

Why Modern America and Nazi Germany Have More in Common Than You Know

“The one message I want to convey today is that you will have missed the most frightening aspect of it all if you do not appreciate that [the Holocaust] happened in one of the most educated, most progressive, most cultured countries in the world.”

These were some of the words of U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia (1936-2016) during his keynote address at the annual Days of Remembrance commemoration for victims of the Holocaust in the U.S. Rotunda on May 8, 1997:

The Germany of the late 1920s and early 1930s was a world leader in most fields of art, science and intellect. Berlin was a center of theater; with the assistance of the famous producer Max Reinhardt, playwrights and composers of the caliber of Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill flourished.

Berlin had three opera houses, and Germany as a whole had no less than 80. Every middle-sized city had its own orchestra. German poets and writers included Hermann Hesse, Stefan George, Leonhard Frank, Franz Kafka and Thomas Mann, who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1929. In architecture, Germany was the cutting edge, with Gropius and the Bauhaus school.

It boasted painters like Paul Klee and Oskar Schlemmer. Musical composers like Anton Webern, Alban Berg, Arnold Schönberg and Paul Hindemith. Conductors like Otto Klemperer, Bruno Walter, Erich Kleiber and Wilhelm Furtwängler. And in science, of course, the Germans were preeminent. ...

To fully grasp the horror of the Holocaust, you must imagine

[for it probably happened] that the commandant of Auschwitz or Dachau, when he had finished his day's work, retired to his apartment to eat a meal that was in the finest good taste, and then to listen, perhaps, to some tender and poignant lieder of Franz Schubert.

Germany in the early 16th century was transformed by the power of the Word when Martin Luther (1483-1546) translated the New Testament Greek to German in 1522, and the Old Testament "Tanakh" from Hebrew to German in 1534, thereby igniting the Protestant Reformation.

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In the mid-20th century, however, Germany was to learn that there is no safety in distance from Jehovah God. America finds itself on the very same path unless the church finally will engage in confrontation with secularism. We are reminded in this of Dennis Peacocke's unspoken reality in the century-long unraveling of the nation: "One thing is certain, virtually no one in 'the real world' expects Christians to be a significant contributing factor in the process [of creating a counteraction to secularism]."

In his New York Times bestseller, "Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy," Eric Metaxas wrote: "German culture was inescapably Christian. This was a result of the legacy of Martin Luther, the Catholic monk who invented Protestantism. Looming over the German culture and nation like both a father and a mother, Luther was to Germany something like what Moses was to Israel ... Luther's influence cannot be overestimated. His translation of the Bible into German was cataclysmic."

On Jan. 30, 1933, President Hindenburg appointed Adolf Hitler chancellor of the Reich. "Hitler had commended himself to the elite conservative circles that shared his distaste for the

Republic, not least through his desire to replace the parliamentary system with an authoritarian monocratic state or Führerstaat.”

Germany would now be tyrannized by a diabolical prince of darkness who consorted with diehard ultras, maniacs and assorted barbarians, and who was often seen carrying a dog whip in public. Pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945) forewarned of the predicament awaiting the nation: “If you board the wrong train, it is no use running along the corridor in the other direction.”

But Germany did board the wrong train, resulting in Bonhoeffer becoming involved in a plot to assassinate Hitler. Imprisoned for the last two years of his life, Bonhoeffer was executed at dawn in the morning of April 9, 1945, after being led into the execution yard while prison guards jeered and ridiculed him.

The pastor was not alone. The prison doctor at the Flossenbürg concentration camp later said, “I have hardly ever seen a man die so entirely submissive to the will of God.”

Justice Scalia questioned the idea that modern American education theories would produce virtue to sustain freedom. “One would think that Nazi Germany was a sufficient demonstration of the fallacy of that thinking. In the 1920s and 1930s Germany was the leader of the world in most areas you could name—the physical sciences, historical scholarship, music, philosophy [and] public education. The most sobering fact about the Holocaust is that it was there, and not in some backward, underdeveloped country, that it occurred.”

Contemporary American education is completely divorced from common-sense reality as well as from its historical biblically based context.

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Should America insist on refusing to reinstate the Founding

Fathers' model for education, which includes embedding biblical virtue into its youth, the future of the nation is at risk, with devastation of cataclysmic proportions a concrete possibility. Cultural Marxism has wrecked public education as secularists pervert culture by celebrating iniquity, provoking instability, fomenting division, stirring up political upheaval and indoctrinating children to hate America and hate each other.

Hardly ever have better words been written on education than did in 1798 Benjamin Rush (1746-1813), American Founding Father, physician and signatory to the Declaration of Independence, Pennsylvania delegate to the Continental Congress and surgeon general of the Continental Army:

"What mode of education we shall adopt so as to secure to the state all the advantages that are to be derived from the proper instruction of youth; and here I beg leave to remark, that the only foundation for a useful education in a republic is to be laid in religion. Without this there can be no virtue, and without virtue there can be no liberty, and liberty is the object and life of all republican governments."

Dr. Peter J. Leithart noted in his excellent "1 and 2 Kings Commentary" the apt phrase used by Edna St. Vincent Millay (1892-1950), the American lyrical poet, playwright, feminist and winner of the 1923 Pulitzer Prize for Poetry: "It's not true that life is one [obscurity] thing after another; it is one [obscurity] thing over and over."

America now has catered to and indulged in idolatry for three or four generations. Most of the nation dances in worship around the golden calves of state-sanctioned abortion and same-sex marriage. Similar to the physical lack of water in ancient Israel, there is spiritual famine of God's Word in a nation "founded for the glory of God and the advancement of the Christian faith."

By God's grace, however, Gideons and Rahabs are entering the public square. {eoa}

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