

CROSS BELONGS ON PUBLIC LAND

On October 7, the U.S. Supreme Court heard arguments on the constitutionality of a seven-foot cross placed on public land in the Mojave National Preserve in California. We said that the cross should be allowed on the land.

In 1892, the same court ruled that “this is a Christian nation.” Ever since, radical secularists have tried to stamp out this reality, holding that it excludes non-Christians. It does, and that is because the country’s founding was not the work of non-Christians.

That same day the *New York Times* carped over the cross. Defensively, its editorial began by saying that this case leads to such overheated charges as, “There is a war against Christianity under way; or civil liberties groups are trying to turn this into a secular nation.” Both accusations are accurate. Consider who is bringing the suit against the World War I veterans who first erected the cross in 1934, the ACLU—an organization marked with an anti-Christian animus since its founding in 1920.

One reason the *Times* is wrong is its faulty sense of history: it is simply not true to insist that the founders said “there must be a wall of separation between church and state.” That metaphor was broached by Thomas Jefferson in an 1802 letter to Baptists, and two days later he attended church services in the Capitol building, thus busting the myth that he wanted a wall between church and state. So if Jefferson thought it okay to have Christian services in a taxpayer-funded building, does the *Times* or the ACLU really think that he, or any of the founding fathers, would object to a cross—privately funded—on public lands honoring veterans, most of whom were Christians?