



## Lake Almanor Community Church

2610 Highway A-13 ~ Lake Almanor, CA 96137

Phone # (530) 596-3683 ~ Fax # (530) 596-4682 ~ E-mail: lacchurch@frontiernet.net ~ Web page: www.lacconline.org

Todd DuBord, Senior Pastor  
Paul Bernard, Student Ministry Pastor

John Erickson, Associate Pastor  
Scott Cory, Chair of Elder Board

Mr. Gary Sandling  
Director of Interpretation  
Thomas Jefferson Foundation  
P.O. Box 316  
Charlottesville, Virginia 22902

10/20/07

Dear Mr. Sandling:

I genuinely appreciate Mr. Daniel P. Jordan's (President of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation) correspondence to me (dated March 6, 2007--attached) regarding my research "A Gate Between Church and State" (also attached and posted on our website, [www.lacconline.org](http://www.lacconline.org)), which details some erroneous information given by guides at Monticello to our group of 50 Californians in July of 2006. Mr. Jordan also sent a carbon copy of his letter and my research to you.

I am not an extremist or a conspirator, nor do I wish to be a public pain, but to date I have not heard any response from you regarding my research materials Mr. Jordan passed along to you, so I'm writing and sending them again.

I'm also writing about yet another (and similar) unfortunate circumstance with one of your guides, who incorrectly informed our second group of 56 Californians on June 4, 2007 about Jefferson's religious practice, beliefs, and actions mixing Christianity and government.

I tried to make contact with you while at Monticello, but you were unfortunately out of the office. I spoke to Shirley (last name?), who is (I was told) the second in command in your absence. She was very cordial and asked if I would like to talk to two other associate curators who were present at the facility. I answered in the affirmative. But when she asked the nature of the discussion, and I mentioned "Monticello's teaching on Jefferson's views of Christianity and government," she responded that only you could address that because the other curators' expertise was on architecture, artifacts, etc."

I apologize for my delay in writing, as I wanted to respond to you as soon as we returned to California in June, but I was caught up in several summer emergency situations with my pastoral position, then I was invited on a trip to Iraq with Chuck Norris in September during which we visited 15 military bases there to encourage the troops.

Moreover, I do not wish to jeopardize any guide's employment and have no complaint against the three or four who taught our groups except for the fact that they were uneducated and/or misinformed about Jefferson's views on Christianity and politics, and hence passed off that faulty information to us two years in a row. Our guide this year was an American history major graduate from Virginia

University. He was articulate, an exceptional teacher, and well-versed in Jefferson's life and the Monticello estate. Our group thoroughly enjoyed his cordiality, professionalism, and wit, until the last 10 minutes of the tour when I respectfully asked the following religious questions during a time when he asked us if we had any further questions.

Because I wanted to see how he understood Jefferson's view of Christianity (and not just religion in general) and particularly how he intermingled it (or allowed such) with government, I asked four questions of him. Before I document those questions and his answers (which were heard by the others in our group of course), I must tell you that this was the only time the guide became noticeably nervous and seemingly insecure in our entire tour. And I assure you (and have many witnesses) that I was not interrogating in any respect, but merely asking respectful questions as he requested.

**My question to guide:** "Did Jefferson ever intermix Christianity and government?"

**Guide's response:** [Answering confidently] "No, not that he would have considered so."

**My follow-up question to guide:** "So he never intermingled politics and Christian belief or practice?"

**Guide's response:** "No, Jefferson did not."

While it is espoused and correct that Jefferson did much to assure the separation of Church and State, it is equally true that he did not try to eliminate Christian influence from government--just the dominance of Christian sectarianism. In my research (attached and located at [www.lacconline.org](http://www.lacconline.org)) I cite from the Library of Congress over a dozen major occasions in which Jefferson merged Christianity and politics, including (as you know) his own proposal of biblical imagery for the U.S. Seal, endorsement and use of government buildings for church purposes, and the signing of treaties for federal monies to be used to support priests, missionaries, military chaplains, and build churches on the western frontier.

**My question to guide:** "Did Jefferson ever attend Church Services while President?"

**Guide's response:** "No, not unless he was asked by a delegation."

**My follow-up question to guide:** "Do we know where Jefferson would have attended Church?"

**Guide's response:** "The America Episcopal Church, but it burnt down."

This is an exact quote from the Library of Congress <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/religion/rel06-2.html>:

***The State Becomes The Church:  
Jefferson And Madison***

*It is no exaggeration to say that on Sundays in Washington during the administrations of Thomas Jefferson (1801-1809) and of James Madison (1809-1817) the state became the church. Within a year of his inauguration, Jefferson began attending church services in the House of Representatives. Madison followed Jefferson's example, although unlike Jefferson, who rode on horseback to church in the Capitol, Madison came in a coach and four. Worship services in the House--a practice that continued until after the Civil War--were acceptable to Jefferson because they were nondiscriminatory and voluntary. Preachers of every Protestant denomination appeared. (Catholic priests began officiating in 1826.)*

I'm sure our Monticello guides in both years would be completely surprised to discover that just two days after Jefferson wrote his famous letter to the Danbury Baptists citing the "wall of separation between Church and State," he attended church in the place where he always had as president: the U.S. Capitol. The very seat of our nation's government was also used for sacred purposes. If the Library of Congress can state that, can you please assure the guides could be trained to say so at Monticello?

**My question to guide:** "I heard Jefferson was the President of the first public school Board in Washington, D.C.?"

**Guide's response:** "Yes, he was."

**My follow-up question to guide:** "Did you know the Bible was used as a school text in that area?"

**Guide's response:** "I did not."

While the United States' President, in 1805 Thomas Jefferson was elected the first president of the Washington, D.C. public school board, which used the Bible as a text in classrooms. Though some doubt Jefferson's advocacy of the Bible as public education curriculum, there is no sufficient reason for doing so. In 1813 a report by one principal to the board of trustees conveyed the advances his students made in spelling and reading using the Bible as a text, just three years after Jefferson left the school board and Washington, D.C. for retirement in Virginia:

55 have learned to read in the Old and New Testaments, and are all able to spell words of three, four, and five syllables; 26 are now learning to read Dr. Watts' Hymns and spell words of two syllables; 10 are learning words of four and five letters. Of 509 out of the whole number admitted that did not know a single letter, 20 can now read the Bible and spell words of three, four, and five syllables, 29 read Dr. Watts' Hymns and spell words of two syllables, and 10 words of four and five letters.

While not specifically stated in previous records, there is no reason not to believe that the Bible was embedded into the public school curriculum when Jefferson was president of the board just three years earlier. Would and could the board have established its usage in such a short time, if it was not previously a regular part of the curriculum under Jefferson?

Jefferson even reassured one Christian school that it would receive "the patronage of the government" (According to a letter of Thomas Jefferson to the Nuns of the Order of St. Ursula at New Orleans on May 15, 1804—the original letter is at the New Orleans Parish).

**My last question to guide:** "Why the Separation of Church and State? To keep the State out of the Church, or the Church out of the State, or both?"

**Guide's response:** [Hesitant and nervous], "To keep the State out of the Church I believe." He further elaborated on how our founders did not want a replication of what existed between the King of England and the Anglican Church. While his answer is absolutely true, it is only partially accurate. It is also true (as you know) that Christian sectarianism or denominationalism (not Christian belief and practice) was to be prohibited from dominating the State. The first amendment excluded the State from interfering in Church affairs, but also excluded sectarianism from taking over the State.

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Again, I do not wish to make a case against your guides, only to say that it seems that Monticello needs to add to or revise its educational guides, as the incorrect information has now been disseminated two years in a row to our groups of 50 plus tourists. Could this be coincidental? I am truthfully only trying to help you in fine tuning the tours at Monticello. They are exceptional in all cases, except it seems the religious education—at least based upon these two major tour groups from the west coast.

Being that Jefferson's work on the relationship between Church and State was one of his most significant emphases, I'm certain that there is a section in your training manuals for your guides about his beliefs and what he did and didn't espouse regarding the relation between the two. Might I respectfully request a copy of the training manual, so that I can settle for my own mind and tens (if not now hundreds) of thousands of others across America who have access to my research from our website or some secondary source?). I would gladly post a reassurance to the public from you that it is in (or has been revised in) the training material by quoting from it, or a letter from you that it is being reviewed for proper emphasis in the training material.

Because of the related Internet news articles posted on [www.worldnetdaily.com](http://www.worldnetdaily.com), you should know I've been interviewed on over three dozen radio stations nationwide, about Monticello's educational oversights and potential need to enhance its tour training manuals. Because these news agencies are curious about Monticello's next response, about 20 station managers have given me their e-mail addresses and are waiting to hear back from me about your response.

I look forward to multiple trips to Monticello in the future with other groups from California, but I am genuinely hoping to hear a greater and more accurate emphasis upon Jefferson's views of religion and especially how Christianity at times merged with government, at the same time he fought for the separation of sectarianism.

Respectfully,

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

cc: Mr. Daniel P. Jordan, President

attachments