

## CONTROLLING LEGAL PRINCIPLES

*Free Exercise Clause Decision – The “Contemplation of Justice”  
School Dist. of Abington Tp. v. Schempp, 374 U.S. 203 (1963)*



*"Man's relation to his God was made no concern of the state. He was granted the right to worship as he pleased and to answer to no man for the verity of his religious views."*

*"Men may believe what they cannot*

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*prove. They may not be put to the proof of their religious doctrines or beliefs. . . .*  
Many take their gospel from the New Testament.

It is true that religion has been closely identified with our history and government. As we said in Engel v. Vitale, 370 U. S. 421, 370 U. S. 434 (1962),

*"The history of man is inseparable from the history of religion. And . . . , since*

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*the beginning of that history, many people have devoutly believed that 'More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of.'"*

In Zorach v. Clauson, 343 U. S. 306, 343 U. S. 313 (1952), we gave specific recognition to the proposition that "[w]e are a religious people whose institutions presuppose a Supreme Being." The fact that the Founding Fathers believed devotedly that there was a God and that the unalienable rights of man were rooted in Him is clearly evidenced in their writings, from the Mayflower Compact to the Constitution itself. This background is evidenced today in our public life through the continuance in our oaths of office from the Presidency to the Alderman of the final supplication, "So help me God."