

America A Christan Nation?

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There are many misconceptions that America is a Christan nation. There is nothing further from the truth. The history of the United States Of America is based on people of Europe leaving there country because of religious persecution and the corruption of a combined church and government system. I have made a cut and paste compilation from a number of sources for your education and entertainment.

References

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History Of The Church Of England

Christianity had first arrived in the British Isles around 200 during the Roman Empire. Archbishop Restitutus and others are known to have attended the council of Arles in 314. Christianity developed roots in Britain and Ireland, and spread to Scotland and north England. But the Anglo-Saxon invasion of Britain re-paganized most of southern and eastern England.

John Wycliffe (about 1320 – 31 December 1384) was an English theologian and an early dissident against the Roman Catholic Church during the 14th century. He founded the Lollard movement, which opposed a number of Roman practices. He was also an antagonist of the papal encroachments on secular power. Wycliffe was associated with statements indicating that the Church in Rome is not the head of all churches, nor did Peter have any more powers given to him than other disciples. Statements of this ilk related his call for a reformation of its wealth, corruption and abuses. Wycliffe, an Oxford scholar, went so far as to state that "...The Gospel by itself is a rule sufficient to rule the life of every Christian person on the earth, without any other rule." The Lollard continued his pronouncements from pulpits even under the persecution that followed with Henry IV up to and including the early years of the reign of Henry VIII.

However, a politically supported split with Rome occurred when Henry VIII's requested annulment to his current wife was refused. A similar annulment had been granted to Henry VIII's forebear, Henry II of England. Henry II married Eleanor of Aquitaine on 18 May 1152. Eleanor had children with Louis VII of France. Henry VIII used the political crown and the unsuccessful persecution to sustain his break with Rome. The first break with Rome (subsequently reversed) came when Pope Clement VII refused, over a period of years, to annul Henry's marriage to Catherine of Aragon, not purely as a matter of principle, but also because the Pope lived in fear of Catherine's nephew, Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor, as a result of events in the Italian Wars.

Henry first asked for an annulment in 1527. After various failed initiatives he stepped up the pressure on Rome, in the summer of 1529, by compiling a manuscript from ancient sources proving in law that spiritual supremacy rested with the monarch, and demonstrating the illegality of Papal authority. In 1531 Henry first challenged the Pope when he demanded 100,000 pounds from the clergy in exchange for a royal pardon for their illegal jurisdiction. He also demanded that the clergy should recognise him as their sole protector and supreme head. The church in England recognised Henry VIII as supreme head of the Church of England on 11 February 1531, however in 1532 he still continued to attempt to seek a compromise with the Pope, but negotiations (started in 1530 and ended in 1532) with the papal legate Antonio Giovanni da Burgio have failed.

In May 1532 the Church of England agreed to surrender its legislative independence and canon law to the authority of the monarch. In 1533 the Statute in Restraint of Appeals removed the right of the English clergy and laity to appeal to Rome on matters of matrimony, tithes and oblations, and gave authority over such matters to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York. This finally allowed Thomas Cranmer, the new Archbishop of Canterbury, to issue Henry's annulment; and upon procuring it, Henry married Anne Boleyn. Pope Clement VII excommunicated Henry VIII in 1533.

In 1534 the Act of Submission of the Clergy removed the right of all appeals to Rome, effectively ending the Pope's influence. The first Act of Supremacy confirmed Henry by statute as the Supreme Head of the Church of England in 1536. (Due to clergy objections the contentious term 'Supreme Head' for the monarch later became 'Supreme Governor' - hence one cannot technically refer to the reigning monarch as the so-called 'head' of the Church of England.)

Such constitutional changes made it not only possible for Henry to divorce but also gave him access to the considerable wealth that the Church had amassed, and Thomas Cromwell, as Vicar General, launched a commission of enquiry into the nature and value of all ecclesiastical property in 1535, which culminated in the Dissolution of the Monasteries (1536 - 1540).

For the next century, through the reigns of James I and Charles I, and culminating in the English Civil War and the protectorate of Oliver Cromwell, there were significant swings back and forth between two factions: the Puritans (and other radicals) who sought more far-reaching reform, and the more conservative churchmen who aimed to keep closer to traditional beliefs and practices. The failure of political and ecclesiastical authorities to submit to Puritan demands for more extensive reform was one of the causes of open warfare. By continental standards the level of violence over religion was not high, but the casualties included a king, Charles I and an Archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud. For about a decade (1647-1660), Christmas was another casualty as Cromwell abolished all feasts and festivals of the Church to rid England of outward signs of Popishness. Under the Protectorate of the Commonwealth of England from 1649 to 1660, Anglicanism was disestablished, presbyterian ecclesiology was introduced as an adjunct to the Episcopal system, the Articles were replaced with the Westminster Confession, and the Book of Common Prayer was replaced by the Directory of Public Worship.

Despite this, about one quarter of English clergy refused to conform. In the midst of the apparent triumph of Calvinism, the 17th century brought forth a Golden Age of Anglicanism.[2] The Caroline Divines, such as Andrewes, Laud, Herbert Thorndike, Jeremy Taylor, John Cosin, Thomas Ken and others rejected Roman claims and refused to adopt the ways and beliefs of the Continental Protestants.[2] The historic episcopate was preserved. Truth was to be found in Scripture and the bishops and archbishops, which were to be bound to the traditions of the first four centuries of the Church's history. The role of reason in theology was affirmed.[2]

With the Restoration of Charles II, Anglicanism too was restored in a form not far removed from the Elizabethan version. One difference was that the ideal of encompassing all the people of England in one religious organization, taken for granted by the Tudors, had to be abandoned.

The 1662 revision of the Book of Common Prayer became the unifying text of the ruptured and repaired Church after the disaster that was the civil war.

With the Act of Toleration enacted on 24 May 1689, Nonconformists had freedom of worship. That is, those Protestants who dissented from the Church of England such as Baptists, Congregationalists and Quakers but not Roman Catholics were allowed their own places of worship and their own teachers and preachers, subject to acceptance of certain oaths of allegiance. It deliberately did not apply to Catholics and Unitarians and continued the existing social and political disabilities for dissenters, including their exclusion from political office. The religious landscape of England assumed its present form, with an Anglican established church occupying the middle ground, and Roman Catholics and those Puritans who dissented from the establishment, too strong to be suppressed altogether, having to continue their existence outside the national church rather than controlling it. Restrictions and continuing official suspicion and legal restrictions continued well into the nineteenth century.

Protestantism

Protestantism is a branch within Christianity, containing many denominations of different practices and doctrines, that originated in the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation. It is considered to be one of the primary divisions within the original Christian church, i.e., the Catholic Church, along with Eastern Orthodoxy. Some groups that are often loosely labeled "Protestant" do not use the term to define themselves, and some tend to reject it because of the implication of being non-traditional. Anglicanism, for instance, which originated during the era of the Reformation, is viewed by many of its adherents as an independent branch of Christianity. Likewise, many Baptists and Pentecostals do not see themselves as descended from 16th-century Protestant movements.

Protestantism is associated with the doctrine of sola scriptura, which maintains that the Bible (rather than church tradition or ecclesiastical interpretations of the Bible)[1] is the final source of authority for all Christians. Another distinctive Protestant doctrine is that of sola fide, which holds that faith alone, rather than good works, is sufficient for the salvation of the believer.

Protestant churches tend not to accept the Catholic and Orthodox doctrine of apostolic succession and associated ideas regarding the sacramental ministry of the clergy, though there are some exceptions to this. Protestant ministers and church leaders therefore generally play a somewhat different role in their communities than Catholic and Orthodox priests and bishops.

Protestantism has both conservative and liberal theological strands within it. Protestant styles of public worship tend to be simpler and less elaborate than those of Roman Catholics, Anglicans, and Eastern Christians, sometimes radically so, though there are exceptions to this tendency.

Examples of denominations within Protestantism include Lutheranism, Calvinism (including both Reformed churches and Presbyterianism), Methodism, the Baptist churches, and the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

History Of Religion In The United States

The religious history of the United States begins more than a century before the former British colonies became the United States of America in 1776.

Some of the original settlers were men and women of deep religious convictions. The religious intensity of the original settlers diminished to some extent over time but new waves of 18th century immigrants brought their own religious fervor across the Atlantic. In addition, the nation's first major religious revival in the middle of the eighteenth century injected new vigor into American religion. The result was that many of the people who rose in rebellion against Great Britain in 1776 cited reasons of a religious nature for their actions, and most American statesmen, when they began to form new governments at the state and national levels, shared a conviction that religion was, to quote Alexis de Tocqueville's observation, "indispensable to the maintenance of republican institutions".

The efforts of the Founding Fathers to find a proper role for their support of religion—and the degree to which religion can be supported by public officials without being inconsistent with the revolutionary imperative of separation of church and state—is a question that is still debated in the country today.

Early immigrants to the American colonies were motivated largely by the desire to worship freely in their own fashion, particularly after the English Civil War, but also religious wars and disputes in France and Germany.[3] They included a large number of nonconformists such as the Puritans and the Pilgrims, as well as Roman Catholics (in Baltimore). Despite a common background, the groups' views on broader religious toleration were mixed. While some notable examples such as Roger Williams of Rhode Island and William Penn ensured the protection of religious minorities within their colonies, others such as the Plymouth Colony and Massachusetts Bay Colony had established churches. The Dutch colony of the New Netherlands had also established the Dutch Reformed Church and outlawed all other worship, although enforcement by the Dutch West India Company in the last years of the colony was sparse. Part of the reason for establishment was financial: the established Church was responsible for poor relief, and dissenting churches would therefore have a significant advantage.

The Flushing Remonstrance shows support for separation of church and state as early as the mid-17th century. The document was signed December 27 1657 by a group of English citizens in America who were affronted by persecution of Quakers and the religious policies of the Governor of New Netherland, Peter Stuyvesant. Stuyvesant had formally banned all religions other than the Dutch Reformed Church from being practiced in the colony, in accordance with the laws of the Dutch Republic. The signers indicated their "desire therefore in this case not to judge least we be judged, neither to condemn least we be condemned, but rather let every man stand or fall to his own Master." [4]

Given the wide diversity of opinion on Christian theological matters in the newly independent American States, the Constitutional Convention believed a government sanctioned (established) religion would disrupt rather than bind the newly formed union together. George Washington wrote in 1790 to the country's first Jewish congregation, the Touro Synagogue in Newport, Rhode Island, to state:

All possess alike liberty of conscience and immunities of citizenship. It is now no more that toleration is spoken of, as if it were by the indulgence of one class of people, that another enjoyed the exercise of their inherent natural rights. For happily the Government of the United States, which gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance requires only that they who live under its protection should demean themselves as good citizens, in giving it on all occasions their effectual support.[5]

There were also opponents to the support of any established church even at the state level. In 1773, Isaac Backus, a prominent Baptist minister in New England, observed that when "church and state are separate, the effects are happy, and they do not at all interfere with each other: but where they have been confounded together, no tongue nor pen can fully describe the mischiefs that have ensued." Thomas Jefferson's influential Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom was enacted in 1786, five years before the Bill of Rights.

Most Anglican ministers, and many Anglicans, were Loyalists. The Anglican establishment, where it had existed, largely ceased to function during the American Revolution, though the new States did not formally abolish and replace it until some years after the Revolution.

Many of the British North American colonies that eventually formed the United States of America were settled in the seventeenth century by men and women, who, in the face of European religious persecution, refused to compromise passionately-held religious convictions and fled Europe. The Middle Atlantic colonies of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Maryland, were conceived and established "as plantations of religion." Some settlers who arrived in these areas came for secular motives—"to catch fish" as one New Englander put it—but the great majority left Europe to worship in the way they believed to be correct. They supported the efforts of their leaders to create "a City upon a Hill" or a "holy experiment," whose success would prove that God's plan for churches could be successfully realized in the American wilderness. Even colonies like Virginia, which were planned as commercial ventures, were led by entrepreneurs who considered themselves "militant Protestants" and who worked diligently to promote the prosperity of the church.

The religious persecution that drove settlers from Europe to the British North American colonies sprang from the conviction, held by Protestants and Catholics alike, that uniformity of religion must exist in any given society. This conviction rested on the belief that there was one true religion and that it was the duty of the civil authorities to impose it, forcibly if necessary, in the interest of saving the souls of all citizens.

Nonconformists could expect no mercy and might be executed as heretics. The dominance of this policy, denounced by Roger Williams as "enforced uniformity of religion," meant majority religious groups who controlled political power punished dissenters in their midst.

In some areas, Catholics persecuted Protestants; in others Protestants persecuted Catholics; in some other areas one Protestant group persecuted Protestants of other groups; and in still others Catholics and Protestants persecuted wayward coreligionists. Although England renounced religious persecution in 1689, it persisted on the European continent. Religious persecution, as observers in every century have commented, is often bloody and implacable and is remembered and resented for generations.

While many members of The Continental Congresses and Congress of the Confederation, legislative bodies that governed the United States from 1774 to 1789, were religious Christians, a large number of the more influential members were Deist.[24] The amount of energy that Congress invested in encouraging the practice of religion in the new nation exceeded that expended by any subsequent American national government[citation needed]. Although the Articles of Confederation did not officially authorize Congress to concern itself with religion, the citizenry did not object to such activities[citation needed]. This lack of objection suggests that both the legislators and the public considered it appropriate for the national government to promote a nondenominational, non-polemical Christianity.[25]

Colonial History Of The United States

The Puritans, a much larger group than the Pilgrims, established the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1629 with 400 settlers. They sought to reform the Church of England by creating a new, pure church in the New World. Within two years, an additional 2,000 settlers arrived. The Puritans created a deeply religious, socially tight-knit and politically innovative culture that is still present in the modern United States[citation needed]. They hoped this new land would serve as a "redeemer nation." Seeking the true religion, they fled England and in America attempted to create a "nation of saints" or the "City upon a Hill," an intensely religious, thoroughly righteous community designed to be an example for all of Europe. Roger Williams, who preached religious toleration, separation of Church and State, and a complete break with the Church of England, was banished and founded Rhode Island Colony, which became a haven for other religious refugees from the Puritan community. Anne Hutchinson, a preacher of Antinomianism, likewise was exiled to Rhode Island.

Some migrants who came to Colonial America were in search of the freedom to practice forms of Christianity which were prohibited and persecuted in Europe. Since there was no state religion, and since Protestantism had no central authority, religious practice in the colonies became diverse.

One attempt to consolidate religious practice is sometimes called the Great Awakening, a controversial term which refers to a northeastern Protestant revival movement that took place in the 1730s and 1740s. The movement began with Jonathan Edwards, a Massachusetts preacher who sought to return to the Pilgrims' strict Calvinist roots and to reawaken the "Fear of God." English preacher George Whitefield and other itinerant preachers continued the movement, traveling across the colonies and preaching in a dramatic and emotional style. Followers of Edwards and other preachers of similar religiosity called themselves the "New Lights", as contrasted with the "Old Lights", who disapproved of their movement. To promote their viewpoints, the two sides established academies and colleges, including Princeton and Williams College. The Great Awakening has been called the first truly American event.[12]

A similar pietistic movement took place among some of the German and Dutch Lutherans, leading to internal divisions. By the 1770s, the Baptists were growing rapidly both in the north (where they founded Brown University), and in the South (where they challenged the previously unquestioned moral authority of the Anglican establishment).

Unlike New England, the Mid-Atlantic Region gained much of its population from new immigration, and by 1750, the combined populations of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania had reached nearly 300,000 people. By 1750, about 60,000 Irish and 50,000 Germans came to live in British North America, many of them settling in the Mid-Atlantic Region. William Penn, the man who founded the colony of Pennsylvania in 1682, attracted an influx of immigrants with his policies of religious liberty and freehold ownership. "Freehold" meant that farmers owned their land free and clear of leases. The first major influx of immigrants came mainly from Ireland and consisted of Irish Presbyterians and Irish Catholics. A smaller immigration came with Germans trying to escape the religious conflicts and declining economic opportunities in Germany and Switzerland.

United States Declaration Of Independence

On June 11, 1776, Congress appointed a "Committee of Five", consisting of John Adams of Massachusetts, Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania, Thomas Jefferson of Virginia, Robert R. Livingston of New York, and Roger Sherman of Connecticut, to draft a declaration.

The United States Declaration of Independence is a statement adopted by the Continental Congress on July 4, 1776, which announced that the thirteen American colonies then at war with Great Britain were now independent states, and thus no longer a part of the British Empire. Written primarily by Thomas Jefferson, the Declaration is a formal explanation of why Congress had voted on July 2 to declare independence from Great Britain, more than a year after the outbreak of the American Revolutionary War. The birthday of the United States of America—Independence Day—is celebrated on July 4, the day the wording of the Declaration was approved by Congress.

The modern legal concept of religious freedom as the union of *freedom of belief* and *freedom of worship* with the absence of any state-sponsored religion, originated in the United States of America

Lambert (2003) has examined the religious affiliations and beliefs of the Founders. Some of the 1787 delegates had no affiliation. The others were Protestants except for three Roman Catholics: C. Carroll, D. Carroll, and Fitzsimons. Among the Protestant delegates to the Constitutional Convention, 28 were Church of England (Episcopalian, after the Revolutionary War was won), eight were Presbyterians, seven were Congregationalists, two were Lutherans, two were Dutch Reformed, and two were Methodists, the total number being 49. Some of the more prominent Founding Fathers were anti-clerical or vocal about their opposition to organized religion, such as Thomas Jefferson[12][13] (who created the "Jefferson Bible"), and Benjamin Franklin[14]. However, other notable founders, such as Patrick Henry, were strong proponents of traditional religion. Several of the Founding Fathers considered themselves to be deists or held beliefs very similar to that of deists.[15]

Separation Of Church And State

Separation of church and state is a political and legal doctrine that government and religious institutions are to be kept separate and independent from each other.[1] The term most often refers to the combination of two principles: secularity of government and freedom of religious exercise.[2]

The modern concept often credited to the writings of English philosopher John Locke, the phrase separation of church and state is generally traced to the letter written by Thomas Jefferson in 1802 to the Danbury Baptists, in which he referred to the First Amendment to the United States Constitution as creating a "wall of separation" between church and state. [3] The phrase was then quoted by the United States Supreme Court first in 1878,[4] and then in a series of cases starting in 1948.[5] This led to increased popular and political discussion of the concept.

After the fall of the Western Roman Empire in the 5th century, there emerged no single powerful secular government in the West, but there was a central ecclesiastical power in Rome, the Christian Church. In this power vacuum, the Church rose to become the dominant power in the West. As the Church expanded beginning in the 10th century, and as secular kingdoms rose in power at the same time, there naturally arose the conditions for a power struggle between Church and Kingdom over ultimate authority.

The conflict between Church and state was in many ways a uniquely Western phenomenon originating in Late Antiquity (see Saint Augustine's masterpiece *City of God* (417)). Contrary to Augustinian theology, the Papal States in Italy, today downsized to the State of Vatican, were ruled directly by the Holy See.

For centuries, monarchs ruled by the idea of divine right, which said the king ruled both Crown and Church, a theory known as caesaropapism. On the other side was the belief that the Pope, as vicar of God on earth, should have the ultimate authority over the state. Moreover, throughout the Middle Ages the Pope claimed the right to depose the Catholic kings of Western Europe and tried to exercise it, sometimes successfully (see the investiture controversy, below), sometimes not, such as was the case with Henry VIII of England and Henry III of Navarre[19].

In the West, the issue of the separation of church and state during the medieval period centered on monarchs who ruled in the secular sphere but encroached on the Church's rule of the spiritual sphere. This unresolved contradiction in ultimate control of the Church led to power struggles and crises of leadership, notably in the Investiture Controversy, that resulted in a number of important events in the development of the west.[20]

Another early user of the term was James Madison, the principal drafter of the United States Bill of Rights, who often wrote of "total separation of the church from the state." [28] "Strongly guarded as is the separation between Religion & Govt in the Constitution of the United States," Madison wrote, [29] and he declared, "practical distinction between Religion and Civil Government is essential to the purity of both, and as guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States." [30] In a letter to Edward Livingston Madison further expanded, "We are teaching the world the great truth that Govts. do better without Kings & Nobles than with them. The merit will be doubled by the other lesson that Religion flourishes in greater purity, without than with the aid of Govt." [31] This attitude is further reflected in the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom, originally authored by Thomas Jefferson, but championed by Madison, and guaranteeing that no one may be compelled to finance any religion or denomination.

The concept has since been adopted in a number of countries, to varying degrees depending on the applicable legal structures and prevalent views toward the proper role of religion in society. A similar principle of *laïcité* has been applied in France and Turkey, while some socially secularized countries such as Norway have maintained constitutional recognition of an official state religion. The concept parallels various other international social and political ideas, including secularism, disestablishment, religious liberty, and religious pluralism.

Pope Gregory XVI wrote in his encyclical *Mirari Vos*: "Nor can We predict happier times for religion and government from the plans of those who desire vehemently to separate the Church from the state, and to break the mutual concord between temporal authority and the priesthood. It is certain that that concord which always was favorable and beneficial for the sacred and the civil order is feared by the shameless lovers of liberty." [49]

On December 8, 1864, on the same day as the Pope's encyclical *Quanta Cura*, the Holy See under Pope Pius IX issued a document titled *Syllabus of Errors* (Latin: *Syllabus Errorum*). This document listed 80 specific assertions which it declared to be erroneous. Assertion number 55 in this list, in the section headed "Errors about civil society, considered both in itself and in its relation to the Church", reads: "The Church ought to be separated from the State, and the State from the Church." [50] In the encyclical, he wrote: "Which false and perverse opinions are on that ground the more to be detested, because they chiefly tend to this, that that salutary influence be impeded and (even) removed, which the Catholic Church, according to the institution and command of her Divine Author, should freely exercise even to the end of the world — not only over private individuals, but over nations, peoples, and their sovereign princes; and (tend also) to take away that mutual fellowship and concord of counsels between Church and State which has ever proved itself propitious and salutary, both for religious and civil interests." [51]

The work of Jesuit priest and theologian John Courtney Murray in the 1960s was significant as he developed a theological justification of the separation view based upon St. Thomas Aquinas' observation that there existed a necessary distinction between morality and civil law; that the latter is limited in its capacity in cultivating moral character through criminal prohibitions. As Murray said, "it is not the function of civil law to prescribe everything that is morally right and to forbid everything that is morally wrong." [54] The Vatican eventually demanded that he cease writing on the matter of religious liberty.

Historically, Baptists have supported separation of church and state. In particular, many radical Anabaptist movements, sensitised by the persecution they suffered under both Protestant and Catholic authorities, held that the state should not interfere in religious affairs and vice-versa. One of the earliest calls for separation came from Thomas Helwys, the founder of the first Baptist Church in England. In his last written work, *A Short Declaration on the Mystery of Iniquity*, he penned a note inside the cover of a single copy that was intended for King James. Whether the King received it or not is disputed, but Helwys was later arrested and placed in Newgate Prison. The words that got him in trouble were as follows (spelling is updated to modern conventions):

Hear, O king, and despise not the counsel of the poor, and let their complaints come before thee. The king is a mortal man and not God, therefore has no power over the immortal souls of his subjects, to make laws and ordinances for them, and to set spiritual lords over them. If the king has authority to make spiritual lords and laws, then he is an immortal God and not a mortal man. O king, be not seduced by deceivers to sin against God whom you ought to obey, nor against your poor subjects who ought and will obey you in all things with body, life and goods, or else let their lives be taken from the earth. God save the king. Tho. Helwys. Spittalfield near London.[58]

Even in religious Judaism there is much room for a range of political or moral views; this is only more so for secular Jews. However, even Jewish secular culture is often strongly influenced by moral beliefs deriving from Jewish scripture and tradition. In recent centuries, non-Orthodox Jews in Europe and the Americas have traditionally tended towards the political left, and played key roles in the birth of the labor movement as well as socialism. While Diaspora Jews have also been represented in the conservative side of the political spectrum, even politically conservative Jews have tended to support pluralism more consistently than many other elements of the political right. Some scholars[62] attribute this to the fact that Jews are not expected to proselytize, and as a result do not expect a single world-state, which differs from the beliefs of many religions, such as the Roman Catholic and Islamic traditions; rather, since in Jewish theology the religions of most nations are respected, there was never any perceived reason to convert others. This lack of a universalizing religion is combined with the fact that most Jews live as minorities in their countries,

Since the 5th century, the Coptic Church has advocated separation of church and state. Unitarian Universalists also advocate separation of church and state.[citation needed]

Americans United for Separation of Church and State (AU) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational organization, founded in 1947 by a broad coalition of religious, educational and civic leaders. As a non-sectarian, non-partisan organization, AU's membership includes Christians, Jews, Buddhists, people with no religious affiliation and others. Democrats, Republicans and independents are members of the organization. AU is an independent organization with no ties to any larger group or political movement. It is considered a grassroots organization. Americans United defends separation of church and state in the courts, educates legislators, works with the media to inform Americans about religious freedom issues and organizes local chapters all over the country. Barry W. Lynn is currently the executive director of Americans United.[63]

According to AU, "opponents of church-state separation, led by the Religious Right, extol the "traditional" family of a married couple with children. While many American families fit this mold, others do not. All loving families, regardless of their composition, deserve support from government and society. The government must not deny adoption, child custody and other fundamental rights to families labeled "non-traditional" because of religious bias or narrow interpretations of holy books held by certain religious believers. The government must also recognize that while many couples choose to be married in a house of worship, marriage itself is ultimately a civil institution; access to it should not be defined or limited because of religious strictures [...] A crusade is under way to add a "marriage amendment" to the U.S. Constitution. The purpose of the drive is ostensibly to bar the federal and state governments from recognizing marriages between gay couples, although the amendment also would eradicate hundreds of legal rights that gay and lesbian families currently enjoy under a number of state and local laws. Americans United believes that the campaign to place a marriage amendment in the Constitution raises important church-state and religious liberty concerns." [64]

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has long held to the doctrine of separation of church and state originating in part from the long antagonism local and state governments have had towards their faith. Mormon writings have affirmed "[n]o domination of the state by the church; No church interference with the functions of the state; No state interference with the functions of the church, or with the free exercise of religion; The absolute freedom of the individual from the domination of ecclesiastical authority in political affairs; The equality of all churches before the law." [65] Two of the Church's 13 official Articles of Faith, which outline the basic beliefs of the church, that: "We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law" and "We claim the privilege of worshiping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, or what they may." [66][67][not in citation given][68][not in citation given] Church founder Joseph Smith wrote, "We believe that religion is instituted of God; and that men are amenable to him, and to him only, for the exercise of it,... but we do not believe that human law has a right to interfere in prescribing rules of worship to bind the consciences of men, nor dictate forms for public or private devotion; that the civil magistrate should restrain crime, but never control conscience; should punish guilt, but never suppress the freedom of the soul." [69]

Establishment Clause Of The First Amendment

The Establishment Clause of the First Amendment refers to the first of several pronouncements in the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, stating that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion". Together with the Free Exercise Clause, ("... or prohibiting the free exercise thereof"), these two clauses make up what are commonly known as the "religion clauses" of the First Amendment.

The establishment clause has generally been interpreted to prohibit 1) the establishment of a national religion by Congress, or 2) the preference of one religion over another or the support of a religious idea with no identifiable secular purpose. The first approach is called the "separationist" or "no aid" interpretation, while the second approach is called the "non-preferentialist" or "accommodationist" interpretation. The accommodationist interpretation prohibits Congress from preferring one religion over another, but does not prohibit the government's entry into religious domain to make accommodations in order to achieve the purposes of the Free Exercise Clause.

The clause itself was seen as a reaction to the Church of England, established as the official church of England and some of the colonies, during the colonial era.

Prior to the enactment of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution in 1868, the Supreme Court generally held that the substantive protections of the Bill of Rights did not apply to state governments. Under the Incorporation doctrine the Bill of Rights have been broadly applied to limit state and local government as well. For example, in the *Board of Education of Kiryas Joel Village School District v. Grumet* (1994), the majority of the court joined Justice David Souter's opinion, which stated that "government should not prefer one religion to another, or religion to irreligion."

The "establishment of religion" clause of the First Amendment means at least this: Neither a state nor the federal government can set up a church. Neither can pass laws which aid one religion, aid all religions, or prefer one religion over another. Neither can force nor influence a person to go to or to remain away from church against his will or force him to profess a belief or disbelief in any religion. No person can be punished for entertaining or professing religious beliefs or disbeliefs, for church attendance or non-attendance. No tax in any amount, large or small, can be levied to support any religious activities or institutions, whatever they may be called, or whatever form they may adopt to teach or practice religion. Neither a state nor the Federal Government can, openly or secretly, participate in the affairs of any religious organizations or groups and vice versa. In the words of Jefferson, the clause against establishment of religion by law was intended to erect "a wall of separation between church and State."

The Jefferson quotation cited in Black's opinion is from a letter Jefferson wrote in 1802 to the Baptists of Danbury, Connecticut, that there should be "a wall of separation between church and state." Critics of Black's reasoning (most notably, former Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist) have argued that the majority of states did have "official" churches at the time of the First Amendment's adoption and that James Madison, not Jefferson, was the principal drafter. However, Madison himself often wrote of "total separation of the church from the state" (1819 letter to Robert Walsh), "perfect separation between the ecclesiastical and civil matters" (1822 letter to Livingston), "line of separation between the rights of religion and the civil authority... entire abstinence of the government" (1832 letter Rev. Adams), and "practical distinction between Religion and Civil Government as essential to the purity of both, and as guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States" (1811 letter to Baptist Churches).

No Religious Test Clause

The no religious test clause of the United States Constitution is found in Article VI, section 3, and states that:

The Senators and Representatives before mentioned, and the Members of the several State Legislatures, and all executive and judicial Officers, both of the United States and of the several States, shall be bound by Oath or Affirmation, to support this Constitution; but no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States.

This has been interpreted to mean that no federal employee, whether elected or appointed, career or political, can be required to adhere to or accept any religion or belief. This clause immediately follows one requiring all federal and state officers to take an oath or affirmation of support to the Constitution. This implies that the requirement of an oath, even presumably one taken "So help me God" (not a part of the presidential oath, the only one spelled out in the Constitution, but traditionally almost always added to it[citation needed]), does not imply any requirement by those so sworn to accept a particular religion or a particular doctrine. Note that the option of giving an affirmation can be interpreted as not requiring any metaphysical belief.

The clause is cited by advocates of separation of church and state as an example of "original intent" of the Framers of the Constitution of avoiding any entanglement between church and state, or involving the government in any way as a determiner of religious beliefs or practices. This is important as this clause represents the words of the original Framers, even prior to the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment.

A variety of Test Acts were instituted in England in the 17th and 18th centuries. Their main purpose was to exclude anyone not a member of the Church of England from holding government office, notably Catholics and other "nonconforming" Protestants. Government officials were required to swear oaths, such as the Oath of Supremacy, that the monarch of England was the head of the Church and that they possessed no other foreign loyalties, such as to the Pope. Later acts required officials to disavow transubstantiation and the veneration of saints.

Many colonists of the Thirteen Colonies had left England in part to gain a measure of religious freedom. With the royal government's religious favoritism fresh in their memory, the Founders sought to prevent the return of the Test Acts by adding this clause to the Constitution.

Freedom Of Religion

Freedom of religion is a principle that supports the freedom of an individual or community, in public or private, to manifest religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship, and observance. The concept is generally recognized to also include the freedom to change religion or not to follow any religion. Freedom of religion is considered by many in many nations and people to be a fundamental human right.

Secularization

The issue of secularization is discussed in various religious traditions. The government of Turkey is an oft-cited example, following the abolition of the Ottoman Caliphate and foundation of the Turkish republic in 1923. This established popular sovereignty in a secular republican framework, in opposition to a theocratic system. As one of many examples of state modernization, this shows secularization and democratization as mutually re-enforcing processes, relying on a separation of religion and state. In expressly secular states like India, it has been argued that the need was to legislate for toleration and respect between quite different religions, whereas the secularization of the West was a response to intra-Christian tensions between Catholicism and Protestantism. Some have therefore argued that Western secularization is radically different in that it deals with autonomy from religious regulation and control. Considerations of both tolerance and autonomy are relevant to any secular state.

Treaty Of Tripoli

Article 11 has been a point of contention in disputes on the doctrine of separation of church and state as it applies to the founding principles of the United States.

Article 11 of the Treaty of Tripoli reads:

Art. 11. As the Government of the United States of America is not, in any sense, founded on the Christian religion; as it has in itself no character of enmity against the laws, religion, or tranquility, of Mussulmen; and, as the said States never entered into any war, or act of hostility against any Mahometan nation, it is declared by the parties, that no pretext arising from religious opinions, shall ever produce an interruption of the harmony existing between the two countries.

Advocates of the separation of church and state claim^[17] that this text constitutes evidence that the United States Government was not founded on the Christian religion. The Senate's ratification was only the third recorded unanimous vote of 339 votes taken. The treaty was printed in the Philadelphia Gazette and two New York papers, with no evidence of any public dissent.

History Of Atheism

By the 1770s, atheism was ceasing to be a dangerous accusation that required denial, and was evolving into a position openly avowed by some. The first open denial of the existence of god and avowal of atheism since classical times may be that of Paul Baron d'Holbach (1723–1789) in his 1770 work, *The System of Nature*. D'Holbach was a Parisian social figure who conducted a famous salon widely attended by many intellectual notables of the day, including Denis Diderot, Jean Jacques Rousseau, David Hume, Adam Smith, and Benjamin Franklin. Nevertheless, his book was published under a pseudonym, and was banned and publicly burned by the Executioner

Benjamin Franklin

Benjamin Franklin is credited as being foundational to the roots of American values and character, a marriage of the practical and democratic Puritan values of thrift, hard work, education, community spirit, self-governing institutions, and opposition to authoritarianism both political and religious, with the scientific and tolerant values of the Enlightenment. In the words of Henry Steele Commager, "In Franklin could be merged the virtues of Puritanism without its defects, the illumination of the Enlightenment without its heat." [3] To Walter Isaacson, this makes Franklin, "the most accomplished American of his age and the most influential in inventing the type of society America would become." [4]

Josiah Franklin converted to Puritanism in the 1670s. Puritanism was a Protestant movement in England to "purify" Anglicanism from elements of the Roman Catholic religion, which they considered superstitious. Three things were important to the Puritans: that each congregation would be self-governing, that ministers give sermons instead of performing rituals such as a Mass, and individual Bible study so that each believer could develop a personal understanding and relationship with God. Puritanism appealed to smart, middle-class people such as Benjamin Franklin's father, who enjoyed the governance meetings, discussion, study, and personal independence.

Like the other advocates of republicanism, Franklin emphasized that the new republic could survive only if the people were virtuous. All his life he explored the role of civic and personal virtue, as expressed in Poor Richard's aphorisms. Franklin was a non-dogmatic believer, who felt that organized religion was necessary to keep men good to their fellow men, but rarely attended church himself. His faith in God was an important factor in his support for the American Revolution. [52] When Ben Franklin met Voltaire in Paris and asked this great apostle of the Enlightenment to bless his grandson, Voltaire said in English, "God and Liberty," and added, "this is the only appropriate benediction for the grandson of Monsieur Franklin." [53]

One of Franklin's famous characteristics was his respect, tolerance and promotion of all churches. Referring to his experience in Philadelphia, he wrote in his autobiography, "new Places of worship were continually wanted, and generally erected by voluntary Contribution, my Mite for such purpose, whatever might be the Sect, was never refused." [67] "He helped create a new type of nation that would draw strength from its religious pluralism." [75] The first generation of Puritans had been intolerant of dissent, but by the early 1700's, when Franklin grew up in the Puritan church, tolerance of different churches was the norm, and Massachusetts was known, in John Adam's words, as "the most mild and equitable establishment of religion that was known in the world." [76] The evangelical revivalists who were active mid-century, such as Franklin's friend and preacher, George Whitefield, were the greatest advocates of religious freedom, "claiming liberty of conscience to be an 'inalienable right of every rational creature.'" [77] Whitefield's supporters in Philadelphia, including Franklin, erected "a large, new hall, that... could provide a pulpit to anyone of any belief." [78] Franklin's rejection of dogma and doctrine and his stress on the God of ethics and morality and civic virtue, made him the "prophet of tolerance." [79]

Although Franklin's parents had intended for him to have a career in the church, Franklin as a young man adopted the Enlightenment religious belief in Deism, that God's truths can be found entirely through nature and reason.[80] "I soon became a thorough Deist."[81] As a young man he rejected Christian dogma in a 1725 pamphlet *A Dissertation on Liberty and Necessity, Pleasure and Pain*,[82] which he later saw as an embarrassment,[83] while simultaneously asserting that God is "all wise, all good, all powerful."[83] He defended his rejection of religious dogma with these words: "I think opinions should be judged by their influences and effects; and if a man holds none that tend to make him less virtuous or more vicious, it may be concluded that he holds none that are dangerous, which I hope is the case with me." After the disillusioning experience of seeing the decay in his own moral standards, and those of two friends in London whom he had converted to Deism, Franklin turned back to a belief in the importance of organized religion, on the pragmatic grounds that without God and organized churches, man will not be good.[84]

According to David Morgan,[86] Franklin was a proponent of religion in general. He prayed to "Powerful Goodness" and referred to God as "the infinite". John Adams noted that Franklin was a mirror in which people saw their own religion: "The Catholics thought him almost a Catholic. The Church of England claimed him as one of them. The Presbyterians thought him half a Presbyterian, and the Friends believed him a wet Quaker." Whatever else Franklin was, concludes Morgan, "he was a true champion of generic religion." In a letter to Richard Price, Franklin stated that he believed that religion should support itself without help from the government, claiming; "When a Religion is good, I conceive that it will support itself; and, when it cannot support itself, and God does not take care to support, so that its Professors are oblig'd to call for the help of the Civil Power, it is a sign, I apprehend, of its being a bad one." [87]

George Washington

Washington was baptized into the Church of England.[66][67] In 1765, when the Church of England was still the state religion,[68] he served on the vestry (lay council) for his local church. Throughout his life, he spoke of the value of righteousness, and of seeking and offering thanks for the "blessings of Heaven."

In a letter to George Mason in 1785, Washington wrote that he was not among those alarmed by a bill "making people pay towards the support of that [religion] which they profess," but felt that it was "impolitic" to pass such a measure, and wished it had never been proposed, believing that it would disturb public tranquility.[69]

His adopted daughter, Nelly Custis Lewis, stated: "I have heard her [Nelly's mother, Eleanor Calvert Custis, who resided in Mount Vernon for two years] say that General Washington always received the sacrament with my grandmother [Martha Washington] before the revolution." [70] After the revolution, Washington frequently accompanied his wife to Christian church services; however, there is no record of his ever taking communion, and he would regularly leave services before communion—with the other non-communicants (as was the custom of the day), until, after being admonished by a rector, he ceased attending at all on communion Sundays.[71][72] Prior to communion, believers are admonished to take stock of their spiritual lives and not to participate in the ceremony unless he finds himself in the will of God.[73][74] Historians and biographers continue to debate the degree to which he can be counted as a Christian, and the degree to which he was a deist.

He was an early supporter of religious toleration and freedom of religion. In 1775, he ordered that his troops not show anti-Catholic sentiments by burning the pope in effigy on Guy Fawkes Night. When hiring workmen for Mount Vernon, he wrote to his agent, "If they be good workmen, they may be from Asia, Africa, or Europe; they may be Mohammedans, Jews, or Christians of any sect, or they may be Atheists." [73][75] In 1790, he wrote a response to a letter from the Touro Synagogue, in which he said that as long as people remain good citizens, their faith does not matter. This was a relief to the Jewish community of the United States, since the Jews had been either expelled or discriminated against in many European countries.

...the Government of the United States ... gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance. ... May the children of the Stock of Abraham, who dwell in this land, continue to merit and enjoy the good will of the other Inhabitants; while every one shall sit in safety under his own vine and figtree, and there shall be none to make him afraid. May the father of all mercies scatter light and not darkness in our paths, and make us all in our several vocations useful here, and in his own due time and way everlastingly happy.

Thomas Jefferson

As a political philosopher, Jefferson was a man of the Enlightenment and knew many intellectual leaders in Britain and France. He idealized the independent yeoman farmer as exemplar of republican virtues, distrusted cities and financiers, and favored states' rights and a strictly limited federal government. Jefferson supported the separation of church and state[2] and was the author of the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom (1779, 1786). He was the eponym of Jeffersonian democracy and the co-founder and leader of the Democratic-Republican Party, which dominated American politics for a quarter-century. Jefferson served as the wartime Governor of Virginia (1779–1781), first United States Secretary of State (1789–1793), and second Vice President (1797–1801).

Thomas Jefferson (April 13, 1743 – July 4, 1826)[1] was the third President of the United States (1801–1809), the principal author of the Declaration of Independence (1776), and one of the most influential Founding Fathers for his promotion of the ideals of republicanism in the United States. Major events during his presidency include the Louisiana Purchase (1803) and the Lewis and Clark Expedition (1804–1806).

During the 1800 presidential campaign, the New England Palladium wrote, "Should the infidel Jefferson be elected to the Presidency, the seal of death is that moment set on our holy religion, our churches will be prostrated, and some infamous prostitute, under the title of goddess of reason, will preside in the sanctuaries now devoted to the worship of the most High." [21] Federalists attacked Jefferson as an infidel, claiming that Jefferson's intoxication with the religious and political extremism of the French Revolution disqualified him from public office. [22] At that time, calling a person an infidel, could mean a number of things including that they did not believe in God. It was an accusation commonly levelled at Deists, though they believe in a deity. It was also aimed at those thought to be harming the Christian faith in which they were raised.

While opposed to the institutions of organized religion, Jefferson consistently expressed his belief in God. For example, he invoked the notion of divine justice in 1782 in his opposition to slavery, [23] and invoked divine Providence in his second inaugural address. [24]

Jefferson, however, did not shrink from questioning the existence of God. In a 1787 letter to his nephew and ward, Peter Carr, while at school, Jefferson offered the following advice:

“ Fix Reason firmly in her seat, and call to her tribunal every fact, every opinion. Question with boldness even the existence of a God; because, if there be one, he must more approve the homage of reason than of blindfolded fear. ... Do not be frightened from this inquiry by any fear of its consequences. If it end in a belief that there is no God, you will find incitements to virtue in the comfort and pleasantness you feel in its exercise and in the love of others which it will procure for you. -- (Jefferson's Works, Vol. ii., p. 217)[25] ”

Following the 1800 campaign, Jefferson became more reticent to have his religious opinions discussed in public, and often added requests at the end of letters discussing religion that his correspondents be discrete regarding its contents. [7][8]

The Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom, written in 1779 by Thomas Jefferson, proclaimed:

"[N]o man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place, or ministry whatsoever, nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested, or burthened in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer, on account of his religious opinions or belief; but that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinions in matters of religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge, or affect their civil capacities."

Jefferson believed that each individual has "certain inalienable rights." That is, these rights exist with or without government; man cannot create, take, or give them away. It is the right of "liberty" on which Jefferson is most notable for expounding. He defines it by saying "rightful liberty is unobstructed action according to our will within limits drawn around us by the equal rights of others. I do not add 'within the limits of the law,' because law is often but the tyrant's will, and always so when it violates the rights of the individual." [42] Hence, for Jefferson, though government cannot create a right to liberty, it can indeed violate it. The limit of an individual's rightful liberty is not what law says it is but is simply a matter of stopping short of prohibiting other individuals from having the same liberty. A proper government, for Jefferson, is one that not only prohibits individuals in society from infringing on the liberty of other individuals, but also restrains itself from diminishing individual liberty.

The religious views of Thomas Jefferson diverged widely from the orthodox Christianity of his day. Throughout his life Jefferson was intensely interested in theology, biblical study, and morality. [59] He is most closely connected with the Episcopal Church, Unitarianism, and the religious philosophy of Deism. As the principal author of the United States Declaration of Independence, he articulated a statement about human rights that most Americans regard as nearly sacred. Together with James Madison, Jefferson carried on a long and successful campaign against state financial support of churches in Virginia. During his 1800 campaign for the presidency, he had to contend with critics who argued that he was unfit to hold office because he did not have orthodox religious beliefs. It is Jefferson who is credited with propagating the phrase "separation of church and state". He cut and pasted pieces of the New Testament together to compose a version that excluded any miracles by Jesus, thereby focusing on "the pure principles which he taught" [60] and which has since been published as the "Jefferson Bible". While opposed to the institutions of organized religion, Jefferson repeatedly expressed his belief in God and his admiration for Jesus as a moral teacher. Opposed to Calvinism, Trinitarianism and Platonic Christianity, he expressed his religious commitment by referring to himself in private letters as a "Christian" (1803), [61] "a sect by myself" (1819), [62] an "Epicurean" (1819), [63] a "Materialist" (1820), [64] and a "Unitarian by myself" (1825). [65]

Jefferson considered much of the New Testament of the Bible to be false. He described these as "so much untruth, charlatanism and imposture". [30] He described the "roguery of others of His disciples", [31] and called them a "band of dupes and impostors" describing Paul as the "first corrupter of the doctrines of Jesus", and wrote of "palpable interpolations and falsifications". [31] He also described the Book of Revelation to be "merely the ravings of a maniac, no more worthy nor capable of explanation than the incoherences of our own nightly dreams". [32]

From his careful study of the Bible, Jefferson concluded that Jesus never claimed to be God. [33] While living in the White House, Jefferson began to piece together his own condensed version of the Gospels, omitting the virgin birth of Jesus, miracles attributed to Jesus, divinity and the resurrection of Jesus. Thus, primarily leaving only Jesus' moral philosophy, of which he approved. This compilation titled *The LIFE AND MORALS OF JESUS OF NAZARETH Extracted Textually from the Gospels* Greek, Latin, French, and English was published after his death and became known as the Jefferson Bible.[10]

In 1803 Jefferson composed a syllabus of the comparative merits of Christianity. He let only a few see it, including Benjamin Rush in 1803 and William Short in 1820. When Rush died in 1813, Jefferson asked the family to return the document to him. In the syllabus, Jefferson outlines what he considers to be some of the advantages of Jesus' teachings. In the 1820 letter to Short, he makes it clear that he disagrees with some of those teachings.[8][34]

Incoming Minnesota Representative Keith Ellison became the first Muslim member of the U.S. Congress January 4, 2007. swearing his oath of office on a copy of the Quran that belonged to the author of the Declaration of Independence and the third president of the United States, Thomas Jefferson. "Look at that. That's something else," Ellison, D-Minn., said as officials from the Library of Congress showed him the two-volume Quran, which was published in London in 1764.

The Qur'an is "definitely an important historical document in our national history and demonstrates that Jefferson was a broad visionary thinker who not only possessed a Qur'an, but read it," Ellison said in an interview with the Free Press. "It would have been something that contributed to his own thinking." Ellison also said that Jefferson's Qur'an "shows that from the earliest times of this republic, the Qur'an was in the consciousness of people who brought about democracy."

It is believed that Jefferson was inspired by the teaching of the Quran, prohibiting compulsion in religion and forcing religious doctrines. Also the foundation for "all men are created Equal" and "men are born free" are some of the indications for the Quran as a source for guidance "*no compulsion in religion*" Quran 2:256.

After leaving the Presidency, Jefferson continued to be active in public affairs. He also became increasingly concerned with founding a new institution of higher learning, specifically one free of church influences where students could specialize in many new areas not offered at other universities. Jefferson believed educating people was a good way to establish an organized society, and also felt schools should be paid for by the general public, so less wealthy people could obtain student membership as well.[28] A letter to Joseph Priestley, in January, 1800, indicated that he had been planning the University for decades before its establishment.

His dream was realized in 1819 with the founding of the University of Virginia. Upon its opening in 1825, it was then the first university to offer a full slate of elective courses to its students. One of the largest construction projects to that time in North America, it was notable for being centered about a library rather than a church. In fact, no campus chapel was included in his original plans. Until his death, Jefferson invited students and faculty of the school to his home.

His epitaph, written by him with an insistence that only his words and "not a word more" be inscribed, reads:

*HERE WAS BURIED THOMAS JEFFERSON
AUTHOR OF THE DECLARATION OF AMERICAN
INDEPENDENCE
OF THE STATUTE OF VIRGINIA FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM
AND FATHER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA*

Below the epitaph on a separate panel is written:

*BORN APRIL 2 1743
O.S.
DIED JULY 4 1826*

Pledge of Allegiance

In 1892 the "Pledge of Allegiance" was written by Francis Bellamy, a Baptist minister the phrase "under God" was added to the "Pledge of Allegiance" in 1954. During the Cold War, the United States often characterized its opponents as "Godless Communists,"[28] which tended to reinforce the view that atheists were unreliable and unpatriotic. Against this background, the words "under God" were inserted into the pledge of allegiance in 1954, Government requiring or promoting of the Pledge has drawn criticism and legal challenges on several grounds. Prominent legal challenges have been based on the contention that state-sponsored requiring or promoting of the Pledge is unconstitutional because it violates one or both of the religion clauses in the First Amendment.

"Pledge of Allegiance" Official versions (changes in **bold**)

1892

"I pledge allegiance to my flag
and the republic for which it stands:
one nation indivisible
with liberty and justice for all."

1892 to 1923

"I pledge allegiance to my flag
and **to** the republic for which it stands:
one nation indivisible
with liberty and justice for all."

1923 to 1924

"I pledge allegiance to **the** flag
of the United States
and to the republic for which it stands:
one nation indivisible
with liberty and justice for all."

1924 to 1954

"I pledge allegiance to the flag
of the United States **of America,**
and to the republic for which it stands:
one nation indivisible
with liberty and justice for all."

1954 to Present

"I pledge allegiance to the flag
of the United States of America
and to the republic for which it stands:
one nation **under God**, indivisible,
with liberty and justice for all."

E Pluribus Unum

E pluribus unum, Latin for "Out of many one", is a motto requested by Pierre Eugene du Simitiere (originally Pierre-Eugène Ducimetière) and found in 1776 on the Seal of the United States, along with Annuit cœptis and Novus ordo seclorum, and adopted by an Act of Congress in 1782. The phrase originally came from Moretum, a poem attributed to Virgil but with the actual author unknown. In the poem text, color est e pluribus unus describes the blending of colors into one. A different account was put forward in the Discovery Channel program "Secret America". According to an interview with Priscilla Linn, Senior Curator, State Dept. Diplomacy, the phrase "Out of Many, One" came from a magazine called "The Gentleman's Magazine," published at the time of the revolution. Each year, the magazine would re-purpose one article from each of the year's 12 issues, publishing a standalone issue that was "Out of many, one".

Originally suggesting that out of many colonies or states emerge a single nation, it has come to suggest that out of many peoples, races, religions and ancestries has emerged a single people and nation – illustrating the concept of the melting pot.

Never codified by law, E pluribus unum was considered a de facto motto of the United States until 1956 when the United States Congress passed an act (H.J. Resolution 396), adopting In God We Trust as the official motto.[1] Seth Read of Uxbridge, Massachusetts was said to have been "instrumental" in the addition of "E Pluribus Unum" to U.S. Coins.[2] The first coins with this mint appeared as early as 1786 at Newburgh, New York.

In God We Trust

The motto In God We Trust was placed on United States coins largely because of the increased religious sentiment existing during the American Civil War. Secretary of the Treasury Salmon P. Chase received many appeals from devout Christians throughout the country, urging that the United States recognize God on United States coins. From Treasury Department records, it appears that the first such appeal came in a letter dated November 13, 1861. It was written to Secretary Salmon P. Chase by Reverend M. R. Watkinson, Minister of the Gospel from Ridley Township, Pennsylvania, and read:

Dear Sir: You are about to submit your annual report to the Congress respecting the affairs of the national finances. One fact touching our currency has hitherto been seriously overlooked. I mean the recognition of the Almighty God in some form on our coins. You are probably a Christian. What if our Republic were not shattered beyond reconstruction? Would not the antiquaries of succeeding centuries rightly reason from our past that we were a heathen nation? What I propose is that instead of the goddess of liberty we shall have next inside the 13 stars a ring inscribed with the words PERPETUAL UNION; within the ring the allseeing eye, crowned with a halo; beneath this eye the American flag, bearing in its field stars equal to the number of the States united; in the folds of the bars the words GOD, LIBERTY, LAW. This would make a beautiful coin, to which no possible citizen could object. This would relieve us from the ignominy of heathenism. This would place us openly under the Divine protection we have personally claimed. From my heart I have felt our national shame in disowning God as not the least of our present national disasters.

To you first I address a subject that must be agitated.