

This Country Says 'The Bible May Not Be Taught.' Who's Next?

A Finnish church bishop on trial alongside a Finnish politician says Finland has replaced Christianity with a new state religion of “secularism”—a belief system that will block the Bible from being taught in public.

Bishop Juhana Pohjola is accused of hate speech for his biblical views, charged with violating the dignity and equality of the LGBTQ population. He recently said he blames the downfall of Finnish Christianity on the cultural shift that occurred in Western societies more than 50 years ago.

As CBN's Faithwire reported in January, Pohjola, 49, a bishop in the Evangelical Lutheran Mission Diocese of Finland has publicly offered biblical statements about sexuality and also published lawmaker Päivi Räsänen's book *Male and Female He Created Them: Homosexual Relationships Challenge the Christian Concept of Humanity*.

The ELMDF, a religious body comprised of churches that broke away from Finland's national church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, over doctrinal issues, is being held liable for the book, which was published in 2004.

Pohjola is editor-in-chief of publications distributed by the Luther Foundation Finland—the legal group behind ELMDF. He was charged by Finland's Office of the Prosecutor General with creating incitement against a group of people.

The pair's trial began on Jan. 24 and continued into mid-February. The court will issue its decision on March 30, the ELMDF posted on its website.

Pohjola told Fox News that his country has had a long Christian tradition since the Middle Ages, “The Finnish flag has a cross on it— like all Scandinavian countries—as a sign of common Christian heritage,” he said. But starting around 1970, there was a shift in the majority of the Lutheran church, which led to secularism.

“Cultural and sexual revolution, secularism, rise of individualism and postmodern critique on all structures and concept of truth,” the bishop said. “If previously the majority in the established Lutheran church were ‘believing and belonging,’ it shifted to ‘belonging without believing’ and is now rapidly moving to ‘not belonging and not believing.’”

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