

Providential and Governmental Establishment of Conscience Freedom

Providential basis for conscience freedom

1. God created man in His own image, including sharing a **free will**.
 - a. "God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." --Genesis 1:27
 - b. "The Lord God commanded the man, saying, 'From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.'" --Genesis 2:16-17
2. God placed **voluntary moral choices** at the center of our lives.
 - a. "I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live...." --Deuteronomy 30:19
 - b. "If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." --Joshua 24:15
 - c. "...go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' ...Whoever does not receive you, nor heed your words, as you go out of that house or that city, shake the dust off your feet." --Matthew 10:6-7, 14
 - d. "Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God." --II Corinthians 5:20
3. God examines the **conscience of every human being**.
 - a. "For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them...." --Romans 2:14-15
 - b. "...there shall certainly be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked. In view of this, I also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience both before God and before men." --Acts 24:15-16
 - c. "...we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." --II Corinthians 4:2

Political basis for conscience freedom

4. America's founding documents echo the biblical assertion of freedom of conscience, asserting conscience as a fundamental human right.
 - a. "We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are **endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights**, that among these are **Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness** -- That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed, that whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these Ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its Foundation on such Principles, and organizing its Powers in such Form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.
 - b. "Congress shall make no law respecting an **establishment of religion**, or prohibiting the **free exercise** thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances." -- Amendment 1, U.S. Constitution
5. International bodies assert conscience and religious belief and practice as a fundamental human right.
 - a. "All human beings are **born free** and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and **conscience** and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood." --Universal Declaration of Human Rights
 - b. "First, that we have granted to God, and by this present charter have confirmed for us and our heirs in perpetuity, that the English **Church shall be free**, and shall have its rights undiminished, and its liberties unimpaired." –Magna Carta
 - c. "Everyone has the right to **freedom of thought, conscience and religion**; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance." -- European Convention on Human Rights, Article 9

Summary

God has ordained conscience freedom as a fundamental feature of human existence, and governments have established conscience freedom as an unalienable human right.