



Thomas Jefferson's Letter to the Danbury Baptists on January 1, 1802

Introduction

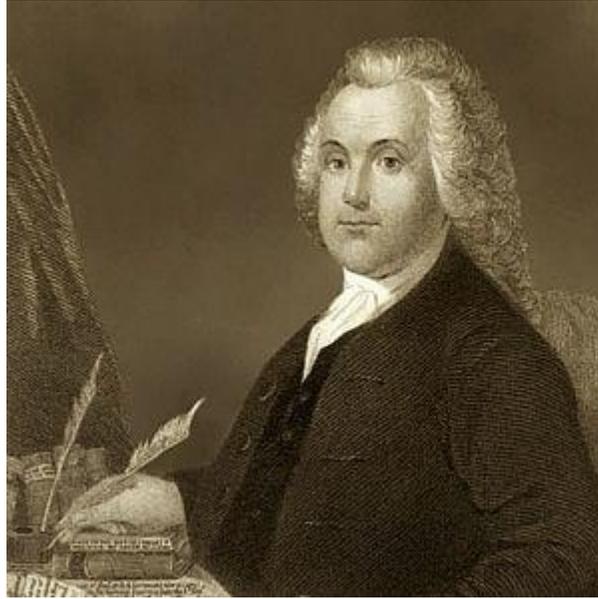


The Danbury Baptist Association of Connecticut wrote to Thomas Jefferson, the 3rd President of the United States (Lived: Apr 13, 1743 - Jul 04, 1826 (age 83) and in Office March 4, 1801 – March 4, 1809) on October 7, 1801, to complain about the infringement of their religious liberty by their state legislature: “what religious privileges we enjoy (as a minor part of the State) we enjoy as favors granted, and not as inalienable rights: and these favors we receive at the expense of such degrading acknowledgments, as are inconsistent with the rights of freemen.” The Baptists, of course, acknowledged that “the president of the United States is not the national legislator,” but expressed the wish that his views on religious liberty would “shine and prevail through all these states and all the world.”

In his brief response, President Jefferson sympathized with the Connecticut Baptists in their opposition to the state’s established religion, while expressing his reverence for the First Amendment’s “wall of separation between Church & State” at the federal level. Jefferson was not advancing the modern view that religion must be excluded from the public square. After all, he concludes his letter, written in his official capacity as President, with a brief prayer

Thomas Jefferson's Letter to the Danbury Baptists on January 1, 1802: Page 2

A very important side note! This below was echoed to President Jefferson!

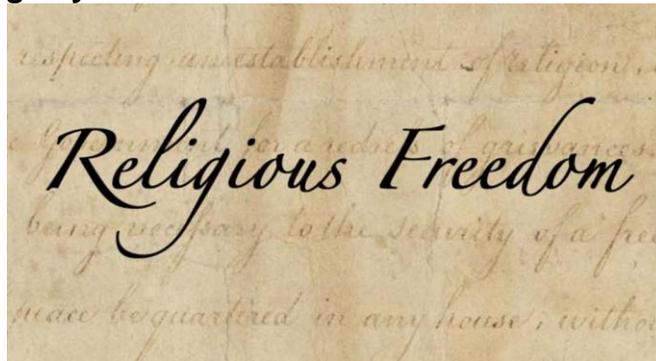


Roger Williams (1603 – 1683) was an English Protestant theologian who was a Puritan, an English Reformed theologian, and later a Reformed Baptist, who was an early proponent of religious freedom, separation of church and state, and the Free Will Baptist movement. In 1636, he began the colony of Providence Plantation, which provided a refuge for religious minorities. Williams started the first Baptist church in America, the First Baptist Church of Providence, Rhode Island.

Williams was also a student of Native American languages, an early advocate for fair dealings with Native Americans, and arguably the **first abolitionist** in North America, having organized the first attempt to prohibit slavery in any of the British American colonies.

Roger Williams had what is called “Anabaptist” Views (One raised in churches that sprinkled babies (Done in Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox and Various Protestant Denominations) then later in life made a profession of faith in Yeshua Messiah (Jesus Christ) as their Savior then Immersed (The word Baptism in the King James Version is a transliteration of the Koine Greek word **baptizo (βαπτίζω)** which means to IMMERSE! BTW, In the King James New Testament, "baptism" is mentioned 23 times, and "baptized" another 59 times.

Puritans, Pilgrims and Anglicans persecuted Williams and the Baptists which even included whippings and floggings by the Puritans in Colonial America!



Here is President Jefferson's Letter to the Danbury Baptists

Gentlemen

The affectionate sentiments of esteem and approbation which you are so good as to express towards me, on behalf of the Danbury Baptist association, give me the highest satisfaction. My duties dictate a faithful and zealous pursuit of the interests of my constituents, and in proportion as they are persuaded of my fidelity to those duties, the discharge of them becomes more and more pleasing.

Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between Man & his God, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship, that the legitimate powers of government reach actions only and not opinions, 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 & State. Adhering to this expression of the supreme will of the nation in behalf of the rights of conscience, I shall see with sincere satisfaction the progress of those sentiments which tend to restore to man all his natural rights, convinced he has no natural right in opposition to his social duties.

I reciprocate your kind prayers for the protection & blessing of the common father and creator of man, and tender you for yourselves & your religious association, assurances of my high respect & esteem.

Th Jefferson
Jan. 1. 1802.

