The Dechristianization of the West: How and Why It is Happening



Late Soviet practices in the west

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In recent decades the west (and this has become most evident in the USA) has experienced a cultural earthquake. If during the Cold War the west thought of itself as a ‘Christian civilization’ opposed to ‘godless communism’, then in the years since the collapse of the USSR its political elites have less and less aligned themselves with their Christian heritage.

Those of us who were around at the time remember how shortwave western radio stations would emphasize that, unlike in the USSR, real freedom of religion existed in the west. People openly expressed their faith in God, churches were being built, the word of God was being preached in stadiums, on the radio and print editions, and the state viewed all of this with all respect.

In the USSR, as western radio stations (or the ‘enemy voices’, as they were the ironically called) never lost the opportunity to remind us, the situation was quite different. The Soviet constitution did formally guarantee freedom of religion, and Soviet citizens in the Brezhnev era were not violating any laws if they attended worship. Interest in religion, however, entailed at the very least a blotted copybook. The Soviet-era ‘personal file’ was a document that was needed to go to university or college or to take on a new job. It would describe a person’s individual character traits and how ideologically reliable he or she was. If it was noted down in the file that a person was a believer, then this would mean that his or her rights would completely disappear. Such a person would be viewed as someone who was untrustworthy. There would be no prospect of a career.

The current situation in the west (and especially in the US) reminds us of the situation in the Soviet Union at the time of stagnation under Brezhnev. There are no bloody repressions, mass shootings and labour camps – but to adhere to the traditional Christian faith, and especially the biblical view of ethics in the area of sexuality, means to blot one’s copybook and endanger one’s career.

Of the better-known cases, we may recall that of the former chief executive officer of the Mozilla Corporation Brendan Eich. In 2008 Eich donated fr om his personal estate eight thousand dollars to support the California Proposition 8 campaign which called for the banning of same-sex marriage in California. This amendment in Californian state legislation defined marriage as a “union between a man and a woman.” The amendment was adopted, yet in 2013 it was annulled by the US Supreme Court. LGBT activists found out about this donation in 2014 and they forced Eich out of his position.

Another case is the suspension and subsequent dismissal of the former Fire Chief of Atlanta Fire Department Kelvin J. Cochran. Cochran, having served impeccably for thirty-four years, published a book which was deemed to be “discriminatory” and “anti-gay.” Cochran is a Christian Baptist in his beliefs and in his book he states that the place for intimacy is in marriage between a man and a woman, and that fornication, whether it be with members of the same or opposite sex, “destroys the human person.” It was this phrase, which is obvious to someone of Christian views, led to Cochran’s dismissal.

Over the past few years dismissals and the annulment of contracts with regard to people who dare to express openly their Christian views on sexual ethics has become routine and now goes under the label of ‘cancel culture.’ This LGBT ideology, moreover, has now definitively become a state ideology.

Having a Bible in one’s possession has not been banned (as it was not banned in the late Soviet Union), but to quote fr om it publicly may entail unpleasant consequences. For example, Finland’s Prosecutor General Raija Toiviainen instigated criminal proceedings against the former Finnish foreign minister Päivi Räsänen for quoting on her Facebook page from the Bible the Epistle to the Romans (1.24-27) which criticizes homosexuality. The prosecutor believed that the biblical quotation came under

the law banning “hate speech.” The British doctor David Drew was dismissed for quoting the Bible at work, while in the US Monifa Sterling was discharged from the US army for refusing to delete biblical quotations from her computer. And so on.

In what way has the west, once the stronghold of freedom of religion, arrived at a situation whereby Christians are persecuted for their faith?

The new totalitarian ideology against Christian civilization

To a significant degree this is linked to the growth of the influence of a group of similar ideological currents coming from what is known as ‘left-wing’ or ‘social’ liberalism.

These currents – LGBT, feminism, ‘wokeism’ and Black Lives Matter (BLM) – sometimes easily overlap with each other and sometimes there are disagreements among them; but what unites them is the common enemy of ‘patriarchal’, ‘misogynist’, ‘homophobic’ and in all respects repressive and unjust Christian civilization.

Opponents of this movement use the term ‘cultural Marxism’, and indeed it is not difficult to see the similarity between what we are observing now and conventional Marxism-Leninism. In both instances the ‘oppressed classes’ are declared to be the engine of ‘social progress’, with the important difference that Marxism-Leninism considered the proletariat to be this class, while in our time it is a coalition of various minorities – ‘sexual’ and ‘racial’ – who present themselves as such.

Both ideologies cultivate a sense of being denied one’s rights and being persecuted, which may be partly rooted in genuine social problems, but which is often an invention as many left-wing activists are students at the most prestigious American colleges, that is to say, they are among the most socially privileged people on the planet.

In both ideologies the ‘oppressed groups’ which, in fighting for their rights, are propelling humankind towards a more just future, are accorded the status of absolute moral superiority – in principle they cannot be wrong in either the general or the particular. As for Marxist-Leninists the representatives of the proletariat (or more often those who acted in their name) are always ‘historically right’ in their conflict with the bourgeois classes, so too activists acting on behalf of the ‘oppressed groups’ can never be the source of injustice.

From the perspective of the modern-day left-wing liberal agenda there can be no such thing at anti-

white racism or anti-Christian intolerance or unjust hostility towards the traditional family on the simple grounds that the ‘victims of injustice and discrimination’ can only be representatives of the ‘oppressed minorities.’

Both ideologies approach the church with principled hostility, proceeding from the very same worldview. The church is an integral part of that old, deeply unjust order which the oppressed progressive groups must destroy.

But in its modern-day variant this hostility is bolstered by the fact that traditional Christian (although not exclusively Christian) sexual ethics is decidedly ‘heteronormal’, that is, it holds that the proper and correct place for sexual intimacy to be in a monogamous marriage between a man and a woman.

This ‘heteronormality’ is taken to be something that is unbearably oppressive. It is asserted that it is responsible for all the crimes committed against ‘unhappy’ gays and ‘transgender’ people and for constantly encouraging them to commit suicide. The church, like any other community which adheres to traditional sexual ethics, is thus a force for evil which every honest and compassionate person must courageously oppose.

A minor exception is made for those liberal communities which have embarked on the task of revising the biblical injunctions on this issue, but not for too long. During the riots following the death of George Floyd quite liberal churches and synagogues were among those vandalized.

The principled hostility of the left-wing liberal (or cultural Marxist, if we are to use this term) agenda towards Christianity could be viewed as something of an oddity, if it were not for the fact that over recent decades this agenda has become the US state ideology and to a significant degree the official ideology of a number of other western countries.

Over the past few decades, the left-wing liberal agenda has been transformed from a position held within society to a compulsory ideology which has negative consequences for the social life of those who disagree with it.

Recently we saw how the US embassy (and the British embassy too) in Moscow hung out the rainbow flag to celebrate ‘Pride month’, and how the US ambassador to Russia John Sullivan spoke in support of the LGBT ideology.

It is hard to find a more official representative of the state than an embassy and a more official person than the ambassador – and what is happening is an indicator that LGBT ideology is occupying in the US and Great Britain with ever more regularity the place once occupied in the Soviet Union by Marxism-

Leninism.

The LGBT agenda originally exerted a defining influence in the corporate world wh ere, in order to pursue a successful career, one had to be an adherent of this ideology wh ere unpleasantness arose for those who dissented against. Yet this agenda was soon adopted by the state.

One of the defining moments was the recognition by the US Supreme Court on 26th June 2015 of 'same-sex' marriages as being constitutionally guaranteed.

At first, the campaign for the recognition of same-sex cohabitation as marriage was carried out under the slogan of 'How does same-sex marriage harm your marriage?' It was asserted that according same-sex cohabitation the status of marriage would in no way be detrimental to all the others – so, all those who are opposed to this innovation do so out of meaningless hatred and fanaticism.

In reality, as might have been expected, this was a fundamental realignment of the moral – and judicial – system, the point being that in declaring something to be a human right, you impose on all the others the obligation to recognize this right. The right to property makes criminals those who would wish to steal property, the right to the inviolability of one's home condemns those who would encroach upon someone's home without permission, and so on.

If a person has a right to something, then it is wrong to deny him or her this right (at the level of intent, at least) and it becomes criminal if this denial is acted upon. If same-sex people have the right to register their relationship as a marriage, then everyone else is obliged to recognize this 'marriage.' The refusal to do would make them both morally and, moreover, legally guilty.

Thus, the recognition of same-sex cohabitation as 'marriage' does not at all mean that we live and let live. It has meant the genuine demonization and criminalization of the 'heteronormal' perspective that true marriage can only be between a man and a woman.

In this regard there is a characteristic analogy constantly used by supporters of 'same-sex marriage', and that is the analogy with race. Opponents of recognizing same-sex cohabitation as 'marriage' have been and are repeatedly compared to racists who oppose mixed-race marriages. This analogy can in no way be seen to be with foundation for the simple reason that behavioural characteristics, whether they be alcoholism, homosexuality or gambling addiction, do not make a person a member of another race, and the demand that the understanding of marriage should be revised is no way analogous to demanding that marriage should be possible for mixed-race couples. Yet the central place that this occupies in LGBT propaganda is also an indication of the place which 'heteronormals' and above all Christians are accorded in this scheme of things. Christians are an exact analogy to the Ku Klux Klan,

while those who regard marriage to be a union between a man and a woman are absolutely identical to racists who fight for racial purity, and are to be treated as such.

In 2013 the LGBT movement demanded that the Catholic Church be included in the official list of 'hate groups' along with the Ku Klux Klan and various neo-Nazi groups simply because of her opposition to 'same-sex marriage.' This is a completely logical outcome of the movement's ideology. This tendency has been aggravated in recent years with the addition of the letter 'T' to LGBT, i.e., 'transgender.'

The recognition of 'sex change' as a 'human right', while disapproval of this practice is seen to be criminal 'transphobia', has led to a situation whereby men who have declared themselves to be women have been given the right to use women's changing rooms and showers, in spite of the danger which this poses for women and girls – and, indeed, crimes have been committed as a result of this. Male criminals, moreover, including rapists, have found it easier to be transferred to a female jail with an easier regime simply by stating that they 'identify as women.'

Complaints by women prisoners of the violence enacted upon them by their 'cell-mates' are suppressed as 'transphobia.' Indicative in this regard is the decision by the high court of England and Wales regarding the complaints of women who had been subjected to violence. The court ordered that sending men found guilty of rape to a female jail is perfectly legal if they 'identify as women.'

The transgender movement has been especially destructive for children and young adults whose psychological problems are explained away by having been 'born in the wrong body' and who require 'transition.' According to official figures in Sweden, the number of girls and young adult women who consider themselves to be boys has increased by 1500% in the country between 2008 and 2018.

Children and young adults are at first given puberty blockers – powerful hormonal substances which block the normal process of sexual development and then undergo a crippling operation which is meant to give their body a semblance to a body of the opposite sex.

All objections to this brutal practice (and they come not only fr om Christians) are taken to be 'transphobia.' What is more, the forceful imposition of the LGBT agenda has acquired a legal dimension, which will inevitably lead to the violation of the rights of Christians and citizens in general.

Ideological imposition and legal pressure

Legal battles, slander and persecution have become commonplace methods in forcing small Christian businesses to attend to LGBT events. In this regard a clear example is that of the story of baker Jack Phillips who has been forced over a number years to fight off LGBT activists' attempts to close his

business.

These battles have only intermittent success as the current, more conservative make-up of the US Supreme Court often comes down in favour of religious people. However, it has to be noted that the general legal background in western countries is leaning towards the criminalization of Christian faith and pastoral practice.

One of the manifestations of LGBT state ideology in western countries is the ban on ‘conversion therapy’, that is, the attempt to help a person (with their consent, of course) to abandon their homosexual lifestyle.

Deutsche Welle reports that “the Bundestag has approved a new law banning so called conversion therapies aimed at suppressing sexual orientation or gender identity. Under the new law, advertising or offering conversion therapy will be prohibited for children up to the age of 18. Violators can be fined up to up to €30,000 ($33,000) or sentenced to up to one year in prison.”

This announcement specifies that “these attempts are made not only by doctors, psychologists and psychotherapists, but also by representatives of the churches and religious communities.” This means that a priest or religious minister who helps his parishioner to break with his homosexual lifestyle (which is his pastoral duty) would be committing a crime according to this law.

In Great Britain, wh ere a ban on ‘conversion therapy’ is only just coming into effect, prominent human-rights lawyer Philip Havers has written that the proposed ban could make everyday Christians actions illegal, including both conversations in school or at home.

It is suggested that psychological consultation, which is there to help an adult, if he or she so wishes, to abandon their homosexual lifestyle, damages their health. At the same time, it is believed that doses of hormones and crippling operations with the aim of ‘transitioning’ do no harm to the health of a young adult; on the contrary, attempts to dissuade someone fr om undergoing this type of operation are to be regarded as criminal.

Moreover, in some countries the law forbids parents from hindering the ‘transition’ of children who, under the influence of fashion or propaganda, believe themselves to be ‘transgender.’ For example, Canadian Rob Hoogland was sentenced to six months in prison for using the word ‘she’ and ‘her’ with regard to his fourteen-year-old daughter who ‘identifies as a boy.’

Attacks and vandalism

The general hostility towards Christianity imposed by both the media and the authorities evidences itself in the growing wave of attacks and acts of vandalism on churches which do not attract media attention and towards which the authorities react feebly.

In its recently released 2019 report, the Graystone Institute stated that western Europe was experiencing an unprecedented wave of anti-Christian vandalism. The Institute has "reviewed thousands of newspaper reports, police blotters, parliamentary inquiries, social media posts and specialized blogs from Britain, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy and Spain. The research shows that roughly 3,000 Christian churches, schools, cemeteries and monuments were vandalized, looted or defaced in Europe during 2019 — which is on track to becoming a record year for anti-Christian sacrilege on the continent.

Violence against Christian sites is most widespread in France, wh ere churches, schools, cemeteries and monuments are being vandalized, desecrated and burned at an average rate of three per day, according to government statistics. In Germany, attacks against Christian churches are occurring at an average rate of two per day, according to police blotters…

The perpetrators of anti-Christian attacks — which include acts of arson, defecation, desecration, looting, mockery, profanation, Satanism, theft, urination and vandalism — are rarely caught. When they are, police and media often censor information about their identities and ethnic backgrounds. Many suspects are said to have mental disorders; as a result, many anti-Christian attacks are not categorized as hate crimes…

Such attacks include smearing feces on representations of Jesus Christ or statues of Mary, the mother of Jesus."

The report's authors state that some of the attacks are committed by extremist refugees who have recently arrived in Europe. But they are far from responsible for all of these actions. As the report outlines, "some attacks, especially those against Roman Catholicism, which some radical feminists and radical secularists perceive to be a symbol of patriarchal power and authority, are political in nature. Such attacks include defacing churches and religious symbols with political graffiti, much of it anarchist or feminist in nature. In Geneva, Switzerland, for instance, the iconic International Monument to the Protestant Reformation, also known as the Reformation Wall, was vandalized with multi-colored paint forming a rainbow, a symbol of the LGBT groups."

The report gives several similar details which have to be omitted here for reasons of space.

Some conclusions

The assertion in the west of a totalitarian ideology which demands assent from all to its doctrine – and above all the radical revision of the natural ideas about family, marriage and the nature of the human person as man and woman – signifies the inevitable rolling back of freedom of religion and the social ostracization of Christians. Not only of Christians, though – this same ideology crushes freedom of speech and freedom of scientific inquiry. But this is a topic for a different conversation. For us as Christians, we have to realize that we are dealing not with the defense of peoples' rights but with an anti-Christian totalitarian ideology with global pretensions.

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