

Worldwide Religious Persecution

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“We are heading inexorably towards the greatest religious persecution of History.” These were the words of Prof. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira—founder of the Brazilian Society for the Defence of Tradition, Family and Property—in a conversation over lunch with a few friends in February 1994.

Today the list of incidents involving religious persecution, primarily of Christians, grows daily. There are many in-depth publications reporting these incidents such as the Church In Need's yearbook or Gudrun Kugler's report on religious persecution against Christians in Europe recently published by her *Observatory on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians in Europe*, as well as many others.

This grave state of affairs prompted Bishop Dominique Mamberti, Vatican Secretary for Relations with States, during the 18th Ministerial Council of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, to propose establishing a World Day Against Persecution and Discrimination of Christians.

Whenever I would tell my beloved mother about the latest aberrations of e.g. some anti-family, gender-mainstreaming politicians, she would ask: Why are they doing that? Why are they persecuting Christians? So you might also wonder why.

The reasons are many and depend on the religious and cultural background of the persecutors.

In the case of the open killings of Christians in the hands of Islamists in Africa, Asia, the Middle East or in Turkey, it is necessary to remember that Islam is a religion of submission (Islam means "submission"). And for them it doesn't matter whether this submission is internal and sincere or the external and fake submission of someone paying lip service to the Koran by saying "Allah is great and Mohammed is his Prophet" (like the French military troopers did when they delivered Mecca from a Shia terrorist commando in 1979 at the request of the king of Saudi Arabia).

Now external submission can also be obtained by means of violence. The Koran divides the world between "dar al Islam," the country of submission and "dar al harb," the country of war. And that is why every single page of the Koran calls to violence against the "infidels".

If we consider the Hindu persecution of Christians, I believe our brothers in India are primarily the victims of a nationalistic wave that is aggravated by the clash of civilisation between India's Muslims and Hindus that has been brewing since independence from British rule. Since Christians are a tiny, weak minority, it is easier to accuse them of "forced or bribed conversions" or to hold them responsible for the attacks against Hindu radical leaders which are in fact committed by other groups, as in Orissa.

A more subtle form of persecution is the one waged against Christians and other religions by the Communist States. The most obvious case is China. The Communist Party must control all aspects of political, economic, social and cultural life, including religion. To this end the Chinese government has the infamous State Administration for Religious Affairs, charged with overseeing the operations of China's five officially sanctioned religious organisations: Buddhists, Taoists,

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Islamists, Protestants, and the Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association. Even though part of an atheist and communist regime, the State Administration for Religious Affairs exercises full control over religious appointments, the selection of clergy, and even the interpretation of religious doctrine!

Islamists or Hindu persecutors will kill their religious opponents, but will never pretend to interpret their doctrine or select their clergy... Chinese communists openly do so. And the Castro regime in Cuba, with the support—alas!—of the Archbishop of Havana, does the same but in a more subtle way.

What is the reason for this Communist intervention in the internal affairs of religious bodies? The answer is to ensure that the registered religious organisations support and carry out the policy priorities of the Chinese Communist Party.

An example is the Maoist "one child policy." This is why blind dissident Cheng Guancheng and his family have been persecuted in such a cruel way and that has ended with his extradition to the USA, in spite of Obama's and Clinton's unsupportive attitudes.

As you see, this is a far more insidious form of religious persecution. Communism wants to turn religion into an instrument of its totalitarian policies and provokes internal divisions between faithful followers of a given religion and their fellow brothers-in-the-pew who are manipulated by infiltrators.

These situations give rise to "useful idiots" who think it is better to shake the deceitful hand extended by the authorities, under the pretext of thus being able to "spread the Gospel," rather than to courageously go underground.

And when the Shepherds themselves are those who shake hands with the Communist authorities, then you have the terrible situation we recently witnessed in Cuba where the Archbishop of Havana himself asked the police to repress Catholic dissidents clamouring for freedom.

How terrible it is to see how the Communists succeed in turning the shepherds of God's flock into accomplices of the wolves...

However, the first prize in this championship of deceit does not go to the Communists regimes, but to our own Secular, pseudo-democratic States in the West.

Because Communist regimes take control of the churches, appoint their clergy and impose State policy as a doctrine. Pseudo-secular States do not take open control of religious bodies, but nonetheless impose State policy as a doctrine, in the name of today's "Higher Law". And by this I mean so-called "human rights." Not the real, unchangeable, fundamental rights of the human person, but rather a subjective, relativistic and evolving version. A version that allows unthinkable aberrations like killing a baby in the name of a supposed right of the mother to do what she pleases with her own body—even going so far as to kill him after birth in the name of the right to health or happiness.

Or the supposed right to follow one's unnatural sexual orientation and to have all the privileges of a married couple, including the adoption of children for unnatural unions.

Or even the supposed right to define oneself as male or female at one's own discretion, regardless of one's physiological sex and without "sex-reassignment" surgery or hormonal treatment. All of this is

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done in the name of "the gender experience as each person feels it," as stated in the Gender Identity Law recently approved 55-0 by the Argentinean Senate.

This new Human Rights "dogma" and its by-product called "the fight against discrimination" pressures Christians to act in public life against their own convictions, even though all democratic constitutions pay lip service to the right to conscientious objection.

Thus Christian hospitals and health personnel have to perform immoral acts such as sterilisation surgeries or provide abortifacients. Christian public servants have to bless unnatural unions as marriages. Christian schools have to admit openly homosexual or transsexual teachers (in Vienna, even Parish Councils have to admit them, not by order of the State but by Cardinal Schoenborn's "merciful" heart!). Parents have to allow their children to be brainwashed with immoral sex education programs. And if they decide to educate them at home, the Education Department will ensure their teaching is not "homophobic"...

In his message for the 2011 World Day of Peace, Pope Benedict XVI denounced this insidious form of religious persecution in a diplomatic way by saying that he hopes that "in the West, and especially in Europe, there will be an end to hostility and prejudice against Christians because they are resolved to orient their lives in a way consistent with the values and principles expressed in the Gospel."

The irony of all this is that we are supposed to live in an era of human history considered to be the most "tolerant" ever! What we have instead is the "dictatorship of relativism" many times denounced by the Pope.

This "dictatorship of relativism" is the worst and most insidious form of religious persecution, because it forces us Christians to cultivate an "attitude of openness," a positive interest for "alternative lifestyles," to accept someone else's "diversity," to "enrich" our personality with his opposing viewpoint. A Swiss philosopher even said that a truly tolerant person, through imagination, tries to interiorly mimic the way of reasoning, the subjective "truth" and "good" (in between quotes), and the lifestyle of the other while admitting to his own shortcomings.

Such an internal renunciation of our own convictions is tantamount to apostasy. Because Faith consists precisely in firmly holding as true, on God's own authority, everything He has revealed to us. This is incompatible with a permanent, or even transitory, attitude of voluntary doubt.

Secularist "tolerance" thus incites us to abandon our Christian faith in order to be part of the "festival of diversities" that our modern democracy pretends to be. In so doing, the modern Secularist State unleashes a more insidious persecution than that of the Islamists, radical Hindus or even Communist regimes.

Instead of succumbing to this languorous, deceptive and Siren-like melody of "tolerance," we must fight back with increasing ardour. We must fight back with the unmitigated truth against an enemy that is gradually showing its true face. We must fight within the legal framework, but time is running out.

We must fully realise that we have a responsibility not only to ourselves, but to society as a whole. We understand the danger of this anti-Christian persecution—at times open and at others veiled—through policies that attempt to eliminate God from the public square. These policies will turn our society into an inhuman world, a world which is against life, against nature, against anything that

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Christian Civilisation has established over the last 2000 years. This will be the most totalitarian regime ever, even worse than the totalitarian regimes we thought we had overcome in the 20th century.

When we celebrate the family here in Madrid, we celebrate the very heart of what is at stake. A Christian society, a Christian civilization is made up of Christian families and families of families. The disappearance of Christian families leads to a barbarian society, to a non-civilisation.

We must take this cause to the streets. Pope Benedict repeatedly asked us Catholics to be visible, to bear witness to our faith in public. We must motivate the scattered and silenced good ones. We must win over those that waver by showing them the reactions of the pseudo-tolerant, full of hatred anti-family, anti-life lobbies.

This is a fight for the common good. It is a fight for the one and only true civilisation, that is, Christian Civilisation whose remnants we admire around us today. These remnants should spur us to action because our great aim, our great ideal is to build a Christian civilisation from the ruins of the modern world just as the medieval world arose from the ruins of the Roman world.

This is not a dream; this is not a fantasy for we have the support of Heaven. Our most holy and heavenly mother the Blessed Virgin Mary promised us at Fatima that her Immaculate Heart will triumph in the end. But she wants our help. So let us get up and move and she will add whatever is missing.

“Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth and having on the breastplate of justice” as St. Paul says (Eph 6:14). Let us walk, nay run onto the battlefield! This is a battle between Heaven and Hell. If we want to prevent Hell on Earth for our families, then let us raise our eyes to Heaven with confidence and fight!