2013 RELIGIOUS LIBERTY ESSAY SCHOLARSHIP CONTEST

Sponsored by the Religious Liberty Council of the Baptist Joint Committee

Entry forms are pages 2 and 3 of this document

ESSAY TOPIC

The United States of America was religiously diverse at its founding. Its population included numerous Protestant groups, small Catholic and Jewish populations, those who practiced traditional Native American religions as well as those who practiced African religions. The United States has become even more religiously diverse, yet Christianity has remained the majority faith tradition since the country's beginnings. Today, some Americans assert that the country was founded as a "Christian nation" while others contend that statement is a myth. **Using the Constitution and writings of the Founders, research and evaluate the claim that the United States was founded as a "Christian nation."** Include a discussion of the current implications for religious freedom for all people in a democratic country in which the majority rules in elections and ballot initiatives.

ELIGIBILITY

The contest is open to all high school students in the graduating classes of 2013 and 2014. There are no requirements involving GPA, faith, activities or anything else.

PRIZES

First Place – $2,000 & trip for two to Washington, D.C.*
Second Place – $1,000
Third Place – $250

LENGTH

800 (minimum) to 1,200 (maximum) words
Note: the word count does not include title and bibliography

SUBMISSION & DUE DATE:

The essay, student registration form and essay adviser form all must be mailed together to the following address by March 1, 2013:
Baptist Joint Committee Essay Contest
200 Maryland Avenue, N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002

Entries and registration forms must be postmarked **no later than March 1, 2013**. No email or fax entries will be accepted.

REQUIREMENTS

1. Submitted essays should be in 12-point type, double-spaced and single-sided. To ensure fairness, your name (or any other identifying information) should not appear on any page of the essay.

2. Essays must have a **title** at the top of the first page of the essay (do *not* use a title page).

3. Essays must be between 800-1,200 words, not counting the title and bibliography.

4. Sources *must* be used and *must* be cited and credited in a bibliography, consistent with an accepted citation style.

5. Each essay must be accompanied by an essay adivser form, signed to verify the essay is the student's original work.

7. The essay, student registration form and essay adviser form all must be mailed to the Baptist Joint Committee, postmarked no later than March 1, 2013.

Essays failing to meet the requirements will not be judged.

Winners will be announced in summer 2013. The first-place winner will be recognized at the BJC board meeting in Washington, D.C., in October 2013. All entrants will hear from the Baptist Joint Committee by email or U.S. mail after the winners are selected.

ESSAY ADVISER INFORMATION

Students must have an "essay adviser" who can review the essay. Advisers must be a teacher or counselor at the applicant's school or on staff at the applicant's house of worship. The adviser cannot be the student's parent unless the parent homeschools the student. The adviser verifies the essay is the student's original work and reviews it to ensure it meets all requirements. An adviser may work with more than one student, but each essay must be submitted with its own adviser form.

JUDGING CRITERIA

Entries will be judged on the depth of their content, the mastery of the topic, and the skill with which they are written. Students should develop a point of view on the issue and demonstrate critical thinking, using appropriate examples, reasons and other evidence to support their position. Essays should be free of grammatical errors and should be clear, concise and well-organized. Judges reserve the right to reduce the number of awards if not enough deserving entries meet the requirements.

Visit **www.BJConline.org/contest** for more information or contact Cherilyn Crowe at 202-544-4226 or by email at ccrowe@BJConline.org.

Note: All essays become the property of the BJC and cannot be returned.
* Trip includes actual airfare costs to D.C. up to a predetermined amount and one night of lodging for the contest winner and one accompanying parent/guardian to present the winning essay at the BJC board meeting.

BAPTIST JOINT COMMITTEE
FOR RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

2013 Religious Liberty Essay Scholarship Contest

Student Registration Form

Entries must be postmarked by March 1, 2013

include this form and the essay adviser form with your essay

Student Information

Name_____

Home address_____

City_____State_____ ZIP Code_____

Telephone (include area code)_____

Email (please print clearly) _____
NOTE: You will receive an email after the winners are selected. If no email address is provided, you will receive a letter in the mail.

School_____

Graduation year_____

Where did you learn about this scholarship contest? (Circle one)

FastWeb.com Scholarships.com Baptist Joint Committee Church School/Teacher Friend

Other: _____

Essay Information

Title of essay _____

Exact word count of essay text (must be between 800-1,200)_____

Essay Adviser Information

Adviser's name _____

Daytime phone number_____

Email_____

NOTE: You <u>must</u> have an essay adviser. He or she should fill out the "Essay Adviser Form," and it must be included with your entry.

BAPTIST JOINT COMMITTEE FOR RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

2013 Religious Liberty Essay Scholarship Contest

Essay Adviser Form

Must be included with student's entry
Entries must be postmarked by March 1, 2013

Advisers must be a teacher or counselor at the student's school or on staff at the student's house of worship. The adviser cannot be the student's parent unless the parent homeschools the student. The adviser verifies the essay is the student's original work and reviews it to ensure it meets all requirements. In the essay, the student should use the Constitution and the writings of the Founders to evaluate the claim that the United States was founded as a "Christian nation." For the complete topic, visit BJConline.org/contest.

Essay Adviser Information

(note: you may be the essay adviser for more than one student, but you must include a copy of this form with each essay)

Your name_____

Name of school or house of worship_____

Position_____

Address_____

City _____ State_____ ZIP Code_____

Daytime telephone_____ Email:_____

Student's name_____

How do you know the student? _____

Sign below to verify, to the best of your knowledge, that the essay is the original composition of the student.

_____

Would you like to receive the topic for the 2014 contest via email? (Circle one): YES NO

Do you have suggestions for future contests?