



An Introduction to This Essay by Glen P. Goffin

This Essay by Lt. Col. Glen P. Goffin (USAF-Ret.) was the result of his investigation of an Exhibition by the Library of Congress entitled, "Religion and the Founding of the American Republic." This Exhibition was called to his attention by a letter posted on the Internet and signed by 24 eminent scholars. Those scholars challenged the Library of Congress false interpretation of Thomas Jefferson's famous "wall of separation" letter to the Danbury Baptist Association.

Being a student of American History, and concerned for the freedom of conscience that is the very foundation of all our Freedoms, Col. Goffin determined to investigate the rest of the Exhibit to see if it contained other "reinterpretations."

Col. Goffin's investigation, as shown in this Essay, reveals not only the official responsible for this Exhibition, who was charged with false interpretation by those 24 eminent Scholars, but also reveals many other revisionist interpretations throughout the Exhibition; revisions which support only Christian religious beliefs. He also determined that only Christian organizations and people provided funding and support of this Exhibit.

Yet this false Exhibition, under the prestigious name of 'The Library of Congress,' continues to be presented to the world through the Internet, and allowed to tour America as factual American History. The information revealed by Col. Goffin's Essay should bring about an investigation by Congress, an apology to the American people, and the resignation of all officials involved.

Bank of Wisdom had been aware of this deceptive Exhibit for some time. It was the reason for our CD-ROM #7; "AMERICA; The Historic Facts," and this present CD-ROM of 'The Writings of Thomas Jefferson,' and will bring about other scholarly and factual Works of America's Founding Fathers.

Bank of Wisdom salutes Lt. Col. Glen P. Goffin for his continued service in defense of his Country. It is often considered enough that a soldier defend his Nation in battle, but that it is not the business of the soldier to defend against enemies that destroy a nation from within. But if not the soldier, who? Who could have a greater interest in the continued preservation of a Nation than a soldier who risked life and limb in its defense? The most powerful and unscrupulous enemy of America today is organized religion, and it requires a person of great courage to challenge their devious aggression against our Freedom: Thank you Col. Goffin for being a man of courage.

Emmett F. Fields
Bank of Wisdom

One American's
ESSAY OF INDICTMENT
of the Library of Congress Exhibit:
"Religion and the Founding of the American Republic"

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Dear American Citizen:

Are you concerned about losing the right to safely express your religious, or non-religious, beliefs and opinions without fear of Government interference? If you aren't, one day soon you may wish that you had been. For me, that day came when I inadvertently 'surfed' across the following information on the Internet.

"On June 4, 1998, the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress mounted an exhibit entitled "Religion and the Founding of the American Republic." It is an impressive collection beginning with the English colonization of the 17th century and reaching into the New Republic. It was developed under the direction of Dr. James Hutson, Chief of the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress. Unfortunately, the press, with apparent encouragement from Dr. Hutson, chose to focus on a single document, a letter from President Thomas Jefferson on January 1, 1802 to a Committee of the Danbury (Connecticut) Baptist Association. Concurrent with the press conference, Dr. Hutson released an essay, written on official stationery of the Library of Congress, entitled, "The Wall of Separation Between Church and State: What Jefferson Originally Wrote and What It Means."

After reading the above statement on the Internet, I was curious to read the remainder of the post and identify the author. It came as quite a surprise to discover that 24 eminent and highly qualified scholars had authored it. They were in direct and total disagreement with Dr. Hutson's revisionist interpretation of Jefferson's use of the "wall of separation" phrase. The arguments presented by the 24 scholars made so much common good sense I was disturbed that this Library of Congress spokesperson could have arrived at the alien interpretation that he had and still attempt to claim an unbiased mind. I have always believed that the 'establishment clause' of the 1st Amendment, supported by the Jefferson philosophy of a "wall" of separation between church and state, was one of the truly great gifts that our country had given to the world... the freedom for the individual to express their religious or non-religious conscience without government interference.

Religion in America had flourished in peace, free of Government intrusion, since the ratification of our Bill of Rights. Why would someone knowingly wish to tear down any of that wall of church-state separation? I set about attempting to discover what could be behind this new and unsupported interpretation. I decided to review the entire Library of Congress exhibit to see if other items had been given new unsupported twists.

Upon completion, I was left wondering why the United States Government was suddenly promoting the Christian religion over all other religious or non-religious exercises and expressions of conscience. Had there been some sort of unannounced government coup? Had some secret cabal of armed Christian radicals taken over the rudder of state and abolished all the Supreme Court decisions that expressly mandated our Government to remain neutral concerning religion?

Suddenly I felt a strange uneasiness and insecurity for a man who has spent 65 years living and studying American history with 21 of those years in the service of his country. I had sworn to defend the U.S. Constitution from enemies either foreign or domestic. Had someone captured my government when I wasn't paying close enough attention? This was a very new and distressing thought for an old veteran and 1st Amendment enthusiast. I returned to the exhibit and began a more methodical review hoping to discover that my fears were unfounded. Sadly they were only exacerbated.

Having previously expended a good deal of time and energy learning about the propaganda techniques employed by the former Soviet Union, there was little difficulty readily identifying similar, though often slicker, techniques being employed throughout the entire exhibit. Many of the narratives seemed to consist more of biased opinion than accurate fact. Under whose watch had this been authorized or permitted? The exhibit has been open for public viewing since June 1998. Why had I not heard of any complaints other than the one mounted by the scholars...and that only by pure chance? Was I simply being an alarmist because I happen to recognize the enormous degree of Christian bias in many of the narrations? Was this bias causing the accuracy of the overall presentation to suffer dramatically and present a faulty image of American history to the world?

I decided that I was not simply being an alarmist. Rather, I was deeply wounded by a government that no longer engendered the constitutional principles for which I had been willing to die and that many others already have and may in

the future. That fact has prompted me to write about what I found and produce this "Essay of Indictment." But first a little background information and discussion are required that could help to explain why I have arrived at my position concerning this exhibit.

Dr. Stefan T. Possony, an authority on psychological warfare and revolution, testified before a committee of the Eighty-Sixth Congress that "manipulation of language constitutes one of the Communists' most potent weapons in their drive for world domination." He also said that "to the Communists, words are tools to achieve effects, not means to communicate in the search for truth."

Senator James O. Eastland, Chairman of the 1961 Committee on the Judiciary said, "Words are only as good as their definitions. Our greatest disappointments and defeats in the last 15 years have come to a great extent because the representatives of the free world have tended to define Communists words with a Western dictionary."

In 1961, a House of Representatives Congressional Committee issued a Report on the "National Assembly for Democratic Rights and Citizens Committee for Constitutional Liberties." The name of this report was "Manipulation of Public Opinion by Organizations Under Concealed Control of the Communist Party."

If the reader is wondering why I would dredge up such ancient history, they need only substitute a few key words to appreciate how pertinent the information contained in those reports and testimony is to this specific Library of Congress exhibit. Where Dr. Possony and Senator Eastland use "Communists", substitute "radical Christian fundamentalists." Where the Report title uses "Communist Party", substitute any number of avowedly intolerant and anti-democratic, radical, Christian organizations. (Many of the Christian Identity, Neo-Nazi, Aryan Nation, Posse Comitatus, and State Militia groups, and even a few, media headline grabbing, national Christian organizations could be substituted.) However, this only helps to show that propaganda techniques are well known and of long standing. A few of the more obvious word manipulations and techniques used in the exhibit are as follows:

1. Using "religion/religious" to mean "Christian/Christianity. The word "religious" is stealth doublespeak because approximately 86% of current Americans of religious faith profess that they are Christians. The 1991 "Encyclopedia of American Religions" lists 1,588 religious denominations, sects,

faith groups, organizations, etc. in just North America alone. I estimate at least 1,200 of these claim to be Christian. If there are 1,200 "different" organized definitions of Christian, how can any single group, or coalition, of Christians claim to be representative of, and speak for, all of Christianity? Simple! They can't...unless they are allowed to get away with lumping all 1,200 under the buzz words "religion/religious"... especially when discussing the period of American history covered by the exhibit.

2. Using "church" to mean "religion", and "state" to mean "government". When discussing the wall of separation between church and state, we are actually discussing the wall of separation between religion and government...the Christian deities and Caesar.

3. Even though the exhibit accurately identifies Deism as a religion, it is presented in a manner that would lead the reviewer to mentally substitute it for "Freethinkers", and "Freethinkers" as a substitute for "any person who does not accept the Christian Bible as the revealed word of a supernatural God." This would include Atheists, Agnostics, Humanists, New Agers and Skeptics of every ilk. Therefore, many Americans equate Deism with Atheism and other non-Christian beliefs. This leads those Americans to believe what they are told about Christianity as the sole source of moral and ethical values in an early America. (As I will attempt to reveal, the exhibit narrations use this inaccurate belief as an additional propaganda tool to help manipulate the uninformed reviewer to believe that only Christianity was responsible for the way the American republic was founded.)

4. One of the most effective propaganda techniques is the use of "Omission" to render a presentation to seem as though it is revealing the whole story while in fact it is only a portion of it. This lack of salutary balance is particularly insidious and destructive in maintaining a democratically elected and representative government. It is unconscionable if practiced by any agent of that government such as the highly esteemed Library of Congress. Each reviewer must arrive at their own conclusions about whether this exhibit has practiced such propagandistic deceit. (One way that this exhibit could have avoided much of my criticism would have been to leave the word "Founding" out of the title. In my opinion, "Religion and the Early American Republic" would have made the exhibit much less controversial.)

Unfortunately the exhibit is far too extensive to go into an analysis of every questionable item. Additionally, providing accurate amplifications on all the possible pertinent omissions would be a truly daunting task. Therefore, I will attempt to elaborate on only a few of the more startling items and omissions. Hopefully they will be enough to adequately explain my deep concerns about this particular exhibit and its world-wide impact on understanding and appreciating the need to maintain the "high" wall of church-state separation. Now we may proceed.

The impact of this cleverly orchestrated exhibit on our religious and governmental history knowledge is to make it seem as though certain members of the "Christian" community and "The Great Awakening"(1734-50) are the sole motivators of, and responsible for, the War of Independence (The Colonial Insurrection, as it is known abroad) and the framing of the U.S. Constitution in 1787. This is a total fabrication and unworthy of those who have created or supported this "official" U.S. Government position. In the darkest hours of the Cold War, the anti-religious Soviet Government could not have ever hoped to have perpetrated this kind of overwhelming propagandistic fraud on the American psyche as effectively as this one exhibit is doing. This fraud is successfully accomplished through revisionist history at the hands of a few "spin doctors". These academic, religious stealth, warriors may not even recognize that they are accomplishing what Karl Marx, Lenin and Stalin could not...the enslavement of America's religious freedoms on the altar of their own personal faith beliefs and opinions.

A portion of the exhibit's "Introduction" states, "The result was that a religious people rose in rebellion against Great Britain in 1776, and that most American statesmen, when they began to form new governments at the state and national levels, shared the convictions of most of their constituents that religion was, to quote Alexis de Tocqueville's observation, indispensable to the maintenance of republican institutions." (What is the purpose of this statement? How accurate is it? What image does it create?)

Why does the author of this Introduction cleverly use written juxtaposition when inferring that state and federal governments were formed simultaneously by the identical religious people. In reality, well over 150 years passed between the formation of most colonial governments and the federal one created in the Philadelphia Constitutional Convention of 1787 that legally founded our "democratic" republic. Additionally, in 1776, Great Britain was a Christian nation

with a large number of religious supporters (Tories/Anglicans) to be found among the American colonists. The author does not mention that the majority of religious colonial Americans initially viewed those calling for revolution to be no more than trouble-making, self-serving, revolutionary terrorists bent on acquiring power for themselves. Many of the leaders of this rebellious group were believed to have been seduced by a so-called unholy and un-Christian belief in Deism.

How many first time exhibit viewers will be aware of how intolerant many of the early colonial state governments had been toward all Christian expressions of conscience except their own state established ones? Will the reviewer know that Quakers had been hung and, so-called, witches hung or executed in one colony?

Why does the narrative writer not see fit to reveal that Alexis de Tocqueville was a 25 year old, Catholic, of noble birth who, in 1831-32, spent only nine months traveling though 17, of the then 24, states examining our penal systems. In 1835 and 1840, he wrote of his experiences and observations in his well researched and often prophetic books about "Democracy in America". (Hardly a first hand observer and interpreter of all the factors leading to the Revolution and founding of our constitutional form of democratic government...especially considering that he would not have been welcomed, or allowed, in the majority of the pre-Revolutionary colonies because of his "Papist" beliefs.

All over the world, a great many people, believers and non-believers, have rebelled against single religion governments. The Native Americans rebelled against our "religious" colonial governments and paid a horrible price in blood and land. This exhibit chooses to remain silent on the subject of how our 'godly' early American Christians treated the Native Americans who could not be converted to a specific individual's expression of Christianity. However, a converted tribe is featured in the exhibit as though a glorious victory for religion. The fact that it was these same God fearing Christian religionists who lied to, stole land from, and slaughtered the unconverted Native Americans, like just so many buffalo, is not addressed.

The world has been awash in religious wars for at least 2,000 years. The academic "spinmeisters" of this exhibit could just as easily have claimed that the War Between the States(Civil War) was precipitated by the religious Yankees (Unionists) and the religious Rebels(Confederates) because they disagreed over the interpretations of the writings in their identical Christian holy scriptures

concerning slavery....if the Civil War was even fought over slavery rather than State's Rights and economics....though perhaps fueled on both sides by emotional religious preachings.

Additionally, before the fact rather than after, Alexis de Tocqueville predicted that America would have difficulty coming to terms with the slavery issue. In France, only one interpretation of the Christian Bible was officially sanctioned by the government. Mr. de Tocqueville suggested that single, dogmatic, interpretations offered stabilizing influences not found where multiple ones existed. In his second volume on the American Democracy he wrote, " There are religions that are false and very absurd, but it may be affirmed that any religion which remains within the circle I have just traced, without pretending to go beyond it (as many religions have attempted to do, for the purpose of restraining on every side the free movement of the human mind)..."; and, "This is especially true of men living in free countries..."; and, "Religious nations are therefore naturally strong on the very point on which democratic nations are weak; this shows of what importance it is for men to preserve their religion as their conditions become more equal."

Would these sentiments indicate a man who understood or who would support the separation of church and state? Not hardly! Would they indicate a proponent of church-state collusion. Most definitely! Perhaps that is why his words were selected for use by the exhibit rather than those of his "Enlightenment" countryman, Voltaire(1694-1778), who wrote," If you have two religions in your land, the two will cut each other's throats; but if you have thirty religions, they will dwell in peace." Voltaire went on to write, "Of all religion, Christianity is without doubt the one that should inspire tolerance most, although, up to now, the Christians have been the most intolerant of men." It was Voltaire's words that vibrated in the minds of our Founding Fathers as well as across the land, not those of the 1835 and 1840 Mr. de Tocqueville. One could easily claim that de Tocqueville found American Democracy and religious dogma antithetical. (If that claim be true, it is all the more reason to wonder why this specific Frenchman's thoughts were placed where they were within the exhibit. It would appear to serve but one purpose, to help support the other questionable contentions made by this narrative's author and throughout the exhibit.)

Thus, in just a small segment of the exhibit's introductory remarks, the unwary reviewer is left with little, or a mis-directed, understanding of the role of religion in the founding of the American Republic. It does not point out that only a portion

of the original colonists came here seeking religious freedom from their Christian bretheran. However, the Introduction does set-up the reviewer for the specific Christian ride on which the exhibit's designers have embarked.

Considerable emphasis is placed on several Continental Congresses and their religious contributions to our Republic's founding. One narrative concerning the passage of the Northwest Ordinance on July 13, 1787 comes in for particular emphasis because of the nature of its Article 3 language which states, "Religion, Morality and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind..." (Why the capitalization of two words and not the third..."knowledge?")

How many people would know or care that this is only a partial quote of Section 14, Article 3 (of 6) and that the remainder of this Article definitively states how the Indians shall be treated...but were obviously not by other highly religious people? How many Americans, let alone world viewers, would know that Article 1 states, "No person, demeaning himself in a peaceable and orderly manner, shall ever be molested on account of his mode of worship, or religious sentiments, in said territory." Why did the exhibit's creators select only a portion of Article 3, rather than all of Article 1, for special note? Could it be that Article 1 establishes the foundation for church and state separation whereas a portion of Article 3 attempts to accomplish the opposite? Interestingly enough, the exhibit points out that the Congress did not fund the Article 3 portion. To what end was that piece of information added? Perhaps to imply that the folks living in the old Northwest are not religious, moral or knowledgeable because Congress did not allot funds for that purpose? Or could there have been another purpose...like the need for Federal tax funds to promote religious goals? But whose religious goals?

So exactly who were these so-called highly religious Founding Fathers of these early Continental Congresses? Most of those with whom the American public is most familiar were conducting secret debates at the Friday session of the Constitutional Convention when the men of this 13th Continental Congress issued this particular Ordinance. Even though there were 15 Continental Congress sessions held between Sept. 5, 1774 and Mar 2, 1789, with many of the more famous Founding Fathers sitting in session at one time or another, in 1778, Robert Morris said, "The Continental Congress and the currency have greatly depreciated." (If the Continental Congress had been so effective in our founding, why, in 1787, did our Founding Fathers believe that there was an urgent need to replace it with something that was truly effective?)

The exhibit features many military religious rules and guides issued by the so-called highly religious men of the earlier Continental Congresses, but nothing about how the inertia of these same members nearly resulted in General Washington and the Continental Army losing the war. The War was won in spite of the "Christian" Continental Congress, not because of it. (Just read Gen. Washington's written, desperate, pleas to that same Congress.) Congress could not even provide General Washington's forces with the timely means to survive let alone win. Perhaps someone thought that starving men's stomachs could be filled and nourished by Christian moral values and rules. If it hadn't been for some of those non-Christian Native Americans of the Oneida Tribe (Peoples) providing Washington's troops with some critically needed food stores during the 1777/78 winter at Valley Forge, and the Oneida woman, Polly (Cobus) Cooper, teaching the soldiers how to cook corn before eating it, independence might well have died there and the Continental Congress, that was quick with plenty of written moral guidance but little food, right along with it.

After the war, when Washington offered to pay Polly for her vital contributions to victory, she refused to accept any money. How ironic for today's Christian Nation claimants to learn that pagan morality and ethical values were more responsible for the founding and survival of the American Republic than any supernatural intercession to which these Christian Nation claimants constantly attempt to lay claim.

As far back as 1635, Roger Williams argued for church-state separation and against the Massachusetts Bay magistrates' claim "that their efforts to create a Godly commonwealth made them special favorites of divine providence." (Obviously "them" being these specific Christian Protestants.) For these preachings, he was banished, on foot, into the wilderness snows of a Massachusetts January. He trudged south and established the colony of Rhode Island, "where liberty of conscience would be assured to every citizen." (This was some 154 years before it was finally ratified into constitutional law via the 1st Amendment church-state separation clause.)

It should be quite clear that religious freedom to express Christian biblical interpretations, other than their own, was never a goal of the first European settlers in this land. Quite the opposite. They would have been horrified by the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution. I have little doubt that both documents would have been declared as the works of Satan...and the latter was because of its lack of reference to any God or any deference to Christian

dogma. It was not until late in the 18th Century that the practical importance of freedom of conscience and religious liberty really began to gain a permanent place in the mind's of "We the People". The seed of religious tolerance planted by Roger Williams, nourished by the thinkers of the Enlightenment, and watered by the influx of differing Protestant denominations had grown into the strong stem and sweet smelling flower of religious liberty and tolerance that we know and enjoy today...and all primarily due to the legally enforceable separation of church from state. (This exhibit does little to help the reviewer to understand or appreciate the factors which led to the founding of a republic which separated religion from government for the first time in human history. Quite the opposite. The exhibit makes it seem as though this was a terrible mistake engineered by a few 'atheistic' Deists like Thomas Paine, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, John Adams, Alexander Hamilton, Benjamin Franklin, Ethan Allen, and a group of their intellectual "comrades" in revolution.)

Prior to the Constitution and Bill of Rights being ratified, many of the states physically forced and taxed their citizens to adhere to, and support, "their" specific Christian denomination dogma. They accomplished this by establishing governments that followed the church-state collusion pattern of their European homelands. These kinds of patterns were, and continue to be, inherently hostile to any other religious dogma, whether Christian or not, gaining adherents and power within the pre-established governmental borders. (i.e.: Northern Ireland, Kashmir, Indonesia-Timor, Yugoslavia-Kosovo, Somalia, Iraq, Philippines, Near East, ad nauseum.)

One glaring example of the negative bias against Deism, and by default promoting Christianity, found throughout the exhibit is the manner in which the exhibit's narrations constantly play down Thomas Paine and his writings contained in such famous American Republic foundation establishing works as "Common Sense", "The American Crisis" series, "The Rights of Man", and "The Age of Reason". The impact those writings had on the daily lives and discussions of every citizen concerned with religious and governmental tyrannies, whether at home or abroad, were prodigious. But it is not until the final section of the exhibit that Paine's immense influence over people and events are provided a separate discussion. (Why this placement? Why two unflattering narratives about Paine and his Deistic views and writings sandwiched into the final Section of the exhibit?)

These two narratives devote themselves to the "pious" Americans who called "The Age of Reason" (not published until 1794), the "Atheist's Bible." Yet Thomas Paine was an avowed believer in one God, "and no more," and hoped for a happiness beyond this life. How many of these so-called "pious" people had been Tory sympathizers during the War? How many were terrified at the results of the French Revolution and the loss of a Monarchy? How many already held great enmity for Mr. Paine because of his direct and acerbic attacks on them or the institutions they supported? (A truly "pious" Christian loves his fellow man and turns the other cheek. Obviously these cited people were either not Christians, or not pious. Maybe Paine exposed Federalist, non-democratic, republican hypocrites within the current American administration as well as unrepentant Tories. The exhibit does not inform us.)

Paine's "Common Sense", a 50 page pamphlet, was published on January 10, 1776 and distributed throughout the country by the tens-of-thousands. It became the war-cry of the revolutionary movement. In addition to calling for a declaration of independence from England, it "urged the colonies to establish in North America a haven of refuge for the oppressed peoples of the world." (John Adams had already called for such independence, but perhaps not as effectively for reasons that came to light later.) George Washington wrote, when referring to information received from Virginia, that "Common Sense is working a powerful change there in the minds of many men." Paine fans have even made a viable case that Thomas Jefferson plagiarized many of Thomas Paine's thoughts and words when drafting the Declaration of Independence.

If "Common Sense" helped to provide the philosophical and practical backbone for commencing the American Revolution, then it must be claimed that Paine's series of thirteen "The American Crisis" articles gave the country, and especially the rag-tag, badly beaten and thoroughly dissipated Continental Army of December 1776, the moral imperative and justification to carry on to victory. Who does not know the opening line and many of the others contained in that first "Crisis" article? General Washington commanded that the article be read to his men on the eve of their attack on the Hessian forces just outside Trenton. Just a few of the lines are: "These are the times that try men's souls...What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly: it is dearness only that gives every thing its value...I have as little superstition in me as any man living, but my secret opinion has ever been, and still is, that God Almighty will not give a people to military destruction,

or leave them unsupportedly to perish,..." (How can any exhibit viewer possibly hope to understand the role of religion in the Founding of the American Republic without first understanding Paine's views on religion?)

Why has the exhibit treated Thomas Paine in the manner it has? If George Washington is known as the Father of his Country, then Thomas Paine could easily have been called the Father, or Guiding Light, of the American Revolution. Could it be because Paine's expression of religious convictions had to be discredited so it would seem that they had no role or any influence on the 'Founding of the American Republic'?

Why has a complete Alexis de Tocqueville quote been added shortly after Mr. Paine's narratives and just one entry before the end of the final section? Why are these beliefs of an anti-democratic 1830's French visitor chosen to open and close the exhibit on "Religion and the Founding of the American Republic" in favor of America's foremost democrat. How odd! Or is it?

The exhibit could have included a quote attributed to the Marquis de Lafayette, a French officer who fought with us in the Revolutionary War as a Congressionally conferred Major General and who became a life-long friend of George Washington. He observes, "If the liberties of the American people are ever destroyed, they will fall by the hands of the clergy." That is certainly a solid reference to "Religion and the Founding of the American Republic" by a Frenchman who fought and was wounded for that founding, and not merely regurgitated by a French tourist some 55 years after the fact. (What would have caused Lafayette to have harbored his belief? Something he observed while present at the scene perhaps? That would seem hardly possible according to the manipulators of this exhibit.)

This stilted exhibit claims that 1776 Americans were "a religious people, who rose up against Great Britain." That statement is completely contrary to the findings of other highly qualified religious history and government experts who have calculated that only 10-15 percent of the 1770's population were church members. (Renowned religious historian, Robert T. Handy said, "No more than 10 percent-- probably less-- of Americans in 1800 were members of congregations.") For what purpose, to what end, did the creators of this exhibit make their claim that 75-80 percent of the 18th Century colonists were religious? In either case, the majority of those church members were women and children because they were denied access to the political and secular affairs of the states

due, in no small part, to Christian religious dogma enforced by the religiously tested members of the state governments. (Without being able to look into the mind of each person who fought against Great Britain, I believe that it is almost impossible to validate such statistical hindights. Therefore anyone's percentage claims are immediately suspect. Religious or non-religious, humans are known to lie in order to promote, or protect, their own self-interests and beliefs.)

Though the exhibit accurately identifies that Deism was a minority religious faith within the family of early American theistic philosophies, it also confirms that it attracted adherents from among America's most educated and worldly thinkers and contributors. One need only read "The Federalist Papers", by Madison, Hamilton and Jay, to readily understand, through its appeal to pure reason rather than Christian dogma or religious evangelicalism, the true impact of Enlightenment reasoning on the founding of our government. Many of the most instrumental and influential members of our democratic republic's founding were Deists in mind, if not always in physical and verbal action. For a government exhibit to claim otherwise, it is a modern perversion of the written records left by many of these Founding Fathers.

Why was the Constitutional Convention of 1787 conducted in secret? What, if anything, did these "Founding Fathers" fear from their fellow countrymen if it was discovered that no religious invocations were a part of the daily deliberations? Why was it necessary to birth a democracy of freedom in the dark corner of secrecy? Yet the exhibit manages to cite only Benjamin Franklin and his memorable June 28th speech calling for prayers to precede each day's debate. The fact that Franklin was an 81 year old Deist, or that his call for prayer was an attempt to keep the Convention on tract at a critical stage of deliberations, is not explained. (Why else make a motion and speech for prayer after many weeks of "small progress?") Based only on the statement of Hugh Williamson, of North Carolina, the exhibit writer alleges that a lack of money was the reason that prayers were excluded? Yet even while Franklin's motion was under discussion, Edmund J. Randolph, of Virginia, proposed a sermon be preached on the 4th of July "and thenceforward prayers be used in the Convention every morning." This proposal was seconded by Dr. Franklin. However, "After several unsuccessful attempts for silently postponing the matter by adjournment, the adjournment was at length carried, without any vote on the matter." Why would such a motion have been made after it was claimed that there were insufficient funds to hire clergymen if the issue of available funds were the true reason that no prayer was "ever" preached as a part of the Convention debates? Several of the debate

attendees were ordained to preach, but were never invited to do so, nor did they offer. Could there have been a more subtle reason for adjournment without a vote on either motion and the subject never having arisen again? All that seems to matter to the exhibit producers is that Dr. Franklin said something about religion in the debates.

Deism is a recognized "religion". Why then would the exhibit's creators go to such great lengths to place questions and doubts in the viewing public's mind about the specific denominational identity of the men who practiced it? The exhibit seems to go to extraordinary lengths to claim them for Christianity if it can be uncovered, anywhere within the body of the historical records, that any one of these Founders was ever observed within a Christian house of worship, had ever listened to a Christian sermon, or had ever uttered any word or phrase which could advance the goals of Christian faith and dogma. (Could it be that during the times of their greatest historical accomplishments to the founding of our democratic republic that too many of the key Fathers were actually philosophical Deists rather than dutiful practicing Christians?)

Perhaps a simple belief in a Nature's God, rather than a biblical one, is not welcome in a Christian oriented propaganda campaign that must resort to so much academic prestidigitation in order to present the semblance of a convincing case for their personal biases. Is the exhibit reviewer supposed to believe that only Christian dogma can produce human acts of creative wisdom, goodness and integrity, and nothing un-patriotic or un-American? Reading these narratives would tend to make one believe that is the case. Yet there are many patriotic Americans who claim that no religious belief is required to produce a person, or a nation, with moral and ethical values; and many religious Americans who have proven to be just about as un-patriotic and un-American as one can be. Shouldn't expressions of conscience live or die on their own merit, not by any government's edict, intrusion or influence?

It can be accurately argued that many early colonial governments represented only specific Christian denomination views. It can not be honestly argued that the Constitution and Bill of Rights were not intentionally crafted to force the new federal government to remain neutral in and on matters of religious conscience and expression. The increasing religious and non-religious pluralism within the citizens of this country caused them not to desire a federal government capable of writing any religious mandate into law. Why then, today, intentionally attempt to convince an unsuspecting audience otherwise? Whose religious stealth agenda is

being hyped and followed by an arm of "everyone's" federal government in violation of all that I swore an oath to protect? Is it the religious agenda of some foreign terrorist group sworn to destroy America and all its institutions? Or could it be our own friends, families and neighbors efforts after having been falsely informed by a select group of power hungry religious reconstructionists and revisionists. Men bent on usurping, destroying or otherwise neutralizing anything that they imagine stands between them and the supposed supremacy of "their" inerrant faith beliefs and values? I believe it is the latter. (Our Founding Fathers clearly understood that there were those who would attempt to do this. Why don't we?)

The entire exhibit has been placed in question because of a few clever, though insidiously malignant, pieces of erroneous and stilted history and unexplained opinions or omissions. A particularly egregious piece of propagandistic sleight of hand appears in the narrative concerning the "Reforms in the Prebyterian Church" where the phrase "a part of the constitution" appears twice, in quotes, as though referencing the U.S. Constitution. It is not! That quote is referencing the altered Westminster Confession being printed as part of "The Government and Discipline of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America." Why would that one short phrase have been placed in quotation marks if not to lead the casual reader astray? Could it have been done intentionally hoping to make the reader believe that a Christian religious belief was the basis of the U.S. Constitution? If so, it would be an unconscionable attempt to mislead the public by someone in the employ of our federal government.

In reality, many aspects of our Constitution were derived from the Virginia Plan and the Constitution of the Iroquois Nations("The Iroquois Book of the Great Law"), not from the Christian scriptures as the exhibit seemingly attempts to imply. Did the Iroquois Nations have a religious belief system? You bet they did...and it included a virgin birth. Did it contribute to the Founding of the American Republic? It would certainly seem so...but it wasn't Christian based. Only the religions of the original and follow-on, white, European, invaders and their slaves, were treated in a positive light within this exhibit. (Seem like a harsh indictment? Accurate facts often are.)

Is it possible that those responsible for this revisionism are "not" those who would promote a democratic republic? Could they desire a return to a theocratic government patterned after those found throughout a 16th, 17th and 18th Century Europe, where the dogma of a single Christian denomination ruled supreme and

religious wars abounded? For me, that would be more un-American and a greater threat to our democratic, constitutional, liberties and freedoms than any that we have ever faced before... whether theistic or atheistic. It would make me believe that some people employed by the Library of Congress are a pack of religious reconstructionist ideologues bent on re-establishing the power bases of the colonial theocracies that were lost because of the ratification of the U.S. Constitution, Bill of Rights and the 14th Amendment. (Whether my accusations are accurate or not is irrelevant. It is how I perceive the total impact of this exhibit on the world-wide viewing public. Why would our government authorize and approve such an exhibit when it clearly excludes millions of our current citizens from gaining an unbiased understanding of why they sought, and were welcomed to, this land where the safe exercise of religious or non-religious conscience was legally protected by the constitutional separation of church and state?)

I am dismayed that this terribly flawed exhibit is not only open to the American public but is actually being presented to a world wide audience on the Internet. What are the peoples in other lands, and of differing religious faiths, to believe about the claims of our Founding Fathers that "As the government of the United States of America is not founded in any sense on the Christian religion --"? Were our founders just a bunch of lying, hypocritical, Christians? Evidently Americans at the beginning of the 20th century didn't think so. Why did the exhibit designers elect to omit a reference to the "Treaty of Peace and Friendship Between the Bey and Subjects of Tripoli of Barbary?"

Article XI to the English translation of this Treaty reads, "As the government of the United States of America is not founded in any sense on the Christian religion -- as it has in itself no character of enmity against the laws, religion or tranquility of Musselmen -- and as the said states have never entered into any war or act of hostility against any Mahometan nation, it is declared by the parties, that no pretext arising from religious opinions shall ever produce an interruption of the harmony existing between the two countries."

Though arguments have abounded over the origin, and even the accuracy, of Article XI of this Treaty as translated from the Arabic by Joel Barlow in 1796, none have successfully argued about its existence. In the Spring of 1899, at the beginning of the war with Spain, it was discovered that there were Muslims in the Philippines who might start a Holy War against the United States. Mr. Oscar S. Straus (1850-1926) gained an audience with the Sultan of Turkey, Abdul Hamid, and presented him the Joel Barlow version of the Treaty translated back into

Turkish. After allowing the Sultan to read it, Mr. Straus requested the Sultan, as Caliph of the Muslim religion, to act against the possibility of an Islamic Holy War against the American forces in the Philippines. After the Sultan read it, he sent a message to the Sulu Muslims of the Philippines forbidding them to fight the Americans as no interference with their religion would be allowed under American rule. President McKinley sent a personal letter of thanks to Mr. Straus saying he had saved at least 20,000 American troops in the field.

Why is there no narrative concerning this Treaty in the exhibit? And compounding that omission, why is the following endorsement omitted? It is affixed to the Treaty by the President of the United States. He writes, "Now, be it known, that I, John Adams, President of the United States of America, having seen and considered the said treaty, do, by and within the consent of the Senate, accept, ratify and confirm the same, and every clause and article thereof." (Perhaps the fact that neither the Treaty with Tripoli nor this John Adam's statement are mentioned in the exhibit tells more about the stealth goals of the exhibit than it does about "Religion in the Founding of the American Republic.")

Even though this definitive statement concerning the American Government's founding appears only in this one treaty, and only in this English language translation of the treaty, that does not seem like a reasonable excuse to exclude it from the exhibit. President Adams added his personal statement to it after the treaty had been read to, and unanimously ratified by, the Senate without any debate. It was published in a number of the leading newspapers of the day. It remains in the permanent records of the U.S. State Department. Why would the exhibit designers fail to even mention it? What, then, is the damage being done to America's image as the bastion of free religious expression and exercise by this federally approved exhibit? Certainly this omission could not be due to a simple oversight or lack of space. If for no other reason, in a world already tense because of the strains between Christian and Muslim true believers, why would this key piece of America's religious founding be omitted. (I also suspect that those 20,000 American military servicemen and their families, to whom President McKinley referred, would care a great deal about government interference in religion. Fortunately for them, Mr. Straus understood the true significance of that statement in the treaty.)

However, as a Christian propaganda piece, a great deal can be exposed by looking at the manner in which the exhibit's authors handle the early Presidents' religious affiliations and beliefs. Considerable liberties are taken with the references to John Adams and several others.

First, in at least two places, they describe President Adams as a leading Deist. However, when it suits their purposes, Adams becomes "a church going animal." This quote is used at least four times when it suits the author's purposes. However, in a specific Adams narrative, when referring to a 19 April 1817 letter from him to Jefferson, not only do they repeat the "animal" quote but add the following, "Without Religion this World would be Something not fit to be mentioned in polite Company, I mean Hell." Why is this the specific quote selected out of the long letter? In a less than convincing way, the authors opine that Adams was probably more Unitarian at the time he wrote this particular letter. Why, after stating that he was a leading Deist, would they feel the necessity to describe him thusly? If one reads the entire letter, including the page displayed beside the narrative, they can easily see that John Adams was torn by the identical issue I raise in this indictment. How to successfully maintain a separation between religion and government? Late in life, John Adams seemed to fear doing away with all religion, though he had often felt like calling for that, rather than allowing only one religion to have complete control. Hardly the thoughts and words of a zealous Christian. Yet, in a March 5, 1798 article in a Philadelphia newspaper, President Adams had been described, somewhat sarcastically, as "most Christian president." (But a fuller understanding of this issue is left for the diligent reader to uncover for themselves and wonder why the exhibit's authors would have made the claims they did, in the manner they did.)

Though granting that Thomas Jefferson was a leading Deist, the authors stretch credulity to the limit when attempting to tie Jefferson to supernatural Christianity. In one narrative when supposedly discussing Jefferson's views regarding Jesus, they offer a quote from a Jefferson letter to his close friend Benjamin Rush. They claim Jefferson asserted that he was a "Christian, in the only sense in which [Jesus] wished any one to be." However, if one were to read more of that same letter, they would discover that what Jefferson actually wrote was, "To the corruptions of Christianity I am indeed opposed, but not to the genuine precepts of Jesus himself. I am a Christian, in the only sense he wished any one to be; ..."

This would appear to be the single, most important, issue faced by anyone calling themselves a Christian today. Must they believe in the supernatural

inerrancy of everything written in the Holy Bible in order to be a Christian; or only in the completely human precepts of Jesus himself? Obviously Jefferson, and many other Founding Fathers, subscribed to the latter belief. Unfortunately for anyone exposed to this exhibit, it seems that only the former definition is valued and promoted. Why?

I sincerely believe that much of the damage done to the accurate reasons behind our Revolutionary War and the most religiously liberating document ever created, the U.S. Constitution, may already be irreversible because of the U.S. Government's Library of Congress imprimatur on this flawed exhibit. Perhaps those who have overtly claimed that they are at war with those who refuse to accept "their" faith belief interpretations have not revealed that they have enlisted and are utilizing many covert agents and techniques in this war to "brainwash" the minds of the American public and the world. A war where the precepts of Christianity, as I understand them, are placed in abeyance in order to allow the ends to justify the means. A war where baring 'false witness' is an accepted weapon. A war in which no one will truly win, but where everyone could truly lose.

Without adequately explaining the mutual self-interest 'give and take tolerance' and rational thought of our numerous religious and non-religious groups of the past, this exhibit makes it too easy to visualize that only one Christian denomination flag will be flying over our nation's capital if these reconstructionists can cloud the minds of the American electorate long enough to gain political control of our government. Instead of rendering unto Caesar (Luke 20:25), it will be rendering unto whichever Christian denomination wrests final control from all the other Christian denominations. And history has clearly, though sadly and bloodily, indicated that there will be a wrestling match.

Whether murdering Pro-Choice advocates, non-whites, Jews, intellectuals, homosexuals, or merely those of differing religious belief systems, it is not considered murder in the convoluted reasoning of the perpetrators of these heinous acts of barbarism. These murderers and assassins, claiming, under the catch-all phrase of being devout religionists, believe that they are merely the instruments of "their" God's will as "they" interpret it...regardless of the existing secular laws. (A claim often made by the terrorists of the world in a disingenuous attempt at justification for the indiscriminate human slaughter they reap in the name of their various Gods and causes.) Instead, it is merely the reflection of little, ignorant, sick, closed minds being fed a steady diet of self-serving drivel by

power hungry leaders. Destroying our constitutional government and replacing it with a theistic one of "their" own is being done in the name of "their" God's will. Thus, the question that everyone should be asking is, "When will their interpretation of 'their' God's will demand that they murder or destroy those who choose to resist their efforts and dogma?"

Another truly revealing insight into this exhibit's preferential bias is the matter of how Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition seized on the 4 June 1998 opening date of the exhibit, inviting everyone to see it, and the Library's Manuscripts Division Chief's erroneous interpretation of the Thomas Jefferson "wall" of separation letter, to lobby Congress into passing the Religious Freedom Amendment(RFA). Had the RFA passed, it would have disemboweled the 'establishment clause' of the 1st Amendment. Why would one group of, self-proclaimed, religious Christians wish to destroy the establishment clause? Why would they be so anxious that everyone view this new exhibit if they believed that it didn't support their specific Christian inerrancy dogma?

The Manuscript Division Chief is the same man responsible for this exhibit. Why did he make his media release about the exhibit revolve around his personal interpretation of the Jefferson letter? Why isn't the fact that he came under fire from 21 eminent and highly qualified academic scholars, who factually and historically challenged his interpretations, made a part of the exhibit's presentation of this letter? However, the Christian Coalition continues to tout his flawed interpretation as the only correct one and no correction appears to have been made to the exhibit's narratives concerning this letter. Why?

Who are the people and covert agents behind this exhibit? Why do they seek to destroy the "high" wall between religion and government? A close examination of the three corporate sponsors of the exhibit and their stated aims and goals proved to be both enlightening and troubling. Discovering more about each of them provided additional confirmation of my suspicions about the stealth purpose of this exhibit.

To repeat an old adage, "Use it, or lose it!" I have chosen to use my rights of free speech and individual conscience to write this "Essay of Indictment" rather than lose them to those who would present me with a beatific smile, or academic scowl, while picking my constitutionally protected, religious or non-religious, pocket. I sincerely hope that other supporters of our Constitution, Amendments and Church-State separation will become better informed, if they sincerely value their personal beliefs and individual liberties already paid for by the blood of so many others. One price of freedom is constant vigilance...at home...as well as abroad.

Very sincerely,

Glen P. Goffin

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