The founding of America was an experiment in a democratic government and a societal structure based on liberty of all kinds. The concepts of political, economic, religious, and geographic liberty were not just abstract concepts but deeply rooted principles that guided our nation's founders as they set out to create a new society. They envisioned a future where every individual, regardless of their origin, social, or economic standing, could enjoy freedom. Though the founders of America envisioned a society defined by religious liberty, early American society presented a mixed bag; it demonstrated substantial efforts to uphold religious freedom, aligning with the founders' vision, but simultaneously exhibited notable shortcomings, especially regarding inclusivity and tolerance of diverse faiths beyond Christianity

Religious liberty was one of the core values of early American society. Early American society saw a large amount of immigration from Europe, which was mostly driven by the pursuit of religious freedom and the religious oppression in their home countries. This motivation for religious freedom by the immigrants created diverse colonies that valued the acceptance of different religious faiths, or none at all. As an example, the Puritans who settled in the Massachusetts Bay aimed to create a community based on their own Puritan religious beliefs without being controlled by the Church of England (VOF 30). Additionally, the Pennsylvania colony was a safe space for Quakers as well as some other religious groups who were facing religious persecution. Both of these colonies had a relatively high amount of religious autonomy, which fostered an accepting environment for differing faiths. From this one can say that early American society was characteristically accepting of diversity in religious faith, giving the early American people the liberty to practice whatever religious beliefs they hold.

The founding fathers of America all shared the common belief that American society should be based on individual liberty, with religious liberty being one of the most important. They believed that religious liberty should not only be tolerated but also encouraged within society on top of it being a basic human right. This vision of a religiously tolerant country was a stark departure from the religious conflicts that defined Europe at the time. The founding fathers of America sought to establish a society where the government could not dictate matters of faith, and where coercing religious conformity would be unheard of. The early American society, with its diverse religious communities operating with significant autonomy in matters of faith, did align with these expectations. The plurality of faiths and the peaceful coexistence of various religious communities upheld the founders' principle of religious freedom (GML 87). The early American society did not just fulfill the founders' expectations for religious liberty, it demonstrated the value and viability of their vision.

Despite the strides made in establishing religious liberty, early American society had its shortcomings in fully realizing the founders' vision for religious freedom. The founding fathers’ plan for a country where everyone could practice their religious beliefs without fear of discrimination regardless of their beliefs. However, this was not completely accurate. For example, the Puritan communities in Massachusetts which were initially founded as a refuge from religious persecution quickly implemented strict religious rules of their own. Those who disobeyed from these rules faced severe consequences, which lead to the infamous Salem witch trials. Additionally, although the colonies did oftentimes accept many different denominations of Christianity, this acceptance was not typically offered for all religions and beliefs. In many areas, non-Christian faiths such as indigenous beliefs were frequently discriminated against. Thus, while the early American society did take significant steps towards the founders' vision for religious liberty, it fell short in many ways. The promise of religious freedom was not fully realized, especially for those outside the Christian faith or those who dared to challenge the established religious norms.

To summarize, early American society succeeded to a respectable extent in upholding the principle of religious freedom, creating a society where personal religious beliefs were not determined by the state but rather a personal choice. The colonies provided refuge for people fleeing religious persecution and validated the founders' vision of religious liberty. However, the realization of this vision was far from perfect. The promise of religious liberty did not fully extend to non-Christian faiths, nor was it universally upheld within Christian communities. These instances of religious intolerance reveal that while the concept of religious liberty was deeply ingrained in the founders' vision for America it was not consistently implemented in early American society.

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