

# Some Christians Cry Persecution to Avoid Accountability

I've heard the cries of some U.S. evangelicals claiming they are in the midst of persecution.

I don't pretend to know exactly what another person is going through, but I wonder if what they are experiencing is not persecution but accountability.

Not one of us revels in being held accountable for our actions when we know what we've done is wrong. I see it in the face of our 10-year-old and hear it in the fierce defense of our 7-year-old.

But we must be held accountable when our actions, our decisions, our theology harm children. Our most important calling here on earth is to protect and foster our children. We aren't doing this well.

[One out of every six children in the U.S.](#) lives in food insecure environments in which adequate food supplies cannot be obtained at some point during the year, resulting in food quality, quantity or both being reduced.

[Ten percent of U.S. children](#) will experience sexual abuse before their 18th birthday.

When I read stories of [people supporting men who have abused children](#) for political office and [the attempt to use theology to justify child abuse](#), I know we have a long way to go.

We cannot divert attention or responsibility by calling accountability for our actions "religious persecution."

Religious persecution is what the pilgrims were experiencing when they feared for their lives, took a harrowing journey across the sea and tried to build a life

with next to nothing in a new world they had never seen.

Conversely, being told you should not harm a child or that you will be held legally responsible because you have harmed a child is not religious persecution.

The number of people who attend a weekly worship experience has steadily declined, according to [Pew Research Center data](#), and not just for the people who identify as “nones.”

Church attendance has declined for those who still claim to be Christians, and this has left a serious gap in accountability.

In the absence of weekly teaching and worship, a do-it-yourself theology has arisen that allows an individual to find justification for his or her actions without the accountability of living in community with other people.

My decisions and my interactions are different because I know the stories of the people in our community of faith who are suffering loss and serious illness.

My decisions and my interactions are different because I know the couple who was homeless who come to our church for food, prayer and comfort.

My decisions and my interactions with children are different because of our policies about how to keep our children safe in our church community.

We need more accountability, not less.

We need more people who are willing to engage in communities and who will challenge them and remind them how much work we still need to do to create safer communities for our children.

To be certain, as our children grow and mature, they will be the ones who hold us accountable for what we have and haven't done to protect them.

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