



Focus on Religious Freedom

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Christ is Risen. Alleluia. Alleluia.

*The dawn was purpling o'er the sky, With alleluias rang the air;
Earth held a glorious jubilee; Hell gnashed its teeth in fierce despair.
When our most valiant mighty King, From death's abyss in dread array,
Lead the long imprisoned Fathers forth, Into the beam of life and day.*

*When He whom stone and seal and guard, Had safely to the tomb consigned,
Triumphant rose and buried death, Deep in the grave he left behind.
Calm all your grief and still your tears, Hark the descending angel cries,
For Christ is risen from the dead, And death is slain no more to rise.*

Edward Caswall from Aurora Lucis Rutilat 6C. 1849

As we rejoice with our risen Lord on this glorious day, religious freedom/the rights of conscience empower Americans to rejoice and celebrate, not only within the four walls of our churches which is the definition of "freedom to worship", but in our homes, community and in the public square. We are free to teach about the resurrection through the Bible and other religious books, and to invite others to join us. We are free to have open worship and celebration of Easter as seen in the Easter sunrise services throughout America, all protected by "freedom of religion."

Our 1st Amendment religious freedom restricts our government from imposing or favoring one religion over another or prohibiting the free exercise of religion. Americans of every faith or of none are protected in their thoughts, speech and practice of faith because our founders knew that freedom of religion taken from one was taken from all.

One of our founders, the Rev John Leland of Virginia, who is considered the father of the 1st amendment wrote in support of religious liberty for all: "The liberty I contend for is more than toleration. The very idea of toleration is despicable; it supposes that some have a pre-eminence above the rest to grant indulgence, whereas all should be equally free, Jews, Turks, Pagans and Christians."