



FREEDOM OF FAITH



Religious Minorities in the United States



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Front Cover: More than 110,000 Mennonites in the United States are part of the Anabaptist movement of Christianity, whose followers first came to the United States from Europe in the 17th century. The Howard family of Sparta, Tennessee, sings hymns at home. © AP Images/ *The Tennessean*, John Partipilo

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About This Issue

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof...”



American spiritual leaders from many faiths come together on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., in a ceremony of ecumenical peace.

© AP Images/Marcy Nighswander

no matter how small, worship with the knowledge that the right to practice a religion of one's choosing is protected by the First Amendment and woven into the fabric of American society. And those members of society who choose not to practice a religion at all are equally protected.

But sometimes in a diverse country like the United States, individuals and institutions will clash, and the boundaries of religious freedom may need to be redefined. When that happens, Americans turn to the court system and seek redress. Then the courts, even the Supreme Court, will perform their constitutional duties to decide how fundamental

The first United States Congress added the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution as part of the Bill of Rights in 1791, when the memory of the War for Independence was still fresh. But the concept of religious freedom is even older than the nation itself.

More than a century before, in 1657, citizens of Flushing, New Amsterdam, a Dutch colony, protested the persecution of Quakers by their governor, who had banned all religions save his own. They laid their objections to paper in a document called the Flushing Remonstrance. Some were jailed for their protest, and years passed before freedom of faith came to their town.

Today in Flushing, New York, more than 200 places of worship flourish within a few square kilometers, and those brave citizens of the 17th-century colony are remembered as some of the earliest Americans to stand firm for the religious freedom enjoyed by more than 300 million 21st-century Americans.

Members of churches, temples, synagogues, mosques, and thousands of other places of prayer across the country,

principles like religious freedom are best upheld in a nation where the population has multiplied by 100 since the First Amendment was written.

These court rulings influence everyday activities in schools, hospitals, workplaces, and other public places. Respect and tolerance for many faiths is tested, as imperfect human beings attempt to adhere to what is often seen in the United States as an inviolate principle.

Today, this nation pulses with the vitality of a new wave of immigration and a unique cultural chemistry. In these times, the principle of religious liberty will likely face new tests, but the noted experts who discuss the issues on these pages express confidence that religious minorities in the 21st century and beyond will still find protection in the 18th-century commitment to the principle of freedom of faith.

— *The Editors*



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Keeping the Promise of Religious Freedom

Diana L. Eck



This temple opened near Hampton, Minnesota, in 2007 to serve the growing number of Buddhists in the area. A four-day consecration ceremony attracted Buddhists from around the world.

© AP Images/Jim Mone

Two of the bedrock principles of the United States are religious liberty and the separation of church and state. At the time the Republic was founded more than two centuries ago, the overwhelming majority of Americans were Christians. Since that time, however, as the author of this article documents in her book, A New Religious America, the United States has become the world's most religiously diverse society, especially during the last several decades.

Diana L. Eck is professor of comparative religion and Indian studies on the faculty of arts and sciences and a member of the faculty of divinity at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

The huge white dome of a mosque with its minarets rises from the cornfields just outside Toledo, Ohio. You can see it as you drive by on the interstate

highway. A great Hindu temple with elephants carved in relief at the doorway stands on a hillside in the western suburbs of Nashville, Tennessee. A Cambodian Buddhist temple and monastery with a hint of a Southeast Asian roofline is set in the farmlands south of Minneapolis, Minnesota.

The religious landscape of America has changed radically in the past 40 years, a change gradual and colossal at the same time. It began with the “new immigration,” spurred by the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act, as people from all over the world came to the United States and became citizens. With them have come the religious traditions of the world — Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Sikh, Zoroastrian, African, and Afro-Caribbean. The people of these faiths have moved into American neighborhoods, tentatively at first, their altars and prayer



A roadside sign in the small city of Elko, Nevada, directs visitors to the many churches serving the community of fewer than 20,000.

© Adam Tanner/The Image Works

Piscataway of Maryland to the Blackfeet of Montana. The people who came across the Atlantic from Europe also had diverse religious traditions — Spanish and French Catholics, British Anglicans and Quakers, Jews and Dutch Reform Christians — a diversity that has continued to broaden over the centuries. Many of the Africans brought to these shores with the slave trade were Muslims. The Chinese and Japanese who came to seek their fortune in the mines and fields of the West brought a mixture

rooms in storefronts and office buildings, and basements and garages, nearly invisible to the rest of us. But since the 1990s, their presence has become evident. Not all Americans have seen the Toledo mosque or the Nashville temple, but they will see places like them in their own communities. They are the architectural signs of a new religious structure in the United States.

Americans know, for example, that many internists, surgeons, and nurses are of Indian origin, but have not stopped to consider that these medical professionals have a religious life, that they might pause in the morning for prayer at an altar in their homes, that they might bring fruits and flowers to the local Shiva-Vishnu temple, and be part of a diverse Hindu population of more than 1 million. We are well aware of Latino immigration from Mexico and Central America and of the large Spanish-speaking population of our cities, and yet we may not recognize what a profound impact this is having on American Christianity, both Catholic and Protestant, from the singing of hymns to festivals.

A VAST PLURALISM

Historians say that the United States has always been a land of many religions. A vast, textured pluralism was present among the native peoples — even before the European settlers came to these shores. The wide diversity of native religious practices continues today, from the

of Buddhist, Taoist, and Confucian traditions. Eastern European Jews and Irish and Italian Catholics also arrived in great numbers in the 19th century. Both Christian and Muslim immigrants came from the Middle East. Punjabis from northwest India came in the first decade of the 20th century. Most of them were Sikhs who settled in California, built America's first *gurdwaras* [Sikh places of worship], and intermarried with Mexican women, creating a rich Sikh-Spanish subculture. The stories of all these peoples are an important part of America's immigration history.

The immigrants of the last several decades, however, have expanded the diversity of our religious life exponentially. Buddhists have come from Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, China, and Korea; Hindus from India, East Africa, and Trinidad; Muslims from Indonesia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, the Middle East, and Nigeria; Sikhs and Jains from India; and Zoroastrians from both India and Iran. Immigrants from Haiti and Cuba have brought Afro-Caribbean traditions, blending both African and Catholic symbols and images. New Jewish immigrants have come from Russia and the Ukraine, and the internal diversity of American Judaism is greater than ever before. The face of American Christianity has also changed with large Latino, Filipino, and Vietnamese Catholic communities; Chinese, Haitian, and Brazilian Pentecostal communities; Korean Presbyterians, Indian Mar Thomas, and Egyptian Copts. In every city in the land, church

signboards display the meeting times of Korean or Latino congregations that nest within the walls of old urban Protestant and Catholic churches.

In the past several decades, massive movements of people both as migrants and refugees have reshaped global demographics. Immigrants around the world numbered more than 190 million in 2005, according to the International Organization for Migration, with about 45 million in North America. The dynamic global image of our times is not the so-called clash of civilizations but the “marbling” of civilizations and peoples. Just as the end of the Cold War brought about a new geopolitical situation, the global movements of people have brought about a new georeligious reality. Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims are now part of the religious landscape of Britain; mosques are a fixture in Paris and Lyons, Buddhist temples in Toronto, and Sikh *gurdwaras* in Vancouver. But nowhere, even in today’s world of mass migrations, is the sheer range of religious faith as wide as it is in the United States. This is an astonishing new reality. We have never been here before.

A CHALLENGE OF COMMUNITY

The new era of immigration is different from previous eras in magnitude, complexity, and in its very dynamics. Many of the migrants who come to the United States today maintain strong ties with their homelands, linked by travel, e-mail, cell phones, and cable television news. They manage to live both here and there. What will the idea and vision of America become as citizens, new and old, embrace all this diversity? Whom do we mean when we invoke the first words of our Constitution, “We, the people of the United States of America”? Who is this “we”? This is a challenge of citizenship, to be sure, for it has to do with the imagined community of which we consider ourselves a part. It is also a challenge of faith, for people of every religious tradition live today with communities of faith other than their own, around the world and across the street.

When our children are best friends with Muslim classmates, when a Hindu is running for a seat on the

school committee, all of us have a new vested interest in our neighbors, both as citizens and as people of faith.

As the new century unfolds, Americans are challenged to make good on the promise of religious freedom so basic to the very idea and image of the United States. Religious freedom has always given rise to religious diversity, and never has our diversity been more dramatic than it is today. This will require us to reclaim the deepest meaning of the very principles we cherish and to create a truly pluralist U.S. society in which this great diversity is not simply tolerated but becomes the very source of our strength. To do this, we will all need to know more than we do about one another and to listen for the ways in which new Americans articulate the “we” and contribute to the sound and spirit of America.

The framers of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights could not possibly have envisioned the scope of religious diversity in the United States at the beginning of the 21st century. But the principles they articulated

in those documents — the “nonestablishment” of religion and the “free exercise” of religion — have provided a sturdy rudder through the past two centuries as our religious diversity has expanded. The United States is beginning to claim and affirm what the framers of the Constitution did not imagine but equipped the nation to embrace.

Religion is never a finished product, packaged, delivered, and passed intact from generation to generation. Some in every religious

tradition think of their religion that way, insisting it is all contained in their sacred texts, doctrines, and rituals. But even a modest journey through history proves them wrong. Our religious traditions are dynamic not static, changing not fixed, more like rivers than monuments. The United States today is an exciting place to study the dynamic history of living faiths, as Buddhism becomes a distinctively American religion and as Christians and Jews encounter Buddhists and articulate their faith anew because of that encounter or perhaps come to understand themselves as part of both traditions. Humanists, secularists, and even atheists have to rethink their worldviews in the context of a more complex religious reality. With multitheistic Hindus and nontheistic

Many of the migrants who come to the United States today maintain strong ties with their homelands, linked by travel, e-mail, cell phones, and cable television news. They manage to live both here and there.



A diverse crowd of Hindus attends the opening of a temple in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Buddhists in the picture, atheists may have to be more specific about what kind of “god” they do not believe in.

Just as our religious traditions are dynamic, so is the very idea of the United States. The motto of the Republic, *E pluribus unum*, “From many, one,” is not

an accomplished fact but an ideal that Americans must constantly reclaim. The story of America’s many peoples and the creation of one nation is an unfinished story in which ideals are continually brought into being. Our *pluribus* is more striking than ever — our races and faces, our jazz and *qawwali* music, our Haitian drums and Bengali *tablas*, our hip-hop and *bhangra* dances, our mariachis and *gamelans*, our Islamic minarets and Hindu temple towers, our Mormon temple spires and golden *gurdwara* domes. Amid this plurality, the expression of our *unum*, our oneness, will require many new voices, each contributing in its own way.

Envisioning the new America in the 21st century requires an imaginative leap. It means seeing the religious landscape of United States, from sea to shining sea, in all its beautiful complexity. ■

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Religious Diversity in Early America

Catherine L. Albanese



© Francis G. Mayer/Corbis

The 19th-century painting *Penn's Treaty With the Indians* depicts the founder of the Pennsylvania colony, Quaker William Penn, establishing friendly relations with Native American tribes in 1682. The painting is by artist Edward Hicks, who was born to an Episcopalian family but converted to the Quaker faith.

The colonial period in U.S. history was marked by religious pluralism, as Native Americans, African slaves, and European settlers practiced their own diverse forms of religion. In this article, the author traces the roots and the establishment of religious tolerance in colonial times.

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Three myths prevail in the common perception of American religious history:

- Myth One: The religious story is only about Europeans.
- Myth Two: The Protestant Christianity of European immigrants and settlers was monolithic in the nation's earliest decades.
- Myth Three: Religious pluralism is a late-breaking, 20th-century development.

There are several problems with this view of American religious history. First, it ignores the place of indigenous peoples — American Indians — who



Photo of painting by Douglas Volk/Library of Congress

The Franciscan priest Father Hennepin is depicted in this painting with the American Indians who were his guides and companions as he explored the territories of the Upper Midwest in the late 17th century. Other priests of the Franciscan order had begun to build missions among the native tribes 100 years earlier.

very recently — it is no wonder that the actual diversity in early America was ignored.

TRADITIONS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND AFRICAN AMERICANS

For centuries, in separate nations, indigenous peoples had developed their distinctive American cultures. Each Indian nation had its own belief systems, codes of conduct, and ceremonial practices that were, and today remain, distinct from one another. (Material here and in much of what follows is summarized from Catherine L. Albanese, *America: Religions and Religion*, 4th ed., [Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing, 2007].) With some 550 distinct societies and languages in 17th-century

preceded the Europeans to these shores by centuries. Second, it also ignores the place of Africans who comprised a large minority of the colonial population. Third, on the European side of the story, it is important to notice that, while the early American population was largely Protestant, Roman Catholics and Jews were also among the settlers. Finally, even among Protestants, pluralism was widespread in early America and was an important feature of the American religious landscape. Sectarian developments in Britain in the period immediately preceding colonization guaranteed a pluralistic outlook, and so did sectarian immigration from, most notably, Germany. Meanwhile, settlers from other mostly northern European nations with their particular religious preferences were represented in early America as well.

Even with this short description of the actual religious diversity of early America, we can well ask questions about how the myth of monolithic Protestant identity began in the first place. The earliest historians of the American religious experience were themselves representatives of mainstream Protestant denominations. They came at history, not professionally, but from positions as clergy. Thus, only gradually did the study of American religious history become professionalized, and — with Protestants the clear majority in the nation until

America, American Indian culture was marked by greater diversity than most of us can fathom. But if we look at the commonalities among groups, American Indians demonstrated a strong sense of continuity with the sacred world, expressed in beliefs, ceremonies, and ways of living that told of their kinship with nature. They saw the material world around them as sacred and did not separate it from a supernatural realm in the same way that Europeans did. They found sacred reality, too, in interior dream states, and they saw their inner lives and outer reality as everywhere fluid and open to transformation. Sacred animals could become people and vice versa. In this context, the Indians' ethic might be described as one of living in complete harmony with the natural world. Moreover, the Indians were comfortable in situations of what later would be called religious plurality. Among Native Americans, religious differences were noticed, honored, and accepted. Different tribes had different spirits to claim, different ceremonies to perform, and different practices to observe.

Among Africans, in turn, religion did not disappear with slave status. Most of them came from West Africa and the Congo-Angola region, and many were Mandinke, Yoruba, Ibo, Bakongo, Ewe, and Fon peoples. Islam was the religion of choice for some, while others followed various and distinctive traditional African religions. Again, as for American Indians, certain themes

prevailed among these indigenous forms. Community was key, and the sacred world was never far away, peopled by spirits and deities who included revered ancestors. Presiding over the sacred community was a high God, whose power the people appropriated through intermediary deities. Divination, animal sacrifice, music, and dance — with the insistent rhythm of the drum — all functioned to create and express spiritual meaning. In America, these religious ideas and practices took new turns in slave communities in which blacks adapted to Protestant Christianity and also incorporated themes related to the involuntary condition of servitude. So black Christianity, as it evolved, was never the same as the white European version. Alongside it, too, traditions of magic and healing, often called conjure, grew up and flourished, mingling with American Indian beliefs and practices and sometimes attracting whites in search of healing or material help through magical practice.

TRADITIONS OF THE EARLIEST EUROPEANS

The first Europeans in early America were the Spanish who, under Juan Ponce de Leon, made their way into the peninsula we call Florida in 1513. Only eight years later, Roman Catholic priests came to missionize the Indians, and by 1564 the Spanish had founded St. Augustine. Similar religious activity was under way hundreds of miles away, in the western regions of the new continent. Before the end of the 16th century, Franciscan missionaries were in what is now the state of New Mexico, and Jesuits began an Arizona mission at the beginning of the 18th century. Among the English, Catholics came not to convert the Indians but to settle. Indeed, the charter to launch the colony that became Maryland was given to a Roman Catholic. The English King Charles I granted the charter to Catholic George Calvert, the first Lord Baltimore. His son Leonard in 1634 arrived as the colony's first governor. The Maryland colony did not long remain in Catholic hands, but its existence at all was testimony to the power of religious minorities in the colonial era. Meanwhile, the Quaker colony of Pennsylvania welcomed Catholics, and the colony of New York, for at least part of its history, also tolerated them. There was even a Catholic governor in New York from 1682 to 1689 in Thomas Dongan.

New York also was home to the first Jews in early America. They had originally settled there in 1654 when it was still New Amsterdam (the colony changed hands from Dutch to English in 1664). These Jews — part of

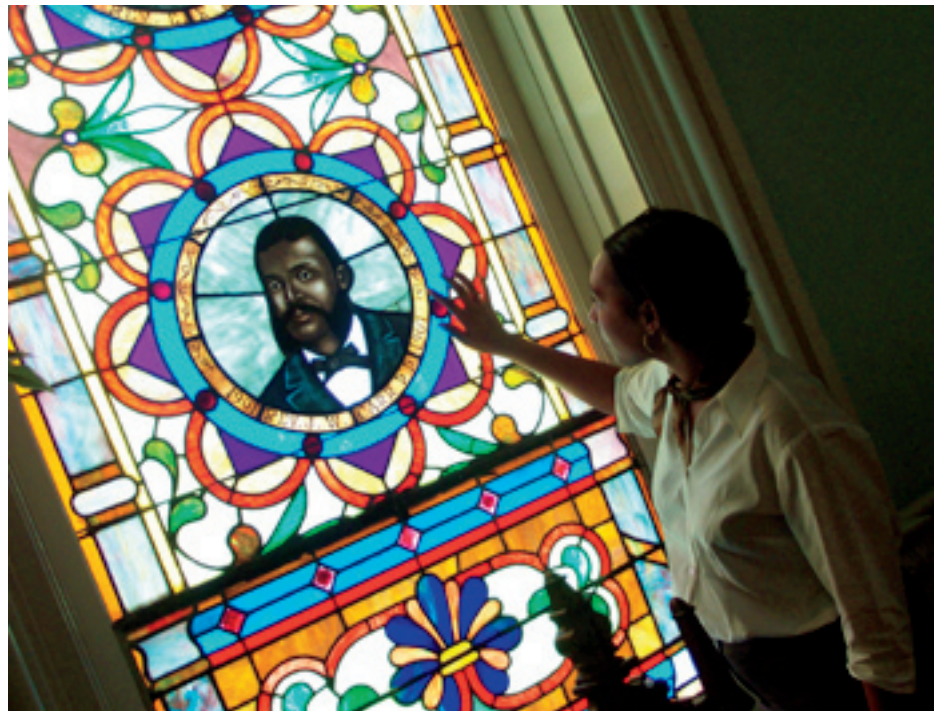
a Spanish-Portuguese refugee community that formed after Jews were expelled from these lands in the late 15th century — had initially settled in liberal Holland. Later they moved to eastern Brazil in a Dutch colonial venture until, with a take-over by Portugal, the Jews fled north to New Amsterdam. There they formed a tiny community of Sephardim, mainly tradespeople without rabbis. Inter-marriage with non-Jews in the area meant that numbers of them melted into the local population, but by 1692 they had managed to establish the first synagogue in North America. Some of the Sephardim, too, settled in Rhode Island, and others — with northern European Jews who had begun to arrive — dotted East Coast cities with their small communities and religious congregations as far south as Charleston, South Carolina.

Within this early American world of religious diversity, Protestants collectively held the majority position. Two pandemics in the early 17th century decimated the Indian peoples on the North American continent — vanquished by European microbes much more than by European guns. The other groups — Africans, Catholics, and Jews — were always clearly in the minority, even if African populations were sizable in some places. Thinking of the Protestant settlers collectively, however, belies the situation of religious difference that actually characterized these European immigrants. Many of them exhibited a cultural Protestant Christianity but lived, too, in touch with a series of metaphysical beliefs and behaviors akin to those of Indians and blacks — turning to the magical practice of cunning folk, to astrological forms of guidance, and to elite forms of esotericism (see Jon Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990], and Catherine L. Albanese, *A Republic of Mind and Spirit: A Cultural History of American Metaphysical Religion* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007]).

Moreover, the settlers in the two early colonies that were major players in later political developments were settled by different religious groups. The Virginians, with their first permanent colony at Jamestown from 1607, were officially members of the Church of England. So stringent was their Anglicanism that, in 1610 and thereafter for nearly a decade, Virginia law required attendance at Sunday worship with a threat of death for a third offense of nonattendance (we have no record that anybody was ever actually executed). In New England, by contrast, settlers in both the Plymouth (1620) and Massachusetts Bay (1630) colonies (which later joined together) were Puritans, members of two different groups

of reformers who rejected the practices of the Church of England. In Plymouth, Separatist Pilgrims — who had earlier settled in Holland — understood themselves as totally outside the English church. In the larger Massachusetts Bay colony, Non-Separatists worked to change the Church of England from within. Both groups stressed the role of conversion to a true and pure Christianity based on personal religious experience. Both were heavily influenced by Calvinist theology with its message of the sovereignty of God, the sinfulness of humanity, and the arbitrariness of the divine election to heavenly glory or eternal hellfire. Both also admired the free, or gathered, church that had grown up in the Anabaptist (Radical) Reformation of 16th-century Europe. Both groups also stressed the role of this gathered congregational church as the keeper of a covenant between the people and the Almighty.

Even the Puritan reformers in Massachusetts Bay, though, were not pure enough for some of the new Protestant settlers. For example, Rhode Island became home to Baptist believers after Roger Williams founded the colony in 1636. Williams had been exiled from Massachusetts Bay when it became increasingly clear that he found his fellow Puritans wanting. He was joined in Rhode Island by other religious dissidents, such as the outspoken Anne Hutchison, who claimed that she was under the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit. Further south, New York Protestants included the Dutch Reformed settlers from its earlier days as the New Amsterdam colony. In addition, other European Protestant groups — French Calvinists, German Lutherans, New England Congregationalists, Quakers, and Baptists — made their home there, even as the colony identified itself officially as Anglican (see Richard W. Pointer, *Protestant Pluralism and the New York Experience: A Study of Eighteenth-Century Religious Diversity* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988]).



This stained glass window is installed in the First African Baptist Church in Savannah, Georgia, built in 1859 by both free blacks and slave labor. The current church evolved from a congregation organized in 1788, considered to be among the oldest African-American congregations in the United States.

Photo Courtesy of Savannahvisit.com

New Yorkers came to regard their diversity as positive, seeing its religious and political benefits.

In New Jersey, in turn, Dutch and other northern European immigrants joined New Englanders and English Quaker settlers. And in Pennsylvania, especially, Quakers found a safe haven and a ruling position in the colony for a time. An ideology of toleration prevailed after William Penn established Pennsylvania as a Quaker colony from 1681. Penn, the son of an admiral and a Quaker convert, obtained proprietorship of the colony when he received a vast tract of land in payment of an old debt the Duke of York had owed his father. Quakers, with their mystical beliefs in the “divine light” within all, translated their religious message into social and political sanctuary for all. In Pennsylvania, one could worship freely, and rights of conscience were upheld. Penn’s regard for Indian peoples in his treaty arrangements with them and his avoidance of warfare as a policy initiative were also striking.

Throughout parts of the American South, English Quaker and Baptist missionaries made their way, and religious diversity became a normal feature of the religious landscape. Presbyterians, too, were an important part of the mix, and so were a series of smaller dissident groups. Meanwhile, German sectarians spread out in

Pennsylvania and elsewhere — Mennonites, Dunkers, and Moravian Pietists among them. Wherever German and Scandinavian peoples settled, too, a strong Lutheran presence developed, as well as a Reformed (Calvinist) representation among the Germans. What we might today call fringe groups were also present, such as the Woman in the Wilderness community not far from Philadelphia — an esoteric brotherhood, which practiced a version of blended pagan, Christian, and Jewish elements in their own form of nature religion.

THE INFLUENCE OF REVIVALS

With such a mix of religious identities and competing religious views among people who were often missionary in orientation, revivals — episodes of intense mass evangelism — became commonplace by the 18th century. In these gatherings, emotions were aroused and convictions stirred, so that ordinary folk would commit to new religious groups or reinvest in old ones. Historians like to point to the period from the late 1730s through the 1740s and 1750s as a time of special attention to revival claims (see William G. McLoughlin, *Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform: An Essay on Religion and Social Change in America, 1607-1977* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978]). Called the Great Awakening, or sometimes the First Great Awakening, this era was dominated by the preaching of two figures. The first was English itinerant preacher George Whitefield, a follower of John Wesley (the founder of Methodism) with Calvinist leanings, who came to the North American

colonies and preached to raise money for an orphanage in the southern colony of Georgia. The second was the Puritan who has been called America's greatest theologian — Jonathan Edwards, who from his pulpit in Northampton, Massachusetts, revived a stern Calvinist message of doom and condemnation for those not chosen for salvation. Nor were these revival preachers alone. For example, in the Middle Colonies — Pennsylvania and New Jersey especially — Presbyterians also offered their own version of awakening.

The language of revival, seemingly, became the religious language of the United States. Indeed, historians point to the role of the revival in creating and fostering religious dissent, even as they notice its role in bringing colonists together with a sense of common ground. In this regard, one prominent thesis that explains how the American Revolution became ideologically possible in the late 18th century argues for the role of the Great Awakening in producing the sense of common identity that would be necessary to start the Revolution at all (see Alan Heimert, *Religion and the American Mind: From the Great Awakening to the Revolution* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966]). However we judge this argument, it is clear that by the late 18th century, American religious diversity was strikingly apparent, and it remains a prominent feature on the nation's social landscape today. ■

The opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. government.

The Demographics of Faith

Brian J. Grim and David Masci



© AP Images/janet Hostetter

A gathering at Christ Presbyterian Church in Edina, Minnesota.

Scores of different religious groups coexist in the United States, all enjoying the right to follow their faiths with the legal protection of the U.S. Constitution.

Brian J. Grim, senior research fellow in religion and world affairs, and David Masci, senior research fellow in religion and law, are with the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life. The Forum is a project of the Pew Research Center, a nonpartisan organization in Washington, D.C., which provides information on issues, attitudes, and trends shaping the United States and the world.

The United States is one of the most religiously diverse countries in the world. Indeed, with adherents from all of the world's major religions, the United States is truly a nation of religious minorities. Although Protestantism remains the dominant strain of Christianity in the United States, the Protestant tradition is divided into dozens of major denominations, all with unique beliefs, religious practices, and histories. Furthermore, Protestant Christianity's dominance in the United States has waned in recent years. In fact, a recent public opinion survey by the Pew Forum on Religion &

Public Life finds that the United States is on the verge of becoming a minority Protestant country for the first time in its history. The number of Americans who report that they are members of Protestant denominations now stands at barely 51 percent, down from more than 60 percent in the 1970s and 1980s.

Roman Catholics account for about a quarter of U.S. adults, and members of other Christian faiths account for an additional 3.3 percent. Overall, nearly 8 in 10 adults report belonging to various forms of Christianity. Other world religions — including Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism — now have followers among about 5 percent of the U.S. adult population. Almost one in six adults are not affiliated with any particular religion, a population that has been growing in recent decades.

Religious diversity in the United States is driven by many factors, including immigration. America's religious diversity also reflects the protections afforded to the free practice of religion under the U.S. Constitution. Not only do immigrants feel free to bring their religious beliefs and practices with them, but many Americans decide to change their religious affiliation at least once

in their lives. Indeed, according to the survey conducted in mid-2007, more than a quarter of American adults have left the faith in which they were raised in favor of another religion — or no religion at all — and that does not include changes in affiliation from one type of Protestantism to another.

RELIGIOUS RIGHTS IN THE UNITED STATES

The U.S. Constitution offers protections for religious minorities and for religious practices in general. These guarantees are included in what are called the Free Exercise and Establishment clauses of the Constitution's First Amendment. The First Amendment, which also guarantees freedom of speech and assembly, was enacted in 1791, along with the other nine amendments that make up the Bill of Rights.

The drafters of the First Amendment, most notably James Madison (a key architect of the Constitution and the fourth U.S. president), were keenly aware that religious differences in Europe had led to centuries of violent conflict. They also opposed policies made by some American states of that era to impose restrictions on certain religious denominations in favor of state-sanctioned or established churches. In particular, Madison believed that limits on freedom of worship, along with government efforts to create religious uniformity, violated fundamental individual rights. He also argued that religious faith would best thrive in an environment in which the government protected individuals' religious liberty but did not support religious institutions. These two aims are the basis for the First Amendment's religion clauses.

Even in Madison's day, however, there was significant disagreement over the exact meaning of the religion clauses, which state that "Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." As a result, it has been largely left to the courts to determine the exact meaning of the Establishment and Free Exercise clauses.

While everyone agrees that the First Amendment prohibits the creation of a government-supported church, agreement essentially ends there. Some argue, for example, that the Establishment Clause prevents all government entanglement with religion. They believe, as Founding Father Thomas Jefferson once wrote, that "a wall of separation" exists between church and state. Others argue that the state can support religious activities and institutions as long as it does not favor one faith over another. When disputes over religious practice have

Major Religious Traditions in the United States

	Among all adults Percent
Christian	78.4
Protestant	51.3
Evangelical churches	26.3
Mainline churches	18.1
Hist. black churches	6.9
Catholic	23.9
Mormon	1.7
Jehovah's Witness	0.7
Orthodox	0.6
Other Christian	0.3
Other Religions	4.7
Jewish	1.7
Buddhist	0.7
Muslim*	0.6
Hindu	0.4
Other world religions	<0.3
Other faiths	1.2
Unaffiliated	16.1
Don't know/Refused	0.8
	100

**From "Muslim Americans: Middle Class and Mostly Mainstream," Pew Research Center, 2007.*

Due to rounding, figures may not add to 100 and nested figures may not add to the subtotal indicated.

Source: U.S. Religious Landscape Survey, Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life.

entered the judicial system, courts have walked a line between these two views. They have generally ruled that the government can broadly acknowledge religion — for example, on the currency and in public oaths and pledges — but have struck down laws that seem to promote religion — such as the teaching of the Bible in public schools.

The Free Exercise Clause also has been the subject of much debate and disagreement. While courts have consistently determined that the clause protects all religious beliefs, they have treated religious practices and activities differently. Generally, courts have held that the

First Amendment does not give people of faith a blank check to ignore the law. However, some court decisions have granted special exemptions to religious groups, including minority faiths. For instance, in 1943 the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the right of Jehovah's Witnesses to refuse to participate in compulsory flag-saluting ceremonies based on their religious beliefs.

THE U.S. RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE

Within this legal context, a great diversity of religious expression has flourished in the United States. No official estimates are maintained of the number of religious groups in the United States because the U.S. Census Bureau has not surveyed citizens about religious beliefs or membership in religious groups since the late 1950s. A good source of information on religion in the United States today comes from the Forum's U.S. Religious Landscape Survey. Based on interviews with more than 35,000 adults, the Landscape Survey details the great diversity of religious affiliation in the United States at the beginning of the 21st century.

Larger Religious Groups: The survey found that nearly 8 in 10 adults in the United States belong to a Christian church or denomination. Members of Protestant churches now constitute a slim majority (51.3 percent) of the adult population. But Protestantism in the United States is not homogeneous; rather, it is divided into three distinct religious traditions — evangelical Protestant churches (26.3 percent of the overall adult population and roughly half of all Protestants); mainline Protestant churches (18.1 percent of the adult population and more than one-third of all Protestants);



Worshippers at the Church of the Pentecost in the Bronx, New York, where recent immigration trends have led to establishment of greater numbers of evangelical churches.

and historically African-American Protestant churches (6.9 percent of the overall adult population and slightly less than one-seventh of all Protestants). Protestantism also comprises numerous denominational families (e.g., Baptist, Methodist, and Pentecostal) that fit into one or more of the above traditions.

Roman Catholics account for nearly one-quarter (23.9 percent) of the adult population and roughly 3 in 10 American Christians. Among the native-born adult population, Protestants greatly outnumber Catholics (55 percent Protestant vs. 21 percent Catholic). But among foreign-born adults, Catholics outnumber Protestants by nearly a two-to-one margin (46 percent Catholic vs. 24 percent Protestant).

Smaller Religious Minorities: The Muslim share of the U.S. adult population is estimated to be 0.6 percent, according to the Pew Research Center's 2007 nationwide survey of Muslim Americans, which was conducted in Arabic, Urdu, and Farsi in addition to English. Roughly two-thirds of Muslim Americans are immigrants. Nonetheless, the survey finds that they are decidedly mainstream in their outlook, values, and attitudes. Overwhelmingly, Muslim Americans believe that hard work pays off, a belief that is reflected in the fact that Muslim Americans' income and education levels generally mirror those of the overall American public. Muslims also are the most racially diverse group in the United States. More than one in three Muslims are white, roughly one in four are black, one in five are Asian, and nearly one in five are of other races.

Hindus account for approximately 0.4 percent of the U.S. adult population, according to Pew's *Religious Landscape Survey*. More than 8 in 10 American Hindus are foreign born, coming almost exclusively from South-Central Asia. Nearly half of Hindus in the United States have obtained a postgraduate education, compared with only about 1 in 10 of the adult population overall. Hindus also are much more likely than other groups to report high income levels, with more than 4 in 10 making more than \$100,000 per year.

Buddhists make up 0.7 percent of U.S. adults. In contrast to Islam and Hinduism, Buddhism in the United States is primarily made up of native-born adherents, whites, and converts. Only one in three American Buddhists describe their race as Asian, and nearly three in four Buddhists say they are converts to Buddhism. A quarter of Buddhists have obtained postgraduate education, a much higher percentage than in the adult population overall.

The survey finds that most American Jews identify



© AP Images/The Fort Wayne Journal Gazette, Chaithe Rowand

In Fort Wayne, Indiana, members of the Mon Buddhist Temple gather for a blessing during a celebration of the life of the monk Luang Phot Uttama, who died in 2006. The Mon people referred to him as their Dalai Lama.

with one of three major Jewish groups: Reform (43 percent), Conservative (31 percent), and Orthodox (10 percent). More than 8 in 10 Jews were raised Jewish, and about 7 in 10 are married to someone who shares their Jewish faith. More than one-third of Jews have a postgraduate education, and, like Hindus, Jews have much higher income levels than the general population.

A large number of Americans belong to a third major branch of global Christianity — Orthodoxy — whose adherents now account for 0.6 percent of the adult population. In addition, American Christianity includes sizeable numbers of Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses. Mormons account for 1.7 percent of the adult population. Approximately 6 in 10 Mormons have had at least some college education, compared with half of the general U.S. population. Mormons tend to have slightly higher income levels than average, with a majority (58 percent) making more than \$50,000 per year. Jehovah's Witnesses account for 0.7 percent of the adult population. More than two-thirds of Jehovah's Witnesses are converts from another faith or were not affiliated with any particular religion as a child.

The survey finds that 16.1 percent of the adult population says they are unaffiliated with a particular religion, making the unaffiliated the fourth largest "religious" tradition in the United States. But the survey also finds that the unaffiliated population is quite diverse and that it is simply not accurate to describe this entire group as nonreligious or "secular." In fact, despite their lack of affiliation with any particular religious group, a large portion of this group says religion is somewhat important or very important in their lives.

Only 1.6 percent of the adult population in the

United States says they are atheist, with men being twice as likely as women to say they are atheist. Younger adults (those under age 30) also are more likely than the adult population as a whole to be atheist.

Geographic Distribution of Religious Groups:

The survey finds that each region of the United States displays a distinctive pattern of religious affiliation. The Midwest, or central part of the country, most closely resembles the overall religious makeup of the general population. About a quarter (26 percent) of residents of the Midwest are members of an evangelical Protestant church, about one in five (22 percent) are members of a mainline Protestant church, nearly a quarter (24 percent) are Catholic, and 16 percent are unaffiliated. These proportions are nearly identical to what the survey finds among the general public.

The Northeast has more Catholics (37 percent) than other regions and has the fewest number of people affiliated with evangelical Protestant churches (13 percent). Northeasterners also are much more likely to be Jewish (4 percent) than people living in other regions. By contrast, fully half of members of evangelical Protestant churches live in the South, compared with only 10 percent in the Northeast and 17 percent in the West. The vast majority of Mormons (76 percent) live in the West, with the highest concentration in the state of Utah. The West also has the largest proportion of people unaffiliated with any particular religion (21 percent), including the largest number of atheists and agnostics.

AMERICAN RELIGION: DIVERSE AND NOT DOGMATIC

Perhaps reflecting the great religious diversity in the United States, most Americans agree with the statement that many religions — not just their own — can lead to eternal life. Indeed, the survey finds that most Americans also have a nondogmatic approach when it comes to interpreting the tenets of their own religion. For instance, more than two-thirds of adults affiliated with a religious tradition agree that there is more than one true way to interpret the teachings of their faith. The lack of dogmatism in American religion, combined with the legal protections afforded to all religious groups, means that religious minorities are likely to continue to find a welcoming home in the United States. ■

The opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. government.

The Freedom to Worship and the Courts

Andrew C. Spiropoulos



Joe Riedel/Getty Images

The U.S. Supreme Court building in Washington, D.C., has been the scene of many legal showdowns over interpretations of contemporary laws and the constitutional protections for religion. Frequently, these cases become so controversial that crowds assemble in front of the court building to express their views with signs, songs, and chants.

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof...”

When citizens believe that a law violates this principle of the U.S. Constitution, they turn to the courts, constitutionally designated as the guardians of these principles. Citizens will challenge a law for impermissibly establishing a faith or for restricting their free exercise of religious practice. The court must decide whether the laws of the day have strayed from that fundamental principle of religious freedom.

EJournal USA asked Andrew C. Spiropoulos, professor of law and director of the Center for the Study of State Constitutional Law and Government at Oklahoma City University School of Law, to draft a number of hypothetical Free Exercise and Establishment Clause legal cases. For each, Spiropoulos devised fictional places and people. He outlined a set of facts, described the respective legal arguments of the

plaintiff and the government, and suggested how a court likely would rule in that particular case. The “rulings” are only interpretations of what a court would say, but they are based on actual court decisions. Read collectively, these scenarios outline the imprecise but real lines between permissible and impermissible government action as it applies to matters of faith.

Scenario 1

Facts: William Davis practices a Native American religion. One of this faith’s most important sacraments requires the use of a narcotic drug. Possession of this drug is a serious crime under the laws of Davis’s home state of West Mountain. When Davis’s employer discovered that he used the drug as part of his religious worship, Davis was fired from his job. Because Davis was fired for doing something

illegal, the state of West Mountain then denied him the usual state benefits for one who loses his job. Davis has sued the state of West Mountain to force it to give him his benefits because he believes that the Constitution of the United States does not allow the state of West Mountain to decide that using this drug for religious worship is illegal.

Plaintiff's Argument: Davis argues that by withholding his benefits, the state has wrongly limited his right to exercise freely his religion as guaranteed by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. He argues that the law that the state cited to deny unemployment benefits — a statute criminalizing the possession of the narcotic — violates the Constitution because it makes it difficult, if not impossible, for him to practice his religion. The law forces Davis either to violate the rules of his faith or go to jail for violating the drug law. The Constitution, Davis further argues, only permits the state to prevent someone practicing his faith if: (1) the state has a very important reason and (2) the law is the only way for the state to accomplish its goal. Here, Davis argues, the state has no good reason to stop him from using the narcotic in his religious worship. He is causing no harm either to himself or any others; he is not using the drug in the same way as a person who abuses the drug for pleasure; and he does not intend to sell the drug to anyone else. The state, in other words, cannot show how this law makes any sense as applied to Davis. Without a compelling reason for limiting Davis's freedom of religion, then the Constitution does not allow the state to punish him.

Government's Argument: The state argues that it is not taking away the right of Davis to freely exercise his religion. The law forbidding the possession of the narcotic does not just apply to religious people; it applies to everyone. The state argues that it possesses the constitutional authority to require Davis to obey this law so long as it requires everyone, both religious and nonreligious, similarly to comply. The state argues that it need not prove that it has a very important reason for the law and that the law is the only way to accomplish that goal. All it has to show is some kind of legitimate reason for the law, and it offers one: that it will be easier for the government to enforce its laws against the illegal use of drugs if it does not have to worry about making exceptions for people like Davis, who believe they have a good reason for violating the law.

Likely Ruling: In this case, the court likely will rule in favor of the state. The court will likely hold that even if the enforcement of a law makes it difficult — perhaps almost impossible — for someone to practice his faith, the Constitution does not give a religious person the right to

disobey the law. As long as the law applies to everyone, religious or nonreligious, and it is enforced fairly against everyone who breaks the law, then the state can apply the law to the religious person as long as it can articulate any kind of sensible reason for the law. The state, in other words, does not have to except religious people from the requirements of an impartial law.

Scenario 2

Facts: The Church of the New Order practices the Utopian faith. Its liturgy encompasses animal sacrifice, including the killing of pigeons, chickens, goats, and sheep. Animal sacrifice is an important part of Utopian services, including sacraments, initiation of new members and priests, prayers for the sick, and an annual celebration. Many residents of the city of Palm Leaf, where the church wishes to locate, are concerned about the church's practice of animal sacrifice. They find the practice disgusting and disturbing and believe it could endanger public health. They have asked the city to stop the church from sacrificing animals. The city has passed a law that makes killing an animal illegal, if it is part of a ritual or ceremony and not for use as food or clothing, sport, scientific experiments, or pest control. The church has sued the city in order to prevent interference with its religious services.

Plaintiff's Argument: The church believes that Palm Leaf's ordinance prohibiting the killing of animals deprives its members of their constitutionally guaranteed right to freely practice their religion. It argues that the law does not treat religious and nonreligious people equally. While the ordinance, on the surface, looks as if it applies to everyone, a close reading reveals that it really only applies to religious people. Only religious people kill animals as part of a ritual or ceremony, and it is only this killing of animals that is made illegal. Many other kinds of animal slaughter, such as killing for food or hunting for sport, are not prohibited. It is also clear that the city intentionally passed this law to prevent people from practicing the Utopian faith. It only adopted the ordinance in response to the hostile complaints of other city residents. The Constitution, at the very least, requires that government not discriminate between religious and nonreligious citizens or deliberately act with hostility to any one religion. In the Palm Leaf case, one can be charged with a crime for practicing one's faith while a person who commits the very same act for nonreligious reasons is not so charged. If the government treats religious people differently than the nonreligious, it must have a very important reason for doing so. In

this case, there is no real difference between the animal slaughter by the religious and by anyone else.

Government's Argument: The city argues that the law is not aimed at religious people and does not treat them unequally. The law applies to everyone, religious or not, who kills animals as a part of a ritual or ceremony, and there are many such ceremonies that are not religious. Hunters who kill for sport or butchers who kill for food, kill animals for a practical purpose, not as part of some ceremony. This differs from ceremonial killing and, therefore, can and should be treated differently by the law. A person is not deprived of his constitutional right to exercise freely his religion when a law applies equally to everyone, both religious and nonreligious. This is so even though the law makes it difficult to practice one's faith.

Likely Ruling: Here, the court will likely rule in favor of the Utopian Church. Even though the ordinance appears to apply to everyone no matter their faith or lack of it, the law clearly does not treat religious and nonreligious people equally. The law was intentionally written to apply to religious people who kill animals as part of their worship services, while exempting everyone who kills animals for other reasons. A person is deprived of his or her right to practice freely their religion when the government treats them differently than the nonreligious, unless the government shows: (1) that there

is a very important reason for the law and (2) that the law is absolutely necessary to achieve that goal. Here, the reasons to limit or prevent animal slaughter apply equally to religious and nonreligious people. The only sensible explanation for this distinction is government hostility toward the Utopian religion.

Scenario 3

Facts: Fourteen-year-old Michelle Rivers recently graduated from a public middle school. The school holds a ceremony to honor the graduating students. These ceremonies are generally very important to the graduating students and their families. The school invited a minister to offer prayers at the beginning and the end of Rivers's graduation ceremony. The prayers only referred to God generally and did not refer to any particular religion's beliefs about God. The students were not required to pray or stand during the prayers. The students also were not required to attend the ceremony in order to graduate. Rivers has sued the school because she believes that the Constitution does not allow a public school to sponsor a prayer at a graduation ceremony.

Plaintiff's Argument: Rivers argues that by sponsoring the prayer, the school (a government institution) violates the First Amendment's prohibition against establishing a religion. Rivers argues that



© AP Images/Bedford Times-Mail, Scott Brunner

Several American communities have been the scenes of legal battles over the placement of monuments honoring the Bible's Ten Commandments. In Lawrence County, Indiana, a civil liberties group went to court to stop the installation of a monument on the courthouse lawn. Here, workers remove the monument in response to a court order.



© AP Images/Charles Rex Ambogast

This exhibit at the McCormick Freedom Museum in Chicago, Illinois, is designed to help visitors better understand the First Amendment freedoms of speech, religion, press, and assembly. The museum opened in 2006, sponsored by the McCormick Foundation, endowed by a former editor and publisher of the *Chicago Tribune* newspaper, Charles McCormick.

government does this whenever its actions show that it endorses even a generic religion over nonreligion or when it gives any support to the spread of religion. Here, by offering prayers at the ceremony, the government favors religion and signals willingness to support it. In addition, government is establishing religion by forcing Rivers to pray or, at least, demonstrate respect for beliefs she does not support. Government may not condition her attendance at the ceremony, an important event in her life, upon her demonstration of respect for religion.

Government's Argument: The school argues that Rivers is not being forced to demonstrate support or even respect for religion. She is not required to attend the ceremony, and, if she attends, she is not required to pray or even stand while others pray. The school argues that it is not illegally supporting or endorsing religion. It only provides those attending the ceremony the opportunity, if they so wish and so believe, to express their religious belief. Schools and other parts of government have offered these opportunities for prayer since the nation's beginning, and few would say that these historic practices

force people to be religious or provide any tangible support to religion.

Likely Ruling: In this case, the court likely will rule in favor of Rivers. The government may not force Rivers to choose between attending her graduation ceremony, an important event in her life, and forcing her to express respect for beliefs she does not share. It is unrealistic to expect Rivers, a minor, to face her peers' disapproval by refusing to stand or stay for the prayers during the ceremony. She therefore will appear to everyone present as if she is praying or at least respects the importance of prayer. The Constitution does not allow the state to force religion upon nonbelievers. In addition, the government cannot use its power and resources to spread or encourage religious belief. By sponsoring a prayer at a public ceremony, the government tells those in attendance that it believes religion is important and good. When government sends the message that it endorses religious belief, it establishes religion in violation of the Constitution.

Scenario 4

Facts: The state capitol building in Metropolis, New Hudson, is surrounded by a large state-owned park that contains several monuments. One of the monuments is a two-meter tall stone structure inscribed with the text of the Ten Commandments. The monument is located between the capitol building, which houses the state legislature, and the building that houses the state supreme court. The inscription on the monument says that it was donated to the state by a group of private citizens more than 40 years ago. Henry Mencken, a resident of Metropolis, frequently walks past the monument on his way to work. Mencken does not hold any religious beliefs and is angry that a monument owned and maintained by the state expresses support for particular religious beliefs. He sues to force the state to remove the monument.

Plaintiff's Argument: Mencken argues that by placing a monument with a religious message on state-owned and -managed property, New Hudson establishes religion in violation of the First Amendment. He argues that any reasonable person who walks through the park — one of the most important public areas in the state — and reads the monument would conclude that the state of New Hudson supports the religious beliefs articulated in the Ten Commandments. Mencken argues that the Constitution does not permit the government to use its authority and resources to endorse or spread particular religious beliefs. He insists the monument must be removed from public property.

Government's Argument: The state argues that nothing about the monument reflects a state effort to establish religion. The monument does not demonstrate that New Hudson is trying to force religion upon its

citizens or that it even supports religion. The monument, which is located in a park accommodating more than 30 other monuments, only expresses the historical fact that the beliefs contained in the Ten Commandments were very important to the people who founded the state. Most people who walk through the park and read the monument see it as just one of many monuments recognizing something important in New Hudson history. They do not view the monument as expressing any message about what the state of New Hudson now believes about religion. Nothing about the monument violates the law, the government argues, and it should remain.

Likely Ruling: In this case, the court will likely rule in favor of the state. The monument expresses neither belief in nor support of religion. Rather, the monument makes a statement about the importance of religious belief in the history of New Hudson. Most people believe the monument expresses a historical, not religious, message, because it is in an area surrounded by other monuments and markers also expressing historical messages. It is also clear that most people who have seen the monument do not believe government is forcing a religious message upon them because the monument has been there for many years without complaint. It is accepted by the people of the state as part of their history and, therefore, cannot be seen as an attempt by the government to establish religion in violation of the Constitution. ■

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The Free Exercise Clause: Significant Supreme Court Rulings

A summary of landmark U.S. Supreme Court rulings compiled by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life.

Reynolds v. United States (1879)

Upheld the successful criminal prosecution of a prominent Mormon for practicing bigamy in Utah.

Cantwell v. Connecticut (1940)

In overturning a conviction for disturbing the peace, held that the Free Exercise Clause applies to state as well as federal actions.

Minersville School District v. Gobitis (1940)

Ruled that the Free Exercise Clause did not give religiously motivated public school children the right to opt out of a compulsory flag-salute ceremony.

West Virginia Board of Education v. Barnette (1943)

Overruled *Gobitis* and recognized the right not to participate in a flag-salute ceremony based on the right of free speech and worship.

United States v. Ballard (1944)

In a case involving a faith healer who claimed to possess supernatural healing powers, ruled that government cannot question the truth or validity of someone's religious beliefs but is free to examine whether such beliefs are sincerely held.

Braunfeld v. Brown (1961)

Rejected an argument from Jewish businessmen who observed a Saturday Sabbath and opposed a law that required businesses to close on Sundays.

Sherbert v. Verner (1963)

Ruled that a South Carolina unemployment policy forcing an employee to choose between her faith's Saturday Sabbath and eligibility for unemployment benefits violated the Free Exercise Clause.

Wisconsin v. Yoder (1972)

Ruled that the Free Exercise Clause exempted the adolescent children of the Old Order Amish from compulsory school attendance laws.

Bob Jones University v. United States (1983)

Rejected a First Amendment challenge to the Internal Revenue Service's policy of denying tax-exempt status to religious nonprofit educational institutions that had racially discriminatory policies.

Goldman v. Weinberger (1986)

Ruled that the Free Exercise Clause did not exempt a Jewish Air Force captain from the rule that forbade the wearing of any headgear indoors.



Mario Tama/Getty Images

It is not unusual to see Jewish men wearing the *yarmulke* in daily life in the United States on the street and at home. The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled, however, that a Jewish Air Force captain could not be exempt from dress code rules that prohibit the wearing of headgear indoors.

O'Lone v. Estate of Shabazz (1987)

Ruled that security considerations provided a reasonable basis for restricting prison inmate attendance at a Muslim religious service.

Employment Division v. Smith (1990)

Upheld the denial of unemployment compensation to two Native American drug rehabilitation counselors who had been dismissed because they had ingested the hallucinogen peyote as part of a religious ritual.



Photo by Ira Block/National Geographic/Getty Images

Some of the supplies used in Native American religious rites, including peyote. The courts have found that use of this otherwise illegal drug is lawful in Indian worship.

Church of the Lukumi Babalu Aye v. City of Hialeah (1993)

Ruled that the city of Hialeah's ordinances on the treatment of animals discriminated against the Santerian faith and its practice of animal sacrifice.

City of Boerne v. Flores (1997)

Ruled that Congress lacks the power to substitute its judgment for that of the federal judiciary on the norms of religious liberty that states must obey.

Locke v. Davey (2004)

Ruled that a Washington state higher education subsidy that excluded those who majored in devotional religious studies was constitutional.

Cutter v. Wilkinson (2005)

Rejected the argument that the portion of a federal religious freedom statute that covers prisoners and other institutionalized persons violates the First Amendment's Establishment Clause.

Gonzales v. O Centro Espirita Beneficente Uniao do Vegetal (2006)

Ruled that RFRA [the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993] protects the right of a small religious sect to import and use a hallucinogenic substance in its religious rituals. ■

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Protecting International Religious Freedom: A Global Consensus

John V. Hanford, III



John V. Hanford III, the ambassador-at-large for religious freedom, as he releases the annual survey on religious freedom conducted by the U.S. Department of State.

Religious freedom is regarded as an inviolable human right by international conventions, and the United States works to protect those rights worldwide.

John Hanford is ambassador-at-large for International Religious Freedom for the U.S. State Department.

Religious liberty is a fundamental right enshrined in the First Amendment of the United States Constitution and is deeply rooted in our history and national character. It is important to note, however, that America's concern for religious freedom does not stop at our shores. Mindful that many citizens worldwide are denied the right to believe, practice, and worship freely by their governments, the United States is committed to the promotion and protection of religious freedom worldwide.

Religious freedom has long been recognized as an

inviolable human right under international conventions and treaties, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Based on this global consensus, the United States works to encourage all governments to uphold these common international obligations without advocating a specifically American approach to the issue.

In 1998, the U.S. Congress unanimously passed the International Religious Freedom Act. The act reinforced what has historically been an important U.S. foreign policy priority and provided new tools for the advocacy and protection of religious freedom. Accordingly, the United States promotes religious freedom for all faiths by encouraging compliance with international standards, condemning violations of religious freedom, and supporting religious freedom as a fundamental right for all people.

The act created the position of ambassador-at-large for International Religious Freedom, as well as the Office of International Religious Freedom at the U.S. Department of State. Together, we monitor religious persecution and discrimination worldwide and develop policies and programs to promote religious freedom. We accomplish this by working with U.S. embassies, foreign officials, and religious and human rights groups to address actions taken by governments that hinder citizens' ability to practice their beliefs freely.

An important tool is the congressionally mandated *Annual Report on International Religious Freedom*. This document summarizes the status of religious freedom in more than 195 countries each year and runs more than 800 pages long. The 2008 report will be issued in September. This and past year's reports can be found at <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/irfl>, as well as on many U.S. embassy Web sites, where it is translated into the local language.

The office also pays close attention to the treatment of minority religious groups. We encourage countries to cease discriminating against minority faith communities

and allow them to register and operate openly in countries such as Russia, Turkmenistan, Egypt, Indonesia, and Pakistan. In Iraq, the office has advocated for greater inclusion of religious minorities in the political process, and we have urged governments in Asia, Europe, and elsewhere to respect the religious freedoms of their minority Muslim populations.

During the 2007 release of the *Annual Report on International Religious Freedom*, it was fitting that two religious faiths in the United States were simultaneously observing religious holidays. Muslims observing Ramadan and Jews observing Rosh Hashanah reminded Americans of our cherished tradition of worshiping freely and respectfully.

As Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said at that time, "Through our bilateral relationships, our work in international forums, and our many ongoing discussions on this issue with people across the globe, the United States will continue working to promote religious freedom, to nurture tolerance, and to build a more peaceful world for people of all faiths." ■

Balancing Work and Religion

Christopher Connell



© AP Images/Mark Lennihan

A Muslim taxi driver from Pakistan prays during the middle of his shift in New York City.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 is widely known for outlawing racial segregation in schools and public places in the United States. But it was also landmark legislation in protecting workers from bias, including discrimination against individuals because of their religious beliefs. Workers of faith who have encountered employment policies that violate the tenets of their religion have found protection in the law.

Christopher Connell is a veteran Washington journalist who writes extensively about public policy issues.

At the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, Muslim immigrant cab drivers from Somalia risk their jobs and the public's wrath by refusing to carry travelers heading home from vacations with duty-free liquor.

At a Starbucks coffee shop in Hillsboro, Oregon, a barista contends she was fired not because of tardiness but because of the Wiccan necklace she wore.

In New Jersey, the oil refiner ConocoPhillips is hauled into court by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity

Commission (EEOC) for refusing to adjust a Christian pipe fitter's schedule so he did not have to miss church services on Sunday mornings.

And in Phoenix, Arizona, after a six-year legal battle, a federal jury returns a \$250,000 judgment against Alamo Rent-A-Car for firing a Muslim sales representative from Somalia for wearing a head scarf during Ramadan.

With the U.S. population rapidly growing more diverse, more workers are demanding the right to exercise their freedom of religion on the job. By law they have a right to reasonable accommodations to their schedules. They sometimes encounter resistance from coworkers or bosses. But in a growing number of court cases, employees have the law's enforcer, the EEOC, on their side.

And many companies find that it makes good business sense to make these accommodations.



Susan McDuffie, left, San Francisco district director of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, listens as EEOC staff attorneys discuss a lawsuit at a press conference. The commission's caseload has grown in recent years, as religious diversity in the U.S. workplace has increased.

© AP Images/Eric Risberg

A LAW BASED IN EQUITY AND RESPECT

Luke Visconti, partner and cofounder of *DiversityInc* magazine, believes that religious accommodation “is just a way of dealing with human beings with respect and treating them equitably so that you have a productive and harmonious workplace. You don’t do this out of some sense of political correctness; you do this so that you can increase your productivity and profit margin.”

An additional benefit for corporate America is that it is learning, at the same time, “how to get along with customers who are also Muslim or Jewish or Christian or whatever other religion they are accommodating” in the workforce, said Visconti.

Corporations such as Texas Instruments Inc. have created “serenity rooms” for workers at assembly plants to pray, and some have installed foot-washing stations where Muslim employees can perform the ablutions their faith requires before prayer. Ford Motor Co. and others have encouraged — or in some cases, tolerated — the creation of employee affinity groups with a religious orientation, whose members gather for prayer or conversation.

When IBM tightened security after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, a newly hired Muslim woman feared she might lose her job because she was unwilling to have her photograph taken without a veil for an identification badge. But the computer services giant accommodated her by issuing two ID badges, one with only her eyes showing that she wore in public and a second, unveiled picture that only female guards were allowed to see.

Georgette F. Bennett, president and founder of the Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding, said, “They got themselves an extremely loyal employee in the process. That’s not anybody who is going to disappear soon, because she was treated with respect and not made to feel like a second-class citizen.”

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 bars employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. Initially the EEOC said employers must accommodate employees’ religious practices unless doing so created “serious inconvenience to the conduct of the business.” In 1972 Congress sought to toughen the statute by requiring reasonable accommodations

that did not impose an “undue hardship.” But the U.S. Supreme Court weakened the protections in 1977 when it ruled in *Trans World Airlines, Inc. v. Hardison* that anything more than a minimal cost to the employer was an undue hardship. Religious groups including Seventh Day Adventists and Orthodox Jews — both strict Sabbath observers — have lobbied for years to strengthen the law, but without success.

Still, increased numbers of business executives and human resource (HR) managers are adopting the principle that American workers have a right to live by their faith on the job as well as off. It’s a cutting-edge issue in the HR business, according to Eric Peterson, manager of diversity and inclusion initiatives at the 240,000-member Society for Human Resource Management.

“People are not necessarily looking for the freedom to proselytize or the freedom to convert” coworkers, said Peterson, former diversity learning manager for the consulting firm Booz Allen Hamilton Inc. “They just want to be able to live and work within the tenets of their religious faith.” That can be a challenge, especially for non-Christians whose religion “asks them to dress, appear, behave in certain ways that are not necessarily encouraged by the workplace,” he said. Oftentimes, “there’s not a whole lot of money you need to throw at this problem. It’s just a matter of opening your mind and saying, ‘OK, how else can we do this besides what we generally default to as [a] very Christian-oriented way of doing it?’”

The law against religious discrimination in the

workplace applies to all U.S. businesses with 15 or more employees. The EEOC in July 2008 released a new, 94-page compliance manual with dozens of specific examples on what employers must do to accommodate workers' religious needs and beliefs.

"It is an area that everybody has been afraid to touch because people are so uncomfortable with the subject of religion. Traditionally we like to think of religion as being left at the office door, but in actuality that can't be done and isn't done," said Bennett.

CHALLENGING INSTANCES OF DISCRIMINATION

Since the early 1990s when immigration worked to expand cultural and religious diversity in the United States, complaints to the EEOC about religious discrimination have doubled to 2,880 in 2007. Race and sex discrimination cases remain far more common (they account for two-thirds of the EEOC's caseload), but they held steady over the past decade while complaints about religious bias rose from 2.1 percent to 3.5 percent of all charges. After the September 11 attacks, the EEOC placed special emphasis on safeguarding Muslims, Arabs, South Asians, and Sikhs against backlash in the workplace.

In the Alamo Rent-A-Car case, Bilan Nur, a 22-year-old immigrant from Somalia, was fired in December 2001 for refusing to remove the head scarf she wore

during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. The EEOC sued Alamo on her behalf, and nearly six years later, a jury awarded the Phoenix woman \$37,640 in back pay and compensatory damages and \$250,000 in punitive damages. "The jury just didn't believe some of the testimony of the Alamo people" about why Nur was fired, said Sally Shanley, the EEOC supervising trial attorney. Alamo paid an even \$250,000 to settle the case. Its current owners declined comment.

The dispute over the veteran pipe fitter, Clarence Thomas, who was ordered to work on Sunday mornings at a ConocoPhillips refinery in Linden, New Jersey, has not yet gone to trial. Thomas said initially he was told he could use vacation time to get those hours off, but then that accommodation also was denied. Bill Graham, a spokesman for the oil company at its headquarters in Houston, said, "We do consider diversity of employees a tremendous asset, and the company prohibits discrimination or harassment of any kind." He noted that unionized workers such as Thomas have a right to file grievances with their local "and they can also call the ConocoPhillips ethics hotline."

A dispute between the operators of the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport — the world's 21st busiest — and Muslim cab drivers from Somalia remains unsettled. More than 4,800 travelers were refused service between 2002 and 2007 by drivers who saw or suspected passengers were toting alcohol with their luggage.

Initially cabbies who refused to take the passengers were sent to the back of the line, but since May 2007 they have faced a 30-day license suspension for the first offense and a two-year revocation the second time they refuse service.

Muslim cab drivers work at many other U.S. airports, but so far this has emerged as an issue only in the Twin Cities. "Why it hasn't happened in other airports, I don't know," said Patrick Hogan, public affairs director for the Metropolitan Airport Commission. "I think it's more a matter of the way a portion of the community here interprets the Koran." The Muslim American Society of Minnesota did not return calls for comments.

Does the EEOC's increased caseload mean the problem is getting worse?

"It's hard to answer that," said Dianna Johnston, assistant legal counsel



Robert Nickselsberg/Getty Images

Linda Sarsour, left, program director of the Arab American Association of New York, talks with coworker Muna Irziqat. Sarsour's organization advocates for the 300,000 Arab Americans living in the New York City area.

at EEOC. “There’s been a significant increase in religious diversity in U.S. workplaces over two or three decades. That’s part of it. Also, people are more open about their religion in the workplace and in society in general. That can give rise to some misunderstandings.”

The law does not protect only the world’s major religions. “It encompasses any moral or ethical belief about right or wrong that’s sincerely held,” said the EEOC’s Johnston. It also protects those who have no religious beliefs.

Workers invoke Title VII of the Civil Rights Act in numerous disputes over their hours or whether they can wear a *yarmulke* or *kufi* prayer cap. In Detroit, for example, the EEOC is suing HCR Manor Care, a large nursing home chain, for sacking a nurse who wore a *kirpan* under her clothing. The *kirpan*, a sheathed, three-inch knife with a dulled blade, is one of the sacred symbols of the Sikh religion.

Many religions encourage believers to proselytize, and some groups say that Title VII gives their followers the right to talk about religion around the office water cooler and to inquire about a coworker’s beliefs. But if that coworker wants them to stop, they must, according to the EEOC’s Jeanne Goldberg, a senior attorney advisor. “The employer has two obligations: to accommodate religious expression to the extent that can be done ... and not to allow religious harassment of employees.”

It’s a balancing act, both for employers and the courts.

In *Peterson v. Hewlett-Packard Co.*, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in 2004 upheld the firing of Richard Peterson, who objected to the pro-diversity posters that

HP put up in its Boise, Idaho, office. Peterson, a devout Christian, began displaying around his cubicle Bible verses condemning homosexuality; he acknowledged his messages were hurtful. The appeals court said that HP had a “right to promote diversity and encourage tolerance and good will among its workforce.”

But that same year a federal judge in Denver awarded \$146,000 to a former AT&T Broadband worker fired for refusing to sign a company diversity policy that recognized the need to “respect and value the differences among all of us.” The judge said the company should have found a way to accommodate Albert A. Buonanno, who had said that as a Christian he loved all people but did not “value” homosexuality.

Eric Peterson, the diversity manager for the Society for Human Resource Management, said the challenge for HR managers is figuring out how to maintain comity in workplaces where workers may hold starkly contrasting views about religion and lifestyles.

“What organizations need to hear is that it is possible to respect people regardless of their religion or their sexual orientation and to let both groups coexist,” said Peterson. “They don’t have to be best friends. You don’t have to invite your colleague and his partner over to your barbeque on Sunday afternoon after church. But you do need to be able to work with them in a respectful and inclusive manner — and that goes both ways.” ■

The opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. government.

The Interfaith Movement

Gustav Niebuhr



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In Los Angeles, local residents, right, bow after Thai Buddhist monks accept food from them. The monks from Wat Thai Los Angeles, the largest Thai Buddhist temple in the United States, walk through the neighborhood weekly to gather donations.

For more than a century, some groups of Americans have been attempting to reach out to other religious groups, in hopes of gaining greater understanding and cooperation in their communities.

Gustav Niebuhr is the author of Beyond Tolerance: Searching for Interfaith Understanding in America. He is also an associate professor of religion at Syracuse University in New York.

Back in 1991, the rabbi at a suburban New York synagogue on Long Island posed a searching question to one of his lay leaders. Was there a group of Muslims nearby who might want to become acquainted with the synagogue's members to gain some mutual knowledge across faith lines? For Rabbi Jerome Davidson, spiritual leader at Temple Beth-El in Nassau

County, New York, it was not a totally unusual idea. For years he had been in charge of inviting well-known non-Jews — Protestants, Roman Catholics, occasionally American Muslims — to speak at his national rabbinic organization. But no such thing, he said, had been attempted on the local level. “It felt important to try that.”

It took time, but within a year some of Beth-El's leading members had agreed to begin conversations with counterparts at the Islamic Society of Long Island, a mosque several miles away. They started off modestly, sharing information about the way their different faiths marked life's great moments (What do you do at a baby's birth? How do you celebrate a wedding?), then moved on to discuss theological principles in their sacred texts. Once they had really gotten to know one another, the



Photo Courtesy of Aaron Lichtov / Minneapolis Jewish Day School

Jewish and Muslim students from schools in the twin cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota, participate in an exchange, as part of an interfaith effort sponsored by the St. Paul Area Council of Churches.

Jews and the Muslims compared their differences over the Middle East — “the sophisticated stuff,” as Davidson described those discussions. By the time I interviewed him, for research for a book on interreligious relations, the dialogue was in its 15th year. “Does it make a difference?” asked Faroque Khan, the physician who served as the mosque’s president. Not globally, he said, but he added, “If I can help two communities understand each other better, that to me is an accomplishment.”

If this story seems unusual, it is because such encounters rarely make the headlines, which often seem reserved for stories of conflict, not cooperation, between religious groups. But the Long Island meetings fit within a pattern emerging in the United States. Even as religious differences are often associated with tension and violence in the news, collaboration among Americans of different traditions has been on the rise. The trend typically takes the form of regular meetings between members of different congregations, for formal conversations or shared work on social projects, such as running a soup kitchen or a literacy program for children. One study by the Hartford Institute for Religion Research in Connecticut reported that among the congregations it surveyed — Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and others — collaborative, social efforts had increased more than four-fold, to 38 percent of all congregations, between 2000 and 2005.

A NATION OF FAITH

Two facts help explain the trend. First and foremost, the United States is a religious nation, as measured by

national polls. Americans value basic religious beliefs and practices, a feature of the nation’s life, past and present. In June 2008, the nonprofit Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life released a massive survey of more than 35,000 people, reporting that 92 percent of Americans said they believed in God; 75 percent said they prayed at least weekly, many of them daily. The findings were consistent with previously reported surveys that upward of 7 in 10 Americans declared religion to be either “important” or “very important” in their lives. The widespread belief that faith in itself is valuable can be traced back into the American past. President George Washington declared in his Farewell Address in 1796 that citizens in a republic could not govern themselves and exercise their full liberties unless they possessed

virtue. And civic virtue, Washington said, stood on religion and morality. (Notably, he did not specify which religion.)

Secondly, the trend toward interreligious cooperation is linked to the demographic shift the United States has been undergoing since the last few decades of the 20th century. In October 1965, after weeks of congressional debate, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed legislation enacting a sweeping reform of immigration laws. The new law opened the doors to new immigrants from Asia, Africa, and Latin America — an influx that diversified the nation’s religious landscape. The new Americans included not just Christians and Jews, both present on the continent since at least the 17th century, but also communities of Buddhists, Hindus, Jains, Muslims, Sikhs, Zoroastrians, and others.

On a practical level, this immigration has meant that in large cities and their suburbs, Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists find themselves rubbing shoulders in the same workplaces, college campuses, and neighborhoods. There are a growing number of individuals who want to bring these diverse groups even closer. Eboo Patel, an Indian-born Muslim whose family immigrated to the Midwest in the 1970s, wants to help break down stereotypes with conversation and activities in which these groups might intermingle. After college in Illinois and graduate school at Oxford, Patel founded the Interfaith Youth Core, based in Chicago. The organization works primarily on college campuses, signing up students to meet across religious lines, discuss core beliefs, and volunteer together on projects, such as repairing housing for the poor and cleaning up city

parks. Patel, now executive director, says the idea is not to convert anyone to another religion, but rather to reinforce students' religious identities while allowing them to discover ethical traditions that their faiths share.

THE HISTORY OF THE INTERFAITH MOVEMENT

The essential idea of thoughtful dialogue among religious minorities in Chicago can be traced back to a singular, historic event on September 11, 1893. A special conference convened on that date as Chicago hosted the World's Fair. Called the World's Parliament of Religions, local Protestants convened the gathering to invite representatives of 10 different faith groups worldwide to Chicago to speak about their specific religious beliefs and practices. The event, which ran for about two weeks, became a national sensation as a public course in comparative religions. Thousands of people attended, including newspaper reporters who carried word of the sessions coast to coast. What particularly mattered was the attention accorded non-Christian speakers, especially two, a Hindu teacher named Swami Vivekananda, and a Buddhist monk, Anagarika Dharmapala. Each represented a religion Americans barely knew or understood. Both men impressed the crowds who heard them and readers who pored over regular newspaper accounts. Each of these South Asian religious figures called for dialogue and respect among the world's faiths. Vivekananda, speaking on the parliament's first day, declared the bell that rang in the opening session had sounded "the death-knell of all fanaticism." We know, of course, that he voiced hope unrealized more than a century later, but for some his words retain an ability to inspire.

The parliament closed without a successor to carry forward its ideas. A broad interest in dialogue did not really begin to develop, either in the United States or Great Britain, until the mid-1990s. A centennial celebration of the parliament itself drew thousands of people to Chicago in 1993, a crowd sufficient to encourage establishment of a permanent organization to continue such international gatherings. The Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions (CPWR) has organized meetings in 1999 in Cape Town, South Africa; in 2004 in Barcelona, Spain; and the next is set for 2009 in Australia.

For many Americans, the important work in interfaith relations takes place at the local level, as in the Long Island example. Much has occurred in the wake of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on New York

City and Washington, D.C. Although the destruction wrought that day increased tensions between non-Muslims and Muslims in some places, that response was far from universal. In a number of cities immediately after the attacks — Seattle, Denver, and Washington, D.C., for example — Christians and Jews rallied to protect mosques from vandalism and reassure Muslim neighbors and coworkers. Longer term, the attacks prompted congregations to engage in dialogue with one another. Acting on their own, many American Muslims launched a series of open houses — "open mosque days" — to introduce curious neighbors to Islam's basics.

To be sure, the trend described here is not universal. Many religious Americans, of all persuasions, do not participate in such events. Some are deeply skeptical, even hostile, about this dialogue, believing that their faiths alone subscribe to absolute truth. Opening religious conversations with other people, in this view, is a waste of time or worse. Under the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment, which guarantees religious liberty to all citizens, such people are entitled to full protection of their beliefs and attitudes.

But as the Pew report cited above found, a majority of Americans are not so dogmatic when it comes to their faiths. And as I discovered in my research, a good many do want to know more about their neighbors' beliefs and practices, and are willing to invest the time to find out. Many find inspiration within their own curiosity. But perhaps the best grounds lie in a statement written 41 years ago by the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. An African-American Baptist minister, he is best remembered for leading the U.S. civil rights movement. But near his life's end, he befriended an exiled Vietnamese Buddhist monk, Thich Nhat Hanh, then traveling in the United States on a peace mission. Nhat Hanh's plea for peace and reconciliation in Vietnam inspired King, who later nominated the monk for a Noble Peace Prize. Around that time, King wrote an essay in which he asked readers to imagine humankind as having inherited "a great 'world house' in which we have to live together." King listed its inhabitants as Jewish and Gentile, Roman Catholic and Protestant, Muslim and Hindu, calling them a family diverse in ideas and culture but one that "because we can never again live apart, must learn somehow to live with each other in peace." ■

The opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. government.

Additional Resources

Books, articles, Web sites, and films about religious minorities in the United States

BOOKS

Ahdar, Rex J. and Ian Leigh. *Religious Freedom in the Liberal State.* Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Albanese, Catherine L. *America: Religions and Religion.* 4th ed. Australia; Belmont, CA: Thomson/Wadsworth, 2007.

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Smith, Tom W. "Religious Diversity in America: The Emergence of Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus and Others," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, vol. 41, no. 3 (September 2002): pp. 577-585.

Wexler, Jay D. "Preparing for the Clothed Public Square: Teaching About Religion, Civic Education, and the Constitution," *William and Mary Quarterly*, vol. 43, no. 3 (February 2002): pp. 1159-1263.

WEB SITES

Academic Info: Religion in America

Web site of books, articles, databases, and other resources.
www.academicinfo.net/amrelig.html

Association of Religious Data Archives (ARDA)

Pennsylvania State University
ARDA provides data on U.S. and international religion, serving congregations, researchers, educators, and the media.
<http://www.thearda.com>

Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life

Boston College
A community of scholars, policy makers, media, and religious leaders engage in discussion and reflection of religion and American public life.
<http://www.bc.edu/research/boisi>

Boniuk Center for the Study and Advancement of Religious Tolerance

Rice University
The Boniuk Center promotes conditions conducive to sustainable peace among persons of different religions.
<http://boniuk.rice.edu>

Center for Religious Freedom

Hudson Institute
Promotes religious freedom as a component of U.S. foreign policy.
<http://crf.hudson.org/>

Education As Transformation Project

International organization exploring the impact of religious diversity on education.

www.wellesley.edu/RelLife/transformation

Forum18

Forum 18 is an instrument to promote the implementation of Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Web site concentrates on reporting actions against religious freedom.

<http://www.forum18.org/>

Hartford Institute for Religion Research

Hartford Seminary

This institute presents current research on religious issues to create greater understanding and a better-informed society.

http://birr.hartsem.edu/about/who_we_are.html

Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life

Nonpartisan, nonadvocacy organization seeking to promote a deeper understanding of issues at the intersection of religion and public affairs.

<http://pewforum.org>

U.S. Religious Landscape Survey

Based on interviews with more than 35,000 Americans ages 18 and older, this Pew survey details the religious affiliation of the American public.

<http://pewforum.org/docs/?DocID=279>

Pluralism Project

Harvard University

The project attempts to help Americans engage with the realities of religious diversity through research, outreach, and dissemination of resources.

<http://www.pluralism.org>

Religion and Culture: Meeting the Challenge of Pluralism

A Ford Foundation initiative explores the role of religious traditions in shaping social values and institutions.

<http://religionandpluralism.org/>

Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding

Secular, nonsectarian organization working to reduce and prevent the violence perpetrated in the name of religion.

<http://www.tanenbaum.org>

Teaching Tolerance

Founded in 1991 by the Southern Poverty Law Center, Teaching Tolerance attempts to reduce prejudice, improve intergroup relations, and support equitable school experiences for children.

<http://www.tolerance.org/teach/magazine/features.jsp?p=0&is=41&ar=850>

FILMOGRAPHY

***America's New Religious Landscape* (2002)**

Producer: Religion and Ethics NewsWeekly

Synopsis: Documentary depicts religious diversity in the United States.

Running time: 60 minutes

***A Son's Sacrifice* (2006)**

Producer: Yoni Brook, Musa Syeed

Synopsis: Documentary follows the journey of a young American Muslim who struggles to take over his father's halal slaughterhouse in New York City.

Running time: 30 minutes

***Exploring Religious America* (2002)**

Producer: Religion and Ethics NewsWeekly

Synopsis: Based on a survey of religious tolerance, beliefs, and practices in the United States, this film presents data and video stories in four areas: religious diversity, Protestants, Catholics, and spirituality in the United States.

Running time: 90 minutes

***Three Faiths, One God: Judaism, Christianity, Islam* (2006)**

Producer: Auteur Productions

Synopsis: Documentary compares similarities and differences in religious beliefs among Islam, Christianity, and Judaism.

Running time: 120 minutes



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