

# There Are Too Many Saviors on My Cross

This article's title derives from a [poem](#) published 50 years ago by actor and film star Richard Harris. Written in free verse, and recorded and released as a record in the days when vinyl was king, Harris's poem was a cry for peace in Northern Ireland, a land plagued by political and religious violence between Catholics and Protestants.

The cross Harris refers to is the cross of Christ. The saviors are the Irish Protestants and Catholics murdering and robbing one another using Christ's cross not for love or peace but for their own nefarious ends.

"Who put you there?" Christ asks of them in the poem. "Who told you that that was your place?"

Indeed, many earthly "saviors" have seemingly good intentions and concerns that sheath a dagger. And these saviors aren't just limited to the warring Irish Protestants and Catholics. Seemingly benign examples abound: The mother who smothers her grown son with advice; the father whose lavish praise of his beloved daughter nourishes an overblown ego; and the husband whose well-meaning nitpicking is destroying his wife. Motivated by what they regard as love, these sorts of saviors diminish people in the name of love.

Worst of all these saviors, however, and one that weighs heavily on the lives of every American, is government.

Believing they know what's best for "the people," politicians and a host of bureaucrats essentially regard themselves as our saviors and seek to lift a cross from our shoulders. The alphabet soup of federal agencies, for instance, exists almost exclusively to rescue Americans not so much from foreign or domestic enemies as from themselves. Education, health,

environment, art, business—you name it, and you'll likely find a federal or state agency managing your affairs "for your own good."

When government isn't pretending to be an omniscient deity—as it did during the pandemic—it often acts as parent or nanny, always ready to impart counsel and wisdom which, if ignored, will get you a timeout in the corner or a trip to the backyard to cut a switch. These saviors don't preach love but obedience.

Even worse, large numbers of Americans worship at the altar of politics and government. Look up "Is climate change a religion?" and you'll find many commentators saying, "Absolutely." Other worshippers of government seek relief from the tens of thousands of dollars they borrowed to attend college. Some who elect not to work reach to the almighty government for money and benefits. Those wishing to alter cultural norms push the government and the courts to become their instruments of change rather than convincing their fellow citizens of the justice of their cause.

In his poem, Harris has Christ ask:

*"Who gave you the right to increase your fold while  
decreasing the pastures of My flock?"*

*Who gave you the right? Who gave it to you, who?"*

Regarding the elevated status of our politicians and administrators, the answer is simple: We did. We traded liberty for security. Over the past century, or longer, we've given greater and greater powers to government, abetted its vast expansion, and have as a consequence slowly transformed our servants into our masters.

I am writing these words the day before the midterm elections. Many people are hoping and praying these elections will bring

a turnabout in the direction our country is headed. I am one of these but with this caveat: If we place too much hope and too many expectations in politics and politicians, we are sure to be disappointed and will once again be deceived.

As much as possible, then, let's keep these supposed earthly saviors in perspective. All too often they are burdens, not blessings.

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