

## **JOHN WINTHROP OR ROGER WILLIAMS? (Part-six of a six-part study)**

The second source of truth in resolving the debate over the identity of our nation consists of the United States Constitution. Recently, this factor has had as its focus, the spiritual condition of those who framed our country's founding document. Were they true believers? Or, were they merely CHINOS? ("Christians in Name Only") Does it really matter? Those men, regardless of their spiritual condition, were given the responsibility of authoring a document, which would unite thirteen independent colonies into one nation. There were significant matters to be resolved, questions to be answered and decisions to be made. The end result of those lengthy deliberations? A Constitution which would govern our nation. And when it came to determining the religious nature of this new nation, what choice would these men make? Would they follow the Massachusetts model, established by John Winthrop? Or, would they embrace the Rhode Island model, developed by Roger Williams? Or, would it be something in between, a mixture of the two? The answer is provided in the First Amendment to the Bill of Rights, where we read –

**“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.”**

The emphasis of this first amendment is undeniable. It is upon the principle of FREEDOM; including freedom of the press, of speech, to peaceably assemble and petition the government, as well as this all-important freedom regarding religion. In order to create this spiritual freedom, the government would not be allowed to establish a state-approved religion to which everyone must adhere. In addition, this new government would have no authority to prohibit religion from being practiced in a particular manner; which has enabled the Christian faith in America to grow and flourish in ways beyond anything Winthrop or Williams could have possibly imagined. This freedom would be granted with the understanding that criminal behavior would still be subject to the governing authority within its civil jurisdiction. In other words, if someone decided it was “against their religion” to pay taxes, such an argument would hold no weight with the civil authority responsible for collecting that tax revenue, or for that matter, with Romans 13:6-7.

Yet there are two sides to every coin, aren't there? For the most part, with a few exceptions, the various levels of government in our nation have done a good job of keeping their noses out of the Church's business. But it seems to me that my current generation of fellow Evangelicals isn't all that willing to reciprocate. It isn't enough that we do have the right to vote, engage with our representatives and even run for office in a manner that is respectful and peaceable. Instead, like a bunch of spoiled church brats throwing a tantrum, they have resorted to the Machiavellian principle of “the end justifies the means” when things don't go their way. So that revisionist history, bad theology, unethical compromises, conspiracy theories, threats of violence and even violence itself, in order to install an unconstitutional theocracy which has no Biblical justification, are all considered fair game by many of today's Bible-believing Christians. Yet why should we be surprised? My generation would probably not rank that high, spiritually, in the overall context of Church history. Some of them may be nothing more than CHINOS, and are leading the way, in not only re-directing, but misleading true Christianity in America astray, toward a concept known as “Christian Nationalism,” with no basis in Scripture or our Constitution. So, for the sake of our Savior, and the genuine advancement of His cause in our nation, and throughout the world, I make one final plea to those who have been trapped in this insidious and heretical movement.

**Please, come to your senses and repent!**