

## Separation of church and state

Dear Editor,

In the Statesman-Examiner edition of July 18, 2012, Chris Cowbrough writes in his editorial column, Off the Wall, that "I also like...my state separated from church."

The phrase and idea, "separation of church and state," does not appear in the Constitution of the United States or in the Declaration of Independence. The idea does appear in a letter that President Thomas Jefferson wrote to the Danbury Baptist Association in the early 1800s.

The Danbury Baptist Association was a group of about two dozen churches in the Connecticut valley. These Connecticut Baptists had written to President Jefferson expressing their fears that a larger established religious group would obtain favor with the government, and thus the Baptists would lose their freedom of religious rights.

The Baptists definitely did not want the state or government to grant any favor to one certain religious group, church, or denomination. President Jefferson, in his reply to the Danbury Baptists, addressed their concerns that there must be a sure and certain wall of separation between the church and state.

Thus, the phrase, "separation between the church and state," means that the state or government would not intrude into the affairs of the church. It does not mean that the church would have no influence or say so about religious values in the affairs of government and national life.

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*Letters to the Editor*

Jefferson's letter was in agreement with the Constitution of the United States, which became effective years before in 1791. Article I of the Bill of Rights states, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

Some folks have the false idea that we should not mix religion with politics. Benjamin Franklin said that we should.

"We have been assured, Sir, in the Sacred Writings that except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it. I firmly believe this. I also believe that, without his concurring aid, we shall succeed in this political building no better than the builders of Babel." Proverbs 14:34 says, "Righteousness exalteth a nation but sin is a reproach to any people."

I took my first pastorate of a Baptist Church in 1952. Since that time, I have watched the issue of separation between the church and state come to the attention of the public again and again.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Arthur Houk  
Colville

August 8, 2012

Colville, WA

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1 Cor. 15:3 "... Christ died for our sins.

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