



## Lake Almanor Community Church

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2/22/07

To whom it may concern:

My name is Todd DuBord and I am the Senior Pastor of Lake Almanor Community Church in California. I've attempted a few different times over the past months (by mail and fax) to inform you of my experience on the tour at Monticello. Because I have not had a reply in four months, I'm writing again with further evidence about Jefferson I've researched in the Library of Congress.

Attached (also online at [www.lacconline.org](http://www.lacconline.org)) is a copy of that experience, "A Gate between Church and State," in which I also discuss (documentation from the Library of Congress) how Thomas Jefferson intermingled politics and religion throughout his political career. What I discuss in this document was denied by a tour guide at Monticello when 50 of us from California were being taught by him. When asked about Jefferson's religion, He said quite overly confident, "We all know Jefferson was a strict deist, who ardently fought for the separation of Church and State." He then supported his claim by a diatribe of comments about how secular Thomas Jefferson was. The problem is that his claims reveal how unfortunately ill-equipped he was in how often Jefferson passed through the wall of separation of Church and State in his various positions in government, including president. Attached is a copy of that documentation—which I am hoping can be passed on to the guides at Monticello to broaden their understanding of Jefferson and his views on religion and state.

I'm not an extremist, but a religion major and an American citizen who is sincerely concerned with the preservation of truth and tradition that has been handed down to us (as I'm sure you are too). Again, I'm respectfully requesting this information is passed along to tour guides and that the Thomas Jefferson Foundation assures their guides are presenting a clearer picture of Jefferson, especially in how he not only intermingled politics and religion but was himself much more religious than often assumed or conveyed, even at Monticello.

Respectfully,

Todd DuBord (M.Div.)  
Senior Pastor  
Lake Almanor Community Church

Cc: The Governor of Virginia and other governmental officials

## **“A Gate between Church and State”**

By Chaplain Todd DuBord (M. Div.)

([www.nationaltreasures.org](http://www.nationaltreasures.org))

As an atheist, I used to believe in “a wall of separation between Church and State.” After researching the religion and politics of Thomas Jefferson in the Library of Congress, I now understand that barrier was a gate Jefferson would often pass through.

### **The fellow at Monticello**

I don't believe Thomas Jefferson was an evangelical Christian.

I don't believe he was orthodox in most of his doctrine either.

What's more important, at least for this treatise here, is that I also don't believe he was a dogmatic deist with a secular progressive agenda to rid religion (specifically Christianity) from government, as he is often conveyed, even by our tour guide at Jefferson's estate, Monticello, in July of 2006.



(Source of photo unknown at time)

While our guide that summer day was cordial and informative about many matters, when asked about the religious faith of Thomas Jefferson, he abruptly and actually quite arrogantly turned saying, “We all know Jefferson was a strict deist, who ardently fought for the separation of Church and State” (for those who don't know, a deist is, in short, a person who believes in a Creator who does not involve himself in the personal and daily affairs of men). The guide's added comments left no doubt that Jefferson would have never allowed any mixture of religion in government. But is that the truth?

The truth is Jefferson was more religious than most know and used both his governmental positions and even funds on occasion to establish churches, distribute biblical information, and promote Christianity. Yes, promote! Let me explain.

## The rule of king and priest: the background of Jefferson's opposition

If one is to understand Thomas Jefferson's views of religion, Christianity, and especially the separation of Church and State, one must understand the government and religion of England and its effects upon the first two centuries of our nation.

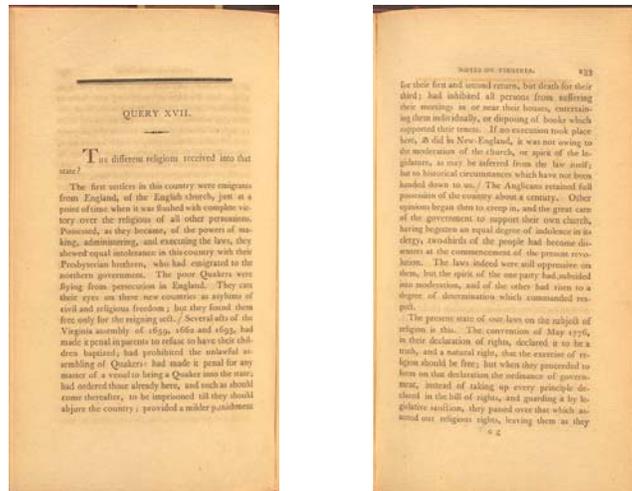
The fact is the only England early American colonists knew was one ruled by kings and priests. This form of tyranny was the milieu in which our country and Jefferson was born and would fight. He did not want America to model the motherland, at least not in this respect.

Jefferson, being born in Virginia, was also raised Anglican (Church of England)—the only denomination funded by Virginia taxes at the time. Anglican's apparent religious (if you will) monopoly over England and Virginia augmented his passion for the freedom of religion.

As if his strict Anglican upbringing and education was not enough to cause a certain polarizing in Jefferson's heart and mind, his later experiences in France just before the French Revolution also multiplied his distrust of Catholic priests and bishops.

One must also remember, as Jefferson penned in his *Notes on Virginia*, a law was in effect in Virginia that

"if a person brought up a Christian denies the being of a God, or the Trinity ...he is punishable on the first offense by incapacity to hold any office ...; on the second by a disability to sue, to take any gift or legacy ..., and by three year' imprisonment."



(Library of Congress)

The Library of Congress further comments from his *Notes*

Thomas Jefferson reflected on the religious intolerance in seventeenth-century Virginia, specifically on the anti-Quaker laws passed by the Virginia Assembly from 1659 onward. Jefferson apparently believed that it was no more than an historical accident that Quakers had not been physically punished or even executed in Virginia as they had been in Massachusetts.

Jefferson believed in and carved a Creator for America in the *Declaration of Independence* that endowed humans with unalienable rights, such as "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." But could these exist if a person felt like one Christian sect had a stranglehold over society? Not according to Jefferson. In a letter to Benjamin Rush, also a signer of the Declaration, in September of 1800 he reflected back on this era by noting,

...the clergy [had] a very favorite hope of obtaining an establishment of a particular form of Christianity through the United States; and as every sect believes its own form the true one, every one, perhaps hoped for his own, but especially the Episcopalians and Congregationalists.

Of course in time many clergy and others, especially those in New England, who would be regarded today by many as fundamentalists (though the pejorative term didn't exist at the time), considered Jefferson an atheist and enemy of Christianity. In reality he was neither of these things. Still their polemical responses, heightened during his candidacy for president, were regarded by Jefferson as irritants and further exacerbated his feelings and thoughts about the potential relationship between Church and State. Evidence for his annoyance is felt in his passionate words written also in the September 1800 letter to Rush and during these personal attacks by select clergy—words now etched on the wall of his memorial: "I have sworn upon the altar of God eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man."

Jefferson's experience with denominational intolerance further enhanced his skepticism of religion's role. This narrow-mindedness did not increase his antagonism against Christianity, only the *tyranny* of any sect of Christianity over the State. His apparent struggle with this particular brand of clergy is obvious in his words to William Short, "the serious enemies are the priests of the different religious sects, to whose spells on the human mind its improvement is ominous."

One must keep these antagonistic matters in mind when reading any of Jefferson's dialogues with other religious groups or clergy, especially the letter (dated 1/1/1802) which he wrote shortly after he was elected President and while still recovering and reviling from a fiery mudslinging campaign from those New England clergy. He wrote in response to a respectful, formal invitation to address the Danbury Baptist Association in Connecticut: <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/religion/f0605as.jpg>

Believing with youth that religion is a matter which lies solely between man and his God, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship, that the legislative power of government reach actions only, and not opinions, I

contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should 'make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,' thus building a wall of separation between Church and State.

A photograph of a handwritten document snippet, likely a letter or a draft, enclosed in a thin orange border. The text is written in cursive and reads: "...can people which declared that their legislature should make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof: thus building a wall of ~~eternal~~ separation between church and state. [Con]". The word "eternal" is crossed out with a horizontal line.

(Library of Congress)

The fact is those eight words of Thomas Jefferson, “a wall of separation between Church and State,” were written in reaction and possibly retaliation to the verbal attacks from New England clergy, calling them in another personal letter an “irritable tribe of priests.” (Another fact pointing to Jefferson’s retributive attitude is found in that the FBI uncovered the scribbled out word as “eternal”—“a wall of *eternal* separation...”). With such inflamed language, should this agitated commentary of Jefferson be used to definitively interpret the 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment and his views of the strictly secular interrelations of Church and State for every American generation hereafter?

It was in this religious background that Jefferson would push for one of his crowning achievements in Virginia, the Bill for Religious Freedom, which passed in 1786 by the Virginia General Assembly. It would serve as a predecessor for the later First Amendment with its religious liberties guarantee in the Establishment and Free Exercise Clauses (1789)--<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/religion/vc006490.jpg>. Both would help establish a freedom of religion (not freedom *from* religion) in our country.

### **The intermingling of Church and State by Thomas Jefferson and Congress**

Some might find it difficult to believe, but the Bill for Religious Freedom and the later First Amendment were born during a time when government was also busy aiding the progress of Christianity, sometimes intentionally, sometimes unintentionally. Let me give several examples from Thomas Jefferson and those with whom he served.

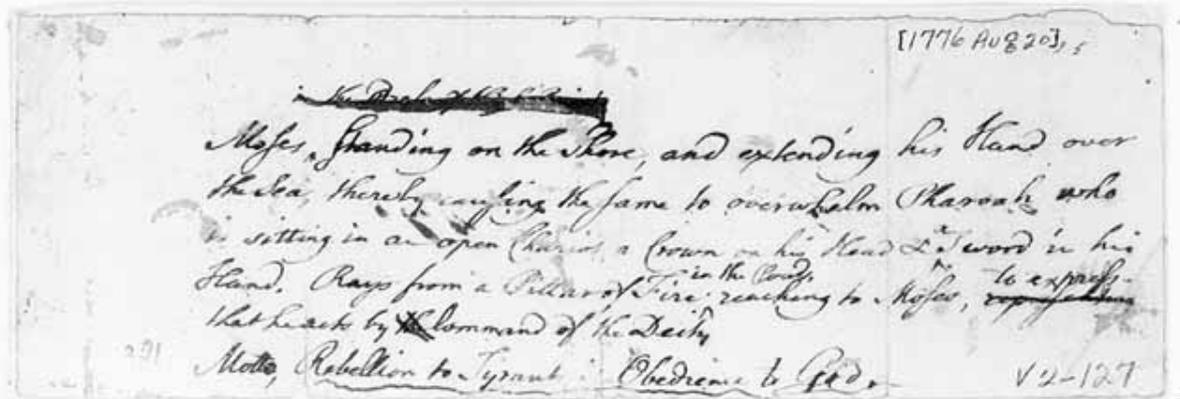
**(1)** While later as President (1801-1809), Jefferson opposed leading the nation in days of fasting, thanksgiving, and prayer, in 1774 he helped create a resolution for a Day of Fasting and Prayer, as a young 31-year old Virginian. Jefferson later admitted in his biography that he “cooked up [the] resolution...for appointing the 1<sup>st</sup> day of June...for a day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer” in order to rouse Virginians “from the[ir] lethargy,” but it still doesn’t take away from the fact that he did.

**(2)** The Continental Congress (of which Jefferson was a part in 1775-1776 and 1783-1784) appointed national days of fasting and prayer for the colonies every year, like this one on May 17, 1776: <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/religion/f0404s.jpg>

*The Congress....Desirous...to have people of all ranks and degrees duly impressed with a solemn sense of God's superintending providence, and of their duty, devoutly to rely...on His aid and direction...Do earnestly recommend Friday, the 17th day of May be observed by the colonies as a day of humiliation, fasting, and prayer; that we may, with united hearts, confess and bewailed our manifold sins and transgressions, and, by sincere repentance and amendment of life, appease God's righteous displeasure, and, through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, obtain this pardon and forgiveness."*

Could you see Congress making similar Christian declarations today?

**(3)** Regarding the proposed seal for the United States, Jefferson first recommended one reflecting the "children of Israel in the Wilderness, led by a Cloud by Day, and a Pillar of Fire by night....", but later accepted Benjamin Franklin's suggestion to adapt the Old Testament account of God's parting of the Red Sea. (See below) <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/religion/re104.html>



(Library of Congress)

As the Library of Congress concludes:

Although not accepted these drafts reveal the religious temper of the Revolutionary period. Franklin and Jefferson were among the most theologically liberal of the Founders, yet they used biblical imagery for this important task.

Do these symbols seem like they could come from those who are ardently in favor of the separation of Church and State?

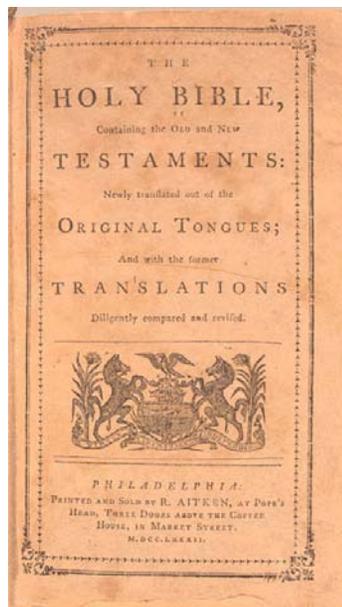
**(4)** In 1777, one year after the creation of the Declaration of Independence, though Jefferson was not on the Continental Congress at the time, it maintained the same spirit toward religion and the State. In that year, Congress voted to import 20,000 copies of the Bible (from "Holland, Scotland, or elsewhere") for the people of this new nation, because they could not obtain them from England during the Revolutionary War. The Committee of Commerce recommended this to Congress because "the use of the Bible is so universal, and its importance so great" (*Journals of Congress*, Vol. 8, pp. 734-

735)--[http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=lljc&fileName=008/lljc008.db&recNum=360&itemLink=r?ammem/hlaw:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(jc00897\)\)%230080361&linkText=1](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=lljc&fileName=008/lljc008.db&recNum=360&itemLink=r?ammem/hlaw:@field(DOCID+@lit(jc00897))%230080361&linkText=1)

This import was affirmed by the thirteen Colonies by a narrow 7-6 vote, but it was not enacted upon by Congress, probably because Robert Aitken (1734-1802), a Philadelphia printer and the first to publish a Bible in this U.S., was already busy printing the New Testament in 1777, which would also be followed in 1778, 1779, and 1781. (At first the committee thought domestic productions too expensive, only to learn in the end that it was being done by Aitken at less cost than it would be to import).

On January 26, 1781, Aitken petitioned Congress to officially authorize a publication of both Old and New Testaments--<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/religion/vc006481.jpg>, which he was preparing at his own expense (*Journals of Congress*, Volume 19, p. 91--[http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=lljc&fileName=019/lljc019.db&recNum=102&itemLink=D?hlaw:14:./t/emp/~ammem\\_1jAn::%230190103&linkText=1](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=lljc&fileName=019/lljc019.db&recNum=102&itemLink=D?hlaw:14:./t/emp/~ammem_1jAn::%230190103&linkText=1))

On September 12, 1782, the Congress “highly approve[d] the pious and laudable undertaking of Mr. Aitken....recommended this edition of the Bible to the inhabitants of the United States.” (*Journals of Congress* ([http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=lljc&fileName=023/lljc023.db&recNum=115&itemLink=r?ammem/hlaw:@field\(DATE+17820912\)::%230230115&linkText=1](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=lljc&fileName=023/lljc023.db&recNum=115&itemLink=r?ammem/hlaw:@field(DATE+17820912)::%230230115&linkText=1)) )



(Library of Congress)

**(5)** Under President Washington, in whose cabinet Jefferson was Secretary of State, the Secretary of War Henry Knox, sent Christian missionaries “of excellent moral character” to be “friends and fathers” to the Indians on the edge of the western frontier. Jefferson carried on this tradition a few years later as President.

As President, in 1803, Jefferson recommended that Congress pass a treaty with the Kaskaskia Indians, which was negotiated by William Henry Harrison, governor of the land and superintendent of Indian affairs, in which “the United States will give annually for seven years one hundred dollars for the support of a [Catholic] priest...the United States will further give the sum of three hundred dollars to assist the said tribe in the erection of a church”—all of which was to be paid out of the United States treasury! (*Public Statutes At Large Of The United States*, 1948, 7:78-79, Article 3rd--<http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llsl&fileName=007/llsl007.db&recNum=90>).

Though some try to escape Jefferson’s Christian acts by emphasizing his purpose as “civilizing the Indians” and acquiring additional land for the U.S., they overlook that he did so by supporting Christian missionaries, paying for a priest’s salary, building a church, and “promoting Christianity” (see #7 below)!

Moreover, if these were not regarded as Christian acts than why did Secretary of State James Madison warn President Jefferson that others would see his action as “a principle not according with the exemption of religion from civil power”? ....

*To read the remaining five points of evidence for Thomas Jefferson’s religious intermingling of Church and State, as well as the rest of the Monticello revisionist story and research, and how Monticello’s administration responded to Todd, and the religious distortions Todd and 53 different tourists discovered at Monticello on another trip in June 2007, [go to this website’s online store to download the whole story and research with colored photos for only \\$2.95](#) or you can [download all four revisionist stories and research with colored photos for \\$9.95](#) (titled collectively, “*Uncovering Christian Revisionism in America*,” which includes 106 pages of documentation on the revisions at Jamestown, Monticello, the U.S. Supreme Court, and the Washington Monument, plus bonus materials on how the famous urban legend debunking website, [www.snopes.com](http://www.snopes.com), made biased liberal changes against Todd’s research in their article on the U.S. Supreme Court-Ten Amendment/Commandment debate.*