



# Ten Tortured Words: How the Founding Fathers Tried to Protect Religion in America . . . and What's Happened Since

*Stephen Mansfield*

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## **Ten Tortured Words: How the Founding Fathers Tried to Protect Religion in America . . . and What's Happened Since** Stephen Mansfield

In the steamy summer of 1787, as America's founding fathers fashioned their Constitution, they told the most powerful institution in their new nation what it must *not* do:

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion."

Few Americans understand the miracle in world history these ten words represent. For the first time in human experience, the legislative power of a nation was forbidden from legislating the conscience of man. And for over one hundred and fifty years, religion flourished, institutions of faith multiplied, and revivals transformed whole communities. Th elected representatives of the people often called for days of prayer, recognizing that religion is essential to national character.

So what happened? Why is it that today a cross-shaped memorial or a religious symbol in a city seal is considered a violation of the Constitution? Why are pastors threatened if they speak out about politics and children kept from even asking about religion in the public schools?

*Ten Tortured Words* separates historical fact from fiction, illuminating the events and personalities that shaped the writing of the Establishment Clause. In his straightforward, award-winning style, cultural historian Stephen Mansfield interprets the societal shifts that have led to the current rift between religion and politics, and takes a surprising look at what lies ahead for freedom of religion in America.

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