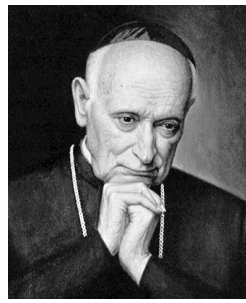


Mindszenty Report



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A Death Wish and the Resurrection of Western Civilization

The term *Death Wish* entered the lexicon in the late 1970s after a series of crime dramas that starred Charles Bronson as *Paul Kersey*, a man who becomes a vigilante after his wife was murdered and his daughter molested by muggers. In a larger context, the concept of a *death wish* is a variation of Freud's *death instinct* that can easily be applied to cultures, nations and even civilizations.

PROPHETS OF DECLINE

It was the former Trotskyite writer, James Burnham, who first popularized this Freudian concept with his 1964 seminal study, *The Suicide of the West*. Burnham exuded the same pessimism about the eventual decline of democracies that Alexis de Tocqueville had in his 19th century work *Democracy in America*. Liberalism to Burnham was *the virus of the West* that stripped the West of the core values it needed in order to combat world communism on a cultural level. He believed it was liberalism's focus on *the politics of guilt*, fueled by its ideological nostras of egalitarianism and social justice that would inevitably lead to the implosion of Western culture.

Bruce Thornton's recent book, *Decline and Fall* details the slow-motion self-destruction of the West from internal factors, caused by the loss of religious and moral faith. For this precipitous decline he faults the philosophy Europe has adopted that includes Nietzsche's nihilism, and Auguste Comte's *religion of man*. European decline has also been accelerated by an extraordinary Muslim immigration. Through a natural policy of *babies and ballots*, Muslims are reproducing at such an alarming rate that they will be able to transform Western culture as a viable culture through their vote.

The master of all *prophets of decline* was Edward Gibbon. In his 1776 classic, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, he placed the blame on a loss of civic virtue among the Roman citizens. Romans had become lazy and soft, avoiding their duties to defend their Empire by hiring barbarian mercenaries, who then became so numerous and deeply ingrained that they were able to take over the empire. He also blamed Christianity for making the Roman population less interested in the here-and-now and more willing to wait for the rewards of heaven.

A FUN CULTURE

In his two most recent books, *The Death of the West* and *The Day of Reckoning*, Patrick Buchanan picked up where Gibbon and Burnham left off. He focuses on the inherent contradictions that man's freedom, unfettered by Christianity, has produced a culture at war with itself. Buchanan delineates a frightening laundry list of social and moral evils that have pervaded the culture in the last half-century. Abortion, formerly a shameful crime, is now a constitutional right. Divorce, once relatively rare, is now commonplace. Pornography is the new addiction of choice for the middle class. Assisted suicide is here waiting for an opening at the banquet table. Euthanasia has a reservation. Extramarital sex is on the everyday menu, while homosexuality is one of the featured entrees. Liberals are acting like the proverbial barbarians within the gates, doing their best to undermine the very nature of the American republic.

Reverend John Navone S.J., author and Professor of Theology at the Gregorian University in Rome, sees the decline of Western Civilization in the loss of tradition, especially among Catholics, since Vatican II. Traditions are the ties that bind humans to their culture. He decries the ignorance that plagues graduates of religious schools who do not know the most basic Bible stories, the history of Judaism or Christianity. Without the traditions of faith, language and history, individuals become religious and moral free agents, continually searching for anything that gives meaning to their lives. To Father Navone the West has declined to a *fun culture*, a hedonist realm of unfettered irresponsibility.

CONTENDERS FOR THE FAITH

While it is a fact that cultural Marxism has set Western Civilization back on its heels, this is not the time to run around shouting that the *sky is falling!* There are many positives in Western Civilization that must be resurrected and shouted from the highest mountaintops. Fortunately, Western Civilization has not lacked for its apt defenders. One of the finest was Christopher Dawson whose classic *Religion and the Rise of Western Culture*, showed how important the monasteries were to the rise of learning in Europe.

Following in his footsteps, historians such as Thomas Woods have taken up the banner for what Dinesh D'Souza called *contenders for their faith* by demonstrating the Catholic Church's vital role in Western Civilization. The author of *How the Catholic Church Built Western Civilization*, Woods criticized the *overall lack of knowledge* of church history among students and *ceaseless tales of varying credibility* about the *Dark Ages* taught in high school history classrooms. According to Woods, the Catholic Church gave birth to the *distinctly Western idea* of international law as well as the idea of natural rights. Woods wonders where Western morality would be without the Catholic Church. It is apparent that in many ways the Church filled the vacuum created by the collapse of the Roman Empire.

Robert Royal is another noteworthy apologist for Western Civilization and the Catholic Church. He writes of Christianity's role in world history, one in which the religion symbolized by the Cross acts as a lantern lighting the way for civilization. Like so many of the founding fathers, Royal argues that religion is necessary for a successful democratic culture.

AN EARTHLY DIVISION

The best defender of the culture seems to be Dinesh D'Souza. His outstanding book, *What's So Great About Christianity* began as a reaction to the new militancy found among today's *atheistic militia*, especially Richard Dawkins, Samuel Harris and Christopher Hitchens. He warns that Catholics must summon the courage to make the *good fight* to defend and advance the values of the civilization that emanated from their faith before it winds up on the refuse pile of history.

What's so Good emphasizes three specific areas where the Church has been instrumental in elevating the former pagan culture of the West. The first area is Christianity's role in providing the spiritual basis for limited government. In Matthew 22:21, Jesus taught his followers to *render to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God*. This can be construed to be the origin of the separation of church and state. Not only does this separation help prevent the excesses of a theocracy, but it also gives credence to the idea of limited government, by advancing the concept that state power has a limit and must respect the conscience of each person.

Thanks to the Church and its formative role in Western Civilization, the United States Constitution which developed out of the Christian debate on tolerance and freedom of conscience also advanced the idea that government should refrain from making laws that would impede the religious freedom of individuals and churches. This has been the guiding principle in America until the secularists in the 1950s reversed Thomas Jefferson's concept of the *wall of separation* of church and state in order to eliminate religion from the public sector. As a result the West has lost sight of its religious heritage. According to George Weigel's book, *The Cube and the Cathedral*, secularism is now *one of the banners behind which modern*

European man wishes to march. This serves as a warning that all Americans should heed.

ALL GOD'S CHILDREN

D'Souza's second thesis is that Christianity *affirms the Ordinary life*. Christianity is not about elites and special powers but about *all God's children*. Unlike other civilizations that have rested on elites, Christianity has gradually raised the status of all human beings because each one has been made in the image and likeness of the Creator. Christians were the first group to attack slavery as contrary to God's law. Through its defense of human dignity Christianity has provided the inspiration for campaigns to end slavery, establish democracy and promote self-government.

Evil has been another aspect that Christianity has addressed. While Plato felt that the problem of evil was a problem of knowledge, a common fallacy adopted by the secular left in current American pedagogy, the Greeks virtually ignored the problem of human evil. St. Paul knew only too well the evil lurking in his own soul, when he said, *For the good that I would, I do not, but the evil which I would not, that I do*. Christianity has been able to identify the universal contradiction inherent in all human beings.

Since the time of Christ the family has been paramount to the Church and the quintessential building block of any sociology of civilization. In Greek culture infanticide and homosexuality were prevalent. These sinful behaviors seriously undermined family life. It was Christianity that underscored the absolute importance of heterosexual monogamous love. It was Christianity that elevated the importance of woman as man's equal, emphasizing her exalted importance to marriage, the family and child rearing. This is a far cry from the modern wisdom that regards men and women as interchangeable parts.

Materialism is another threat to Western Civilization. Catholicism has always warned about the dangers of greed and envy often found in capitalism, globalism and free trade. It emphasized the importance of private property for freedom, the family and religious belief, not financial empire.

A TICKING EARTH

D'Souza shows how modern science owes much of what it is today to its Christian origins. Science is all about interaction and causation. Primitive man saw the world as wholly dependent upon the volatility of their many gods. Even though the idea of an ordered universe originated with the pre-Socratics, such as Thales, Heraclitus and Pythagoras, Christianity provided a rational sense of causation that is the metaphysical underpinning for the entire material universe. Science and reason became a seamless garment, woven together for the good of God's creation. During the Middle Ages many Catholic priests were scientists and the Catholic university became the center of learning about God and His universe. D'Souza underscores the fact that the greatest breakthroughs in science were largely the work of Christians. It

was in Christian universities and monasteries that scientific knowledge was preserved and developed.

For centuries the religion of Jerusalem metaphorically blended with the science of Athens. It was not until the secular atheism of the Renaissance and its stepchild, the French Revolution, that the two cities were cast against each other in a cultural war that still divides Western countries. It has been the atheism of many scientists that has rent the unified fabric of science and religion by unwittingly plunging into the metaphysical sea of causation and origination. No valid scientific method can shed any light on man's origins, an inquiry that is best left to the theologians.

D'Souza's chapter on *The Argument from Design* discusses how the latest scientific findings support the case for *Intelligent Design*, which protects God's creative role as the *Watchmaker* who put a *ticking earth* on the beach. However in accord with the musings of the past two popes, D'Souza leaves the possibility of theistic evolution open even as he destroys the arguments for Darwinian evolution.

An outstanding contribution to debate on evolution is Ben Stein's movie, *Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed* that is appearing in theaters all over America. Stein investigated Neo-Darwinism, atheism brought to the classroom, and found that it now functions as an all-encompassing ideology that has shed any pretext that it is a real science. His conclusion is that *Intelligent Design* is the only real answer to the origin of life on this planet.

THE SAVIOR OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION

Pope Benedict XVI has been at the forefront of this crisis of Western Civilization. The West has been blessed by God to have a man of such integrity to lead the Catholic Church in this time of cultural crisis. During these difficult times when many Westerners have lost their faith and morals seem to be in a freefall, this kind and gentle Bavarian proves that he was the right choice for the Herculean task. Author and Christian blogger Mark Alexander calls him the *Savior of Western Civilization*.

Pope John Paul II was the perfect pope for the fall of communism. Islam and moral relativism are the major threats to Western Civilization that Benedict faces. In his address at Regensburg University, he demonstrated that he is a man of great courage and strength. The Pope is clearly disturbed by the inherent connection between violence and Islam. He wants Christians in Muslim countries to be able to worship free of

harassment and danger. He wants the same freedom for missionaries in the Middle East to convert people to Christianity, just as Muslims are free to convert people to Islam in the West.

His Muslim critics have accused Pope Benedict of wanting to start a modern *crusade* against Muslim countries. If he is starting a crusade, it is directed at Europe and not at Islam. The Pope is more concerned about internal dictatorship of relativism that has permeated European society and hastened its swift decline. Pope Benedict hopes to bring Westerners back to their Christian heritage.

George Weigel compared the Pope's coming to his namesake, St. Benedict who was born in the 5th century. The rise of Benedict's *academy of Christianity* in 529, near Monte Cassino, providentially coincided with the closing of Plato's Academy, the embodiment of classical culture in Athens in the 6th century. The monks not only preserved crucial elements of the civilization of Athens and Rome during medieval times, but they transformed that civilization by infusing a Biblical understanding of the human person, community, origins and destiny into the classical culture.

Benedict's task is equally as difficult. Like Toynbee, Bishop Fulton J. Sheen often wrote about the decline of civilization as being an inevitable part of human history. This does not mean that the world is ending. It means that Christians must learn to deal realistically with a society that has turned itself over to a curious mixture of Islam, secular humanism and anti-Christian values. When the Pope visited the United States in April 2008, he brought with him an *olive branch of hope* that reflected the theme of his latest encyclical, *Spe Salvi* (On Christian Hope). The Pope sees this profound theological virtue as the *solution* to the spiritual and moral malaise that has emanated from 250 years of Marxism and secular humanism.

Ever the realist, the Pope realizes that it may be necessary to trim some of the Church's rough edges, echoing the Benedictine motto *Succisa virescit*, which means, *pruned, it grows again*. This may be the best solution to the crisis of faith that is at heart of the *death wish* of Western Civilization.



William A. Borst, Ph.D., is the author of *Liberalism: Fatal Consequences* and *The Scorpion and the Frog: A Natural Conspiracy* which are available from the author at P.O. Box 16271, St. Louis, MO 63105 or write BBPROF@sbcglobal.net.

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Louisville, KY—Conference 2008

July 18 & 19, 2008

THE CHURCH TEACHES FORUM

The Galt House – East Tower

Faith-based Hope: The Church Evangelizing the World

Friday

Mass: 5:00 p.m. His Em. Francis Cardinal Arinze

Banquet: 7:00 p.m. *Obligation, Readiness & Freedom to Evangelize*

Keynote Address: Cardinal Arinze

Saturday

Rev. Edmund McCaffrey, President of Eternal Life

Most Rev. Joseph E. Kurtz, Archbishop of Louisville

Most Rev. Thomas G. Doran, Bishop of Rockford, IL

Hope is the Anchor of Life

Rev. Roger Arnsparger, Diocese of Charlotte, NC

Rev. Wade Menezes, Fathers of Mercy, Auburn, KY

Eternal Life

Martha and Phil Spalding

902 West Stephen Foster, Bardstown, KY 40004

tel. 800-842-2871 fax 502-348-2224

ST MATTHEW 7:7

“Ask and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you”

50th Anniversary

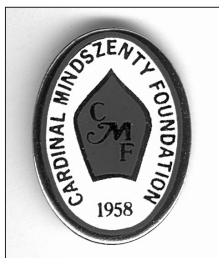
Help us celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Cardinal Mindszenty Foundation! June 2008 marks the historic beginning of the Foundation, which at the time was truly “a voice crying in the wilderness.” We are grateful for the longtime support of our subscribers to the Mindszenty Report and the faithful

Members who conducted and attended many CMF Conferences throughout these 50 years!

How can you help us celebrate? We need new subscribers to the Mindszenty Report, our enduring well-written and highly-acclaimed publication!!!

If you send us a Gift Subscription (\$20.00 for one year, still same cost) we will forward to you a red-white-gold decorative lapel pin which reads: “Cardinal Mindszenty Foundation 1958” size 3/4” x 1/2”.

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Father's Day, June 15



FATHER CARD—Due to many requests, we are happy to offer you our Father Card:

The Importance of a Father

St. Joseph was strong in the face of adversity and poverty of his time.

He is a model of the virtues of prudence, humility, strength and fortitude. Even though Joseph is “silent” in Scripture, his actions speak to us more clearly than recorded words. Just as Joseph resigned his own will to the will of God, so a good father walks the path as God sets it out for him. The greatest gift any father can give to his children is lifelong fidelity to his Marriage Covenant. Children learn about love through a father’s affection, prayer, honor, self-control, forgiveness and integrity.

St. Joseph showed Jesus all the natural love, all the affectionate solicitude that a father’s heart can know. —Pope John Paul II

The full message shown above is on a cream 5 1/2” x 3 1/2” card. Order these cards to insert with notes, letters, payments, and to give out at church, school and family gatherings.

Cost of cards 20 for \$2.00 50 for \$4.00
including postage: 100 for \$7.00 500 for \$32.50
1,000 for \$60.00

Mindszenty Report Reprints

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AGENTS OF SUBVERSION: HOW FOUNDATIONS HAVE UNDERMINED AMERICA—Foundations, especially Rockefeller, Carnegie and Ford, have been an invisible government attempting to destroy America’s free enterprise system and promote socialist ideologies in academia, our social culture, and even religion. Ask for 4/08

THE CROWNING HEIGHTS: THE MARXIST DRIVE TOWARD SOCIALIZED MEDICINE—Reviews the costs of U.S. healthcare, insurance, and the ideology of those pushing universal health care. Traces the history of liberal fascism in Germany to the present-day push by Marxists-Socialists for absolute control in America’s health coverage. Ask for 3/08

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