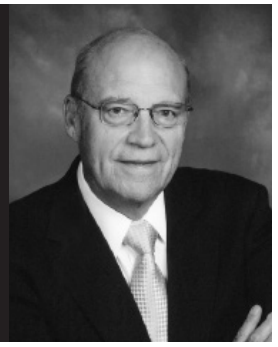




Dr. Fred Schwarz

The Schwarz Report



Dr. David Noebel

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Russian Intervention 1919-2017

by Lloyd Billingsley

Christopher Wray, President Trump's nominee for FBI director is drawing bipartisan approval and appears headed for confirmation. Wray does not doubt the intelligence community on Russian interference in the 2016 election and he does not consider Special Counsel Robert Mueller's probe a witch hunt. As FBI director he would provide Mueller with all appropriate resources for his investigation.

Senator Ted Cruz describes Mueller as a "good and honorable man," and Sen. John Thune calls the former FBI boss "a man of integrity" and perfect for the Russia probe. "He is going to get to the bottom and he is going to find the facts," Thune told MSNBC. The Special Counsel should start at the very beginning of Russian intervention in American elections.

As Harvey Klehr noted in the *New York Times*, the Communist Party USA was a Russian project from the beginning, managed by the Comintern, which Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov, also known as Lenin, set up way back in 1919. This Russian political party intervened in American elections by running candidates, and one is still around.

Angela Davis was the keynote speaker at the Women's March in January, but back in 1979, Russia gave Davis the International Lenin Peace Prize. In 1980 Davis was the vice-presidential candidate of the Communist Party USA, on a ticket with white Stalinist Gus Hall. This duo also lost to Ronald Reagan in 1984 but it hasn't emerged how much money Russia poured into the contest.

Were any Americans colluding with Russia to launder the funds? Special Counsel Mueller, with all the counterintelligence resources at his command, should get to the bottom of that. Perhaps Angela Davis can enlighten him.

During that election cycle, Senator Ted Kennedy was reaching out to Russia. A May 14, 1983 letter from KGB boss Viktor Chebrikov to Yuri Andropov confirms that Kennedy sought to stop not only Reagan's defense buildup but his bid for re-election. The plan was to connect dictator Andropov, with whom Kennedy was "very impressed," with media big shots Walter Cronkite and Barbara Walters.

This became the subject of media reports in Europe but not America. With all the resources at his disposal, Special Counsel Robert Mueller should be able to tell us what US counterintelligence made of this blatant attempt at collusion with a hostile foreign power. Kennedy acted against American interests and during perhaps the most dangerous time in the Cold War.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall, Russia remained a danger to the West, but President Obama canceled missile defense for US allies in Western Europe, allowed Russia to build up its nuclear arsenal, and did nothing when Russia began gobbling up Ukraine, where Stalin had killed millions.

In March of 2012, apparently unaware of a "hot" microphone, President Obama told Russian president Dimitry Medvedev that Vladimir Putin should give him more "space."

"Yeah, I understand," Medvedev responded. "I understand your message about space."

"This is my last election," the president responded. "After my election, I have more flexibility."

"I understand," said Medvedev. "I will transmit this information to Vladimir, and I stand with you."

Was the 44th President of the United States perhaps colluding with Putin and Russia to make more concessions that would strengthen a hostile foreign power and leave the USA in a weaker position? That was the same thing his fellow Democrat Ted Kennedy had tried to do.

With all the resources at his disposal, and Christopher Wray in his corner, the good and honorable Robert Mueller

should be able to enlighten Congress and the public. After all, this was at the very highest level.

The Russia probe should also be diverse and inclusive. Special Counsel Mueller should have a look at the matters explored in Clinton Cash, about the Clinton Foundation, and transfers of uranium to Russia. Was any collusion going on there? And did that play into the 2016 election in any way?

Speaking of elections, in 1976, year of the American Bicentennial, the Communist Party USA ticket was Gus Hall and Jarvis Tyner. It has not emerged now much money the Russian government spent on the race, nor the Americans with whom they colluded. On the other hand, it is known that the Russian-backed party got 58,992 votes, one from college student John Brennan, who wanted the Stalinist Gus Hall to be president instead of Jimmy Carter or Gerald Ford.

Special Counsel Mueller might explain how John Brennan came to head the Central Intelligence Agency. After all, former Clinton National Security Adviser Anthony Lake failed to become CIA director because he thought Alger Hiss might be innocent, which he wasn't. Might the Stalinist-voting Brennan not have been sufficiently vetted? Did Russian agents run a disinformation campaign on his behalf? What did the FBI know and when did they know it?

We know that Donald Trump Jr. talked to a Russian woman, and that it didn't amount to much, if anything. If Special Counsel Mueller is going to "get to the bottom" of Russian interference, he needs to tell us more of what we didn't know and why we didn't know it.

—*FrontPageMag.com*, July 17, 2018

The Opportunities of Socialism

by J.R. Dunn

"That's not a problem—it's an opportunity."

That's a line attributed to Curtis E. LeMay, a man who ran into a lot of opportunities and solved them all. It's one of the class of quotes that serves to put things into proper perspective and one that should be more well known than it is.

It should also be kept in mind as we gird our loins for our next encounter with the left. Suddenly, thirty years after the collapse of communism, with the USSR and its empire long buried in the dustbin of history, we're inundated with "true socialists"—the adorable

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and the somewhat less fetching Andrés López-Obrador in Mexico. (There are others as well. In Pennsylvania, no less than four members of the Social Democrats of America won primaries this spring as Democrats. In all four cases, the GOP has not bothered to run an opposing candidate.)

This development is causing considerable excitement. Among the conservative establishment, this takes the standard form of "They're coming . . . they'll take our guns, they'll take our children . . . everyone will have to dress in drag . . . there's no hope, nothing can be done. . ."

We've already begun to hear this, and we'll hear more of it. It's the standard conservative response to any challenge from the left: hoist up the white flag immediately while discussing what John Adams and Alexis de Tocqueville would have said about it. In a real sense, traditional American conservatism can be considered the France of political philosophies.

A few things we need to keep in mind:

Socialism doesn't work. When I was growing up, lo, in the days of steam and the horse carriage, it was a foregone conclusion that socialism, whatever form it took, was infinitely superior to all other systems and would sweep all before it as time progressed. This was accepted by just about everybody on all ends of the political spectrum. (The conservative response is embodied in the words of ex-communist Whittaker Chambers: "I have left the winning side for the losing side.") Only a handful of followers of Hayek and von Mises's Vienna school had any objections at all. Among everybody else, it was merely a question of when and how far it would go.

This is not easy to excuse, since even as far back as the '50s, it was obvious that socialism, in whatever form, was a type of political leukemia, debilitating everything it touched. Every single socialist state on record has been an absolute failure at providing the minimum level of subsistence, at the same time as the capitalist states were embarked on what Christopher Chantrell calls "the great enrichment" (and let's not chatter about Sweden, which, like most of Western Europe, is a capitalist state with an extremely comprehensive social welfare program).

Let's just take the USSR. It remains unknown to most that the Soviets were propped up at every point by the capitalist West. Those grand dams were built by Metro-Vic. The great "industrial city" of Magnitogorsk was constructed largely by Ford. Then we have Lend-Lease, the endless grain shipments, paid for by US taxpayers, that started in the '50s and continued all the way down

to the big collapse in 1989. That is socialism: a system that cannot match even the most miserable, corrupt, and ill managed capitalist or mercantilist state. Even fascism, closely related as it is, has a better record of accomplishment. Mussolini drained the Pontine marshes, a pesthole since before the days of Rome. Not a single socialist state can claim anything to match that.

The opportunity here takes the form of utilizing this sudden upsurge of the socialist infection as a teaching moment. Attention is going to be focused on Ocasio-Cortez, López-Obrador, and all the rest. Fine—let’s see ’em produce. And when they don’t, let’s nail every last one of them to the wall.

The Zombie Party. A second point is that this sudden socialist outburst is not a sign of health in the left-of-center polity. It’s more like maggots crawling over a rotting corpse. It’s a sign that American liberalism is dead. The New Socialism is the flipside of the #WalkAway movement. Decent, caring individuals among liberals—and there are plenty of them—have been shocked by the bloodshed and violence being carried out in their name. They are appalled by the threats on social media, by the viciousness of comics and commentators, by the open violence practiced by Antifa and the like. They’ve seen through the curtain, and they want no more of it. Some will join the MAGA movement. Many will retreat from politics altogether in disgust, and who can blame them? Another large segment will keep their options open.

But the fanatics, the vicious, the stupid . . . they’re headed farther left. It’s this group, the ones who consider Michael Moore and Kathy Griffin to be heroes, who laugh at the jokes about DJT’s kids being raped, and who at least think about pulling on a black balaclava to kick in windows and toss firebombs, who are the supporters of the New Socialism.

This is a wound that will not heal, a twain that will never again meet. The Democratic Party has gone over the edge and is in free fall. Note how many of these candidates aren’t actually “Democrats” at all, but in fact are denizens of odd little socialist cults strictly limited to academia and large urban areas. This is true from Bernie on down. This crew comprising “fruit-juice drinker, nudist, sandal-wearer, sex-maniac, Quaker, ‘Nature Cure’ quack, pacifist, and feminist,” to use Orwell’s immortal phrase, may think it’s their time to “go national” in seizing the Democratic Party, but they’ll be inhabiting a corpse.

Beyond that, we have ancillary factors such as the fact that López-Obrador is more than a bit of a crazy-

man. He actually held an “inauguration” the last time he lost the election. (Now, whom does that remind you of?) Not to mention his plans to pardon the cartel leaders and drive tens of thousands of people across the US border—what can possibly go wrong with that?

And little Alexandria? Well, she’s a waitress. There’s something off here—she was raised in an upscale Westchester suburb and has impressive, if odd, educational achievements (some faculty at MIT actually named an asteroid after her), but all it led to was waiting tables and pouring coffee. This suggests to me that something went drastically wrong somewhere along the line, but I have no idea what, and our chances of learning about it from our honest media are about the same as getting a look at Obama’s college transcripts. But there you have it. The great hope of the socialist revolution is a waitress—and one, furthermore, notorious for stealing tips. (You could argue that that is excellent training for a socialist politician.)

So while some may see the Four Horsemen appearing over the horizon, I see opportunity. Socialism has been a curse on Western culture for over a century, kept alive by lust for power, backed by ignorance and wish-fulfillment. It’s time to put an end to it. If Alexandria and Andrés are the best they can come up with, that shouldn’t be a difficult trick at all.

—*American Thinker*, July 6, 2018

Conservatism Explained

by Gerald J. Russello

For our intellectual and cultural elites, conservative ideas can never win. When the Cold War ended, conservatives got little credit; they supposedly had nothing left to fight against and now had to “invent” enemies, such as terrorism, to avoid their fall into irrelevance. When Barack Obama was president, conservatives were on the losing side of history, as the “arc” bent toward justice. Now with Trump, liberals are crowing again, about how his election shows that conservatism is incoherent and in disarray.

Roger Scruton will have none of this. As the preeminent exponent and defender of Anglo-American conservatism, he has spent his career explaining why conservative ideas endure. Author of books on topics ranging from fox-hunting to wine, Spinoza to sex, Scruton has

perhaps done more to create the vision of a conservative way of life than any writer in English other than Russell Kirk and William F. Buckley Jr. As with those authors, reading Scruton is an aesthetic as well as an intellectual revelation; conservatism becomes much more than political positions or arguments to own the liberals, as fun as those are. Drawing on the work of David Hume, Michael Oakeshott, Pierre Manent, and Kirk, as well as lesser-known writers such as the Hungarian economist Peter Bauer, Scruton explicates the major lines of what he calls “philosophical” and “cultural” conservatism. Scruton argues that conservatism is about home, how we figure out what home is and how to create and sustain one.

Although the book is designed as an introductory text, even those who have followed Scruton will find it full of insight and a handy overview of the conservative tradition. Of particular note is how Scruton defends the relational aspect of conservative thought. Conservatism is not the unbounded “I” of the progressives (and some libertarians), but neither is it the undifferentiated mass of the socialist state. Rather, Scruton posits that the essence of conservatism is the I–thou, the “second person” perspective “in which the ‘we’ of social membership is balanced at every point against the ‘I’ of individual ambition.” This tension therefore allows for communication between people of differing views to whom we owe an obligation, which allows for society and political organizations. In contrast, to posit an endless array of fully autonomous individuals—as, for example, Rousseau did—is to render civil society impossible.

The problem with understanding conservatism is that it has two creation stories. Liberalism really has only one: The French Revolution combined a political ideology of overthrowing the old European order with the vision of a new man unencumbered by religion or tradition. Although this vision has antecedents in Western history, it was the French Revolution that cemented the “liberal person” for the next two centuries through today. Political conservatism, too, was born in the French Revolution’s aftermath, as a reaction to its excesses; we can see this birth most prominently in the work of Edmund Burke (who receives much attention in this volume).

Scruton recognizes that “we will understand modern conservatism as a political movement only if we see that some elements of liberal individualism have been programmed into it from the outset.” Political theorists, including Locke, and social and political movements have rendered “reaction” obsolete; but that does not render conservatism itself unintelligible. That is because con-

servatism did not have only a political birth. Conservatism is older than the 1789 revolution, and built into the human condition. “Modern conservatism is a product of the Enlightenment. But it calls upon aspects of the human condition that can be witnessed in every civilization and at every period of history.” The most important is what can be called the physicality of conservative belief in the person. The person is not self-created and limitlessly changeable, subject only to the individual will. A conservative believes in contingency; individuals do have choice, but our identities are shaped by loyalties and communities not of our own choosing. Society must balance “the need for custom and community” with “the freedom of the individual.” Scruton sees that “extreme individualism” is a myth; it ignores “the indispensable part played by social membership in the exercise of free choice.”

This social membership is in part what we call tradition, which, echoing Oakeshott, Scruton defines as a kind of knowledge. Tradition helps us to know how to act in accord with our human needs and relational obligations. Political bonds among liberal individuals are weak, because there are no other bonds. For Scruton, this is a category mistake in understanding how political societies come into being and how they remain stable, even under great pressure. For the basic bond is pre-political. That is, legitimacy precedes consent, not the other way around. We recognize a political authority as ours, made by a particular people at a particular place for goals we share. This is why people continue to live peaceably in a society even when the vote might go against their wishes. The recent liberal mantra that Trump is “not my president” is therefore a breakdown of democratic order, not a sign of its health.

So when conservatives say they defend “freedom,” it is not some abstraction: “What they mean is *this* kind of freedom, the freedom enshrined in our legal and political inheritance, and in the free associations through which our societies renew their legacy of trust. So understood, freedom is the outcome of multiple agreements over time, under an overarching rule of law.” How this happens, how a society maintains the balance between freedom and order, is conditioned by history, religion, custom, and tradition. Without these things the only option is some kind of reactionary authoritarianism, or its left-wing counterpart, political correctness. That is to say, the alternatives to conservatism replicate the very weaknesses liberals say they find in conservative thought.

Now one can already hear the liberal reaction: This

view of political life is exclusionary, in that it deliberately cuts out of political society some who are not “like us.” Scruton disagrees. Where we live matters, and every modern society is in some sense a society of strangers. Therefore, we have to find common bonds upon which to build, and we must start with the ones right in front of us: our neighborhood and nation, and our rights as citizens of a particular polity to which we give our consent. This is not a racial or religious concept, as those are false bases on which to build a modern political society. Because conservatism incorporates a respect for the individual, it can accommodate both political freedom and societal coherence. “The language of politics is spoken in the first person plural.” We the People rule and should decide our own destiny.

In a concluding chapter, Scruton describes the current state of conservatism, which he places as a bulwark against both the “culture of repudiation” on the left and the rise of Islam within Europe. As a transnational “pre-political loyalty that is defined without reference to territory,” Islam threatens the European nation-state system in ways that echo international socialism. Western-style tolerance is no defense against such a challenge, because such tolerance assumes common goals. Conservatism has an initial organizational disadvantage because it is local, concerned with particular communities, and so sometimes cannot see a threat until it is almost too late. Here, Scruton argues that European Christian civilization gives us a resource to “find credible alternatives” to extremism, in the injunction to love one’s neighbor. The nation “is the means to reconcile people of different faiths and lifestyles.” For progressives or religious extremists, there is no such thing as a nation, no obligation to understand and defend your neighbors simply because they are your neighbors and not try to change them into socialist man or “woke” citizens. Neighborliness at its best means peace, and conservatism is a necessary strand of any political practice wishing to attain it.

—Review of *Conservatism: An Invitation to the Great Tradition* by Roger Scruton

—*National Review*, June 25, 2018, p. 38, 39

Christianity in the Cross Hairs

by Selwyn Duke

“On this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hell will not prevail against it.” This promise, made by Jesus himself, assures Christians that their faith will endure till the end of time. The standard secular perspective, however, is that religion is dying in the world, slain by science and rationality. Yet demographers and data show that faith will infuse the future—whether the West will share that future is another question.

When philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche proclaimed in 1882 that “God is dead,” he, of course, meant that our idea of God had died. This may seem a strange conclusion to have drawn in the 19th century, a decade before the Supreme Court would declare that there are a “mass of organic utterances that this [the United States] is a Christian nation.” It’s not just that Nietzsche was a European, however, and occupied a continent where Christianity was already more sclerotic, after having once been more robust. During the Middle Ages, for instance, European knights would confess horrible sins and be told to walk to Jerusalem barefoot as a penance, and would actually do it. We may part company with certain aspects of their conception of faith, but their devotion to it cannot be questioned. Moreover, the godless relativism now permeating the West would have been as alien to medieval men as “transgenderism” (which is relativism applied to biology).

This Western phenomenon has inspired the echoing of Nietzsche, with, for example, University of Michigan professor Jeff DeGraff triumphantly proclaiming in a 2016 *Salon* article title “This is the end of . . . God. Finally!” Alluding to young Americans’ irreligiosity (among other things), he asks in his subtitle, “My fellow boomers might mock millennials, but what if the new generation has the big questions absolutely right?” But DeGraff has a big trend absolutely wrong. From the Everything You Know Isn’t So File, Pew Research Center told us last year:

Founded in 1953, the Christian Anti-Communism Crusade, under the leadership of Dr. Fred C. Schwarz (1913-2009) has been publishing a monthly newsletter since 1960. *The Schwarz Report* is edited by Dr. David A. Noebel and Dr. Michael Bauman and is offered free of charge to anyone asking for it. The Crusade’s address is PO Box 129, Manitou Springs, CO 80829. Our telephone number is 719-685-9043. All correspondence and tax-deductible gifts (CACC is a 501C3 tax-exempt organization) may be sent to this address. You may also access earlier editions of *The Schwarz Report* and make donations at www.schwarzreport.org. Permission to reproduce materials from this Report is granted provided that the article and author are given along with our name and address. Our daily blog address is www.thunderontheright.wordpress.com.

In coming decades, the global share of religiously unaffiliated people is actually expected to fall

To be clear, the total number of religiously unaffiliated people (which includes atheists, agnostics and those who do not identify with any religion in particular) is expected to rise in absolute terms, from 1.17 billion in 2015 to 1.20 billion in 2060. But this growth is projected to occur at the same time that other religious groups—and the global population overall—are growing even faster.

These projections . . . forecast that people with no religion will make up about 13% of the world's population in 2060, down from roughly 16% as of 2015.

This relative decline is largely attributable to the fact that religious “nones” are, on average, older and have fewer children than people who are affiliated with a religion. In 2015, for instance, the median age of people who belong to any of the world's religions was 29, compared with 36 among the unaffiliated. And between 2010 and 2015, adherents of religions are estimated to have given birth to an average of 2.45 children per woman, compared with an average of 1.65 children among the unaffiliated.

For sure, it's only religious people—be they Christians, Jews, or Muslims—who reproduce in significant numbers. And the more religious they are as a group, the more children they tend to have. The result? Even Catholicism, mocked by atheists as a dying religion, is growing worldwide at a rate slightly higher than that of population growth.

But not in the West, a realm increasingly dominated by barren secularists. As Pew reported in 2016:

The share of Americans who do not identify with a religious group is surely growing: While nationwide surveys in the 1970s and '80s found that fewer than one-in-ten US adults said they had no religious affiliation, fully 23% now describe themselves as atheists, agnostics or “nothing in particular.”

... While the overall decline in the country's religiosity is driven partly by modest declines [in belief] among Baby Boomers and those who are part of the Silent and Greatest generations, generational replacement appears to be an even larger factor. In other words, Millennials, who make up a growing share of the population as they reach adulthood and older Americans die off, are far less religiously ob-

servant than the older cohorts. Whether Millennials will become more religious as they age remains to be seen, but there is nothing in our data to suggest that Millennials or members of Generation X have become any more religious in recent years. If anything, they have so far become less religious as they have aged.

Of course, why this is happening is more complex than the “what.” Pew explored this in another 2016 piece, “Why America's ‘nones’ left religion behind.” Since the results are derived from polling, they don't generally touch on the deepest reasons, things of which people often aren't consciously aware. Yet the report is a good place to start, so let's consider some of the claimed reasons for dispensing with religion (all quotations are Pew's unless otherwise indicated).

“*Learning about evolution when I went away to college*”: This is tragic but not surprising. As New York University law and philosophy professor and avowed atheist Thomas Nagel put it in an essay entitled “Public Education and Intelligent Design,” evolution's defining element is the claim that life began and developed “as the result of the appearance of random and purposeless mutations in the genetic material followed by natural selection due to the resulting heritable variations in reproductive fitness. It displaces [intelligent] design by proposing an alternative.”

Often overlooked, however, is that “evolution” merely proposes a theory as to *how* life became more complex, not why or even how it began; it says nothing about first cause. In reality, far from being “random and purposeless,” it could have been the vehicle through which God created life. As for the point that evolution, assuming it did occur, took a “very long time,” note that theologians and scientists both tell us that time is an illusion (Albert Einstein called it a “handy illusion”); God is *outside of time* and to Him everything is “now.” Considering this, ponder what I related in “Intelligent Design and Evolution”:

We have all seen that accelerated video footage of a flower blooming before our eyes or clouds racing across the sky . . . Let us assume for argument's sake that life evolved, that beasts ascended from the muck and man from beasts. If you then took all the Earth's history from the time it was a lifeless orb to now (some 4.5 billion years according to expert opinion), and accelerated it so that the “evolution” would have occurred in the blink of an eye, what would you see? Among other things, would you not behold man rising from the muck and instantly

coming to flower? For the human eye would not perceive the stages, only the end result. Now, isn't this at least vaguely reminiscent of Genesis' description? Could it not be said that the main difference is that the creation story provides fewer details about the process but the answer as to what—or who—initiated it?

The point here isn't to make a definitive statement regarding the validity, or lack thereof, of evolutionary theory, but to point out that evolution (albeit not Darwinian evolution) does not necessarily contradict intelligent design.

"Too many Christians doing un-Christian things": Hmm, do we dispense with medical science because some doctors commit malpractice? Do secularists (generally leftists) reject women's rights because approximately 90 percent of the men who have been outed as guilty of sexual misconduct and brought down by the #MeToo movement are women's rights-advocating liberals?

Moreover, central to Christianity is the truth that all are sinners—in other words, people who sometimes do "un-Christian things." In fact, if Christianity were a standard of perfection, how could any person, imperfect by fallen nature, live up to it? It would be an indictment of the faith if he could, because then it could not be that perfect standard. As philosopher G.K. Chesterton put it, "The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting. It has been found difficult; and left untried."

"Religion is the opiate of the people": Well, thank you, Karl Marx. Perhaps better than instinctively issuing a denial here is to ask, "So what?" In his 1976 book *Positive Addiction*, common-sense psychiatrist William Glasser propounded the thesis that negative addictions (e.g., drugs) can be eliminated by replacing them with positive addictions (e.g., exercise). And what's a more positive addiction than God?

The reality is that people never really vegetate, mainly because they're not vegetables. Their minds will be active, and they will always have a focus—and a primary focus. And being "high on God," as some believers put it, is far better than being high on drugs or government.

"Lack of any sort of scientific or specific evidence of a creator": Some would say that life having a design is evidence of a designer. Yet the implied demand in the quotation is unreasonable and illogical. Science involves study of the physical world, but God occupies the spiritual world. One can disbelieve in the latter. But claiming that science's failure to prove God's existence disproves it is like being told that frozen precipitation exists, searching the tropics for it thoroughly, and then claiming

that ice is a myth.

"I see organized religious groups as more divisive than uniting": We could say the same of organized political groups, yet this would be making the same mistake: ignoring that it takes two to tango. Of course, there are those who intentionally try to create division, such as demagogic politicians. But to the point here, if everyone agreed with the supposedly "divisive" entity, there'd be no division. People generally label something divisive merely because it happens to part company with their passions or prevailing fashions. It is in their eyes the nail that sticks up, so it gets hammered down.

"I think that more harm has been done in the name of religion than any other area": Usually cited here are wars, most of which weren't caused by religion but by a lust for power, land, resources, or glory. In a word, evil is caused by sin. What also should be noted is that man's default is not to be angelic but to be devilish—beset by all the Deadly Sins—unless some civilizing agency enters the equation.

The above claim also reflects prejudice, given that Marxism's adherents murdered approximately 100 million people during the 20th century alone. Should we condemn all "ideology"—ignoring that it's not a creed but a category containing the good, the bad, and the ugly (liberalism, libertarianism, etc.)—and dispense with it? We could, but this would ignore the simple truth that people will believe *things*; and whatever we label those things, some will be good, bad, and ugly. Thus is the religious/secular distinction, at bottom, a *false one*.

In the sense of "exclusion of belief in God," the term "secular" dates in English from only the 1850s. Well prior to then, in the Middle Ages, people viewed matters more sanely: There was not the "secular" and "religious," "liberal" and "conservative"—only the true and untrue. Today, though, the prevailing prejudice states that something being labeled "secular" or "religious" determines its status, whether it can be in schools or the public square, even though this standard allows Marxism to be present there but not the word of God. But what's more significant, that we call Marxism "secular" or that it's false? That we call belief in God "religious" or that it's true? Quite perversely, our current cultural and legal standard can advantage the false over the true based only on label.

Another complaint Pew found among the fallen away in 2016 is "The church's teaching on homosexuality": This is interesting. Note what I wrote in 2015 in "Christians Need Not Apply" about how the homosexual agenda is a dagger aimed at the church's heart:

“Once people accept that calling homosexual behavior sinful is ‘hateful’ and ‘bigoted,’ they will consider Christianity a hateful religion. And ‘Voila!’: At this point you have successfully placed the faith and its churches in the same category as hate groups, such as the Nazis, Aryan Nations, or the Ku Klux Klan.” And who would remain part of a “hate group”?

Yet this reflects prejudice, too. While Christianity is accused of singling out homosexuality, the prohibition against it is merely part of a human-sexuality model that also proscribes adultery, fornication, self-gratification, watching pornography, and even impure thoughts. Yet Sexual Devolutionaries never complain about these prohibitions. The reality? It’s not Christianity but its opponents who single out homosexuality—for special treatment.

So with the special condemnation of Christianity that all of the above reflects, we can use a play on Chesterton’s line: Christianity has not been tried and found guilty; it has been found difficult, and chased by a lynch mob.

Just as mobs run on emotion, so do people in general. And the deepest reasons people leave religion are not intellectual ones of which they’re aware, but emotional ones of which they’re usually oblivious. As to this, an interesting reason was propounded by Brian Holdsworth, a young Christian with a fairly popular YouTube channel. In a 2017 video he asks, “Have you even noticed that there’s a correlation between the amount something has cost you and the value you place on it?” He then related a story about how he bought two pairs of identical shoes, one for \$20 on sale and the other (after realizing how great they were) for \$80 weeks later. But he discovered something: He treated the more expensively acquired pair like the cat’s meow and the other one like something the cat dragged in. He couldn’t get over the irrational but very real sense that the \$20 pair wasn’t as valuable.

Likewise, practicing faith has been made so easy—it “costs” us so little—that we don’t value it. Where people once walked to Jerusalem barefoot as penance, wore hair shirts, fasted for long periods, and even engaged in self-flagellation (no, I’m not recommending that!), now they sometimes don’t even feel compelled to dress up for church—or go at all.

The last phenomenon is partially driven by the rejection of organized religion,” skepticism about which was also reflected in the Pew research. Yet we well understand why we have organized soccer leagues, schools,

charitable organizations, social clubs, lobbying groups, and political parties, and, of course, organized government. Obviously, people get together and naturally organize when they have a common cause. Should organizing around faith be any different? And what should be a more common and a greater cause than that universal thing called Truth?

Ah, and therein lies the rub, doesn’t it? With moral relativism/nihilism having swept the West, most today don’t believe in Truth, only perspectives, and are thus imbued with religious-equivalence doctrine. The idea is that no faith can be a matter of Truth (absolute, universal, and eternal by definition); that is, can be *exclusively true*. This, in fact, is considered the open-minded, enlightened position. Yet there’s a word for a matter not that of Truth: taste.

Now, were our emotions perfectly aligned with Truth, we’d naturally love true faith. Yet our fallen nature ensures that we generally find religious devotion burdensome or boring. And do we indulge matters of taste we don’t enjoy? Do we organize around them? “If everything is perspective and ‘all philosophies are equal,’ I may as well be a hedonist,” says the modern. And then he may only go to the trouble of organizing an orgy—or a college.

Yet it must also be pointed out that moral relativism strikes at Christianity’s very foundation. For if right and wrong are merely “perspective,” there’s no sin. If there’s no sin, we don’t need a savior, and then there was no reason for Jesus to die on the cross. Thus are Christian commentators and clergy remiss when not tackling our society’s characteristic philosophical disorder, relativism, head on. Relativism obviates Christianity.

But its enabling of sinners explains its popularity. For my sins cannot be sins if all is perspective. It’s the ultimate justification and a plague of rich civilizations, where there’s great time and opportunity to indulge pleasures of the flesh—where idle minds that are the Devils’ playgrounds are common. Loosely speaking, just as there are no atheists in a foxhole, there are no devout theists at an orgy.

This brings us to an ominous question, one that will be scoffed at most by those who most need to ponder it: Must we be brought to our knees to look up and find God? For if the foxhole is necessary for faith, the foxhole we just may get.

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