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. Their dream was of a society where individuals were free to exercise their faith in whichever way they deemed fit without fear of persecution, a stark departure from the religious conflicts that defined Europe at the time. They 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 founders' aspiration was for a land where every individual, irrespective of their religious affiliation or lack thereof, could freely practice their beliefs without fear of reprisal or discrimination. However, the reality of the time often fell short of this lofty ideal. In the initial years, the colonies were not always the havens of religious freedom they purported to be. For instance, the Puritan communities in Massachusetts, while initially founded as a refuge from religious persecution, quickly developed stringent religious standards of their own. Those who deviated from these standards faced severe consequences, leading to the infamous Salem witch trials of the late 17th century. Moreover, while the colonies did offer refuge to different Christian sects, this acceptance was often not extended to other religions. The religious tolerance shown was frequently limited to different denominations of Christianity, and there was a lack of broader acceptance for non-Christian religions. In many areas, non-Christian faiths, including indigenous beliefs, Judaism, and Islam, were frequently marginalized, discriminated against, or outright ignored. 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. This failure underscored the need for a more encompassing and absolute commitment to religious liberty, one that respected and protected the rights of all individuals to practice their faith freely, which was the true vision of the founders.

In conclusion, the narrative of early American society offers an intriguing insight into the realization and thwarting of certain foundational liberties that our nation's founders had envisioned. It succeeded, to a great extent, in upholding the principle of religious freedom, creating a society where faith was not a subject of state control but a matter of personal choice. The colonies provided refuge for people fleeing religious persecution and validated the founders' vision of religious liberty. On the other hand, the aspiration for political liberty, a cornerstone of the founders' vision, remained largely unfulfilled during this period. Despite the robust religious freedom, political liberty was significantly curtailed under monarchical rule and lack of true representation in governance. This stark contrast between the realization of religious and political liberties served as a catalyst in the evolving sociopolitical landscape, ultimately fueling the struggle for independence. Thus, the early American society, despite its imperfections, served as a critical stepping stone, guiding the nation towards realizing the dreams of its founders and building a society based on the principles of liberty.  
  
Works Cited:  
Foner, Eric. Give Me Liberty!: An American History. W. W. Norton &amp; Company, 2020.

Foner, Eric. Voices of Freedom a Documentary History. W.W. Norton &amp; Company, 2020.