

WHY RELEVANT RELIGIONS ARE IRRELEVANT

The surest way to kill a Western religion is to change its teachings to mirror those of the dominant culture. The data are clear: The more relevant a religion's teachings become, the more irrelevant the religion is.

People want to join a group or an organization because there is something special about it. This is as true of fraternities and sororities as it is religions. If there is nothing special about them, why bother?

Regarding Catholicism, it is not the most orthodox dioceses or orders of priests and nuns that are in trouble; it's the least orthodox. Evangelical Protestants are not in dire straits the way mainstream Protestant denominations are. In fact, evangelicals and Pentecostals are the fastest growing Christian denominations in the world. Similarly, Orthodox Jews are witnessing an uptick in members; the Conservative and Reform branches are declining.

In other words, orthodoxy attracts; heterodoxy repels.

One person who knows this better than most is Juhana Pohjola. He is on trial in a "free" country for being a Christian. To be specific, he is a Finnish Lutheran bishop who has been accused (along with a former political leader in Finland) of a hate crime for publicly professing the biblical teaching on marriage. Both face up to two years in prison.

Not surprisingly, Bishop Pohjola has been quite critical of the extent of which Finland has bowed to militant secularism. His most poignant comments, however, are reserved for the secularizing of Christianity in his home country. The Lutheran Church, he says, has taken its cues from secular society.

“Unfortunately it did not have the strength to be faithful to its own confession and calling in the society and go against the cultural and anti-Christian tide. But it followed more the voice of people (*vox populus*) than God in his revealed Word (*vox Dei*). The lack of clear confession of Christ Jesus, sin and grace and questions of natural law like sanctity of life and marriage have made the established church *more and more irrelevant and meaningless in the public arena and everyday life among the people* (our italics).”

Ditto for all Western religions. Instead of resisting the morally debased dominant culture, they have succumbed to it. There is no virtue in Christian religions playing copy cat with postmodernism. The denial of truth—that there is an objective reality based on what nature and nature’s God has ordained—is at the heart of the crisis in Christianity in the West.

Denying the existence of truth is not only a violation of our Judeo-Christian ethos, and therefore morally wrong, it is also a recipe for self-destruction. We either stick to our principles, as found in the natural law, the Ten Commandments and (for Catholics) the Catechism, or we become so trendy that we become invisible.