

# O America!



## A MANIFESTO *on* LIBERTY



### *The* READING GUIDE

The following discussion questions are intended to help you engage with the ideas expressed in *O America! A Manifesto on Liberty*. The hope is that these questions, and your wrestlings with them, will embolden you to live a braver and freer life.

1. What does the image of Uncle Sam on the cover tell you about the book? Does it in anyway illustrate the current state of liberty in America today?
2. What do you think William Stoughton meant by his quote: “O America, thy God did expect better things from thee and thy children”? Do you agree with the sentiments of that quote? Why or why not?

3. The basic question Derrick addresses in *O America* is “Are we more free or less free than when the founders established the nation?” How would you answer this question?
4. On page 3 Derrick argues that certain segments of the American society are more free today they they were during the founders’ day. But, he also argues that as a whole we are less free than during the founders’ day. Do you agree or disagree? Why?
5. What is your opinion or view of the United States Constitution? How should we interpret it?
6. What is your opinion of Woodrow Wilson’s view of how we should interpret the Constitution as outlined on pages 6 – 7?
7. In 2008, Barack Obama said he wanted to “fundamentally transform” America. What do you think he meant? Transform America from what into what?
8. Derrick argues that if progressive politicians like Woodrow Wilson, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Lyndon B. Johnson, and Barack Obama remain in power and accomplish their legislative agendas then America will become no better than a European-style Socialist state. What is right about Derrick’s argument? What is wrong about his argument?

9. The founders believed in what James Hutson called “the founding generations’s syllogism” and what Derrick called “the liberty triangle”: a republic cannot survive without liberty, liberty cannot survive without virtue, and virtue cannot survive without religion. What is the state of the liberty triangle today? Which side, if any, has fallen in? Why?
10. Do you think the founders placed too much faith in the people’s ability to govern themselves? Explain.
11. The founders believed in limited government and near unlimited liberty. What might that look like today?
12. Derrick argues that the lose of liberty is a direct result of forgetting God, which leads to corrupted virtue, and the inability to govern ourselves. How might this message resonate in a pluralistic society?
13. Derrick places a premium on knowing history. How important is history to you personally? What is the link between knowing and understanding history and liberty?
14. Derrick offers three roads back to liberty: remembering God, practicing virtue, and recovering history. What is your opinion of this roadmap? What would you add or subtract?

15. *O America* ends with George's Washington's farewell address to the nation. Besides announcing his desire to retire from active political life, Washington wanted to establish two doctrines: unity at home and independence abroad. How have Washington's hopes played out in America today? What does your answer portend for freedom, both for today and for tomorrow?

***A 911 for 9/11:  
Finding Answers to the Evil of September 11, 2001***

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