

Week Three Handout

“Religion and American Foreign Policy through Christian Eyes”

Dr. James C. (Jim) Wallace



Wars and Peace Treaties:

Our First Encounters with Islam and Allah

Impressions from last week:

What did you think of Professor Heclo answers to his seven dimensions of the question “Is America a Christian nation?” . . . “Yes – no – no – no – sort of – sort of – and no way!”

Here is the breakdown of his viewpoint:

1. America is a Christian nation if “Christian” is defined demographically.
2. America is not a Christian nation in terms of the way Americans regard the “relevance of Christianity to their everyday lives.”
3. America is not a Christian nation in terms of how Americans uphold Christian creedal commitments.
4. America is not a Christian nation in terms of how they behave.
5. America is “sort of” a Christian nation in terms of its legal and institutional structures.
6. America is “sort of” a Christian nation in terms of its moral/republican ethos.
7. America is definitely not (“no way”) a Christian nation in terms of “Christianity’s view of the question.”

Religion in America – The Data

Religion	1900	%	2005	%	2050	%
Christians	73.2 M	96.4 %	240.4 M	80.6 %	298.7 M	74.5%
Jews	2.5 M	1.97 %	5.4 M	1.82 %	5.0 M	1.25 %
Muslims	10 K	0.01 %	3.7 M	1.27 %	9.0 M	2.25 %
Buddhists	30 K	0.04 %	3.7 M	1.26 %	7.0 M	1.75 %
Hindus	1 K	0.00 %	1.3 M	0.45 %	2.5 M	0.62%
Agnostics	1 M	1.32 %	38.2 M	12.8 %	71.1 M	17.7 %
Atheists	1 K	0.00 %	1.2 M	0.41 %	2.0 M	0.50 %
New Religionists	10 K	0.01%	1.5 M	0.52 %	2.1 M	0.54 %
Ethnoreligionists	100 K	0.13 %	1.0 M	0.36 %	1.2 M	0.30 %
Chinese Folk Religion	70 K	0.09 %	105 K	0.04 %	150 K	0.04 %

SOURCE: Todd M. Johnson and Brian J. Grim, eds.

World Religion Database (Leiden/Boston: Brill, www.worldreligiondatabase.org, accessed June 2014)

Islam in America:

- As of 2014, estimates 6-7 million Muslims in the USA
- 2,000 mosques, Muslim schools and Islamic centers in America
- Since 1994, CAIR has detailed 64 acts of destruction and desecration of Islamic places of worship in America

SOURCE: CAIR – Council on American-Islamic Relations
(www.cair.com, accessed June 2014)

Sources for this week's discussion:

Here are the URL's for the source information for this week's discussion of the United States Treaties with Morocco (1786) and Tripoli (1796).

Yale Law School – *The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy*

- http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/bar1786t.asp
- http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/bar1786a.asp
- http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/bar1786n.asp
- http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/bar1796t.asp

Discussion Questions:

Around your tables, take the remaining 10 minutes to discuss the following questions.

1. What do you think of the United States signing treaties that are written in the name of Allah?
2. Is Allah a generic name for "God" or is it the specific name of a non-Christian God? Should missionaries use the name of Allah in translations and preaching in Muslim-majority countries?