

As Guides say goodbye to God, is there any Christianity left in public life?



No longer the same: Girl Guides

Guides have dropped "God" from their Girl Guides' Promise. In a multicultural and individualist age, the thinking goes, the movement should pledge "to be true to myself and develop my beliefs". None of that guff about God and country. It's now all about "Me" and the anything goes spirituality. Hindu, Druid, New Ager, Muslim, Christian: everything's the same these days.

We've seen it elsewhere. Druids and Christians are accorded equal rights in the workplace: when a Druid employee, say, wants time off to go to Stonehenge for the Solstice, the boss must treat her the same as a Christian wanting time off to attend Mass at Easter. Crystal-gazing is regarded as the same as prayer — except that when a district nurse offers to pray for a patient, she is suspended from work, whereas a crystal-carrying sister can go about as she pleases.

Where will it end? Demoting God in public life ignores a huge part of Britain's heritage: from the Coronation Oath through marriage vows, from schools and hospitals to orphanages and low-income housing, the Christian God has inspired much that is good about this country. Time and again, research finds that people of other faiths look on this religious legacy as crucial to their own well-being: they want to live in a state that respects religion. Baroness Warsi, the Faiths Minister, last year said she relished being raised in a Christian culture, and urged fellow Muslims to celebrate Christmas

Yet stealthily, steadily, today's secularist authorities seem bent on erasing Him from public life. They are getting their way — and meeting little resistance. I'd argue this is one instance when turning the other cheek is a mistake.

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