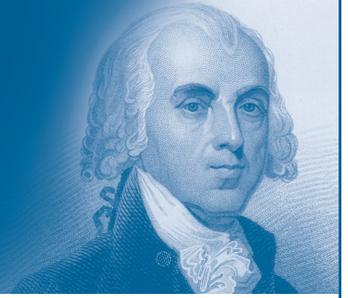


James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions



**A One-Day Symposium Sponsored by the
The James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions
The Program in European Politics and Society at Princeton University
The Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs
The Center on Religion and the Constitution of the Witherspoon Institute**

Reflections on Religious Liberty

2008 marks the 400th Anniversary of that date, when in 1608 an unlicensed illegal emigration took place to Holland from near the estuary of the Humber River in Northeast England. This was the flight-from-persecution of the separatist group of about 100 persons, some of whom later became the “Mayflower Pilgrims” and settled the Plymouth Colony, arriving in 1620. These fleeing émigrés (some of whom were arrested and imprisoned in the effort) left England in flight from a situation of forced conformity in religious practice due to an established State Church. They sought a domicile providing them with the right of free exercise of religious practice. Through their experience, every aspect of the First Amendment to the US Constitution (1791) can be seen in the context of the quest for religious liberty of these early settlers to lands that later became independent from Britain as the United States of America.

No doubt, this was an audacious journey with profound political and legal ramifications for the free world. Through their experience, every aspect of the First Amendment to the US Constitution (1791) can be seen in the context of the quest for religious liberty of these early settlers to lands that later became independent from Britain as the United States of America

As we commemorate this 400th Anniversary, it seems fitting to reflect on the status of religious freedom around the world; to ask what has gone wrong for those millions of people whose freedom has been violated, and as well, to take a closer look to instances where religious freedom thrives. And so this One-Day Symposium aims to provide stimulus to future scholarly conversations on this crucial topic.

October 30, 2008

Aaron Burr 219

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