

How freedom of religion cultivates american innovation

[Philosophy](#), [Freedom](#)



How Freedom of Religion Cultivates American Innovation In the annals of American history, religion takes up volumes. The framers used Judeo-Christian values as a cornerstone to create democracy in the nation.

Manifest Destiny, a concept coined by William Jennings Bryan, explains that it was the people's God-given right to populate the continent and reign from the east to west coast. Before the Civil War, among thousands of individuals, preachers and followers of the protestant faith were the largest faction in America to assist slaves in escaping plantations (Ogden, 61).

So why did the Founding Fathers not limit the exercise of other religions in their writing of the Constitution? For the same reason most religions hold their faiths as truth. Individuals find security in religion and religion shapes who they become. Hundreds of cultures throughout the world leave everything including their health up to the God who manages them. Others believe in consulting a higher power in order to attain individual success. It is important that the state not cross the lines of religious freedom unless religious expression harms the rights of others - in the case of polygamy or human sacrifice.

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The framers knew that if they created a country that favored Christianity, personal beliefs of those outside that religion would be devalued and a follower might not feel safe as a citizen of his own nation. The framers allowed religion in the Bill of Rights to inspire every individual to pursue themselves and become the realization of their thoughts and beliefs.

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America's reputation grew from religious freedom. When the founding fathers came up with a document stating the rights of an American, they hoped they wouldn't be the only ones to create a new idea.

Therefore they allowed room for individual expression. An individual should create his idea of himself and that drive came to most people through religion. Religious freedom guided the Puritans to develop the first university in America, Harvard. It was founded by ministers who realized the need for a clergy in a growing population. It became the nucleus of theological teaching in New England by 1827 and gave America its first philosopher John Calvin, the creator of Calvinism and harbinger of the First Great Awakening. Today, Harvard is in the ranks of the highest achieving universities in the world.

Although it started out as a seminary with nine graduates, today Harvard's 360, 000 living alumni p 190 countries. Religious freedom allowed the Protestants to lead their country to greatness. The First Amendment is not only expressed through education. American businesses also practice certain religious aspects. Famous restaurants one would not suspect exercise the power to practice Christianity. In-N-Out Burger, a popular Western fast food franchise will inconspicuously print Bible verses on cups per customer request.

Wendy's owner Dave Thomas was quoted, saying, " You can be anything you want to be within the law of God and Man". His success demonstrates how prosperous a Christian owned business can be when coupled with strong beliefs. Finally, Quaker Cadbury Adams from Parsippany, New Jersey established " Cadbury", the 2nd largest producer of chocolate and drinks in

the world. It purports a net income of \$700 million a year (Forbes 2012). Clearly, business in America has benefited from diversity. However, it is important that Americans keep religious freedom in perspective.

Religious freedom should not influence two entities to battle between the validity of their party's beliefs. Darwin's Theory of Evolution and Galileo's heliocentric model of the universe are two examples in which Christianity has been tested. In the 1600's, Catholics believed Galileo's ideas were blasphemy. His theory that earth was not the only planet, much less the center of the universe, rocked the Church's platform. Because he did not live in a democratic nation, his government put him under house arrest, all but silencing his discovery.

However, Galileo's theory was in fact only an explanation of the natural world. Although science and religion serve two different purposes, the Church took Galileo's observation on nature as an attack on Christianity and locked him up. Today, Americans view the Church's treatment as unjustified. Four hundred years and successful flights to the moon later, it is difficult to argue that the Church was correct in its attack on Galileo. From the perspective of a country with the First Amendment right, it seems unimaginable. However, today's churches now test religious freedom.

Under the protection of the Bill of Rights, Evangelical Christian D. James Kennedy has prosecuted Darwin's Theory of Evolution. He believes evolution is, " a dangerous opinion that deems God's judgment on Earth" (Kennedy 183) and has many dogmatic followers. He believes public schools should not teach evolution because it conflicts with Creationism. However, by law action

taken on Kenney's part infringes on the rights of others. His Christian agenda supersedes the beliefs of other faiths, such as Hinduism, Islamism, or Judaism, which contradicts freedom of expression.

If Darwinism was kept from being taught in public schools, the government would be ignoring the rights of other faiths. Darwinism is taught in school because his views are seen as science. Science deals with natural explanations about the world (Coriden 12). If science were to have a metaphysical stance involving supernatural explanations for the universe, it would cease to be a worthwhile pursuit. The explanation for a question would become too simple and deferred to God or another supernatural being. That understood, science is unable to disprove religion by fact and religion cannot disprove science by belief.

A connection between the two would seem to be a non sequitur. Truly, neither harms the other. In fact, the opposite may be endorsed. The more discoveries science makes, the more difficult it makes man's purpose to explain. People will turn to religion for comfort because usually a combination of the natural and supernatural will mold an individual's sense of reality. Thankfully, America is a country where one can choose how much to believe in the natural and supernatural. The First Amendment puts no belief system ahead of another.

The Founding Fathers believed in order to avoid religious persecution, that they must create a nation open to every ideology. As they intended, the United States flourished under the principles of equality. Today, the United States Constitution is used as reference for countries constructing a

democratic nation because of the success and freedom Americans enjoy. Although the democratic system is not flawless, it opens the road to individual achievement that does not exist in all countries by allowing religious freedom and the freedom of expression.