



Focus on Religious Freedom

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From the Pilgrims to the Founders: Building a Nation for Religious Freedom, Life and Liberty

"Of the many influences that shaped the American concept of liberty, the first and most formative was faith," wrote author Matthew Spalding.⁽¹⁾

"Indeed, America was the first country in all of history that was deliberately formed to protect and promote religious freedom. Our founders rightly noted that people don't give people freedom - God does," wrote columnist Rebecca Hagelin.⁽²⁾

The freedoms we enjoy in America today originated in Judeo-Christian ideals that date back to the Pilgrims in 1620, the Puritans who followed them in 1630, and were the foundation for the Declaration of Independence written by Thomas Jefferson in 1776 and signed by the Founding Fathers.

Two years after the first Thanksgiving, Gov. William Bradford made an official proclamation for a second day of Thanksgiving in 1623, to thank God for their abundant harvest and for "freedom to worship God according to the dictates of our own conscience."⁽³⁾

Aboard the *Arabella* in 1630, in route to Massachusetts Bay, Puritan leader and lawyer John Winthrop wrote the lengthy document, *A Model of Christian Charity*, that became a model for future constitutional documents in the colonies and beyond. It read: "We are a Company, professing ourselves members of Christ, ... we shall find that the God of Israel is among us, when ten of us shall be able to resist a thousand of our enemies, when He shall make us a praise and glory ..." ⁽⁴⁾

(*We Still Hold These Truths: Rediscovering Our Principles* by M. Spalding⁽¹⁾; focusonthefamily.com, 6/30/15⁽²⁾; americanthinker.com, 11/28/19⁽³⁾; winthropsociety.com⁽⁴⁾)

Happening Now: The Attack on God in Modern America

The two essential pillars that serve as stabilizing factors in any society, faith and family, are under attack during these tumultuous times.

Amid the Covid-19 crisis, in Nevada, casinos are open but churches must remain closed. In California, the governor told churches their congregants can no longer sing worship songs, even while wearing protective masks. In Portland, Oregon, flags as well as Bibles are burned in the streets. In many cities and states, vandals are targeting churches and religious statues.

"Do not be under the illusion that these protests and riots are anything but an attempt to dismantle all of Western Civilization and upend centuries of tradition and freedom of religion," wrote Journalist Miles Cheong.⁽¹⁾

(dailysignal.com, 8/6/20; townhall.com, 8/6/20⁽¹⁾; newsweek.com, 8/5/20; freedomwire.com, 4/15/20)

"Whenever the pillars of Christianity shall be overthrown, our present republican forms of government - and all blessings which flow from them - must fall with them." Jedediah Morse 1799