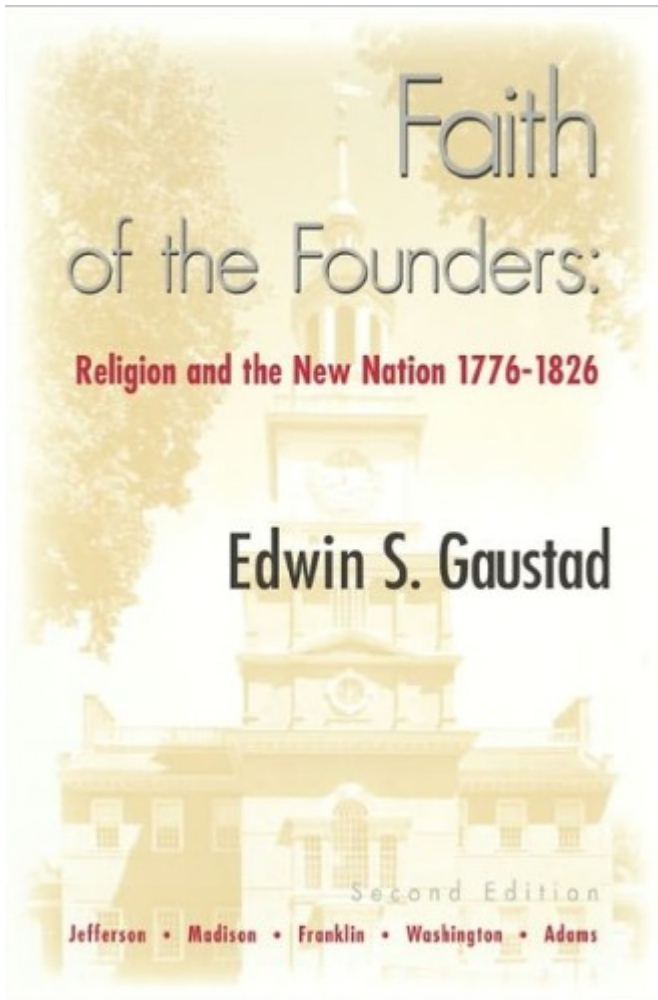


# Religion and the nation's founders

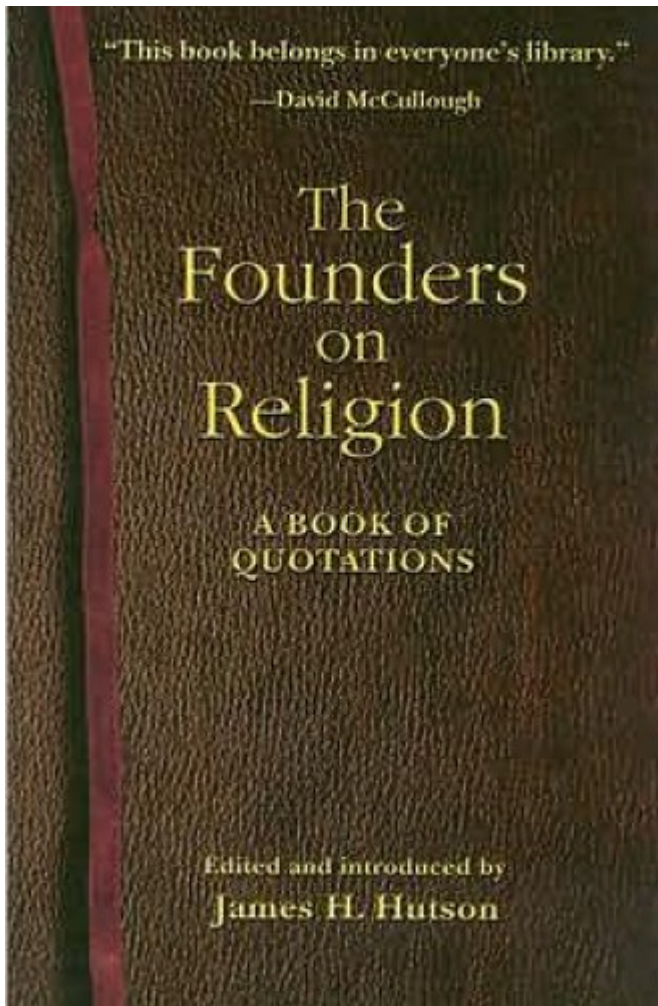
selected by [John Witte Jr.](#) in the [May 3, 2011](#) issue

## In Review



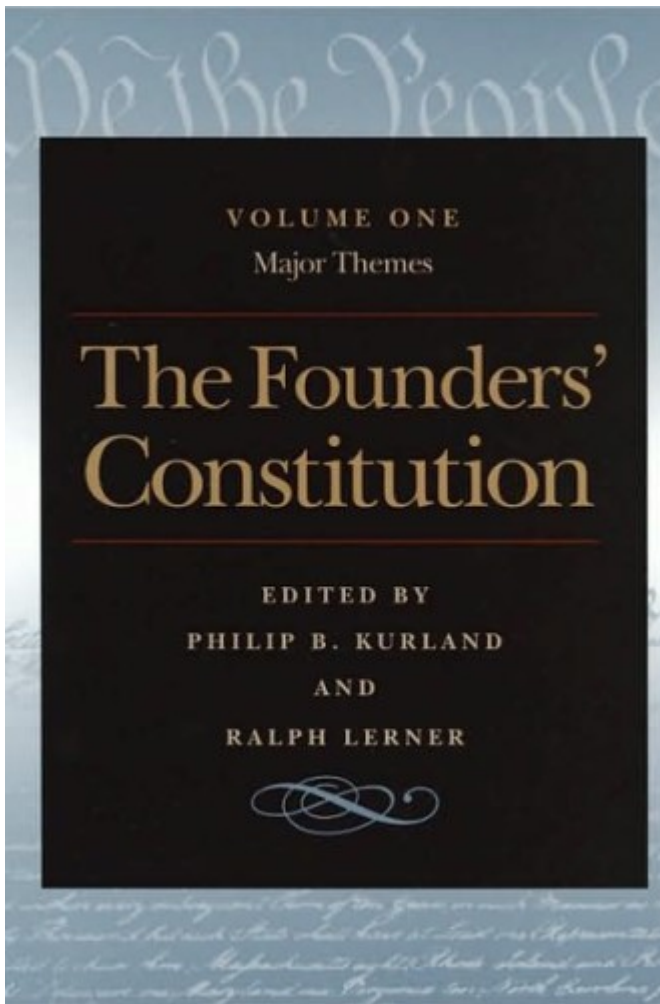
## Faith of the Founders

By Edwin S. Gaustad  
Baylor University Press



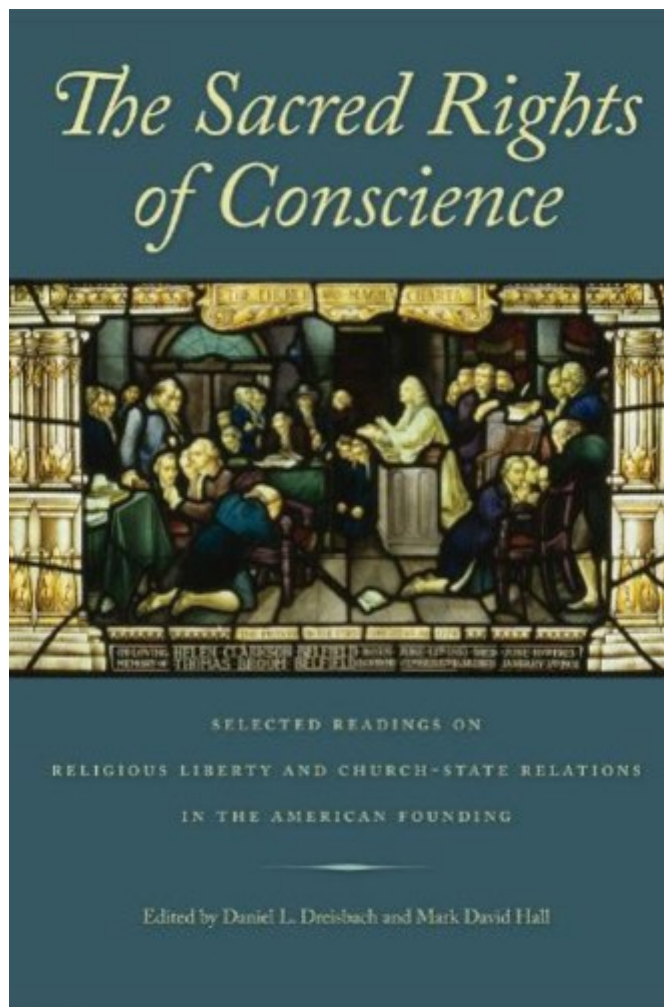
## **The Founders on Religion**

Edited by James H. Hutson  
Princeton University Press



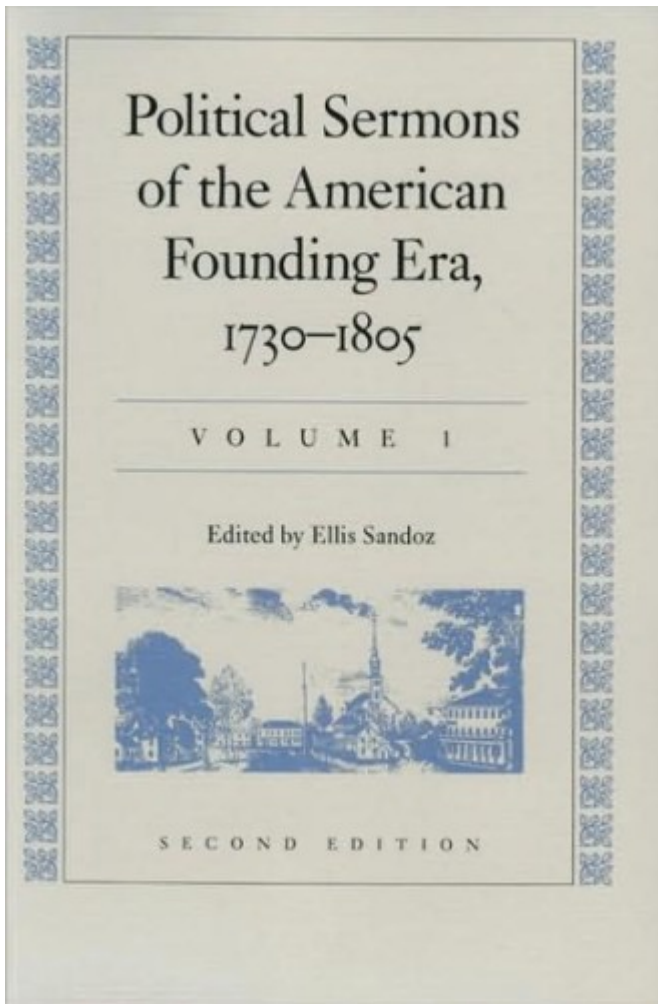
## **The Founders' Constitution**

Edited by Philip B. Kurland and Ralph Lerner  
Liberty Fund



## **The Sacred Rights of Conscience**

Edited by Daniel L. Dreisbach and Mark David Hall  
Liberty Fund



## **Political Sermons of the American Founding Era, 1730-1805**

Edited by Ellis Sandoz  
Liberty Fund

*Faith of the Founders: Religion and the New Nation 1776-1826*, by Edwin S. Gaustad. This is the best short, accessible, single-volume treatment of the religious lives, intellectual pathways and church-state politics of the preeminent founders of the United States—Jefferson, Madison, Adams, Washington and Franklin. It is written by one of the nation's leading church historians. Behind these pithy chapters stand whole libraries of learning, including Gaustad's own exquisite studies of Jefferson, Franklin, Isaac Backus and Roger Williams.

*The Founders on Religion: A Book of Quotations*, edited by James H. Hutson. On the highly contested subject of religion and the nation's founders, there is no substitute for reading the original sources and making up your own mind about what the

founders believed. Happily, most of these 18th-century leaders were engaging writers. Hutson has compiled a judiciously selected and intellectually satisfying collection of excerpts from the American founders, with topics arranged alphabetically.

*The Founders' Constitution* (5 vols.), edited by Philip B. Kurland and Ralph Lerner. For each provision of the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights the editors offer scores of meaty and well-chosen excerpts from the most influential writings produced in or used during the founding era. Religious and moral ideas suffuse many of these documents, but the richest material is gathered around the religious test provision in Article VI and the religious freedom guarantees of the First Amendment.

*The Sacred Rights of Conscience: Selected Readings on Religious Liberty and Church-State Relations in the American Founding*, edited by Daniel L. Dreisbach and Mark David Hall. A good complement to Kurland and Lerner, this collection is focused on religion, morality and religious liberty in the states. This tome goes beyond the famous founders and familiar texts to provide readers with a fine-grained understanding of religious liberty in the founding era.

*Political Sermons of the American Founding Era, 1730–1805* (2 vols., 2nd edition), edited by Ellis Sandoz. From pre-Revolutionary days to the early 19th century, the pulpit was often the most powerful political platform. The printers of the day knew the popularity of political sermons and published them by the thousands. Many of these sources were lost or dumped into dusty archives and have long been forgotten. Distinguished political historian Sandoz has done an invaluable service in bringing the best of these sermons to light.