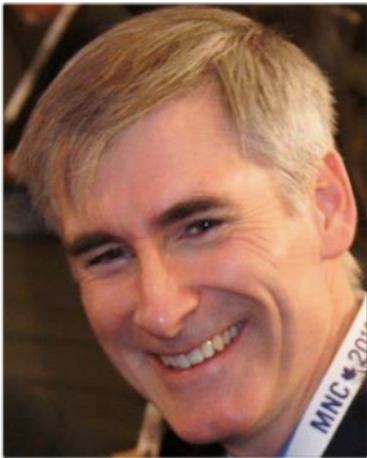


THE EVANGELICAL OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC SQUARE

The Christian Taliban, and Other More Plausible Threats David MacKenzie, February 18th, 2017

The political Left often prides itself on being cosmopolitan. And it is.



The Left genuinely appreciates the exotic locale— the differing culture. The Left has a genuine heart for greater global cooperation and unity.

However, the politics of the Left are not confined to a benign system of multi-cultural appreciation. The Left has goals. It has a desire to see liberal “norms”— like “equality”, for example, universally established. While possessing a certain liberality at its core, years of commingling with Marxist influences has made the Left significantly more Statist. Historically *laissez-faire* approaches have given way to a contemporary militancy; sexual and identity-based class struggle becoming two of its more deliberate wedge issues. As a consequence, the Left has far less

tolerance for deviation than it once had. Today, it appears more centralizing, more moralizing, and more all-encompassing.

It is becoming more totalitarian— a big claim, to be sure, but not without proponents. In fact, this is precisely the terminology that now retired Calgary **Bishop Henry invoked** to describe the 2016 NDP guidelines that attempted to subvert the collective conscience of private Christian schools. More recently, the *Canadian Constitution Foundation* is warning the public of an ongoing case involving a Calgary Jehovah's Witness community which will test whether the State has jurisdiction even over the **membership rolls** of a Kingdom Hall!

Does the Left even recall (much less recoil over) the fact that **not even Jesus** wanted to adjudicate everything?

It certainly doesn't seem so. So self-assured has the ideological Left become, in fact, that it barely comprehends why anyone would want any other competing "religion". Its academics assume the validity of a "secularization thesis"— the rather conceited belief that, as nations become more wealthy and educated, all religious belief will be abandoned. At that point, presumably, the Left's liberal norms will be universally (and religiously) accepted.

But hang on a moment...

The Muslim world is fundamentally defined, not by a particular admiration for western cosmopolitanism, or for liberalism, but by its own favourite book. This book, unlike another famous book, is not a book of persons, proverbs, poetry, and parables, but a book of oracles and directives. And just as the political Left has sought to publicly project itself, Islam also contains a measurable judicial willingness to project its religious aims on everyone else. In fact, the phrase "political Islam" seems reasonably descriptive, since Sharia law usually

accompanies the Islamic faith wherever the latter goes in any significant number.

As such, political Islam represents a system of life which is “total”, as well. Like the Left, its most zealous followers have a world order in mind, represented by the idea of a universal Caliphate, to which all people must be in submission.

Curiously, these days the advocates of the “universal norm” are meeting up with the proponents of the “universal caliphate” and strangely thinking that they’re friends. Some libertarians even argue that these two groups actually *are* friends insofar as both systems tend to prefer centralized and controlling Statist structures. Such analysis may be quite apt.

Both systems believe that legislation in one form or another is *the* answer for society. Both systems want to dominate, or even eradicate, the public square. Curiously, when groups representing these movements actually gather in public, they both seem to struggle with self- control, or bridling their political passions. Oddly, while different terms are targeted, both groups are remarkably offended by free speech. Both obsess over hate speech. Both have even adopted the strategy of the “pathologization of dissent”— frequently invoking such terminology as “homophobia” and “Islamophobia” to silence their critics— as though skeptics of either sexual progressivism or Islam couldn’t possibly be **anything other** than irrational.

Perhaps most disturbingly, both the Left and Islam share an open disdain for certain groups— Islam struggling with its derision for Israel and the Jews; the political Left increasingly suffering from contempt toward Biblically orthodox Christians.

These mutual affinities don’t explain everything, I’ll grant you. For instance, the recent tragic shooting in a Quebec mosque notwithstanding,

it must have taken serious adherence to cultural relativism for one recent Canadian Liberal member of parliament to be sworn in to his Office using **both the Quran and the Bible**. If such acts seem hopelessly conflicted, we need only thank the **theological liberalism** that makes such dubious gestures fashionable in the first place.

Yet, perhaps the most galling aspect of all these trends is that when any government chooses a different course of action— neither pandering to the creeping Statism of West nor East— suddenly Christians become the clear and present danger. This past week, *iPolitics* in Canada **published an article** that complained of “mindless Christian vitriol”, “Christian fanaticism”, and even “Christian Taliban” inside the Trump administration. Tellingly, this progressive author only criticizes the “Taliban” when they are of the **non-existent** Christian variety.

But it’s not just *iPolitics*; it’s the “venerable” *New York Times*. **The NYT recently indicated** that the Trump administration was trying to turn America into an “aggressively Christian country”⁷— even invoking the scare-mongering word “theocracy” in response to Trump’s limited moratorium on representatives of an eastern theocracy who happen to be **fleeing failed attempts** at establishing eastern theocracy.

Given the actual politics involved, these kinds of leftist ramblings are not just insulting to Christians and to political differentiation, in general, they are grotesque political theatrics— conflicted in values, and myopic in vision. Even worse, they represent a very unsettling animus.

Jesus came declaring the Kingdom of God. It is true. Yet, when a Samaritan village wouldn’t come out to meet him, he just kept walking. When his own hometown of Nazareth got offended at his words, he just kept walking. When a village in the Greek Decapolis got frightened of his ministry and asked him to leave, he got in a boat, and just kept sailing.

Of course, Christians can be political. I'm political. But, fundamentally, my model and founder is still Jesus Christ. And, plainly, his is neither the worldly politics of Marx nor Mohammed. The idea, therefore, that the "Christian Right" is inherently more publicly menacing than the Left's own Statist claims and theocratic friends, is preposterous.

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