

# WE ARE WITNESSING A CULTURAL SHIFT

**William A. Donohue**

Cultures change, sometimes slowly, sometimes quickly. The changes are sometimes positive, sometimes negative, sometimes a little of both. The reasons why they change are multiple. In short, there is no such thing as a cultural template or a cultural iron law. They vary. That said, it appears we are in the throes of a cultural shift.

In the last century, we had two world wars and both brought about dramatic changes in the culture. After the Great War (as the first one was initially called), western nations witnessed relaxed social mores. The cabaret society was popular on both sides of the Atlantic: nightlife and entertainment, much of it risqué, brought relief after the war. Prohibition in the U.S. was resisted in urban centers, and was eventually repealed.

World War II saw a massive influx of women into government and private sector jobs. Racial integration of the armed forces proved to be a bellwether of things to come. From the mid-1940s to the mid-1960s, American society was marked by stability: there was virtually no inflation, marriages were strong and church-going was commonplace.

From the late 1960s to the early 1980s, the counterculture challenged traditional norms throughout society. Standards fell in school, boardrooms and bedrooms. The feminist movement, fueled by anger, was more revolutionary than reformist. Sexually transmitted diseases and drug use spiked. In short, promiscuity subverted the stability of the 1950s.

Two things happened in 1981 that represented a cultural shift: Ronald Reagan became president and AIDS was discovered. He was a voice of traditional morality and AIDS put a brake on sexual

experimentation. A modicum of stability reigned.

The next shift occurred in the latter part of the 2000s. The Obama administration signaled a departure from the kinds of religion-friendly policies that marked previous administrations. Identity politics became all the rage. The Biden administration took this to another level, beginning with the selection of Kamala Harris as vice president.

The Biden-Harris team launched a massive attack on boundaries: inflation and the national debt soared; immigrants by the millions crashed our borders; crime exploded; the ruling class embraced gender ideology; and attacks on religion reached a new level.

The Trump landslide represents another cultural shift. He won not simply because the domestic and foreign policies of Biden-Harris were a proven failure. He won because the ruling class didn't settle for giving the cultural pendulum a gentle push—they gave it a wild swing.

Woke culture—the idea that traditional moral norms and values are inherently offensive—has created havoc in school, the workplace and in families. No social order can survive if its culture is under constant assault, and it is this reality that accounted for Trump's stunning victory. The American people threw down the gauntlet, seeking a return to normalcy.

After the election, the *New York Times* interviewed many Trump voters. One stuck out in my mind. A 52-year-old woman said she had never voted for a Republican before, but this time she did. She cited one major factor: her son isn't learning anything in school, and that is because his class is heavily populated with the children of illegal aliens who can't speak a lick of English. This was a direct consequence, she noted, of the Biden-Harris policies.

The signs of a cultural shift are everywhere. Identity politics is being challenged in corporations and universities:

both are pulling back on DEI standards (diversity, equity and inclusion). Mayors that allowed thugs to destroy their cities—in the name of protesting racial injustice—are cracking down. Schools that abandoned standards are reinstituting them. Voters who approved resolutions to legalize hard drugs have rescinded them. The pushback against gender ideology is real and will continue. And our border will soon be secure again.

It's too bad it took pushing our culture to a crisis level before those who promoted these policies got a good slap in the face. Every policy that worked to undermine traditional mores was bound to fail. Even the village idiot knew that defunding the police would only generate more crime. The shame of it is that the village idiot proved to be smarter than those who unnecessarily created this mess—the mostly wealthy white secularists with post-graduate degrees.

This is a good time for the clergy and the laity to exercise their religious muscles and become reengaged in society. The culture is ripe for a return to commonsensical policies, the kind that imbue Catholic moral theology and social teachings. We don't need more imbecilic experimentations: we know what works and what doesn't.

This cultural shift will not proceed without resistance. Those responsible for sabotaging our society—and that is exactly what they did—occupy many important seats of power, and they will not go quietly into the night.

That's where we come in. No administration can effectively transform society without significant help from non-governmental sources. Our number-one goal is to defend and promote religious liberty, but to do this we must take on those who seek to undermine it. We're ready to roll.