

DO LGBT RIGHTS HAVE NO EFFECT ON CHRISTIANS?

In a study recently published in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, six researchers from four universities concluded that there is no evidence to support the idea that LGBT progress comes at the expense of increasing bias against Christians. If this were true, it would undercut one of the more salient bases for opposing LGBT rights.

As will be seen, there are good reasons to question this conclusion. Moreover, a palpable bias on the part of the professors is evident.

If, as the study contends, that anti-Christian bias does not proceed from gains won by the LGBT community, then why do Christians believe there is an animus against them? "Christians' beliefs about conflict with sexual minorities are shaped by understandings of Christian values, social change, interpretation of the Bible, and in response to religious institution."

In other words, the notion that bias against Christians tends to increase as LGBT rights progress is not real—it's in their heads. The study finds that the source of their faulty perception is due to their Christian beliefs, not to any real instances of anti-Christian sentiment or behavior. This, in turn, is a consequence of Christians being on the losing side of the culture wars. Having lost "their sway," they now see themselves as victims of a "symbolic threat."

The authors further claim that since Christians are "relatively privileged," it suggests that their "desire to maintain group dominance may be driven by desires for cultural dominance."

The study ends in a way that is customary for research papers,

with a section titled, "Limitations and Future Directions." It's too bad that these psychologists didn't list their own predilections as a limiting factor. In fairness, this hardly makes them unique. Though it ought to be done.

When they say that Christians are "privileged," they are making a statement that is more political than scientific. Surely low-income and working class Christians are not members of some "privileged" segment of society. By what measure are middle class Americans, many of whom are struggling to pay their mortgage and saving for their children's education, members of some "privileged" group?

In fact, if being "privileged" were defined by the number of hours worked per week, and the number of days off per year, professors would be the most privileged class in the world. In fact, once they get tenure they can slide and do practically nothing and still keep their job. (Bill Donohue was in the professoriate for 16 years, so he speaks with experience.)

Where is there evidence that Christians want "group dominance"? This is an assertion, not an empirical finding. Reclaiming, or maintaining, rights that are being diminished is hardly proof that "dominance" is the goal. The end that is sought may be nothing more than equity.

At the beginning of the article, the *Masterpiece Cakeshop* case is cited. The authors never mention that it was the anti-Christian statements made by the Colorado Civil Rights Commission that persuaded the U.S. Supreme Court to side with the Christian baker. Surely evidentiary findings of bigotry would matter if the victims were LGBT persons. Why should anti-Christian bigotry count for less?

The way the authors see it, this case was about "being obligated to serve sexual minorities," something which "violated Christians' religious freedom." Similarly, at the end of the article they maintain that "same-sex couples

continue to experience more discrimination from wedding industry professionals than heterosexual couples.”

The truth is that the owner of the bakeshop never refused anyone, including gays, from buying one of his goods. What he refused to do was custom-make a wedding cake for two men, a request that would force him to sanction a ceremony that violates the tenets of his Christian faith. That is not a small difference.

The authors have found that “Perceptions of anti-Christian bias seem to be particularly acute for conservative Christians.” It would be shocking if they found otherwise.

As any survey research findings show, liberal Christians and secular Americans on moral issues are virtually identical these days. To put it differently, if a Christian is okay with gay marriage, he is not likely to spot anti-Christian bias in anything the parties to it might request.

One of the main conclusions of this study holds that while LGBT individuals “bear the brunt of discrimination,” there is “less evidence of widespread bias against Christians.” They take it a step further by arguing that “there is no evidence, to our knowledge, connecting the experience of LGBT individuals to bias against Christians.”

If bias against Christians is measured by discrimination in school and in the workplace, then it is true that much progress has been made. But if bias is measured by Christian bashing, there is a big problem.

Those who work in the media, education, the entertainment industry, the arts, and government have said the most vile things about conservative Christians, comments that would never be counseled if said about gays or transgender persons. If anything, the ruling class has locked arms with the gay community, and that often pits them against Christians.

To say that there is no evidence “connecting the experience of LGBT individuals to bias against Christians” is fatuous. There are scores of cases involving Catholic schools which have been sued by deceitful gay teachers.

None was fired because he was a homosexual: every case involved gay teachers who claimed to be married to a person of the same sex, in direct defiance to the norms they voluntarily accepted as a condition of employment. In many cases, these teachers deliberately went public with their status, hoping to force a confrontation in the courts.

The federal government has been sued for allowing orthodox religious schools to receive federal funds, schools which maintain that marriage is the union of a man and a woman, not people of the same sex. Colleges have been sued for denying biological men to live in women’s dorms.

Speech codes have been adopted in the workplace, ordering employees to use pronouns for transgender persons that violate their free speech rights and deny common sense. Catholic adoption agencies have been sued for following Catholic teachings on marriage and the family. Catholic hospitals have been sued for not agreeing to perform transgender surgery. Pro-life activists have been harassed by LGBT store owners.

The collision between LGBT rights and religious liberty is at a fever pitch. LGBT rights are not mentioned in the Constitution, but religious liberty is enshrined in the First Amendment.

It’s time to stop floating the fiction that LGBT advances have not resulted in a diminution of rights for Christians, or in a bias directed at them. The elites have laid anchor, and it is not in the Christian camp.