

Transition from British Colonies to American States

- 1783 Treaty of Paris officially ended the Revolutionary War:
England ceded territory south of the Great Lakes & east of the Mississippi
- 1784 The Methodist Episcopal Church was established in America:
Thomas Coke (37 yrs) & Francis Asbury (39 yrs) were appointed co-superintendants
by the Methodist founder, John Wesley (81 yrs), who remained in England
- 1787 Constitutional Convention:
○ The Northwest Ordinance¹ produced
○ The U.S. Constitution produced
- 1788 Minor changes were made to the extensive body of the Westminster Confession of Faith
in order to deal with republican-style government now used by Christians in America

¹ Some excerpts from the Northwest Ordinance:

Sec. 13. And, for extending the fundamental principles of civil and religious liberty, which form the basis whereon these republics, their laws and constitutions are erected; to fix and establish those principles as the basis of all laws, constitutions, and governments, which forever hereafter shall be formed in the said territory: to provide also for the establishment of States, and permanent government therein, and for their admission to a share in the federal councils on an equal footing with the original States, at as early periods as may be consistent with the general interest:

Sec. 14. It is hereby ordained and declared by the authority aforesaid, That the following articles shall be considered as articles of compact between the original States and the people and States in the said territory and forever remain unalterable, unless by common consent, to wit:

Art. 1. No person, demeaning himself in a peaceable and orderly manner, shall ever be molested on account of his mode of worship or religious sentiments, in the said territory.

Art. 3. Religion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged. The utmost good faith shall always be observed towards the Indians; their lands and property shall never be taken from them without their consent; and, in their property, rights, and liberty, they shall never be invaded or disturbed, unless in just and lawful wars authorized by Congress; but laws founded in justice and humanity, shall from time to time be made for preventing wrongs being done to them, and for preserving peace and friendship with them.

Art. 4. The said territory, and the States which may be formed therein, shall forever remain a part of this Confederacy of the United States of America, subject to the Articles of Confederation, and to such alterations therein as shall be constitutionally made; and to all the acts and ordinances of the United States in Congress assembled, conformable thereto.

Art. 6. There shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in the said territory, otherwise than in the punishment of crimes whereof the party shall have been duly convicted: *Provided, always,* That any person escaping into the same, from whom labor or service is lawfully claimed in any one of the original States, such fugitive may be lawfully reclaimed and conveyed to the person claiming his or her labor or service as aforesaid.

- 1789 The Federal Government began operation
- President George Washington (57 yrs) inaugurated²
- The Episcopal Church officially separated from the Church of England

Country	Immigrants Before 1790	% of Pre-1790 Immigrants	Population In 1790	% of 1790 Population
England	230,000	24%	2,100,000	54%
Ulster Scot-Irish	135,000	14%	300,000	8%
Scotland	48,500	5%	150,000	4%
Ireland	8,000	.8%	(Included in Scot-Irish)	
Wales	4,000	.4%	10,000	.25 %
British total	425,500	45%	2,560,000	66%
Africa (Slaves)	360,000	38%	757,000	19%
Germany	103,000	11%	270,000	10%
Netherlands	6,000	.6%	100,000	2.5%
France	3,000	.3%	15,000	.4%
Jews	1,000	.1%	2,000	.05%
Sweden	500	.05%	2,000	.05%
Other	50,000	5%	200,000	5%
Total	950,000		3,900,000	

² Interesting excerpt from Washington’s Inaugural Address: “Such being the impressions under which I have, in obedience to the public summons, repaired to the present station, it would be peculiarly improper to omit in this first official act my fervent supplications to that Almighty Being who rules over the universe, who presides in the councils of nations, and whose providential aids can supply every human defect, that His benediction may consecrate to the liberties and happiness of the people of the United States a Government instituted by themselves for these essential purposes, and may enable every instrument employed in its administration to execute with success the functions allotted to his charge. In tendering this homage to the Great Author of every public and private good, I assure myself that it expresses your sentiments not less than my own, nor those of my fellow-citizens at large less than either. No people can be bound to acknowledge and adore the Invisible Hand which conducts the affairs of men more than those of the United States. Every step by which they have advanced to the character of an independent nation seems to have been distinguished by some token of providential agency; and in the important revolution just accomplished in the system of their united government the tranquil deliberations and voluntary consent of so many distinct communities from which the event has resulted can not be compared with the means by which most governments have been established without some return of pious gratitude, along with an humble anticipation of the future blessings which the past seem to presage. These reflections, arising out of the present crisis, have forced themselves too strongly on my mind to be suppressed. You will join with me, I trust, in thinking that there are none under the influence of which the proceedings of a new and free government can more auspiciously commence.”

- 1791 The Bill of Rights (First Ten Amendments) Ratified
 ----- At the advice of Daniel Boone (57 yrs), a group of Scots-Irish, Presbyterian settlers from North Carolina settled Cane Ridge, Kentucky
- 1792 Kentucky had the first State Constitution adopted (19 April) **AFTER** the Bill of Rights³
 ----- James O’Kelly (57 yrs) objected to “tyrannical” Episcopal rule within Methodism
- 1793 O’Kelly & his followers established the Republican Methodist Church
- 1794 A significant meeting of the Republican Methodists was held at Surry County, VA

At this meeting, a motion was made by Rice Haggard, with his Bible in hand: “Brethren, this is a sufficient rule of faith and practice. By it we are told that the disciples were called Christians, and I move that henceforth and forever the followers of Christ be known as Christians simply.” This motion carried.

The meeting also adopted "Five Cardinal Principles of the Christian Church":

1. The Lord Jesus Christ as the only Head of the Church.
2. The name Christian to the exclusion of all party and sectarian names.
3. The Holy Bible, or the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as our only creed, and sufficient rule of faith and practice.
4. Christian character, or vital piety, the only test of church fellowship and membership.
5. The right of private judgment, and the liberty of conscience, the privilege and duty of all.

³ The timing of this event is important because it presents the first opportunity to consider what the intended impact of the First Amendment to the Federal Constitution should have upon State Constitutions and their local protection of the Christian Faith.

Article 11, Section 3 of the Kentucky Constitution states “That all men have a natural and indefeasible right to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of their own consciences; that no man can of right be compelled to attend, erect, or support any place of worship, or to maintain any ministry against his consent; that no human authority can, in any case whatever, control or interfere with the rights of conscience; that no preference shall ever be given by law to any religious societies or modes of worship.”

1796 Tennessee became the 16th State - the second **AFTER** the Bill of Rights⁴

⁴ Again, the timing of this document is important in understanding how the First Amendment should be understood in regard to Christian-centric items found within State Constitutions.

“Article 8th

“Section 1st Whereas the ministers of the gospel are, by their professions, dedicated to God and the case of souls, and ought not to be diverted from the great duties of their functions; therefore no minister of the gospel, or priest of any denomination whatever, shall be eligible to a seat in either house of the legislature.

“Section 2nd No person who denies the being of god, or a future state of rewards and punishments, shall hold any office in the civil department of this State.

“Article 11th Declaration of Rights

“Section 3rd That all men have a natural and indefeasible right to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of their own consciences; that no man can of right be compelled to attend, erect, or support any place of worship, or to maintain any ministry against his consent; that no human authority can in any case whatever control or interfere with the rights of conscience; and that no preference shall ever be given by law to any religious establishments or modes of worship.

“Section 4th That no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under this State.

1796 President Washington (64 yrs) published his “Farewell Address”⁵

1797 John Adams (61 yrs) became the 2nd U. S. President⁶

⁵ Some significant excerpts regarding Christianity taken from Washington’s Farewell Address:

“The name of American, which belongs to you in your national capacity, must always exalt the just pride of patriotism more than any appellation derived from local discriminations. With slight shades of difference, you have the same religion, manners, habits, and political principles...**[Special Note: This last line seems to allude to the 1776 Yale College Valedictory Address of Timothy Dwight, a grandson of the “Great Awakening” minister, Jonathan Edwards. Dwight described Americans as having a unique national identity as a new "people, who have the same religion, the same manners, the same interests, the same language, and the same essential forms and principles of civic government."]**

“Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism, who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens...

“Observe good faith and justice towards all nations; cultivate peace and harmony with all. Religion and morality enjoin this conduct; and can it be, that good policy does not equally enjoin it - It will be worthy of a free, enlightened, and at no distant period, a great nation, to give to mankind the magnanimous and too novel example of a people always guided by an exalted justice and benevolence. Who can doubt that, in the course of time and things, the fruits of such a plan would richly repay any temporary advantages which might be lost by a steady adherence to it? Can it be that Providence has not connected the permanent felicity of a nation with its virtue? The experiment, at least, is recommended by every sentiment which ennobles human nature. Alas! is it rendered impossible by its vices?”

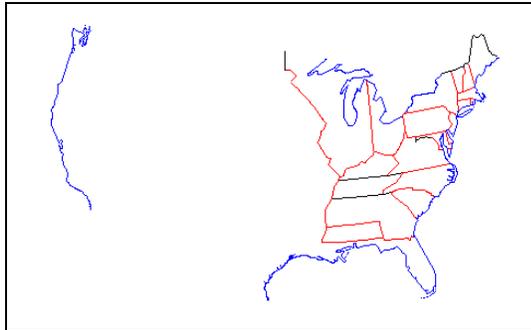
⁶ Significant excerpt from Adam’s Inaugural Address regarding Christianity: “and, with humble reverence, I feel it to be my duty to add, if a veneration for the religion of a people who profess and call themselves Christians, and a fixed resolution to consider a decent respect for Christianity among the best recommendations for the public service, can enable me in any degree to comply with your wishes, it shall be my strenuous endeavor that this sagacious injunction of the two Houses shall not be without effect.”

1797 President Adams, with the advice & consent of the Senate, ratified the Treaty of Tripoli⁷
----- James McGready (34 yrs), a Presbyterian minister, made the following covenant with his flock in Logan County, KY

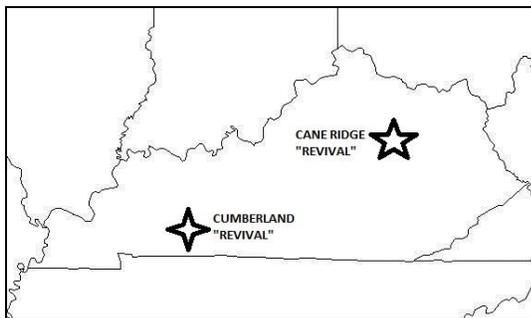
"When we consider the word and promises of a compassionate God to the poor lost family of Adam, we find the strongest encouragement for Christians to pray in faith--to ask in the name of Jesus for the conversion of their fellow-men. None ever went to Christ when on earth, with the case of their friends, that were denied, and, although the days of his humiliation are ended, yet, for the encouragement of his people, he has left it on record, that where two or three agree upon earth to ask in prayer, *believing*, it shall be done. Again, *whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son*. With these promises before us, we feel encouraged to unite our supplications to a prayer-hearing God for the outpouring of his Spirit, that his people may be quickened and comforted, and that our children, and sinners generally, may be converted. Therefore, we bind ourselves to observe the third Saturday of each month, for one year, as a day of fasting and prayer for the conversion of sinners in Logan county, and throughout the world. We also engage to spend one half hour every Saturday evening, beginning at the setting of the sun, and one half hour every Sabbath morning, from the rising of the sun, pleading with God to revive his work."

⁷ There is something quite odd about this treaty, originally made between the U.S. & the Muslim pirates who were operating out of North Africa. In the published English translation (absent from the Arabic original) there is the following clause: "Art. 11. As the Government of the United States of America is not, in any sense, founded on the Christian religion,—as it has in itself no character of enmity against the laws, religion, or tranquility, of Mussulmen,—and as the said States never entered into any war or act of hostility against any Mahometan nation, it is declared by the parties that no pretext arising from religious opinions shall ever produce an interruption of the harmony existing between the two countries." To some scholars, it appears to be a technical loophole (according to the First Amendment, the Federal government isn't permitted to establish a national religion, even though the various states had already, quite clearly declared their own Christian allegiances) which might appease the Muslims and make them more amicable to U.S. overtures. Unfortunately, no contemporary commentary on the treaty clause exists. However, a subsequent treaty was made in 1805 using similar wording WITHOUT the phrase "is not, in any sense, founded on the Christian religion." Eventually, all treaties were broken by the Muslim pirates, prompting the U.S. to solve the issue with military might rather than diplomacy.

- 1797 Barton W. Stone (25 yrs) became the ordained⁸ pastor of the Presbyterians meeting at the Cane Ridge meeting house in Bourbon County Kentucky
 ----- President Dwight of Yale (45 yrs) warned his Baccalaureate candidates regarding "The Nature and Danger of Infidel Philosophy," a more formal presentation of his ongoing warning against "infidel philosophy" coming to America out of the French Revolution.
- 1798 President Dwight's warnings were published, widely distributed and certainly contributed to the "Second Great Awakening"



- 1798-
 1801 McGready was at the center of the "Cumberland Revival" in the newly organized Logan & Christian Counties of Kentucky



- 1801 Thomas Jefferson (57 yrs) became the 3rd U. S. President⁹
 ----- Religious fervor (revival) broke out in/around Cane Ridge, Kentucky

⁸ The Transylvania Presbytery of the Presbyterian churches in America (which oversaw Kentucky) required that its ordained ministers had to subscribe to the Westminster Confession of Faith. When questioned by the Presbytery about his commitment to the Confession, since he had personal reservations about both Calvinism & Trinitarianism, Stone responded, "As far as it is consistent with the word of God." He was ordained despite his qualified response.

⁹ Significant excerpt from Jefferson's Inaugural Address regarding Christianity: "...enlightened by a benign religion, professed, indeed, and practiced in various forms, yet all of them inculcating honesty, truth, temperance, gratitude, and the love of man; acknowledging and adoring an overruling Providence, which by all its dispensations proves that it delights in the happiness of man here and his greater happiness hereafter..."