

(9) Christianity Endured Decades of Hate Without Hate Speech Protections, And There's a Reason Why

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Western governments today increasingly justify so-called “hate speech” laws as a social necessity. Certain communities are said to be uniquely vulnerable to offence, ridicule, or criticism and therefore require legal protection to preserve “social cohesion” and public order. Without such protections, it is claimed, these groups would be marginalised, harmed, or driven from public life.

What is rarely considered, however, is that for much of the past century, Christians in Western nations have endured growing cultural hostility without such protections. Christianity has been openly mocked in film, music, television, art, and literature. Christian moral teaching has been dismissed as ignorant, oppressive, and archaic.

Christians themselves have been portrayed as bigoted, intolerant, and hateful. They have been ridiculed, socially ostracised, and even had their careers terminated, all to the applause of the wider public. In many public institutions, Christian belief has not only been treated as false but also condemned as socially harmful.

Worldwide, Christians remain the most persecuted religious group. More than 388 million believers endure high levels of persecution and discrimination because of their faith, with over 315 million facing very high or extreme levels in just the top 50 countries. That amounts to roughly one in seven Christians globally, rising to one in five in Africa and two in five in Asia.

And yet, all of this hostility has not produced the social chaos that hate speech laws are said to prevent.

Despite decades of ridicule and exclusion, Christian communities continue to make an outsized contribution to public life. Churches and Christian organisations remain heavily involved in charitable work, healthcare, education, disaster relief, foster care, adoption, aged care, and

countless other volunteer services. In virtually every city across Western nations, one can find Christian communities quietly providing practical assistance to the vulnerable, often without recognition, and all within environments openly hostile to their beliefs.

Equally notable is how this hostility has been endured. Christians have not responded with hostility, withdrawal, or violence. They have not formed retaliatory movements or demanded special legal protections to shield their beliefs from criticism. They have willingly suffered cultural contempt while continuing to serve the very societies that deride them.

All of this stands in sharp contrast to the prevailing justification for hate speech legislation. If public critique and offence truly undermined social harmony, Christianity should provide the clearest evidence of it. Yet, despite relentless criticism, its adherents have not become a destabilising force, nor has their contribution diminished. On the contrary, their positive involvement in society has remained remarkably resilient, a fact largely unrecognised by the political class.

Christianity is unique, not only because it is grounded in Truth, but because it teaches its followers to expect ridicule, endure suffering, and respond to hostility with love, not retaliation. Christ's teachings forbid violence in response to insult, or even a self-pitying, victimhood mindset demanding legal immunity. Christians are commanded to love their enemies, bear injustice patiently, and seek the good of their neighbours, even when that goodwill is not returned.

So we must ask, if the most criticised and mocked religion in modern Western history has endured without legal protections, and continued to benefit society, what are hate speech laws really protecting? Are they preserving social peace, or insulating fundamentally flawed and fragile beliefs from scrutiny?

None of this denies that genuine threats, harassment, or violence should be addressed by law. Existing laws already do so. But it challenges the assumption that ideas must be legally shielded from criticism to flourish. Christianity's example suggests the opposite. It endured offence, remained socially constructive, and thrived without coercive protections. Christianity, as Truth, does not require external supports to survive. It does not need the sword of the state to keep it safe.

This is because truth does not cower. It does not flinch. It does not retreat in the face of insult, ridicule, or hostility. Christianity demonstrates this plainly: decades of criticism, mockery, and social exclusion have not weakened it, nor diminished its capacity to contribute to the common good.

The only ideas that demand the sword of the state for protection are those that cannot stand on their own, those that crumble under scrutiny, criticism, or challenge. Truth, by contrast, endures. It confronts opposition without fear, thrives without coercion, and flourishes precisely because it does not depend on law or force.

Ultimately, truth needs no bodyguard; only falsehood cowers behind threats and punishment.

