

Charity: the act of giving selflessly. One of the myths about secular individuals is that we are not compelled to assist others because we don't yield to a higher authority. If we do help, we do so for the purpose of converting 'lost souls' to Atheism.

I have personally fought against this unfair stereotype. Our family regularly donate usable toys and clothes. we also donate money: to the local sheriff and fire fighters organizations, the children with AIDS fund, American Atheists, The Freedom From Religion Foundation, The Goodwill...get the point?

Secular Americans understand the value of helping those in their community, just like religious folks. And, I had thought, most religious organizations did as well. So, I was surprised to hear that the Catholic Church recently pulled a quarter of the funding it usually donates to The Vermont Workers Center. Channel 5 reported that the Church denied the Center's funding which was to be used to fund a health care program. "In order for the Catholic Church to be involved you would have to [identify] with [the] human right war, the right to life, and natural death." In other words: do what I say, or we won't give you the \$30,000 you need to run your program."

This is a perfect example of the double-standard that all too often happens with religion. Whether intentional or not, the leaders of organized religion consistently abuse their power. They are guilty not just in the eyes of man, but in the eyes of their creator. Exodus **23:6** is clear on the subject: "Thou shalt not wrest the judgment of thy poor in his cause." It is wrong to force the poor to do your bidding; it is despicable to threaten the loss of money for the vital funding of a needed community program.

What's worse: the Church unabashedly defends their blatant hypocrisy. "Because the guarantees [to human life] could not be placed there we could not support, the church could not support that type of endeavor."

This also violates Exodus 23:9 "thou shalt not oppress a stranger." Is it not oppression to deny health care, which is a basic human right? How could the Catholic Church send such a deceitful message to it's young people: they might as well whisper into a child's ear, "If you're bigger and stronger, you can make people think your way." We don't need a religious version of the mob to coerce the masses; we need charities that are going to give help struggling Americans, simply for the sake of helping them.

Since the workers stood their moral ground, they lost the \$30,000 grant. The Center is now working to raise donations. Perhaps they decided that getting the grant wasn't worth affirming a statement that shuts out a growing voice in America. I applaud the sense of decency and self respect.

If you would like to donate to the organization, you can do so [here](#).

Quotes taken from : <http://www.wptz.com/cnn-news/19401481/detail.html>

