

## Week Five Handout

### “Religion and American Foreign Policy through Christian Eyes”

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### Manifest Destiny:

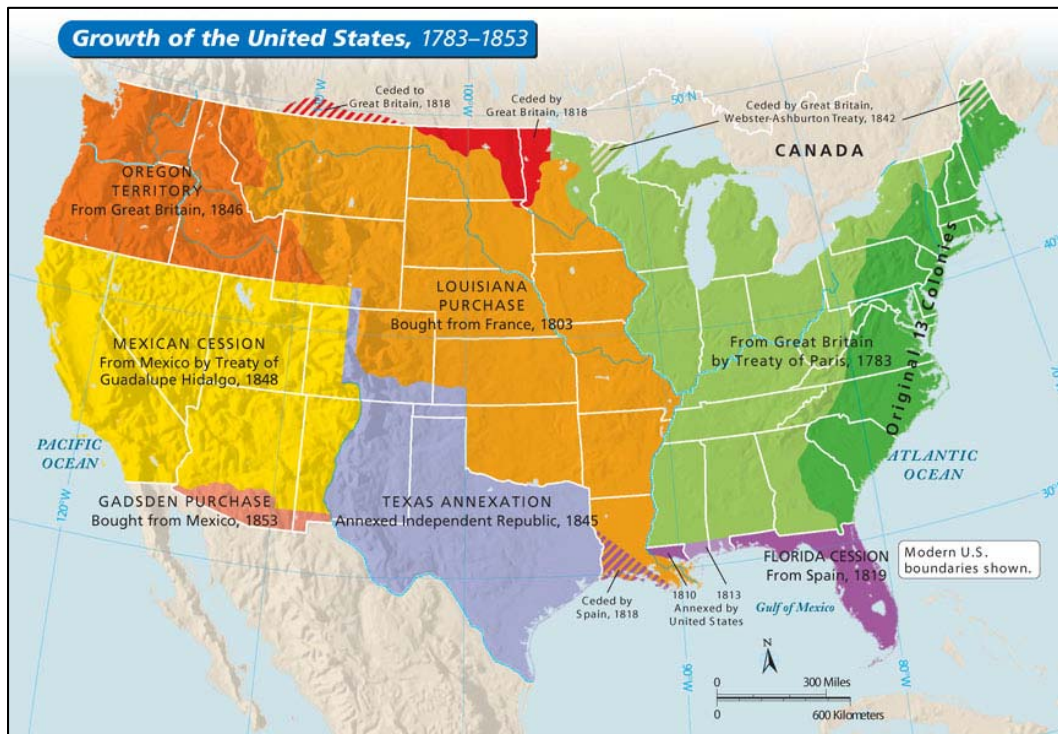
Is it God’s Will that We Spread American Values?

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### Expansion & Reform

Following the War of 1812 . . .

- The U.S. entered a period of optimism and explosive growth
- A period of social reform driven by the Second Great Awakening (1790-1840)
- A period of land expansion
  - Louisiana Purchase (1803)
- And a period of wrestling with the expansion of slavery
  - Missouri Compromise (1820)
  - Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854)



## **Manifest Destiny**

*The belief that America had a God-given **right and duty** to **conquer and civilize** the entire North American continent*

John O’Sullivan, a newspaperman, coined the term “manifest destiny”:

- 1839 – O’Sullivan spoke of “divine destiny” saying that it was America’s mission "to establish on earth the moral dignity and salvation of man"
- 1845 – O’Sullivan spoke of “manifest destiny” in an essay entitled *Annexation* urging the U.S. to annex the Republic of Texas

Manifest destiny involved:

- Justifying the westward expansion and settlement of the U.S.
- Justifying war with Mexico over Texas
- Missionizing, moving and removing the native Indians from their land
- Inspiring the westward settlement of Mormons to Salt Lake City
- Dividing the country along pro-slavery and anti-slavery lines

## **Manifest Destiny & Foreign Affairs**

Missionaries were vanguards of manifest destiny – first at home, then abroad . . .

- In missionizing the native American Indians
- In missionizing around the world – four key regions: China, Ottoman Empire, Africa, Hawaii
- In starting many schools, hospitals, colleges, and newspapers
- *“Missionaries thus combined internationalism, nationalism, cosmopolitanism and parochialism in highly combustible and unpredictable ways.”*
- Missionaries and their supporting organizations became one of the primary influences in shaping American foreign policy in the Middle East – both abroad and at home – for generations

## **Discussion Questions**

1. Do you think it is possible for missionaries to do their work – preaching, teaching, healing – without also becoming “ambassadors” for the country they call home? Is this a good thing or a bad thing?
2. How much influence do you think missionaries and their host organizations should exert on the political foreign policy of their home country? Do you feel the same way about missionaries that come from other countries to the United States?