



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on January 5, 2022

## The Truth Factor: A Major Reason for the West's Declining Christianity Is Rarely Recognized

Western Christianity has long been in decline. This makes the Occident very much an outlier as, unbeknownst to many, the faith is growing robustly worldwide. But while the latter reality gets precious little press, much has been written in recent times about the West's waning faith and the possible reasons for it. But what may be the main reason is almost universally missed.

The COVID-19 situation and how the church has reacted to it (Cult of the Body style) in the West hasn't helped its cause. The bigger picture, in the United States, is that the number of self-identifying Christians has declined 12 points since just 2012 while (ir)religious "nones" have picked up 10 points, Pew Research Center [reported](#) last month. Even more recently, on Sunday, Deutsche Welle (DW) ran a [piece](#) entitled "Churches in Germany need a change in outlook"; it informs that while the nation's Christian majority was taken for granted for centuries, members of Germany's two main churches (Catholic and Protestant) will at some point this year finally constitute less than half the country's 83 million population.

Article author Christoph Strack points out that 1990 Germany still boasted "58 million church members ... two-thirds of the population." Now, along with there being 4.5 million Muslims in the nation, "the biggest new religious buildings arising close to Berlin are a prestigious Buddhist temple and the 'House of One,' where Christians, Jews and Muslims will worship and pray under one roof," he writes. (Will they share the same dogmas, too?)

And one roof may be all they'll soon need, as dwindling "membership affects both Protestants and Catholics, the former just slightly more than the latter," Strack later states — "and in both cases there are many reasons."

"Sometimes the church is seen as too far left or right politically," he continues. "Sometimes it is about church stances on sexual morality or profound scandals such as sexual abuse. And some regional waves of departures can be linked to concrete events and names."

Of course, there's far more to it. Our now-secular culture attacks faith, implicitly and explicitly, at every turn; for example, via the marketing of vice and the message that virtue, as represented by Christianity,



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is outdated or even oppressive; via shallowly portrayed “science” that purports to refute faith (e.g., godless evolution); and so many other things. But then there’s that rarely voiced reason, which I’ll get to momentarily.

Really, Strack understates the case. I’ve spent much time in Germany and can say that any *visible* decline in faith there — or here or any-Western-where — is just making official what had long been reality. Englishman G.K. Chesterton noted in the early 1900s that very few Britons *really* believed in Christianity even then, and as social researcher and Barna Group president David Kinnaman [put it](#) in 2015, “As much of our previous research shows, Americans’ dedication to Jesus is, in most cases, a mile wide and an inch deep.” There’s a reason for philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche’s late 19th-century proclamation “God is dead” — and it’s not because *He* actually “died.”

For Strack’s part, his remedies are vague and remarkably unremarkable, which is perhaps unsurprising when the entity publishing you is, as DW is, funded by a government that enforces “hate speech” laws. But he did strike a quite modernist tone when writing that churches should bear in mind “that counseling and pastoral care has more to do with sharing suffering and stress than with simply being a moral authority that lays down what should or should not be done.”

Now, this smacks of the common lament, “I don’t need a sermon!” which, if I uttered it passionately, might only prove that I do. (People least in need of sermons generally don’t complain about them.) But if there *are* vast numbers of priests and ministers preaching fire and brimstone in socialistic Germany, the United States, or anywhere else in the West, I’ve missed it. “Social justice” talk is the norm. Yet perhaps the real reason people don’t want moral prescriptions brings us to the matter’s heart: They don’t believe in moral illness.

An analogy: Americans spend billions of dollars on nutritional programs. They’ll attend seminars and watch diet gurus expound upon how to live longer, live better, look younger, and beat hunger by adhering to a given regimen — and they’ll not only accept the do’s and don’ts of diet, but crave them.

So they *want* guidance on what is *bad* and what is *good* diet-wise and will readily embrace relevant restrictions. But they wouldn’t even tolerate someone who’d stand there and, imposing his own preferences, insist they choose one flavor over another. The difference is, of course, that they’ll accept the dictates of Truth but not of someone’s taste.

Yet consider what this nutrition-oriented sacrifice is predicated upon: the assumption that there’s not just taste but Truth in the area of diet — that *rules* of human nutrition exist and that violating them can bring serious consequences.

If people came to believe they didn’t exist, though, there would be no point in devoting time and treasure to nutritional “enlightenment”; if “junk food” couldn’t be “bad” and “natural” food “good” because there was no bad or good nutritionally, *everything* would be taste and, therefore, taste would be one’s only guide. Dietary relativism would carry the day and the prevailing credo would be, “If it tastes good, eat it.”

If you’re now thinking the same phenomenon would occur if moral relativism swept society, you really are thinking. That’s precisely what has happened, too.

As the aforementioned Barna Group [found](#) — in 2002 already, and it has only gotten worse — most Americans are moral relativists; meaning, they don’t believe in Truth (“absolute” by definition). Because of this, the researchers determined, people are [most likely](#) to make “moral” decisions based on *feelings*.



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Ergo, the credo “If it feels good, do it.”

But the point is that under this relativistic way of thinking, “moral” pronouncements assume the character of preference, or *taste*. You then not only won’t feel a need for a church’s “moral” guidance, but may actually be offended that someone would seek to foist his “tastes” on you. “Don’t impose your values on me!” becomes truly profound when believing they actually are just the *other guy’s* values — not God’s Truth-derived virtues.

And why would I constrain my instincts with Christian dictates, why would I govern my life by them, if everything is mere taste? I should then rather become a hedonist — or, at least, watch Joel Osteen.

In reality, our age’s relativism strikes at Christianity’s very heart. After all, the faith’s central message and the whole reason to accept Jesus is that He delivered salvation by dying for our sins. Yet if there’s no Truth, there *is no sin*.

Ergo, there was then no reason for Jesus’s crucifixion.

Thus, our time’s prevailing relativism renders the Calvary sacrifice incomprehensible.

You don’t need a savior if there’s nothing you need saving from; and you certainly don’t need a spiritual savior who promises nothing worldly if there are no spiritual threats (“The Devil and Hell are myths”) but profound worldly ones, such as climate change. Under this mentality, Greta Thunberg actually is more relevant than Jesus Christ.

This really is a matter of two sides talking past one another. You may preach Truth, but your audience may hear “taste.” And you won’t compete with the age’s decadent delights if your offerings are seen by chronological chauvinists as just another bland flavor well past its sell-by date.



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