

What 'Separation of Church and State' Is Really Supposed to Mean

Dec. 15 marks the 227th anniversary of the Bill of Rights, which protects freedoms such as speech, press and religion. It says "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion."

To the Founding Fathers, this meant walling off government from interfering with Americans' faith. Nowadays, the understanding of that wall has become so twisted, it's sometimes used to prevent Americans from practicing their faith.

It's as if today's interpreters think "making no law respecting an establishment of religion" means government and God can have nothing to do with each other. But what did the Founding Fathers who wrote the First Amendment actually mean?

Founders Opposed Ramming of Religion Down Citizens' Throats

"When the founders talked about separation of church and state, they had a historical context that we really lack," David Barton of WallBuilders told CBN News.

He said those founders saw great danger in rulers establishing a specific religion their subjects then had to practice.

Christian historian Rev. Eddie Hyatt, author of *Pilgrims & Patriots*, explained, "Church and state were merged together, and the church used the power of the state to enforce its doctrines and practices."

Founders Feared a Forced and Cruel Christianity

Hyatt mentioned certain governments used deadly force against

dissenters who wanted to worship in their own way, saying, “Those people were persecuted, burned at the stake, some had their tongues cut out. The founders did not want that kind of Christianity.”

Barton added, “And so that’s the context they have for the separation of church and state. It was never the church taking over the state. It was always the state taking over the church.”

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