WEEK 52, 2019

THE EPOCH TIMES

President and CEO of College **Board David Coleman**, creator of the Common Core curriculum, speaks onstage during The New York Times **Schools for Tomorrow** conference, in New York on Sept. 17, 2015.

COMMON CORE, STILL IN PLACE, NATIONALIZED EDUCATIONAL

QUACKERY

See Page 2

NEILSON BARNARD/GETTY IMAGES FOR NEW YORK TIMES

Common Core, Still in Place, Nationalized Educational Quackery

The magnitude of the negative effects [of Common Core] tend to increase over time. C-SAIL researcher Mengli Song



ALEX NEWMAN

This is part 11 in a series of articles examining the origins of public education in the



Perhaps nothing has done more to rouse Americans from their slumber on government education than the so-called Common Core standards, which

were quietly imposed on the nation by the leftist Obama administration using tax-funded "bribe" money and arm-twisting. People were furious. Trump called the standards "a total disaster." But the anger only scratched the surface of the

Despite the public outrage over the dumbed-down standards and the centralization of education in the hands of federally funded elites, the toxic scheme is still firmly entrenched across America. Often under new names, the Common Core wreaked havoc on an already dismal education system created by collectivists. The devastation continues, too, as federally funded research on the program has revealed.

The outrage expressed by American voters about this has been intense. In 2014, as the battle was reaching its climax, the annual PDK/Gallup poll on attitudes toward public Americans opposed Common Core, while Obama's executive orders and EPA reguabout one third supported it. President Donlations as reading material. The standards of it, seizing on that fury to propel him into care how poorly written they were," added

"Common Core, No Child Left Behind, and Race to the Top are all programs that take decisions away from parents and local school boards," he said. "These programs allow the progressives in the Department of Education to indoctrinate, not educate, our kids. What they are doing does not fit the American model of governance. I am totally against these programs and the Department of Education. It's a disaster. We cannot continue to fail our children-the very future of this nation."

He was right, of course. And it was hardly a mystery why that message resonated with so many. Teachers, parents, and taxpayers were all outraged. Common Core had become politically toxic like nothing before in the history of American public education-and for good reason.

First of all, in flagrant violation of the U.S.

Constitution, the scheme centralizes control over education at the national level. Public surveys reveal that just a tiny fringe minority of Americans–about 15 percent–believe that the federal government ought to dictate what is taught in the classroom. The overwhelming majority believe that local,

elected school boards should be in charge. In part 10 of this series on education, the history behind the federal government's gradual takeover of education was explored. Common Core, then, was not beginning of the federalization of education, and it almost certainly will not be the end. In fact, it has often been described as just a "symptom" of the problem, rather than the problem itself.

Another major issue with the standards is that Common Core makes a mockery of real education. To understand just how atrocious the standards are from an educational perspective, consider that the only two subject-matter experts on the Common Core Validation Committee both refused to sign off on the scheme.

Dr. Sandra Stotsky, professor of education emerita at the University of Arkansas, served as the only English-Language Arts expert on the committee. She vehemently rejected it. One of the biggest problems, she said, is that the Common Core "reduces both literary study and the opportunity for kids to develop critical thinking skills."

Among other concerns, Stotsky blasted schools revealed that almost two-thirds of the replacement of great literature with ald Trump ran on a platform of getting rid "were written hastily by people who didn't

Common Core, No Child Left Behind, and Race to the Top ... programs allow the progressives in the Department of Education to indoctrinate, not

President Donald Trump

It's a disaster.

educate, our kids. ...

(Below) The Lyndon B. Johnson Building, headquarters of the U.S. Department of Education in Washington, D.C., on Aug. 12, 2006.

(Bottom) President Obama signs the "Every Student Succeeds" Act, which rewrites the "No Child Left Behind", at the Eisenhower **Executive Office Building** in Washington on Dec. 10.



JIM WATSON/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



the English expert, who is not opposed to national standards, per se, but has testified against Common Core in legislatures across

The absurd Common Core "math" standards, meanwhile, have been the subject of endless jokes. But unfortunately, the largescale handicapping of America's youth is no laughing matter. The only math expert on the Common Core Validation Committee, Dr. James Milgram of Stanford University, spoke out clearly and forcefully against the

"The Core Mathematics Standards are written to reflect very low expectations," he explained. "They are as non-challenging as possible with extremely serious failings.' Indeed, there are "actual errors" in some of the math, he said, adding that the standards "are neither mathematically correct nor especially clear."

Even some of the people who worked on writing the standards have spoken out. Dr. Louisa Moats, an internationally renown reading expert who served as a contributor to the Common Core's literacy standards, for instance, has been warning that children will not learn to read properly using the national scheme. "My warnings and protests were ignored at the time," said Dr. Moats in

And yet, despite those warnings and many others from leading experts, the educational establishment–backed by endless supplies of federal tax money and billions from Microsoft billionaire Bill Gates-proceeded to impose it on America anyway. Even undei the Trump administration, those same standards remain firmly in place. Marketed as a way to make Americans

"college and career ready," the opposite would have been closer to reality. The ACT standardized test results released this year, for instance, revealed that college-bound students in America are doing worse than they have ever done in the ACT examina-

And just as critics warned, American students-already far dumber and less educated than previous generations—have continued to suffer academically as Common Core accelerated the destruction of education. The latest National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) revealed that over twothirds of U.S. 8th graders are not even proficient in any core subject.

The federal government knows this well, too. In a federally funded study by the Center on Standards, Alignment, Instruction and Learning (C-SAIL) released this year, researchers found results they did not expect. In short, the investigation concluded that Common Core produced "significant negative effects" in both English and math. "The magnitude of the negative effects [of Common Core] tend to increase over time," added Mengli Song, one of the researchers

Other experts have highlighted the indoctrination component, too. Tenured English Professor Dr. Duke Pesta, director of FreedomProject Academy and one of the nation's leading experts on Common Core, has delivered hundreds of speeches about the standards all over America that have been viewed millions of times online. And his assessment could hardly be worse.

He told the Epoch Times that one of the goals of Common Core's creators was to indoctrinate American children into progressive ideology. "Common Core-now rebranded state by state to fool people into thinking it has been removed—is a key part of a broader movement to transform American education," explained Dr. Pesta, who hosts popular education-focused Doctor Duke Show.

"Common Core is more than just weak standards: it is also bound up with the curriculum, pedagogy, teacher training,



President and CEO of College Board David Coleman, creator of the Common Core curriculum, speaks onstage during The New York Times Schools for Tomorrow conference, in New York on Sept. 17, 2015.

high-stakes standardized testing, and out explaining what sort of fortune-telling data gathering so typical of the progressive and statist push to override traditional knowledge-based education with left-wing and socialist 'social justice' education," he continued. "Social justice education transforms public school classrooms into places of radical political advocacy that appropriates the prerogatives of parents and seeks to re-

socialize students along progressive lines." In his talks, Dr. Pesta includes seemingly endless examples of this sort of dangerous indoctrination from Common Core-aligned textbooks and materials. Fake history. Fake science. Social-justice propaganda in math questions. Outrageous "reading" assignments. Virtually every semi-involved parent of a public-school child these days has

The history of Common Core is deliberately was officially created at the direction of the federally funded, D.C.-based trade groups known as the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO)

Then the Obama administration used "bribe" money, as critics put it, from the so-called "stimulus" package-all combined with threats and even waivers from the Bush-era "No Child Left Behind" scheme-to force states to accept it. Virtually every state caved. And even in the handful of states that resisted, Common Core has entered through the back door.

Common Core was crafted by "Achieve, Inc.," a shadowy organization controlled by U.S. and global elites whose top leaders had openly advocated abolishing local school districts and nationalizing control of all education. This same group also created the "Next Generation Science Standards" that are so outrageous, they do not even include a reference to the scientific method.

But the road to nationalized and even globalized education did not begin with Common Core. In fact, before that was even dreamed up, the federal government used Goals 2000 under President Bill Clinton, followed by President George W. Bush's No Child Left Behind, to help centralize education in America.

Before those two schemes, President George H.W. Bush pushed "America 2000," dubbed "a long-term national strategy" to accomplish "education goals" outlined by Bush. At one of the summits peddling the scheme, occultist Alice Bailey disciple Shirley McCune, who worked on the effort with the U.S. Department of Education and the National Education Association (NEA), explained that it was not just about education, but rather about the "total restructuring of the society."

"We have moved into a new era," she said, boasting about the ongoing "human resource development restructuring" taking place. One of the two main functions of schools, McCune continued, "to prepare students not for today's society, but for a society that's 20, 30, 40, 50 years down the road." "So we have to anticipate what the future is, and then move back, and figure out what it is we need to do today," she added, with-

methods might be used. "That's called anticipatory socialization, or the social-change function of schools."

Most incredibly, perhaps, she revealed that "what the revolution has been in curriculum is that we no longer are teaching facts to children." That is because it is "almost impossible for us to guess the kinds of facts that they will need," McCune said, without explaining how children would be able to think or have a frame of reference without knowing facts.

In an upcoming piece in this series, the nexus between Common Core and the ongoing globalization of education will be explored in much more depth. Interestingly, the U.N.'s "World Core Curriculum" is based on the teachings of the same occultist who inspired McCune, Alice Bailey, according opaque, too. To skirt federal statutes pro- to former U.N. Assistant Secretary-General hibiting direct U.S. government meddling Robert Muller, who wrote the U.N.'s global

Separately, another upcoming piece in this series will examine the explosion in data gathering and data mining by government. It is impossible to truly understand Common Core and what is happening in education without understanding the massive amounts of personal information on children being vacuumed up by authorities and the crony companies that work with them. For now, it is important that Americans understand a few important facts: Com-

Nine year old Tez Taylor (C) asks President George W. Bush a question during a bill signing ceremony of the "No Child Left Behind" Act, at the Hamilton High School in Hamilton, Ohio, on Jan. 8,

2002.

Often under new

Core wreaked

names, the Common

havoc on an already

dismal education

system created by

collectivists. And

t|he devastation

continues...

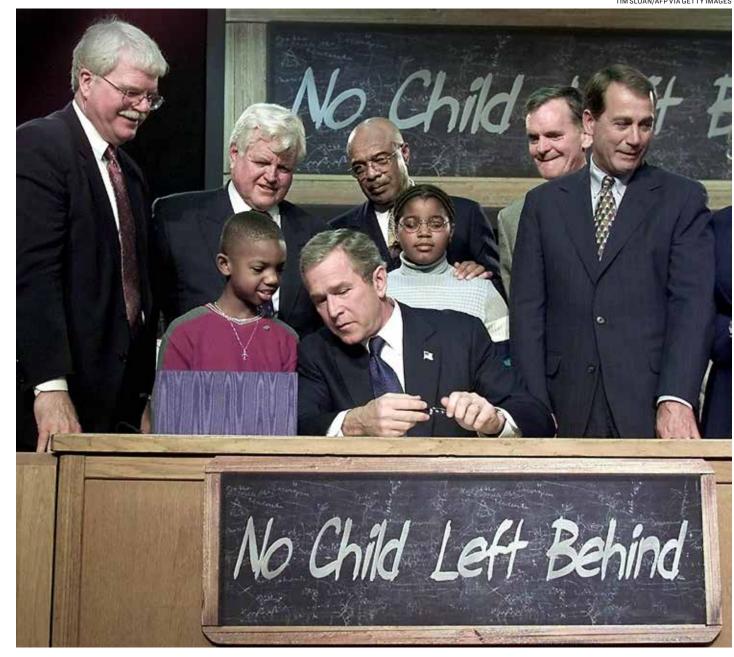
mon Core is still very much alive, it is still handicapping children on an industrial scale, promoters hope to ensnare non-government-school children as well, and there are no plans to get rid of it on the horizon. All of that is a documented fact. But it is also crucial to realize that Com-

mon Core itself is not the problem. Instead, it is a symptom of the problem that has been explored in the previous 10 parts of this series. It is merely the next step forward in "fundamentally transforming the United States of America," as Obama put it.

Getting rid of Common Core would be great But unfortunately, it will not fix the government education system that is destroying America by destroying the nation's children. That will require much more fundamental reforms that get to the root of the problem.

Alex Newman is an award-winning international journalist, educator, author, "Crimes of the Educators: How Utopians *Are Using Government Schools to Destroy* America's Children." He also serves as the CEO of Liberty Sentinel Media and writes for diverse publications in the United States and abroad.

Views expressed in this article are the opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Epoch



4 AMERICAN CROSSROADS THE EPOCH TIMES Week 52, 2019 THE EPOCH TIMES Week 52, 2019 THE EPOCH TIMES Week 52, 2019

Christianity and Communism, Yesterday and Today

DIANA WEST



Commentary Christianity Today, the

magazine founded by Billy Graham in 1956, has called, in this week before Christmas, for President Donald Trump's removal

from office.

Franklin Graham quickly released a statement on Twitter in reply: "I hadn't shared who my father @BillyGraham voted for in 2016, but because of @CYMagazine's article, I felt it necessary to share now. My father knew @realDonaldTrump, believed in him & voted for him. He believed Donald J. Trump was the man for this hour in history for our nation."

It is a beautiful statement; however, I never for a moment doubted that Billy Graham voted for President Trump. Graham's vote for Trump was a given for important reasons and deep beliefs, which, independent of any election, are explored in "The Red Thread: A Search for Ideological Drivers Inside the Anti-Trump Conspiracy."

The relevant chapter, reprinted below minus endnotes, follows an extensive analysis of James Comey's lifelong homage to Marxist theologian Reinhold Niebuhr as the significant influence on his thinking, starting in his college days, when Comey describes himself as having been a communist. Comey moved to "whatever I am now," as he put it to New York Magazine in 2003, but his affinity for Niebuhr remains unchanged to this day.

Chapter 16. The Longest War

It was the 1980s, and Jerry Falwell and his Moral Majority organization were the perfect foils for James Comey to use in his senior honors thesis to extol the socialist teachings of his hero, Niebuhr (1892-1971). In a previous generation, Comey might have juxtaposed the evangelizing Billy Graham (1918-2018) with Niebuhr's Bible-as-myth approach to "social action." Earlier still, Comey might have compared the anti-New Deal, anti-Communist Norman Vincent Peale (1898-1993) with the socialist and "anti-anti-Communist" Niebuhr.

It should become clear that we are looking at a theological and political divide in American Protestantism that is an old story. What is especially relevant to the "red thread" is that so, too, is Donald Trump's place in it.

ternationalists" vs. the nationstaters; the "progressives" vs. the patriots; the socialistic vs. the nationalistic. Now that Donald Trump is president, the first to reach this highest office from the ranks of "America"

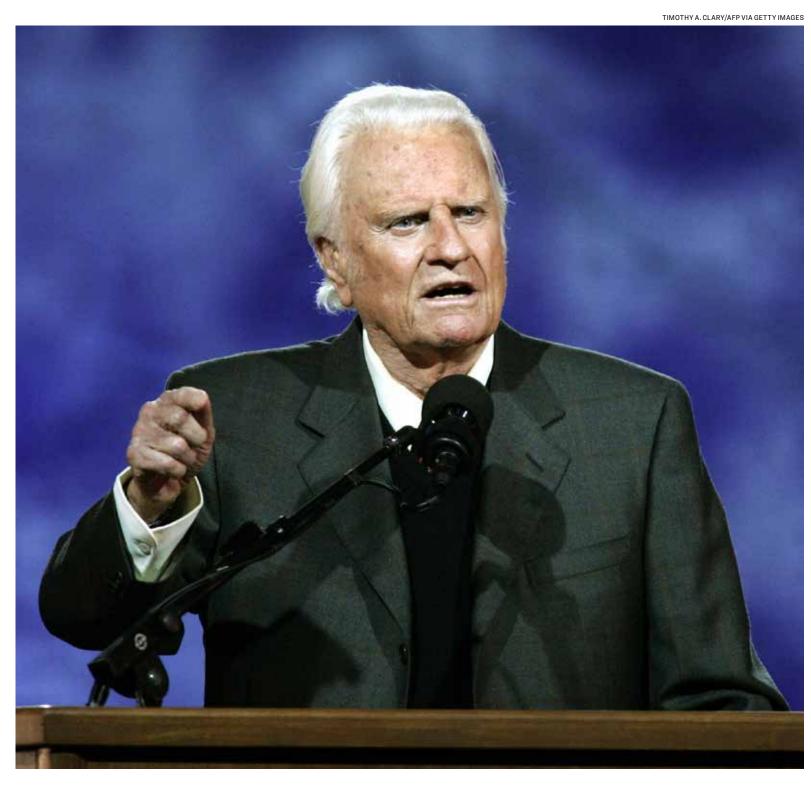
Norman Vincent Peale and Billy Graham both were Trump family favorites. Donald Trump has spoken fondly of taking in Graham sermons with his revered father, Fred, who, Donald remembers, attended "the crusades" at Yankee Stadium. On the 2016 campaign trail at Liberty University, founded by Jerry Falwell in 1971, Donald Trump recalled watching Jerry Falwell's TV show, The Old-Time Gospel Hour. When Billy Graham died in 2018, Donald Trump attended his funeral; five living former presidents did not.

According to the New York Times, it was Peale's church, Marble Collegiate, that the Trump family "gravitated to" in the 1960s. Peale and Donald would develop a warm friendship. Peale officiated at Donald and Ivana's wedding (1977) and also at the wedding of Donald's sister Maryanne. In 1988, Donald hosted Peale's 90th birthday party at the Waldorf-Astoria. As the Washington Post put it, "The Trump and Peale clans have [a] history."

It's easy to imagine heavy Niebuhrian eyerolling over this "history," and not a little choking on the Chardonnay and canapés. Back in the day, things could even get confrontational, as in 1955, when Niebuhr and several fellow "progressives"-of-the-cloth launched a vicious attack in a national magazine on Peale and Graham both. Their attack drew a public rebuke from President Eisenhower's pastor, the Rev. Edward L.R. Elson, who accused these pastoral critics "of 'sneering' and shallow thinking," according to a news report.

Their differences were not theological only. In August 1948, Niebuhr was counseling Christians that the churches could not take a "negative attitude" toward communism. "Churches everywhere," Niebuhr stated, "had to recognize our involvement in injustices and insecurities Communism seeks or promises to cure." In January 1951, Peale was carrying a very different message to the faithful: "The future belongs to Christ not Communism." These were Cold War battle cries across the pro-Communist/anti-Communist divide.

Trump's connection to Peale, then, not replace another (Hitler), and (3) ensure the



only informs the Comey-Niebuhr/Trump-Peale divide, but also throws into relief the larger national cleavage between Global Elites and the America First "Deplorables." This is another old war in America—the "internationalists" vs. the nationstaters; the "progressives" vs. the patriots; the socialistic vs. the nationalistic. Now that Donald Trump is president, the first to reach this highest office from the ranks of "America First," this clash may never have been so highly charged.

For much of the 20th century, Norman Vincent Peale was the nationally renowned pastor of Marble Collegiate in Manhattan. In addition to uplifting, spellbinding sermons, Peale was known for being outspoken in his opposition to all varieties of collectivism, from the socialism of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal, which he sermonized against as a dire threat to liberty, to Soviet communism.

"No one has more contempt for communism than I do," he wrote in his 1952 megaseller, The Power of Positive Thinking. In the late 1930s, he fought against the explosion of executive powers that undergirded Roosevelt's "New Deal," serving as secretary of a non-partisan group called the National Committee to Uphold Constitutional Government. This committee came together under newspaper editor Frank E. Gannett to oppose Roosevelt's infamous Supreme Court packing plan and other executive branch encroachments that were destroying the Constitution's "checks and balances." The same concerns drove opposition to FDR's decision to run for an unprecedented third term in 1940, and the president's landmark foreign aid proposal known as Lend Lease, which arrived as a bill in Congress at the beginning of 1941, eleven months before Pearl Harbor.

In most histories, Lend Lease is a barely noticed stepping-stone to America's entry into World War II; at the time, however, the debate was loud and acrimonious. The vast war-making powers the bill gave the president galvanized its opponents in a quickly growing, grass-roots movement known as America First. Caricatured today, this anti-interventionist organization drew in a wide swath of Americans from both political parties, from all walks of life, from Frank Lloyd Wright to Gerald Ford to Kingman Brewster to Norman Thomas to Charles Lindbergh. Their main agenda was (1) steer clear of another European war and thereby save young American lives, (2) avoid building up one totalitarian monster (Stalin) to

Evangelist Billy Graham delivers his message during the Billy Graham Crusade at Flushing Meadows Park in New York on June 24, 2005.



Former FBI director James Comey answers questions during an interview forum at the Washington Post in Washington, DC, on May 8, 2018.

forum at the Washington Post in Washington, DC, on May 8, 2018.

Donald Trump understood there was a difference between the interests of global elites and those of ordinary Americans ... The ensuing struggle, then, is not political; it is existential. government's three branches survived the process "co-equal." They failed on all counts.

Peale, as secretary of the National Committee to Uphold Constitutional Government, strongly opposed Lend Lease on well-defined constitutional grounds. Lend Lease expanded presidential powers to a point where the chief executive could send military support of any kind to any country he deemed "vital to the defense of the United States." There were no limits. No president had ever even sought such powers. But there was even more to Lend Lease than that—and here is where the red thread pokes up and down like a hem-stitch through the rest of the "American century."

Lend Lease was not just anti-Constitutional; it was revolutionary. This will not surprise anyone who learns that the legislation's godfathers were Armand Hammer, Harry Hopkins, and Harry Dexter White—all three men pro-Soviet to the core, all three men variously believed to be Soviet agents, although such shocking revelations came later. We may now regard Lend Lease as the founding document of the "new world order" that arose in the aftermath of World War II, its heaviest cornerstones laid by covert Soviet agents Alger Hiss at the United Nations and Harry Dexter White at the International Monetary Fund.

The sea change came in making "any country's defense vital" to our own. Secretary of State Edward Stettinius wrote:

To favor limited aid to the allies as an expedient device for saving friendly nations from conquest was one thing. To declare that the defense of those nations was "vital" to our own national security was quite another. If we adopted the bill with those words, we would, in effect, declare the interdependence of the American people with the other freedom-loving nations of the world ... [emphasis added].

We did indeed adopt the Lend-Lease bill with those words (notwithstanding that a major recipient of Lend Lease was the Soviet Union—definitely not a "freedom-loving nation"). This makes March 11, 1941, the day the Lend-Lease bill passed, America's Interdependence Day.

Norman Vincent Peale correctly warned that Lend Lease would give the president "the power to commit the American people to any war anywhere, and without action by Congress." Lend Lease itself may have expired but its powers have lived on in an unconstrained Executive. Such "interdependence" is the basis of the "liberal postwar order," and the "neoconservative" mission

we have known in our time as "nationbuilding."

What was once controversial draws little comment today. When a President of the United States declares the destinies of foreign peoples to be "vital" to that of the United States, whether in Saudi Arabia (FDR), Iraq (Bush), or Afghanistan (Obama), he is merely carrying out the "internationalism," or "globalism" that has been the primary purpose of U.S. foreign policy since FDR. Then along came Trump.

Suddenly, the ideological mission of postwar America—as FDR put it, "our responsibility to build a democratic world"—was in peril.

In his first foreign policy address on the 2016 campaign trail, Trump identified as "dangerous" the "idea that we could make western democracies out of countries that had no experience or interests in becoming a western democracy." He promised: "We're getting out of the nation-building business."

To that end, he declared he was looking for a new set of foreign policy experts with practical ideas "rather than surrounding myself with those who have perfect résumés but very little to brag about except responsibility for a long history of failed policies and continued losses at war."

For Washington's entrenched and heretofore empowered elites in both parties-

Donald Trump understood there was a difference between the interests of global elites and those of ordinary Americans; there were the "progressives" with their plans for the world, and there were the patriots with their hopes for the wall. It was borderless free trade vs. American manufacturing. In many ways, it was Niebuhr vs. Peale all over again. The ensuing struggle, then, is not political; it is existential.

Where did they come from, these Niebuhrian elites? Not from Marble Collegiate. Not from Queens. Not from Trump Tower, either. It was in all of those places where Donald Trump, influenced by Peale, developed his own "power of positive thinking" and his anti-communism, too. Andrew Bostom points us to Trump's 2000 book, The America We Deserve, for an expression of Trump's anti-communist outlook.

Referring to what he designated "oppressive Communism," Trump championed "western style democracy" as his desired replacement for Communist totalitarianism in the collapsed former Soviet Union. Trump also decried the "disgrace" Castro's Communism had wrought upon Cuba:

Bostom writes:

Trump wrote:
Terror reigns, the police are unrestrained;
beatings and citizen disappearances are
common, and all free expression outside

the Communist Party is crushed.
Also in 2000, by the way, the late Sen. John
McCain favored "a road map towards normalization of relations [with Cuba] such as
we presented to the Vietnamese."

Trump was unrelenting, too, about the dangers posed by Communist China, notwithstanding eight years of Clinton "collusion" with the PRC military, including the exchange of U.S. military and technological secrets for Chinese campaign contributions. Just as Obama would oversee Russia's entry into the WTO, Clinton brought about China's entry into the WTO, kick-starting the Communist state's development into an economic and financial rival to the United States.

Trump wrote:

Where I break rank with many business colleagues and foreign-policy gurus is in my unwillingness to shrug off the mistreatment of China's citizens by their own government. My reason is simple: These oppressive policies make it clear that China's current government has contempt for our way of life. It fears freedom because it knows its survival depends on oppression. It does not respect individual rights. It is still, at heart, a collectivist society. As such it is a destabilizing force in the world and should be viewed that way. [Emphasis added.]

A similar lack of respect for individual rights and a collectivist heart are innate to the anti-Trump conspirators, who are themselves a destabilizing force inside our constitutional government.

Yes, James Comey may have "moved from" his Communist position in his college days, but he never changed sides in the very long war that pits socialism and collectivism vs. free markets and liberty, and godless Communism vs. God-fearing Christianity.

Neither did Donald Trump.

Diana West is an award-winning journalist and author, whose latest book is "The Red Thread: A Search for Ideological Drivers Inside the Anti-Trump Conspiracy."

Views expressed in this article are the opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Epoch

Church Removes Painting Depicting Gay Garden of Eden for Not Being Politically Correct Enough

CELIA FARBER



Commentary
Political Correctness
is not one "thing" but
it has one way—one
mechanism and path.
To understand its na-

ture is to understand some thing never at rest. In biology, maybe a spirochete ("a flexibly spirally twisted bacterium") provides an illustration. It craves newly conquered terrain, or flesh, to penetrate, in order to live.

Political correctness, if imagined in the gestalt of a person, does not stand back, having swept the house clean, lean on its mighty broom, and say: "There now! It looks clean. Let's do

something else."

It searches instead for new imaginary moral dirt, (insults to "identity") in perpetuity. It expresses itself thus

and only thus.

The place in the world where this PC monster organism thrives best is Sweden, where it has become the national religion, displacing Lutheran Christianity.

It has quite literally overtaken the national Church of Sweden, and the details will shock you. In late November, a painting by radical LGBTQ artist, and lesbian, Elisabeth Ohlson Wallin, called "Paradise," featuring gay/trans sexuality in the Garden of Eden, was proudly unveiled in St. Paul's Church in Malmo, at the altar, on the first of Advent.

"Sweden's only LGBT altarpiece is received in St. Paul's Church in Malmo," the headlines beamed with pride, (no pun intended.). The church was built in 1882. Wallin's painting was hanging in a private home, when two Malmo Priests begged for it to be hung in the altar, after it was donated by the owner. St. Paul's agreed, and was expecting a public relations triumph for the ages.

St. Paul's pastor, Sofia Tunebro, wearing a satin Rainbow stole, told a reporter the painting represented "inclusion for all," and that it was in the tradition of Luther, to be democratic, as befitting her Church, built round, to signal democracy. She spoke of how it would have pleased Luther himself to show such an open and positive attitude toward human sexuality, and resonated with the work of Renaissance painter Lucas Cranach.

"I think countless people will breathe a huge sigh of relief that they are finally represented in the Church," Tunebro told Expressen. "No matter how much we preach about how people all have the same value, we need concrete images we can identify with. No matter who we love



The painting "Paradise" by Elisabeth Ohlson Wallin.

or how we identify ourselves, we are all included in God's love."

The painting features racially mixed gay and lesbian couples, naked, and a transsexual woman in a tree wielding a snake. That transsexual would become the deal breaker.

Within a few days, protests rang out that the depiction of the transsexual as the snake was transphobic. (The transsexual is interacting with the snake in the painting.) Surely this is a peak event in PC.

The place in the world where this [Political Correctness] monster organism thrives best is Sweden, where it has become the national religion, displacing Lutheran Christianity.

After intense and anguished soul searching, within two weeks of being unveiled, the painting was taken down. The explanation from the church was that the snake, representing evil, was bound up with the transsexual in the paining, implying that trans people are evil.

A press release from the Church, stressing that the painting itself depicting gay sexuality in the Garden of Eden was "totally uncontroversial," and reasserting its commitment to the LGBT cause, stated: "But there is the Serpent, which traditionally stands for evil, and it also turns out to be a trans person, which may be interpreted in a way that a trans person is evil or even the Devil. The Church of Sweden absolutely cannot support this."

"At first I didn't grasp the complex-

ity," Per Svensson, a Vicar at St. Paul's, told SVT (Swedish TV station.) "But after careful thought and discussion with the Church's leadership, we see no alternative but to remove the painting."

Remember what I said about the rapacious nature of PC? Well, this did not end the matter, not by a long shot. Instead, St. Paul's troubles have only just begun. Wallin has launched a harsh criticism against St. Paul's claiming they are only pretending to care about transphobia, which she says is a cover for their real intention, fearing the backlash of the "far right." (In Sweden, one presumes the "farright" would be anybody having any objection to this painting.)

Meanwhile, she is working on a new Garden of Eden themed painting with no trans-snake, and plans to test the Church's tolerance by sending it to them to replace the controversial one.

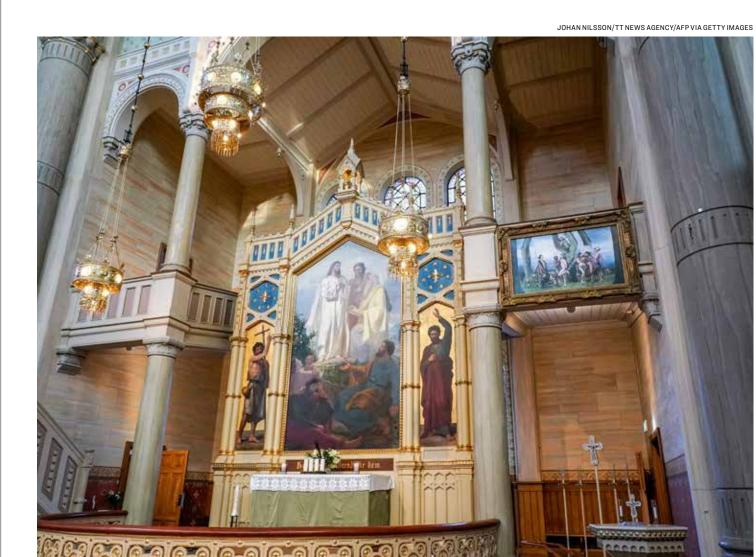
The Church of Sweden has 5 million members and is Sweden's "largest religious organization," with Europe's largest Lutheran denomination.

The Swedish Church has been marrying gay couples for 10 years. I found only one religious objection to the painting, from a Bishop named Johan Tyrberg who said, "A Gnostic painting does not belong in the Swedish Church."

Brave man.

Celia Farber is a Swedish-American writer with a background in magazine reportage and investigative reporting. She has written for Harper's Magazine, Esquire, Rolling Stone, and many more, and is a contributor to The Epoch Times.

Views expressed in this article are the opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Epoch Times.



The LGBTQ painting "Paradise" by Elisabeth Ohlson Wallin is on display at the right side of the altar in the St. Paul Church in Malmo, Sweden on Nov 29, 2019

