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Inside Track

Iraqi Christians: “Perilously Close to Extinction”

In the days since the 2003 U.S.-led coalition toppled the Iraqi dictator and his Ba’ath Party, it’s become extremely dangerous to follow Jesus in Iraq. Always a minority in the country, the number of Christians in Iraq in 2003 hovered around 1.5 million. Today, not even two decades removed from Saddam’s overthrow, only about 250,000 remain, an 83-percent drop.

Right Reverend Bashar Warda, the archbishop of Erbil in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, laid out the situation in plain words to Christian leaders in the U.K., as reported by the BBC on May 23:

“Christianity in Iraq, one of the oldest Churches, if not the oldest Church in the world, is perilously close to extinction. Those of us who remain must be ready to face martyrdom.”

As the Christian persecution watchdog group Open Doors explains, Iraqi Christians face persecution from various groups, including the government, which has begun urging Christians to emigrate. But the Rt. Rev. Warda is focused on one group, which he calls an “existential” threat: Islamic State (ISIS) militants, who are determined to blot Christianity from the country by any means necessary.

“Our tormenters confiscated our present,” Warda said, “while seeking to wipe out our history and destroy our future. In Iraq, there is no redress for those who have lost properties, homes and businesses. Tens of thousands of Christians have nothing to show for their life’s work, for generations of work, in places where their families have lived, maybe, for thousands of years.”

Rt. Rev. Warda believes that a culture of political correctness in Great Britain has prevented Christian leaders in the country from speaking out against the ongoing genocide in Iraq. He believes that leaders are more concerned about being seen as “Islamophobic” than they are of the religious cleansing currently taking place.

“Will you continue to condone this never-ending, organized persecution against us?” Warda asked the assembled group of Christian leaders. “When the next wave of violence begins to hit us, will anyone on your campuses hold demonstrations and carry signs that say, ‘We are all Christians?’”

“Sky High” Piles of Trash Making Downtown Los Angeles Unlivable

Typhus is a disease born of filth, most commonly spread by contact with the feces of fleas. Last year, Los Angeles County reported a record 124 confirmed cases of the disease, enough to be classified as a full-blown outbreak. So far in 2019, more than 50 cases have been reported.

The reason? Fleas are attracted to rats and rats are attracted to huge piles of garbage, such as the ones that currently litter vast portions of downtown Los Angeles. The overburdened sanitation department simply doesn’t have the manpower necessary to keep up with the gigantic piles of filth that spring up quickly and are left to grow and rot for months at a time.

Long acknowledged as the homeless capital of America, the city’s Skid Row district is the epicenter of the trash problem. “Skid Row is the worst it’s been from a sanitation perspective and a safety perspective and a humanitarian perspective,” said Estela Lopez, the executive director of the Downtown Industrial District Business Improvement District.



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One of the city's most notorious trash piles is located on Ceres Avenue between the fashion district and the produce district in downtown Los Angeles. Known as the "Typhus Zone," the area has become a trash magnet.

The homeless living in the area are large contributors to the fetid mountains of waste in Los Angeles, but they are not the only suppliers of trash. Many businesses of the area are illegally dumping trash on the piles that often extend into the street and disrupt the traffic flow. Businesses break the law like this both out of convenience and because the city has switched to a new recycling system that essentially gives monopolies to waste-removal companies in certain areas.

The saddest part of all of this is that there are actual people living among these foul-smelling, trash-infested streets.

Perhaps the waste problem in Los Angeles is a bit of poetic justice. After all, the town's movie industry has been polluting the culture for decades. Maybe the culture is simply responding in kind.

Dumb and Dumber: Developed Countries Are Imperiled by Falling IQ

Studies show that in a number of Western countries, IQ scores are dropping notably.

Of course, there are legitimate questions about IQ tests. Nonetheless, "IQ tests in use throughout the world today really do seem to capture something meaningful and durable," wrote Evan Horowitz, of financial think tank FCLT Global, on May 22. "Dec-ades of research have shown that individual IQ scores predict things such as educational achievement and longevity. More broadly, the average IQ score of a country is linked to economic growth and scientific innovation."

While Horowitz states that average IQ hasn't yet dropped in the United States, "a range of studies using a variety of well-established IQ tests and metrics have found declining scores across Scandinavia, Britain, Germany, France and Australia."

What's the reason? "One potential explanation was quasi-eugenic," Horowitz relates. "As in the movie 'Idiocracy,' it was suggested that average intelligence is being pulled down because lower-IQ families are having more children.... Alternatively, widening immigration might be bringing less-intelligent newcomers to societies with otherwise higher IQs."

Yet while such factors would have to be relevant, there's more to it. After all, in a Norwegian study, "researchers observed IQ drops occurring within actual families, between brothers and sons — meaning the effect likely isn't due to shifting demographic factors as some have suggested."

"Instead, it suggests changes in lifestyle could be what's behind these lower IQs, perhaps due to the way children are educated, the way they're brought up, and the things they spend time doing more and less (the types of play they engage in, whether they read books, and so on)."

Horowitz relates that one "leading explanation is that the rise of lower-skill service jobs has made work less intellectually demanding, leaving IQs to atrophy as people flex their brains less."

Whatever the case, Horowitz quips, with IQ's significance to civilization, we'd better "pin down the precise reason IQ scores are dropping before we're too stupid to figure it out."



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Segregation Returning to American College Campuses

A troubling new study by the National Association of Scholars reveals that a number of American colleges have returned to the premise that separate but equal is, in fact, equal.

The study, released April 29, is entitled “Neo-Segregation at Yale” and is part of a larger project called Separate but Equal, Again: Neo-Segregation in American Higher Education.

The study cites numerous examples of this sort of neo-segregation: Forty-six percent (80 colleges out of the 173 surveyed) segregate student orientation programs, 43 percent (75 colleges) offer segregated residential arrangements, 72 percent (125) segregate graduation ceremonies, 68 percent of the colleges surveyed offer minority students an expense-paid segregated preview of college, 85 percent of the colleges have “multicultural centers,” and 34 percent had specifically black cultural centers.

The study’s authors found that the arrangements at these colleges “are ostensibly voluntary” but noted that it was not easy for students to opt out of those arrangements, perhaps intentionally: “The voluntary character of neo-segregation is illusory. Colleges encourage minority students when they are still in high school to apply as minority students and to capitalize on their minority identities. Many colleges have ‘diversity fly-ins’ where they invite minority students, usually at the college’s expense, to special segregated sessions that sell the college as an attractive destination. The students who attend as recognized minorities often receive benefits, sometimes in the form of extra financial aid: a practice that is illegal but still widespread. When these students arrive, they are often conscripted into a segregated orientation. Those steps are ‘voluntary’ in name only. It would take an unusually adroit and determined student to avoid them — and a very brave one.”

The authors are hopeful that their study will bring to light this widespread phenomenon so that these systems can be dismantled. However, they are aware that some readers may be delighted by the findings in the report, as neo-segregation under the guise of multiculturalism and diversity enrichment is, for many on the Left, the very goal.



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