



Focus on Religious Freedom

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"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid."

Matthew 5:14

What Are the Origins of America's Unique Freedom & Judeo-Christian Principles?

Almost 400 years ago, in 1630 aboard the Arbella, Gov. John Winthrop wrote a now famous sermon titled, *"A Model of Christian Charity"* to his fellow Puritans to prepare them for planting a new society in a perilous environment. These brave people, fleeing from religious persecution in Britain, would understand from the very beginning the standards and principles that they would live by to ensure the success of the colony. Winthrop preached the importance of Christian virtues of faith, charity and love as a foundation bedrock upon which to build their new society. "When God gives a special commission, He looks to have it strictly observed in every article.... We are entered into covenant with Him for this work. We have hereupon besought Him of favor and blessing." ⁽¹⁾

The Puritan settlement was an experiment. If the colony failed, not only functionally but especially morally, Winthrop feared they would lose the grace of God. But, should they succeed, they would become a beautiful beacon of religious piety and freedom. He wrote:

"For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us. So that if we shall deal falsely with our God in this work we have undertaken, and so cause Him to withdraw His present help from us, we shall be made a story and a by-word through the world."⁽²⁾

Does Freedom Matter?

Too often Americans take freedom for granted but it is never guaranteed. The restrictions upon freedoms of individuals, groups, schools, businesses, and houses of worship during the current pandemic have highlighted how fragile freedom really is. Today, some retain their freedoms and others are denied. "While the pandemic poses many grave challenges, there is no world in which the Constitution tolerates color-coded executive edicts that reopen liquor stores and bike shops but shutter churches, synagogues and mosques," wrote Justice Neil Gorsuch. ⁽³⁾ Yet, ignoring the Constitution and restricting freedom, especially religious freedom, has become commonplace in America.

landmarkevents.org (1)(2); thefederalist.com/ john winthrop; medium.com, 3/15/15(2); arcofhistory.org; thefederalist.com, 12/1/20(3)

Happening Now: Honoring Religious Liberty Martyr, St. Thomas Becket

"Thomas Becket's death serves as a powerful and timeless reminder to every American that our freedom from religious persecution is not a mere luxury or accident of history, but rather an essential element of our liberty." "It is our priceless treasure and inheritance. And it is bought with the blood of martyrs.

President Trump's "Proclamation on 850th Anniversary of the Martyrdom of St. Thomas Becket."

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