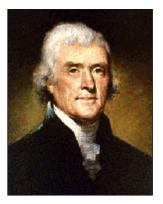# WAS AMERICA FOUNDED AS A
CHRISTIAN NATION???

To hear Pat Robertson tell it, America was founded by a group of fundamentalist Christians and was intended to be a Christian nation. As frequently is the case, Pat and the religious right are wrong.

To start with, if America's founders were Christians they would have followed the teachings in the Bible. What does the Bible have to say about things like the American Revolution? Let's take a look. Romans 13:1&2 states, "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore he who resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment." According to this direct quote from the Bible, Thomas Jefferson and *everyone* who supported the American Revolution were acting against God when they rebelled against the British monarchy. How the Christian fundamentalists can claim America was founded as a Christian nation with this blatant disobedience to their holy book, the Bible, by *everyone* who took part in the revolt against, "the governing authorities," I'll never know.

Thomas Jefferson, the author of the first document of the United States, the Declaration of Independence, was not a Christian, but was a Deist. That is, he believed in God or a Creator, but did not believe Jesus was the son of God or divine in any way and did not believe the Bible was the word of God. That is one reason the Declaration of Independence never mentions Moses, Jesus, or the Bible. Instead, being the Deist document that it is, it refers to God as Nature's God, the Creator and divine Providence. All Deistic terms.

Regarding the much vaunted book of Revelations he had this to say: "No man on earth has less taste or talent for criticism than myself, and the least and last of all should I undertake to criticize works on the Apocalypse. It was between fifty and sixty years since I read it and then I considered it as merely the ravings of a maniac, no more worthy, nor capable of explanation than the incoherence of our own nightly dreams. . . . You will judge, therefore, from this how impossible I think it that either your explanation or that of any man in 'the Heavens above or on the earth beneath' can be a correct one. What has no meaning admits no explanation!" (Thomas Jefferson: In His Own Words, page 360).

The religious right likes deceiving its followers and the public into thinking Mr. Jefferson was one of them. They often misquote Jefferson when he wrote in a letter to Benjamin Rush, dated April 21, 1803, " I am a Christian, in the only sense in which he (Jesus) wished anyone to be; sincerely attached to his doctrines, in preference to all others;" They usually stop there. But if they had the honesty to continue, you would read, ". . .ascribing to himself every *human* excellence; and believing he never claimed any other." As his complete quote shows, he did not believe Jesus was anything more than a great person. He certainly did not believe he was a God.

Jefferson didn't trust the early Church leaders who voted on which books would be in the Bible and which would not. He thought so little of the New Testament that he physically cut and pasted it. That is he cut out the parts he believed Jesus said and that were in line with our God-given Reason and discarded the rest. And he didn't even think enough of the Old Testament to bother with it at all! Does this sound like a Christian fundamentalist to you???

To learn about the natural religion of Deism, please contact the World Union of Deists at: Box 4052, Clearwater, FL 33758 - U.S.A., or visit our web site at: www.deism.com