

America became the melting pot of political, social, and religious ideas and ideals, as well as of nationalities. **But religious liberty for all was not brought over to the colonies from Europe.** On the contrary, **radical (Separatists, Congregationalists) and conservative alike**-left wing and right wing-had **essentially the same concept of establishing God's kingdom on earth through human, churchly endeavor.** 10 {1954 LEF, PFF4 18.2}

As we look at colonial history, we will see colonial religious establishments afforded powerful advantages to two denominations, the Anglicans and Congregationalists, who together claimed the largest number of churches in British North America by 1750.

The second point we will see in this history is that a small but **influential minority of colonials rejected** the widely held conviction that **religious establishments were essential to a unified state** and an orderly society. By the lights of Roger Williams (the founder of Rhode Island) and William Penn (the founder of Pennsylvania), government efforts to enforce religious conformity provoked discord in civic life, promoted corruption within state-sponsored churches, and encouraged hypocrisy and ignorance among ordinary men and women. Those two radical thinkers contended that it was the duty of governments to uphold liberty of conscience: Penn's first set of laws for his colony pledged to protect the civil liberties of "all persons...who confess and acknowledge the one almighty and eternal God to be the creator, upholder, and ruler of the world," while Williams guaranteed all Rhode Islanders, no matter what their religious views, the liberty to "freely and fully have and enjoy...their own judgments and consciences."

1607— JAMESTOWN, FIRST ENGLISH COLONY

It was settled by men and boys only. It was an investment venture company seeking to make a profit in the New World. It eventually established the Church of England-**Anglican** and within its royal charter was a mandate to evangelize those living in ignorance and darkness (the Native Americans and African slaves).

This belief to evangelize was common among many colonists; they considered themselves God's missionaries in the New World.

1619—SLAVERY IN COLONIAL AMERICA

The first recorded Africans arrived in British North America in late August 1619. The "White Lion", a privateer ship owned by Robert Rich, 2nd Earl of Warwick but flying a Dutch flag, docked at what is now Old Point Comfort (located in modern-day Hampton) with approximately 20 Africans. They were captives from the area of present-day Angola and had been seized by the British crew from a Portuguese slave ship, the "São João Bautista".^{[5][6]} To obtain the

Africans, the Jamestown colony traded provisions with the ship.^[7] These individuals appear to have been treated as indentured servants, since slave laws were not passed until later, in 1641 in Massachusetts and in 1661 in Virginia.^[8]

INDENTURED SERVANTS

The growth of tobacco, rice, and indigo and the plantation economy created a tremendous need for labor in Southern English America. **While slaves existed in the English colonies throughout the 1600s, indentured servitude was the method of choice employed by many planters before the 1680s.**

Virginia and Maryland operated under what was known as the "headright system." The leaders of each colony knew that labor was essential for economic survival, so they provided incentives for planters to import workers. **For each laborer brought across the Atlantic, the master was rewarded with 50 acres of land.** This system was used by wealthy plantation aristocrats to increase their land holdings dramatically. In addition, of course, they received the services of the workers for the duration of the indenture.

This system seemed to benefit the servant as well. Each indentured servant would have their fare across the Atlantic paid in full by their master. **A contract was written that stipulated the length of service — typically five years.** The servant would be supplied room and board while working in the master's fields. Upon completion of the contract, the servant would receive "freedom dues," a pre-arranged termination bonus. This might include land, money, a gun, clothes or food. On the surface it seemed like a terrific way for the luckless English poor to make their way to prosperity in a new land. Beneath the surface, this was not often the case.

Only about 40 percent of indentured servants lived to complete the terms of their contracts. Female servants were often the subject of harassment from their masters. A woman who became pregnant while a servant often had years tacked on to the end of her service time. Early in the century, some servants were able to gain their own land as free men. **But by 1660, much of the best land was claimed by the large land owners.** The former servants were pushed westward, where the mountainous land was less arable and the threat from Indians constant. **A class of angry, impoverished pioneer farmers began to emerge as the 1600s grew old. After Bacon's Rebellion in 1676, planters began to prefer permanent African slavery to the headright system that had previously enabled them to prosper.**

1619—ANGLICAN CHURCH OF ENGLAND OFFICIALLY ESTABLISHED

- Law **mandated** Virginians worship in the Anglican Church
- Church supported **by tax dollars**
- **Line** between religious and civil authority **blurred**
- Virginians **not tolerant** of non-Christian religions

1620—PLYMOUTH COLONY FOUNDED

Facing controversy and religious persecution in England, the Separatist Puritans (dissenters inside the Church of England who wish to “purify” it but are frustrated by lack of change) **seek new places for worship.** That year, a group of them board the *Mayflower* in Plymouth, England, and arrive in America after a grueling two-month voyage. Landing in Massachusetts, they establish the second successful colony in America, also called Plymouth, and become known as the Pilgrims.

"The aim of Winthrop and his friends in coming to Massachusetts was a construction of a **theocratic State** which should be to Christians, under the New Testament dispensation, all that the theocracy of Moses and Joshua and Saul had been to the Jews in Old Testament days. They should be to all intents and purposes freed from the jurisdiction of the Stuart king, and so far as possible the texts of the Holy Scriptures should be their guide, **both in weighty matters of general legislation, and in the shaping of the smallest details of daily life.**

The Puritans simply followed the customs of their time. **Religious liberty was a thing unknown.** Roman Catholicism and intolerance have been synonymous from the beginning. The Church of England was as intolerant as the Roman Church. The Puritans had not advanced far enough to perceive the **error of the principle of religious intolerance,** only they did not want the intolerance extended to them. They did not think that the Church of England ought to be intolerant, because they could see her errors, but, feeling sure that they themselves were right, they were equally sure that their opinions ought to prevail, and ought to be imposed upon others.

CLASH BETWEEN JAMESTOWN AND PLYMOUTH:

It will be desirable to bear in mind that the Massachusetts Bay immigrants were Puritan Anglicans who, while deploring her ritualism and Rome-ward trends, nevertheless **professed love for the mother Church of England** and were unfriendly to the principles of Separatism. 13 Calvinistic in view, the Puritans came to America to establish the Genevan discipline in the New World. On the contrary, the **Mayflower leaders,** landing at Plymouth, were **Separatists. And the "two consorted ill together."** 14 In their prior stay on the European Continent, under the guidance of Pastor Robinson, the Pilgrims had been disciplined in **Congregationalism.** Thus the **democratic principle was brought to America.** Such, then, was **the sharp differentiation between the two concepts.**" 15 {1946 LEF, PFF3 27.1}

The Puritans regarded themselves as the particular repositories of righteousness. Their goal was a close-knit church-state. Centralization of power was natural and inevitable under this scheme. Dissenters must be held in subjection. Theocracy was inevitable. 16 Jehovah was the Lawgiver; the Bible, the statute book; and the minister, the interpreter of the law. 17 **But sanctuaries were close at hand for the dissenters from theocracy-**Connecticut for Congregationalists, Rhode Island for the Separatists, and Maine for the rebellious individualists. 18 {1946 LEF, PFF3 27.2}

1624—DEATH PENALTY

An alleged homosexual man was hung for sodomy.

1630- MASSACHUSSETS BAY COLONY

The firmest alliance between church and state existed in Massachusetts Bay, where for most of the seventeenth century **only male members** of the Congregational Church enjoyed the right to vote in colony elections. In those colonies, too, the civil government dealt harshly with religious dissenters, exiling Anne Hutchinson and Roger Williams for their outspoken criticism of the Puritan way and whipping Baptists or cropping the ears of Quakers for their determined efforts to [proselytize](#). Official persecution reached its peak between 1659 and 1661, when Massachusetts Bay's Puritan magistrates hanged four Quaker missionaries. But England's intervention in 1682 ended the corporal punishment of dissenters in New England, and the **Toleration Act, passed by Parliament in 1689**, granted them the right to build churches and to conduct public worship. **Despite those measures, dissenters endured discrimination and financial penalties well into the eighteenth century.** Many devout Puritans refused to intermarry or to conduct business with Baptists and Quakers, and civil governments resisted granting them exemptions from the taxes, which supported Congregationalist ministers.

1631—ROGER WILLIAMS

Eleven years after the planting of the first colony, Roger Williams came to the New World. Like the early Pilgrims, he came to enjoy **religious freedom**; but unlike them, he saw—what so few in his time had yet seen—that **this freedom was the inalienable right of all, whatever might be their creed.** He was an earnest seeker for truth, with Robinson holding it impossible that all the light from God's Word had yet been received. **Williams “was the first person in modern Christendom to assert, in its plenitude, the doctrine of the liberty of conscience, the equality of opinions before the law.”**

Williams had challenged both the government and the clergy; he gained followers and his teachings spread outside the colony. Nearly all clergy believed he **threatened** Winthrop's vision of 'a city upon a hill', a vision they believed was from God.

He declared that the worse law of English code was to force people to attend church and reproved their inconsistency regarding persecution in England, and then doing the same thing themselves in New England.

They maintained the “persecution is not wrong in itself. It is wicked for falsehood to persecute truth, but it is the sacred duty of truth to persecute falsehood.”

1634—ANNE HUTCHINSON

Anne Hutchinson was a spiritual leader in colonial Massachusetts who challenged male authority—and, indirectly, acceptable gender roles—by preaching to both women and men and by questioning Puritan teachings about salvation.

Hutchinson's popularity disturbed religious leaders—who were the true authority in the theocratic Bay Colony. But the real issue was her defiance of gender roles—particularly that she presumed authority over men in her preaching. At a time when men ruled and women were to remain silent, Hutchinson asserted her right to preach, which her husband avidly supported. However, her former mentor, Reverend Cotton, turned on her, describing her meetings as a “promiscuous and filthy coming together of men and women...” Hutchinson was tried in 1637 for heresy.

1635—ROGER WILLIAMS BANISHED

The leaders and clergy banished him in the fall of 1635. In January 1636 a warrant was sent for his arrest and then to ship him to England. Leaving his family, he fled into the forest during a winter storm. It was the Native Americans who sheltered him that winter. He was known for his concern for, and good relations with, the Native Americans in the region. When he founded Rhode Island, he purchased the land from the tribe who owned the land.

He established the American colony of Rhode Island, **the first sanctuary for religious liberty**. “The creation of Rhode Island was,” wrote historian Paul Johnson, “**a critical turning point in the evolution of America**.” It not only introduced the principles of complete religious freedom and the separation of church and state, it also inaugurated the practice of religious competition.

It was Williams, not Thomas Jefferson, who first called for a ‘wall of separation’ to describe the relationship of church and state. It was Williams who created the first government in the world that built such a wall. And it would be Williams who first defined the word ‘liberty’ in modern terms, and saw the relationship between a free individual and the state in a modern way.

He was not the first to call for religious freedom, but he was the first to link that to individual liberty in a political sense and to create a government and society informed by those beliefs.

1638—ANNE HUTCHINSON BANISHED

The real issue to those in power was that she dared to overstep her place as a woman, and they feared she would likewise inspire other women to rebel. They said she had “rather been a Husband than a Wife and a preacher than a Hearer; and a Magistrate than a Subject.” In asserting her rights, Hutchinson miscalculated when she told the court that she had received a direct revelation from God and that she could interpret the scriptures for herself. The assertion sealed her fate.

In March, 1638, Hutchinson was excommunicated and banished from the colony. The Hutchinsons moved to Roger Williams’ more liberal colony of Rhode Island.

1649—RELIGIOUS TOLERATION ACT

- Maryland was the first colony to introduce "toleration" (not complete religious liberty) as a policy. But next to Rhode Island, the Quaker colonies—Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware—were the most liberal. All the proprietary colonies had **liberal** tendencies because of their **mixed population**. It was, indeed, **this very diversity of religions that made possible the separation of church and state, and gave a distinctive character to American church development.** 13 {1954 LEF, PFF4 20.1}
- **The colony of Maine passes legislation creating religious freedom for all citizens, but only on the condition that those of “contrary” religious beliefs behave “acceptably.”**

DEFINITION OF TOLERATION:

Religious tolerance assumes that a person does not discriminate against another person's religious beliefs, even if they think that the person's beliefs are wrong. Religious tolerance differs from religious acceptance.

For example, a person of the Jewish faith may think that Jesus is not the Messiah. A person of the Christian faith may not believe that the Torah is the complete version of the Bible. Each person can disagree silently with the other person's religious belief system without discriminating against them or making them feel less about themselves or wrong. This is the foundation of religious tolerance. **Religious tolerance does not involve believing that all religions are true.**

The population of the colonies is 50,368 in 1650, up by 50,000 since 1607. Waves of immigration are bringing more colonists, and with that comes diversity. Which results in the toleration acts, to accommodate the new religions arriving in the colonies. But discrimination still existed in many colonies.

1652 FIRST ANTI-SLAVERY LAW

In **1652, Rhode Island** passed the first abolition law in the Thirteen Colonies banning **slavery**, but the law was not enforced by the end of the 17th century. By 1774, the **slave** population of **Rhode Island** was 6.3 percent, nearly twice as high as any other New England colony.

1654—JEWS ARRIVE IN NEW AMSTERDAM

Fleeing from the Spanish Inquisition in Brazil, 23 Jews arrive. The governor does not want to permit them to settle there. The Dutch West India Company manages the colony, and they order the governor to allow the Jews to stay, as long as they are not a burden, and do not worship publicly.

1656—FIRST QUAKERS ARRIVE IN BOSTON

Mary Fisher and Ann Austin, the first Quakers to arrive in Boston, are arrested by the colony's authorities. Five weeks later they are deported back to England. Another group of eight Quakers arrives in Boston and are also immediately imprisoned by Puritan authorities who regard them as politically and religiously subversive.

1657—PUBLIC CIVIC RESISTANCE

When the Dutch governor of the colony of New Amsterdam, Peter Stuyvesant, pursues **a policy of imprisoning and persecuting Quakers in his city, he is met with some resistance by non-Quaker residents.** A group of English citizens in Flushing, Queens, present a public petition known as the **"Flushing Remonstrance," which calls for peaceful co-existence for all faiths and constitutes an early act of popular resistance to civic intolerance.**

1660—ULTIMATE PRICE PAID

Mary Dyer, a Puritan-turned-Quaker, **is hung** on Boston Common after repeatedly defying orders banning her and other Quakers from living in the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

1663—CHARTER OF RHODE ISLAND

British monarch Charles II grants the Charter of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, providing latitude for freedom of conscience, stating "our royal will and pleasure is, that no person within the said colony, at any time hereafter, shall be anyway molested, punished, disquieted, or called in question, for any differences in opinion in matters of religion, and does not actually disturb the civil peace of our said colony." This explicit pledge of government non-

interference in matters of belief was unique: both England itself, and most other colonies, still had in place many legal limits on religious practice.

1671 – SABBATH KEEPERS IN RHODE ISLAND

The first Sabbatarian church in America was founded in Rhode Island in 1671, and its establishment created quite a stir. The report reached England that Rhode Island colony did not keep "the Sabbath." Roger Williams denied the report but called attention to the fact that there was no Scripture for "abolishing the 7th day," adding, "You know yourselves do not keep the Sabbath, that is the 7th day." 88 {1946 LEF, PFF3 50.2}

1673—OBJECTION TO SLAVERY

The Quakers, a Protestant denomination that emphasizes social justice and equality as part of their religious beliefs, **lodge early objection to the practice of slavery in the colonies on religious grounds.** In 1673, they publish *An Exhortation & Caution to Friends Concerning Buying or Selling of Negroes*, one of the earliest anti-slavery publications circulated in the American Colonies.

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) played a major role in the abolition movement against slavery in both the United Kingdom and in the United States of America. Quakers were among the first white people to denounce slavery in the American colonies and Europe, and the Society of Friends became the first organization to take a collective stand against both slavery and the slave trade, later spearheading the international and ecumenical campaigns against slavery. Quakers were also prominently involved with the Underground Railroad.

Quaker anti-slavery activism could come at some social cost. In the nineteenth-century United States, some Quakers were persecuted by slave owners and were forced to move to the west of the country in an attempt to avoid persecution. Nevertheless, in the main, Quakers have been noted and, very often, praised for their early and continued antislavery activity.

1675-76—KING PHILIP’S WAR

. . . Breaks out between the settlers in New England and a coalition of Native American groups headed by the Wampanoag leader Metacom (known to the colonists as “King Philip”). Triggered by colonists expansion inland and growing commercial and cultural tensions, this **bitter war lasts over a year. It ends with a colonial victory and the enslavement and killing of thousands of Indians.** While the colonists suffer many losses, the New England Native American **tribes and their cultures are so devastated that they never recover.**

1682-1683—WILLIAM PENN

William Penn, an English entrepreneur, sails to America to claim land given to him by the Duke of York, which includes parts of what is now Pennsylvania and Delaware. Penn, a Quaker, founds the new colony of that bears his name, **where his pledge of religious freedom attracts a Quaker community and other persecuted religious minorities, including Huguenots, Mennonites, Amish, Catholics, Lutherans, and Jews. Penn will later advocate the abolition of slavery.**

1689 – JOHN LOCKE

The view that government had no business meddling in religious matters gained momentum throughout the Anglo-American world during the eighteenth century. Swelling that sea change of opinion were two opposing historical *tsunamis*, which, paradoxically, contributed to the same result: a rising tide of support for full religious toleration among both elites and ordinary people. **The first wave of influence was the Enlightenment, which nurtured a new liberal world-view exemplified by the writings of John Locke.**

- government originated from a voluntary contract among individuals and that its sole purpose was to secure their natural rights.
- state should serve merely as a referee in contests among individuals seeking to advance their private interests;
- government had no responsibility to promote morality and religion or to help steer men and women toward eternal salvation.
- Locke set forth the novel proposition that religious belief was a matter of individual preference, not political proscription in his *Letter Concerning Toleration* (1689), which declared, “The magistrate’s power extends not to the establishing of any articles of faith, or forms of worship, by the force of his laws.”
- Those words, stripping the state of any religious function, set afire the brains of his young readers in the American colonies, a circle that included Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and many other future architects of the new republic.
- The second influence were evangelical religious revivals, which swept across Great Britain and its American colonies.
- As this new age of faith arose to counter the Enlightenment’s age of reason, a growing number of colonial Christians embraced upstart evangelical communions like the Baptists and the Methodists and protested their persecution by Anglican and Congregationalist religious establishments.

1692—WITCH TRIALS IN SALEM

The **Salem Witch Trials** in the Massachusetts colony are officially launched with the conviction of Tituba, a West Indian slave woman. In an episode of mass hysteria, **Salem is swept with a panic that results in citizens trying 150 of their neighbors for witchcraft, ending in twenty executions.** The event would become a touchstone in future debates about tolerance of religious and cultural differences, and the dangers of mass hysteria.

WEAKNESS OF COLONIAL CHURCHES

In this new country, especially under frontier conditions, the church, for various reasons, never kept pace with the population. There were **successive waves of migration** from other countries, of **differing religious backgrounds**, 14 and migrations are, as Candler remarks, **periods of definite peril and moral danger to those cut off from established; vitalizing forces and the old restraints.** Our Colonial forefathers were divided into separate jealous colonies, with differing religious groups in the lead, but in most cases with no dominant religion. Under the stress of wars and frontier conditions and the inadequacy of churches and pastors, religion declined, manners coarsened, and intemperance and licentiousness prevailed. Even the established churches were honeycombed with the unconverted. **Such was the serious situation in Colonial America on the eve of the Great Awakening of the mid-eighteenth century.** 15 {1954 LEF, PFF4 20.2}

1730-1740—FIRST GREAT AWAKENING

Prior to the awakening church membership was low from having failed to keep up with population growth, and the influence of Enlightenment rationalism was leading many people to turn to atheism, Deism, Unitarianism, and Universalism. The churches in New England had fallen into a routine formalism in which experiential faith had been a reality to only a scattered few.

As a result ministers, influenced by Puritanism, Presbyterianism, and Pietism, began calling for revival. The blending of these three would produce an evangelical Protestantism that placed greater importance “on seasons of revival, or outpourings of the Holy Spirit, and on converted sinners experiencing God’s love personally.

The awakening united evangelicals in various denominations around shared beliefs, it also led to division in existing churches. A new theology of revival and salvation as preached by Whitefield and Edwards, transcended denominational boundaries and helped create a common evangelical identity. The revival movement increased the number of African slaves and free blacks who were exposed to Christianity.

FROM COLONIAL AGE TO NATIONAL AGE (1775-1780)

"By the time of the Constitutional Convention (1787), it had become clear to them that the only way to get freedom nationally for themselves was to grant it to all others"; thus "these groups cancelled each other out." And the immense geographical spread of the New World made effective persecution impossible. {1954 LEF, PFF4 24.1}

Both deists and **left-wing Evangelicals** looked upon religion as a personal, individual relationship with God, and the church as a "voluntary society." 27 The positive movement for the separation of church and state, and for equality of all religious groups before the law, therefore, sprang essentially from the joint activities of the **large left-wing Protestant groups**, particularly the Baptists and Quakers, along with those of the rationalistic leaders. 28 {1954 LEF, PFF4 25.4}

In the swift transition period from **1775 to 1800**, marked by the Declaration of Independence, the successful Revolution, the consolidation under the Articles of Confederation and the new Constitution, **long-cherished ties were severed with parent European churches, and national religious freedom was established**, with that peculiarly American phenomenon—an array of varied and independent churches, or "denominations," equally protected and equally free of governmental support and control. Then came the Great Revival at the turn of the century, and many new trends and developments in the new nation that show the significance of this crucial period in American affairs. {1954 LEF, PFF4 26.1}

As Mead sums it up, "during the Colonial Period several religious groups, transplanted from Europe, meant to perpetuate their European religious patterns in America." 31 But these Old **World patterns of uniformity ultimately broke down**, in successive steps, from religious toleration to real religious freedom, and eventually to complete separation of church and state, with all religious groups on an equal and voluntary basis. The **left-wing church groups** of the "sect" type grew at the expense of the **right-wing churches**, and the "pietistic-evangelical-revivalistic" tendencies predominated. Latourette well observes: {1954 LEF, PFF4 26.2}

"The Christianity which developed in the United States was **unique**. It displayed features which marked it as **distinct** from previous Christianity in any other land." 32 {1954 LEF, PFF4 26.3}

In this century we also pass from the colonial into the early national era, from 1776 onward. The American Declaration of Independence, followed by the Constitution with its Bill of Rights, marks one of the great advances in the progress of liberty, crowning the new era inaugurated by the Reformation. **It was in this country that for the first time the separation of church and state was realized in the interest of true religion, as protected in the Bill of Rights found in the first ten amendments to the Constitution.** {1946 LEF, PFF3 146.1}

1776 – DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

Rhode Island was the first colony in America to declare independence on May 4, 1776, a full two months before the [United States Declaration of Independence](#)

1777—RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN VIRGINIA

Thomas Jefferson drafts the Virginia Bill Establishing Religious Freedom. Jefferson advocates the separation of religion and government, arguing that people must be left to find their way to

God and truth on their own, and that their **civic rights should not depend on their religious beliefs**. Jefferson and James Madison advocate the bill throughout the Revolutionary war, but it becomes a law only in 1786. **It lays the foundation for future documents about the separation of church and state, including the First Amendment to the Constitution.**

1780

Richard Allen and Absalom Jones, **both religious men who were born into slavery, form the Free African Society**. The FAS is a religious organization that is set up like a church and provided religious and financial aid to newly freed African Americans who willingly joined the society. The [Free African Union Society](#) was America's first African benevolent society. Rhode Island's Constitution finally emancipated all slaves in 1843 in Section 4, "Slavery shall not be permitted in this state."^[18]

1781

In October of 1781, the war between Great Britain and its American colonies ends with the thirteen colonies successfully establishing their political independence. **Religion plays a role in revolutionary thinking, as rebels justify their actions by invoking resistance to religious control by the Church of England, and their belief that they have a divine mission to colonize the New World.**

The Virginia Act for Establishing Religious Freedom, first crafted by Thomas Jefferson in 1777, separates church and state in the Commonwealth of Virginia, **ending state government's role in subsidizing an official church, collecting church tithes, and restricting freedom of individual religious practice.**

September 17, 1787

A new Constitution is created and approved by representatives of the colonies, gathered in a Constitutional Convention held in Philadelphia.

March 4, 1789

The Constitution goes into effect.

April 1789

George Washington inaugurated as the first President of the United States.

September 25, 1789

Congress passes a Bill of Rights, ten amendments to the Constitution that expand the rights of individual citizens, and they are sent to the states for ratification. The first amendment is intended to promote freedom of religion.

The first amendment of the Constitution and the like provisions in State constitutions were not dictated by indifference or hostility to the principles of the Christian religion, but aimed to prevent not merely the establishment of any one form of religion, however widely spread, but **to establish upon a firm footing the right before the law of every religious sect.**—Solicitor for the Department of State (Washington, D. C.), in Statement presented to Edinburgh World Missionary Conference, 1910

C. 1790

The slaves Peter Durrett and his wife founded the First African Church, now known as First African Baptist Church, in Lexington, Kentucky.

May, 1790

The State of Rhode Island was the last of the 13 states to ratify the [United States Constitution](#) (May 29, 1790), only doing so after being threatened with having its exports taxed as a foreign nation. On June 7, 1790, Rhode Island also becomes the 9th state to ratify the Bill of Rights.

1797—NOT A CHRISTIAN NATION

John Adams signed the Treaty of Tripoli- “the United States is not founded on the Christian religion.”

1798—William Miller raised up

CONCLUSION/SUMMARY:

The religion of the Middle Colonies, as one would expect, was diverse. Quakers, Mennonites, Lutherans, Dutch Calvinists, and Presbyterians were all represented, which made it impossible for one religion to dominate and gave a greater freedom of religion than any of the New England Colonies, with exception to Rhode Island.

All 13 American colonies had some form of state-supported religion. This support varied from tax benefits to religious requirements for voting or serving in the legislature.” All colonies were predominantly Christian. Eight of the colonies had state-sponsored churches. Five did not.

Official Church of Colony at Founding

Anglican / Church of England: Maryland, New York, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia

Puritan / Congregational Church: Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire

No Official Church: Delaware, Georgia, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island

Even those colonies without a state-supported church were “Christian” by charter. Some examples of the colonies mandating religious activity in their charters.

QUOTE FROM SOP:

No distinction on account of nationality, race, or caste, is recognized by God. He is the Maker of all mankind. All men are of one family by creation, and all are one through redemption. Christ came to demolish every wall of partition, to throw open every compartment of the temple, that every soul may have free access to God. His love is so broad, so deep, so full, that it penetrates everywhere. It lifts out of Satan's circle the poor souls who have been deluded by his **deceptions**. It places them within reach of the throne of God, the throne encircled by the rainbow of promise. {COL 386.2}

AN EXCERPT FROM E. J. WAGGONER:

It is part of the irony of human destiny that the end we really accomplish by striving with might and main is apt to be something quite different from the end we dreamed of as we started out on our arduous labor. It was so with the Puritan settlers of New England. The religious liberty that we enjoy today is largely the consequence of their work, but it is a consequence that was unforeseen, while the direct and conscious aim of their labors was something that has never been realized, and probably never will be. February 3, 1890 EJW, SITI 70.13

