

Corrupting Christian Values

I was recently listening to an old pod cast by James Lindsey. In it, he was discussing how history and the U.S. Constitution have been corrupted over time to a point that they are no longer recognizable to those who made history or the constitution. While Lindsey is primarily interested in the ideologies that influence our culture, his evolution of storytelling is applicable to other fields as well, including Judaism and Christianity.

To illustrate his theory, Lindsey talked about vampire stories, ranging from Bram Stoker's *Dracula* to Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* series. I will briefly cover some of his points and add some of my own. To begin with, we have *Dracula*, which is a defining moment in vampire mythology. We have a monster of irredeemable evil and high cunning. He is immortal, possesses superhuman strength, has magical abilities, an extreme allergic reaction to sunlight, and a taste for human blood (although animal blood can be substituted in emergency situations). Fast forward to more contemporary times with Anne Rice's *The Vampire Chronicles*, and a newer vampire came along. Instead of monsters, we have a society of highly sophisticated beings. Instead of being pure evil, most of them simply play with their food like a cat. But more importantly, Rice looked at the vampire's ability to survive on non-human blood and introduced the vegan version of the vampire by having some refuse to kill humans for their sustenance on moral grounds.

The vegan vampire idea took off. In the HBO series "Tru Blood," all vampires more or less turn away from human blood after synthetic blood is created. Next, the TV series "Angel" and the "Blade" movie series gave us superhero vegan vampires. Furthermore, Blade is a vampire who is not affected by sunlight. When we come to *Twilight*, immunity to sunlight takes an amusing twist, as not only are vampires safe to be in the sun, but they sparkle in it. At this point, one must wonder if we are really talking about vampires, or if we are talking about elves. This brings us to the end of Lindsey's range of mythology (although I have added to it), but as a guilty pleasure I would like to add the popular *The Innkeeper Chronicles* series by Ilona Andrews.

In the *The Innkeeper Chronicles*, vampires are not super-natural beings, but rather a spacefaring race whose DNA is close enough to human that they can procreate with them. While they have exceptional strength by human standards, it overlaps with exceptional humans. Despite their vastly superior technology, they still prefer to mix things up in hand-to-hand combat and have no problem using their fangs to good effect while doing so. They do not drink blood out of need (their normal diet is not much different than an Earthly diet), but rather as a "heat of the moment" thing from fighting. And far from being "evil," they are extremely religious with a church obviously inspired by the Catholic Knights Templar and Knights Hospitaller. Indeed, it is their exceptional religious tolerance and piety that causes them to back off from those holding up holy symbols, as it is an unforgivable sin for them to attack an enemy while the enemy is praying. Finally, they place family (especially children) above almost everything else, and extend this protective instinct to children of non-vampires as well.

So, in 120 years or so, how far has a vampire changed from *Dracula* to *Innkeeper*? We go from a demonic monster of pure evil to an extremely advanced technological society where citizens are extremely religious. Cunning can be found in all vampires since *Dracula*, but has become more of a plot device than a defining feature. Immortality and super-strength remains common in most myths, but in the *Innkeeper* they are downgraded to "long lived" and "superior strength." We see a gradual change from demonic power to magical power to technology. We have gone from vampires that turn to

dust in sunlight to creatures that simply prefer darkness because of sensitive eyes. We have gone from drinking human blood to survive, to drinking it out of personal preference, to eating normal food. The only meaningful characteristic that has remained unchanged is the extra-long canine teeth that can be used as a weapon.

Now, if we try to find common ground in answering what makes a vampire a vampire, then what we have is this: a humanoid that has large canine teeth, survives by killing, has some degree of cunning and is known for his strength. A vampire is thus a fur-less bear that has the ability to reason. In the desire to find a new way to tell an old story, the old story got twisted to the point of being beyond recognition. At some point, one must either differentiate between what is a vampire, what is vampire-like, and what is vampire-inspired, or else this absurdity of saying a vampire is a rational bear is what one is left with.

But while destroying the reality of what a vampire is has been done for entertainment purposes, and no real damage has been done (unless one is a real-life vampire hunter looking for advice), there are very serious consequences when society allows creativity to redefine what is "truth." We see this going on today in literally every institution that holds society together. The stronger the societal norm, the more radical the change that has taken place. A deliberate effort is being made to change reality as we know it, and with the express intent of destroying our culture in order to make room for a false utopia.

The problem started with Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, who decided that reality at any given moment could only have existed because the past before it left no choice but for it to exist as it does. Therefore, to understand the present requires a full understanding of what preceded it. Had Hegel used this idea within reasonable boundaries, he would have been one of the greatest philosophers in history. Indeed, most people since his time do limit Hegel's ideas to reasonable boundaries and are able to contribute greatly to humanity by doing so. But Hegel recognized no boundaries, and he pushed this idea to the point where he eventually had to answer the question of what separates real from non-real. Hegel decided that there is no difference between the two. For Hegel, the *Innkeeper* vampires did not come about because the authors had a great imagination, but rather because vampires were predestined to evolve in this manner. One does not make "mistakes" or "poor judgments," one's life experiences forces one to do poorly.

From Hegel, we get to Karl Marx, who added to Hegel by claiming that knowing history allows us to not just understand the present, but to predict the future. This was married to politics and economics. For Marx, subsistence economies must give way to mercantile economies. Mercantile economies must give way to industrial economies and they, in turn, must give way to socialism. Now, even in my nascent stage of philosophy, I saw a fallacy here that should have been obvious to all socialists: the more primitive a culture, the more socialist it is (because there is so little to be had, they have to share everything). But for whatever reason, Marx and those who followed him were never called out on this historical truism, and this cognitive dissonance tragically remains to this day. It should not have been a surprise that the spontaneous outbreak of socialism in industrialized countries never took place like Marx predicted, despite constant revolts made by handfuls of disgruntled middle class youth. But rather than admit Marx was wrong, Vladimir Illyich Ulyanov (better known as Vladimir Lenin) decided that a political movement was necessary to make Marx's socialism come true. But Lenin could only succeed in one of the most economically backwards country in the world, Russia. This was exactly the opposite of what Marx suggested. Now we come to Antonio Gramsci.

Gramsci decided that the reason Marx's dream did not come true was because developed

countries had institutions in place that lulled people into complacency instead of fighting for their "best interests." These institutions must be destroyed so the people can be freed to pursue the socialist destiny. He mentioned five institutions in particular that needed to be overcome: education, law, media, family and religion. And of these five, it is religion for which Gramsci had a special purpose. It would be religion that would actually take the lead in the destruction of the others, after which religion would destroy itself. This should not be a surprise, as Hegelism actually corrupted the idea of the triune God to its own purposes, and Marx further modified Hegel's ideas as well. So, if the gentle reader will forgive me for taking a short tangent on how Hegel (and therefore Marx) looked at metaphysics, I think my final points will be made clearer.

Hegel was not technically an atheist, and his ideas of God paralleled the Christian views. But this parallel is such a corruption that all good Christians should cringe at what I must say next. Hegel looked at God the Father as pure spirit, separate from the material world and therefore incomplete (Hegel even said "imperfect"). In God's effort to become complete, God the Son was begotten as a material being in the form of Jesus Christ. The purpose of God the Son is to bring God to perfection by becoming both spiritual and material. God the Holy Spirit is the ongoing process of this perfection. Eventually, the process will be complete and God will be perfected. We see here how Hegel changed Jehovah to something that is only vaguely Jehovah-like. With this single step, he came up with a Jehovah that is hardly recognizable as what Christians believe.

Marx, who was clearly atheist, nonetheless built on this idea. God the Father became the idea of justice (expressed in terms of the interchangeability of all people, not the Christian idea that everyone, no matter how different, is made in God's image), God the Son is the economic and political apparatuses of a state (i.e., the government) and God the Holy Spirit is the calling of mankind to the socialist destiny. If Hegel developed Jehovah to the point of being almost unrecognizable, Marx clearly crossed the line. The only thing left of Jehovah here is the triune nature. But the godless religion of Marxism, being built along the same lines as Christianity, is used by Gramsci's followers to destroy Christianity through assimilation. And assimilation begins by subverting the Christian idea of human dignity to conform with the socialist idea of humanism.

I believe the fruits of Gramsci's work are quite obvious, at least in the other four institutions. There are many who came after Gramsci who worked on how these assimilations were to take place, but I will only talk about Herbert Marcuse once a few more points are made.

The first of the five institutions to fall was obviously the family. Interestingly enough, Margaret Sanger was preaching birth control only a few years before Gramsci was writing his ideas in his prison cell, but her efforts clearly supported his goals. I do not want to get into a debate on whether or not women should be allowed to work, but I reject the idea that preventing a woman from doing what it is that defines her as a woman is the only way a woman's dignity can be protected. One does not defend an object by destroying the object, and one cannot protect a female human by turning her into an asexual being. The female was slowly being removed from the family triangle, and the family has been losing ground ever since. The feminization of men was done in a manner much more behind the scenes, but has progressed rather rapidly. Government welfare reduces the need of a man to provide for the family. Man's need to embrace risk in order to prove himself, even in controlled environments such as sports, has been heavily discouraged and increasingly regulated. In some cases, even outlawed (such as boxing, and efforts to stop football following two tragedies within a week in January 2023 have already begun). The testosterone levels of males today are significantly lower than just a few years ago. Men are being slowly removed from the family triangle. The black community has suffered especially bad in this regard. It should not be surprising that simply orphaning children within the

family triangle was not enough -- they are being removed as well. Explicit sexual education with graphic drawings and pictures are being given to kindergartners in an effort to create a false parity between children and adults. There was a video that went viral when a woman read aloud from her 5th grader's school book at a school board meeting, and the school board told her to stop because it was "obscene." Offering sex change operations to children as young as kindergarten, queer story hour in schools, encouraging children to attend LGBT+ events all succeed in destroying childhood. Family is no longer father, mother and child. It can be single parent and child. It can be a bunch of homeless teens on the streets. It can be single grandparent and grandchild. It can be mother and an endless rotation of stepfathers and child. It can be two mothers and child or two fathers and child. While many (but not all) of these descriptions have legitimate stories behind them that deserve consideration, these sad states of "family" are being actively promoted and encouraged.

But while the family was the first to be attacked, the destruction of law, media and education is already complete. I have already talked about the destruction of education. With the fall of education came the fall of all professional organizations. Once the most prestigious law school in the United States, Harvard now allows its students to violently stop any conservative from speaking on campus. Within two months of the Dobbs decision, over 100 fire bombings of churches (mostly Catholic) and pregnancy centers have taken place (more than two per day) with no arrests. However, on 23 September, 2022, pro-life activist Mark Houck was arrested at home by over 25 FBI agents armed with what President Biden calls "assault rifles." Houck had pushed a man who was intimidating his son with pro-abortion speech. The FBI decided that pushing this man denied the belligerent creep his legal rights to support an abortion, and Houck faces 11 years in prison for protecting his child from a belligerent man. Furthermore, Biden and then Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, both of whom claim to be practicing Catholics, freely admitted they don't care what laws they have to break to ensure anyone who wants an abortion can get it (which, by the way, makes them oath breakers). All of this would have been unthinkable just a few years ago.

This leaves us with the media. Traditional media sources have been on the wane since the internet came along, and it is the media that can grab people's attention the best that are surviving today. The only way that is easier to grab someone's attention than by *telling* the public that someone, somewhere is suffering, is to *show* the public that someone, somewhere is suffering. As a result, socialist humanism has almost completely dominated most major media sources. There is an undeniable narrative that is being pushed, and any who speak out against it are being threatened with censorship. In 2021, Twitter banned 22 people for life, 21 of them were conservatives. All social media posts concerning Covid had links automatically attached to them to "trusted" sites. Despite seeing pictures of people stealing goods out of a broken store window while a car burns in the foreground, there are those today who still believe Black Lives Matter is a peaceful organization. No institution has been more open to and more proud of the fact that they have perverted what they once were than the media.

But while religion has fought the good fight to defend the family, it has said almost nothing about defending education, media or law. And while religious institutions still fight to protect the family, the religious themselves do not. In a corrupted understanding of what "turn the other cheek" (based on Matthew 5:39) means, many religious support the destruction of the family, and enemies of the faith are reaping a bountiful harvest in promoting this poison. Most Christians today are pro-choice (although not necessarily to the extent most those promoting abortion desire). The one and only demographic in the United States that is mostly pro-life is *church-going* Christians. But only 22% of the American population go to services weekly (and not all of them are Christian), despite 79% of the population claiming to be religious of some type. More Christians are pro-choice than pro-life.

Furthermore, the abortion movement, in response to the "human dignity" argument made by churches, believe that being able to get abortions *is* a matter of human dignity. And for the unborn babies as well! They believe it is respectful to prevent a baby from being born with painful genetic diseases, being unwanted because he was conceived through rape or incest, or having to live in poverty. It does no good for clergy to simply tell the congregation to respect human life. The clergy need to tell what respecting human life really is before the church's enemies have a chance to spread their own corrupted ideas about it. Indeed, these over simplified messages on human dignity from the pulpit are perhaps the single greatest boon the church's enemies could hope for. They are all too happy to turn "human dignity" into something "human dignity-ish," and then to something that bears no meaningful resemblance to human dignity whatsoever.

And while the role human dignity plays in the abortion issue is important, one must understand that many other issues are wrapped up in it as well. The pathology of the destruction of Christian ideals is always the same, only the details change. Human dignity is covered by the Cardinal Virtue of "justice." Being a Cardinal Virtue, justice is a moral imperative for Christians. But it is only one of four such virtues, and must further be balanced against the three Theological Virtues. What is being done to justice is what C.S. Lewis frequently called "holding virtue hostage." In other words, it is being held separate from the others and all attention is placed upon it.

When the virus of Marxism (and socialists today explicitly claim that their ideology must spread as do viruses) enters institutions, it always does so in the name of justice for the oppressed. Since Christianity preaches that we are to defend the helpless, it is no wonder Christian churches typically welcome it with open arms. But once these social justice ideas infiltrate the institution, then justice quickly and invariably becomes held hostage. Once the virus enters the church, justice becomes justice-like, and then something unrecognizable as Christian justice.

According to Marxist theory, justice is ensuring that no one has privilege. According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, justice means to "respect the rights of each and to establish in human relationships the harmony that promotes equity with regard to persons and to the common good." (#1807) One can easily see how the two might overlap, and the gut reaction is to seek compromise through this common ground. But this compromise is not made in good faith on the part of the Marxist. Remember that, for them, the Holy Spirit is a drive towards a specific [although never defined] goal. To honor the compromise is literally "blasphemy against the Holy Spirit" (a perverted interpretation of Matthew 12:22-32 and Mark 3:22-30), the "unforgivable sin." Rather than see the compromise as a starting point for two different ideologies to build a relationship, the Marxist sees "compromise" as the means to infect the institution with their ideology.

Take for example the recent Dobbs Decision. Pope Francis rightly declared this a great victory for human dignity, but he did not leave it there. Instead, he used it as a platform to talk about the dignity of women and children and those on death row. The problem for the Catholic here is not that these are unworthy goals, but that by mixing them in with what should have been a victory speech, the limits necessary for rational thought have been horribly blurred. Those *supporting abortion* fully agree with these other goals of Pope Francis. The difference is that they believe abortion *is* the means of ensuring that women and unborn babies are treated justly (as talked about above). For the Pope to be seen in photographs at Saint Peter's Cathedral after mass with Pelosi shortly after she announced that she would do whatever she could to ensure abortion was a national right did nothing to help the average Catholic in dealing with abortionists.

It is not my intent to attack the integrity of Pope Francis, and I believe in the purity of his heart

and intentions. The mixed signals, however, come from his constant message that holding human dignity is the preeminent moral imperative. Whether he realizes it or not, he is promoting socialist humanism instead of Christian justice and charity. The Cardinal Virtue of prudence is clearly absent here, as he apparently did not consider how those words (or his photo opportunities) would be interpreted by abortionists. I could also argue that the Cardinal Virtue of temperance is also lacking, as I believe he was overstating the importance of human dignity instead of focusing on the victory at hand.

But this is just a single, albeit highly publicized, example. Micro victories for the Marxists happen all the time, and they all come from ignoring the other six virtues (prudence and temperance in particular). When someone comes into church in inappropriate clothing, holding justice hostage means we simply ignore him, because the sole concern is on his right to participate in the service. Herbert Marcuse (radical leader in the 1960s, he was instrumental to the student rebellion at Berkeley University), like Gramsci, believed that capitalism and Christianity made the people too comfortable to want to revolt. Letting an impoverished person sit, ignored, in a congregation is exactly what Marcuse wanted to see, as fear and resentment are allowed to fester in the poor fellow. And it's not just the poor soul that is sitting alone where Marcuse finds victory, the perceived disrespect of the service alienates the rest of the congregation from the very unity the service is supposed to foster. This is how Gramsci's idea of using the Church to destroy itself can be fulfilled.

True Christian justice is not to merely allow anyone in any condition to come to service. Saint Paul said as much when he called out the Corinthians for coming to service as gluttonous drunks and ignoring the poor (1 Corinthians 11:21-22). The Christian idea of justice is to elevate the wretched from their state. It is the socialist idea of humanism to bring the lofty down to a wretched state. Christian justice says the congregation at large deserves respectful attendance for the service (whatever "respectful" means for the particular congregation; I'm not endorsing a "one size fits all" solution here, but rather one that is prudent to the needs of the community), but it also says that this individual should be allowed to share in it as well. What is needed is either a meaningful common ground with the non-conformist or the expulsion of the non-conformist. Fortitude says someone in the congregation should address the individual and seek understanding of his situation. Perhaps the poor fellow didn't know better and that is all that was needed to affect a change. Perhaps the individual wants to be respectful, but does not have the means to do so. In this case, the Theological Virtue of charity comes into play. Perhaps this person is simply disagreeable. In this case, justice says he needs to be removed from the congregation. But whatever the solution is, the solution *cannot* be to ignore him. This is what Saint Paul envisioned, not the typical responses going on today.

I've taken care to explain how justice is being held hostage as it destroys religion because this attack is so obvious yet so overlooked. Many people seem to sense something is wrong, but every time they speak up they are hit with the "don't judge your neighbor" card. Two common quotes from Matthew 7 are often misrepresented here: "Stop judging that you may not be judged" (verse 1) and "why do you notice the splinter in your brother's eye, but do not perceive the wooden beam in your own eye?" (verse 3). What is ignored is that, in the first case, how we judge will be how we are judged (verse 2), meaning we should judge fairly. In the second case, Jesus said to examine oneself so one can see clearly to remove the spec (verse 5). These lessons do not *prevent* us from judging, they are instructions on *how* to judge.

But if the corruption has been subtle in the past, it is becoming more and more evident since the end of the Covid panic. Governor Gavin Newsom (California) paid to place pro-abortion billboards in anti-abortion states in time for the 2022 midterm elections to sway votes towards the Democratic Party

-- using *Biblical scripture* he thinks shows Jesus supporting abortion. On August 1, 2022, Trent Horn of "Catholic Answers" fame did a podcast to respond to an article from *The New Yorker* magazine that discussed popes who have allegedly supported abortion ("Is Abortion Sacred REBUTTED"). As abominable as these things are, it should be a wake-up call to exactly what is happening to the Christian faith. Considering how readily the churches let themselves be closed as a result of Covid while abortion clinics had no meaningful restrictions placed on them, and how the FBI has now set a precedence on targeting Christians on the thinnest pretext, there may not be much more time for one to speak up.

My solution to this problem is to hold on to traditions. This is not to say that blind obedience to traditions is the answer (this ignores the virtues in just as destructive a way), but rather to always know what a Christian really is. How that expectation is relevant to the contemporary world is open to discussion and debate, but such talks can only happen if the expectation is understood and respected. How do we know what a real vampire is? Look to Stoker. How do we know our interpretation of the U.S. Constitution is valid? Read the Federalist Papers. How do we know what interpretation of the Bible is correct? Read the Catechism. Yes, justice is critically important to society, but so are the other six virtues. Yes, this requires work, but temperance calls for it. Yes, this requires being unpopular, but fortitude is a Cardinal Virtue for a reason. Yes, one has to take time to think things out, but prudence is what brings everything together.

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