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Article

# Religious Freedom in America

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## A three-part documentary delving into America's struggle to bring principles of religious freedom into practice

The United States often portrays itself as the epicenter of the so-called free world. But what of the conflict for peace and equality between religious groups that has plagued the American experiment since its inception and persists to this very day?

*Religious Freedom in America* is a three-part documentary series that explores the historical tensions that define religious life in the United States. The series explores the interplay between Old World and New World Christian traditions; the friction between religion as tradition and religion as racial protest; and the conflicts between Christianity and Islam. The scope of the series spans the entirety of the American experiment.

### *Religious Freedom and the American Experience*

What are the philosophical and political roots of the “separation of church and state” as defined by the framers of the U.S. Constitution? The first part of this series explores

how the struggle against religious tyranny and oppression in Europe informed the early American constitutional stance on religious liberty.

## *Islam in America, Part I:*

The second film in the series focuses on the complex history of Black Muslims in America, including the earliest African American Muslim communities in the United States and the development of the Nation of Islam as a movement that united political protest, racial separatism, and religious innovation.

## *Islam in America, Part II*

This second examination of Islamic life in the United States explores how the concept of religious freedom was challenged after the September 11th attacks.

*This documentary series was produced through a partnership between America Abroad Media (AMA) and Turkish Radio and Television (TRT). Series host Mithat Bereket is the lead anchor of TRT and an America Abroad Media Fellow. Religious Freedom in America originally aired as a part of Pusula (Compass), Bereket's biweekly program on news and international affairs.*