

It has been popular to say that attempts to grant legal rights for homosexual couples is an “assault on Christianity” or that asking companies not to alienate their non-Christian customers is a “war on Christmas,” and certainly there is a strange sort of appeal to being able to say that you are part of a persecuted group (a persecuted majority, in the case of Christians). But the world would be a much better place if we all tried to get along and understand each other’s point of view instead of treating every disagreement as an insult and every difference of opinion as an attack.

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In almost all cases, such lawsuits are not about limiting religion, but about stopping religion from being imposed on others or stopping one religion from being favored over another by the government. Those are things all Americans should approve of. Agreeing with a scientific fact (such as evolution) which some people do not think is compatible with religion is not an attack on religion. Science does not make religious statements. Depending on the context, trying to disrupt a conversation with ridicule, derision, or inflammatory speech might rightly be seen as an attack on religion. Attacks on atheism are often carried out in the same way. Such attacks are juvenile and help nobody. Some atheists might more significantly attack religion by (for example) disrupting ceremonies, vandalizing religious property or things, or trying to interfere with legitimate freedom of speech. Such acts are rare, and moral atheists detect these people just as much as theists do. Regardless of the context, there is no glory in being a thug.

**R**ELIGIOUS PEOPLE SOMETIMES feel like they are under attack by atheists — and, sometimes, they're right. Other times, they feel attacked when they are not being attacked at all. Let's consider a few examples.

- Polite disagreement. "I think the Bible is a work of fiction," isn't an attack on religion; it's a statement of opinion. If you disagree, say why and start a conversation.
- Saying "Happy holidays" isn't an attack on Christianity any more than "Merry Christmas" is an attack on Judaism, Islam, or any other belief system.
- Declining to participate in a group prayer or other religious practice isn't an attack on that practice. It's not even necessarily a statement of disapproval of that practice. Similarly, a Canadian who refused to say the American "Pledge of Allegiance" isn't insulting America; she's just refusing to take a false oath.
- A lawsuit attempting to stop government from participating in religion isn't an attack on religion, even if the result is inconvenience for a religious

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# WHY DO ATHEISTS ATTACK RELIGION?

A Question of Moral Atheism

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group. In almost all cases, such lawsuits are not about limiting religion, but about stopping religion from being imposed on others or stopping one religion from being favored over another by the government. Those are things all Americans should approve of.

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- Some atheists might more significantly attack religion by (for example) disrupting ceremonies, vandalizing religious property or things, or trying to interfere with legitimate freedom of speech. Such acts are rare, and moral atheists detest these people just as much as theists do. Regardless of the context, there is no glory in being a thug.



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# QUESTIONS OF MORAL ATHEISM: INSTRUCTIONS

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We appreciate your interest in helping us spread information about moral atheism! To make copies of this pamphlet for your own use or to share with friends, follow these simple steps:

1. Print pages one and two of this document, one on each side of the same piece of paper (if you don't have access to a duplex printer, print page one, put the page back in the paper tray upside down, and print page two — depending on the type of printer, you may have to experiment a bit).
2. Cut the printout in two, using the thin rules across the middle of the page as a guide.
3. Fold the two pieces of paper in half, making a pair of small pamphlets.
4. Keep one of the pamphlets to read, and give the other away to an interested friend or stranger.

That's it! If you have any questions, suggestions, or comments, we invite you to share them by leaving a comment on [blog.iamanatheist.org](http://blog.iamanatheist.org). Thanks!

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