

"Writing the truth  
as I see it;  
trying not to  
offend  
those who will  
disagree."

# The truth as I see it™

Idaho Common Sense™



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## God bless America

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Is the day coming when we must say "In nothing we trust," or "So help me nothing," or "Nothing bless America?" Educators in Woodbury, Vermont cowered to such demands and make students who want to recite the Pledge of Allegiance to do so away from the classroom, so no one can hear the word God. In 2002, the ninth Circuit Court of Appeals declared the Pledge of Allegiance unconstitutional under the First Amendment, because it mentions God. This was followed by a 2004 Supreme Court decision reversing the ninth Circuit Court, affirming that "teacher-led Pledge of Allegiance recitals in public schools are constitutional."

What is happening? Is it right to give in to demands to remove the Ten Commandments from courthouses, to remove God from the Pledge, to remove religion from our currency, to remove anything remotely religious from our government? How many counties cave in to ACLU demands because the county cannot afford the legal costs of fighting them? Did the Founding Fathers intend the government to be irreligious or to be atheist?

People advocating an irreligious government find statements in the Declaration of Independence or the Constitution they claim support their predetermined belief that government should be irreligious. Is that the right way to study an issue? Rather than deciding what they want the Founding Fathers to say and then trying to prove it, shouldn't we try to understand what the Founding Fathers intended our government to be?

What did the Founding Fathers want to say with the First Amendment reference to religion, which states, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof?" What did the Founding Fathers mean by "no law respecting an establishment of

religion?" Irreligious advocates tell us it means total "separation of church and state." And, they use the phrase so frequently many people believe these words are in the Constitution even though they are not.

If we try to understand the fears the Founding Fathers brought with them from their countries of origin along with their fears of the very government they were creating, we will get a much better understanding of their intentions for the First Amendment. Were they afraid of a religious government or were they actually afraid of a Methodist government, a Baptist government, a Quaker government, or the like? Was their fear of the government having the power to sanction one denomination, as was the case in England with the state Church of England?

Even so, did their fears of government lead them to the other extreme, creating an irreligious government or an atheist government to prevent the possibility of a state supported church developing here like in England?

Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence, succinctly stated the Founding Fathers beliefs on the place of religion in government and the origin of our rights. The Declaration of Independence states, "...to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them...We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights."

Was Jefferson defining rights we get from the government or was he saying the government has nothing to do with granting our rights? Rather is it the "Creator" who grants us "certain unalienable rights"? But if the "Creator" rather than the government

grants our rights, what is the government for?

The Declaration of Independence goes on to state that "to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men..." and derive "...their just powers from the consent of the governed..." to protect and defend the rights given the people by their "Creator." People establish governments to protect the rights their "Creator" granted them.

The Declaration of Independence continues with the admonishment that "...whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles."

Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court, Tom Campbell Clark, best paraphrased what Thomas Jefferson wrote in the Declaration of Independence. He said, "Our Founding Fathers believed devoutly that there was a God and that the inalienable rights of man were rooted not in the state, nor the legislature, nor in any other human power, but in God alone."

Is it possible to have an irreligious government without discarding the basic principles of this nation outlined in the Declaration of Independence?

The Founding Fathers created this nation, this government to protect the "unalienable rights" given each of us by our "Creator." Can we become an irreligious government without abandoning precisely what the Founding Fathers created?

Should we be challenging the religious foundation of our nation? Should we be unwilling to admit the value of that moral foundation to our nation? Should we allow a select few to destroy what so many have died to create and protect?

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