U.S. SOCIETY & VALUES

VOLUME 2 ELECTRONIC JOURNALS OF THE U.S. INFORMATION AGENCY NUMBER 1

THE RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE OF THE UNITED STATES

FROM THE EDITORS

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; *or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances."*

The above text of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, in a mere 45 words, lays out four of the most important fundamental rights of American citizens. A recent issue of USIA electronic journals (Issues of Democracy, Volume 2, Number 1, February 1997) explored a free press.

In this journal, readers are invited to consider two aspects of religious life in America, the fundamental rules of which derive from that same First Amendment:

★ The constitutional guarantee to personal religious freedom in American society;

★ The remarkable religious vitality of a society which supports some 2000 different religious denominations, and in which more than 60 percent of the citizens can be found at least once a month in one of the almost 500,000 churches, temples and mosques which dot the landscape.

A speech by President Bill Clinton begins our explorations. It alludes to the founding fathers and their remarkable ideas and achievement. It also discusses the critical role of the Supreme Court of the United States in defining a balance in what are often conflicting claims of constitutional right or protection. The President's words provide an eloquent and personal statement about his view of religion in the U.S. There can be no better place for the reader to begin the exploration of this rich and important subject.

U.S. SOCIETY & VALUES
ELECTRONIC JOURNALS OF THE U.S. INFORMATION AGENCY
VOL.2 / BUREAU OF INFORMATION / U.S. INFORMATION AGENCY / NO. 1
ejvalues@usia.gov

MARCH 1997

CONTENTS

THE RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE OF THE UNITED STATES

INTRODUCTION

Can a society which guarantees freedom of religion be a religious society? America's founding fathers argued that the guarantee of religious freedom was the *only* way that religion could flourish in the new nation. The effect of that reasoning, the way in which that guarantee has been interpreted, and the question of the religious orientation of American society are the focus of this electronic journal.

FOCUS

5
RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN AMERICA
By President Bill Clinton
In a speech delivered to students at a suburban Washington, D.C. high school, President Clinton presents an informal and personal discussion of his own view of the meaning of religious freedom guaranteed in the U.S. Constitution. The president talks about his first-hand experience and the importance of religious tolerance. He also defines as critical an understanding of the difference between state support of religion and protection of those seeking to exercise their personal religion in public settings.

COMMENTARY

10
THE ROOTS OF AMERICAN RELIGIOUS LIBERTY
By Professor Charles C. Haynes
This brief article draws on frequently asked questions and answers about the constitutional basis of U.S. religious freedom, and the separation of church and state. The materials originally appeared on the Internet site of The First Amendment Center at The Freedom Forum of Vanderbilt University.

13
THE RELIGIOUS FREEDOM RESTORATION ACT: CASE STUDY IN CONFLICT
By Nina Totenberg
It is the United States Supreme Court which is the ultimate judge of the way in which the American system balances conflicting rights of its citizens and government. The Court has been a major player in defining the intentions of the founding fathers, expressed through the U.S. Constitution and related writings. In so doing, it has enormous power to shape daily lives in many areas. Religion has long been one of those areas. The U.S. Constitution's discussion of religious freedom is very brief. It is through the Court's interpretive rulings that the application of this guarantee has been applied to contemporary life, with wide effect.

15
RELIGION IN AMERICA
By William Peters
Various observers, including President Clinton, have described America as one of the most religious societies in the world. This article provides a brief *tour d' horizon* of contemporary religious America in its remarkable variety and vitality. It is designed to help readers understand how many religions can flourish side by side, how they shape individual lives and shape the national character.

18
ISLAM IN THE UNITED STATES: A TENTATIVE ASCENT
An interview with Dr. Yvonne Haddad
Moving from the general to the specific, this article spotlights the fastest-growing faith in the United States, how it is practiced, and how it coexists with more traditional American religions. Dr. Haddad, a professor of Islamic Studies, is the author of numerous works on Islam in this nation.

24
RELIGION IN AMERICA: WILL THE VITALITY OF CHURCHES BE THE SURPRISE OF THE NEXT CENTURY?
By George Gallup, Jr.
In this article reprinted from *The Public Perspective*, one of America's preeminent pollsters analyzes the numbers of American religion, and talks about what they say about the present and perhaps the future.

29
SEPARATION AND INTERACTION: RELIGION AND POLITICS IN THE UNITED STATES
An Interview with Dr. Kenneth D. Wald
The relationship between religion and politics in the United States has been marked by frequent shifts in intensity and degree. Sometimes intersecting, sometimes clashing, sometimes operating on parallel tracks, the linkage has been one of the more fascinating aspects of American history and life. Dr. Wald, author of a seminal book, *Religion and Politics in the United States*, discusses this phenomenon.

35
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Publisher..........................Judith S. Siegel
Editor............................William Peters
Associate Editors................................Wayne Hall
.................................Guy Olson
Contributing Editors...........................Charlotte Astor
.....................Michael J. Bandler
.............................Helen Sebsow
.......................Rosalie Targonski
Art Director/Graphic Designer........Thaddeus A. Miksinski, Jr.
Graphic Assistant.................................Sylvia Scott
Internet Editor...................Chandley McDonald
Reference and Research.................Mary Ann V. Gamble
.............................Kathy Spiegel

Editorial Board

Howard Cincotta *Judith S. Siegel* *Rosemary Crockett*

USIA's electronic journals, published and transmitted worldwide at two-week intervals, examine major issues facing the United States and the international community, and inform foreign publics about the United States. The journals — ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVES, GLOBAL ISSUES, ISSUES OF DEMOCRACY, U.S. FOREIGN POLICY AGENDA and U.S. SOCIETY & VALUES — provide analysis, commentary and background information in their thematic areas. French and Spanish language versions appear one week after the English. The opinions expressed in the journals do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Government. Articles may be reproduced and translated outside the United States unless there are specific copyright restrictions cited on the article. Current or back issues of the journals can be found on the U.S. Information Service (USIS) Home Page on the World Wide Web at "http://www.usia.gov/journals/journals.htm". They are available in several electronic formats to facilitate viewing on-line, transferring, downloading and printing. Comments are welcome at your local USIS office or at the editorial offices — Editor, U.S. SOCIETY & VALUES (I/TSV), U.S. Information Agency, 301 4th Street SW, Washington, D.C. 20547, United States of America. You may also communicate via email to ejvalues@USIA.gov. ***Please note this change in our numbering system: With volume one, journal editions were numbered sequentially as a group. With volume two, each edition is numbered separately in sequence (e.g., U.S. Society & Values, Vol. II, No. 1).***

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN AMERICA

By President Bill Clinton

(Abridged from an address at James Madison High School, Vienna, Virginia, July 12, 1995. James Madison, one of the signers of the Constitution, was a principal shaper of early attitudes on religious liberty. U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley accompanied the President on his visit.)

Today I want to talk about a subject that can provoke a fight in nearly any country town or on any city street corner in America — religion. It's a subject that should not drive us apart. And we have a mechanism as old as our Constitution for bringing us together.

This country, after all, was founded by people of profound faith who mentioned Divine Providence and the guidance of God twice in the Declaration of Independence. They were searching for a place to express their faith freely without persecution. We take it for granted today that that's so in this country, but it was not always so. And it certainly has not always been so across the world. Many of the people who were our first settlers came here primarily because they were looking for a place where they could practice their faith without being persecuted by the government.

Here in Virginia's soil, the oldest and deepest roots of religious liberty can be found. The First Amendment was modeled on Thomas Jefferson's Statutes of Religious Liberty for Virginia. He thought so much of it that he asked that on his gravestone it be said not that he was president, not that he had been vice president or secretary of state, but that he was the founder of the University of Virginia, the author of the Declaration of Independence and the author of the Statutes of Religious Liberty for the state of Virginia. And of course, no one did more than James Madison to put the entire Bill of Rights in our Constitution, and especially, the First Amendment.

Religious freedom is literally our first freedom. It is the first thing mentioned in the Bill of Rights, which opens by saying that Congress cannot make a law that either establishes a religion or restricts the free exercise of religion. Now, as with every provision of our Constitution, that law has had to be interpreted over the years, and it has been in various ways that some of us agree with and some of us disagree with. *But one thing is indisputable: The First Amendment has protected our freedom to be religious or not religious, as we choose, with the consequence that in this highly secular age the United States is clearly the most conventionally religious country in the entire world, at least the entire industrialized world.* [Italics added.]

We have more than 250,000 places of worship. More people go to church here every week, or to synagogue, or to a mosque or other place of worship than in any other country in the world. More people believe religion is directly important to their lives than in any other advanced, industrialized country in the world. And it is not an accident. It is something that has always been a part of our life.

I grew up in Arkansas which is, except for West Virginia, probably the most heavily Southern Baptist Protestant state in the country. But we had two synagogues and a Greek Orthodox church in my hometown. Not so long ago in the heart of our agricultural country in eastern Arkansas, one of our universities did a big outreach program to students in the Middle East, and before you knew it, out there on this flat land where there was no building more than

two stories high, there rose a great mosque. And all the farmers from miles around drove in to see what the mosque was like and to try and figure out what was going on there.

This is a remarkable country. And I have tried to be faithful to the tradition that we have in the First Amendment. It's something that's very important to me.

Georgetown University (Washington, D.C.) is a Jesuit school, a Catholic school. Secretary Riley mentioned that when I was there, all the Catholics were required to take theology, and those of us who weren't Catholic took a course in world religions, which we called Buddhism for Baptists. And I began a sort of love affair with the religions that I did not know anything about before that time.

It's a personal thing to me because of my own religious faith and the faith of my family. I've always felt that in order for me to be free to practice my faith in this country, I had to let other people be as free as possible to practice theirs, and that the government had an extraordinary obligation to bend over backwards not to do anything to impose any set of views on any group of people or to allow others to do so under the cover of law.

That's why one of the proudest things I've been able to do as president was to sign into law the Religious Freedom Restoration Act in 1993. It was designed to reverse the decision of the Supreme Court that essentially made it pretty easy for government, in the pursuit of its legitimate objectives, to restrict the exercise of people's religious liberties. This law basically said — I won't use the legalese — that if the government is going to restrict anybody's legitimate exercise of religion, they have to have an extraordinarily good reason and no other way to achieve their compelling objective other than to do this. You have to bend over backwards to avoid getting in the way of people's legitimate exercise of their religious convictions.

With the Religious Freedom Restoration Act we made it possible, clearly, in areas that were previously ambiguous for Native Americans, for American Jews, for Muslims, to practice the full range of their religious practices when they might have otherwise come in contact with some governmental regulation.

Secretary Riley and I have learned as we have gone along in this work that all the religions obviously share a certain devotion to a certain set of values which make a big difference in the schools. I want to commend Secretary Riley for his relentless support of the so-called character education movement in our schools, which has clearly led in many schools that had great troubles to reduced drop-out rates, increased performance in schools, better citizenship in ways that didn't promote any particular religious views but at least unapologetically advocated values shared by all major religions.

One of the reasons I wanted to come here is because I recognize that this work has been done here in this school. There's a course in this school called Combatting Intolerance, which deals not only with racial issues, but also with religious differences, and studies times in the past when people have been killed in mass numbers and persecuted because of their religious convictions.

Our sense of our own religion and our respect for others has really helped us to work together for two centuries. It's made a big difference in the way we live and the way we function and our ability to overcome adversity. The Constitution wouldn't be what it is without James Madison's religious values. But it's also, frankly, given us a lot of elbow room. I remember, for example, that Abraham Lincoln was derided by his opponents because he belonged to no organized church. But if you read his writings and you study what happened to him, especially after he came to the White House, he might have had more spiritual depth than any person ever to hold the office that I now have the privilege to occupy.

So we have followed this balance, and it has served us well.

Our Founders understood that religious freedom was basically a coin with two sides. The Constitution protected the free exercise of religion, but prohibited the establishment of religion. It's a careful balance that's uniquely American. It is the genius of the First Amendment. It does not, as some people have implied, make us a religion-free country. It has made us the most religious country in the world. [Italics added.]

Let's just take the areas of greatest controversy now: All the fights over the past 200 years have been over what those two things mean: What does it mean for the government to establish a religion, and what does it mean for a government to interfere with the free exercise of religion? The Religious Freedom Restoration Act was designed to clarify the second provision — government interfering with the free exercise of religion — and to say you can do that almost never.

We have had a lot more fights in the last 30 years over what the government establishment of religion means. And that's what the whole debate is now

over the issue of school prayer, religious practices in the schools and things of that kind. I want to talk about it because our schools are the places where so much of our hearts are in America, and where all of our futures are.

First of all, let me tell you a little about my personal history. Before the Supreme Court's decision in *Engel v. Vitale* (1962), which said that the state of New York could not write a prayer that had to be said in every school in New York every day, school prayer was as common as apple pie in my hometown. And when I was in junior high school, it was my responsibility either to start every day by reading the Bible or get somebody else to do it. Needless to say, I exerted a lot of energy in finding someone else to do it from time to time, being a normal 13-year-old boy.

Now, you could say, well, it certainly didn't do any harm; it might have done a little good. But remember what I told you. We had two synagogues in my hometown. We also had pretended to be deeply religious, while there were no blacks in my school because they were in a segregated school. And I can tell you that all of us who were in there doing it never gave a second thought most of the time to the fact that we didn't have blacks in our schools and that there were Jews in the classroom who were probably deeply offended by half the stuff we were saying or doing — or maybe made to feel inferior.

I say that to make the point that we have not become less religious over the last 30 years by saying that schools cannot impose a particular religion, even if it's a Christian religion and 98 percent of the kids in the schools are Christian and Protestant. I'm not sure the Catholics were always comfortable with what we did either. We had a big Catholic population in my school and in my hometown. So I have been a part of this debate we are talking about. This is a part of my personal life experience. I have seen a lot of progress made and I agreed with the Supreme Court's original decision in *Engel v. Vitale*.

Now, since then, I've not always agreed with every decision the Supreme Court made in the area of the First Amendment.

But I do believe that on balance, the direction of the First Amendment has been very good for America and has made us the most religious country in the world by keeping the government out of creating religion, supporting particular religions, and interfering with other people's religious practices.

So what's the big fight over religion in the schools and what does it mean to us and why are people so upset about it? I think there are basically three reasons. One is, most Americans believe that if you're religious, personally religious, you ought to be able to manifest that anywhere, at any time, in a public or private place. Second, I think that most Americans are disturbed if they think that our government is becoming anti-religious, instead of adhering to the firm spirit of the First Amendment — don't establish, don't interfere with, but respect. And the third thing is people worry about our national character as manifest in the lives of our children. The crime rate is going down in almost every major area in America today, but the rate of violent random crime among very young people is still going up.

So these questions take on a certain urgency today for personal reasons and for larger social reasons. And this old debate that Madison and Jefferson started over 200 years ago is still being spun out today basically as it relates to what can and cannot be done in our schools, and the whole question, the specific question, of school prayer, although I would argue it goes way beyond that.

So let me tell you what I think the law is and what we're trying to do about it, since I like the First Amendment, and I think we're better off because of it. And I think that if you have two great pillars — the government can't establish a religion, and the government can't interfere with religious practice — obviously there are going to be a thousand different factual cases that will arise at any given time, and the courts from time to time will make decisions that we don't all agree with. But the question is, are the pillars the right pillars, and do we more or less come out in the right place over the long run?

The Supreme Court is like everybody else, it's imperfect and so are we. Maybe they're right and we're wrong. But we are going to have these differences. The fundamental balance that has been struck it seems to me has been very good for America, but what is not good today is that people assume that there is a positive-antireligious bias in the cumulative impact of these court decisions with which our administration —the Justice Department and the secretary of education and the president — strongly disagree. So let me tell you what I think the law is today and what I have instructed the Department of Education and the Department of Justice to do about it.

The First Amendment does not — I will say again — does not convert our schools into religion-free zones. If a student is told he can't wear a yarmulke, for example, we have an obligation to tell the school the law says the student can, most definitely, wear a

yarmulke to school. If a student is told she cannot bring a Bible to school, we have to tell the school, no, the law guarantees her the right to bring the Bible to school.

There are those who do believe our schools should be value-neutral and that religion has no place inside the schools. But I think that wrongly interprets the idea of the wall between church and state. They are not the walls of the school.

There are those who say that values and morals and religions have no place in public education; I think that is wrong. First of all, the consequences of having no values are not neutral. The violence in our streets is not value neutral. The movies we see aren't value neutral. Television is not value neutral. Too often we see expressions of human degradation, immorality, violence and debasement of the human soul that have more influence and take more time and occupy more space in the minds of our young people than any of the influences that are felt at school anyway. Our schools, therefore, must be a barricade against this kind of degradation. And we can do it without violating the First Amendment.

I am deeply troubled that so many Americans feel that their faith is threatened by the mechanisms that are designed to protect their faith. Over the past decade we have seen a real rise in these kinds of cultural tensions in America. Some people even say we have a culture war. There have been books written about culture war, the culture of disbelief, all these sorts of trends arguing that many Americans genuinely feel that a lot of our social problems today have arisen in large measure because the country led by the government has made an assault on religious convictions. That is fueling a lot of this debate today over what can and cannot be done in the schools. Much of the tension stems from the idea that religion is simply not welcome in what Professor [Stephen] Carter at Yale has called "the public square." Americans feel that instead of celebrating their love for God in public, they're being forced to hide their faith behind closed doors. That's wrong.

Americans should never have to hide their faith. But some Americans have been denied the right to express their religion, and that has to stop. That has happened and it has to stop. It is crucial that government does not dictate or demand specific religious views, but equally crucial that government doesn't prevent the expression of specific religious views. When the First Amendment is invoked as an obstacle to private expression of religion it is being misused. Religion has a proper place in private and a proper place in public because "the public square" belongs to all Americans. It's especially important that parents feel confident that their children can practice religion. That's why some families have been frustrated to see their children denied even the most private forms of religious expression in public schools. It is rare, but these things have actually happened.

I know that most schools do a very good job of protecting students' religious rights, but some students in America have been prohibited from reading the Bible silently in study hall. Some student religious groups haven't been allowed to publicize their meetings in the same way that nonreligious groups can. Some students have been prevented even from saying grace before lunch. That is rare, but it has happened and it is wrong. Wherever and whenever the religious rights of children are threatened or suppressed, we must move quickly to correct it. We want to make it easier and more acceptable for people to express and to celebrate their faith.

Now, just because the First Amendment sometimes gets the balance a little bit wrong in specific decisions by specific people doesn't mean there's anything wrong with the First Amendment. I still believe the First Amendment as it is presently written permits the American people to do what they need to do. That's what I believe. Let me give you some examples and you see if you agree.

First of all, the First Amendment does not require students to leave their religion at the schoolhouse door. We wouldn't want students to leave the values they learn from religion, like honesty and sharing and kindness, behind at the schoolhouse door, and reinforcing those values is an important part of every school's mission.

Some school officials and teachers and parents believe that the Constitution forbids any religious expression at all in public schools. That is wrong. Our courts have made it clear that that is wrong. It is also not a good idea. Religion is too important to our history and our heritage for us to keep it out of our schools. Once again, it shouldn't be demanded, but as long as it is not sponsored by school officials and doesn't interfere with other children's rights, it mustn't be denied.

For example, students can pray privately and individually whenever they want. They can say grace themselves before lunch. There are times when they can pray out loud together. Student religious clubs in high schools can and should be

treated just like any other extracurricular club. They can advertise their meetings, meet on school grounds, use school facilities just as other clubs can. When students can choose to read a book to themselves, they have every right to read the Bible or any other religious text they want.

Teachers can and certainly should teach about religion and the contributions it has made to our history, our values, our knowledge, to our music and our art in our country and around the world, and to the development of the kind of people we are. Students can also pray to themselves — preferably before tests, as I used to do.

Students should feel free to express their religion and their beliefs in homework, through art work and during class presentations, as long as it's relevant to the assignment. If students can distribute flyers or pamphlets that have nothing to do with the school, they can distribute religious flyers and pamphlets on the same basis. If students can wear T-shirts advertising sports teams, rock groups or politicians, they can also wear T-shirts that promote religion. If certain subjects or activities are objectionable to students or their parents because of their religious beliefs, then schools may, and sometimes they must, excuse the students from those activities.

Finally, even though the schools can't advocate religious beliefs, as I said earlier, they should teach mainstream values and virtues. The fact that some of these values happen to be religious values does not mean that they cannot be taught in our schools.

All these forms of religious expression and worship are permitted and protected by the First Amendment. That doesn't change the fact that some students haven't been allowed to express their beliefs in these ways. What we have to do is to work together to help all Americans understand exactly what the First Amendment does. It protects freedom of religion by allowing students to pray, and it protects freedom of religion by preventing schools from telling them how and when and what to pray.

The First Amendment keeps us all on common ground. We are allowed to believe and worship as we choose without the government telling any of us what we can and cannot do.

I will say again, the First Amendment is a gift to us. And the Founding Fathers wrote the Constitution in broad ways so that it could grow and change, but hold fast to certain principles. They knew that all people were fallible and would make mistakes from time to time. As I said, there are times when the Supreme Court makes a decision, and if I disagree with it, one of us is wrong. There's another possibility: both of us could be wrong. That's the way it is in human affairs.

But what I want to say to the American people and what I want to say to you is that James Madison and Thomas Jefferson did not intend to drive a stake in the heart of religion and to drive it out of our public life. What they intended to do was to set up a system so that we could bring religion into our public life and into our private life without any of us telling the other what to do.

This is a big deal today. One county in America, Los Angeles County, has over 150 different racial and ethnic groups in it — over 150 different ones. How many religious views do you suppose are in those groups? How many? Every significant religion in the world is represented in significant numbers in one American county, as are many smaller religious groups — all in one American county.

We have got to get this right. And we have to keep this balance. This country needs to be a place where religion grows and flourishes.

Don't you believe that if every kid in every difficult neighborhood in America were in a religious institution on the weekends, the synagogue on Saturday, a church on Sunday, a mosque on Friday, don't you really believe that the drug rate, the crime rate, the violence rate, the sense of self-destruction would go way down and the quality of the character of this country would go way up?

But don't you also believe that if for the last 200 years we had had a state governed religion, people would be bored with it, and they would think it had been compromised by politicians, shaved around the edges, imposed on them by people who didn't really conform to it, and we wouldn't have 250,000 houses of worship in America? I mean, we wouldn't.

It may be imperfect, the First Amendment, but it is the nearest thing ever created in any human society for the promotion of religion and religious values. [Italics added.] ■

THE ROOTS OF AMERICAN RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

Adapted from a presentation by Charles C. Haynes

From the colonial era to the present, religions and religious beliefs have played a significant role in the political life of the United States. Religion has been at the heart of some of the best and some of the worst movements in American history. The guiding principles that the Framers intended to govern the relationship between religion and politics are set forth in Article VI of the Constitution and in the opening 16 words of the First Amendment of the Bill of Rights. Now that America has expanded from the largely Protestant pluralism of the seventeenth century to a nation of some 3,000 religious groups, it is more vital than ever that every citizen understand the appropriate role of religion in public life and affirm the constitutional guarantees of religious liberty, or freedom of conscience, for people of all faiths or none.

The philosophical ideas and religious convictions of Roger Williams, William Penn, John Leland, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and other leaders were decisive in the struggle for freedom of conscience. The United States is a nation built on ideals and convictions that have become democratic first principles. These principles must be understood and affirmed by every generation if the American experiment in liberty is to endure.

The Religion then of every man must be left to the conviction and conscience of every man; and it is the right of every man to exercise it as these may dictate. This right is in its nature an unalienable right.

-James Madison, 1785

The Religious Liberty clauses of the First Amendment to the Constitution are a momentous decision, the most important political decision for religious liberty and public justice in history. Two hundred years after their enactment they stand out boldly in a century made dark by state repression and sectarian conflict. Yet the ignorance and contention now surrounding the clauses are a reminder that their advocacy and defense is a task for each succeeding generation.

-The Williamsburg Charter, 1988

Guarantees of religious liberty in the Constitution.

The guiding principles supporting the definition of religious liberty are set forth in Article VI of the U.S. Constitution and in the opening words of the First Amendment to the Constitution. These principles have become the ground rules by which people of all religions or none can live together as citizens of one nation.

Article VI of the Constitution concludes with these words: "**No religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States.**" With this bold stroke, the Framers broke with European tradition and opened public office in the federal government to people of all faiths or none.

The First Amendment's Religious Liberty clauses state that **"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof ..."** Taken together, these two clauses safeguard religious liberty by protecting religions and religious convictions from governmental interference or control. They ensure that religious belief or nonbelief remains voluntary, free from governmental coercion.

(Amendments One through Ten to the U.S. constitution are known collectively as "the Bill of Rights." They are not part of the original draft of the Constitution, but were added as a condition of ratification - approval - by the states. Ed.)

The clauses apply equally to actions of both state and local governments, because the Supreme Court has ruled that the Fourteenth Amendment's dictum that states are not to deprive any person of liberty makes the First Amendment applicable to the states.

Meaning of "no establishment."

"No establishment" means that neither a state nor the federal government can establish a particular religion or religion in general. Further, government is prohibited from advancing or supporting religion. This does not mean that the government can be hostile to religion. The government must maintain what the Supreme Court has called "benevolent neutrality," which permits religious exercise to exist but denies it government sponsorship. The No Establishment clause serves to prevent both religious control over government and political control over religion.

Meaning of "free exercise."

"Free exercise" is the freedom of every citizen to reach, hold, practice, and change beliefs according to the dictates of conscience. The Free Exercise clause prohibits governmental interference with religious belief and, within limits, religious practice.

The difference between belief and practice.

The Supreme Court has interpreted "free exercise" to mean that any individual may believe anything he or she wants, but there may be times when the state can limit or interfere with practices that flow from these beliefs.

Traditionally, the Court has required a government to demonstrate a compelling interest of the "highest order" before it can burden or otherwise interfere with religious conduct. Even then, the government has to demonstrate that it has no alternative means of achieving its interest that would be less restrictive of religious conduct.

A 1990 Supreme Court decision, *Employment Division v. Smith*, states that government no longer has to demonstrate a compelling government interest unless a law is specifically targeted at a religious practice or infringes upon an additional constitutional right, such as free speech. The Religious Freedom Restoration Act, signed into law by President Clinton in 1993, restores the compelling interest test and ensures its application in all cases where religious exercise is substantially burdened.

The movement toward religious liberty in the United States.

The momentous decision by the framers of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights to prohibit religious establishment on the federal level and to guarantee free exercise of religion was related to a number of religious, political, and economic factors in eighteenth-century America. Underlying all of these factors, of course, was the practical difficulty of establishing any one faith in an emerging nation composed of a multiplicity of faiths (mostly Protestant sects), none of which was strong enough to dominate the others.

The period between 1776 and the passage of the First Amendment in 1791 saw critical changes in fundamental ideas about religious freedom. In May 1776, just prior to the Declaration of Independence, the leaders of Virginia adopted the Virginia Declaration of Rights, drafted by George Mason. The first draft of the Declaration argued for the "fullest toleration in the exercise of religion according to the dictates of conscience." This language echoed the writings of John Locke and the movement in England toward toleration.

Although toleration was a great step forward, a 25-year-old delegate named James Madison (1751-1836) did not think it went far enough. Madison, also deeply influenced by the ideas of the Enlightenment, successfully argued that "toleration" should be changed to "free exercise" of religion. This seemingly small change in language signaled a revolutionary change in ideas. For Madison, religious liberty was not a concession by the state or the established church, but an inalienable, or natural, right of every citizen.

In 1791, the free exercise of religion proclaimed in the Virginia Declaration became a part of the First Amendment, guaranteeing all Americans freedom of conscience.

From establishment to separation.

The decisive battle for disestablishment came in the large and influential colony of Virginia, where the Anglican Church was the established faith. Once again, James Madison played a pivotal role by leading the fight that persuaded the Virginia legislature to adopt in 1786 Thomas Jefferson's "Bill for the Establishment of Religious Freedom."

Madison and Jefferson argued that state support for a particular religion or for all religions is wrong, because compelling citizens to support through taxes a faith they do not follow violates their natural right to religious liberty. "Almighty God had created the mind free," declared Jefferson's bill. Thus, "to compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves and abhors, is sinful and tyrannical."

The "Great Awakening" and the struggle for disestablishment.

Madison and Jefferson were greatly aided in the struggle for disestablishment by the Baptists, Presbyterians, Quakers, and other "dissenting" faiths of Anglican Virginia. The religious revivals of the eighteenth century, often called the Great Awakening (1728-1790), produced new forms of religious expression and belief that influenced the development of religious liberty throughout the colonies. The revivalists' message of salvation through Christ alone evoked a deeply personal and emotional response in thousands of Americans.

The evangelical fervor of the Awakening cut across denominational lines and undercut support for the privileges of the established church. Religion was seen by many as a matter of free choice and churches as places of self-government. The alliance of church and state was now seen by many as harmful to the cause of religion.

In Virginia this climate of dissent and the leadership of such religious leaders as John Leland, a Baptist, provided the crucial support Madison needed to win the battle for religious liberty in Virginia.

The successful battle for disestablishment in Virginia is a vital chapter in the story of religious liberty in America. By the time of the ratification of the First Amendment in 1791, all of the other Anglican establishments (except in Maryland) were ended. The Congregational establishments of New England lasted longer. Not until 1818 in Connecticut and 1833 in Massachusetts were the state constitutions amended to complete disestablishment. ■

Charles C. Haynes is scholar-in-residence at the Freedom Forum First Amendment Center, Vanderbilt University, in Nashville, Tennessee.

THE RELIGIOUS FREEDOM RESTORATION ACT: Case Study in Conflict

It is the United States Supreme Court which is the ultimate judge of the way in which the American system balances conflicting rights of its citizens and the government. The court has been a major player in defining the intentions of the founding fathers, expressed through the U.S. Constitution and related writings. In so doing, it has enormous power to shape daily lives in many areas. Religion has long been one of those areas.

In February, 1997, the court heard opening arguments in a case called *Boerne vs. St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church*. The following presentation of the issues involved is taken from a broadcast radio report by Nina Totenberg, Legal Affairs Correspondent for National Public Radio.

This is MORNING EDITION. I'm Bob Edwards.

Today, the Supreme Court hears arguments in what may be the most important religious rights case of this century. At issue is the constitutionality of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act known by the acronym RIFRA.

RIFRA makes it illegal for any government anywhere in the country to take action which interferes with religion, unless the government can prove the action is justified.

Nina Totenberg reports:

The case to be argued today is much more than a test of religious rights; it's a test of power. Congressional versus judicial power, federal versus state power, and community rights versus religious rights.

If the Supreme Court strikes down (rules illegal) the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, it could cast a constitutional cloud of doubt over almost every piece of civil rights legislation on the books.

Conversely, if the court upholds the act, it could be putting everything that state and local governments do under a religious microscope, and the decision could weaken the power of the court as the ultimate arbiter of what the Constitution means.

The stakes are clear to everyone involved. "This is the most important church-state case ever," says Baptist Minister Oliver Thomas, of the Nation Council of Churches, "because it will affect every single religious individual and organization in the country."

Indeed, it seems that the coalition supporting RIFRA includes just about every religious denomination in the country, from fundamentalist Christians to mainline Protestants, Catholics, Muslims and Jews.

RIFRA was adopted (made national law) four years ago in response to a Supreme Court decision widely condemned as restricting religious faith. RIFRA requires government at every level to be more accommodating of religion than the Supreme Court had said was required by the Constitution.

Specifically, RIFRA states that government cannot burden religious practice unless it can show a compelling need, such as health or safety, and can show that it has used the least restrictive means. That may sound simple, but those are high legal standards to meet, and in the years since the law's enactment, hundreds of lawsuits have been filed by individuals and churches seeking exemptions under RIFRA from state and local laws.

Everything from zoning laws (controlling land use in cities), to anti-discrimination laws, to prison regulations have been challenged as a burden on the free exercise of religion.

Now finally, a case has reached the Supreme Court testing whether Congress exceeded its authority in adopting the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. The case pits the small Texas city of Boerne against one of its fastest growing churches, Saint Peter's Roman Catholic Church.

The church wanted to expand, but because it was located within an area designated for historic preservation, the city council refused to give permission. The church submitted a variety of plans that would have preserved the facade of the building, but the city still said no.

Finally, the church went to court charging that the city's refusal to grant a building permit for the expansion violated the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

Father Tony Cummings is the priest at Saint Peter's: "The problem is that we have just a church that seats 230 people and we have a parish population of a thousand families, and we are unable to accommodate our parishioners for Sunday worship. We are presently using a gym (a local school sports facility) for our Sunday services."

But the city has stuck to its guns. Mayor Patrick Heath contends that the laws of the city must apply equally to everyone. "How can we require owners of other kinds of buildings to submit to the regulations, which are designed to maintain this community's sense of its architectural heritage, if the church does not have to do that?"

A federal district court agreed with the city and struck down RIFRA as unconstitutional, but an appeals court reversed (the district court decision), and the city appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court where the justices will hear arguments today.

The briefs in the case bespeak the powerful interests at stake (briefs are written arguments submitted to the justices — the court allows other organizations with an interest in the issue to submit their own arguments.) On one side, defending RIFRA, is the religious world, the Clinton Administration, conservative and liberal members of Congress, a host of civil rights organizations and five states; including New York and California.

On the other side are the city of Boerne, sixteen states and historic preservation groups.

To understand the profound issues at stake, you need to go back to the adoption of the Fourteenth Amendment (to the U.S.

Constitution) after the Civil War. The goal of those reconstruction-era constitutional amendments was to force the states, even if they didn't want to, to honor individual and civil rights (guaranteed in the Constitution) by giving the Congress, the national legislature, the power to enforce those rights.

Since then, Congress has often passed laws to provide more protection for individual rights than the Supreme Court said was required by the Constitution. Congress did just that in passing the Voting Rights Act, the Pregnancy Anti-discrimination Act, and a whole raft of other civil rights laws.

And just as Congress required compelling justifications for practices that even incidentally burdened one race or gender, when it passed RIFRA it required compelling justification for practices that even incidentally burdened religious faith.

Today in the Supreme Court, University of Texas Law Professor Douglas Laycock, representing Saint Peter's Church, will tell the justices that if RIFRA is unconstitutional, so too may be the whole framework of our modern civil rights law; a framework that has, heretofore, been repeatedly upheld by the court. "This would be a dramatic change in course," says Professor Laycock, "if the court were to say Congress cannot expand constitutional rights. You know, 130 years of law would be out the window."

But Marci Hamilton, representing the city of Boerne, will counter that RIFRA is no ordinary statute, but a constitutional amendment dressed up to look like a statute so it could be enacted without taking the difficult steps required for a constitutional amendment.

"This statute, so called statute, looks exactly like a constitutional amendment" says Hamilton. "It applies to every law enacted by every government in the United States. If RIFRA is good law, then we might as well put a moving walkway between the front door of the Supreme Court and Congress, and every time someone loses on a constitutional claim in the court, they can simply go to Congress to have it overturned. So we'll have no finality, and in fact, the court will become the most irrelevant branch (of the federal government)."

Hamilton will argue that RIFRA is different than other civil rights laws, because it elevates religion above everything else in society, and inextricably involves government with religion in violation of the Constitution.

"The problem here is the simultaneous elevation of every religious interest in the country. It looks exactly like the problem that the framers were most concerned about, and that is a union of the power between church and state," says Hamilton.

The church's lawyer, Douglas Laycock, responds that the church is entitled at least to be left alone: "The church is not entitled to go out and impose its will on everybody else, but it is entitled to practice its faith."

And then there's the debate over states rights (the constitutionally protected power of the states to make the laws which primarily affect citizens at the state and local levels). The Supreme Court has granted time to the state of Ohio, representing itself and fifteen other states, to argue that RIFRA tramples on the traditional function of state and local governments; and the prime example is prisons.

"What we find" says Betty Montgomery, the Attorney General of Ohio, "is that those prisoners who are not able to get what they want through the normal channels, have begun to rely upon this Religious Restoration Act to claim that they have a right to certain kind of food, they have a right to certain kind of clothing, they have a right to certain treatment which is outside the norm, and often time risks the security of the institution."

Montgomery cites a litany of horror stories. Prisoners who claim, for example, a religious right to distribute hate literature, or pornographic material, but she concedes that all of these claims have been thrown out by the courts, and RIFRA supporters note that new legislation enacted by Congress punishes prisoners with fines and added time in jail if they file frivolous lawsuits.

In the end, however, there's only one question before the Supreme Court today: Is the Religious Freedom Reformation Act constitutional? If the court says it is, everyone, even the church's Douglas Laycock, knows there will be hard cases to decide under RIFRA down the road. But, he contends, this case is easy. "We're at the very core of the First Amendment, the policy of the city of Boerne is that these people cannot attend Mass on Sunday morning, because it would rearrange the stonework (of the church). That is an absurd policy and it's at the very core of the free exercise of religion."

A decision in the case is expected in the summer of 1997. ■

RELIGION IN AMERICA

By William Peters

(Various observers, including President Clinton, have described America as one of the most religious societies in the world. This article provides a brief tour d' horizon *of contemporary religious America in its remarkable variety and vitality. It is designed to help readers understand how many religions can flourish side by side, how they shape individual lives and shape the national character.)*

Pre-Columbian America, like most indigenous societies, had rich and diverse religious cultures; elements of which remain. But Europeans coming to the New World brought their own religions with them. Indeed, it was for the freedom to practice these beliefs that many people came to the New World. These communities flourished, and the resulting religious variety helped give rise to a highly unique and important contribution to world religions — the most fundamental commitment to religious pluralism and freedom in the world.

The effects of the Protestant Reformation (1517) were quickly felt throughout Europe, and as the movement gathered momentum, increasing numbers of religious non-conformists frequently became religious refugees. These groups often were able to find temporary asylum by moving to a different European country. But eventually, many dissenters concluded that the New World offered the best hope for long-term survival and freedom to realize their religious objectives.

America became a haven for many different strongly motivated religious communities. For some, the very strength of their religious beliefs restricted their tolerance for those who did not share their theological views. People were pushed out of these groups or left on their own to pursue their own personal religious expression. Thus, the continuing desire to define personal religious practices produced new domestic groups even while fresh religious refugees from Europe appeared on America's shores.

But the original religious leaders often were succeeded by others who were less single-minded. Communities developed, with their multiple strands of interaction, and religious sects began to learn to live together. Gradually, a pattern of basic religious tolerance began to emerge in the colonies.

Religious differences still existed, however, and they were often reflected by region. Early Virginia was largely identified with the new Church of England, and later with Baptists and Methodists. Maryland was founded as a Catholic haven. Pennsylvania and New York had substantial numbers of Lutherans, other minor German Protestant groups, and members of the Society of Friends or Quakers. New England was the home of various Puritan groups. In the north, in what would become Maine, Vermont and Quebec, French Catholics exercised substantial influence. As different as these groups were, though, they all derived from a Judeo-Christian cultural and historical background.

American territorial gains in the nineteenth century added Spanish and French lands and peoples. Between the Napoleonic wars and World War I, waves of immigration brought English, Scots and Irish, Italians and Greeks, Germans and Poles and Swedes and Russians. Immigration to the U.S. changed the mix of religious groups, but America's overall heritage remained primarily European, and primarily Judeo-Christian.

The 125-year period following the birth of the new American nation was a time of many individual and national struggles, as the nation and its citizens confronted myriad social issues. During this time,

the critical role of the United States Supreme Court in interpreting and defining the application of the U.S. Constitution was born. The issues which occupied the court were not primarily those of religion. They involved the balance between the three branches of the national government and between the national governnent and the governments of the states.

The religious protections incorporated in the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights depended on government and society for their application. There were clear cases of breakdowns. The failure of European Americans to understand and recognize the unique role and importance of Native American religious practices, so much a part of their culture, and so closely linked to nature, is a notable example. Another more conventionally acknowledged situation concerns the Mormons. Religious intolerance expressed in physical and political attacks drove them out of the northeastern and midwestern states before they found refuge in the frontier state of Utah.

By the midpoint of the twentieth century, however, the United States, for the most part, was a successful example of a society acting with general tolerance towards a wide array of primarily Christian sects. (President Clinton provides a picture of this sense of religious homogeneity in the description of his own young experiences provided in the speech which opens this journal.)

But while most Americans saw themselves as religiously tolerant, there were troubling reminders of religious prejudice. The Holocaust forced many Americans to think about the treatment of Jews, even in the United States. Catholic John F. Kennedy's candidacy for president in 1960 raised other questions about the extent of religious tolerance in the country. At about the same time, cases before the Supreme Court forced a renewed recognition that personal religious freedom of conscience also implied freedom to be non-religious. Application of this guarantee had implications not just for individuals but for U.S. society as a whole.

The wars of empire in Europe did much to shape the religious landscape of nineteenth and early twentieth century America. Subsequent immigration did not have a similar effect until the mid-1960s, when immigration reform removed restrictions which long had given preference to Europeans. New groups of immigrants from Asia and Latin America brought their cultural and religious values to the U.S, significantly fueling the growth of Islam and having an important impact on American Catholicism.

PRESENT DAY RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION IN THE U.S.

After more than 200 years as a nation, religion in America is a complex picture. Elsewhere in this journal, George Gallup, Jr., examines American religious values, practices, and their implications. This journal's bibliography cites an on-going study called the *Harvard Project on Pluralism*, under the direction of Diana L. Eck, which takes a similarly broad look over an extended period. For the convenience of the reader not familiar with religious America, here are some basic facts and numbers:

- 163 million Americans (63%) identify themselves as affiliated with a specific religious denomination.
- Roman Catholics are the single largest denomination with some 60 million adherents.
- Members of American Protestant churches total some 94 million persons, spread across some 220 particular denominations. *The Universal Almanac for 1997* groups the denominations into 26 major families with memberships of 100,000 or more, but also notes that there are thousands of self-identified independent groups of believers.
- There are more than 300,000 local congregations in the U.S.
- There are more than 530,000 total clergy.
- The U.S. has some 3.8 million religiously identified or affiliated Jews (an additional 2 million define themselves as primarily culturally or ethnically Jewish).
- There are an estimated 3.5 - 3.8 million Muslims; Islam is the most rapidly growing religion in the U.S.
- In any given week, more Americans will attend religious events than professional sporting events.
- In terms of personal religious identification, the most rapidly growing group in the U.S. is atheists / agnostics (currently about 8 million).

This religious community can be viewed in a variety of other useful ways. Protestant churches are often divided between "mainline" and "Evangelical" denominations. Evangelical churches are those whose current practices include an active and conscious drive to attract new members, in both the United States and outside the country. Evangelical churches are often less hierarchical, more "fundamental" in terms of a literal interpretation of the Scriptures, and more inclined toward a "personal" relationship with God. Mainline churches are more traditional, are less focused on soliciting new members, may have a more "defined" body of religious leaders, and in general comprise a diminishing percentage of overall Protestant adherents. Even the Roman Catholic Church has begun to develop something of a mainline/ Evangelical division.

There are important racial differences. For example, the world of Methodists of color is largely represented by the African Methodist Episcopal Churches, while white Methodists are largely found in the United Methodist Church. There is a similar important difference among African-American (National Baptist Convention, USA; American Baptist Churches in the USA; Progressive National Baptist Convention) and the largely white Southern Baptist Convention. While not deriving from the same historical experience, there are important separate immigrant Christian communities (the number of independent Korean and Central American evangelical Christian churches in the region around Washington, D.C., is noticed by even the most casual observer).

Judaism continues to be a religion of substantial importance in the U.S., with persons of Jewish faith and culture making extensive and wide ranging contributions in all walks of American life. More Jews live in the United States than in any other country, including Israel. There are three major branches of Judaism in this country: Orthodox, Reform and Conservative.

Islam in the U.S. comes from two distinct traditions. African Americans, seeking an alternative to their "slave" identities, seized on the fact that many of the original slaves would likely have been Muslim. An evolving "Black Muslim" community existed in the late nineteenth century, but only came into its own at mid-twentieth century. Muslims from Lebanon and Syria were present in America at the turn of the century, but it was the revision of the immigration laws in the mid-1960s which permitted the entry of substantial numbers of educated Muslims from Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, and the Middle East. It is this group of immigrants which has largely defined the second American Islamic tradition. (For further information, see the conversation on Islam in America.)

In the speech at the beginning of this journal, President Clinton talks of a sense, on the part of some Americans, that public expressions of religion in the seventies and eighties had been viewed with disfavor. More recently, many religious Americans have consciously become more overtly expressive of their faith. There is currently a burgeoning world of religious rock music; religious bookstores are an increasing phenomenon; and religious radio broadcasters can be heard in every major and minor American market.

In fact, radio and television broadcasting have become a major element of contemporary American religion. Major network broadcasters are increasingly likely to have programs with a visible religious content. The explosion of cable and direct broadcast television outlets (many Americans can select from more than 100 television channels) means that even "minor" or non-traditional denominations or faiths have been able to establish their electronic presence.

Some years ago, a major U.S. national news magazine headlined an issue with the question "Is God Dead?" Most American observers would say confidently that today in America the answer is clearly no. ■

ISLAM IN THE UNITED STATES: A TENTATIVE ASCENT

A Conversation with Yvonne Haddad

(The Islamic presence in the United States has grown substantially over the past decade or two. With that expansion, however, have come self-assessments from within the Islamic-American community, and speculation on what the future holds. In this interview, with U.S. Society and Values editors William Peters and Michael J. Bandler, Yvonne Haddad, professor of Islamic history at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, considers the state of Muslims in America today.)

Q: The rise of Islam in the United States can be seen tangibly, every day, with the mosques that have been constructed in the nation's urban areas. What is the current total?

Haddad: There are twelve hundred fifty mosques and Islamic centers.

Q: How many have been erected in the past ten years?

A: Quite a few. I think that since 1984, the number has doubled.

Q: Then there are the intangibles — the spirit and resolve and determination of that community to make a life for itself in the United States. But first, I thought we'd discuss the fact that Islam is not completely new to these shores. It didn't spring up in the last 20 years.

A: No, it did not. Some scholars are exploring the possibility that Muslims even preceded the Plymouth Plantation and the Virginia settlements. We have historical evidence that some of the Moors who were expelled from Spain somehow made their way to the islands of the Caribbean, and from there to the southern part of the United States. There's a book on the Melungeons who came to North America prior to the 1600s. So there are some Muslims now who are looking at this history and seeing themselves as part of the founding of America. It's sort of the Spanish version of the founding of America. We also know that a substantial number of the African Americans who were brought as slaves to the United States were Muslim, and were converted to Christianity. Some continued to practice Islam until the early part of this century. They lived on the outer banks of Georgia, on the periphery. So there are different ways of looking at the history. Generally speaking, we talk about steady emigration in the 1870s and 1880s when the Muslims from Lebanon and Syria came to the United States.

Q: Were these people able to live their lives as Muslims?

A: They did continue their lives as Muslims. One of the things that is interesting about Islam is that it's a portable religion. Any place can be a place of worship. It's just that the establishment of community, and perpetuation of the faith is something that became prominent only at the beginning of the 1930s, during the Depression. We see a great deal of institutionalization among the immigrants. We ended up with about 52 mosques by the end of World War II. The United States, from the 1920s through the end of the Second World War, had no immigration to speak of. That's when you had the homogenization of America. Then, in the 1960s, the doors opened again, leading to a massive new immigration from all over the world — reminiscent of the waves of Eastern Europeans who came at the turn of the 20th century.

Q: You mentioned a figure of 52 mosques.

A: Nineteen fifty two saw the creation of the Federation of Islamic Associations of the United

States and Canada. Fifty-two mosques joined, with predominantly Lebanese and Syrian populations. There were a few groups of Muslims from the Balkans. Not included in that count was about a hundred African American mosques.

Q: So you're talking about the growth from 150 to 1250 over less than a half-century.

A: Right.

Q: In those early days, were there contacts between the different communities?

A: Most of them were chain migration Muslims. They came out of the same villages in Lebanon. You had people who settled in North Dakota. Then, during the First World War, some were drafted and went to Europe and died, and others came back, but didn't go back to North Dakota, where they had homesteaded, but went into the automobile factories in Detroit [Michigan], for example, or started businesses in Ohio.

Q: Was that the genesis of the strong Muslim presence in the Detroit area?

A: It was the Ford Rouge Factory. It employed Muslims as well as African Americans from the South. The company paid five dollars a day, and took in anybody who could put up with the heat and horrible working conditions. Most of the people who came from the Middle East didn't know any English. It was good pay.

Q: Were there any tensions with American society, based on religion?

A: It was more racist than religious. There were two court cases at the time. The question was whether Arabs were considered fit citizens for the United States, because at that time citizenship was defined either by being Caucasian or Negroid, and the Arabs didn't fit either profile.

Q: Let's focus on the tremendous growth that has taken place in recent years. First, pinpoint the reasons for it.

A: The most important factor is the change in the U.S. immigration laws around 1965, in which people were given visas based on their ability to contribute to society, rather than chain migration, which is through relatives. What you had after 1965 was the inflow of doctors and engineers — the brain drain, the professional class — Pakistanis and Bangladeshis and Arabs. That is what established Islam in a very solid way as a religion in America. They soon set up mosques, because they could not relate to the more assimilationist mosques that were established by the Federation of Islamic Associations. They thought of them as being too Americanized, too Christianized.

Q: So there was a very definite distinction between the old-line mosques and the new ones.

A: Correct.

Q: What were the older ones like?

A: First of all, the immigrants who came in that earlier wave were uneducated, mostly young single men. We even have records of people on a train going to Washington State, passing through Chicago. The group included more than 50 people who were between the ages of 9 and eleven. It was child labor, headed for the mines, or orchards, or the railroads. These kids didn't even know where they came from. They didn't know English. But eventually, they married Americans, settled, and tried to invent an identity, and developed a bare minimum of religion, with the food and music and marriage customs as culture.

Q: So the worship wasn't the focal point. It was almost incidental.

A: That's right. These mosques were social clubs. But then, once they got married, they began to worry about bringing up children. We have a record of the Quincy [Massachusetts] mosque. Eleven families banded together and said, we need a mosque, a building, a place where we can gather so our children can grow up as Muslims and marry each other. They built the mosque. But, according to a survey, not one of the children, male or female, married Muslims. And all the marriages ended in divorce. It's an incredible statistic.

Q: That's the way it was. And obviously, change was needed.

A: Right. When the post-1965 immigrants came, they looked at what had been going on, and decided that wasn't what they wanted. The identity and consciousness of the new immigrants are different. They are the product of the nation-states that arose after the Second World War. They are educated. They have a national identity, whether as Pakistanis, Lebanese, or Syrians. They have been taught a particular history, a background, as well as the history of Islam, its culture and contribution to world civilization. So they came already formed with a particular perspective on life. They looked at the earlier immigrants who did not share their identity, and decided to establish their own institutions.

Q: So you've identified two distinctive schools. Then there is the black Muslim.

A: Absolutely. From 1933 to 1975, they were growing up parallel and separate. The African American experience really developed in the industrial cities in the North as a reaction to racism. When African Americans left the Southern cotton fields at the beginning of the twentieth century, they expected the North would be more open, and it wasn't. So gradually, Islam was rediscovered as an identity that would ground them in their original African identity — since Africa had at least three Islamic kingdoms (Mali, Songhai and Ghana) that had made great contributions to African civilizations. African Americans started changing their names as a rejection of slave identity.

Q: Today, in the Islamic community, as one response to the voids of the past, there is a whole network of schools.

A: There are over a hundred day schools, and over a thousand Sunday or weekend schools.

Q: And are there community organizations?

A: Yes, besides the 1,250 mosques or Islamic centers, we have addresses for organizations, publishers, radio stations — about 1,200 institutions.

Q: Is there a religious training program for leaders?

A: There is a new one established this year near Herndon, Virginia. It is run by the International Institute of Islamic Thought. It gives an M.A. in Imamate Studies, preparing Imams for religious leadership, and an M.A. in Islamic Studies. It is going to serve as a seminary, to prepare leaders who have lived and are trained in America. Up to now the leadership has been imported. And that isn't working too well.

Q: That must have created some stresses.

A: At first it didn't, but it did as the immigrants acclimatized to life in America. And the imported leaders couldn't communicate with the children.

Q: I'm sure that even the youngsters who go to day schools are Americanized in many ways.

A: They are. They live in two cultures, straddling them.

Q: Let's talk about living in two cultures — whether it's even possible to do so. How successfully is it accomplished?

A: It's a very interesting question. I've been looking at it for some time. On one level, they've been able to do that very successfully. On another level, given the heightened Islamophobia in America, it's become very uncomfortable. In one of the surveys we did in the 1980s, we asked people whether they believed America discriminated against Muslims. Of a sample of 365 people, 100 percent said yes. Then, when we asked whether any had personally experienced discrimination, none had. So it is in the air. The press contributes to the paranoia, and we cannot ignore it. Muslims feel comfortable, they've been invited to churches and synagogues, and have participated in interfaith dialogue. They know we're not out to get them. And yet, they get up in the morning and read press reports about terrorists and they panic. There is this fear that at any moment, you'll have a mob marching, trying to bomb a mosque. It has happened. There have been three or four bombings, perhaps two cases of arson, and some desecration of mosques, since 1989. No one has been killed, but these religious sites have been attacked and this is very frightening. Usually these incidents follow, or are linked to, some high-visibility terrorist act overseas.

Q: Certainly there has been, particularly among some of the strongly ecumenical Christian groups, a sense that they have a mission to reach out, and correct the errors of the past.

A: Absolutely. The National Council of Churches has come out with statements about Christian relations with Muslims. At least eight denominations have come out in support of Christian and Muslim rights in Jerusalem. These same denominations have presented statements about how to treat our neighbors, how to get churches to reach out to the Muslim community.

Q: So there's some counterbalance to the extreme actions.

A: From some of the churches, yes. I agree. Many have taken a stand that neighbors should work with each other, that congregations should be taught how to relate with Muslims as Americans, as full citizens, as participants in building the future of America.

Q: Today, do you think a good Muslim can practice his or her religion in this country comfortably?

A: Well, the practice of religion is to pray five times a day, to perform ablutions before the prayers, to fast the month of Ramadan, to give alms, to go on the *hajj* once in a lifetime. Fasting is not as easy as fasting in a Muslim country, where the workday is shortened.

Q: Yet the United States has religious leave and other laws.

A: Well, they haven't accommodated Muslims yet. The only place where this has been tested is in the prison system. African American Muslims have sued certain prison systems and have acquired the right, for example, to get *halal* food — Islamically slaughtered food — and the right, while fasting, to eat not at times designated by the prison authorities but at the times that the religion allows them to eat.
The five daily prayers happen to be concentrated in the afternoon and evening. You do the first one in the morning before you leave the house, and have a noon break for the second. You can postpone the mid-afternoon one in some cases. They don't take that much time — five to ten minutes. The only thing is that you need a clean space to be able to perform ablutions. That's the toughest thing. Performing ablutions in a public bathroom, the lack of a private space, is hard.

Q: Because we're considering Islam in America as an evolutionary situation, would you say that it is easier today for Muslims to effectively practice their religion in this country as opposed to 50 years ago?

A: It's easier in that there are Muslim mosques throughout the 50 states, and you can find a community where you can worship. When we first moved into Hartford [Connecticut] in 1970, we knew there was a Muslim person. He used to go to the Maronite church to seek community. At that time, there was no mosque. He died, and was buried in a Christian cemetery. Now there is a Muslim section of the cemetery. And Muslims are able to make arrangements with funeral homes that will allow them to wash the bodies according to Islamic practice and prescriptions and perform the prayers. So it is becoming easier for Muslims to live in the United States. It is more comfortable; there's no question about it. They are organized better, and they are beginning to ask for their rights under American law.

Q: Let's discuss the current state of political activism among Muslims in the United States today — both in terms of specific causes and also some of the more broad-based kinds of issues where they might join with other groups.

A: Political action is very hard to pinpoint, basically because it's not well-organized. There's no consensus on issues. Since the early 1970s, there have been several Arab-American political action groups — the Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee, the National Association of Arab Americans — but those included both Muslims and Christians. They came into existence after the Arab-Israeli War of 1967. These are not necessarily Islamic. They will work for Arab-American causes, like discrimination. For Muslims, at the moment, the cause is [U.S.] anti-terrorism legislation that attempts to create profiles. There is a fear that it could target Muslims and Arabs, or people who look like Arabs, when they go to an airport.

Q: But that's not an Islamic religious issue.

A: No. Then you have different groups, like the United Muslims of America, or the Muslim Alliance, that have defined themselves as political action groups, that try to invite candidates for office to speak to them. They have not been very successful, for a variety of reasons. We do have a record, for

example, of public officials who returned Arab American Christian money because they said it was tainted.

Q: That was 10 or more years ago.

A: Right. But it is a fear that they are being disenfranchised. This changed, though, with Jesse Jackson running for office. When he ran for president in 1988, there were 50 Arab Americans and Muslim Americans who were part of his delegation to the Democratic National Covention. And [candidate Michael] Dukakis acknowledged them when he addressed the assemblage as "Christians, Jews and Muslims." President Reagan once met the Pope in Florida, and welcomed him in the name of Americans, their churches, synagogues and mosques. And President Clinton, several times, has sent congratulations at the time of Ramadan. And Mrs. Clinton invited Muslims for an *Iftar* dinner [the meal that breaks the Ramadan Fast] at the White House. So there is a feeling that people are beginning to notice Muslims as part of America.

During the last election, there was an effort to bring five Muslim political action committees together, trying to create a voting bloc. Knowing the Jewish vote was going to go for [President] Clinton, Muslims wondered, could they go for Dole? They couldn't do that. About fifty percent voted for the Democratic party, and fifty for the Republicans. So they're totally divided, and have independent opinions. Also, since they're mostly recent immigrants, they have their own particular interests. The issue of Jerusalem is universal for all Muslims, regardless of where they're from. But when you talk about Kashmir, for example, you'll see that Indian and Pakistani Muslims will focus on that. You have the issue of the Moro revolution in the Philippines — everybody will give some sort of lip service to it, but that's about it. They all rallied in support of the Muslims of Bosnia.

Q: You've been citing foreign policy issues, for the most part. Where do Muslims in the United States come down on critical domestic issues?

A: Nowhere. They have not been able to organize or make an impact. First of all, the people running for office don't want to be associated with Muslims. There's this fear of being tarred. I agree that there are issues that they could share with other groups. One example of cooperation I can cite is the statement about abortion issued by the American Muslim Council in Washington in collaboration with the Catholic Bishop of Maryland.

Q: What was the substance of that?

A: They were jointly against abortions, at the time of the United Nations Beijing Conference. It's not that they were against women's rights, but they felt that the way these rights were defined was against the religious teachings of Catholicism and Islam. There also was one court case where Muslims and Jews collaborated, that had to do with freedom of worship. Generally, though, even where there may be a confluence of interests, there is no cooperation.

Q: So what else can you say about this newly vibrant community?

A: The thing is that it becomes more vibrant the more it feels persecuted. We ran a survey in the 1980s and found out that only five to ten percent of the community is interested in organized religion. Most people of Islamic background will have nothing to do with the mosques, even though they see themselves as Muslims and identify themselves as Muslims.

Q: Is that still true today?

A: I think it gets higher in periods when you have a perception of persecution.

Q: What does Muslim education accomplish, in the day schools and weekend schools? Do these institutions expand and build a base?

A: They hope it will. Some Christians attend these schools. They're good schools, sometimes operating in ghetto areas. But there aren't that many schools — what is a hundred across the whole United States? And only a few go through high school. The Sunday schools are producing a very interesting group of students. I'm starting to get them in my college classes, and they all come knowing what Islam is, because they were raised in this consciousness. They're a very interesting parallel to my Jewish students. They have a specific, particular knowledge but not necessarily grounded in the historical facts of Judaism or Islam, their thoughts

and institutions. Sometimes I say something about Judaism, and my students jump. There was one student who would challenge me all the time. I told him to go check with his rabbi. He came back, and told me, "the rabbi said you're right." And the same happens with the Muslim students.

Q: How do you view things as they are going to evolve into the next century? Are you sanguine about the growth and enrichment of Islam in the United States?

A: I believe that the issue of Islamophobia in some quarters of the United States is serious. One of the leaders told me, "our biggest enemy in America would be tolerance." We know, for example, that in Chicago we had two or three mosques. Then the Salman Rushdie affair developed, bringing fears among the Muslim immigrants that their children would become Salman Rushdies, denying their faith and being integrated into the system — in a sense adopting the language of the enemy of Islam and using it against Islam. So what happened was that over 60 Sunday schools sprang up, and each one became a mosque. It was a wakeup call for the community. Then there was the World Trade Center bombing, and people began going to mosques. Others were hiding. They were claiming, `I'm not Pakistani — I'm Hindu,' or `I'm not Egyptian — I'm Greek,' just to get rid of the bias and the stereotype.

I really personally believe, having been doing research on the Islamic community for over twenty years, that if they felt comfortable, they would probably integrate much more easily and would have an easier life. But the last few years, since the fall of the Soviet empire, there are certain people who feel we need an enemy.

Muslims are eager to be part of this country. They don't want to be discriminated against. They want their children to be able to live here. They would like Islam to be recognized as a positive force for justice and peace in the world.

Q: If there is more recognition of Islam, as you said, by various U.S. presidents, or greetings to Muslims during the Ramadan season that appear on local television stations, isn't this an acknowledgment of some forward movement?

A: I think that goes a long way towards making them feel at home in the United States. There are developments coming through. If you look at the mosque movement itself, you will see a great deal of Americanization within it. Remember that in most of the countries Muslims came from — especially in the early parts of the century — people did not go to the mosques. Now there is a mosque movement worldwide. And what we have in America is that women, too, are going. Female space has been created — sometimes in the basement, sometimes in a separate room, sometimes side-by-side or in the back or on a higher level from the men. Basically, we're seeing the kind of innovations that are making the mosques American.

Q: If we try to sum up the Islamic community in the United States, putting the religion aside, how would you assess it?

A: I think they will feel comfortable. Increasingly, they are learning how to operate within the system. Their children are American and they know it. They may know that they are also Pakistani, or Lebanese, or Syrian, or Palestinian, but at the same time, they are Americans, and they can operate better within the American system than they can in Pakistan, for instance. Some of them have never been to Pakistan — it's a place their parents talk about. And they know that that's what they're supposed to be, but they don't know what it is. And I think it's the coming generation that is going to define what Islam is going to be in America. If we look at the history of the development of religion in America, it would be parallel to churches. We're beginning to have more pot-luck dinners. There is one mosque in New York with a woman president — which is unheard of. She's a medical doctor, of Pakistani extraction. So why not?

In a sense, then, the mosque is not going to be a transplant —something that is foreign and brought here. It is going to be an indigenous experience of religiosity in America. ■

RELIGION IN AMERICA:

Will the Vitality of Churches Be the Surprise of the Next Century?

By George Gallup, Jr.

In this article reprinted from The Public Perspective, *one of America's preeminent pollsters analyzes the numbers of American religion, and talks about what they say about the present and perhaps the future.*

A clear understanding of the functioning of American society is impossible without an appreciation for the powerful religious dynamic that affects the attitudes and behavior of the populace. Ironically, though this dynamic is clearly evident, social commentators frequently downplay it.

A recent study conducted by The George H. Gallup International Institute for William Moss shows that Americans' concerns about society, democracy and the future are deeply rooted in their beliefs about God.[1] While most survey respondents hold staunchly to the view that one can be a good and ethical person without believing in God, a solid majority (61%) say that a democracy cannot survive without a widespread belief in God or a Supreme Being. Further evidence of the power of the religious dynamic in U.S. society is seen in the fact that the importance one places on religion, and the intensity of one's faith, often has more to do with attitudes and behavior than such background characteristics as age, level of education, and political affiliation.

Religious Diversity and Vitality

The religious liberty clauses of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution — described as perhaps the most important political statement of religious liberty and public justice in the history of mankind — are embodied in just 16 words: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." One need only look at the landscape of the United States to discover the importance of this provision for both the prominence given religion in our nation, and its diversity. Nearly 500,000 churches, temples and mosques, of all shapes and sizes, dot the landscape. There are no fewer than 2,000 denominations, not to mention countless independent churches and faith communities. The way to reach the American people is through their houses of worship: 60% of the populace can be found attending them in a given month.

Clearly the U.S. is a "churched" nation; in fact, the last 50 years have been the most churched half-century in the nation's history, judging from census and other data reported by Roger Finke and Rodney Stark in "The Churching of America".[2] Levels of attested religious belief, surveys reveal, are extraordinarily high. Virtually all Americans say they believe in God or a universal spirit. Most believe in a personal God who watches over and judges people. Most believe God performs miracles today, and many say they have felt the presence of God at various points in their lives, and that God has a plan for their lives. A substantial majority believe that they will be called before God at Judgment Day to answer for their sins. Americans [overwhelmingly] attest to a belief in the divinity of Jesus Christ, although what is meant by "divinity" varies. Most believe in an indwelling living Christ, and in the Second Coming. We say we believe in Heaven, and to a lesser extent, Hell. Half of Americans believe in the Devil. Also, the vast majority of Americans believe the Bible is either the literal or inspired Word of God. We believe the Ten Commandments to be valid rules for living.

In the area of religious experience, some dramatic survey findings emerge. A remarkable and consistent one-third of Americans report a profound spiritual experience, either sudden or gradual, which has been life-changing. These occurrences are often the focal point in faith development.

Turning to experiences in the realm of traditional religion, more than one in three American adults (36%) say that God speaks to them directly. About four in 10 believe that during the time of the Bible, God Himself spoke out loud to people. And almost as many thought God spoke through other people.

Reprinted by permission from The Public Perspective.
Copyright (c) 1995 The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research.
All rights reserved.

About half of persons interviewed believe God speaks today through the Bible and Scriptures. Forty-eight percent believe God speaks through an internal feeling or impression. Nearly a quarter of the people say that God speaks through another person and 11 percent said God still speaks audibly.

Prayer has meaning for many Americans. Virtually everyone prays, at least in some fashion, and, we believe prayers are answered. A consistent four-in-ten Americans attend church or synagogue every week. Seven in ten say they are church members. One-third of Americans watch at least some religious television each week. The vast majority want religious training for their children. Millions of Americans attend athletic events every year — but many more attend churches and synagogues. Professional sports events gross millions of dollars — but Christians and Jews give billions to their churches as free will gifts.

Of key institutions that elicit respect in society, the church or organized religion rates near the top, and has consistently been in this position since the measurement began 20 years ago. The clergy are held in comparative high esteem. Generally speaking, they receive good marks from the public for the way they are dealing with the needs of their parishioners and the problems of their communities.

Fewer than one person in ten indicates that he or she has no religious preference. Only three out of every 100 Americans say their lives have not been touched at all by Jesus Christ, either in a supernatural sense or in the sense of Jesus being an ethical or moral influence on their lives. Three-fourths of Americans say that religion is currently very important or was important at some earlier point in their lives. Fifty-six percent are churched — people who are members of a church or have attended services in the previous six months, other than for special religious holidays. The churched and unchurched are in a constant state of flux: Many people in churches are about to leave, but at the same time, many outside the churches are about to join. Half of the currently unchurched say there is a good chance that they can be brought back into the community of active worshipers.

It should come as no surprise to learn, then, that the United States is one of the most religious nations of the entire industrialized world, in terms of the level of attested religious beliefs and practices. As we look at other countries, we generally see an inverse correlation between levels of religious commitment and levels of education. The more highly educated a country's populace is, the less religiously committed and participating it is. The U.S. is unique in that we have at the same time a high level of religious belief and a high level of formal education.

Impact of Religion

Religious feelings have spurred much of the volunteerism in our nation. Remarkably, one American in every two gives two or three hours of effort each week to some volunteer cause. This volunteerism is frequently church-related. Probably no other institution in our society has had a greater impact for the good than has the church. From the church, historically, have sprung hospitals, nursing homes, universities, public schools, child care programs, concepts of human dignity and, above all, the concept of democracy.

In one form or another, every religion teaches a gospel of service and charity. A study conducted by Gallup for Independent Sector reveals that America's religious institutions do as they say. Churches and other religious bodies are the major supporters of voluntary services for neighborhoods and communities. Members of a church or synagogue, we discovered in a Gallup Poll, tend to be much more involved in charitable activity, particularly through organized groups, than non-members. Almost half of the church members did unpaid volunteer work in a given year, compared to only a third of non-members. Nine in 10 (92%) gave money to a charity, compared to only seven in ten (71%) of non-members. Eight in ten members (78%) gave goods, clothing or other property to a charitable organization, compared to two-thirds (66%) of non-members.

Religion would appear to have an early impact upon volunteerism and charitable giving, according to the findings of another survey conducted by Gallup for the Independent Sector. Among the 76% of teens who reported that they were members of religious institutions, 62% were also volunteers, and 56% were charitable contributors.(5) By contrast, among those who reported no religious affiliation, far fewer were either volunteers (44%) or contributors (25%).

Not fewer than 74% of U.S. adults say religion in their homes has strengthened family relationships a great deal or somewhat. In addition, 82% say that religion was very important or fairly important in their homes when they were growing up. Those who say religion was important in their homes when they were growing up are far more likely than are those

who say it was not important to indicate that it is currently strengthening family relationships “a great deal” in their homes.

Interestingly, “moral and spiritual values based on the Bible” far outranked “family counseling,” “parent training classes” and “government laws and policies” as the main factor in strengthening the family, and was only superseded by “family ties, loyalty, and traditions.”

Eight in ten Americans report that their religious beliefs help them to respect and assist other people, while 83% say they lead them to respect people of other religions. Almost as many claim that their religious beliefs and values help them to respect themselves. In another study we determined that the closer people feel to God, the better they feel about themselves and other people.

The survey also shows 63% stating that their beliefs keep them from doing things they know they shouldn’t do. Only four percent say their beliefs have little or no effect on their lives. Still another survey shows that Americans who say religion is the most important influence in their lives, and those who receive a great deal of comfort from their beliefs, are far more likely than their counterparts to feel close to their families, to find their jobs fulfilling, and to be excited about the future.

Trends In Last 60 Years

The major perceivable swings in the religious life of the nation over the last six decades — the period charted by modem scientific surveys of the population — were a post-World War II surge of interest in religion characterized by increased church membership and attendance, an increase in Bible reading, and giving to churches, and extensive church building. Religious leaders such as Billy Graham, Norman Vincent Peale, and Fulton J. Sheen had wide followings during this period. This surge lasted until the late 1950s or early 1960s, when there was a decline in religious interest and involvement. Today, there appears to be a “bottoming out” in certain indicators, if not a reversal of some of the declines.

Organized religion in America is regaining its strength, according to the latest Princeton Religion Research Center Index. Modern American religious belief and practice attained its peak during the 1950s, before the social upheavals of the 1960s and 1970s took their toll on most institutions, including religion.

Despite these ebbs and flows, one of the most remarkable aspects of America’s faith is its durability. In the face of all of the dramatic social changes of the past half century — depression, war, the civil rights movement, social unrest, technological change — the religious beliefs and practices of Americans today look very much like those of the 1930s and 1940s. The percent of the populace who are active church members today closely matches the figures recorded in the 1930s. (One must note, of course, that for certain churches and denominations, these figures are not going in the same direction.) This applies to church attendance as well as to basic religious beliefs. Despite this consistent orthodoxy, Americans remain highly independent in their religious lives and independent of their religious institutions.

The religious liberty most Americans cherish and celebrate has enabled religion to flourish in many forms, and to become a profound shaper of the American character. Religious liberty has contributed vitality and vigor to the American outlook — an exuberance, a feeling that anything is possible — and often, the courage to bring about difficult but needed change in society.

Superficial ... or Transforming?

The record of organized religion is impressive. But in trying to assess the impact of religion in America, it is necessary to examine religion on two levels: surface religion (such as being religious for social reasons) versus deep transforming faith (perhaps best measured by the way faith is lived out in service to others).

There is no gainsaying the fact that organized religion remains strong in our nation or the fact that religion has shaped America in distinctly positive terms. Yet when we use measurements to probe the depth of our religious conviction, we become less impressed with the depth of our faith, at least in terms of traditional religion. We believe in God, but this God is often only an affirming one, not a demanding one; He does not command our total allegiance. We pray but often in a desultory fashion, with the emphasis on asking, or petition, not on thanksgiving, adoration, intercession, or forgiveness. We revere the Bible, but many of us rarely read it. The proof is the sorry state of biblical knowledge among Americans — we are truly “biblical illiterates.”

Religious ignorance extends to a lack of awareness and understanding of one’s own religious traditions and of the central doctrines of one’s faith. The result is that large numbers of Americans are unrooted in their faith and therefore, in the view of some, easy prey for movements of a far-ranging and bizarre

nature. We pick and choose those beliefs and practices that are most comfortable and least demanding. Canadian sociologist Reginald Bibby calls this "religion a la carte."

We want the fruits of faith, but less its obligations. Of 19 social values, "following God's will" is far down the list among the public's choices as the "most important," behind happiness and satisfaction, a sense of accomplishment and five other values. Of eight important traits, teenagers rate "religious faith" as least important, behind patience, hard work, and five other traits.

Church involvement alone does not seem to make a great deal of difference in the way we live our lives. It is at the level of deep religious commitment where we find extraordinary differences — in outlook, in charitable activity, in happiness, and in other ways. The highly committed segment of the populace — the "hidden saints," if you will — comprise a small percentage of the population, but their influence is far out of proportion to their numbers. In my book *The Saints Among Us* (written with Tim Jones), we report that only 13% of Americans can be said to have a deep integrated and lived-out faith — as measured by a 12-item scale.

Any such survey effort is bound to be imperfect — given the complexity and subtlety of religious feelings. Ours did, nonetheless, help identify people who truly live what they profess religiously. They may not be canonized or officially recognized, but they find deep meaning in prayer. They gain personal strength from their religious convictions. And they demonstrate more than mere religious sentiment. They often spend significant time helping people burdened with physical and emotional needs. They are less likely to be intolerant of other faiths, and more giving, more forgiving. They appear to have bucked the trend of many in society toward narcissism and privatism.

Three "Gaps"

The religious condition of Americans today can perhaps be best described in terms of gaps. First, there is an ethics gap — the difference between the way we think of ourselves and the way we actually are. While religion is highly popular in this country, survey evidence suggests that it does not change people's lives to the degree one would expect from the level of professed faith. Perhaps such a gap must always exist. There is also a knowledge gap — the gap between Americans' stated faith and their lack of the most basic knowledge about that faith.

Finally, there is a gap, a growing one, between believers and belongers — a decoupling of belief and practice, if you will. Millions of Christians are believers, many devout, but they do not participate in the congregational lives of their denominations. Americans increasingly view their faith as a matter between them and God, to be aided, but not necessarily influenced, by religious institutions.

The decoupling of faith and church stems in considerable measure from what has been called privatism, or "radical individualism," dramatically represented in a related series of beliefs. The vast majority of Americans believe that it is possible to be a good Christian or Jew without going to church or synagogue. They also believe that people should arrive at their religious beliefs independently of any church or synagogue. Lastly, a majority agree that it does not make any difference which church a person attends because one is as good as another.

Role of Surveys

With the advent of scientific surveys in the mid-1930s, observers of the religious scene gained greater confidence in drawing conclusions about the dynamics of religion in society. Such surveys have added a new dimension to the history of what average citizens believe and think. Yet probably no more difficult task faces the survey researcher than attempting to measure the religious mood. There is much about religion that defies statistical description: questions can be blunt instruments while religious beliefs are varied and subtle and do not yield easily to categorization. Complicating the effort to assess the spiritual climate through survey research is the difficulty of examining the findings on the basis of denominations and other religious groups — for example, fundamentalists, evangelicals and charismatics. The terms are in flux, blurred and overlapping.

Nonetheless, surveys serve as an important reality check, by going to the people themselves, thus bringing the nation's elites into touch with mainstream America. Surveys are valuable as a way of obtaining factual information not otherwise available — for example, on church attendance and membership. Data collected by census means through individual churches is often incomplete and unreliable, due to differing classifications of members and collection methods. The Gallup Poll has devoted considerable time and money to reduce to a minimum the tendency of respondents to give the socially acceptable answer.

I expect the importance of religion to grow in the decades ahead, as religion is increasingly shaped from the people in the pews rather than by the church hierarchy. While scientific probing of the

religious scene through surveys is beginning to catch up with survey research in other areas of life, I see an urgent need for more penetrating explorations into the religious life. We know a great deal about the breadth of religion in America, but not about the depth. Certainly one of the new frontiers of survey research is the "inner life."

The Future

Organized religion plays a large, pivotal role in American society. What is much less clear — and far more difficult to predict — is the direction in terms of the depth of faith. It is at a level of deep commitment that we are most likely to find lives changed, and social outreach empowered. Will the nation's faith communities challenge as well as comfort people? Will they be able to raise the level of religious literacy? These are the questions that need to be addressed by the clergy and religious educators of all faiths. The threat to the traditional church is that an uninformed faith that comforts only can lead to a free-floating kind of spirituality, which could go in any direction.

There is an exciting development in this nation (Princeton sociology Professor Robert Wuthnow calls it a "quiet revolution") that merits close attention — The proliferation of small groups of many kinds that meet regularly for caring and sharing. A 1991 study conducted by The George H. Gallup International Institute for the Lilly Endowment revealed that 40% of Americans are so engaged, with another seven percent interested in joining such groups, and still another 15% who had been members of such groups in the past. Sixty percent of these groups were related to a church or other faith community.

Wuthnow, the director of this landmark study, notes in his book, *Sharing the Journey*, that a number of these groups tend to cultivate an "anything goes" spirituality. There are, however, other groups, often related to a faith community, that challenge, as well as comfort, participants; that help people in their faith journey; and that encourage them to be open and honest with each other. Small groups can serve as both a support for persons who find the church setting too impersonal, as well as an entrance to the larger community.

The growth of these groups, involving close to half the populace, and the intense searching for spiritual moorings suggest that a widespread healing process may be underway in our society. Because most Americans believe in a personal, approachable God (94% believe in God or a universal spirit, and 84% in a personal God who is reached by prayer), we are predisposed to reach out in this direction for guidance.

When functioning at a deep spiritual level, small groups can be the vehicle for changing church life from the merely functional to the transformational. They can help meet two of the great desires of the heart of Americans, particularly at this point in time: the desire to find deeper meaning in our world, and the desire to build deeper, more trusting relationships with other people in our impersonal and fragmented society. If these desires are met, the vitality of our churches could well be the surprise of the next century. ■

Endnotes

(1)Survey conducted for William Moss by the George H. Gallup Institute, September 1994.

(2)Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *The Churching of America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992; paper 1993).

(3)Survey by the Gallup Organization, 1986.

(4)Survey by the Gallup Organization, October 1989.

(5)Gallup Youth Survey, October 1990.

(6)Survey by the Gallup Organization, October 1986.

(7)Survey by the Gallup Organization, 1988.

(8)Gallup Youth Survey, March 1987.

(9)George Gallup, Jr. (with Tim Jones), *The Saints Among Us* (Richfield, CT: Morehouse Publishing, 1992).

(10)Robert Wuthrow, *Sharing the Journey: Support Groups and America's New Quest for Community* (New York: Free Press, 1994).

This article has been cleared for republication in English and in translation by USIS, including the Agency's homepage, and the press outside the United States.

SEPARATION AND INTERACTION:

RELIGION AND POLITICS IN THE UNITED STATES

An Interview with Kenneth D. Wald

In the course of the past three hundred years, the relationship between religion and politics in the United States has been one of frequent shifts in intensity and degree. Sometimes intersecting, sometimes clashing, sometimes operating on parallel tracks, the linkage has been one of the more fascinating aspects of American history and life. In the following conversation, Kenneth D. Wald, professor of political science at the University of Florida, Gainesville, author of a seminal book, Religion and Politics in the United States*, discusses this phenomenon. Dr. Wald spoke with* U.S. Society & Values *editors Michael J. Bandler and William Peters.*

Q: The constitutional prohibitions have been interpreted to raise a wall of separation between church and state. Does this preclude the involvement of religion and politics?

W: Not at all. The Constitution did clearly establish a secular state or a secular government, but in doing so there was no intent to prevent religion from having an influence in society broadly, and in politics specifically. There were religious ideas that had a strong influence on the Constitution itself, and the nature of the political system that was created. Religious values have been a very powerful influence for a variety of movements, including those to abolish slavery, and to promote civil rights. And religious institutions remain important places where people learn civic norms. So there is no attempt — and it really would have been impossible — to rule religion off the political agenda. All the Constitution attempted to do was to say that the state as a government does not take any particular position with regard to religious questions or religious issues.

Q: The Constitution's religious clauses of significance, you write in your book, address "freedom from" versus "freedom of".

W: Exactly. The interesting thing about the separation of church and state in the United States is that it really was inspired by two different political movements. The founders of the United States, particularly people like [James] Madison and [Thomas] Jefferson, were very much influenced by the thinking of the French Enlightenment, and they took the position that giving religion state power would produce bad government. The very hostilities the people might have toward other religions would become political hostilities, and the entire system would have trouble surviving.

On the other hand you had the other form, what I call Protestant separationism, which was supported by groups like Methodists and Baptists. They felt that to endow religion with state power would produce bad religion; it would give state sanctions to religions which might be in error, or would limit the religious freedom of other Americans. So there is a kind of two-way street operating in the Constitution — the sense that religion will do best and government will do best if they flourish independently of one another.

Some people, I think, assume that the Constitution takes a position that is anti-religious, and that's what separation of church and state means. I think quite the contrary. I think that the separation was designed to make religion stronger, provided it focused on an appropriate sphere.

Q: It seems almost as if religion is designed to make the political objective stronger as well.

W: Certainly there have been political thinkers who have taken the position that a strong religious sphere is important to the strength of a democratic government. Some people have said that churches are in a sense incubators of civic virtues. It's in churches and congregations that people learn habits of mind and dispositions that may contribute in a positive way to the maintenance of democracy.

Similarly, de Tocqueville argued that you couldn't understand anything about American society unless you first saw that very strong religious base which made a democratic system possible. It taught people to think about means and ends and the importance of taking a long range objective. So there certainly is a stream of thought which says that the founders did intend separation to build a strong religious sector, and that this would be good for the political system as well.

Q: When you refer to what was being taught in the churches, you are basically talking about values?

W: Yes. Churches are important to democracies in lots of different ways. On the one hand, churches are institutions where people learn skills and abilities that will enable them to participate effectively in democratic politics. It's been shown, I think very persuasively, that African Americans actually out-participate other Americans, given their level of socioeconomic standing, largely because the churches that they belong to are such powerful schools of political training. In those churches people learn how to give speeches, they learn how to run meetings, they learn how to organize campaigns. They learn a whole host of skills which translate very directly into the political process. So in a sense they are little schools of democratic practice. For many Americans who don't belong to any other organization that gives them these skills, the church is really essential in promoting a broad-based democratic participation.

Similarly, I think you can argue that in their Washington-based representation, churches often provide a voice for people who are otherwise without that voice. The American Catholic Bishops are an example, with their impressive presence in Washington, or the various groups located in the Methodist Building. Theirs are important voices that talk about the needs of the homeless, the needs of people who are defenseless. They simply give a voice to positions that may not be represented by the major interest groups. So I think in ways most intimate in the congregation and much more broadly in terms of a Washington presence, religious congregations do really enhance and bring additional vitality to the government.

Q: This is true, actually, in Jewish circles too. You have a strong representation of Jewish religious groups lobbying in Washington.

W: Yes. In fact, you can argue that the extension of the First Amendment, particularly the anti-establishment clause, has really come through minority religious groups that have lobbied for a broader sense of what government should not do to benefit a religion. Certainly Jewish groups have been at the forefront of almost all of these cases. The late Leo Pfeffer, who represented the American Jewish Committee, was the key litigator. But many of the really critical cases have been argued on behalf of groups like Jehovah's Witnesses, or Seventh Day Adventists, and most recently the Church of Santeria, all of whom have been key actors. Again, I think they expand the rights of all of us by taking these actions.

Q: You earlier referred to the religious roots of the Constitution. In your book, you talk about your theory of "inherent depravity" in connection with Puritan theology. As I understood it, this is basically the sense that man is inherently sinful or depraved, and you basically can't trust humankind. The extension of this is that you can't trust any one branch of government; you ought to have checks and balances. Is that correct?

W: Yes. One can even call it original sin if one wants. It is a powerful factor that was in the minds of almost everybody at the Constitutional Convention. Jefferson believed we should leave nothing to human virtue that can be provided for by a constitutional mechanism. The sense was that whether you embody government in a single individual like a monarch, or whether you embody it in an elected assembly like a congress, human nature is such that we will abuse the power that we are given, we will try to accumulate as much power as possible, and we will not always be sensitive to the needs of others, particularly those who are less powerful. So the solution to this in the eyes of the founders was not divine kingship which has the same problem, but the creation of a government with so many auxiliary protections for liberty that it becomes very difficult for anybody to abuse power.

The other assumption I find very important in the whole development of American constitutionalism is the idea of the covenant. Most Americans learn this from the Bible; they often learn it from the Mosaic Covenant in which God made certain commitments to the people of Israel if they would follow his laws as provided in the Ten Commandments; or in the covenants with Jesus. In these covenants, God makes an agreement, a contract as it were, with people, providing certain benefits in exchange for certain costs. If God is willing to be limited in this way, it's hard to support an argument for a divine monarch. That kind of thinking is also very important in the Constitution.

Q: Religion as it exists in the United States is not at all monolithic or homogeneous, among the different religions or even within the denominations of particular religions. What happens when these myriad views, credos, interests all converge on the political landscape? How is a cultural war avoided?

W: I think that one of the great good fortunes of American life is that we have such a highly diverse and differentiated religious community that in a sense, we are all members of minority religions. The single largest denomination in the United States is Roman Catholicism, and yet that takes in only about twenty five percent of the adult believers, based on most surveys. So in that sense, most of us live in places where there are lots of different religions. I think that has prevented the kind of — what game theorists would call — zero-sum situations, which you have in Northern Ireland, or Lebanon, or Bosnia, where you have a majority religion facing a minority religion.

Our diverse religious community, in a sense, has made all of us minority religions at some time or another, and on some issues. So groups often change position based on the issue according to their particular interest. Catholic Americans — the Catholic Church, for example — have been very strongly in the pro-life camp that has resisted liberalized abortion. On that issue they have been on very different ground than the American Jewish community, or some other liberal Protestants. Yet on other issues, they have been in the forefront of religious activism because they have a very diverse mandate. So Catholics will change sides; Jews will sometimes work with Evangelicals, sometimes not.

Q: In other words, politics does make strange bedfellows. You have ultra-Orthodox Jews and Evangelical Christians getting together on more conservative issues, for example.

W: Sure. People may think that they have very little in common, but when it comes to issues like school vouchers, or certain other aspects of the process, they find common ground. So in a sense, I think we have been lucky. We have not become like Northern Ireland because every issue isn't simply Catholic versus Protestant with one of the sides foreordained to win. In the American system there is so much difference among religions, so much variety, that it's probably preserved some balance, and prevented any one group from becoming dominant.

And the trend in American religion is toward ever more diversity. Since the immigration laws were changed in the sixties, the number of people who are adherents of what are called Eastern or Asian religions has increased significantly. And I think, in a sense, that's the future of American religion — more and more diversity, more and more variation, even within the same denomination.

Southern Baptists, for example, are probably in the process of splitting into two separate denominations. There are two different trends already. American Jews are divided into four or five different traditions or denominations, if you want to use that term. So the pattern, I think, is toward ever greater differentiation. Therefore, I think it's going to make it even less likely that any one faith is going to be dominant.

Q: There's a lot of talk about the success of religious interest groups in lobbying on issues. How are these activities different from those carried on by trade unionists or environmentalists or oil interests and so on?

W: I think, broadly speaking, there is a lot of similarity between the way religious interest groups lobby, and how economic interests or labor interests would lobby. There are differences, I think, as well. Religious interest groups, for example, seldom engage in direct campaign contributions in the manner that we associate with political action committees. But in other respects, religious interest groups will do what is called "grass roots" lobbying. They will encourage their members to communicate with public officials. They will host demonstrations and public information campaigns. They will occasionally secure professional lobbyists to represent their point of view. So in some senses they look a lot like some of the secular interest groups.

On the other hand, I think it's important to understand that sometimes the style of lobbying can be very different. Religious interest groups will often argue that they have a prophetic motivation; that is to say they try to bring the insights of their religious tradition to the attention of public officials. In so doing, they deal in a very different currency — spiritual as opposed to financial. Sometimes this means that they are less likely to win, but they focus on much broader concerns. So sometimes they are

very distinctive from the run of the mill.

On occasion, this can take the form of something that I think is very unpalatable. Religious interest groups may take the position that "if you fail to support me on this issue, you are somehow obstructing the will of God." They literally can, on occasion, associate a particular program with a divine mandate. Most religious traditions that I am familiar with would regard that as blasphemy because it, in a sense, connects a religious imperative or a divine mandate with a program of political action, and I would argue that's not what religion does; that's really perverting the goal of religion.

Q: Is that part of the source of the tension over the perceived activities of the radical right; a sense that they are going beyond what is traditionally appropriate in religious expression?

W: Well, I think that really goes back to the early eighties, when these groups first began to have a political presence in Washington. The groups that come to mind are the Moral Majority and the Religious Roundtable. These groups were charged in particular with this style of lobbying — with coming into legislators' offices and saying that God's will is that we pass a certain piece of legislation, a balanced budget amendment, or an anti-abortion amendment, or something of this nature. Basically, in so doing, they were tremendously ineffective because legislators — and the American public, frankly — don't like the notion that their sacred tradition is necessarily embodied in a particular political plan.

One of the things that encourages me is that those conservative religious groups have learned some lessons from their failures in the early nineteen eighties. If you compare an organization like Christian Coalition with Moral Majority, which in some ways was its spiritual predecessor, you see a much shrewder and more sensitive approach to religious lobbying. You see a tendency to argue not that this is God's will, but that this is our humble attempt to understand the insights of our tradition as it applies to this issue or policy. And there is much more talking about the religious freedom of students than talking about school prayer.

This is partly a strategic shift. It's clear that Ralph Reed, who runs Christian Coalition, is much shrewder politically than was Jerry Falwell, or many of the people who worked for Moral Majority. In part, though, I think it reflects a learning experience. People have been chastened by some of the feedback they've gotten from their own churches, and some of their own parishioners. They've come to understand that it's important to be modest in linking your policy preferences to your religious views.

There's a prayer that we recite in my congregation on Saturday mornings, for the United States, in which we ask God to give to legislators and public officials the insights of his *Torah*. It doesn't ask them to convert, it doesn't say that there are particular policies that are consistent with our tradition and others that aren't. It says there are insights in our tradition about what is just, what is fair, what is reasonable, that ought to be factored into the political process. I think that's the level at which most Americans are comfortable with religion in the political process.

Q: In fact, then, the success of this somewhat more sophisticated right is a reaffirmation of how Americans in the middle perceive this entire process?

W: Yes, I think that's absolutely right.

Q: I sense that there is a misperception outside the U.S. as to what the outcomes are here, when religious interests attempt to affect national interest politics or policies.

W: Yes, I think that's true. When I have lectured overseas, I have seen, really, two massive misperceptions about religion in American politics. One is the assumption that Americans are not religious, and that the Constitutional separation of church and state reflects hostility to religion. I have already indicated that I think that is not the case—that indeed, many people think it is the absence of a state sanction for religion that has enabled it to be so vigorous. Certainly religion is a more vigorous institution and a more vigorous factor in the United States than it is in almost any society where there has been state support for it. I think there are some interesting free market explanations for this. So that's one misperception that is very powerful. I think it's just belied by the facts.

The other major misperception is that there are some policy areas where religious interest groups totally dominate the process, and there is no example that we hear more often than the American Jewish community and Israel. I think it's interesting that on the one hand, this is probably a policy area

where the circumstances, more than any other policy area, do favor interest group impact. This is a policy area which is central to American Jews for a whole series of reasons. Many of them see their identity tied up in important ways with the existence of the State of Israel. It's critical in many cases to the survival and the security of Jews. And it's a policy area where most admit there really isn't any other interest group that's been involved until recently. So you would expect that if there is any policy area where a religious group should be powerful, it would be an area like the Middle East, and a community like the American Jews.

But in point of fact, the evidence suggests that while American Jews have been successful in some important respects, their success is largely because the policies they prefer are interpreted by the president to be in the American national interest. When American Jews have run up against the Administration, and this is true all the way back to the nineteen fifties, then they've had very little success. For example, they couldn't stop the sale of AWACS planes under the Reagan Administration. They couldn't persuade George Bush to unfreeze loan guarantees to the State of Israel. And I would suspect if Bill Clinton should decide that Israel is not being aggressive enough in pursuing a Middle East peace, the American Jewish community would be able to do very little to prevent him from trying to put more pressure on the State of Israel today. So, if the president is an ally, groups do succeed very well. If the president isn't an ally, then the Jewish community doesn't usually succeed in these things.

Q: Hand in hand with religious tolerance over the years, we've witnessed religious intolerance. On the social and political landscape, is this something that can be deterred or thwarted, and how?

W: Well, I think the evidence in America is that on the one hand, speaking at the mass level, there has actually been a growth in religious tolerance. Overt anti-Semitism and overt anti-Catholicism are now clearly phenomena of fringe movements. Americans have shown themselves, for example, much more willing to vote for candidates of minority religious traditions than was ever the case in the past. So in the one sense, I am heartened by the fact that there is less overt religious prejudice; it's less socially acceptable; and affiliation with a minority religion is less of a bar to success.

On the other hand, what worries me is that at the fringes there has been a growth in religiously inspired political violence. We have seen this, for example, in the extreme fringe wing of the anti-abortion movements, with the bombing of abortion clinics and the murder of people who work there. We've also seen it at the fringes in some of the militia movements, primarily in the western states, where the so-called Christian Identity movement has inspired certain murders and assassinations. So in the mainstream the news is good; at the fringe the news is worrisome.

The evidence suggests that the way to counter this sort of violence is, first of all, through aggressive law enforcement which is important — taking these threats seriously and dealing appropriately with them. The other prong, and what's probably more important, is that communities themselves have to speak up. There was a very heartening case in Billings, Montana, when there was some anti-Semitic vandalism. Members of the committee decided if vandals were targeting houses with menorahs [Jewish holiday candelabra] in the windows during Hanukkah season, everybody in Billings would put menorahs on their window sills. I think when the community makes it clear that it simply doesn't tolerate this kind of behavior, it sends a very powerful message.

Q: Granted that there is nothing new about the linkage between religion and politics in American life, are there any new wrinkles surfacing these days that could have an important impact one way or the other in the years ahead?

W: I think there are two really interesting changes that we've seen in the last ten or fifteen years. The first is the political emergence of Evangelical Christians. This is a community that may be as

much as 25 percent of the American public now, which didn't use to have much of an organized political voice. Since 1980, the story has been a much more dramatic, much more assertive political voice for Evangelicals. The results have not always been decorous, and there has certainly been some learning, but by and large, Evangelicals, who used to be politically marginal, have really come into their own.

The other transformation, I think, has been much quieter, but also interesting. It is the changing role of American Catholics. Catholics used to be politically involved, pretty much, only when direct Catholic interests were involved. Questions like public funding for parochial schools, or overt instances of anti-Catholicism used to be the issues that brought Catholics into the political realm.

Now, clearly, Catholics have taken their place on the center stage of American political life, and they've done so in interesting and not always consistent ways. Most of us think of the Catholic church as an opponent of abortion and a driving force of the pro-life movement, but at the same time, the Catholic church has been very active in speaking up on behalf of disadvantaged Americans. In part, this reflects the transition of the American church as it becomes more Hispanic and goes back to its working class roots. In part, I think it represents the impact of the whole series of reforms of Vatican II.

Q: In your book, you argue that ultimately the intertwining of religion and politics in the United States has been both beneficial and detrimental. Could you summarize your views?

W: I think any fair-minded person would have to say that religion, on occasion, has ennobled our politics, and caused us to act in the best way we possibly can. The civil rights movement of the nineteen fifties and sixties is perhaps the high water mark of religious involvement in a very constructive way in our political system.

On the other hand, any fair-minded person would also say that religion has fueled some of the excesses. It's as if religion sometimes licenses an extra savagery when people mix it with politics. There have been events that many of us would be ashamed about: The bombing of the abortion clinics, the violence among the militia movement, are two recent examples.

To my mind, the connection between religion and politics is good or bad depending on the way people bring their religious values into the political process. I think if they subscribe to the sort of triumphalist notion that they have all the answers, and all we need is to subordinate our political system to our clear religious traditions, then you're going to have problems.

I think our religious traditions are subtle; applying them to the political sphere requires some degree of modesty, some sense that we only dimly perceive the implications of our religious faith in the secular realm. When people approach it with modesty, and tolerance, and understand that when you speak in the public square, you need to speak a public language, then I think that kind of religion and that kind of religious impulse is very constructive.

I've learned a lot from people with whom I disagree politically, when they've explained to me the religious basis of their policy preferences. When people shout at me, when people tell me that their way is the only way, that God has spoken clearly on policy questions, then I don't pay much attention, and I don't think our political life is in any way ennobled. To my mind, it all depends on the attitude with which one finds a link between the religious and the secular.

Q: And the presentation.

W: Very much so. ■

BIBLIOGRAPHY

IF YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT. . .

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ahlstrom, Sydney E. A RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972.

Albanese, Catherine L. AMERICA: RELIGIONS AND RELIGION. 2d ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1992.

Ali, M.M. MUSLIMS IN AMERICA: THE NATION'S FASTEST GROWING RELIGION (Washington Report on Middle East Affairs, vol. 15, no. 1, May-June 1996, pp. 13, 107.

Berger, David et al. WHAT DO AMERICAN JEWS BELIEVE? A SYMPOSIUM (Commentary, vol. 102, no. 2, August 1996, pp. 18-96)
Continues a discussion begun thirty years ago in a symposium entitled "The State of Jewish Belief."

Bowman, Karlyn H. and Ladd, Everett C., eds. PUBLIC OPINION AND DEMOGRAPHIC REPORT: FAITH IN AMERICA (American Enterprise, vol. 5, no. 5, September-October 1994, pp. 90-99)

Carter, Stephen L. THE CULTURE OF DISBELIEF: HOW AMERICAN LAW AND POLITICS TRIVIALIZES RELIGIOUS DEVOTION. New York: Doubleday, 1994.

Chambers, Veronica and Higgins, Chester, Jr. SAY AMEN, INDEED. (American Way, vol. 30, no. 4, February 15, 1997, pp. 38-42, 102-105)

Cooper, Mary C. MUSLIMS IN AMERICA (CQ Researcher, vol. 3, no. 16, April 30, 1993, pp. 361-384)

Eastland, Terry, ed. RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN THE SUPREME COURT: THE CASES THAT DEFINE THE DEBATE OVER CHURCH AND STATE. Washington: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1993.

Eck, Diana L. NEIGHBORING FAITHS: HOW WILL AMERICANS COPE WITH INCREASING RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY? (Harvard Magazine, vol. 99, no. 1, September-October 1996, pp. 38-44)
http://www.harvard-magazine.com/so96/faith.html

Eck, Diana L. ON COMMON GROUND: WORLD RELIGIONS IN AMERICA. CD-ROM. New York: Columbia University Press, April 1997.
Contains three general sections: Exploring the Religious Landscape, Discovering American Religions, and Encountering Religious Diversity.

Flowers, Ronald B. THAT GODLESS COURT? SUPREME COURT DECISIONS ON CHURCH-STATE RELATIONSHIPS. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994.

Gaustad, Edwin Scott. A RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF AMERICA. 2d ed. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1990.
Haddad, Yvonne Yazbeck and Smith, Jane Idleman, eds. MUSLIM COMMUNITIES IN NORTH AMERICA. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994.

Haddad, Yvonne Yazbeck and Zaidan, Wadi, eds. CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM ENCOUNTERS. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1995.

Haddad, Yvonne Yazbeck, ed. THE MUSLIMS OF AMERICA. New York:
Oxford University Press, 1993.

Hewitt, Hugh. SEARCHING FOR GOD IN AMERICA. Dallas: Word Publishing, 1996.
The companion volume to a public television series of the same name.

Hudson, Winthrop S. and Corrigan, John. RELIGION IN AMERICA. 5th ed. New York: Prentice-Hall, 1992.

Jelen, Ted G. and Wilcox, Clyde. PUBLIC ATTITUDES TOWARD CHURCH AND STATE. Armonk, NY: Sharpe, 1995.

Jost, Kenneth. RELIGION AND POLITICS. (CQ Researcher, vol. 4, no. 38, October 14, 1994, pp. 889-912)

Johnson, Paul. GOD AND THE AMERICANS (Commentary, vol. 99, no. 1, January 1995, pp. 25-45)

Kosmin, Barry A. and Lachman, Seymour, P. ONE NATION UNDER GOD: RELIGION IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN SOCIETY. New York: Harmony Books, 1993.

Koszegi, Michael A. and Melton, J. Gordon. ISLAM IN NORTH AMERICA: A SOURCEBOOK. New York: Garland, 1992.

Lippy, Charles H. and Williams, Peter W., eds. ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE AMERICAN RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE: STUDIES OF TRADITIONS AND MOVEMENTS. New York: Scribner's, 1988. 3 vols.

Marsden, George M. RELIGION AND AMERICAN CULTURE. San Diego: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1990.

Martin, William. WITH GOD ON OUR SIDE: THE RISE OF THE RELIGIOUS RIGHT IN AMERICA. New York: Broadway Books, 1996.
The companion volume to a public television series with the same title.

Marty, Martin. MODERN AMERICAN RELIGION. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970-1996. 3 vols.
This planned four-volume survey presently includes THE IRONY OF IT ALL, 1893-1919; THE NOISE OF CONFLICT, 1919-1941; and UNDER GOD INDIVISIBLE, 1941-1960.

Marty, Martin. PILGRIMS IN THEIR OWN LAND: FIVE HUNDRED YEARS OF RELIGION IN AMERICA. New York: Viking Penguin, 1985.

Masci, David. CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE U.S.: CAN IT OVERCOME THE CHALLENGES AHEAD? (CQ Researcher, vol. 5, no. 33, pp. 779-799)

Melton, J. Gordon, ed. THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF AMERICAN RELIGIONS. 5th ed. Detroit: Gale Research, 1996.

Moen, Matthew C. THE EVOLVING POLITICS OF THE CHRISTIAN RIGHT (PS, Political Science and Politics, vol. 29, no. 3, September 1996, pp. 461-464)

Moen, Matthew J. THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE CHRISTIAN RIGHT. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1992.

Mooney, Carolyn J. AMERICA'S MANY RELIGIONS: A HARVARD SCHOLAR MAPS THE COUNTRY'S CHANGING RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE (Chronicle of Higher Education, June 9, 1995, p. A10+)

Neuhaus, Richard John THE NAKED PUBLIC SQUARE: RELIGION AND DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986.

Neuhaus, Richard John. THE PUBLIC SQUARE: A CONTINUING SURVEY OF RELIGION AND PUBLIC LIFE (First Things, no. 23, May 1992, pp. 78-81)

Noll, Mark A., ed. RELIGION AND AMERICAN POLITICS: FROM THE COLONIAL PERIOD TO THE 1980s. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.

Queen, Edward L. et al. THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF AMERICAN RELIGIOUS HISTORY. New York: Facts on File, 1996. 2 vols.

Thiemann, Ronald F. RELIGION IN PUBLIC LIFE: A DILEMMA FOR DEMOCRACY. Washington: Georgetown University Press, 1996.

Utter, Glenn H. and Storey, John W. THE RELIGIOUS RIGHT: A REFERENCE HANDBOOK. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1995.

Wald, Kenneth D. RELIGION AND POLITICS IN THE UNITED STATES. 3d ed. Washington: CQ Press, 1997.

Weber, Paul J. and Jones, W. Landis. U.S. RELIGIOUS INTEREST GROUPS: INSTITUTIONAL PROFILES. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994.

Wilcox, Clyde. GOD'S WARRIORS: THE CHRISTIAN RIGHT IN THE TWENTIETH-CENTURY. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991.

Wind, James P. and Lewis, James W., eds. AMERICAN CONGREGATIONS. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994. 2 vols.
Portraits of twelve religious communities comprise volume 1; volume 2 contains new perspectives in the study of congregations.

SELECTED INTERNET SITES

AMERICAN STUDIES WEB: PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION
Georgetown University's detailed meta-index of useful links for American Studies students.
http://www.georgetown.edu/crossroads/asw/philos.html

APS RESEARCH GUIDE TO RESOURCES FOR THEOLOGICAL AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES
A highly-rated list of academic sites, manuscripts, and textual resources.
http://www.utoronto.ca/stmikes/theobook.htm

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF AMERICAN RELIGION
Located at Princeton University, the Center "has the basic goal of furthering scholarship on religion in North America. . . . [and] supports the cross-disciplinary approaches that are required to deal with [its] social, historical, and cultural complexity. . . ."
http://www.princeton.edu/~nadelman/csar/csar.html

COMPARATIVE RELIGION: A DIRECTORY OF INTERNET RESOURCES FOR THE ACADEMIC STUDY OF RELIGION
This comprehensive list of web sites on religion includes sources of information on religious tolerance as well as links to various religions.
http://weber.u.washington.edu/~madin/

FACETS OF RELIGION — WWW VIRTUAL LIBRARY
Contains links to hundreds of religious resources and the major texts of each faith. Compiled by Armin Muller, a German scientist with an interest in religion.
http://www.christusrex.org/www1/religion/religion.html

FIRST AMENDMENT CYBER-TRIBUNE — FACT
Edited by Charles Levendosky of the Casper (WY) Star-Tribune, this online newspaper focuses on the liberties guaranteed by the First Amendment. The Religious Liberty page includes links to relevant documents and court decisions. Also provides links to other sites on these issues.
http://w3.trib.com/FACT/index.html

FREEDOM FORUM — FIRST AMENDMENT CENTER AT VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY
A good site for basic information on First Amendment issues. The Religion page contains bibliographies and court rulings on the separation of church and state, constitutional protections and other FAQs.
http://www.vanderbilt.edu/VIPPS/www_fac_org.html

ICLNET: INSTITUTE FOR CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP
Prepared by Gary Bogart and John Brubaker, this site contains guides to Early Church Documents, Christian Resources, Literature, Software, and Organizations. Links to news groups, FTP sites, e-newsletters, journals, and bulletin board systems are also provided.
http://www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/

INTERFAITH ALLIANCE
This national network of citizens concerned about religious political extremists promotes "the positive role of religion as a healing and constructive force in public life." Links to similarly-minded organizations are given.
http://www.intr.net/tialliance/

ISLAMIC TEXTS AND RESOURCES METAPAGE
Compiled by the Muslim Students Association at SUNY Buffalo, this gopher site includes the Qur'an in Arabic, English and other translations, Hadith collections, and information on Islamic philosophy and religion.
http://wings.buffalo.edu/sa/muslim/isl/isl.html

ISLAMIC RESOURCES SERVER
Provides information about "Islamic beliefs, resources, community events, businesses, and organization." Also includes announcements of conferences, other guides to Islam on the Internet and computing resources.
http://sparc.latif.com/

JUDAISM AND JEWISH RESOURCES
From archaeology to Yiddish, this comprehensive site includes information about museums, exhibitions, Jewish studies, archives, and organizations.
http://shamash.nysernet.org/trb/judaism.html

PLURALISM PROJECT
Developed by Diana L. Eck at Harvard University to "study and document the growing religious diversity of the United States, with a special view to its new immigrant communities," this project is studying the radical changes that have taken place in the American religious landscape over the last thirty years.
http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~pluralsm/

RELIGION AND POLITICS
This is the home page for the subsection of the American Political Science Association dealing with issues of church and state, religion and politics, morality and social justice, political behavior and public policy.
http://www.gac.edu/Academics/
poli-sci/relpol/r&p.html

RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY RESOURCES ON THE INTERNET
Maintained by David Suiter, Librarian, and created by Sara A. Memmott, former Bibliographer, at Boston University, this very rich site is divided into General Religion Resources, Asian Religions, Christianity, Islam, and Judaism sections. Guides to print resources on these topics are included in addition to major links.
http://web.bu.edu/STH/Library/contents.html

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM
Sponsored by the Christian Science Committee on Publication, this site is dedicated to looking at religious freedom in the United States and in other countries. Provides text of the Religious Freedom Reformation Act. The map of religious freedom worldwide provides interesting information, but reflects the judgment of this organization.
http://www.religious-freedom.org/welcome.html

YAHOO! — Society and Culture: Religion
This comprehensive list of religious sites is updated daily. It provides numerous links to more than fifty religions and related topics, providing a sense of the very broad landscape of the "major" and "minor" religions in the United States.
http://www.yahoo.com/Society_and_Culture
/Religion/

U.S. SOCIETY & VALUES
VOLUME 1 ELECTRONIC JOURNALS OF THE U.S. INFORMATION AGENCY NUMBER 20