

FINLAND ELUDES FASCIST LABEL

Most Americans pay no attention to events in Finland, but what happened on March 30th merits their attention. A Helsinki court dropped all charges against two notable Christians for their alleged crime of voicing Christian beliefs.

Thus did Finland elude charges that it has become a fascist nation. No matter, the fact that charges were brought against Christians for being Christian is evidence of the war on Christianity in the West.

This ordeal started in June 2019 when Finnish parliamentarian Päivi Räsänen and Lutheran Bishop Juhana Pohjola were investigated for making Christian statements about marriage and sexuality that may have violated the law.

What triggered this case was a statement that Räsänen made on Twitter raising the question why the Lutheran Church leadership decided to be an official sponsor of the LGBT “Pride 2019” event.

An investigation followed and found that she had committed an earlier offense. In 2004, she wrote a pamphlet about marriage titled, *Male and Female He Created Them*. The bishop was charged with publishing the booklet. A third charge against her was made after she appeared on a humorous radio talk show in 2019 and said, “What would Jesus think about homosexuals.”

Räsänen was charged with three counts of “ethnic agitation” under a hate speech law; it prohibits threatening, defaming and insulting a certain group of people. Her crime? Articulating a Christian understanding of marriage and sexuality.

The prosecutor said the Bible was not on trial. He lied—it most certainly was. Even the judicial ruling said that “it is not for the district court to interpret biblical concepts.”

The prosecutor never cited a single comment she made that could in any way be deemed hate speech. There were no slurs made against homosexuals, nor were there untoward remarks of any kind. His outrage was based solely on her willingness to offer a Biblical account of marriage and sexuality.

The prosecutor even admitted that Räsänen did not use “rude” language. But, he said, “she uses terms that are discriminatory and offensive. She portrays homosexuals as immoral and psychosexual broken.”

What really irked the prosecutor were Biblical declarations citing homosexual acts as sinful. Here is how a reporter characterized comments made by the prosecutor in a court proceeding.

“According to the prosecutor, it is not innocent to say that homosexuality is a sin. On the contrary, *it could be more serious saying that it is a sin than a crime* (our italics).”

Perhaps the most morally offensive gambit tried by the prosecutor was the attempt to privatize freedom of religion. “Everybody has the freedom of religion and belief. Everybody may believe and think what he wants,” he said. “But expressing all this has boundaries.”

Similarly, “The court does not address the religious views of the Bible and homosexuality. It is addressing expression of these views.”

So gracious of the prosecutor to say that everyone is free to “believe and think what he wants,” something he is powerless to stop anyway. Moreover, to say someone can “believe and think what he wants” about the Bible, but is not free to express it, is a flagrant violation of freedom of speech and religion. Indeed, this is the mark of totalitarian regimes, not free societies.

“When one judges deeds,” the prosecutor said, “the whole

person is judged. Actions cannot be separated from identity because actions are part of identity. Understanding deeds as sin is derogatory.”

This would mean that those who condemn adultery are making derogatory comments and could therefore be prosecuted under the hate crimes law.

The media cheered this attack on freedom of speech and religion.

Helsingin Sanomat is the largest newspaper in Finland. It showed its fascist colors last year when it weighed in against the defendants. In an editorial, it said the real issue was not “an individual personal opinion,” rather it was “society’s long lasting cruel position against sexual minorities.” It noted that “just a little time ago such opinions represented the mainline view in society.”

So how have things worked out in Finland, now that it is proudly free of its Christian heritage? Are people still getting married at the same rate as before? Not at all. There were 30,557 marriages in 2010; in 2020 the figure was 22,082.

What about sexually transmitted diseases in libertine Finland? “In 2019,” a report revealed, “the number of sexually transmitted diseases increased significantly.” Small wonder why. According to the website Queer in the World, Finland is “one of the most progressive and gay-friendly countries in the world.”

But there are problems nonetheless. Gay travelers who like to prey on men in saunas should know that “there is only one explicitly gay sauna in Helsinki and overtures in traditional saunas will not go down well.”

This is what happens when Christianity collapses: radical individualism reigns supreme, and with it come assaults on religion and the creation of a morally debased society.

The International Lutheran Church called the decision to prosecute Räsänen and Pohjola “egregious.” Too bad it didn’t say the same about the decision of the Finnish Lutheran Church to herald “Gay Pride” events, the proximate cause of this unseemly episode in the first place.

POLISH AMERICAN LEADERS PROTEST VILE DEPICTION

More than 200 leaders of Polish American organizations signed a letter to members of Congress asking that a book which offers a vile depiction of Poles during the Holocaust be discontinued in the schools.

The letter was distributed to members of the House Committee on Education and Labor, Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education. It follows a decision by a Tennessee school district to drop the book from its curriculum.

The best-selling graphic novel, *MAUS*, by Art Spiegelman, which is targeted at children, features illustrations that are outrageous and needlessly offensive. But it is the lies, and the vicious insults hurled at Poles, that merit the most serious condemnation.

The letter by the Polish American coalition, led by Edward Wojciech Jeśman, president of the Polish American Strategic Initiative, lists several reasons why *Maus* does not belong as an assigned or recommended book in the schools.

- The book offers a flagrantly inaccurate account of the Polish experience during the Holocaust. Poles are

portrayed as Nazi sympathizers, which is a lie—they were the victims of Hitler's genocidal agenda. Polish deaths were proportionately the greatest of any nation in World War II, which is why the deaths of Poles and Polish Jews constitutes a double Holocaust. Moreover, many Poles, drawing on their Catholic upbringing, risked their lives to save Jews.

- Poles are depicted as pigs. "Pigs in popular culture are viewed as disgusting, filthy animals," the letter notes, "while in Jewish culture, pigs and pork are unclean in a way other animals are not. *MAUS* employs the same imagery of Poles found in Nazi propaganda, where they are routinely referred to as 'Polish pigs.'"
- The takeaway for Polish schoolchildren who are required to read this book is that their people are morally debased and that their heritage is evil. No child deserves to be psychologically raped by educators.

Removing books from a school's curriculum should never be taken lightly, but when the book in question (a) maligns an entire ethnic group (b) is historically indefensible and (c) is aimed at innocent, unsuspecting children, then to make it available in the schools is nothing short of educational malpractice.

Those who defend assigning *MAUS* would not assign a book which characterized blacks as pit bulls or American Indians as piranhas, never mind distort their historical heritage by depicting them as savages.

Many thanks to Ronald Rychlak, Distinguished Professor of Law at the University of Mississippi, for bringing this issue to our attention. He is a member of the Catholic League's board of advisors. Bill Donohue would also like to note that one of the signatories, Richard Walawender, serves on our board of directors.

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION FALTERS

Bill Donohue recently wrote to Craig Lissner, Acting Director for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Research at the World Health Organization Department of Reproductive Health and Research.

The following is an excerpt.

The recently released document, "Abortion Care Guideline," is contemptible. The disrespect shown for medical personnel who invoke conscientious objection status to performing an abortion is outrageous. This would certainly include Catholic doctors and hospitals.

The document says that "conscientious objection continues to operate as a barrier to access to quality abortion care." It instructs governments around the world to ensure that this does not happen, and then concludes that this basic right may be violated. "If it proves impossible to regulate conscientious objection in a way that respects, protects and fulfills abortion seekers' rights, conscientious objection in abortion provision may become indefensible."

What is really indefensible is the attack on conscientious objections to killing the innocent. It is not only morally offensive, it flouts international law.

Freedom of conscience and religion are assured by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Convention on Human Rights, the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the American Declaration on the Rights and Duties of Man, and the African Charter on Human

and Peoples' Rights.

The United Nations Charter also guarantees the right to self-determination. Indeed, the General Assembly provides that every nation "has the duty to refrain from any forcible action which deprives peoples referred to in the elaboration of the principle of equal rights and self-determination...."

The plain language of these renowned declarations ensures the freedom to conscientiously object to mandates that would violate them.

WHO may not have any international enforcement power, but the fact that it would promote a frontal assault on such a fundamental right as freedom of conscience shows how thoroughly irresponsible it has become. Not only does it devalue innocent human life, it wants to punish those who reject its morally debased ethics.

Catholic medical personnel who are victimized by WHO's agenda, or who resist sanctions against them, may need legal assistance. We will be happy to see they get it.

DOUBTING THE RESURRECTION BUT NOT PREGNANT MEN

Reflecting on the meaning of Easter, we got thinking about secularists who scoff at the idea that Jesus was resurrected. What exactly are their beliefs? Before analyzing some of them, it's worth taking a quick look at why the Resurrection story is true.

Faith, of course, is an abiding feature of all religions, but

it is not on faith alone that the account of Jesus' resurrection is persuasive.

New Testament scholar N.T. Wright notes that it is fatuous to believe that the early Christians invented the resurrection as a myth. To wit: The idea of the Messiah dying and coming back to life would have struck Jews at the time as bizarre—there was no concept for this belief in Jewish theological beliefs.

What about the empty tomb?

There is a passage in the Gospel of Matthew where it mentions the attempt by some Jews to discredit Christianity by saying the body was stolen. Of course, to make this claim they would have had to have been complicit in at least tacitly admitting that the tomb was empty. But why would Jews or Romans want to steal the body—wouldn't that keep the story alive? It is even more unbelievable to maintain that the disciples stole the body. That would make them masochists. After all, why would they want to endure being beaten and killed for the sake of a lie?

Then there are the post-Resurrection accounts.

We learn from Paul (1 Corinthians 15:3-8) that Jesus "appeared to Cephas [Peter] then to the Twelve. After that, He appeared to more than 500 brothers at once" and "then to all the apostles."

Now some secularists will say that they don't believe in the historical Jesus. Fine. So why do they believe in the writings of the ancients, those like Aristotle, who came before Christ? Lest we forget, it was the monks who preserved the writings of antiquity, and it was St. Patrick who played a pivotal role in this historic exercise. Looks like secularists can't escape relying on our bounty.

What about their convictions? Just consider the content of some of their beliefs today.

It is now fashionable in elite circles, e.g., the White House and the nation's leading colleges and universities, to believe that two men can marry and have a family. But men don't have the anatomical equipment to pull this off, which is why they crib from the largess of heterosexuals.

It is also popular to say that male and female status is "assigned" at birth, and that it can be changed. This, too, is nonsense. No one "assigns" a person's sex: Hospital personnel typically record the sex of the person (which was knowable prior to birth). Moreover, every person who has ever lived possesses either XX chromosomes or XY chromosomes, making them either female or male, respectively. There is no XYZ third option.

Secular elites believe—Joe Biden is one of them—that men can become pregnant. That is why they refer to pregnant women as "birthing persons," so as to be inclusive. But everyone lucky enough not to have had his mind corrupted by delusional professors knows that it is always women who carry babies, deliver them and wean them. Furthermore, men can no more menstruate—no need to have tampon dispensers in their bathrooms, even at Ivy League schools—than women can undergo radiation for prostate cancer.

Some secularists believe in the Great Ape Project—Peter Singer does and he teaches at Princeton. They are convinced that chimps, bonobos, gorillas, and orangutans should have the same rights as humans. That may not be such a good thing. Before King Kong breaks out the champagne, he should know that Singer believes that parents should be allowed to kill their infants, meaning that little Kong may not make it past the chimp stage.

Other secularists, like the late Christopher Stone, a distinguished law professor, taught his students at USC that "valleys, alpine meadows, rivers, lakes, estuaries, beaches, ridges, groves of trees, swampland [and] air" should enjoy legal rights. More recently, a judge in New York had to rule on whether an elephant named Happy was entitled to be released

from a prison called the Bronx Zoo. Unhappily for him, he lost.

Sorry secularists, you're in over your skis. Don't expect us to believe that the resurrection of Jesus is not believable but your fairy tales about pregnant men and tree rights are.

BISHOP McMANUS NOT WANTED AT HOLY CROSS

Bishop Robert McManus, who heads the Diocese of Worcester, has notified the College of Holy Cross that he will not attend the school's commencement on May 27. He made his decision after the school's president, Vincent Rougeau, was petitioned by some students, faculty and alumni to disinvite him. This marks the fifth consecutive year that the bishop has not attended a graduation ceremony at the Jesuit school.

This year the source of the controversy began on April 3 when McManus issued a statement that was critical of the Nativity School, a middle school affiliated with Holy Cross. The school had been flying a Black Lives Matter and a gay pride flag next to the American flag for over a year, but was only recently brought to the attention of the bishop. When he learned of what was going on, he asked the school to stop flying the two flags. That request sparked the online petition.

In his public statement on this issue, McManus wrote that while the Catholic Church respects everyone equally, "the flag with the emblem Black Lives Matter has at times been coopted by some factions which also instill broad-brush distrust of police and those entrusted with enforcing our laws." He also said that "gay pride flags are often used to stand in contrast

to consistent Catholic teaching that sacramental marriage is between a man and a woman.”

“As the Bishop of this diocese,” McManus said, “I must teach that it is imperative that a Catholic School use imagery and symbols which are reflective of that school’s values and principles so as to be clear with young people who are being spiritually and morally formed for the future.”

Bishop McManus is to be commended for telling the truth. If anything, he was too kind.

Black Lives Matter has not been coopted by anyone—from the very beginning this Marxist, anti-Christian organization has been very specific about its goals. It has explicitly called for the destruction of the nuclear family. As we have said before, this is precisely the kind of objective that the Klan would endorse. Nothing would further punish the black poor more than to further destabilize the intact family.

It is striking how the same left-wing students, faculty and alumni that deplore violence stand in unison with an organization that is responsible for the murder of at least 25 persons and has engaged in arson, vandalism and looting, often in black neighborhoods. The cost of its wanton destruction is upwards of \$2 billion. White supremacists couldn’t have done a better job.

How ironic that these brave Catholic students are still defending an organization whose leaders have ripped off the public—no one more than blacks—by buying mansions for themselves, leaving the black community high and dry. Their refusal to pay taxes is now under investigation throughout the nation.

Flying a gay pride flag at a Catholic school sends an unmistakable message: We don’t buy the Church’s teachings on sexual ethics. As such, it is not a plea to respect homosexuals: on the contrary, it is an in-your-face rejection

of Catholicism. That this should take place at a time when child abuse is taking place in some schools, and parental rights are under attack—in the name of sexual orientation and gender identity—makes the flag issue all the more reprehensible.

It is a shame what has happened to Holy Cross. It is not the college that once made so many of its graduates proud.

We cannot allow those who are responsible for this travesty to carry the day. We asked our email subscribers to show their full support for the courageous stance taken by Bishop McManus.