

EUROPEAN YOUTH ABANDONING CHRISTIANITY

Catholic sociologist Stephen Bullivant has issued a detailed report on the state of Christianity in Europe. It is not encouraging. Bullivant, who teaches at St. Mary's University, outside of London, is director of the Benedict XVI Centre for Religion and Society. The report, "European Young Adults and Religion," measured religious practice and affiliation in 22 countries; the data were taken from a survey of those aged 16-29.

The proportion of young adults with no religious affiliation ranges from a high of 91 percent in the Czech Republic to a low of 17 percent in Poland. Following the Czech Republic are Estonia, Sweden, and the Netherlands; between 70 percent and 80 percent of young adults in those countries have no religious affiliation. The next most religious country to Poland is Lithuania; Austria and Ireland also post respectable numbers.

Conditions in the United Kingdom have changed markedly. More young people there identify as Catholic (10 percent) than Anglican (7 percent), with Muslims (6 percent) coming on fast.

Attendance at religious services has fallen off dramatically, as has the proportion of young people who pray. Poland is the least affected by the secularization of Europe; Estonia, the Czech Republic, and the Scandinavian countries are the most secular.

What does this mean? Bullivant maintains that "Christianity as a default, as a norm, is gone, and probably gone for good—or at least for the next 100 years." He adds that "In 20 or 30 years' time, mainstream churches will be smaller, but the few people left will be highly committed."

What does this forebode? Douglas Murray, author of *The Strange Death of Europe*, points out that “Europe today has little desire to reproduce itself, fight for itself or even take its own side in an argument.” Speaking of European elites, he says, they “seem persuaded that it would not matter if the people and culture of Europe were lost to the world.”

Who saw this all coming? Pope Benedict XVI. He saw the effects of multiculturalism as clearly as anyone, showing how a contempt for moral truths that adhere to the Judeo-Christian ethos has led to “a peculiar Western self-hatred that is nothing short of pathological.”

The de-Christianization of the West has yielded such fruit as record high levels of abortion, out-of-wedlock births, homosexuality, divorce, sexually transmitted diseases, pornography, prostitution, drug abuse, depression, and suicide. This is the natural outcome of a civilization that has allowed moral relativism to triumph over Christianity. Just as Pope Benedict XVI said it would.

PLANNED PARENTHOOD’S ABORTION FIXATION

In her recently published memoir, outgoing Planned Parenthood president Cecile Richards says that in January 2017 she and her husband met with Ivanka Trump and her husband, Jared Kushner. She claims that Kushner floated the idea that if Planned Parenthood stopped providing abortions, federal funding for the organization would proceed smoothly.

Richards, who said “it almost felt like a bribe,” is still incensed by the comment. To her, it was a ploy to make Ivanka

and Jared look like “savvy dealmakers.” Richards insists she was “essentially being asked to barter away women’s rights for more money.” Which is an odd thing to say given that exploiting women for money is what Planned Parenthood does for a living.

Predictably, the Kushners are being blasted by the champions of abortion, and Richards is being received as a heroine. But why?

Richards is playing both sides of the street. When pressed why Planned Parenthood is so fixated on abortion, she and her spokeswomen point to its latest annual report (2016-2017) to show that only 3 percent of its services have anything to do with abortion. Most of its work, they say, deals with such issues as testing and treatment, cancer screening, contraception, sex education, and other women’s health services.

If this is true, then why are Richards and her fans so upset by Ivanka and Jared’s proposal?

To put it differently, if the head of a large-scale organization were given the opportunity to rid himself of a public relations nightmare—caused by a mere 3 percent of his company’s work—in exchange for assurances that the other 97 percent of its operations could continue without a snag, wouldn’t he grab the offer with dispatch? Unless, of course, the 3 percent of the organization’s work is its *raison d’être*.

Hugh Hefner justified his porn rag by saying that only 10 percent of *Playboy* featured nudity, the other 90 percent being dedicated to essays, advice columns, interviews with famous persons, and the like. Yet everyone knew that absent the photos, few would buy the magazine.

Similarly, Planned Parenthood is obsessed with abortion. It is its signature issue. Let’s face it, abortion is what makes it tick—not medication management.

Take away abortion and Planned Parenthood morphs into another run-of-the-mill clinic, driving away its donors, and enervating its passion. In short, abortion is not an option for Planned Parenthood—it is an imperative.

ABORTION IS NOT TORTURE—NOT HAVING ONE IS

The March 26 editorial in the *New York Times* will go down in history as its most radical defense of abortion. It's hard to see how it can ever top this one. Here is what it said:

“Carrying to term a pregnancy against one's will is punishment enough—in fact, it can amount to torture—according to the United Nations Human Rights Council.”

So not being able to abort one's baby is torture, but the mangling of one's baby is not.

The March 26 editorial in the *Wall Street Journal* sheds light on the United Nations Human Rights Council. Here is what it said:

“Syria bombs civilians with chlorine gas, China tortures dissidents, Venezuela restricts access to food and Burma is engaged in ethnic cleansing of a Muslim minority. So naturally the United Nations Human Rights Council trains the bulk of its outrage on...Israel.”

So real examples of torture don't seem to bother the United Nations Human Rights Council, but not being allowed to abort one's baby does—it amounts to torture.

This is the mind-set of the pro-abortion industry. The *New*

York Times and the United Nations Human Rights Council have become completely unhinged.

RADIO JOCK'S VILE ATTACK ON ELDERLY NUN

Sister Jean Dolores Schmidt is the well-loved chaplain at Loyola University Chicago, and a rabid sports fan. She was delighted when her school upset the University of Tennessee in the second round of the NCAA basketball tournament.

The victory didn't sit well with Cody McClure, who hosts a radio show on WKGN-AM, a Knoxville station. He posted a tweet saying, "F*** Sister Jean everyone." The nun is 98-years-old.

When asked to explain himself, McClure said, "I don't regret the joke, no I don't, because it was a joke." He then went on to lecture those who can't take a joke anymore.

It wasn't a joke—it was a cruel and obscene assault on an innocent elderly nun. Moreover, it was clearly meant to harm, not to induce laughter.

When anti-Catholic outbursts such as this happen, there should be a lot more Catholics protesting. It makes us wonder why Catholics are so lame in defense of people like Sister Jean.

CNN'S SKEWED COVERAGE OF WARTIME POPES

University of Mississippi law professor Ronald Rychlak, one of the world's foremost scholars of the Catholic Church's role during the Holocaust, was included in the April 8 episode of the CNN series on the papacy. He serves on the board of advisors of the Catholic League. We posted his analysis of the program online. Here is an excerpt from that article:

CNN avoided the pop journalists who too often populate such debates, but even among serious scholars, there is debate and confusion. Given the time constraints, it was necessary for the producers to make cuts and avoid many details. Of course, when that happens, the tendency is to raise the controversial point, ignore the details and the nuance, and leave the viewer to assume the worst. That happened quite a bit in this episode.

One such instance related to the 1929 agreement between Italy and the Holy See, the Lateran Treaty. This agreement reconciled a difficulty that had existed since the fall of the Papal States in 1870. In it, the Vatican recognized the kingdom of Italy, received compensation for property that had been seized, and defined the rights and obligations of the Church and State. According to CNN, it also set a precedent that the Vatican would be willing to negotiate with dictators for sovereignty. That is simply not correct.

In reaching accord with Italy, Pius XI treated it the same way he treated other nations. Even if a state might stand to gain in the short term, governments do not last, and eventually the Church would be better positioned if it had a relationship with the people. Moreover, the Lateran Treaty provided that the Church reserved "the right to exercise her moral and spiritual power in every case." So, while the Holy See was

officially neutral, it did not relinquish the right to speak on moral truths. None of this was seen on CNN.

Similarly, the 1933 concordat with Germany was portrayed as a capitulation to Hitler. In reality, it was a defense mechanism that permitted the Church to save souls. Naturally, the Church insisted on a provision permitting it to speak to moral issues. Hitler, who first thought he could exploit the concordat, soon saw it as being used by the Church to protect Jews (with real or forged baptism certificates), and he vowed to end it immediately after the war. That was not mentioned on CNN.

The show did a nice job of explaining the importance of Pius XI's anti-Nazi encyclical, *Mit brennender Sorge*, but it ended by saying that this was the only time he spoke to all of Germany about the Nazis and the horror faced by Jews. Not only does that overlook numerous statements by the Vatican's radio and newspaper, it also fails to explain that the encyclical was immediately suppressed, doing no actual good for the victims; only leading to more persecution. In fact, two other messages – one from Poland and one from Holland – urged the pope not to speak, lest he cause more suffering. Neither was mentioned on the show.

CNN told of Pius XII's 1942 Christmas message, but omitted the most important passage in which he said mankind owed a solemn vow "never to rest until valiant souls of every people and every nation" arise and "devote themselves to the services of the human person and of a divinely ennobled human society." Mankind owed this vow to "the hundreds of thousands who, through no fault of their own, and solely because of their nation or race, have been condemned to death or progressive extinction."

Listeners on both sides of the war understood that this was a direct reference to the Jews. A Christmas Day editorial in the *New York Times* praised Pius XII for his moral leadership in

opposing the Nazis: "No Christmas sermon reaches a larger congregation than the message Pope Pius XII addresses to a war-torn world at this season. This Christmas more than ever he is a lonely voice crying out of the silence of a continent." The Nazis also understood.

CNN included Mark Riebling and his important work showing Pius XII's involvement with the plot to assassinate Hitler. Unfortunately, the show suggested that this was an unsettled proposition because there was no written evidence. As Mark explained, there are tape recordings proving his involvement!

Similarly, after explaining that the pope knew that written evidence could get people in trouble with the Nazis, a commentator questioned the papal role in sheltering Roman Jews because there are no surviving written papal orders. Some mention should have been made of the numerous eyewitnesses who testified to receiving or overhearing orders from the Vatican.

CNN should have noted that Jewish groups from around the world praised Pius at the end of the war and at his death. Also unmentioned was that Pope Francis – an apparent favorite of the producers – has often praised Pius XII. Just last June he asked: "How many, beginning with Pius XII, took risks to hide Jews so that they wouldn't be killed, so that they wouldn't be deported? They risked their skin!"

While there is much to learn about the popes of World War II, viewers should not think that they have learned the full story just by watching this series, much less a single episode. Even well-intended producers and commentators are limited by the constraints of the clock.

*For more on the Catholic Church's role during the Holocaust, see professor Rychlak's authoritative book, **Hitler, the War, and the Pope.***

GAY MARRIAGE DEFENDERS GETTING CRAZY

Until yesterday morning, historically speaking, virtually every person in the world believed that marriage was a union between people of the opposite sex. This was true of both Western civilization and Eastern civilization.

Moreover, beginning with Judaism, most world religions considered homosexuality taboo. Plato thought homosexuality was against nature, the Romans made it a capital crime, and Jefferson made it a felony. Now no one can get tenure at many—perhaps most—colleges and universities if he believes what virtually every person in the world used to believe, until yesterday morning, historically speaking.

Punishing public officials, and denying others jobs, for simply holding to the traditional understanding of marriage, is now routine. Consider two recent examples.

Mike Pompeo, the CIA director, was grilled by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on April 12 regarding his nomination by President Trump to be Secretary of State. The State Department, as everyone concedes, has as much to do with two men marrying as a local parks department does. But to the gay obsessed, it doesn't matter: everyone must line up single file to pledge his allegiance to the gay agenda.

New Jersey Senator Cory Booker was clearly upset that Pompeo doesn't share his trendy view of gay marriage. Tellingly, he never asked Pompeo about Christian persecution in the Middle East. In fact there is no record of Booker ever asking anyone about Christian persecution. Yet he sits on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, not the Department of the Interior.

Badgering Pompeo for his conviction that marriage should be between a man and a woman is unseemly. It's not only Booker who is going bonkers over this, the Anti-Defamation League, which was founded to fight anti-Semitism, wrote a letter to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee chastising Pompeo. And the gay-crazed *New York Times* said Pompeo's rather normal view of marriage "raised alarm bells."

It's not just on the national level that this issue has exploded in a wave of intolerance.

On April 11, Katherine Asjes was rejected by the Iowa Board of Medicine because she holds to the same view of marriage that virtually everyone in the world used to believe, until yesterday morning, historically speaking. The Catholic mother of six, and the wife of a military veteran, was nominated by Gov. Kim Reynolds. It seems clear that she would have been confirmed had she not been stopped by intolerant gay activists.

Neither Pompeo nor Asjes is a threat to any lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer person. But many activists in that community are a threat to those of us who still believe what virtually everyone in the world used to believe, until yesterday morning, historically speaking.

SATANIC ICE CREAM?

When a Catholic League member emailed us a note recently about a Canadian ice cream company, Sweet Jesus, we decided to give it a pass: it was a fairly innocuous appropriation of Christianity, and there was no reason to believe that the intent was to offend. But that has all changed.

We have now learned that the company's logo includes at least one satanic symbol: in some marketing campaigns, the "S" in Sweet has been replaced with the symbol of a lightning bolt; an inverted cross appears in the place of the "T." The former is known as the "satanic 'S'" (which was used by Hitler's elite), and the latter is a mockery of the Cross of Jesus Christ. In other instances, the first "S" in Jesus appears as a lightning bolt.

Sweet Jesus has opened in Baltimore and plans to expand to Minnesota's Mall of America. "Our aim is not to offer commentary on anyone's religion or belief systems," the company says. Nonsense. Its aim is to offend. Indeed, if what they say is true, then let them sell "Sweet Jesus" ice cream absent the satanic symbols, restoring the "S" and the "T" to their proper place.

Meanwhile, Americans should send the purveyors of this demonic message a Christian message of their own: boycott Sweet Jesus.

BIAS PERVADES SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER

Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) is regarded by many journalists as the gold standard for information on hate groups. But its record is dotted with bias.

SPLC issued a statement on April 3 about a federal court judge's decision against Matt Hale, an imprisoned neo-Nazi who sued the Federal Bureau of Prisons for violating his religious rights; he belongs to a "religion" called Creativity Movement. The quotes are used to indicate that it isn't a religion at all. Indeed the judge thoroughly debunked the claim that it

is.

SPLC cited Hale's hatred of Jews and African Americans but made no mention of his history of anti-Catholicism. Nor did it mention the virulent anti-Catholicism of Hale's predecessor, Ben Klassen.

When SPLC whitewashes the anti-Christian bigotry of Klassen and Hale the implication is that the victimizers are Christians. After all, if 70 percent-75 percent of Americans are Christians, who would the offenders be?

AMERICAN ATHEISTS FIRES ITS PRESIDENT

Bill Donohue

The board of directors of American Atheists has fired its president, David Silverman. The decision was made the night of April 12. With the exception of a few Internet sites, there have been zero news stories on this development.

The statement of April 13 that is posted on the website of American Atheists simply says that on April 10 Silverman was placed on leave, pending a review of his conduct. The review ended with his firing. "The Board of Directors has reviewed internal documents and communications related to the initial complaint as well as evidence relating to the additional allegations brought to the Board's attention."

The board's April 13 statement gave no details about Silverman's conduct. But the website Buzzfeed did. The board statement cited the Buzzfeed story, suggesting that it does

not find it to be inaccurate. The following is taken from the BuzzFeed account.

Silverman was removed because of “explosive written allegations of sexual assault and undisclosed conflicts of interest.” Silverman’s lawyer says his client denies any wrongdoing and “has never had a non-consensual sexual encounter.” He added that at the time of the alleged incidents, Silverman and his wife were in an “open marriage.”

Silverman is being investigated by the board for allegedly not disclosing “financial and personal conflicts of interest relating to the promotion of his book, *Fighting God: An Atheist Manifesto for a Religious World*, and the appointment to a senior position of a woman with whom Silverman was allegedly having a sexual relationship. (That appointment has been rescinded.)”

The sexual assault charges are more specific. One woman said that at an American Atheists convention in 2015, Silverman forced himself on her after everyone else had left the room. “He physically pressed me to the wall and began to kiss me forcefully, grabbed my breasts, and put his hand into my leggings where there was actual penetration of my vagina,” she wrote.

Silverman continued the assault at the Memphis hotel, she says, by calling her a “dirty little whore.” He pushed her to her knees, “where his penis briefly made contact with my mouth,” she said. She stood up and told him “no.” He responded by slapping her, saying, “You don’t get to say no to me.” Her account was verified by two prominent atheists who just days later said the woman told them what happened.

In 2012, an undergraduate student who was attending the annual Secular Student Alliance convention in Columbus, Ohio, said she got drunk with Silverman, and in his room he “pressured her into having anal sex.” She told a female friend about the

incident, and the two of them wrote to American Atheists about what happened.

There is obviously something wrong, seriously wrong, about not only Silverman, but about the organization. The founder, Madalyn Murray O'Hair, whose lawsuit banning school prayer proved successful, was a scatological queen, a sexual deviant, and a thief.

"I will defecate and urinate when I damn well please and as the spirit—and the physical necessity—moves me." She also said, "I will engage in sexual activity with a consenting male any time and any place I damn well please." The refrain, "Not in My Backyard" never sounded more persuasive.

O'Hair also ripped off her own members by absconding with more than \$600,000. Six years after she disappeared, the FBI revealed in 2001 that it had found the bones of her mutilated body. She was murdered by David Waters, a convicted felon out on parole. He was once an office manager at American Atheists; he also ripped off the organization by stealing \$54,000.

There are two outstanding issues that deserve a public airing.

Why is the board of directors of American Atheists refusing to offer any details about Silverman? Whatever happened to transparency? American Atheists has been quick to pounce on the Catholic Church for holding back information about wayward priests. Why the double standard?

Secondly, why the media blackout? Why has not one newspaper, wire service, or broadcast news outlet covered Silverman's firing? Why are they not questioning the absence of transparency? Will criminal charges be brought against Silverman?

I debated Silverman several times and always found him to be intellectually shallow and mean-spirited. But I had no idea that he was this bad.