

# **“National Treasures” (An introduction or “Where it all started”)**

By Chaplain Todd DuBord (M. Div.)

[www.CrossFireUSA.org](http://www.CrossFireUSA.org)



**Dear U.S. Supreme Court, Jamestown Yorktown Foundation, and Thomas Jefferson Foundation, As Well As Many Other U.S. Governing Officials:**

I am writing you to share my extreme disappointment with the false, misleading religious history and information given at three locations by governing personnel: the Jamestown settlement, Thomas Jefferson's Monticello estate, and the U.S. Supreme Court Building.

In July of 2006, my wife, Tracy, and I were offered a gift-trip to Washington, D.C. and Virginia by some pastor friends of ours from a large Sacramento Church, who, along with a travel company, were hosting a Christian heritage tour back to the southern-east coast. One of the primary purposes of the trip was to rediscover the history, and particularly the Christian history, of America's Founders, early settlements, and national capital.

It of course was an awesome week-long tour, which included seeing sites from the first English settlement in Jamestown, Monticello (Thomas Jefferson's estate), Mt. Vernon (George Washington's estate), Ford's Theater (where Lincoln was shot), a tour of the Pentagon, Capitol Hill, and the U.S. Supreme Court Building, to a close-up view of the White House and a walk through of a host of memorials: the Holocaust Museum, Korean War Memorial, World War 2

Memorial, Vietnam Memorial, Washington Memorial, Jefferson Memorial, and Lincoln Memorial, among other sites.

As great as the trip was, it was unfortunately hindered on three occasions by the revisions or exclusions of religious history and information. Quite frankly, as a Christian religion major in my undergraduate and graduate studies, I was stunned by the information given (or not given). Let me discuss each in turn.

### **The Absence of Christian History at the Jamestown Settlement Tour**

While the tour guide of the Jamestown museum and settlement was cordial and informative on many points, there were two momentous, religious oversights.



(Source for photo unknown)

First, we were not only taught several times, but asked to repeat on several other occasions, the reason the first settlers came here to America: “to make money.” While this is partially true, it was not only totally overstated by its emphasis and repetition, but there was absolutely no hint of the religious purpose given and stated under the Virginia Charter of 1606, which called for the “propagating of Christian religion to such people as yet live in darkness and miserable ignorance of the true knowledge and worship of God.” There was also absolutely no mention of the fact that the colonists’ first act, after having landed at Cape Henry, April 27, 1607, was to erect a large wooden cross and hold a prayer meeting, conducted by their minister, Reverend Robert Hunt. As colonist George Percy noted back then, “The nine and twentieth day we set up a cross at Chesupioc Bay, and named the place Cape Henry.” In fact, it seemed whenever there was an opportunity to address any of the religious characteristics or zeal of this first community, they were avoided.

Secondly, at the Jamestown museum and settlement, as the tour guide was leading us through the very heart of the replica of the community, the Anglican Church, we asked if the guide could speak about the significance of the three religious plaques (the Lord’s Prayer, Ten Commandments, etc.) placed on the wall at the front of the church. Our guide’s response was that she was unable to speak about it, a clear reference to all of us that she was trained to minimize the religious aspects of the settlement. We were all appalled, and shared so with her, especially understanding that this was an educational tour and that the religious education was being eliminated from the heart of a people who were devoutly Christian.

**As a result, I am first respectfully requesting that the religious history, particularly the devout Christian faith and foundations of the first American settlers, be rediscovered and reintroduced into the Jamestown tour guides’ information and other educational parks and organizations about America’s early colonization history.**

## The Absence of Christian History and Faith of Thomas Jefferson on Monticello Estate Tours

From Jamestown we traveled to Monticello, the home of Thomas Jefferson. What a beautiful estate!



(Source for photo unknown)

Again, while our guide was cordial and informative about many matters, when asked about the religious faith of Thomas Jefferson, he abruptly and actually quite arrogantly said, “We all know Jefferson was a strict deist [a person who believes in a Creator who does not involve Himself in the daily affairs of men], who ardently fought for the separation of Church and State.” His added comments left everyone believing Jefferson was essentially (what might be called today) “a liberal democrat,” and especially one who would have never allowed any mixture of religion in government. Again, while these statements have some truth in them, they were exaggerated and gave no hint of how his religious passion prompted him to use both his governmental positions and even funds to establish churches, distribute Bibles, and promote Christianity. Let me explain.

Religiously speaking, Jefferson was raised Anglican (Church of England), which is one significant reason why he (like others) opposed the tyranny of king, priest, or whomever. That is also why, in the New World (specifically Virginia), he pushed for one of his crowning achievements, the Bill for Religious Freedom, which passed in 1786 by the Virginia General Assembly. (At the time, Anglicanism was also the only denomination funded by Virginia taxes). It helped to establish a freedom *of* religion (not freedom *from* religion) in our country, and would serve as a predecessor of sort for the later First Amendment and the religious liberties it would guarantee in the Establishment and Free Exercise Clauses.

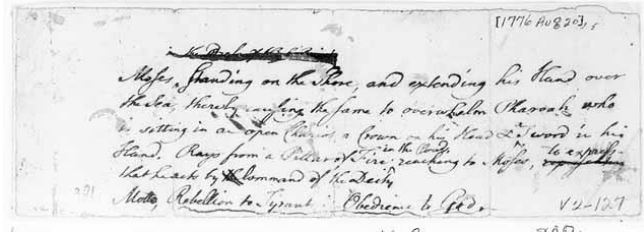
Seemingly ironic to many today, the Bill for Religious Freedom and the later First Amendment were born during a time when government was busy also aiding the progress of Christianity, sometimes intentionally, sometimes unintentionally. Let me give a few examples.

**(1)** Despite that Jefferson would later struggle to lead national days of fasting, thanksgiving, prayer, and the like, the Continental Congress (of which he was a part—1775-1776 and 1783-1784) would appointed official national days of fasting and prayer for the colonies every year, like this one on May 16, 1776: *The Congress....Desirous...to have people of all ranks and degrees duly impressed with a solemn sense of God's superintending providence, and of their duty, devoutly to rely...on His aid and direction...Do earnestly recommend Friday, the 17th day of May be observed by the colonies as a day of humiliation, fasting, and prayer; that we may, with united hearts, confess and bewailed our manifold sins and transgressions, and, by sincere repentance and amendment of life, appease God's righteous displeasure, and, through the merits and*



*mediation of Jesus Christ, obtain this pardon and forgiveness.”* Could you see Congress making similar declarations today?

**(2)** Regarding the proposed seal for the United States, Jefferson first recommended one reflecting the "children of Israel in the Wilderness, led by a Cloud by Day, and a Pillar of Fire by night....", later accepting Benjamin Franklin's suggestion to adapt the Old Testament account of God's parting of the Red Sea. (See below) <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/religion/rel04.html>  
Do these symbols seem like they could come from those who are ardently in favor of the separation of Church and State?



(Library of Congress)

**(3)** In 1777, one year after the creation of the Declaration of Independence, though Jefferson was not on the Continental Congress at the time, it voted to import 20,000 copies of the Bible (from “Holland, Scotland, or elsewhere”) for the people of this new nation, because they could not obtain them from England during the Revolutionary War. The Committee of Commerce recommended this to Congress because “the use of the Bible is so universal, and its importance so great” (*Journals of Congress*, Vol. 8, pp. 734-735)--[http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=lljc&fileName=008/lljc008.db&recNum=360&itemLink=r?ammem/hlaw:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(jc00897\)\)%230080361&linkText=1](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=lljc&fileName=008/lljc008.db&recNum=360&itemLink=r?ammem/hlaw:@field(DOCID+@lit(jc00897))%230080361&linkText=1)

This import was affirmed by the thirteen Colonies by a narrow 7-6 vote, but it was not enacted upon by Congress, probably because Robert Aitken (1734-1802), a Philadelphia printer and the first to publish a Bible in this U.S., was already busy printing the New Testament in 1777, which would also be followed in 1778, 1779, and 1781. (At first the committee thought domestic productions too expensive, only to learn in the end that it was being done by Aitken at less cost than it would be to import).

On January 26, 1781, Aitken petitioned Congress to officially authorize a publication of both Old and New Testaments, which he was preparing at his own expense (*Journals of Congress*, Volume 19, p. 91--[http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=lljc&fileName=019/lljc019.db&recNum=102&itemLink=D?hlaw:14:/temp/~ammem\\_1jAn::%230190103&linkText=1](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=lljc&fileName=019/lljc019.db&recNum=102&itemLink=D?hlaw:14:/temp/~ammem_1jAn::%230190103&linkText=1))

On September 12, 1782, the Congress “highly approve[d] the pious and laudable undertaking of Mr. Aitken....recommended this edition of the Bible to the inhabitants of the United States.” (Journals of Congress ([http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=lljc&fileName=023/lljc023.db&recNum=115&itemLink=r?ammem/hlaw:@field\(DATE+17820912\)::%230230115&linkText=1](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=lljc&fileName=023/lljc023.db&recNum=115&itemLink=r?ammem/hlaw:@field(DATE+17820912)::%230230115&linkText=1)))

(4) In acquisition of additional land for the U.S., then President Jefferson signed a 1803 Indian treaty with the Kaskaskias tribe, negotiated by William Henry Harrison, governor of the land and superintendent of Indian affairs, in which “the United States will give annually for seven years one hundred dollars for the support of a [Catholic] priest....the United States will further give the sum of three hundred dollars to assist the said tribe in the erection of a church” (*Public Statutes At Large Of The United States*, 1948, 7:78-79, Article 3rd-- <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llsl&fileName=007/llsl007.db&recNum=90> ). (Could anyone today see a President signing such a treaty that gave governmental monies to any group for the specific building of a church or clergy salary? Does this seem like the type of document “the Thomas Jefferson” so often conveyed in educational circles today would sign and endorse?)

(5) Not many know that, before the Revolutionary War, Jefferson was a lay leader in his local church, and that he would maintain friendships with many clergy and financially support some churches throughout his life. During his Presidency, Jefferson also attended weekly church services held in the Capitol (House of Representatives). (Can anyone imagine a Congress and Senate allowing such Church services today in the Capitol?).

Perhaps the best summary of the relation between the State and Christianity (which includes the four years Jefferson was in Congress) is noted by the Library of Congress (“Religion and the Congress of Confederation: 1774-1789”-- <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/religion/rel04.html>):

*The Continental-Confederation Congress, a legislative body that governed the United States from 1774 to 1789, contained an extraordinary number of deeply religious men. The amount of energy that Congress invested in encouraging the practice of religion in the new nation exceeded that expended by any subsequent American national government. Although the Articles of Confederation did not officially authorize Congress to concern itself with religion, the citizenry did not object to such activities. This lack of objection suggests that both the legislators and the public considered it appropriate for the national government to promote a nondenominational, nonpolemical Christianity.*

*Congress appointed chaplains for itself and the armed forces, sponsored the publication of a Bible, imposed Christian morality on the armed forces, and granted public lands to promote Christianity among the Indians. National days of thanksgiving and of "humiliation, fasting, and prayer" were proclaimed by Congress at least twice a year throughout the war. Congress was guided by "covenant theology," a Reformation doctrine especially dear to New England Puritans, which held that God bound himself in an agreement with a nation and its people. This agreement stipulated that they "should be prosperous or afflicted, according as their general Obedience or Disobedience thereto appears." Wars and revolutions were, accordingly, considered afflictions, as divine punishments for sin, from which a nation could rescue itself by repentance and reformation.*

*The first national government of the United States, was convinced that the "public prosperity" of a society depended on the vitality of its religion. Nothing less than a "spirit of universal reformation among all ranks and degrees of our citizens," Congress declared to the American people, would "make us a holy, that so we may be a happy people."*

(There were many other Christian acts by government during this period—a must read and display for those interested is on the Library of Congress website—<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/religion/rel04.html> )

In conclusion, Thomas Jefferson was of course a very complex individual, especially in his views of religion and faith. He, however, is often only painted in educational circles as a valiant

secular progressive, who was trying to rid Christianity in particular from government. That is also the impression that we received from the guide at Monticello, a portrait, I believe, that ought to be brushed a little wider to include a more in-depth picture of his (and other Framers') relationship between religion and politics.

Undoubtedly, Jefferson had strong differences with many American clergy, and conveyed many conflicting statements at different times in life about his own faith, but his passion and debate was not about eliminating Christianity from government. His concern was to reduce the risks of any one religious denomination (or sect) ruling in government, not to remove religious influence from government altogether. While it is true that Jefferson was an advocate for the separation of the State from aligning with any specific national Church, he was not attempting to neuter the government from any or all religious or even Christian influence.

The fact is Jefferson noted his strong belief in a God to whom he and our country owed its allegiance (words now also inscribed on the wall of the Jefferson Memorial):

*The God who gave us life gave us liberty. And can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are a gift from God? That they are not to be violated but with His wrath? Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just, and that His justice cannot sleep forever. [from Jefferson's A Summary View of the Rights of British America and Notes on the State of Virginia, 1781].*

Are those the words of a "strict deist," whose God was a divine watchmaker, not involved in the affairs of men? Sounds to me more like a preacher than a politician!

While Jefferson conveyed deistic tendencies at times in his writings, denied Jesus' miracles and deity, and certainly was Unitarian in his theology, his faith was more complex than "strict deism." On the other hand, as he wrote to William Short on October 31, 1819, he declared that the teachings of Jesus contained the "outlines of a system of the most sublime morality which has ever fallen from the lips of man."

He also concluded over a few different occasions (June 26, 1822, letter to Dr. Benjamin Waterhouse; Sept. 18, 1813, letter to William Canby; January 9, 1816, letter to Charles Thomson):

*The doctrines of Jesus are simple, and tend to all the happiness of man....*

*Of all the systems of morality, ancient or modern which have come under my observation, none appears to me so pure as that of Jesus....*

*I am a real Christian, that is to say, a disciple of the doctrines of Jesus.*

It doesn't seem to me that one can say things like the above and be a "strict deist" at the same time, because Jesus' doctrines included the belief in the immanency of a God who will never leave us or forsake us, always willing to intervene and help us in our times of need, and one who would enter the world again to judge the living and the dead. That is not a divine watchmaker.

**As a result, I am, secondly, respectfully requesting that the complete religious history and faith of Thomas Jefferson and the interplay that government often had with religion (specifically Christianity) be rediscovered and reintroduced into the Monticello tour guides' information and education.**

## The Absence of Judeo-Christian History and Information in the U.S. Supreme Court

Lastly, days later when we were in Washington, D.C., we were led on a tour into the very chamber of the U.S. Supreme Court (where I understand the tour personnel host four other of the same lectures each day). I could only imagine the education needed to be able to speak about its history, workings, and architecture of the highest court in the land. I was excited to be there in the very Supreme Court Building and then Courtroom, where the most critical of cases are deliberated and decided by the U.S. Supreme Court Justices.

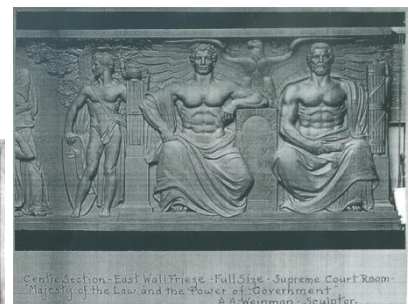


(Source for photo unknown)

Once again, the guide was very cordial and informative on many, many points for nearly a half hour. When she began to speak about the history and architecture of the four marble friezes, which circle the top of the walls on the inside chamber of the Court, I listened intently. The first shock came as the guide explained the center of the frieze directly above the Bench (what is known as The East Wall Frieze—photos next page top). She said, “Between the images of the people depicting the Majesty of the Law and Power of Government, there is a tablet with ten Roman numerals, the first five down the left side and the last five down the right. This tablet represents the first *ten amendments* of the Bill of Rights.”



(Source for photo unknown)



Centre Section: East Wall Frieze - Full Size - Supreme Court Room - Majesty of the Law and the Power of Government - A. Weinman - Sculptor.

I was very surprised at first, because in my study I recall reading they represented the Ten Commandments, given by Moses, the lawgiver of the Israelites. I didn't, however, raise my hand yet to question her claims, because I noticed there was only one tablet on the frieze (not two as often depicted by the Ten Commandments), which made me doubt for a moment what I learned in my own religious history study. I would soon learn I was wrong to not question her, for she was incorrect about her information.

I thought to myself, how could they be the first ten amendments to the Constitution? My answer or at least the Court's explanation would come almost a half-hour later when I went to the official Information Booth of the Court (which I'll explain shortly why I went there). On the official document explaining the East Wall Frieze it tells its readers exactly why the tablet is described as representing the first ten amendments,

According to a letter from [the sculptor of the four friezes, Adolph A.] Weinman to [the architect of the Supreme Court Building Cass] Gilbert describing the design for this frieze, the pylon carved with the Roman numerals 1 to X between the two central figures symbolizes the first ten amendments to the Constitution, also known as the Bill of Rights [underline added. Additionally, I thought "pylon" is a strange term to use to describe what looks like a tablet—are they avoiding "commandment" inferences?].

This is the standard line (and only evidence) one will find in documentation even on the web to conclude that this "pylon" (which is really a tablet) is the "ten amendments." So apparently convincing is that letter that even watchdog sites like snopes.com and truthorfiction.com unequivocally conclude this tablet on the East Wall Frieze must be the ten amendments. The problem is they overlook (nor even mention) the facts that: (1) The alleged "Weinman letter" is very likely not even authentic (based upon the evidence I will shortly convey); (2) The real evidence (based upon another sculpture in D.C. by Weinman, with the same tablet!) proves the "pylon" is the Ten Commandments. Let me discuss each in turn.

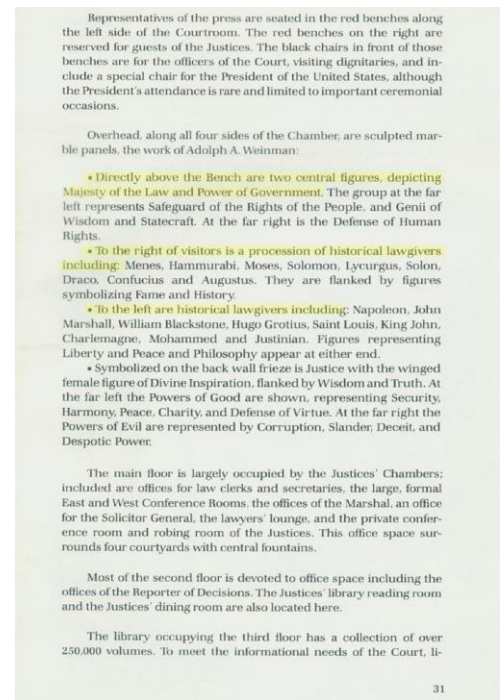
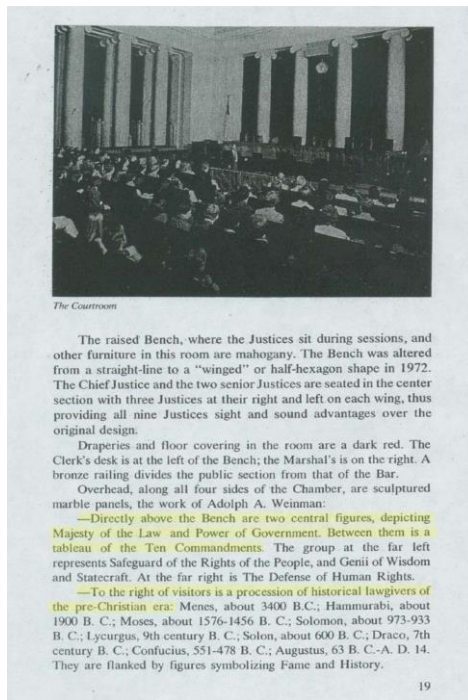
At first I thought I would love to read that letter from Weinman to Gilbert, so I sought it out when I returned home to California. What I discovered was a mystery and what seemed to be a smokescreen the likes of which one often sees in a Hollywood thriller, for the history of education of that central "pylon" had been changed!

Thanks to the excellent research of Dr. Catherine Millard ("The Rewriting of America's History"), I found out that in the 1975 official U.S. Supreme Court Handbook, prepared under the direction of Mark Cannon, Administrative Assistant to the Chief Justice, it stated: "Directly above the Bench are two central figures, depicting Majesty of the Law and Power of Government. Between them is a tableau of the Ten Commandments..." (Underline added by me) (Left-top photo next page)

Well, on May 12, 1987, the United States Supreme Court was designated by the Secretary of the Interior, Donald Hodel, as a National Historic Landmark. As a result, it came under the control of the United States Department of the Interior, established by the National Park Service. The question is: who now has control of the information educating the public?

As a further result, the official U.S. Supreme Court Handbook was rewritten in 1988 (right below), and the reference to the Ten Commandments was removed, leaving no explanation at all to the central tableau.





(Source: Dr. Catherine Millard)

There was one new explanation, however, located in the north ground floor exhibit of the U.S. Supreme Court (created after it became a National Historic Landmark), depicting plaster models of the four Courtroom friezes. The East Wall frieze rewritten caption reads:

"East Wall plaster model of Courtroom Frieze. The Central focus of the frieze located directly above the Bench is on the seated figures representing 'Majesty of the Law' and 'Power of Government.' The tablet between them symbolizes early written laws..." [Underline added]

It was in 1999, however, when those "early written laws" were once again explained, but this time they were redefined. In that year the U.S. Supreme Court inner courtroom lectures (5 per day) began stating that "Between the 'Majesty of the Law' and 'The Power of Government' was a depiction of The First Ten Amendments to the Bill of Rights." (Underline added).

When I researched further into why this change had been made, I discovered that the authorities justified the change based upon a letter allegedly written by sculptor Adolph A. Weinman, which noted that this tablet represented the first ten amendments. Though at first being satisfied with the existence of such documentation, I soon found out that the so-called "ten-amendment letter" by Weinman was spurious, based upon the fact that it did not contain three elements that every other governmental correspondence by Weinman includes: his letterhead, his signature, and an official stamp that it was received by the government as his actual letter (compare letters next page).

October 31, 1932.

Cass Gilbert, Esq.  
244 Madison Avenue  
New York City.

Dear Mr. Gilbert:

I am sending you herewith two photographs of my sketch models and two plaster casts of the same, for the East and West wall friezes for the Supreme Court Room.

The titles of these friezes, as indicated on back of photographs are, East wall: "Majesty of the Law and the power of Government", showing the figure of Law, resting on the tablet of the ten amendments to the Constitution known as the "Bill of Rights" (**bold by mh**) and Government with the scales, symbol of executive power. Besides these figures are the Genii of Wisdom and of Statecraft.

The group at left represents the Defense of Human Rights.

The group at right represents the Safeguard of Liberty.

West wall frieze: The central group shows Justice resting upon her sword with the winged figure of Divine Inspiration balancing the scales. Seated at right and left of this group is Truth with mirror and rose and Wisdom with owl.

The group at left represents "The Power of Good" with the Defense of Virtue, Charity, Peace, Harmony and Security.

The group at right represents "The Power of Evil" with the Bondage of Evil, Corruption, Falsehood, Deception and Despotic Power.

I am proceeding with the enlargement of these sketches and will prepare sketches for South and North walls as soon as I have completed my search for necessary data.

Sincerely yours,

(Source for photos: Dr. Catherine Millard)

**Disputed U.S. Supreme Court sculptor Adolph Weinman's letter to architect Cass Gilbert, upon which identity of tablet on East Wall Frieze is taught as the "ten amendments" (Bill of Rights) of the Constitution. Notice bolding of Amendment sentence, with words next to it "(bolded by mh)." Can one bold an original letter? If this is a duplicate, why not post the original? Who is mh?**

*Sculptor 298 Weinman*

*COPY*

January 17, 1933.

CASS GILBERT  
RECEIVED  
JAN 17 1933

Mr. David Lyon,  
Architect of the Capitol,  
Washington, D.C.

Best, U.S. Supreme Court Building,  
"Tablets for murals", enclosure.

Dear Mr. Lyon:

Answering your letter of January 17, in reference to coverage by insurance against fire etc., of the models I am preparing for the frieze in the Supreme Court Room, I wish to inform you that I have arranged for such coverage in the amount of the first payment, of \$15,000, becoming due upon the payment of my sketches for the said frieze. I shall arrange to procure insurance to cover the various stages of the work at which payments become due. As per your request, I shall forward certificate to you through the office of Messrs. Cass Gilbert, Esq., and John R. Lockart.

Yours very truly,  
Adolph Weinman

*12.51*

ADOLPH ALEXANDER WEINMAN  
515 GREENWYCH SOUTH  
FOREST HILLS, LONG ISLAND, N. Y.

April 15, 1933.

CASS GILBERT  
RECEIVED  
APR 17 1933

Dear Mr. Gilbert:

This is to remind you that the 2-1/4" scale model for the East Wall Panel in the Supreme Court Room is now completed and that you have promised to come and see the work the early part of the coming week. If you will inform me when it will be convenient for you to come out, I shall send Howard in to call for you.

Sincerely yours,  
Adolph Weinman

Cass Gilbert, Esq.,  
244 Madison Avenue,  
New York City.

*See letter to Mr. Lyon 4/3/33*

*Sculptor 298 Weinman*

ADOLPH ALEXANDER WEINMAN  
515 GREENWYCH SOUTH  
FOREST HILLS, LONG ISLAND, N. Y.

April 17, 1933.  
Implied at Garden City 24, 33  
and approved.

Cass Gilbert, Esq.  
244 Madison Avenue,  
New York City.

CASS GILBERT  
RECEIVED  
APR 17 1933

Dear Mr. Gilbert:

I find that I shall have to leave for Richmond to tonight and expect to be back by Wednesday noon. I enclose you of this in order that you will not get tomorrow as the date for the completion of the East wall 2 1/4" scale model and completed. Trusting this will not interfere with your plans. Sincerely yours, Adolph Weinman

**Three undisputed letters of sculptor Adolph Weinman, with his letterhead, signature, and the official reception stamp.**

Questions began to quickly circulate through my mind: Should the description of the frieze directly above the Bench of the highest justices in the land be changed based upon a single literary witness that has doubtful authenticity? Would the present justices in the U.S. Supreme Court regard this letter as “beyond reasonable doubt” when it contains none of the three characteristics that Weinman’s other governmental correspondence includes as proof of their genuineness?

Dr. Millard (op. cit.) notes one very significant reason to believe that Adolph Weinman considered the central tableau of the East Wall Frieze as actually the Ten Commandments not the Ten Amendments, and the reason comes from another memorial in the nation’s capital, *The Oscar Straus Memorial*, which commemorates the accomplishments of the first Jew to serve in the Cabinet of a U.S. President. Oscar Solomon Straus served as Secretary of Commerce and Labor under the President Theodore Roosevelt from 1906-1909. This fountain memorial is located in the Federal Triangle on 14<sup>th</sup> Street between Pennsylvania and Constitution Avenues, Northwest, just in front of the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center.

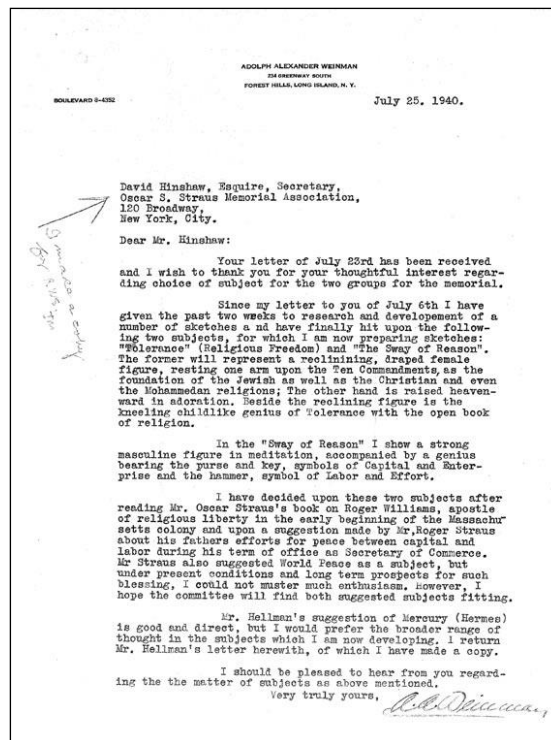
This bronze masterpiece sculpture (below) was also designed by none other than Adolph Weinman, erected in 1947, and depicts a human figure leaning upon the same tablet with Roman numerals just as that one on the East Wall Frieze in the U.S. Supreme Court.



(Source for photo unknown)

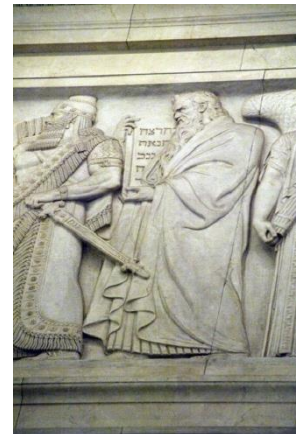
**The inscription on the base of this Straus memorial, *Justice*, which represents religious freedom, reads: "Our Liberty of Worship Is Not A Concession Nor a Privilege But An Inherent Right."**

In a signed letter, dated July 25, 1940, to David Hinshaw (Secretary of The Oscar S. Straus Memorial Association) artist Adolph A. Weinman states that this tablet represents “The Ten Commandments.” This letter was validated by David Hinshaw’s reply dated July 31, 1940 and by Roger W. Straus’ July 29, 1940 response.



Would Weinman have sculpted two similar tablets, in the same city, each with the Roman numerals I through V on one side and VI through X on the other, each with a human figure leaning upon it, but with totally different identities? One sculpture depicting the Ten Commandments (on the Straus Memorial) and the other as the ten amendments (in the U.S. Supreme Court)? It seems very unlikely. Back to the story!...

As the guide turned to the South Wall Frieze, there was no debating the identity of the figure third in line of these lawgivers from different lands and times. It was Moses and he is holding the Ten Commandments (actually just showing a partial Hebrew inscription of the sixth through tenth commandments—photos next page top).



After the U.S. Supreme Court guide described the figures on that frieze, including Moses, she asked if there were any questions. I raised my hand and asked, "Are there any other depictions of Moses or the Ten Commandments in or on the U.S. Supreme Court Building?" (I actually knew of at least two other places—even though I would later discover four more, but I was hoping she would even share one other.)

The two other depictions of which I knew were: (1) when closed, facing the Bench of the Justices, on the lower part of the inside of each of the oak doors where we entered the inner Court Chamber, are engravings of two tablets, side by side, on each door, shaped in the traditional form



of the Ten Commandments, with the Roman numerals I-V on one and VI-X on the other written out.

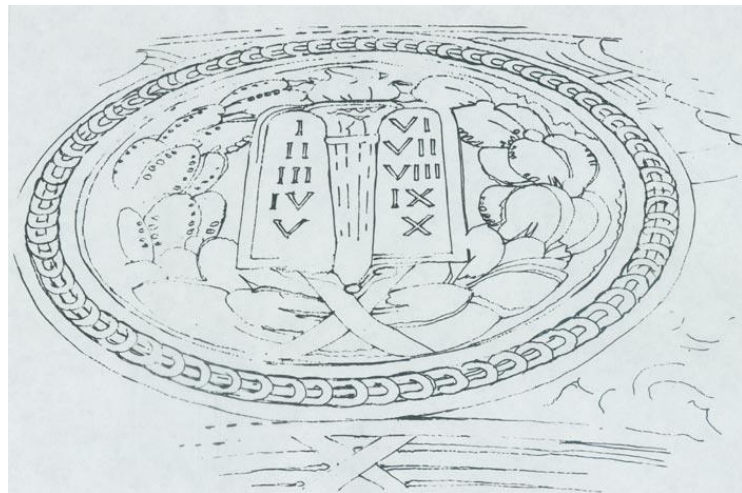
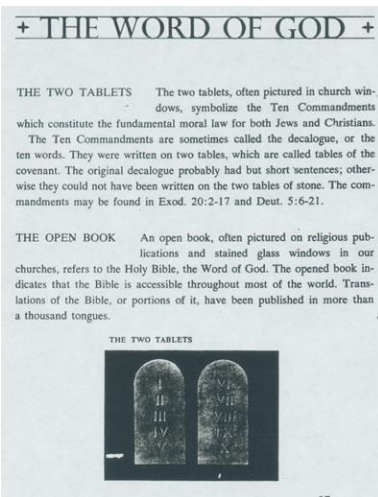


(Source for photo unknown)

(2) The second depiction of Moses and the Ten Commandments was what I considered the greatest of all: it is a large sculpture over the east portico of the Building, large enough for the whole world to see as they pass by. It is entitled, “JUSTICE THE GUARDIAN OF LIBERTY,” and has as its central figure, holding the two tablets of the Ten Commandments (shaped just like those on the oak entrance doors of the inner chamber), Moses himself. (I shall reveal a photo of this momentarily, as I unfold the surprising ending of this Supreme Court saga)

There was no hesitation to the guide’s response to my question of whether there were any other depictions of Moses or the Ten Commandments. Her answer was simply and unequivocally, “No.” I must admit I was more than shocked; I was flabbergasted. Almost simultaneously my pastor friend and I, pointed in back of us and asked, “But what about on the doors?” (She knew we were obviously referencing the engravings on the oak doors entering the court). Her response again was immediate and convincing, “Those are the ten amendments.” Now we all were shocked. Racing through my mind were questions like: Were the ten amendments given to our forefathers on tablets?? Why was she answering so quickly? So confidently? Did she know these things for a fact or was she being told to say them by others? I’ve always believed that everyone deserved respect, so I didn’t want to debate the guide in front of a 150 or so tourists in the chamber of the U.S. Supreme Court. I thought, who am I to question a guide who has been deemed educated enough to give multiple tours a day in the highest court of the land?

Incidentally, Dr. Millard (*op. cit.*) discovered a book (below-left photo) in the Library of Congress (the neighboring building to the Supreme Court), depicting church symbolism, showing the Ten Commandments traditionally depicted by two tablets with the Roman numerals, I-V to the left and VI-X to the right. These are renditions that are identical to those on the lower part of each of the oak doors of the main entranceway leading into the inner courtroom of the U.S. Supreme Court (left below). And never mind the fact that the same depiction of those tablets, described as the Ten Commandments, are on a floor design of the main rotunda in the National Archives Building (right below). But, in the U.S. Supreme Court, they are the ten amendments??



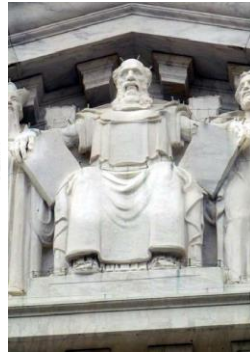
(Source for photo unknown)

So I approached the guide in the front of the Courtroom when the tour was over saying, "It is difficult for me to believe that these tablet depictions with the Roman numerals I-X were the ten amendments and not the Ten Commandments. What proof is there for those conclusions?" She replied, "If you don't believe me, go down to the Information Booth of the U.S. Supreme Court, and they will give you documentation." So I hustled a head of the group to the official Information Booth, where I approached the woman behind the booth and told her what the guide said about the inscriptions and engravings being the first ten amendments and not the Ten Commandments. Then I asked for the documentation. She had none for the inside chamber doors. "Interesting," I thought. She did, however, have a description of the Bronze Doors (which serve as the main entrance doors to the entire Building, leading to the Courtroom), but that would do me no good anyway.

My last inquiry for the personnel at the Information Booth of the U.S. Supreme Court was this: "If there are no other depictions of Moses or the Ten Commandments on the building except on the South Wall Frieze in the U.S. Supreme Court, then what about on the east side of the building where Moses is the central figure among others, holding both tablets of the Ten Commandments, one in each arm?" Her response shocked me as much as the guide inside the Court chamber. She simply and confidently told me, "There is no depiction of Moses and the Ten Commandments like that on the U.S. Supreme Court." I looked at her bewildered and used my body to describe the position in which Moses was holding the Ten Commandments. She again responded, "No, sir, there is nothing like that here." I began to second guess myself, "Where did I see that before? I could have sworn it was here." (We had not yet seen the east outside of the building on the tour, but simply entered the building from the west side, as others do, yet I remembered seeing the eastern entrance in photographs.) One more time I asked her, "Are you certain Moses and the Ten Commandments are not there?" "Yes, sir. They are not." So I asked, "Do you have a picture or description of the display on the east side of the Building, leading up to the Court?" She replied, "I certainly do" (and began to thumb through her files.) When she pulled out the piece of paper, with the photo and description of the East Pediment, her eyes widened with surprise. There was Moses in photo and description as the central figure, holding the Ten Commandments, one in each hand (below).



(Source for photo unknown)



My response was admittedly somewhat flippant but sincere, "I'm certainly glad to know I wasn't dreaming! And at least now you know so you can tell others. You are, after all, the Information Booth." Moments later I attempted to take the piece of paper about the East Pediment back to our Court tour guide, but she had vanished. I was not concerned with winning the debate, but providing the information so that others could be properly educated and educate others.

(Unfortunately, even watchdog sites like [snopes.com](http://snopes.com) and [truthorfiction.com](http://truthorfiction.com), trying to dispel internet and urban legends, end up perpetuating another by, first, gullibly accepting the "Weinman-letter-ten-amendment" myth, then carrying that dogma over to their explanation of Moses here holding the two tablets: "And although many viewers might assume Moses is holding a copy of the Ten Commandments in this depiction, the two tablets in his arms are actually blank." Particular corrections of these watchdog sites' conclusions about this subject can also be found at [www.lacconline.org](http://www.lacconline.org))

By the way, regarding the Eastern pediment with Moses as the central figure, Herman A. MacNeil (who designed the Eastern pediment) explained his work in this way, "Law as an element of civilization was normally and naturally derived or inherited in this country from former civilizations. The 'Eastern Pediment' of the Supreme Court Building suggests therefore the treatment of such fundamental laws and precepts as are derived from the East." Makes one wonder, from which civilization and law is he saying our nation "derives" or "inherits" our law?



(Source for photo unknown)

### **The metope of Moses and Ten Commandments (notice tablets by face)**

#### **--There are eighth of these in the Grand Hall of the U.S. Supreme Court**

In all, as of 1975, the U.S. Supreme Court Building had seven depictions of Moses and or the Ten Commandments: **(1)** The East Wall Frieze above the Bench; **(2)** The South Wall Frieze; **(3)** On each of the inside, lower parts of the oak doors entering the actual Courtroom. **(4)** On the East Pediment, leading up to the Court Building from the outside; **(5)** And two more locations, which I haven't mentioned yet and only learned a month ago: Moses is one of eight Exterior Portrait Medallions, which are found on the corners of the Supreme Court Building. Moses is actually on the West Façade. **(6)** Moses is also depicted as an ornamental metope located on the frieze in the Great Hall of the Supreme Court Building. (this depiction is actually repeated 8 times

in the Great Hall). (7) I recently discovered a 7<sup>th</sup> depiction (of the Ten Commandments) on an Information Sheet (“Symbols of Law”) from the U.S. Supreme Court which they did not have on file at the time I was there—the depiction appears on the posts of the bronze gates which exit from the south and north sides of the courtroom, separating the courtroom from the aisle. These are repeated **50 times** (on the front and back of multiple posts of these bronze gates on the south and north sides inside the court). For a total of 64 depictions of the Ten Commandments and/or Moses on the U.S. Supreme Court Building.



(Source for photo unknown)

#### **#7 depiction recently discovered in U.S. Supreme Court Information Sheet, “Symbols of Law”**

As of 2006, though all seven depictions of Moses and the Ten Commandments remain on the Supreme Court Building, the guide told an audience of at least 150 tourists (on that July day) that there was only one (on The South Wall Frieze), denying the others’ existence. I can only imagine the same is being taught several times a day, each and every weekday, ever since, and even now is possibly being told to a new crowd at this moment.

All of the real seven (often central or prominent) depictions of Moses and/or the Ten Commandments on the U.S. Supreme Court Building should prompt us all to consider just what place (dare I say even priority) only a few decades ago that the Ten Commandments had within the legal system and foundations of our nation:

**"The Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount contain my religion" - John Adams, Nov. 4, 1816, letter to Thomas Jefferson.**

**"Our laws are founded upon the Decalogue, not that every case can be exactly decided according to what is there enjoined, but we can never safely depart from this short, but great, declaration of moral principles, without founding the law upon the sand instead of upon the eternal rock of justice and equity."—Supreme Court of North Carolina, 1917**

**"A people unschooled about the sovereignty of God, the Ten Commandments, and the ethics of Jesus, could never have evolved the Bill of Rights, the Declaration of Independence, and the Constitution. There is not one solitary fundamental principle of our democratic policy that did not stem directly from the basic moral concepts as embodied in the Decalogue .."—Florida Supreme Court, 1950**

**"The fundamental basis of this nation's laws was given to Moses on the Mount [Sinai]. The fundamental basis of our Bill of Rights comes from the teachings we get from Exodus and St. Matthew, from Isaiah and St. Paul. I don't think we emphasize that enough these days." - Harry S Truman, Feb. 15, 1950, Attorney General's Conference.**



"The Ten Commandments have had an immeasurable effect on Anglo-American legal development" - **U.S. District Court, Crockett v. Sorenson , W.D. Va. (1983)**

"It is equally undeniable ...that the Ten Commandments have had a significant impact on the development of secular legal codes of the Western World." - **U.S. Supreme Court, Stone v. Graham, (1980) (Rehnquist, J., dissenting)**

**As a result, I am, thirdly, respectfully requesting that the complete educational history regarding the depictions of Moses and The Ten Commandments be rediscovered and retaught to U.S. Supreme Court guides and to the public in the U.S. Supreme Court Building.**

### **I'll Be Back!**

Preserving American liberty depends first upon our understanding the foundations on which this great country was built and then preserving the principles on which it was founded. Let's not let the foundation on which we were established be forgotten through false and misleading education. The Founding Fathers have passed us a torch; let's not let it go out.

I will be returning to the east coast over the next couple years, this time leading a tour of my own (along with our present former County Supervisor, Bill Dennison, and others) on another Christian heritage tour. I only hope and indeed pray that the public is being properly educated about America's religious history and displays at these three historic landmarks (Jamestown, Monticello, and the U.S. Supreme Court Building).

Because I dislike those who complain but are unwilling to help, I want to offer my services and whatever I can do to help. If nothing more, please feel free to pass along copies of this treatise to the personnel of your organizations and particularly the guides.

"Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD." (Psalm 33:12)

Respectfully,

Rev. Todd A. DuBord (M.Div.)  
CrossFireUSA.org

Cc: The President of the U.S. and the Justices of the U.S. Supreme Court, among others

*(Unfortunately, Todd initially received absolutely no response to this letter and research from any other the historic landmarks or places. Little did he know, this was only the beginning of a long road of governmental twists and turns, but most of all revolutionary rectifications to major religious and historical reductionisms and revisions in important landmarks across our nation. If you're ready to read adventurous stories that marvel the movie "National Treasure," discover buried evidence (including new photos), and experience amazing outcomes for each of these situations, including a new Washington Monument revision of monumental proportions, then read **"The Jading of Jamestown"** (Jamestown Settlement and the fight for the religious history of the founding English colony of America), **"A gate between Church and State"** (Monticello and Thomas Jefferson's intermingling of matters on Church and State), **"U.S. Supreme Cover Up"** (U.S. Supreme Court and Ten Commandments conspiracy), and **"Monumental Omission"** (Washington Monument and the revisions of the LAUS DEO ["Praise be to God"] inscription on the capstone replica). Enjoy the journey!*