



A 1955 Letter Reveals the Folly of the Left's Civilization-ending Return to Paganism

To modern ears, using the term “pagan” pejoratively may smack of a supposed medieval intolerance, conjuring up images of a robed monk praying in candlelight or, maybe, of a Bible-thumping 19th-century missionary. In fact, pagan status may be considered hip and edgy today, embraced by people who rarely if ever know that the ancient pagans never did or would’ve called themselves “pagans” (the word derives from a Latin term [meaning](#), in part, “incompetent soldier”). But fashions often don’t collide with facts.



Antwon McMullen/iStock/Getty Images Plus

And here’s a fact, warn critics: The West has been regressing to paganism, with leftists leading the charge. It may seem like mere triviality, too, but it actually can end civilization.

Treating this Tuesday, commentator Andrea Widburg [wrote](#) that for many on the Left, paganism “means frolicking naked through a nature unbesmirched by mankind’s fossil fuels, shaking rattles and coughing in WEF luminaries’ faces, and living a life unconstrained by those nasty biblical strictures about any morality.”

“In fact, pagan life was brutal beyond all modern imagining,” she continues. “We don’t want it back.”

But with history poorly taught and Hollywood twisting reality, imagining (misinformed by man’s habit of projection) is all people have, and they often imagine that the pagan of old was that mythical “noble savage.” Yet a 1955 letter Widburg cites, written by a journalist and *Reader’s Digest* roving editor named David E. Reed, tells a different tale. I’ll get to that momentarily.

Aside from the letter, Widburg mentions a book she’s currently reading that also inspired her commentary. “The book is Logan Lancing’s and James Lindsay’s [The Queering of the American Child: How a New School Religious Cult Poisons the Minds and Bodies of Normal Kids](#),” she relates. “What makes this book extraordinary is how clearly it explains that, while we think of Marxism as an economic system that today’s American leftists cleverly turned into a social phenomenon, that’s all wrong.”

“In fact, Marxism has always been a nature cult that seeks to undermine Western society entirely,” Widburg continues. “The workers of the world were just the starting point. According to Marx, capitalism wasn’t simply unfair. Instead, it stifled each person’s god-like creative ability to define his reality, thus freeing him” (according to the book; you can read an essay Lindsay wrote on the topic [here](#)).

As Widburg states and as I’ve often emphasized, post-modernism — and its ideological spawn, such as Marxism and today’s “leftism” — deny the existence of Truth (objective by definition). Leftism cannot



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on March 22, 2024

exist in an environment in which Truth is recognized and sought, but only flourishes if belief in Truth is destroyed. This is, too, why it viciously attacks, undermines, and discredits the West's purveyor of Truth: Christianity.

Since advancing paganism draws people away from Christianity, it facilitates leftism (note that [the WWII-era Nazis promoted it for the same reason](#)). But what would the world look like without Christianity?

Entrepreneur and philanthropist Joe Lonsdale — who is Jewish, mind you — touched on this, posting the [aforementioned letter](#) (below).

Predictably, Lonsdale got pushback (example below) from Christophobes and those imbued with the spirit of the age.

Lonsdale correctly points out that the testimonials to pagan savagery are so numerous and derive from so many sources that they are absolutely dispositive.

For example, the Aztecs practiced human sacrifice on a massive scale, and when “the Great Pyramid of Tenochtitlan was consecrated in 1487 the Aztecs recorded that 84,000 people were slaughtered in four days,” [related](#) historian Tim Stanley in 2011. Moreover, the Spanish conquistadors, so vilified by revisionist historians, saw some of their members [sacrificed and eaten](#) by Aztec allies. Know that there's much [archaeological evidence](#) of Mesoamerican brutality and [human sacrifice](#), too.

Realize, too, that Spanish explorer Hernán Cortés could only conquer the entire Aztec Empire with his relatively small number of conquistadors because 80,000 or more local tribesmen joined forces with him. Why? They'd been oppressed and brutalized by the Aztecs.

None of this was unusual, mind you. The world was rife with human sacrifice, cannibalism, and slavery until the Christianized West ended the savagery. The 2006 film *Apocalypto*, in a departure from Hollywood's revisionist bent, portrayed this well (videos below).

Of course, the knee-jerk leftist reaction is to scream “Racism!” The reality, though, is that going back far enough reveals that all of us had savage pagan ancestors. Again, the West only civilized the world (see my 2023 essay “[A World Without the West](#)”) because it itself became Christianized. It was Christianity that ended the Roman arena's brutality. It was Christianity that constrained the rapacious, post-Viking-invasion English knights. It was Christianity that ultimately ended slavery.

Unfortunately, we've now already regressed to much pagan morality. The ancient Spartans and [Carthaginians](#) killed/sacrificed infants, but our rampant abortion makes them look like pikers. The Roman nobility and other pagans were infamous for sexual perversion, but we're giving them a run for their money. And, now, asks *NewScientist*, “Is it time for a more subtle view on the ultimate taboo: cannibalism?” The site [writes](#):

Ethically, cannibalism poses fewer issues than you might imagine. If a body can be bequeathed with consent to medical science, why can't it be left to feed the hungry? Our aversion has been explained in various ways. Perhaps it is down to the fact that, in Western religious traditions, bodies are seen as the seat of the soul and have a whiff of the sacred. Or maybe it is culturally ingrained, with roots in early modern colonialism, when racist



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on March 22, 2024

stereotypes of the cannibal were concocted to justify subjugation. These came to represent the “other” to Western societies — and revulsion towards cannibalism became a tenet of their moral conscience.

Wow, how edgy, dude! Maybe we can next take a more “subtle view” on slavery, too. We just must shed those pesky “Western religious traditions.”

Certain things should not be “re-litigated.” We needn’t reopen debates on whether $\text{Force} = \text{Mass} \times \text{Acceleration}$, [trephining](#) is a valid medical practice, or $2+2=4$. Yet a bit like dialing back our technology to a state before metallurgy and the wheel, cultural devolutionaries would undo the fruits of millennia of accumulated wisdom and divine revelation — all so they can, without judgment or guilt (they hope), be a modern-day Marquis de Sade or play God.

Of course, we won’t really return to the old pagan state of being. We certainly can cultivate atavism and become moral barbarians, but we’d be savages with nuclear weapons, nanotechnology, and AI. No, that doesn’t sound like a situation that would end well — just like one that would end.



Subscribe to the New American

Get exclusive digital access to the most informative, non-partisan truthful news source for patriotic Americans!

Discover a refreshing blend of time-honored values, principles and insightful perspectives within the pages of "The New American" magazine. Delve into a world where tradition is the foundation, and exploration knows no bounds.

From politics and finance to foreign affairs, environment, culture, and technology, we bring you an unparalleled array of topics that matter most.



What's Included?

- 24 Issues Per Year
- Optional Print Edition
- Digital Edition Access
- Exclusive Subscriber Content
- Audio provided for all articles
- Unlimited access to past issues
- Coming Soon! Ad FREE
- 60-Day money back guarantee!
- Cancel anytime.

Subscribe