CAUSE OF THE DESCENT INTO ATHEISM

George J Marlin, contributor to *The Catholic Thing* website, has drawn attention to an admirable address given at Oxford on the 400th anniversary of publication of the King James Bible in which the British Prime Minister, David Cameron, insisted on the fundamental influence of Christianity on the culture and the moral and political life of the peoples of Great Britain. His article is reproduced in the appendix.

Marlin compares Cameron's words with those in recent statements of Pope Benedict XVI condemning the development in Europe of "a culture that, in a manner hitherto unknown to humanity, excludes God from public awareness". He cites the Pope for the proposition that the confusing ideology that defines liberty as license and degrades the responsibility to do what is right into the right to do what is irresponsible has led Europe into an "age of agnosticism, of disenchantment, of presumption..." If quoted accurately, His Holiness has, with the greatest respect, put the cart before the horse. The first, the original, defective principle driving such a mentality is the embrace of atheism. The moral and cultural evils are not so much causes as consequences.

Modern atheism is rooted in the revolt of Martin Luther and Henry Tudor against God and His Church in the sixteenth century and in the systematic derogation from Christ's teachings that followed. Protestantism retained much of its Catholic ground but the heresy is now resolving into the unbelief which was ever at its root. The reduction of the metaphysical and objective to the physical (material) and subjective was a primary effect of this betrayal. Manifest in a myriad of forms, it is most notable in Hegel's *Idealism*, in Marx's *Dialectical Materialism*, and in Darwin's application of Spencer's *Evolutionism*, each of them harmful to civilisation. Men were reasonably able to cope with these aberrations until an event occurred which seemed to ratify their underlying atheism. The catalyst was the decision of the bishops of the Second Vatican Council to abandon the Church's claim to be the one true religion on earth.

This was the effect of their illogical, not to say irrational, Declaration on Religious Liberty, *Dignitatis Humanae*.[1] In this document, the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council did precisely what Pope Benedict is cited as condemning; they confused liberty with license, confused *moral* liberty with *absolute* liberty. 'Religious freedom', the freedom to believe in any religion or none at all, involves a rejection of the moral duty to adhere to the one religion founded by God. A better mind than any at Vatican II had set out the consequences eighty years earlier:

> "To hold… that there is no difference in matters of religion between forms that are unlike each other, and even contrary to each other, most clearly leads in the end to the rejection of all religion in both theory and practice. And this is the same thing as atheism, however much it may differ from it in name..."[2]

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[1] The bishops' endeavour to save the uniqueness of the Catholic Faith in a document whose central thesis contradicted it is testimony to this intellectual incompetence, if not folly.

[2] Pope Leo XIII, *Immortale Dei*, 1.11.1885, n. 32.

Atheism was the genie the bishops of Vatican II released from its Pandora's box when they rejected the Church's infallible teaching against the theological error of 'religious freedom'.[3] In removing the chief impediment to atheism's justification they enabled the development in Europe of that "culture that, in a manner hitherto unknown to humanity, excludes God from public awareness".

<div align="center">*   *</div>

Until the day arrives when a pope condemns the conduct and teaching of Vatican II which opened the doors of the God's holy Church to the influence of the secular, until he formally addresses the folly of atheism explicitly and systematically in an encyclical, the world's descent into atheism is likely to continue unabated.

Michael Baker
1st January, 2012—*The Solemnity of the Mother of God*

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APPENDIX

THERE'S ALWAYS HOPE
By George J Marlin

British Prime Minister David Cameron, speaking on December 16, 2011 at Oxford's Christ Church celebration of the 400th anniversary of the publication of the King James Bible, shook the very foundation of that college city when he said the Bible "was relevant today as at any point in its 400 year history. And none of us should be frightened of recognizing this."

Pretty good stuff – and there was plenty more. Cameron went on to say that the King James Bible "bequeathed a body of language" that has influenced every aspect of British culture – literature, music, and art. The Bible has guided Britain's politics "from human rights and equality to our constitutional monarchy and parliamentary democracy" and "helped to give Britain a set of values and morals which make Britain what it is today."

His most startling comment – which made international headlines – was that thanks to the Bible Great Britain is a Christian nation – "and we should not be afraid to say so."

Cameron also said Judeo-Christian beliefs provide the foundation "for the evolution of our freedom and democracy."   And he added "the knowledge that God created man in his own image was, if you like, a game changer for the cause of human dignity and equality."

It is apparent that, since he has been responsible for governing, as opposed to just talking on the floor of Parliament, Cameron has learned that ideas and beliefs have real consequences for the everyday plight of Britain's citizenry.

No doubt, last summer's riots in London led by ageing hippies, parlor anarchists, and young narcissists made a lasting impression on the prime minister. He now realizes that mayhem in British society has been due to "an absence of real accountability or moral code."

"For too long," Cameron confessed, "we have been unwilling to distinguish right from wrong" and that "moral neutrality or passive tolerance just isn't going to cut it anymore."

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[3] As to which see the author's *The Trouble With Dignitatis Humanae—Error Masquerading As Right*, at http://www.superflumina.our/PDF_files/dignitatis_humanae_1.pdf , especially under the sub-heading 'The Problem of Contradiction'.

To fix this mess, he called on his nation's churches to play a role in promoting the values that "define us as a nation." (Compare that to Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams' milquetoast call for Parliament to allow the use of elements of Sharia law in Great Britain.)

Finally, unlike many politicians who have accepted a mistaken notion that society has to be kept free of religious influences, Cameron said, "I have never really understood the argument some people make about the church not getting involved in politics. To me, Christianity, faith, religion, the Church and the Bible are all *inherently involved in politics* because so many political questions are moral questions." (emphasis added)

Refreshing candor, isn't it? And by the way, the sky did not fall in Britain following his blunt remarks.

A further bit of good news: Cameron understands that his nation has moved from a practical "live and let live" attitude to a disastrous abdication of responsibility: "Do whatever you please."

Specifically, he observes that "diversity" and multiculturalism policies have failed (a sentiment now shared by the leaders of France and Germany, though America seems not to have noticed yet).

Countless nanny state regulations, enforced by muddled bureaucrats, have created an entitlement society populated by "victims." Cameron would doubtless agree with British critic Theodore Dalrymple's: "The sturdy independent upright citizen has become a neurotic dependent frightened wreck."

What the Prime Minister may not realize, however, is his analysis of the current crisis of civilization is strikingly similar to Pope Benedict's.

Benedict has argued the European cultural crisis is due to the modern perception that the idea of man is nothing more than a cultural construct. Hence, the pope has written, "the splendor of the fact that he is the image of God—the source of his dignity and of his inviolability—no longer shines upon this man; his only splendor is the power of human capabilities."

The pope has often warned that this view has caused European governments to develop "a culture, that, in a manner hitherto unknown to humanity, excludes God from public awareness." The drive to marginalize God and his Church was most evident in the politically correct European Constitutional Treaty (rejected by voters in France and the Netherlands), which failed to mention Europe's Christian roots.

By expelling morality from law, relativism has triumphed in Europe. And this confusing ideology that defines liberty as license and has degraded the responsibility to do what is right into the right to do what is irresponsible, has, in the pope's judgment, led Europe into an "age of agnosticism of disenchantment, of presumption."

Whether or not Prime Minister Cameron is serious about restoring Christian values as the foundation of Britain's political and cultural identity remains to be seen. Nevertheless, the fact he was willing to discuss the matter in the public square, and sees eye to eye with Pope Benedict on the evils of nihilistic secularism suggests there is hope that other elected officials will also see the need to lead their people back to their spiritual roots.

Who knows? It might even catch on here.

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