

# Cultural deconstruction of Christianity



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By **Robert Meyer**

I couldn't agree more with the sentiments expressed regarding in the recent op-ed by Christine M. Flowers "Around the world, the cross is in the crosshairs."

The piece is germane on two levels. First it informs us that Christianity is under attack worldwide, though the media shows little interest in reporting the issue. To say that the cultural warfare against Christianity that persists here in America pales in comparison to persecution faced by Christians in foreign countries, is an understatement of the highest order.

Secondly, and more to the point of this piece, it's a wake-up call for those who complacently insist "It can't happen here."

Domestically, there exists a glib attitude among those hostile or apathetic toward religious convictions, that the claim of assault on religious liberty is a figment of overheated imaginations, or persecution complexes. But the weakening of the cultural influences of Christianity has been accomplished through a pejorative evolutionary process in some of the following ways (In addition to public education and pop-culture which were discussed in previous pieces).

By making "freedom of worship" tantamount to "free exercise of religion." Freedom of worship merely allows a person to worship as they see fit and personally hold given convictions. Free exercise of religion enables people to act culturally on their convictions, and guarantees their perspectives enjoy equal public standing, as long as the safety of others isn't jeopardized.

Even a source as unlikely as the United Nations provides support for this historical perspective. Article 18 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights declares that...

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 teaching, practice, worship and observance* (Italics and underlining are my emphasis).

Constitutionally, when religious liberty comes into conflict with other "rights," whether they are newly created or questionable applications of existing rights, the other issue nearly always trumps religious liberties. This is ironic since The Bill of Rights enumerates the free exercise of religion as the very first civil liberty.

A recent op-ed by Ryan T. Anderson of The Heritage Foundation succinctly summarizes the latest example of this trend to command national attention.

"The Supreme Court of New Mexico ruled Aug. 22 that the First Amendment does not protect a Christian photographer's ability to decline to take pictures of a same-sex commitment ceremony – even when doing so would violate the photographer's deeply held religious beliefs. As Elaine Huguenin, owner of Elane Photography, explained: "The message a same-sex commitment

ceremony communicates is not one I believe."

The concept of "Separation of church and state" is deconstructed from its historical meaning. Originally it signified that both church and state were institutionally distinct, with each having jurisdiction over a limited sphere. Today it implies that public policy can't be influenced by religious conviction.

This is completely contrary to the relationship between religious conviction and public policy articulated by George Washington in his Farewell Address. Washington chaired the Constitutional Convention before he served as America's First President.

"Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism, who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens. The mere politician, equally with the pious man, ought to respect and to cherish them. A volume could not trace all their connections with private and public felicity. Let it simply be asked: Where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation desert the oaths which are the instruments of investigation in courts of justice? And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle."

Finally, the message of the Cross has been warped by secularists and religious progressives, into an abbreviated mandate limited to "social justice," where the state becomes the primary agent of engineering a utopian society.

We see this exemplified in organizations such as Sojourners and Red Letter Christians, where Jesus is used as an ideological icon to provide a veneer for disguising left-leaning socio-political activism. Jesus is conveniently morphed from the spiritual redeemer to progressive counter-culture revolutionary.