

## U.S. EMBASSY JAKARTA-SPEAKER PROGRAM

### Zeenat Rahman Mustafa

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The United States is a patchwork of diverse ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds. The growing diversity of the U.S. population shapes how Americans identify themselves.

#### Bio



Zeenat is the Senior Program Coordinator for Public Affairs at the Interfaith Youth Core. In this position she oversees policy initiatives and international programs, well as strategic media outreach for the organization. She frequently travels abroad to speak about the importance of interfaith youth work in promoting civic engagement and healthy integration amongst youth.

She is a member of the Transatlantic Network 2020 - a program sponsored by the British Council, which seeks to create sustainable, multilateral networks of future leaders from North America, to the UK, to the rest of Europe to collaboratively address global issues. She is a 2008-9 Fellow with the American Muslim Civic Leaders Institute at the University of Southern California's Center for Religion and Civic Culture.

Zeenat completed her Master's Degree at the University of Chicago's Center for Middle East Studies in June 2006. Her thesis work was focused on Muslim youth and the territorializing of Muslim religious institutions in America. Currently, she is one of the co-creators of a play based on Muslim women and their real life experiences, told in monologue format .

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#### Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC)

Interfaith Youth Core builds mutual respect and pluralism among young people from different religious traditions by empowering them to work together to serve others.

There are millions of religious young people in the world interacting with greater frequency. That interaction tends either toward conflict or cooperation. Where so many of these interactions tend towards conflict, the Interfaith Youth Core aims to introduce a new relationship, one that is about mutual respect and religious pluralism. Instead of focusing a dialogue on political or theological differences, we build relationships on the values that we share, such as hospitality and caring for the Earth, and how we can live out those values together to contribute to the betterment of our community.

The Interfaith Youth Core is creating these relationships across the world by inspiring, networking, and resourcing young people, who are the leaders of this movement. We provide young people and the institutions that support them with leadership training, project resources and a connection to a broader movement.

We are the core of the larger movement of people in the world who are promoting religious pluralism. As the core, our role is to provide resources, network, and catalyze the corps of people who are actively engaged in this work in their communities, and provide a platform to showcase their work to the rest of the world.

For more information, please check <http://www.ifyc.org/>

## **Tolerance in a Multi-Cultural, Multi-Religious, Democratic Society**

### **Rights and Responsibilities**

*Democracies rest upon the principle that government exists to serve the people. In other words, the people are citizens of the democratic state, not its subjects. Because the state protects the rights of its citizens, they, in turn, give the state their loyalty. Under an authoritarian system, by contrast, the state demands loyalty and service from its people without any reciprocal obligation to secure their consent for its actions.*

### **Fundamental Rights**

This relationship of citizen and state is fundamental to democracy. In the words of the U.S. Declaration of Independence, written by Thomas Jefferson in 1776:

*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.*

More specifically, in democracies, these fundamental or inalienable rights include freedom of speech and expression, freedom of religion and conscience, freedom of assembly, and the right to equal protection before the law. This is by no means an exhaustive list of the rights that citizens enjoy in a democracy, but it does constitute a set of the irreducible core rights that any democratic government worthy of the name must uphold. Since they exist independently of government, in Jefferson's view, these rights cannot be legislated away, nor should they be subject to the whim of an electoral majority.

### **Speech, Assembly, and Protest**

Freedom of speech and expression, especially about political and social issues, is the lifeblood of any democracy. Democratic governments do not control the content of most written and verbal speech. Thus democracies are usually filled with many voices expressing different or even contrary ideas and opinions. Democracies tend to be noisy.

Democracy depends upon a literate, knowledgeable citizenry whose access to information enables it to participate as fully as possible in the public life of society and to criticize unwise or oppressive government officials or policies. Citizens and their elected representatives recognize that democracy depends upon the widest possible access to uncensored ideas, data, and opinions. For a free people to govern themselves, they must be free to express themselves – openly, publicly,

and repeatedly – in speech and in writing.

The protection of free speech is a so-called “negative right,” simply requiring that the government refrain from limiting speech. For the most part, the authorities in a democracy are uninvolved in the content of written and verbal speech.

Protests serve as a testing ground for any democracy – thus the right to peaceful assembly is essential and plays an integral part in facilitating the use of free speech. A civil society allows for spirited debate among those in disagreement over the issues. In the modern United States, even fundamental issues of national security, war, and peace are discussed freely in newspapers and in broadcast media, with those opposed to the administration's foreign policy easily publicizing their views.

Freedom of speech is a fundamental right, but it is not absolute, and cannot be used to incite to violence. Slander and libel, if proven, are usually defined and controlled through the courts. Democracies generally require a high degree of threat to justify banning speech or gatherings that may incite violence, untruthfully harm the reputation of others, or overthrow a constitutional government. Many democracies ban speech that promotes racism or ethnic hatred. The challenge for all democracies, however, is one of balance: to defend freedom of speech and assembly while countering speech that truly encourages violence, intimidation, or subversion of democratic institutions. One can disagree forcefully and publicly with the actions of a public official; calling for his (or her) assassination, however, is a crime.

### **Religious Freedom and Tolerance**

All citizens should be free to follow their conscience in matters of religious faith. Freedom of religion includes the right to worship alone or with others, in public or private, or not to worship at all, and to participate in religious observance, practice, and teaching without fear of persecution from government or other groups in society. All people have the right to worship or assemble in connection with a religion or belief, and to establish and maintain places for these purposes.

Like other fundamental human rights, religious freedom is not created or granted by the state, but all democratic states should protect it. Although many democracies may choose to recognize an official separation of church and state, the values of government and religion are not in fundamental conflict. Governments that pro-

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Protect religious freedom for all their citizens are more likely to protect other rights necessary for religious freedom, such as free speech and assembly. The American colonies, virtually theocratic states in the 17th and 18th centuries, developed theories of religious tolerance and secular democracy almost simultaneously. By contrast, some of the totalitarian dictatorships of the 20th century attempted to wipe out religion, seeing it (rightly) as a form of self-expression by the individual conscience, akin to political speech. Genuine democracies recognize that individual religious differences must be respected and that a key role of government is to protect religious choice, even in cases where the state sanctions a particular religious faith. However, this does not mean that religion itself can become an excuse for violence against other religions or against society as a whole. Religion is exercised within the context of a democratic society but does not take it over.

### **Citizen Responsibilities**

Citizenship in a democracy requires participation, civility, patience – rights as well as responsibilities. Political scientist Benjamin Barber has noted, "Democracy is often understood as the rule of the majority, and rights are understood more and more as the private possessions of individuals. ... But this is to misunderstand both rights and democracy." For democracy to succeed, citizens must be active, not passive, because they know that the success or failure of the government is their responsibility, and no one else's.

It is certainly true that individuals exercise basic rights – such as freedom of speech, assembly, religion – but in another sense, rights, like individuals, do not function in isolation. Rights are exercised within the framework of a society, which is why rights and responsibilities are so closely connected.

Democratic government, which is elected by and accountable to its citizens, protects individual rights so that citizens in a democracy can undertake their civic obligations and responsibilities, thereby strengthening the society as a whole.

At a minimum, citizens should educate themselves about the critical issues confronting their society, if only so that they can vote intelligently. Some obligations, such as serving on juries in civil or criminal trials or in the military, may be required by law, but most are voluntary.

The essence of democratic action is the peaceful, active, freely chosen participation of its citizens in the public life of their community and nation. According to scholar Diane Ravitch, "Democracy is a process, a way of living and working together. It is evolutionary, not static. It requires cooperation, compromise, and tolerance among all citizens. Making it work is hard, not easy. Freedom means responsibility, not freedom from responsibility." Fulfilling this responsibility can involve active engagement in organizations or the pursuit of specific community goals; above all, fulfillment in a democracy involves a certain attitude, a willingness to believe that people who are different from you have similar rights.

Read more: <http://www.america.gov/st/democracy-english/2008/May/20080623200545eaifas0.258404.html>

### **More articles on the issues:**

#### **The Roots of Religious Liberty**

U.S. Department of State publication, Rights of the People: Individual Freedom and the Bill of Rights.

Read more: <http://www.america.gov/st/democracy-english/2008/June/20080630204604eaifas0.5368725.html>

#### **Pluralism and Democracy**

Leading scholar explains how pluralism is one key to American democracy

Read more: <http://www.america.gov/st/diversity-english/2008/May/20080528174025xjsnommis0.9732477.html>

#### **Rights of the People**

"Rights of the People" is a history of American law and justice, written by Constitutional historian Melvin Urofsky. By focusing on the Bill of Rights to the U.S. Constitution, and the legal interpretations, many of them written by America's finest jurists, that refined and expanded the Bill of Rights, Urofsky presents a history of the United States from the standpoint of individual liberty.

Read more: <http://www.america.gov/publications/books/rightspeople.html>

## Tolerance in a Multi-Cultural, Multi-Religious, Democratic Society

### Identity in America: Are Perspectives Shifting?

*Blending cultures may be redefining what it means to be American*



The number of Americans of more than one race is rapidly growing — a result, in part, of the growing population of diverse cultures.

By Sonya Weakley  
Staff Writer

“For we know that our patchwork heritage is a strength, not a weakness.”  
— President Barack Obama, January 20, 2009

“Everywhere immigrants have enriched and strengthened the

fabric of American life.”

— John F. Kennedy, *A Nation of Immigrants*, 1958

Washington — Multicultural, plural, post-ethnic, post-racial. While these descriptors are widely debated among American scholars, writers, politicians and others, it is usually not debated that with the possible exception of the American Indian, to be American is to be, genealogically speaking, from somewhere else in the world.

In addition, the heritage of individual Americans increasingly is from more than one part of the patchwork that is the fabric of America. Questions such as “Where are you from?” or “What is your background?” can draw complex responses as these individuals use words to identify themselves such as “multiracial,” “multiethnic” or “hybrid.”

As a result of the mingling of many ethnicities, America may be evolving from a multicultural nation to a nation of multicultural people. According to the United States Census Bureau, by 2050, the total “minority” population, which includes everyone except non-Hispanic, single-race whites, is projected to be 235.7 million out of a total U.S. population of 439 million, or nearly 54 percent.

Accordingly, the number of Americans who identify themselves as being of two or more races is projected to more than triple, from 5.2 million in 2008 to 16.2 million in 2050. The Census Bureau started collecting multiracial information in 2000, when census respondents were for the first time given the option of identi-

fying themselves in more than one category in the question on race.

The U.S. Office of Management and Budget decided in 1997 that “mark one or more races” should be included in the census based on “evidence of increasing numbers of children from interracial unions and the need to measure the increased diversity in the United States,” according to the Census Bureau.

The decision sparked debate in America on the social and political impact of creating so many categories of race, but it also brought the idea of multiracial identity to the country’s collective consciousness. With the election of President Obama, who is of mixed race, the question of race or ethnicity, how much it matters and what Americans think about it has become a popular topic for discussion.

### SO WHO IS AN AMERICAN?

For the month of February 2009, America.gov joined the discussion and exploring how the ever-increasing diversity of the U.S. population is affecting the way Americans identify themselves. Can Americans choose how and when to use ethnic heritage in describing themselves? If so, how do they decide which ethnicity to use? Can Americans choose not to be identified by any ethnicity or to use other social descriptors? Are all these choices part of being American?

A number of recent polls and other reports point to trends indicating shifts in American attitudes toward race and ethnicity that may be influencing how Americans think about their identities.

In an ABC News poll conducted December 19, 2008, to January 4, 2009, more than half the respondents who were black said they think of themselves first as American. That 51 percent is up from 46 percent in September 2008. Blacks age 50 and older call themselves American first by a margin of 2 to 1.

In an October 2008 poll by the American Anti-Defamation League, 66 percent of respondents see the growth in “minority” populations in the United States as an advantage in building a strong economy. In 1992, only 39 percent held that view.

In his September 2008 report titled “The Kerner Commission Report Plus Four Decades: What Has Changed? What Has Not?,” Reynolds Farley, a sociologist at the University of Michigan’s Population Studies Center, details a number of “pervasive changes in the racial attitudes and beliefs of whites” and cites the significant

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In 1968, when the Kerner Commission, established by President Johnson to investigate the causes of race riots, issued its report, about 1 percent of black married men had white spouses. In 2006, that proportion had increased to 14 percent, Farley reports.

He also notes that in the 1996 General Social Survey by the University of Chicago, 92 percent of white respondents said they would vote for a black presidential candidate if their party nominated a qualified one.

### **JOIN THE JOURNEY**

During February 2009, America.gov considered ideas and thoughts on race, ethnicity and identity through various elements, including pieces on the role of blogs in fueling the discussion and how public exhibits are introducing new ways of thinking, a review of American immigration history, a photo essay of people whose quotes provide food for thought, first-person documentation of personal experiences, videos of people who share their insights, interactive tools and more.

Come explore identity and diversity with America.gov.

Read more: <http://www.america.gov/st/diversity-english/2009/January/20090129121357fsyelkaew0.9819147.html#ixzz0MhxfohKp>

### **More articles on Multicultural, post-ethnic, post-racial:**

#### **Are We So Different?**

Is race real or a recent human invention? Is it about biology or culture? These questions are addressed by RACE: Are We So Different?, a traveling exhibit and related Web site on the history of the idea of race, the science of human variation, and the experience of living with race and racism. Related article: Landmark Exhibit on Race Asks "Are We So Different?"

Link: : <http://www.america.gov/st/diversity-english/2009/January/200901221119061CJsamohT0.1856653.html#ixzz0MhxyWDqz>

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#### **Growing up Multicultural**

Crystal Grace Ofori is proud to be a Ghanaian American, but it wasn't always that way. Iranian-American Gelareh Asayesh faced these same challenges. Related

article: Finding My Own Saffron Sky

Link: <http://www.america.gov/st/diversity-english/2009/February/20090202171139gcirof00.9010126.html?CP.rss=true#ixzz0MhyEW9ZC>

[February/20090202171139gcirof00.9010126.html?CP.rss=true#ixzz0MhyEW9ZC](http://www.america.gov/st/diversity-english/2009/February/20090202171139gcirof00.9010126.html?CP.rss=true#ixzz0MhyEW9ZC)

## **U.S. Religious Landscape Is Marked by Diversity and Change**

Immigration contributing to changes in size, composition of religious groups

By Melody Merin—Special Correspondent

Washington -- Religious affiliation among U.S. residents best can be described as "diverse and extremely fluid," according to a new poll conducted by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life.

The U.S. Religious Landscape Survey queried more than 35,500 adults age 18 and older living in the United States. It was conducted by telephone in 2007 in both English and Spanish.

The goal was to examine the religious makeup of American society -- not only the size of various religious groups, including the smallest ones, but also demographic characteristics, social and political values, religious practices and shifting religious affiliations.

Luis Lugo, director of the Pew Forum, added that the survey -- published in February 2008 -- will contribute to "a better understanding of the very important role religion plays in the private, personal and also the public lives of most Americans."

More than three-fourths of those surveyed classify themselves as Christian, 5 percent belong to other faiths, and 16 percent are not affiliated with a specific religion.

Members of evangelical Protestant churches constitute the largest religious tradition in the United States (26 percent of the population), followed by Catholics (24 percent) and mainline Protestants (18 percent).

### **MOVEMENT AMONG RELIGIONS**

With more than 28 percent of American adults leaving the faith of their childhoods to practice another religion -- or no religion -- the survey confirmed that "a remarkable amount of movement" is occurring.

Such movement is evident in the Protestant community. Fifty-one percent of U.S. adults surveyed identify

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Catholicism has held steady over the past two decades, but that statistic obscures dramatic shifts as well. According to the survey, "Catholicism has lost more people to other religions or to no religion at all than any other single religious group." However, such losses were offset by the number of Catholics who immigrated to the United States.

The remaining Christian groups (3 percent of the population) include Mormons, Jehovah's Witness, Orthodox (evenly divided between Greek and Russian Orthodox), and others.

### **IMPACT OF IMMIGRANTS**

Immigration is "contributing in a major way to the changes in the American religious landscape," notes the Landscape Survey. Some 61 percent of immigrants are from Latin America and the Caribbean, with half of these from Mexico alone. Nearly three-fourths of Mexican immigrants and half of other Latin American immigrants are Catholic. This helps explain why one-fourth of U.S. Catholics are foreign born.

New arrivals are bringing other religious traditions to America as well. Immigrants are "disproportionately represented among several world religions in the United States, including Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism," the survey found.

Muslims, of whom two-thirds are immigrants, account for roughly 0.6 percent of the U.S. adult population, according to the survey. Hindus are 0.4 percent of the population, with 86 percent born elsewhere. (By contrast, three fourths of Buddhists are native-born; many are converts from other faiths. They constitute 0.7 percent of the population.)

The survey found that Hindus, Muslims and members of Christian Orthodox churches are the groups most heavily comprised of immigrants.

### **DIVERSITY WITHIN RELIGIOUS GROUPS**

There also is considerable diversity within religious traditions. Among Protestants, about half are evangelicals, one-third belong to mainline churches (Methodist, Lutheran, etc.) and 13 percent attend historically black churches.

In the survey, 1.7 percent identify themselves as Jewish, with Reform Judaism leading the way followed by Conservative and Orthodox Judaism.

Among U.S. Muslims, Sunnis make up half of the total,

while the rest are Shiites and those who do not specify a denomination.

Buddhists, too, emerge with a number of distinct categories: Zen Buddhism, Theravada and Tibetan, among others.

Other factors like age, race and geography also influence the religious landscape. For example, mainline Protestants and Jews generally are older, while people not affiliated with a particular religion are younger. Immigrants more often are Catholic, while native-born Americans are more likely to be Protestant.

Blacks are the group most likely to report a religious affiliation. More than three-fourths are Protestant.

Protestants have a slight edge (53 percent) among non-Hispanic whites, but Catholics predominate among Hispanics (58 percent). Asians are more divided, with 27 percent Protestant, 17 percent Catholic and 53 percent other religions or unaffiliated.

Looking at geography, the Southern United States has the highest percentage of Protestants, particularly evangelicals, while the Northeast has the highest percentage of Jews, Catholics, Hindus and Muslims. The West has the most Buddhists.

### **NO RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION**

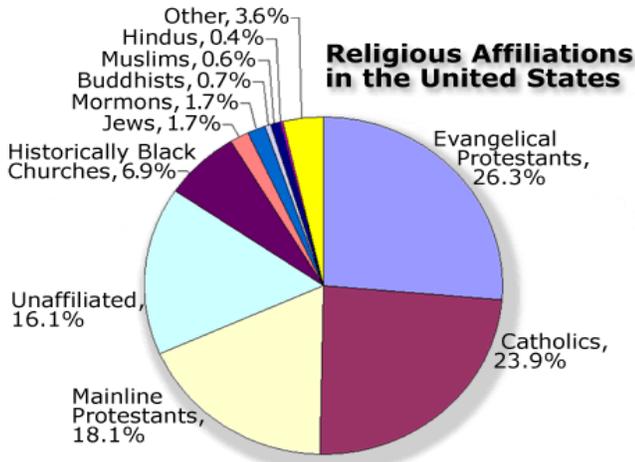
One of the most interesting findings in the Landscape Survey is the growing number of American adults (16 percent) who do not belong to any particular religious group. Through the 1980s, this group accounted for only 5 to 8 percent of the population.

The unaffiliated group is "quite diverse" and "it is simply not accurate to describe this entire group as nonreligious," the survey states. About one-fourth identify themselves as atheist or agnostic (4 percent of the total adult population). The rest describe their religion as "nothing in particular" (12 percent of the adult population). While half of these respondents say religion is "not important" in their lives, the others say it is "somewhat" or "very important," even though they do not chose to be affiliated with a religious group.

The Pew Forum plans to issue another report based on the Religious Landscape Survey that will examine religious beliefs and practices as well as social and political attitudes of believers and nonbelievers. The Survey is available at <http://religions.pewforum.org/pdf/report-religious-landscape-study-full.pdf>

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**Main Religious Affiliations in the United States**



Source: The Pew Forum Religious Landscape Survey (2008)

Source: The 2008 Pew Forum Religious Landscape Survey (State Dept.)

**Almost all the world’s religions are practiced today in the United States. The American tradition of religious tolerance and constitutional safeguards for freedom of worship has made religious life in the United States one of most diverse and vibrant in the world. In a new study by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, 78 percent of the more than 35,500 respondents classified themselves as Christian, 5 percent belonged to other faiths, and 16 percent were not affiliated with a specific religion. Members of evangelical Protestant churches constitute the largest religious group in the United States (26 percent of the population), followed by Catholics (24 percent) and mainline Protestants (18 percent).**

**Evangelical Protestants**

Evangelical churches and religious groups have roots in the 18th-century Protestant revival movement, a period of heightened religious activity, especially in the United States and England. The Pew Forum’s U.S. Religious Landscape Survey states that “churches within the evangelical Protestant tradition share certain religious beliefs (such as the conviction that personal acceptance of Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation), practices (such as an emphasis on bringing other people to the faith), and origins (including separatist movements against established religious institutions).” Evangelicals emphasize personal religious experience, individual conversion, Bible study, the role of the laity in spread-

ing the tenets of the faith and the need to practice faith-based morality in public life. The largest evangelical groups in the United States are evangelical Baptists, Pentecostals and nondenominational evangelicals.

**Catholics**

The United States has the third-largest Catholic population in the world (after Brazil and Mexico). Catholicism is the traditional religion of most Americans with Latino, Italian, Irish and Polish roots. The Landscape Survey states that “the Catholic share of the U.S. adult population has held fairly steady in recent decades, at around 25 percent.” Approximately one-third of survey respondents who were raised Catholic no longer practice that faith. These losses, however, have been offset partly by Catholic immigrants, particularly from Latin America. The church traces its origin to Jesus and the Twelve Apostles. It sees the bishops of the church as the successors of the apostles, and the pope in particular as the successor of St. Peter. The primary mission of the Catholic Church is to spread the message of Jesus Christ, found in the four Gospels of the Bible, and to administer church rituals called sacraments. Roman Catholicism today is the largest single church in the United States.

**Mainline Protestants**

The Landscape Survey, emphasizing the diversity of American Protestantism, describes churches in the mainline Protestant tradition as sharing “a less exclusionary view of salvation” than the evangelicals’ strict emphasis on personal acceptance of Jesus Christ. Mainline Protestant churches, which developed as a result of the 16th-century Reformation movement in Europe, have “long-established religious institutions” and place “a strong emphasis on social reform,” the survey said. The most numerous mainline Protestant churches in the United States are the Methodists, Lutherans, mainline Presbyterians and mainline Baptists. These churches tend to embrace the ecumenical position (belief in Christian unity) and often participate in interdenominational and interfaith organizations such as the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches. Approximately half (51 percent) of the members of U.S. mainline Protestant churches are age 50 or older.

**Historically Black Churches**

After slavery was abolished in the United States in the mid-19th century, African-American Christians started to establish their own churches to strengthen their communities, escape discrimination and worship in their

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own, culturally distinctive ways. Those churches quickly became the main social, cultural and political institutions of the African-American community. Black pastors and preachers, like Martin Luther King Jr. and others, played a prominent role during the civil rights movement of the 1960s. Today, many historically black churches continue to combine religious and community functions and cultivate unique forms of worship and spiritual expression. The most numerous among the black Christian churches are black Baptists organized in the National Baptist Convention, USA, and black Methodists.

### **Jews**

Although Jews have been settling in America since Colonial times, most came from Germany and Eastern Europe in the 19th century, bringing in diverse religious customs and forms of piety characteristic to those regions. Today, most American Jews follow the Reform stream of Judaism developed in the United States in the 19th century. Two other main streams of Judaism -- Conservative and Orthodox -- take, respectively, the second and the third place. More than 40 percent of American Jews live in the Northeast, although significant Jewish communities also exist in Florida, California and most large American urban centers.

### **Mormons**

The Mormon Church, officially known as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, was founded in New York state in 1830. According to its founder, Joseph Smith, angel Moroni revealed golden tablets containing the Book of Mormon, which along with the Bible is the foundation of the Mormon faith. After Smith was assassinated by a mob in 1844, his closest associate, Brigham Young, took church members across the continent to Utah, which is still the main site of the Mormon community. As a result of active missionary efforts, the church has spread throughout the United States and abroad. Mormons make up about 61 percent of Utah's population and 1.7 percent of the total U.S. population.

### **Buddhists**

Americans first were exposed to Buddhism after the California Gold Rush, when large numbers of immigrants from China started arriving in the United States. The first Buddhist temple was built in San Francisco in 1853. Today, Buddhism remains the traditional religion of a large portion of Asian Americans but it also has developed a significant following among non-Asian converts. It has been studied by a number of American philosophers, writers and artists. Today, most American

Buddhists still live in the West, especially along the West Coast, where several prominent American Buddhist schools and universities are located. Three-fourths of Buddhists in the United States are native-born; many are converts from other faiths. They constitute 0.7 percent of the population.

### **Muslims**

The first Muslim in North America recorded by history is the early 16th-century Spanish explorer of Berber descent, Estevánico of Azamor. Historical records also show that many African slaves brought to America were probably Muslims. Over the last hundred years, the Muslim population of the United States has been growing steadily, as the result of immigration and conversions. An estimated one-third of American Muslims are African Americans who have converted to Islam, and most of the rest are immigrants. Muslims account for roughly 0.6 percent of the U.S. adult population, according to the Landscape Survey. The survey found that Sunnis make up half of the total, while the rest are Shiites and those who do not specify a denomination. Most American Muslims live in the South and in the Northeast.

### **Hindus**

Prior to the Immigration and Nationality Services Act of 1965, Hindu immigration to the United States was difficult to estimate, but it probably was very limited. Today, Hindu communities exist throughout the United States, and numerous Hindu religious leaders live in or visit America. The first Hindu temple in North America was the Sri Venkateswara Temple in Penn Hills, a suburb of Pittsburgh, consecrated in 1976. It receives up to 100,000 pilgrims every year. Another prominent Hindu temple is Malibu Hindu Temple, built in 1981 near Malibu, California. Elements of Hindu lore have entered into mainstream American culture, as shown by the popularity of yoga, meditation and other techniques of self-awareness and self-improvement rooted in Hindu philosophy. Hindus are 0.4 percent of the U.S. population, and 86 percent are foreign born.

Read more at: <http://www.america.gov/st/diversity-english/2008/March/20080317160257zjsredna0.8236048.html>

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**Religious Freedom Laws Help Create Culture of Tolerance**

*Scholar R. Scott Hanson discusses religious diversity in America*

Washington -- An openness to immigration and laws protecting religious freedom helped create the conditions for religious tolerance in the United States, says an expert on immigration, religion and urban issues in America who has researched a neighborhood in New York City he calls "perhaps the most extreme case of religious pluralism in the world."

That neighborhood is Flushing, Queens, which encompasses more than 200 places of religious worship within 6.5 square kilometers. Queens is one of the five boroughs that make up New York City.

Flushing has become a model for religious pluralism in America, says R. Scott Hanson, a visiting assistant professor of history at the State University of New York at Binghamton and an affiliate of the Pluralism Project at Harvard University. He answered questions about religious diversity during an America.gov webchat August 19.

While many communities in the United States are religiously diverse, Hanson said, the dense concentration of houses of worship and absence of widespread religious conflict in Flushing make it special.

The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution protects the right to worship freely or not worship at all, and prohibits the government from establishing a national religion. Hanson said the protection of these "basic rights" is essential in creating a culture of tolerance. (See "The Freedom to Worship and the Courts.")

"The conditions for diversity seem to stem from a democratic government that permits immigration and protects religious freedom by law," he observed.

While the efforts of religious institutions and grassroots groups to promote tolerance are important, they are not enough, Hanson said. "In every major world religion, you can find a common message of tolerance, but I think a democratic government that protects religious freedom by law is the only way to guarantee this."

Flushing has a long history of religious tolerance. In 1657, a group of colonists issued a public notice -- a

"remonstrance" -- decrying efforts by the Dutch colonial government to force discrimination against Quakers. The Flushing Remonstrance was one of the earliest arguments for religious freedom in the United States, Hanson said. (See "U.S. Religious Freedom Owes Debt to Colonists' Radical Document.")

Today in Flushing, "there are half a dozen Hindu temples, two Sikh gurdwaras, several mosques, Japanese, Chinese, and Korean Buddhist temples, a Taoist temple, over 100 Korean churches, Latin American evangelical churches, Falun Gong practitioners, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons ... as well as some of the oldest



In this map created by R. Scott Hanson, each dot represents a place of worship in Flushing, Queens, as of 2007. Queens is one of the five boroughs that make up New York City.

churches and synagogues in the city," Hanson said in an essay for the Pluralism Project. (See "One New York City Neighborhood Is a World of Religious Diversity." <http://www.america.gov/st/diversity-english/2008/July/20080729171918xlrennef0.9129907.html>)

Most of the recent growth in Flushing and throughout Queens is due to immigration from Latin America, East Asia and South Asia, he told the webchat participants. According to the 2000 census, more than half the residents of Flushing are Asian American, and Queens is now the most ethnically diverse county in the United States.

"I think the real question people are wondering about now for the 21st century is if places like Flushing are

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now too diverse to still allow for a sense of community," Hanson said. This can be a problem with recent and first-generation immigrants, who "need time to settle, build institutions, and assimilate" before they feel a part of the community.

However, "Asian Americans who grew up in Flushing are now more politically engaged with the local community than their parents," he said.

Since the late 1980s, there have been several attempts "to bring various religious and ethnic groups in the community together led by local religious leaders and activists," Hanson said. These generally are prompted by incidents of vandalism, bigotry or events such as the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, "but then [these efforts] fade. As a result, interaction between groups has been limited and relatively superficial, but at least leaders got to know each other."

"Only very recently has there been more of an organized attempt to bridge the divisions and find common ground," he said. (See "Different Faiths Team Up to Bridge Differences in New York.")

"Recent studies show that the 2nd-3rd generations [of immigrants] ultimately become more civically involved - as you're starting to see in Flushing now with the current City Councilman, John Liu -- the city's first Asian American to hold that office," Hanson said. Liu, who was born in Taiwan and came to America at age 5, represents northeast Queens on the New York City Council.

"I predict there will be much more civic participation and meaningful interfaith activity in the coming years," Hanson added.

*Hanson is the author of City of Gods: Religious Freedom, Immigration, and Pluralism in Flushing, Queens -- New York City, 1945-2001, scheduled for publication in 2009.*

More information on Hanson's research is available from the Pluralism Project.

Also see "U.S. Minorities Will Be the Majority by 2042, Census Bureau Says." Read more: <http://www.america.gov/st/diversity-english/2008/August/20080825143428xlrennef0.4305994.html#ixzz0MhvQWQRf>

### The Culture of Democracy

(The following article is taken from the U.S. Department of State publication, USA Democracy in Brief.)

Human beings possess a variety of sometimes contradictory desires. People want safety, yet relish adventure; they aspire to individual freedom, yet demand social equality. Democracy is no different, and it is important to recognize that many of these tensions, even paradoxes, are present in every democratic society.

### Conflict and Consensus

According to scholar and writer Larry Diamond, a central paradox exists between conflict and consensus. Democracy is in many ways nothing more than a set of rules for managing conflict. At the same time, this conflict must be managed within certain limits and result in compromises, consensus, or other agreements that all sides accept as legitimate. An overemphasis on one side of the equation can threaten the entire undertaking. If groups perceive democracy as nothing more than a forum in which they can press their demands, the society can shatter from within. If the government exerts excessive pressure to achieve consensus, stifling the voices of the people, the society can be crushed from above.

There is no easy solution to the conflict-consensus equation. Democracy is not a machine that runs by itself once the proper principles are inserted. A democratic society needs the commitment of citizens who accept the inevitability of intellectual and political conflict as well as the necessity for tolerance. From this perspective, it is important to recognize that many conflicts in a democratic society are not between clear-cut "right" and "wrong" but between differing interpretations of democratic rights and social priorities.

### Education and Democracy

Education is a vital component of any society, but especially of a democracy. As Thomas Jefferson wrote: "If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never shall be."

### Freedom permits people to live a peaceful, private life.

There is a direct connection between education and democratic values: in democratic societies, educational

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content and practice support habits of democratic governance. This educational transmission process is vital in a democracy because effective democracies are dynamic, evolving forms of government that demand independent thinking by the citizenry. The opportunity for positive social and political change rests in citizen's hands. Governments should not view the education system as a means to indoctrinate students, but devote resources to education just as they strive to defend other basic needs of citizens.

In contrast to authoritarian societies that seek to inculcate an attitude of passive acceptance, the object of democratic education is to produce citizens who are independent, questioning, yet deeply familiar with the precepts and practices of democracy. Chester E. Finn Jr., a senior fellow born with an appetite for personal freedom, but they are not born with knowledge about the social and political arrangements that make freedom possible over time for themselves and their children. ...Such things must be acquired. They must be learned." Learning about democracy begins in school; it continues throughout a life of civic involvement, and curiosity about the many kinds of information accessible in a free society.

### Society and Democracy

Democratic constitutionalism is ultimately the foundation by which a society, through the clash and compromise of ideas, institutions, and individuals, reaches, however imperfectly, for truth. Democracy is pragmatic. Ideas and solutions to problems are not tested against a rigid ideology but tried in the real world where they can be argued over and changed, accepted, or discarded.

Scholar Diane Ravitch observes: "Coalition-building is the essence of democratic action. It teaches interest groups to negotiate with others, to compromise, and to work within the constitutional system. By working to establish coalition, groups with differences learn how to argue peaceably, how to pursue their goals in a democratic manner, and ultimately how to live in a world of diversity."

Self-government cannot always protect against mistakes, end ethnic strife, guarantee economic prosperity, or ensure happiness. It does, however, allow for public debate to identify and fix mistakes, permit groups to meet and resolve differences, offer opportunities for economic growth, and provide for social advancement and individual expression.

The late Josef Brodsky, Russian-born poet and Nobel Prize winner, wrote, "A free man, when he fails, blames nobody." It is true as well for the citizens of democracy who, finally, must take responsibility for the fate of the society in which they themselves have chosen to live.

Democracy itself guarantees nothing. It offers instead the opportunity to succeed as well as the risk of failure. In Thomas Jefferson's ringing but shrewd phrase, the promise of democracy is "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

Democracy is then both a promise and a challenge. It is a promise that free human beings, working together, can govern themselves in a manner that will serve their aspirations for personal freedom, economic opportunity, and social justice. It is a challenge because the success of the democratic enterprise rests upon the shoulders of its citizens and no one else.

Read more: <http://www.america.gov/st/democracy-english/2008/May/20080623211627eaifas0.3020236.html#ixzz0MhvZwKN5>

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### Native American Ideas of Governance and U.S. Constitution

By Bruce E. Johansen



Historian Bruce E. Johansen

*Bruce E. Johansen is the Frederick W. Kayser Professor in the School of Communication at the University of Nebraska in Omaha. With co-author Donald A. Grinde Jr. he pioneered the once-controversial, now widely accepted re-*

*search on the significant influence of indigenous American government practices on the Constitution of the United States.*

Besides well-known European precedents — from Greece, Rome, and English common law, among others — indigenous American ideas of democracy have shaped the government of the United States. Immigrants arrived in colonial America seeking freedom and found it in the confederacies of the Iroquois and other Native nations. By the time of the Constitutional Convention in 1787, these ideas were common currency in the former colonies, illustrated in debates involving Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and John Adams. Later, during the 19th century, conceptions of Iroquois gender relations had an important impact on major architects of American feminism. These ideas illuminate political debates today.

Throughout eastern North America, Native nations had formed confederacies by the time they encountered European immigrants: the Seminoles in what is now Florida, the Cherokees and Choctaws in the Carolinas, and the Iroquois and their allies the Wyandots (Hurons) in upstate New York and the Saint Lawrence Valley.

The Iroquois system of confederation was the best-known to the colonists, in large part because the Iroquois occupied a pivotal position in diplomacy, not only between the English and French but also among other native confederacies. Called the Iroquois by the French and the Five (later Six) Nations by the English, the Iroquois peoples, who call themselves Haudenosaunee “People of the Longhouse,” controlled the only relatively level land pass between the English colonies on the

eastern seaboard and the French settlements in the Saint Lawrence Valley.

The Iroquois Confederacy was formed by the Huron leader Deganawidah, “the Peacemaker” in Haudenosaunee oral tradition, who enlisted the aid of Aiowantha (sometimes called Hiawatha) to spread his vision of a confederacy to control bloody rivalries. The confederacy originally included the Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas, and Senecas. The sixth nation, the Tuscaroras, migrated into Iroquois country in the early 18th century and were adopted. The confederacy probably dates from the 12th century of the Common Era, according to research by Barbara A. Mann and Jerry Fields of the University of Toledo.

Haudenosaunee fundamental law, the Great Law of Peace, stipulates to this day that sachems’ (chiefs’) skins must be thick to withstand the criticism of their constituents: sachems should take pains not to become angry when people scrutinize their conduct in governmental affairs. Such a point of view pervades the writings of Jefferson and Franklin, although it was not fully codified into U.S. law until the Supreme Court decision *New York Times v. Sullivan* (1964) made it virtually impossible for public officials to sue successfully for libel.

The Great Law of Peace also provides for the removal from office of leaders who can no longer adequately function in office, a measure remarkably similar to a constitutional amendment adopted in the United States during the late 20th century providing for the removal of an incapacitated president. The Great Law includes provisions guaranteeing freedom of religion and the right of redress before the Grand Council. It forbids unauthorized entry of homes — all measures that sound familiar to U.S. citizens through the Bill of Rights.

The procedure for debating policies of the confederacy begins with the Mohawks and Senecas, called “elder brothers.” After being debated by the Keepers of the Eastern Door (Mohawks) and the Keepers of the Western Door (Senecas), the question is thrown “across the fire” to the Oneida and Cayuga statesmen, “younger brothers,” for discussion. Once consensus is achieved among the Oneidas and the Cayugas, the discussion returns to the Senecas and Mohawks for confirmation. Next, the question is laid before the Onondagas, who try to resolve any remaining conflicts.

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At this stage, the Onondagas exercise a power similar to judicial review and functions built into conference committees in the U.S. Congress. They can raise objections about the proposal if it is believed to be inconsistent with the Great Law. Essentially, the council can rewrite the proposed law so that it can be in accord with the constitution of the Iroquois. When the Onondagas reach consensus, the Tadodaho, the chief executive officer of the Grand Council, confirms the decision. This process reflects the emphasis on checks and balances, public debate, and consensus. The overall intent of such a parliamentary procedure is to encourage unity at each step.

### The Iroquois and Colonial Federation

At Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in 1744, Canassatego, the Iroquois Tadodaho, advised colonial representatives on Iroquois concepts of unity:

"Our wise forefathers established Union and Amity between the Five Nations. This has made us formidable; this has given us great Weight and Authority with our neighboring Nations. We are a powerful Confederacy; and by your observing the same methods, our wise forefathers have taken, you will acquire such Strength and power. Therefore whatever befalls, never fall out with one another."

Benjamin Franklin probably first learned of Canassatego's advice to the colonies as he set the sachem's words in type. Franklin's press issued Indian treaties in small booklets that enjoyed a lively sale throughout the colonies, from 1736 to 1762. Even before the Albany Congress, the first attempt to unify the colonies, Benjamin Franklin had been musing over the words of Canassatego. Using Iroquois examples of unity, Franklin sought to shame the reluctant colonists into some form of union in 1751 when he engaged in a hyperbolic racial slur: "It would be a strange thing ... if Six Nations of Ignorant savages should be capable of forming such an union and be able to execute it in such a manner that it has subsisted ages and appears indissoluble, and yet that a like union should be impractical for ten or a dozen English colonies, to whom it is more necessary and must be more advantageous." Actually, subsequent evidence shows that Franklin had a healthy respect for the Iroquois. He began his distinguished diplomatic career by representing Pennsylvania in treaty councils

with the Iroquois and their allies, as he became a forceful advocate of colonial union.

On July 10, 1754, Franklin formally proposed his Plan of Union before the Albany Congress. Franklin wrote that the debates on the Albany Plan "... went on daily, hand in hand with the Indian business." The Iroquois sachem Tiyanoga not only spoke for the roughly 200 Indians in attendance at the Albany Congress but also briefed the colonial delegates on Iroquois political systems, much as Canassatego had done 10 years earlier.

In drawing up his final draft of the Albany Plan for colonial unification, Franklin was meeting several diplomatic demands: the British, for control; the colonies, for autonomy in a loose confederation; and the Iroquois, for a colonial union similar to their own in form and function. For the British, the plan provided administration by a president general appointed by England. The individual colonies were to be allowed to retain their own constitutions, except as the plan circumscribed them. The retention of internal sovereignty within the individual colonies closely resembled the Iroquois system and had no existing precedent in Europe.

### Thomas Jefferson and Native American Concepts of Governance

While Franklin and Jefferson were too pragmatic to believe that they could copy the "natural state," its image was sewn early into the United States' national ideological fabric. Jefferson wrote: "The only condition on earth to be compared with ours, in my opinion, is that of the Indian, where they have still less law than we." When Thomas Paine wrote, on the first page of his influential pamphlet *Common Sense*, that "government, like dress, is the badge of lost innocence," he was recapitulating observations of Native American societies.

Writing to Edward Carrington in 1787, Jefferson linked freedom of expression with public opinion and happiness, citing American Indian societies as an example:

The basis of our government being the opinion of the people, our very first object should be to keep that right; and were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate for a moment to prefer the latter .... I am convinced that those societies [as the Indians] which live without government enjoy in their general mass an infinitely greater degree of happiness than those who live

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under European governments.

“Without government” could not have meant without social order to Jefferson. He, Franklin, and Paine all knew native societies too well to argue that Native Americans functioned without social cohesion. It was clear that the Iroquois, for example, did not organize a confederacy with alliances spreading over much of northeastern North America “without government.” They did it, however, with a non-European conception of government, one of which Jefferson, Paine, and Franklin were appreciative students who sought to factor “natural law” and “natural rights” into their designs for the United States during the revolutionary era.

### A Debate Regarding Federalism at the Constitutional Convention

By June of 1787, the delegates to the Constitutional Convention were engaged in a debate about the fundamental nature of the Union. Many delegates appeared to agree with James Wilson when he stated, on June 1, 1787, that he would not be “governed by the British model which was inapplicable to ... this country.” Wilson believed that America’s size was so great and its ideals so “republican, that nothing but a great confederated republic would do for it.”

In 1787, on the eve of the Constitutional Convention, John Adams published his *A Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States of America*. Although Adams was selected as a Massachusetts delegate to the Constitutional Convention, he chose not to attend and published his lengthy essay instead. Adams’s *Defence* was a critical survey of world governments that included a description of the Iroquois and other Native American governments and other historical examples of confederacies in Europe and Asia.

Adams’s *Defence* was no unabashed endorsement of native models for government. He refuted the arguments of Franklin, who advocated a one-house legislature resembling the Iroquois Grand Council, a model that had been used in the Albany Plan and Articles of Confederation. Adams did not trust the consensus model that seemed to work for the Iroquois. Adams believed that without the checks and balances built into two houses, the system would succumb to special interests and dissolve into anarchy, or despotism. When Adams described the Mohawks’ independence, he exercised criticism, while Franklin wrote about Indian governments in a much more approving way.

### Native American Ideas and the Origins of American Feminism

An aspect of Native American life that alternately intrigued, perplexed, and sometimes alarmed European and European-American observers, most of whom were male, during the 17th and 18th centuries, was the influential role of women. In many cases they hold pivotal positions in Native political systems. Iroquois women, for example, nominate men to positions of leadership and can “dehorn,” or impeach, them for misconduct. Women often have veto power over men’s plans for war. In a matrilineal society — and nearly all the confederacies that bordered the colonies were matrilineal — women owned all household goods except the men’s clothes, weapons, and hunting implements. They also were the primary conduits of culture from generation to generation.

The role of women in Iroquois society inspired some of the most influential advocates of modern feminism in the United States. The Iroquois example figures importantly in a seminal book in what Sally R. Wagner calls “the first wave of feminism,” Matilda Joselyn Gage’s *Woman, Church, and State* (1893). In that book, Gage acknowledges, according to Wagner’s research, that “the modern world [is] indebted [to the Iroquois] for its first conception of inherent rights, natural equality of condition, and the establishment of a civilized government upon this basis.”

Gage was one of the 19th century’s three most influential American feminists, with Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony. Gage herself was admitted to the Iroquois Council of Matrons and was adopted into the Wolf Clan, with the name Karonienhawi, “she who holds [up] the sky.”

The opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. government.

Read more: <http://www.america.gov/st/peopleplace-english/2009/June/20090617110824wrybakcu0.5986096.html>

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