When Freedom Falls Down

written by Holly
October 2, 2003
By Holly Lisle

The very first amendment to the U.S. Constitution says:

Amendment I

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof ….

Know what this is. This is the amendment that prevents the U.S. government from saying that one religion is the "official" religion of the U.S., and that guarantees that people will be able to practice their religions without interference from the government.

Somewhere along the way, however, someone lost sight of what this amendment means. And this horror is the result.

I'm not a Christian. For a long time, I was, in fact, particularly unsympathetic to Christianity, having had some very bad experiences with a couple varieties of that religion as a child and young adult. But … please. This is insane. I'm tempted to get a "Three Cheers for Christians" bumper sticker to put beside my Darwin fish. (Well, I don't actually have a Darwin fish, because as much as I enjoy reading other people's car art, I don't want anything plastered on **my** car. But you

get the idea.)

Some faction of the American population is working very, very hard to establish Secular Humanism as the state religion, in complete contravention of the intent of the Bill of Rights. Nothing in the Constitution or Bill of Rights requests or requires the separation of church and state. Nothing supports this bizarre notion that children should not be able to pray before lunch in kindergarten, or that religion (especially the Christian religion, at least for now) should be hidden from public view as if it were some disfiguring, contagious disease. In fact, the first amendment in the Bill of Rights guarantees that believers are **permitted** to practice their religions free from persecution.

I would like to note that it's time for people like me – people who have spent a lot of time disliking or even loathing Christianity – to put the hurt and the anger on the back burner, or just get rid of it entirely, and face the fact that if we do not support the rights of those we vehemently disagree with, we are acting for the erosion of our own freedoms. America must remain a place where public prayer is permissible, because religion is fragile and vulnerable to oppression, hatred, and censorship to the precise degree that it matters to the people who believe it.

Jesus fish, anyone?

Contents © Holly Lisle. https://hollylisle.com All Rights Reserved