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Freedom is the essence of America, cast into the foundation of the Republic by the Founders, then locked into the Constitution and Bill of Rights. The Constitution guarantees the fundamental rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. The Bill of Rights extends the list to include freedom of religion, speech, press, assembly, and the right to petition the government. Although multiple rights are under assault by the Obama's administration, this paper focuses on religion.

### Religious Freedom

Religious freedom is the core premise of the United States of America, the shining light to the politically and religiously persecuted since the pilgrims stepped on Plymouth Rock. The religious composition of the founding fathers included Episcopalian, Anglican, Congregationalist, Presbyterian, Quaker, Unitarian, Catholic, and Deist.

The current religious mix of the United States shows 83% of the population with some type of affiliation, roughly 16% unaffiliated, and 1% unknown. The two largest groups are Christian. Protestantism, with a varied makeup, represents 51% of the population and Catholicism is 24%. Of these other religions, Jewish, Buddhist, Muslim, and Hindu are less than 2% per category. (Source: Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life / U.S. Religious Landscape Survey).

The question is, "Why is a website dedicated to American Competitiveness writing a paper on religious freedom?" Simple - business does not operate within a vacuum. The constitutional freedoms making Americans the most successful people in history are the same ones driving our economic activity. When government has the power to control religion, it can control the people, production, and distribution systems just as easily.

Some people foolishly want to make this a Democrat or Republican issue. In fact, it lies at the foundation of who we are as people. A loss of freedom will affect every person currently and all future generations. We may become one people again, without a party affiliation, and without a choice.



A government pushing the boundaries to gain power has little concern for color, religion, and social class, other than how to manipulate groups to achieve their purpose. Citizens must remember that centralized authority is antithetical to freedom.

## The Catalyst

President Barack Obama, under authority granted by his Affordable Care Act (ACA), ordered the Catholic Church to violate core church values. Catholic theology states that humans do not have the right to block conception, and that once conception occurs aborting the child is murder. The administration forced a confrontation by demanding that the Church and affiliates offer coverage for birth control and morning-after pills, which are abortifacients. Faced with a firestorm of dissent, the Obama administration backed off partially, exempting the Churches, but not the affiliates such as the hospitals and charities. Backing further away, Obama agreed to have the birth control and morning-after pills paid for by the insurance companies. The problem is that many of the affiliates are self-insured.

In this situation, the Catholic Church has four options. One, ignore the order, with all the legal ramifications; two, comply with the order and violate church doctrine; three, disband the charities and hospitals; four, discontinue all health care insurance and pay the penalty. This throws all the workers onto the newly established health care exchanges, when they are completed. To avoid an election confrontation, Obama delayed implementation for one year, and that year is nearly over.

Many think this is a women's rights issue. The majority of younger Catholic women use birth control, and coverage is included in 80% of the health care plans. Women without coverage typically pay \$20 to \$50 dollars a month for birth control. (Source: Costhelper.com). While the ACA provides significant and important benefits, the services are not free and insurance premiums will rise to absorb the cost. (Source: [Jodi Jacobson](#), Editor-in-Chief/RH RealityCheck, expert on women's health and rights). It also raises another question, would most women sell religious freedom for \$240-600 year, especially when the insurance rate increases by at least that amount?

Actually, this is a religious and women's rights issue. The Church cannot both buckle and retain its doctrine. In either case, the Obama administration has created a paradox for employees of Catholic organizations. If organizations disband, there will be wholesale job losses and women's services provided by Catholic organizations will stop. If employers drop the insurance coverage, employees, many of them women, will have to deal with the exchanges.

A harbinger of future consequences has already occurred. The Catholic Church is unwilling to bend on the doctrine that marriage is between a man and women. They are shutting down adoption centers rather than place children with same sex couples. In point, there are enough agencies that none has to be everything to everyone. Sadly, people caught in the controversy have lost their jobs.

The Affordable Health Care Act will radically affect every American. The research my co-author and I did for our book, "Crunch Time for Health Care," clearly indicates that health care costs,



already out of control, are going to escalate. At the same time, services will suffer. The reason the Obama administration focused on Health Care is obvious. If government has control over medical care, it increases control over the people. Women's health is a straw man to draw attention from the damage it will eventually cause to families. The administration delayed the implementation until the election is over. Starting in October 2013, people will discover how much it really costs and how it will change their lives.

In the final analysis, it appears the Obama administration would celebrate the disintegration of the Catholic Church and all religious organizations. Advocates of big government see religion as a threat, and in nearly every historical case, government has attempted to eliminate or mitigate power threats. The key exception is atheism, which is often an ally of elitism.

### Religious Rights

This brings us to the point. Americans enjoy religious rights like few other countries in the world. It is this right that makes us great. It is a joy to drive down a highway and see a cross, a minaret, or a country church with a steeple.



I listened to the emotional power of the Baptist music that buoyed Martin Luther King and the black community, fighting for equality. The music of the Protestant reformation inspires, and Jewish music causes longing for moments lost in time. The Islamic call to prayer reminds that diversity enriches us all. Attending Latino Mass at Our Lady of the Valley in California, with the rich, joyful, music sung in Spanish, is a great joy. Religion helps us deal with death and sorrow; it comforts us when things go wrong. Religion lifts and enriches us as one people, under God, giving us moral purpose beyond ourselves.

This election may have determined the fundamental right to worship as we please. President Obama demonstrated his contempt for religion in multiple ways.

First, President Obama disrespected his pastor, Jeremiah Wright, when their friendship caused unfavorable press reports. While not a believer in Black Liberation Theology, I respect the right of all people to practice their own religion. Jeremiah Wright was a Marine, who served his country. I was an Army medic; therefore, Jeremiah Wright is my brother in arms, and I would choose him unequivocally over Barack Obama to cover my back. We have paid the price for the right to free speech, freedom of religion and total equality.

On 9/11/2012, terrorists attacked the U.S. consulate in Benghazi, Libya. It appears the president, preparing for a presidential campaign, retired to bed. Someone in his administration ordered a stand down to military rescue attempts. Four Americans died.

The second and third insights to the freedom of religion issue occurred in the Democratic National Convention. The platform omitted any mention of God, or references to Jerusalem as the Capital of Israel. The subsequent uproar resulted in the reinstatement of both by a mock two-thirds vote.

The message, however, was very clear on both points. In the past, the Democratic platform has shown contempt for the Jewish state, and the platform reinforced that obvious conclusion. The Obama administration appears to reject religion of every type.

### **In Conclusion**

It is time to return to facts and reality, not the smoke and mirrors used by the Obama machine to cloud the issue.

1. Attempts to force the Catholic Church to violate its fundamental doctrines are in process.
2. The Democratic Convention platform omitted the word "God".
3. The Obama administration failed to recognize the sovereign boundaries of Israel.
4. The Obama administration omitted Jerusalem as the Israeli capital in the Democratic Convention platform.
5. Pres. Obama threw Jeremiah Wright under the bus when he became "inconvenient."

These facts are the hard reality. The Obama administration has opposed religion at every step, except for Islam; therefore, one must conclude that if Barack Obama has the opportunity, he will eliminate the core premise of America, religious freedom. This is the new REALITY!

If the persecution of the Catholic Church is successful, personal freedoms will significantly erode. Every religion, without exception, will be negatively transformed. Every religion enjoys equal rights under the law, and every American has the right to worship without government interference. Citizens should not have to go to bed at night and pray for their right to worship.

It gets worse. He will probably appoint two or more Supreme Court Justices, and religious freedom will move from jeopardy to history. It will be a dark, cold world without respite.



This is an American, not a Democrat or Republican issue. Twenty years in the future, no one will care what we labeled ourselves. Our children and grandchildren will be justified in asking, "How could you have been so stupid, to us sell them into government-controlled serfdom?"

I have always believed in the incredible judgment of the American people to change destiny. The last election shook that belief to the core. The American people made a choice that, in the end, will negatively affect every citizen.

The Rev. Jeremiah Wright made the comment, "The chickens will come home to roost." Although he referenced a different context, in President Obamas case, the true character of the man is coming into focus, and the chickens are flying into the coop.

A free America, filled with opportunities, will release the pent-up power of the entrepreneurs, lifting everyone. A large centralized government destroying the foundation of our Republic takes everyone down.

It is never too late when free people wake up, understand the threat, and take action. There is not much time left. Before the end of 2013, we will continue to be free people, or on the slippery slope to a police state. Without religious freedoms, there cannot be a free, competitive America.

