



**The American Civil Liberties Union
The Number One Religious Censor in America Today**

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) is the number one religious censor in America today. Despite their claim to be a great defender of religious freedom, they actively seek, through a continued war of fear, intimidation, and disinformation to bully public officials into suppressing any public expression of religious faith. In addition, they use legal and political means to force many Americans to violate their own core religious beliefs.

Some examples:

- In California, the state Supreme Court – in a case in which the ACLU joined with others against Catholic Charities, ruled that the charity must provide contraceptive coverage to women as part of any group health care prescription drug program it offers to its employees. This is despite the fact that the Catholic faith and its doctrine strictly prohibit the use of contraceptives. The ACLU contended that since the charity had non-Catholic employees and ministers to non-Catholics, it must provide this coverage. If the ministry did not minister to those outside of the Catholic faith, it might be exempt. In other words, the ACLU and the state supreme court were telling the charity: “Keep your ministry to yourself.” Only one justice – Janice Rogers Brown, now sitting on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit, dissented. Justice Brown wrote, “[*This is*] such a crabbed and constricted view of religion that it would define the ministry of Jesus Christ as a secular activity.”¹ Interestingly, the ACLU hasn’t tried to force Planned Parenthood to hand out information on abstinence.
- The New York chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union filed suit against the Salvation Army because the Army’s employment policies require that employees divulge their religious affiliation and affirm the organization’s Christian mission. The ACLU filed the suit simply because the Salvation Army receives state and city funds to help provide services for children in poverty.²
- The ACLU backed a lawsuit against Yeshiva University, an Orthodox Jewish school, because the university would not allow two lesbians to live in married student housing. The school holds the traditional Jewish position that homosexual behavior is a violation of God’s law. The school lost, and the ACLU crowed about how it had forced a private faith-based organization to violate its core beliefs. ACLU attorney Matthew Coles said, “*It’s a fabulous ruling.*”³

¹ “Secular Absolutism,” *The Wall Street Journal*, March 14, 2004.

² Matt Kellner, “Out in the Cold?” *Christianity Today*, May 2004.

³ Seth Lewis, “Court Lets Homosexuals Sue for Access to Married Housing,” *CNSNews.com.*, July 2, 2001.

- When asked about the right for military chaplains to discuss their faith with military personnel, Dr. Jeremy Gunn, director of the ACLU’s Religious Freedom Project, said: “[They] need to find another career.”⁴
- In Oklahoma, a thirty-year veteran school teacher had been teaching Bible lessons to his students **during non-school time**. The students **voluntarily participated**. The ACLU filed a lawsuit on against the teacher and the curriculum publisher, stating that they were “co-conspirators to establish religion.” The case went to a jury, which found against the teacher and publisher, but only awarded the plaintiffs \$251 – an indication of how they really felt about the ACLU lawsuit. But the story does not end there. ACLU backed attorneys turned around and sought more than **eighty thousand dollars** from the teacher for their legal fees and costs. The Alliance Defense Fund stepped in, free of charge, to help him. The ACLU-backed attorneys eventually received only a fraction of their original demand.⁵
- Franklin County (Ohio) Children’s Services wanted to stage a gospel concert at a local church to help raise awareness of adoption and the need for foster parents and mentors among the religious community. In the previous year, the agency received more than five hundred inquiries about adoption and foster parenthood from those that attended. The ACLU sent a letter to Children’s Services threatening a lawsuit if the concert was not immediately cancelled. The agency’s director said: “*Our efforts do not constitute a subsidy of any religious group, nor do we require any child to observe any particular religious denomination.*”⁶
- In Louisiana, the ACLU filed a lawsuit challenging a **voluntary** prayer group of Christian teachers. The teachers met on their **own** time, during recess, and not during instructional time.⁷ In addition, the ACLU’s executive director has compared school officials who allowed a public prayer to the terrorists who attacked the World Trade Center and the London subway,⁸ as well as calling for jail, stating that individuals that pray publicly “should be removed from society.”⁹
- In Baldwin City, Kansas, a local public school had a standing tradition of inviting a member of the community to dress as Santa Claus and visit elementary school children at Christmas time. In one instance, the school allowed an associate pastor from a local church to be Santa. When he asked the children why Christmas is celebrated, one little girl innocently said, “Because it’s Jesus birthday.” The ACLU immediately sent a letter to the school district demanding that the long-standing tradition be discontinued because the name of Jesus had been said by **a child** at a public school.¹⁰ An ADF attorney provided the school district with the information they needed to protect the school’s tradition, and the ACLU was never heard from again.

⁴ Tom Roeder, “Expert-Falsehoods Fuel Debate About the Role of Faith in the Military,” *Colorado Springs Gazette*, May 11, 2006.

⁵ *Hughes v. Warrington*, 74 F.3d 1249, January 4, 1996.

⁶ Felix Hoover, “ACLU Aims to Halt Gospel Concert Event Planned by Children’s Services: Likely Would Violate Law, Local Agency Says,” *Columbus Dispatch*, August 17, 2004.

⁷ Jim Brown, “ACLU Focuses Crosshairs on Louisiana Schools for Religious Activities,” *AgapePress*, April 20, 2004.

⁸ “School Board Compared to Terrorists?” *WAFB-9*, August 16, 2005.

⁹ Adam Nossiter, “ACLU Asks Jail for Tangipahoa School Officials,” Associated Press, May 18, 2005.

¹⁰ Kristen Dymacek, “School Board Examines ACLU Allegations,” *Baldwin City Signal*, December 10, 2003.

- The ACLU sued the city of Cranston, Rhode Island, which had opened the front lawn of its city hall **on an equal basis** for “seasonal and holiday displays.” Citizens were allowed to provide displays, which could be either religious or secular. The city also posted a disclaimer that read: “*The public holiday displays are strictly from private citizens or groups. They do not represent an official view of the City of Cranston, nor are they endorsed by the city.*” Displays included a Santa Claus, a menorah, and a snowman, along with a crèche. The ACLU took offense with the crèche. An ADF-allied attorney came to the defense of the city, and a U.S. district court judge dismissed the ACLU’s lawsuit. He noted that nothing in the city’s public statements or in its implementation of its policy for Christmas displays “*reveals or even remotely supports an inference that a religious purpose was behind the creation of the limited public forum.*”¹¹
- In Morgan Hill, Calif.,¹² Visalia, Calif.,¹³ and Boyd County, Kentucky,¹⁴ the ACLU filed lawsuits to force *mandatory* “tolerance” education on public school students with regard to the acceptance of homosexual behavior, even if such training violates their personal religious beliefs about such behavior. When parents – who were not allowed to “opt-out” their children from such training – chose to have their children stay home on the day the training was conducted, the ACLU threatened to file a lawsuit to force the parents to put their children in a position to be subjected to material that violates their sincerely held religious beliefs.

Of course, the ACLU likes to trumpet the few cases where it has defended religious expression. However, its founder, Roger Baldwin, stated that was a tactic he would use from time to time to try to illustrate that the ACLU was “non-partisan.” He noted: “*If I aid the reactionaries to get free speech now and then, if I go outside the class struggle to fight against censorship, it is **only** because those liberties help to create a more hospitable atmosphere for working-class liberties.*”¹⁵ In other words, it is a tactic to advance its far-left agenda, by confusing its true intent by taking a limited number of cases involving religious freedom, in particular, Christian expressions of faith.

¹¹ *Grace C. Osediacz v. City of Cranston, et al*, United States District Court, C.A. No. 03-600S, William E. Smith presiding.

¹² *Flores v. Morgan Hill Unified School District*, settlement fact sheet, January 6, 2004; <http://www.aclu.org/news/NewsPrint.cfm?ID=14658&c=106>.

¹³ “In Groundbreaking Settlement, School Agrees to Sweeping Anti-Gay Harassment Program,” *ACLU Press Release*, August 13, 2002.

¹⁴ “View Homosexual Film, or School Faces Lawsuit,” *WorldNetDaily.com.*, November 28, 2004.

¹⁵ William Donohue, *Twilight of Liberty*, (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Press, 2001), p. xi, citing Roger Baldwin, “Freedom in the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R.,” *Soviet Russia Today*, September 1934, p. 11.