If we will but focus on their incredible accomplishments—their efforts in the discovery and

establishment of the greatest nation on earth—rather than their few weaknesses, and in addition avoid the trap of presentism, then we will discover heroes worthy of our emulation. Then we will have heroes whose lives will touch a responsive chord within us, heroes who can inspire us to be true patriots and more heroic in our own lives.

Honoring our nation's heroes and giving respect for the sacrifices they made breeds a positivism and patriotism that is wholesome and uplifting. President Bill Clinton referred to this spirit while participating in a documentary on the life of George Washington that highlighted his incredible contributions to the foundation of this nation: "Americans [have] no idea how indebted they are to him."⁶⁶ In other words, Washington is a hero of immense proportions.

It is time for our long-held national heroes to be re-enthroned and revered consistent with actual history, not revisionist history, hence the next chapter on our Founding Fathers.

NOTES

- ¹ Benson, *God's Hand in Our Nation's History*, speeches.byu.edu.
- ² Hinckley, *Building Your Tabernacle*, 52.
- ³ Cohen, *The Four Voyages of Christopher Columbus*, 35.
- ⁴ Delno C. West and August Kling wrote: "We cannot deny that the Admiral wanted a comfortable income for himself and his heirs, but the primary motivation in his quest for gold was spiritual. On many occasions, he clearly stated that any gold found should be used first and foremost to propagate the faith and to launch the final crusade to Jerusalem" (*The Libro de las profecias of Christopher Columbus*, 69).
- ⁵ Morison, *Admiral of the Ocean Sea: A Life of Christopher Columbus*, 47; emphasis added.
- ⁶ From a letter from Columbus to Amerigo Vespucci, in Lester, *The Life and Voyages of Americus Vesputius*, 79.
- ⁷ Columbus, *The Diario of Christopher Columbus's First Voyage to America*, 1492–1493, 291.
- ⁸ All references to Bible passages in this book are from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.
- ⁹ Abernathy, *And the Walls Came Tumbling Down*, 471–475; also see Morrow, "A Reckoning with Martin Luther King," wsj.com.
- ¹⁰ Saul, who later became Paul, is a case in point. He went about persecuting the Christians. Members of Christ's church knew him only for the evil that he had done. When Ananias, a disciple of Christ, was instructed by the Lord in a vision to seek out Saul and give him a blessing, he was understandably reluctant: "I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints" (Acts 9:13). But the Lord had a deeper and greater perspective into who Saul really was and who he could really become: "He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel" (Acts 9:15). And what a powerful disciple he became.
- ¹¹ For one example of this view, see Strong, "Slavery and Colonialism Make Up the True Legacy of Columbus," *The New York Times*, 1989.

- [12](#) D’Anghera, *De Orbe Novo*, 1:220.
- [13](#) D’Anghera, *De Orbe Novo*, 1:298.
- [14](#) Columbus, *Select Letters of Christopher Columbus*, 81–83.
- [15](#) Rafael, *Christopher Columbus the Hero*, 136.
- [16](#) Historian Carol Delaney added: “Columbus, who never owned slaves, is reviled and blamed for everything that went wrong in the Indies” (*Columbus and the Quest for Jerusalem*, 252).
- [17](#) Rafael, *Christopher Columbus the Hero*, 220.
- [18](#) Columbus, *Select Letters of Christopher Columbus*, 167.
- [19](#) Pelowski, “Why Columbus Sailed,” [kofc.org](#); emphasis added.
- [20](#) Delaney, *Columbus and the Quest for Jerusalem*, 181.
- [21](#) Cohen, *The Four Voyages of Christopher Columbus*, 55.
- [22](#) Martyr, *De Orbe Novo*, The First Decade, Book III, 101; emphasis added.
- [23](#) Carol Delaney noted, “While recognizing Columbus’s shortcomings in the administration of the colonies, Las Casas still claimed that Columbus was far better and fairer than either Bobadilla or Ovando or any of those who came later” (*Columbus and the Quest for Jerusalem*, 230).
- [24](#) D’Anghera, *De Orbe Novo*, 142
- [25](#) Columbus, *Select Letters of Christopher Columbus*, 198. On another occasion, Columbus forbade his men from taking advantage of the natives as they bartered one with another. Columbus then noted that he “gave them [the natives] many beautiful and acceptable articles which I had brought with me, taking nothing from them in return” (*Select Letters of Christopher Columbus*, 8).
- [26](#) Delaney, *Columbus and the Quest for Jerusalem*, 145.
- [27](#) Columbus sent Alonso de Hojeda to replace Margarit. But as noted by Delaney: “Columbus misjudged Hojeda’s character. He would later learn that Hojeda used brutal tactics against the Indians to demonstrate the dire consequences of their attacks. For example, when Hojeda heard that a few Indians had robbed several Spaniards of some of their clothes, he cut off the ears of one of the natives and sent the chief and several others in chains to La Isabela. . . . Columbus was angry over what Hojeda and his men had done, and he should have punished them, but he realized that would only infuriate them further and make insurrection more likely. So to demonstrate his authority, he made a show of preparing to execute the captives. When the Spaniards were distracted, he released them” (Delaney, *Columbus and the Quest for Jerusalem*, 146).
- [28](#) Jones, “Critics of Columbus Day Get History Wrong, Scholar Says,” [catholicnewsagency.com](#) (emphasis added).
- [29](#) Las Casas, *A Brief Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, 18.
- [30](#) Delaney, *Columbus and the Quest for Jerusalem*, 237
- [31](#) Columbus, *Select Letters of Christopher Columbus*, 157–58, 159–60.
- [32](#) “Examining the Historical Columbus,” [dartreview.com](#).
- [33](#) Columbus, *Select Letters of Christopher Columbus*, 192.
- [34](#) Rafael, *Christopher Columbus the Hero*, 11.
- [35](#) d’Anghera, *De Orbe Novo*, 79, 222.
- [36](#) Thomas, *Rivers of Gold*, 115.
- [37](#) d’Anghera, *De Orbe Novo*, 62–63, 72–74, 155, 315, 342, 401–2.
- [38](#) Columbus, *Select Letters of Christopher Columbus*, 31.
- [39](#) Rafael, *Christopher Columbus The Hero*, 119.
- [40](#) d’Anghera, *De Orbe Novo*, 387.
- [41](#) Rafael, *Christopher Columbus The Hero*, 80.
- [42](#) Rafael, *Christopher Columbus The Hero*, 11.
- [43](#) Two of the more undeveloped countries in South America are Bolivia and Ecuador. Bolivia has a life expectancy of 71.2 years while Ecuador has a life expectancy of 76.8 years (World Bank, “Life

Expectancy at Birth,” data.worldbank.org). A New York Times article summarizing the study of anthropologists, economists and paleopathologists concerning a seven-thousand-year study of the health of people in the western hemisphere concluded, “In the healthiest cultures in the 1,000 years before Columbus, a life span of no more than 35 years might be usual” (Wilford, “Don’t Blame Columbus for All the Indians’ Ills,” nytimes.com). In other words, the life expectancy of Native Americans has more than doubled since the time of Columbus.

[44](#) Perhaps the most potentially damaging evidence against Columbus is a forty-eight-page document discovered in a state archive in Spain in 2006 called *La caída de Cristóbal Colón*. It alleges that Columbus or his men were responsible for atrocities such as cutting off a man’s nose and ears for stealing corn and parading a woman naked through the streets and eventually selling her off into slavery. If Columbus was personally responsible for any of these activities, then certainly it would be a black mark on his character. In fairness to Columbus, it is important to note that he spent years refuting these claims. In addition, such actions were often the acts of his men without his approval or the actions of other Spaniards while he was not present. Furthermore, the revisionists have neglected to mention that there is a major problem with this report. It was prepared by Francisco de Bobadilla, a bitter enemy of Columbus who “successfully usurped power from him in the West Indies” (Michael J. Knowles, “Historical Record Shows Christopher Columbus Actually Was a Great Man,” dailywire.com). In fact, Columbus said of Bobadilla, “he made innumerable unjust and disgraceful charges against me” (*Select Letters of Christopher Columbus*, 155). To give full credit to this report would be something like treating a history of the Jews by Adolf Hitler as an impartial work or a history of Jesus Christ by the Pharisees and Sadducees as an accurate historical picture of Christ’s life. In support of this conclusion, Las Casas noted that Bobadilla told his men: “[T]ake as many advantages as you can [against the natives] since you don’t know how long this will last” (*History of the Indies*, 79). Delaney then added: “By ‘advantage’ he meant for the men to take as much of the gold, women, and labor of the Indians as they could. Las Casas said the obvious: ‘The Spaniards loved and adored him in exchange for such favors,’ and because they were allowed to get away with murder, literally, they were not about to denounce Bobadilla.” Instead, they were willing to denounce Columbus to gain the favor of Bobadilla. No wonder Delaney concluded: “Because there was no opportunity for Columbus to counter the accusations against him made by Bobadilla, the recently found report by Bobadilla, *La caída de Cristóbal Colón*, is highly suspect” (*Columbus and the Quest for Jerusalem*, 181–82, 206; emphasis added).

[45](#) Rafael, *Christopher Columbus the Hero*, 227–28.

[46](#) Morison, *Admiral of the Ocean Sea*, 516.

[47](#) Las Casas, *History of the Indies*, 139.

[48](#) Delaney, *Columbus and the Quest for Jerusalem*, 236. Delaney also commented, “Judging Columbus from a present-day ethical standard is not only anachronistic, it reduces his intentions to their [unintended] effects; that is, it mistakes the consequences for the motivations” (*Columbus and the Quest for Jerusalem*, xiii).

[49](#) Hinckley, *Christopher Columbus*, 8.

[50](#) West and Kling, *The Libro de las profecías of Christopher Columbus*, 105.

[51](#) West and Kling, *The Libro de las profecías of Christopher Columbus*, 42.

[52](#) Morison, *Admiral of the Ocean Sea*, 352. On March 30, 1493, the king and queen, recognizing God’s hand in the mission of Columbus, wrote to him: “We have seen your letters and we have taken much pleasure in learning whereof you write, and that God gave so good a result to your labors, and well guided you in what you commenced” (Morison, *Admiral of the Ocean Sea*, 355).

[53](#) Hinckley, *Christopher Columbus*, 24.

[54](#) Las Casas, *Historia de las Indias*, 1:471.

[55](#) Las Casas, *Historia de las Indias*, 1:44.

- [56](#) Colón, *Historia del Almirante*, 1:14.
- [57](#) Columbus, *Diario*, 273.
- [58](#) In fact, this was a continuous theme in the writings of Columbus. On one occasion, he prophesied, “Your Highnesses have won these great lands, which are another world, where Christianity will have so much enjoyment and our faith, in time, so much growth” (Las Casas, *Historia de las Indias*, 2:255).
- [59](#) Colón, *Historia del Almirante*, 6.
- [60](#) Bermudez, “Catholics against Columbus,” A13.
- [61](#) Morison, *Admiral of the Ocean Sea*, 514.
- [62](#) As to the naming of America, Delaney observed: “It was an injustice that the continent would be named after Amerigo [Vespucci] rather than its discoverer [Columbus]” (*Christopher Columbus and the Quest for Jerusalem*, 234).
- [63](#) Cannon, *Gospel Truth*, 240.
- [64](#) Irving, *A History of the Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus*, 1:238.
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