

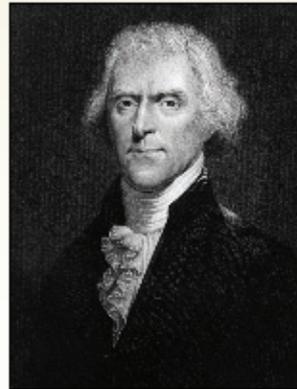
In God We Trust...Or do we?

In the United States, our religious beliefs have always been a part of our way of doing business. From the Mayflower Compact to the Declaration of Independence, our Judeo-Christian beliefs and the freedom to worship have coincided whereby it is good for the soul and for the marketplace to have the freedom to worship God and the freedom to make money without government interference in either. "God Is Back," is a new book by editor in chief of the Economist John Micklethwait and Adrian Wooldridge, the magazine's Washington bureau chief. They create the argument that religion is "returning to public life" around the world, that "the great forces of modernity — technology and democracy, choice and freedom — are all strengthening religion rather than undermining it," that these days "religion is playing a much more important role in public and intellectual life." They assert that "religion is becoming a matter of choice," something that individuals themselves decide to believe in instead of something imposed upon them, and that "the surge of religion is being driven by the same two things that have driven the success of market capitalism: competition and choice."

In 1801, the Danbury Baptist Association — a religious minority in the predominantly Congregationalist state of Connecticut — sent a letter to President Thomas Jefferson asking for his guidance on the topic of religious freedom.

In his letter, Jefferson responded: "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. This was a letter to a preacher not part of our constitution."

American history demonstrates repeatedly that the nation was founded on Christian principles and our founding fathers wished to acknowledge that fact all over Washington D.C. buildings, in official documents, and in historical speeches. Less than a hundred years after the Declaration of Independence, In God We Trust was proclaimed on our coins. America is a free nation, and freedom of religion is still guaranteed in the Constitution's First Amendment.



“ God who gave us life gave us liberty. Can the liberties of a nation be secure when we have removed a conviction that these liberties are the gift of God? Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just, that His justice cannot sleep forever. **”**

– Thomas Jefferson

While a strong presence of religiosity is a distinctive feature of American society, the separation of church and state, since the founding of the United States of America, has been a pillar of progress for democratic institutions as well as an affirmation of religious belief. It was this separation that allowed for the full expression of both, and which, although it may seem paradoxical, was a catalyst for both. As such, it continues to inspire curiosity that the inscription understood to be a symbol of material well-being so dear to Americans on the one dollar bill reads: "In God We Trust."



“ And whereas it is the duty of nations as well as of men, to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God, to confess their sins and transgressions, in humble sorrow, yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon; and to recognize the sublime truth, announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord. **”**

Abraham Lincoln



“ Without God, there is no virtue, because there's no prompting of the conscience. Without God, we're mired in the material, that flat world that tells us only what the senses perceive. Without God, there is a coarsening of the society. And without God, democracy will not and cannot long endure. If we ever forget that we're one nation under God, then we will be a nation gone under. **”**

– Ronald Reagan