

Religion in the New Nation

Religion in America

the Founders' Rational Religion

Benjamin Franklin, Deist

George Washington, ?

John Adams, Unitarian

Thomas Jefferson, Deist

- The Declaration of Independence, 1776
 - "Nature's God," the Creator, "Supreme Judge," "divine Providence"
 - "Happiness" mentioned twice

Thomas Paine, Deist: *The Age of Reason*, 1794

Religion and the New Nation

Religion essential to morals of republic

Most states keep tax-supported churches

- Some require religious tests for office
- Pennsylvania and Rhode Island never had state churches

Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom, 1786

- Jefferson, Madison, Baptists, and Presbyterians vs. Anglicans
- Jefferson: religion a private opinion; state should not impose opinions
- Baptists: America not a "Christian nation" and absolute separation of church and state

Disestablishment's slow progress elsewhere

- Vermont, 1807; Connecticut, 1818; New Hampshire, 1819
- Massachusetts, 1833

The Constitution, 1787

"We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare,

and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”

Religion omitted from text

- No religious tests for office

The Constitution and Religion

Antifederalists force Bill of Rights

- First Amendment: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.”
 - Madison elected with Baptist support; wording shows their concerns
 - “The civil rights of none shall be abridged on account of religious belief or worship, nor shall any national religion be established, nor shall the full and equal rights of conscience be in any manner, or on any pretext infringed.”

George Washington to Touro Synagogue, 1790

- “To bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance”

Thomas Jefferson’s letter to Danbury Baptists, 1802

- “A wall of separation between church and state”

Americanization of religion

Episcopal Church, 1787

- First bishop, Samuel Seabury

American Catholic Church

- Bishop John Carroll, Baltimore, 1789
 - Archbishop, 1808
 - Selected by priests; “trusteeism”

The Fundamental Orders of Connecticut

World’s first written constitution, written by Puritans, 1639

For as much as it hath pleased Almighty God by the wise disposition of his divine providence so to order and dispose of things that we ... are now ... dwelling in ... Connectecotte ; ... and well knowing where a people are gathered together the word

of God requires that to maintain the peace and union of such a people there should be an orderly and decent Government established according to God; ... do therefore associate and conjoin ourselves to be as one Public State or Commonwealth; and do for ourselves and our successors and such as shall be adjoined to us at any time hereafter, enter into Combination and Confederation together, to maintain and preserve the liberty and purity of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus which we now profess, as also, the discipline of the Churches, which according to the truth of the said Gospel is now practiced amongst us; as also in our civil affairs to be guided and governed according to such Laws, Rules, Orders and Decrees as shall be made, ordered, and decreed as followeth.