

# HOPE — OF — NATIONS

*Standing Strong in a Post-Truth,  
Post-Christian World*

**JOHN S. DICKERSON**



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*Hope of Nations*

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*Introduction*

# UNDERSTANDING OUR NEW REALITY

**W**hen did it become normal and routine for us to daily expect news of another terror attack, shooting, or act of evil?

We are pummeled each day with news of bloody terror attacks, social rioting, deep political hatred, missile launches, global unrest, and moral blindness here at home. Worse than the happenings themselves is the response from many of our neighbors and leaders. Where there was once a civilized pursuit of truth and social cohesion, there is now hatred, division, dishonesty, and destruction.

In the static noise of these cycling conflicts, we sense that we are losing something foundational—an entire way of life. We sense that the world our children and grandchildren inherit may be unrecognizable from the life of peace, stability, freedom, and prosperity that we once knew in America and the West.

**The great cataclysm of this era is not merely a catastrophe of disconnected events, but fully the collapse of a culture, a society, a civilization.** In moments of perspective, we suspect we're not living through typical shifts in a stable society. No, it seems the tectonic plates are rupturing deep beneath our civilization.

This book explains—definitively, simply, and accurately—just what is happening in our world, our nation, and our society. This book

enables you to see where these events are leading and why they are happening. This book combines the research of a decorated journalist with the Bible teaching and guidance of a pastor and bestselling author.

On this eye-opening journey, we will combine cultural reporting, surprising new data, global understanding, Scripture, and history to answer the four pressing questions of our day:

- What in the world is happening?
- Why are these things happening?
- Where will all of this lead?
- And, most importantly, how do we live like Christians now?

As the nations shake in fear, we will gain sure footing by rooting ourselves in Scripture and in timeless truth. So many of our neighbors are confused and increasingly in a panic. But we can know with confidence what is happening, why it's happening, and where it will lead. Ultimately, we can be people who stand strong because our lives are built upon the Hope of Nations.

More than ever, our divided society needs people who model true love, true courage, and true leadership. This book equips you to be such a person.

With an understanding of the times, we can be people of stability. Built on the unshakable Hope of Nations, we can be together a people of stability. We can lead families of stability, churches of stability, and organizations of stability—even within a shaking world.

We can be God's anchored people, full of understanding, compassion, faith, hope, and resolve. We can be the people who shine bright the Light of the world and who declare the Hope of Nations.

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In chapter 3, we will examine some unsettling stories and trends that reveal the emerging culture of the United States. One of these

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stories involves an outdoor “bondage” sex festival on the streets of an American city. The Folsom Street Fair includes naked adults in leather bondage gear, masturbation in public, and outdoor sexual “play places” that emphasize bondage, whips, and chains. All of this happens in broad daylight on the streets of a major American city.

But the real point of the story is that children have frequently been visitors to this annual event. I spoke with a Christian law enforcement officer who has worked security at the event, and he mentioned that he sees multiple minors there every year.

One news report documents a father who brought his two-year-old daughter to the sex festival dressed in leather bondage gear.

When the dad was asked by a newspaper reporter if it was wrong to bring his daughter to such an event, the dad answered, “Every parent has to decide for themselves what is right for them. And I respect that. And we decided that this is right for our children.”<sup>1</sup>

Exposing a child to acts of sex would rightly be prosecuted as sexual abuse in many states, but at the Folsom Street Fair in California, it has instead been celebrated.

I mention this disturbing story here in the introduction for one purpose. When you read the term *Post-Truth* in this book, you may be tempted to brush it off as an academic term that doesn’t really matter. But a dad dressing his daughter in bondage gear and bringing her to witness enacted sexual abuse is one tangible example of where “Post-Truth” thinking actually leads a culture, its people, and its youth. When a culture has no truth standard, then every family is free to define its own morality.

As we will see in the pages of this book, the Post-Truth shift of American culture is underway, and this shift will bring with it tangible and difficult consequences for our neighbors, our children, and our grandchildren.

Every year the experts at Oxford Dictionaries pick a word of the year. Recently, they chose *Post-Truth* as the single word that best

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summarizes American and European culture now.<sup>2</sup> They noted that our society now defines truth by *feelings* rather than by *facts*. Western society was once founded on truth, but it has now moved beyond it.

**With its “Post-Truth” declaration, the team at Oxford planted a flag, a mile marker between two eras in world history. And it is this shift—from one era of history to another—that underlies the global and social unrest we now see.**

In the United States and the West, the previous era was defined by the constant pursuit of truth. That era was an uneven but upward climb toward truth.<sup>3</sup> It lasted more than one thousand years, from the founding of Oxford University and the other early Christian universities until very recently.<sup>4</sup>

Within that era, the pursuit of truth was the light that guided Western scientists, innovators, educators, inventors, and lawmakers to constantly improve the human condition in Europe, the United States, and then the rest of the world. These people were imperfect, but their pursuit of a higher truth beyond themselves produced contributions far beyond their own capacities.

Christian-based Western contributions (the following is a fact, not an opinion) have doubled human life expectancy, created widespread literacy, eradicated open slavery (which had been a global norm previously), and birthed the most prosperous era of human history, thanks to Western democracy, modern medicine, the scientific revolution, and mechanizations that have lifted humanity from darkness to light.

**These world-changing innovations sprouted exclusively from one small, focused region of the globe at one focused time in history—Christianized Europe and the nations that exported its Christianized civilization to other parts of the earth, including the United States.**

In our lifetime, we have likely witnessed the peak of this Western-Christianized civilization. It is a vast and complex network, and

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Western civilization will not collapse overnight. But this much is clear: Western society is now willfully descending back down the mountain of truth—moving willfully away from the very pursuit that produced its wealth and liberty in the first place.

Multiple studies, which we will cite in this book, demonstrate that the tipping point of a Post-Truth shift is upon us. A majority of young Westerners now view reality through a Post-Truth lens, which is creating a predominantly Post-Truth society. The Post-Truth view of reality is set to continue redefining US elections and culture for the next thirty years. It will also play a role in the dramatic reshuffling of global order as the United States recedes from influence and loses its place as the world's largest economy and most powerful military.

What lies ahead we cannot say with certainty. But if human nature plays out as it has in previous eras, then my generation (the millennial generation) will find itself surprised by the brutality and consequences of a society severed from the truth.

**This Post-Truth breakage is the fault line underlying the earthquakes presently shaking America, Western Europe, and the world. From this single fault line—a Post-Truth rupture—reverberates shaking in government, media, society, culture, ideals, individuals, economies, and the very global order.** We feel the tremors every day as we witness unthinkable acts of public violence and as we realize how divided the United States is becoming.

In the West, a new Post-Truth culture is rejecting the old Truth-Based beliefs. As the older Truth-Based thinkers age out of influence and die, the full shaking of this societal change may exceed what we can imagine or foresee.

Blind groupthink, moral decay, street violence, social unrest, the divisions within Western nations, the reordering of the global superpowers—each of these results from the Post-Truth shift within Western culture's deepest foundation. On a macro scale, global peace and prosperity sway like shifting Jenga-block towers atop the

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murmurs of this splitting fault line. **When news reports grip us in fear, those events often trace—in one way or another—back to this Post-Truth rupture deep in the tectonic plates of Western civilization.**

In this book, we will discover why Western culture has taken the Post-Truth turn. We will learn where it will likely lead. This analysis will be driven by an aggregation of the best sociological research and cultural surveys available today. It will also be informed by the history of other post-Christian nations that embraced similar post-Christian philosophies in their universities and then in their mainstream cultures. And of course, our response will be shaped by the Word of God.

**We will learn the Five Forces shaping world events today and in the next thirty years.**

We will prepare ourselves, our families, and our institutions to live for Christ now—and to stand strong for Christ in the social reshaping of the coming decades. With understanding from the Word of God and with empowering from the Spirit of God, we can stand strong for Christ through the coming reshuffling of global order and restructuring of American society.

## HOW TO READ THIS BOOK

You will find the practical heart of this journey in part 3: “How Will We Live?” That section includes nine manifestos—positive postures to keep us standing strong while the world reshapes around us.

Each of these manifestos anchors us to an unchanging truth of Scripture specific to a cultural change in our time. These nine manifestos are Christian purpose statements that any family, organization, or individual can adopt as we determine to follow Christ now.

In parts 1 and 2, you will find the analysis, deep thinking, and cultural research of the book. Parts 1 and 2 are the “mind” of the book; part 3 is the “heart.”

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## MY COMMITMENT TO YOU, THE READER

My prayer in these pages is to minister to your head and to your heart, to your mind and to your soul.

As a seminary-trained pastor, a nationally awarded research journalist, and a frequent commentator in news outlets like *USA Today*, it is my calling to aggregate social trends, global events, Christian theology, history, and biblical application. All of these will combine in this book, I pray, to give you new insight into world events, spiritual currents, and the national trajectories shaping the next thirty years.

Together, we will fortify our Christian foundations and our God-honoring response of faith in Christ. In a chaotic world, we will remind ourselves that we are not randomly placed. In fact, the Creator has strategically placed us here so that we can serve our role in the greatest story of justice, goodness, and triumph over evil.

**On this journey, we will gain a higher understanding of the world events that continue shocking and shaking our neighbors.**

We can understand the great story. We can see our role within this great story. And then, even if the mountains should fall into the sea, even if the nations are in uproar, we will be unshaken.

In this book, we will prepare ourselves to love our neighbors of every race and creed, to show them the Hope of Nations. We are preparing to live as Christians today and in the unpredictable days ahead.

I kneel before God as I write these words, and I ask Him to empower you on this journey. I ask Him to give you divine insight and wisdom, faith and courage.

**The thrashing struggle between good and evil will continue in our day. Our choice is not to determine the era in which we live; our choice is to determine the side for which we will fight. And then to become fearless and courageous in joining God's good work in the struggle.**

My assignment from God is to prepare you to live fearlessly. Together, we will live for Christ now. We will show and tell the Hope of Nations.

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PART 1

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**WHAT IS HAPPENING,  
AND WHY?**

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## Chapter 1

# MY HOPE FOR THE NATIONS

**C**harles Gibson, who was the face of *ABC World News Tonight*, set his wineglass on the pressed, white tablecloth. Sophisticated, friendly, and charming, Gibson was everything you'd expect from a world-famous newsman. But he could not hide the confusion in his eyes.

“You’re quitting journalism to become a pastor?” He asked me the question a second time.

We were sitting in the Yale Club in Manhattan, and Gibson was about to award me the Livingston Award for Young Journalists. Each year Gibson, Tom Brokaw, and a team of news media A-listers choose three Livingston Award recipients from among the nation’s thousands of journalists.

It’s a dream honor for any journalist to receive. At age twenty-six, I was among the younger recipients in the award’s history. Conversations that night included many of my professional heroes at the time—Christiane Amanpour of CNN, Ken Auletta of the *New Yorker*, editors, majority owners, and powerbrokers from the *New York Times*, the *Chicago Tribune*, NPR, and others.

Seven years since that night, I admit I did not fully understand the prestige and power I was forsaking when I sidelined my journalism career to serve as a Christian pastor.

Had I realized what earthly success I was giving up, it would not

have made a difference. God had hold of my heart, you see. **He had convinced me that the greatest change agent in the world is not any media network or government, but the unique and disheveled organism of Christ believers to whom God has entrusted the true Hope of Nations.**

“I’m not abandoning the pursuit of truth,” I responded to Gibson. “The same tenacity for truth that drove my news reporting—that tenacity has convinced me that Jesus’ message is real. His message is the most powerful force for good in history.”

As I said those words, I knew I sounded like a zealot, a weirdo, a fanatic.

No matter. I believed those words to be true.

And I still do.

**With all my heart, I believe that Christ’s people are the greatest hope for this nation, for all the nations, and for every living, breathing person on the planet.**

Sadly, we Christians do not always carry ourselves with the confidence, urgency, or dignity of ambassadors who possess such a powerful hope. We often fumble in carrying this great hope. We get defensive. We lose our perspective. We behave in ways that Christ wouldn’t.

Despite those flaws, I have great hope for Christ’s followers today. With God’s help, when functioning at even half capacity, Christians are the most powerful force for moral good, human rights, equality, social prosperity, and cultural progress in human history.

Many of our neighbors don’t know it, but it is Christians who have led the way in creating orphanages, hospitals, universities, literate societies, and women’s rights for humanity. The foundation pillars and social structures on which prosperous Western civilization now stands—from democracy and the idea of racial equality to electricity and vaccines—are Christian foundations.<sup>1</sup> In recent decades, this undeniable fact has gone from ignored to denied, despite overwhelming evidence.

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We now live during an epoch of great dimming. Fattened by the contributions of previous generations, humanity is now set on improving itself without God's help. As a result, society is getting darker, thunderously dark. Evil is spreading. Hate is reigning. The planet is groaning. Justice and peace are being redefined within once-great institutions.

My generation—the millennial generation—has inherited a complex scaffolding of wealth, prosperity, leisure, and liberty. An interdependent machinery of technology, capability, and ease has been handed down to us. And yet many in my generation do not understand how these prosperous systems were created. We do not understand how truly unique our society is within world history, nor do we understand how to maintain it.

Quite the opposite, most incoming Americans and Europeans have been trained to recoil at any whiff of “exceptionalism” or “imperialism.” **We are taught, explicitly, to despise and deconstruct the foundations on which this grand society was built.**<sup>2</sup>

The intentional demolishing of our society's foundation pillars—now being executed by our best and brightest—is but one symptom of the Post-Truth shift. It may take decades to notice the consequences in our refrigerator shelves and living rooms, but we are already beginning to see the consequences in the big cogs of society—national government, media, academia, and popular culture. The *Titanic* did not sink in five minutes, and it will take many years to deconstruct the progress accumulated during the more than four hundred years of Protestant work ethic in the West.

It will take some time to disassemble the gearwork. But what is clear is that the deconstruction has been underway for some time. And it continues today.

Already we're seeing early ramifications of a society that rejects absolute truth. Take, for example, the Post-Truth approach to news and “fake news.” **On this point, my most liberal journalist friends and my most conservative Christian friends suddenly agree:**

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**when it comes to elections—choosing leaders—Post-Truth is not good for American society.**

But here is where many fail to connect the dots. **A Post-Truth society is the only logical end of a post-Christian society.** Post-Truth is the only possible next step for a culture that once founded itself on Christian truths and ideals but now abhors Christian truth to the extent that it will deny Christianity's role in its history.

*New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof accurately described the anti-Christian sentiment overtaking US culture shapers today, when he wrote, “Today, among urban Americans and Europeans, ‘evangelical Christian’ is sometimes a synonym for ‘rube.’ In liberal circles, evangelicals constitute one of the few groups that it’s safe to mock openly.”<sup>3</sup>

That same disdain that Kristof politely described can be seen more aggressively in other leading edges of American culture—from mainstream news media to entertainment, film, Silicon Valley, Washington, and academia. In less sanitized terms, actress Megan Fox demonstrated this cultural animosity toward Christians in America today. Asked how she would keep an evil robot from destroying the entire world, Fox replied, “I’d barter with him and say, ‘Instead of the entire planet, can you just take out all of the white trash, hillbilly, anti-gay, super Bible-beating people in Middle America?’”<sup>4</sup> Fox summarized well the cultural mood as it relates to Christians, especially Bible-believing ones. Her sentiment can be found at every leading edge of American culture today.

University of North Texas sociology professor George Yancey cited Fox’s quote when he documented nationwide anti-Christian bias in the United States. In 2015, he released a groundbreaking report in which he used empirical sociological methods to measure what he calls “Christianophobia” in the United States.<sup>5</sup>

Yancey tells the true story of an American high school classroom. When the teacher of the class mentioned that Christians around the world were being killed for their faith, a number of students

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responded that this was good and that Christians deserved it because they have so frequently been oppressors and slave owners. “To his [the teacher’s] amazement, some students approved of these murders. In their minds, it was time for Christians to face the same death that Christians had inflicted on others.”<sup>6</sup>

While a majority of Americans surely do not wish death on Christians, Yancey found that an emerging and significant percentage of Americans do believe Christians in the US deserve punishment for their past evils.<sup>7</sup>

Separately, a 2007 survey of American college professors, conducted by a different sociologist, found that more than half of college professors express openly “negative feelings” for evangelical Christians.<sup>8</sup>

In yet another separate study, a significant number of college professors overtly stated they would discriminate against Christian job applicants and not hire a Christian to work in their department.<sup>9</sup> These prevailing student and campus moods are symbolic of the social mood in the new and emerging American culture.

America’s post-Christian turn is quickly graduating from apathy about Christians to antagonism toward Christians (at least those Christians who treat the Bible as a serious truth standard). What is lost on many secular observers is that the post-Christian turn inevitably brings with it the Post-Truth turn, because the Truth-Based foundations of this society were intertwined with Christian beliefs.

Anti-Christian indoctrination at the highest levels of culture (the most influential universities) is one cause for the Post-Truth tipping point in this formerly Christianized culture. **We are now beginning to taste a culture in which a majority of influencers have been taught to reject, mock, or disdain the Christian Bible, the Ten Commandments, and the Christ who claims to be the Way, the *Truth*, and the Life.**

Many who mock Christianity today are ignorant of the reality that the institutions, customs, values, and wealth they inherit are,

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ironically, the fruits of a once-Christianized society. Few of these critics realize that they are literate and educated because of schools, laws, and norms instituted by Christians. They are alive and breathing because of scientific and medical breakthroughs initiated by Christians and Christian-founded institutions such as Harvard, Yale, and Johns Hopkins, but they've never been taught this.

For a while, following the 2016 presidential election, even the most anti-Christian intellectuals became concerned about a society in which a government official's "truth" is internal and subjective. But it is too late to recant sixty years of "relative truth" indoctrination at the nation's prize universities. Since then, it has become evident that the Post-Truth versus Truth-Based war of ideologies is not a Republican versus Democrat war. This is a battle within each party, within families and communities and institutions. The battle is everywhere, at every level in America and the West. **Simply put, you cannot have a post-Christian society that is not also a Post-Truth society.**

In time, the absurdities of a Post-Truth society—a society where a majority of people set their own standards for moral right and wrong, based on their own feelings and regardless of fact—will produce a tangible, felt impact on American lives and families. Entire industries that we take for granted, from banking and Wall Street to law enforcement and government, will not function as we have assumed they always will, because their Truth-Based foundations are being deconstructed. **People will be confused as the machine of American and Western society stops running.**

As an illustration, consider the person who has never changed the oil on their automobile. They do not understand how an engine works or how to maintain one. They drive around, benefiting from what others built but neglecting its maintenance.

I've heard of some reliable cars continuing to run for tens of thousands of miles beyond their scheduled oil change. But eventually the oil burns out or becomes so clogged with dirt that the engine seizes. And then that car will not be driving anywhere.

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**In many ways, the American economy and society are so well built and engineered that they have continued operating, even as their fundamentals are neglected and deconstructed. But eventually, the machine will seize.**

In the coming years, a populace that does not believe in an objective truth standard will struggle to enforce objective laws and policies. It will also struggle to write laws and policies objectively. In time, courts, neighborhoods, schools, retirement accounts, stock markets, and even grocery store shelves may be affected.

What most of us struggle to understand is how an entire way of life—a society we assume as normal—can change within a generation or two. We should know better, though, as students of the last one hundred years. Consider the immense and rapid societal shifts that overtook average life in Russia in 1917, Germany in the 1930s, China after World War II, or Venezuela just recently.

**I believe American and European Christians have a window of opportunity—*right now*—to prepare ourselves. We have a closing window of time during which we can prepare our families and prepare our Christian communities for the forthcoming ramifications of life in a Post-Truth society.** I believe we have a historic opportunity before us—to share the hope of Christ as society shakes.

Society may destabilize around us in a gradual, consistent fashion (as Rome's fall was—slow and steady). Or the decline may accelerate at some point into a free-fall collapse. In either scenario, we have great hope because our hope is not in earthly prosperity. Our hope is not in a politician, a party, a nation, or even a civilization. Our Hope dwells on a higher plane. Our Hope is of a higher order and a higher power. We place our Hope in the resurrected Christ, who is the Hope of Nations.

I'm convinced that lights shine brighter in the darkness than in the daylight. And now—during this great dimming—is the time for our light to shine. Americans may face darker days than present

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generations imagine. An entire way of life, peace, and prosperity that my millennial generation assumes as normal may deteriorate or crumble inward.

**We can prepare now to shine Christ's light into this darkness.**

If we are properly anchored to Christ, then no calamity will unmoor us.

Jesus Christ, the Solid Rock, outlasted the fall of the Roman Empire and the violent dechristianization of France in the late 1700s. He has outlasted the Soviet Union, and He has outlasted brutal attempts to annihilate Christianity in Red China, the Middle East, and North Africa.<sup>10</sup> Jesus Christ has promised that we who believe will also outlast these crumbling and disposable earthly kingdoms. We will rule with Him in a kingdom that will outlast all other human empires.

**And so we live out our days on this earth with purpose, knowing Jesus Christ *will* return to set right all that is broken in this world.**

Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah, *will* be exalted as King of kings and Lord of lords.

We *will* be clothed with glory and overcome with ecstasy in His presence.

We *will* inherit and manage a kingdom where justice reigns, where prejudice does not exist, where famine and poverty are no more, and where a tree of life feeds all.

We *will* walk in bodies that feel no pain.

We *will* watch the lion and the lamb lie next to each other in a culture of invincible peace, genuine diversity ("every nation, tribe, people and language"<sup>11</sup>), and infinite abundance. It is His kingdom, and by extension of His love, it is *our* kingdom.

And so, no matter how dark the days get here, we know how the story ends. And because of our confidence in that certain future, we do not weep, we do not grieve, as those who have no hope.<sup>12</sup>

For a time in this world, we may face moments when the throes

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of ignorance and injustice seem inescapable. We may grieve the unraveling of a stable society. Our hearts may groan at the dimming of righteousness and justice. Our emotions may droop at the injustice and brokenness of the world that our children and grandchildren will inherit. But here, even in the ruins, great hope can burst forth from our heart of faith. For ours is a *resurrection* hope. A living, breathing, muscular hope.

We have believed it, and in our lifetime we will experience it, that the One who is in us is greater than the one who is in the world.<sup>13</sup> The more Satan kills and steals and destroys,<sup>14</sup> the more he buries the nations in mental and moral darkness, all the more brightly will shine the light of Christ, who is the Hope of Nations.

God brought this book into your life to equip you to live well in these times. You can live the adventure of this era with great purpose. You can know with confidence that the Creator of the universe has appointed you, with your gifts, to bring light and life to this moment in human history. You can be secure in understanding God's reason for placing you on this continent, at *this* time, among *your* people, for eternal purposes.

In the following pages, we will explore what is happening in the world, why it is happening, and where it is leading. Most importantly, we will cast a vision for responding to frightening changes with supernatural faith.

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## Chapter 2

# WHAT IS HAPPENING?

In her book *The Hiding Place*, Corrie ten Boom, a Nazi concentration camp survivor and Christian activist, wrote about her older brother Willem. Long before the tanks and bombs of World War II, Willem was able to foresee where German society was heading. He saw this because he understood the power of ideas.

Willem saw things, I felt. He knew what was going on in the world.

Oftentimes, indeed, I wished that Willem did not see quite so well, for much that he saw was frightening. A full ten years ago, way back in 1927, Willem had written in his doctoral thesis, done in Germany, that a terrible evil was taking root in that land. Right at the university, he said, seeds were being planted of a contempt for human life such as the world had never seen. The few who had read his paper had laughed.

Now, of course, well, people weren't laughing about Germany.<sup>1</sup>

A few pages later, Corrie wrote, "Nobody dreamed that this tiny cloud would grow until it blocked out the sky. And nobody dreamed that in this darkness each of us would be called to play a role."<sup>2</sup>

**November 9, 1938**—Having festered in the German consciousness for years, the anti-Jewish mood finally erupted into violence. Flames lit the night sky as darkness fell on that Wednesday evening. The first hours of the Kristallnacht (“Night of Crystal,” also called “Night of Broken Glass”) overtook Germany as a predatory lion overtakes its prey—suddenly, but after much unseen time hiding in ambush.

Previously peaceful members of German society—men, women, and children—burned more than 260 synagogues and destroyed more than 7,000 Jewish-owned businesses. Mobs of printers, architects, professors, schoolteachers, bakers, and bricklayers brutalized and murdered dozens of individual Jews.

The violence was so abrupt and abrasive that other nations assumed it could not get worse. Germany, after all, was a civilized nation. Surely this was an anomaly. A flare-up. A one-time tragedy. But the Kristallnacht was no mere flare-up. It was a violent contraction leading to the annihilation of six million Jews in Nazi-occupied territory.<sup>3</sup>

We must keep in mind that Germany was at that time a post-Christian nation in much the same way that the United States is presently a post-Christian nation. The German landscape was still dotted with Christian cathedrals and churches, and a majority of the population professed to be “Christian.”<sup>4</sup> But these self-professed Christians were spiritually no more Christian than the 70 percent of Americans today who identify as “Christian.” The culture had moved beyond its old Christian center. And most of its “Christian” population was not following Christ in any practical, theological, or spiritual sense. Most did not read the Bible personally or attend a church that taught biblical understanding.

Germany was post-Christian because the intellectual class had spent the previous century gutting the supernatural out of Christianity. By the early 1900s, the gutting of Christianity’s core ideas and truth claims had spread through the cultural leaders and into the society as a whole.

Like so many Americans today, the 1930s generation of Germans

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merely adopted the name “Christian” because their grandparents had. That generation had a form of godliness but denied its power by denying its truth.<sup>5</sup>

Regarding post-Christianity in the US today, some 70 percent of Americans still identify as Christian, but the best researchers conclude that only 7 to 20 percent of Americans are measurably active in the Christian faith.<sup>6</sup> That a society is post-Christian does not mean the nation has no Christians; it means the society has abandoned Christianity as its stabilizing center. Christian values are no longer a driving influence in shaping the culture.

World War II Germany demonstrates that post-Christian civilizations can be the most dangerous civilizations. They inherit the machinery, institutions, and capability of a Christianized society. They have immense power and organization. But when they forsake the Christian rule book, when they opt to improve humanity by their own definitions rather than by God’s, they are bound to veer off course.

**We are taught today that Adolf Hitler perpetrated the atrocities of World War II Germany, but that is not the whole truth. The actual perpetrator was an idea, a way of thinking. The most industrious genocide in human history resulted from an *ideology*. The boxcars, the naked prisoners, the gas chambers—these were the logical results of a way of thinking about self, about race, and about reality. That post-Christian way of thinking—sown like a seed into generations of German minds—finally produced its natural fruit.**

The early buds of this fruit showed up in the young people of Germany. Nazism was a youth movement.<sup>7</sup> Its seed was planted and watered in the schools, beer halls, and universities and in the budding leaves of violence on the streets—perpetrated not by armed soldiers in the beginning, but by teens and many of the highly educated youth who had attended Germany’s best schools and universities.

I am not suggesting that America will foster any carbon copy of the evils perpetrated by Nazi Germany. The post-Christian ideology budding in the United States is markedly different from Nazism.

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We cannot predict exactly what a post-Christian, Post-Truth era will produce in the United States, but we can say two things with some certainty: (1) the eventual maturity of the Post-Truth ideology in America will not be good, and (2) it will look different than it did in Germany. It is a different group of people in a very different scenario.

The great German universities, once founded by Christians, had been overtaken less than one hundred years before World War II by various forms of theological liberalism that moved those Christian-founded schools to scoff at Christianity as myth and fable. The truth of Christianity was expelled from the halls of learning.

The German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche famously marked post-Christian academia for Germany in 1881 when he concluded that “God is dead” in his extensive and popular criticism of Christianity, *The Dawn of Day*. Some fifty-two years later, the German people democratically elected Adolf Hitler, a fan of Nietzsche’s work, to lead their national socialist democracy.

From the mid-1800s until World War II, the German universities began teaching a post-Christian, anti-Christian criticism not too different from what American universities teach today about Christianity.<sup>8</sup> It was a condescending view of Christianity as an outdated and dangerous myth for the weak of mind.<sup>9</sup>

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This same academic pattern, wearing slightly different clothes, has been in play in the US for more than one hundred years now in every leading university, including Harvard, Yale, and Princeton, as documented by the scholar George Marsden.<sup>10</sup> Princeton’s recent revoking of an award that pastor Timothy Keller was scheduled to receive—due to Keller’s biblical position on sexual morality—may mark the completion of this Post-Truth turn in the American Ivy League universities.<sup>11</sup>

America’s Ivy universities set the tone for America’s state universities, and the Ivy graduates largely set the cultural tone for the nation in a

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trickle-down fashion. Like so many of the German universities, each of the American Ivy universities was founded by Christians, often for the explicit training of Christian ministers and clergy.<sup>12</sup> Many of the Ivies still have their Christian mottos, crests, or cathedrals at the center of campus, but today's Ivy students know little or nothing of their alma maters' Christian heritages. These students largely ignore Christianity, or else they consider it a danger. The curriculum and culture at Yale and other post-Christian Ivies have become as anti-Christian as Germany's universities in the decades between Nietzsche and Hitler.<sup>13</sup>

Much like German students in the 1930s, students in post-Christian American universities today are taught that we have evolved beyond Christianity, that Christianity is mostly myths and fables. They demonstrate a remarkable pride and contempt in their disdain for Christian ideas and truth claims. Our rising young have been taught that we must devise better ways forward for humanity. They are taught that the most dangerous thing about Christianity is to take it seriously.

Cornell professor Allan Bloom summarized the post-Christian, Post-Truth status of American academia in his book *The Closing of the American Mind*. In it, he writes, "The true believer is the real danger."<sup>14</sup>

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Back to Germany. We can zoom out from the tanks and roaring bomber planes, from the muddy battlefields and death camps, and we can see one thing with clarity: **It was an *ideology* that infected the German consciousness. It was an ideology birthed in the universities, spread to the leading edges of culture, and then adopted by millions. This is what killed more innocent people than any previous killing campaign in history: a set of ideas adopted by a majority of a society, an ideology.**

Nazi fascism is not the only deadly ideology to infect the human mind in the last one hundred years. Lenin's and Stalin's version of Marxism was equally *an idea* for the Russian people. Let us not

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forget that Stalin also emerged from a post-Christian culture, having studied at a church school in Gori and at Tbilisi Spiritual Seminary before he embraced another post-Christian German thinker, Karl Marx. Stalin wrote *Marxism and the National Question* in a post-Christian vacuum.<sup>15</sup> We will unpack in chapter 5 how Soviet socialist communism also erupted from a post-Christian culture.

Once Russian society adopted Stalin's ideology, it destroyed more lives than Nazi fascism. Mao Tse-tung's Marxist ideology in China also grew out of the post-Christian German academics. The unthinkable genocides and injustices of the last century, the industrial-scale killings and starvations—all have been the work of ideologies. Ideas, embraced by millions of people, lead dramatically to death or to life.

## IDEOLOGIES ARE WARRING

In our lifetime, we are witnessing a new warring of ideologies. Within the United States, an emerging Post-Truth ideology is at war against the old Truth-Based ideology. Because we live in an ideological civil war, we will focus much of our response (found in part 3: "How Will We Live?") on assuming a Christlike posture within this struggle and its fallout.

In chapter 5, we will further define the Post-Truth and Truth-Based ideologies, as well as explore the conflict between them. In that exploration, we will see evidence that American millennials have recently swung to prefer Soviet-style socialism over traditional American capitalism, according to multiple surveys taken within the last three years.<sup>16</sup> We will also see that 70 percent of American millennials no longer believe that democracy is necessary to accomplish the goal of bettering society.<sup>17</sup>

Combine the new propensity for socialism with the reality that millennials will overtake baby boomers as the largest voting bloc in the next presidential election, 2020.<sup>18</sup> Then add in the trend that each younger generation of Americans (those younger than millennials) values socialism increasingly more, while disdaining capitalism,

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democracy, and Christianity more, and a clear picture emerges of a nation rapidly changing.<sup>19</sup>

This swing toward socialism is likely to emerge as soon as 2020, with a Bernie Sanders-type candidate. (Note: During the 2016 presidential primaries, Sanders—the first serious socialist candidate for president in American history—earned more votes from young Americans than both Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump *combined*.)<sup>20</sup> This shift will occur when the number of voting Post-Truth millennials and younger Americans overwhelms the number of Truth-Based Americans (mostly older and aging out), likely either in 2020 or 2024.

This gravitation toward socialism is just one result of the Post-Truth shift in ideology, which, again, we will examine in chapter 5. These and other trends do not mean all millennials are Post-Truth thinkers or all boomers are Truth-Based thinkers, but research indicates that the switch from Truth-Based to Post-Truth thinking falls along generational lines.

We will continue witnessing this civil war of ideologies within the US for the next fifteen to twenty-five years.<sup>21</sup> Today's news media reports do not explain this ideological civil war. That is because many reporters now fail to see the world through the lens of ideologies. This is a result of their Post-Truth education, which teaches them to believe that all ideologies are equal and harmless. And so most news reports today provide only myopic updates on small events. What is missing is that most of the conflict in the world today results from ideological struggles.

Beyond the US, other muscular ideologies are also shaping global events. And by sheer number of believers, the ideologies outside the US are far larger than the entire US population.

A new hybrid communist ideology remains ignored by Americans but is incredibly strong in China,<sup>22</sup> affecting a massive and influential chunk of the world population. In the next ten years, as China overtakes the United States to become the world's wealthiest economy,<sup>23</sup> China's larger population may also show itself to be more unified in ideology than the US, giving China a practical advantage over a divided and squabbling US.<sup>24</sup>

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As a preview of these trends, here's an interesting note. Price-waterhouseCoopers projects that thirty years from now, the world economies will rank as follows:

1. China
2. India
3. United States
4. Indonesia.<sup>25</sup>

If other factors remain stable, that's the world our children and grandchildren will navigate in their prime.<sup>26</sup>

Harvard professor Graham Allison recently studied the history of global empires reshuffling like this. He concluded that in the last five hundred years, when a #2 world power has overtaken the #1 power, it has led to war twelve out of sixteen times.<sup>27</sup>

Consider that as recently as 2000, the top four economies were the United States, Japan, the United Kingdom, and France, and you can see the global power center moving in our lifetime. The widespread global implications of such a shift are difficult to comprehend. In time, this shift will affect every nation, the global order, the global power center, military balance, dominant currencies, and cultural trade expectations.

The gravitational center of the globe is on course to shift east—both geographically and ideologically—with India being predominantly Hindu and Indonesia being fundamentalist Muslim. In 2017, a Christian governor in Indonesia was sentenced to two years in prison for blaspheming Islam.<sup>28</sup> The world's #2 economy, India, will have larger populations of Muslims and Hindus than any other country in the world. Meanwhile, China still bans nonregistered Christian gatherings, censors Christian expression on the internet, and demolishes Christian church buildings routinely. These will be three of the four most powerful nations in the world.

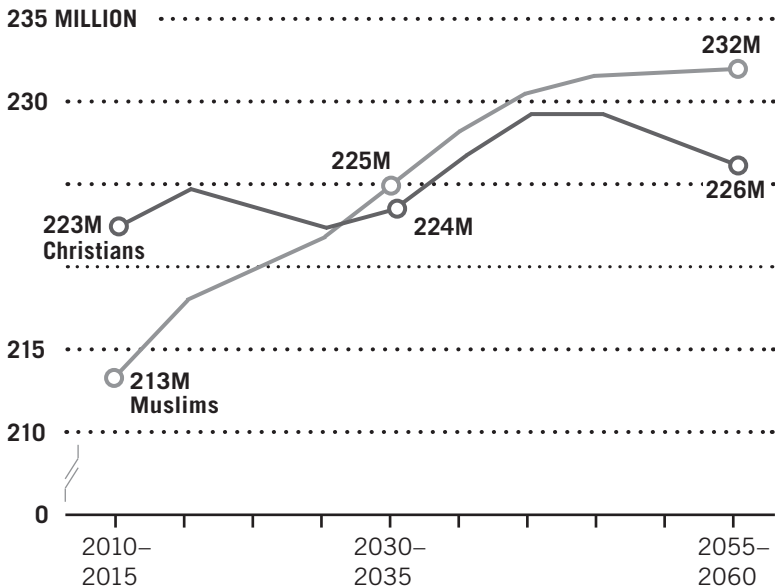
Simultaneously and unlimited by national boundaries, the ideology of Islam is marching forward to tie Christianity as the most dominant

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ideology on the globe. **In 2015, the Pew Research Center concluded that Islam is growing faster than any other major religion and is on course to grasp the minds of one in three people during the next decades.**<sup>29</sup> In 2017, they wrote, “Muslims are projected to be the world’s fastest-growing major religious group in the decades ahead, as Pew Research Center has explained, and signs of this rapid growth already are visible. In the period between 2010 and 2015, births to Muslims made up an estimated 31% of all babies born around the world.”<sup>30</sup>

**Babies Born to Muslims Will Begin to Outnumber Christian Births by 2035**

*Estimated number of babies born, by mother’s religion, during each five-year period*



Source: Pew Research Center demographic projections (see Methodology for details): “The Changing Global Religious Landscape”

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**Figure 2.1**

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About 220 million new babies are born into Muslim families every five years. That's far greater than the total population of Russia (143 million). Every five years! The same is true of babies born to Christian families every five years, about 230 million.<sup>31</sup> Combined, the total of new Muslim and Christian babies born every five years (about 450 million together) nearly equals the combined standing populations of Russia and the United States. In contrast, China only adds about 90 million births per year, even following the elimination of its one-child policy in 2016.<sup>32</sup>

Islam will continue to grow in influence—not only because of its muscular ideology and momentum, but also because of its sheer size, birth rate, and young population. For these reasons, Islam is set to become the fastest-growing ideology in the world during our lifetime. This will bring dramatic shifts in the global order. Projecting into the next thirty years, Pew researchers concluded:

Muslims—a comparatively youthful population with high fertility rates—are projected to increase by 73%. The number of Christians also is projected to rise, but more slowly, at about the same rate (35%) as the global population overall.

As a result, according to the Pew Research projections, by 2050 there will be near parity between Muslims (2.8 billion, or 30% of the population) and Christians (2.9 billion, or 31%), possibly for the first time in history.<sup>33</sup>

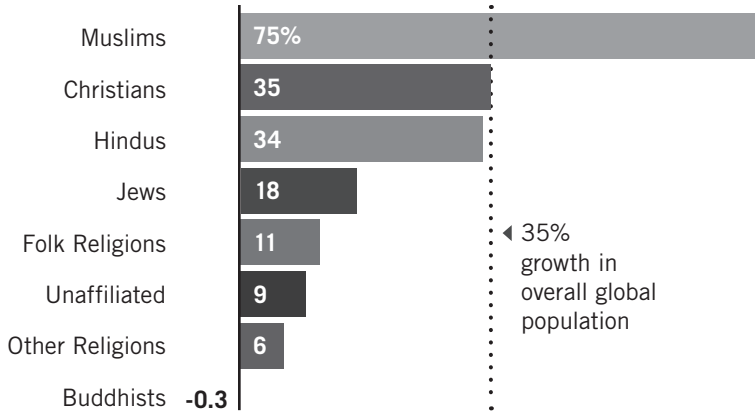
**By 2050, there will be 6.7 Muslims in the world for every one American. There will be five Muslims in the world for every one European in the combined EU territories.**<sup>34</sup> In 2050, the five most populous Muslim nations will be home to 1.2 billion people, or roughly the population of China today and about four times the current US population.<sup>35</sup>

Note that the year 2050 is not fifty years from now; it's more like thirty years from now. I'm thirty-five years old as I write this.

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### Islam Growing Fastest

*Muslims are the only major religious group projected to increase faster than the world's population as a whole.*



Source: "The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010–2015"

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**Figure 2.2**

These footnoted experts are projecting that when I'm sixty-seven years old, Islam will have nearly equaled Christianity as a percent of global population and also that America's economy will be playing third chair globally.

Islam will be the formal religion in dozens of wealthy nations with increasingly sophisticated militaries, which each have 80 percent-plus Muslim populations and theocratic Muslim law. Christianity, on the other hand, will remain loose—a non-state entity in comparison and a waning percentage within the US and Europe. The Christian growth of the next decades is projected beyond the West into the poorest parts of the world.

As a sociological note, where Islam expands, it is much more formal than Christianity and much more likely to overtake national

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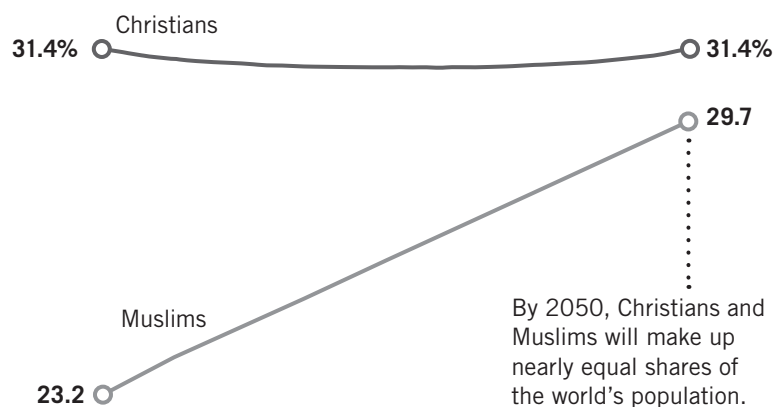


government and laws (a doctrinal requirement in many Islamic interpretations). While militarized nations formally adopt Islam as their ruling law and required ideology (see Turkey, Iran, Indonesia), there is no indication of any such militarized Christian nations emerging on the global scene in the next thirty years.<sup>36</sup>

### SIMPLIFYING THE DATA

Christianity will be the second-fastest-growing ideology during the next thirty years. At today's trends, Christianity's future growth will be the result of births within existing Christian families, not due to conversions. And these Christian births will occur in the poorest and least developed parts of the world.

**Projected Change in Global Population: Percent of Global Population, 2010–2050**



Source: "The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010–2015"

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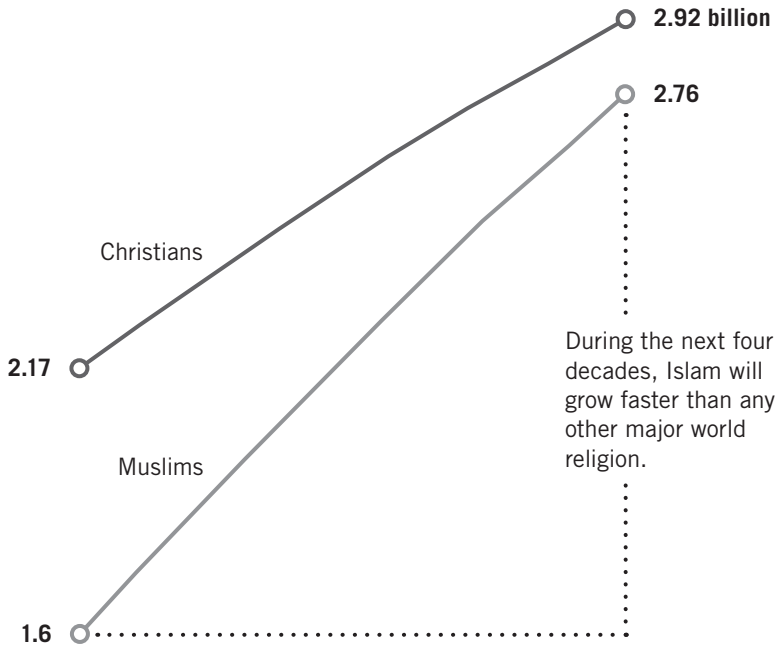
**Figure 2.3**

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This same figure can be visualized as the change in the actual number of Christians and Muslims in the world.

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**Projected Change in Global Population: Number of People, 2010–2050**



Source: "The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010–2015"

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**Figure 2.4**

The global maintenance of Christianity's population percentage during the next thirty years is projected to occur *in spite of* America and the West, not because of it. In fact, Pew projections show the continued dramatic exodus of Americans and Westerners away from Christianity and into agnosticism and spiritual nonbelief. In all, Pew projects another 106 million American and European Christians

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will quit the faith between now and 2050, with most “switching” to become nonreligious or “unaffiliated.”<sup>37</sup>

**Projected Cumulative Change Due to Religious Switching, 2010–2015**

Source: “The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010–2015”

	Switching in	Switching out	Net change
Unaffiliated	97,080,000	35,590,000	+61,490,000
Muslims	12,620,000	9,400,000	+3,220,000
Folk Religions	5,460,000	2,850,000	+2,610,000
Other Religions	3,040,000	1,160,000	+1,880,000
Hindus	260,000	250,000	+10,000
Jews	320,000	360,000	-310,000
Buddhists	3,370,000	6,210,000	-2,850,000
Christians	40,060,000	106,110,000	-66,050,000

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**Figure 2.5**

Note the exodus of 106 million “switching out” or *away from Christianity* in the bottom row (under the bold heading “Switching out” and then trace down to the bottom row). Most of these ex-Christians switch to become nonreligious or “Unaffiliated” (see the top row, where 97 million will be “switching in” to become religiously “unaffiliated”).<sup>38</sup> This trend is almost entirely due to the Post-Truth shift in America, Europe, and the formerly Christian Western nations.

In short, America and the West will continue bleeding Christians out spiritually, while sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, and other developing regions will make up the loss with their own gains in Christians—so that Christianity holds even as a percentage of the world population.<sup>39</sup> As a result, the global hub of Christianity will migrate from the wealthiest, most influential nations to the poorest,

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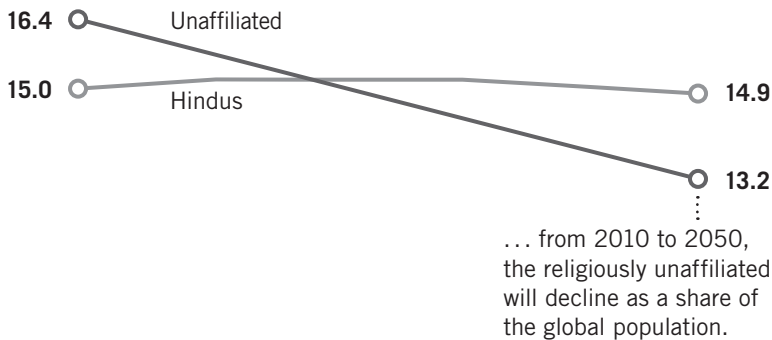
most dependent nations. Thirty years from now, two in five Christians globally will live in sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>40</sup>

These thirty-year trends from Pew, as well as a look back at thirty years in Gallup data (see chapter 6), expose the ignorance of the argument that “Christianity is actually doing fine in America.” This glib optimism is myopic and sadly ill-informed. Christianity has undeniably failed to retain its own and has lost its influence on American culture. The percentage of young Americans abandoning the faith continues to increase dramatically with each new generation since the 1980s, and the blood loss is on course to continue.

Unaffiliated/agnostic Americans (those leading the Post-Truth cultural turn in America) will continue to dominate American culture and increase rapidly as a percentage within America.<sup>41</sup>

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#### Projected Change in Global Population: Number of People, 2010–2050



Source: “The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010–2015”

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**Figure 2.6**

In summary, then, the projections and sociology findings I consulted lead to the following conclusions. Each represents a simple thesis of this book:

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1. The Post-Truth era will dominate US culture for some decades, dramatically reshaping society in the United States for the next thirty years.
2. Outside of the United States, Islam, Chinese communism, Hinduism, and other muscular ideologies will continue to grow rapidly and powerfully, likely leading to conflicts between competing ideologies.
3. The future Post-Truth culture in the United States, declining in economic clout and cultural cohesion, will eventually find itself vulnerable to some other, more muscular outside ideology that may subvert America from within or without.

To summarize in paragraph form: **In the next three decades, Post-Truth thinking will overtake Truth-Based thinking in the United States, resulting in massive societal implications for all Americans. Meanwhile, massive global conflicts of ideology will be playing out beyond the US, and eventually these globally dominant ideologies will affect a less globally dominant US, which will rank about third in global economic power.**

We cannot predict which ideology may overtake Post-Truth America in those future decades or when such a conquering could occur or what specifically will happen in global events, but we will suggest some theories in part 2: *Where Will It Lead?*

As ideologies go, communism and Islam are muscular ones. The consequences of communist and Islamic societies have been well documented in their impacts on human rights, life expectancy, economic activity, personal liberty, women's rights, and other measurable outcomes. But few Americans under age forty are interested in these objective facts.

**Young Americans are not interested in the end results of ideologies because they have been conditioned to believe that all cultures are equally good.** Even more significant, most young Americans have been conditioned to believe it is a moral evil to critique any

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culture or religion other than Christianity.<sup>42</sup> As a result, it would be “wrong” in the view of most incoming Americans to factually critique the consequences of communist or Islamic cultures. To do so—even if the facts are obvious—would be bigoted, prejudiced, “white,” racist, or imperialistic. In chapter 6, we will further document research suggesting this social climate among young Americans.

Islam has proven its resilience as an ideology for about 1,400 years. As powerful as Islam and China’s hybrid communism will show themselves to be in the coming decades, their rise will largely be the result of Western civilization’s decline at home and then globally.

**A great vacuum of world power will result as the West continues to abandon its old Truth-Based values (and, as a result, its Truth-Based prosperity, liberty, and influence). Simply put, because the West no longer believes its way of life is any better than any other culture, it will not make any effort to propagate, spread, or protect its culture. This is a consequence of the Post-Truth view of Western civilization.**

This apathetic self-posture will concur with the rapid global rise of muscular ideologies in China (hybrid communism), India (Hindu), Indonesia (Muslim), and other nations with large populations, like Turkey (Muslim). The West will also decline economically, globally, and militarily, which comes after more than forty years of abortion policies and a shrinking population in the West.<sup>43</sup>

As a result of these abortion policies, academic researchers recently found that “in Europe today there is virtually no overall population growth from natural increase.”<sup>44</sup> And so the Western nations have shrinking natural-born populations, even as Muslim, Hindu, and developing nations are exploding in population growth because they have not institutionalized abortion to the extent that Western nations have.<sup>45</sup>

Note that the future ranking of world economies is simply today’s ranking of the nations with the largest populations: China, India, US, Indonesia. As one writer notes, with technology equalized,

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economic production is simply the result of population size.<sup>46</sup> Until recently, the West held such technological advantage that its smaller populations could produce more wealth than larger populations, but exported technology has changed that equation so that the largest populations with modern technology will become the largest economies.

This population shrinkage within the West is an unstated aggravator in the present struggle over “globalism.” Europe’s shrinking natural population is a factor in its bipolar, love-hate struggle with immigrants from nonassimilating cultures.

The reality is that Europeans have killed so many of their own youth through abortion and population control that aging Europeans *must* have North African and Middle Eastern immigrants to do their physical labor, work in their nursing homes, and power their working economy. Yet, a percentage of these immigrants do not wish to assimilate into the values of their European host cultures. Thus, we see conflict.

**We will likely witness in our lifetime a struggle between hybrid communism (China), Islam (globally the fastest-growing ideology), New Nationalism (Russia and others), Hinduism (India), and other ideologies to wrest control of the power vacuum that is emerging as a result of the West’s decline.**

That struggle will be unpredictable and will include internal conflicts within large ideologies and regions. These internal conflicts include the coming violent Sunni versus Shia power struggle within global Islam;<sup>47</sup> the underreported but deadly struggle between Hinduism and Islam in India; and in our neck of the woods, the Post-Truth versus Truth-Based ideological struggle now dividing the US—a struggle that will likely continue splintering our culture for as long as the baby boomers are with us.

The warring of ideologies in our lives will include open battles among some of these dominant ideologies, such as hard-line Islam’s present conflicts in India, Europe, and around the world. Other

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ideologies will rise globally as the West forsakes its Truth-Based ideology and assumes its passive Post-Truth ideology.

**In the end, it may turn out that the most dangerous ideology in the coming century is not some villainous, obviously violent ideology, but rather the chaos that will result from the absurd Post-Truth ideology now overtaking America and Europe.** That is, the Post-Truth ideology, once it fully overtakes Western nations, will open the door for the most forceful and muscular ideology at that moment to prevail. And as imperfect as the Christianized, Western Truth-Based culture was, future Westerners may learn the hard way that it was an exceptionally noble, free, prosperous, and dignifying culture compared to most cultures in history (and compared to whatever may supplant it). In the meantime, while Westerners argue with each other on social media, each of these dominant muscular ideologies is arming itself with nuclear weapons, building armies, and raising rigid, ideologically unified populations.

The struggle I've described in this chapter—this warring among ideologies—is one force among the Five Forces shaping world events today. And this force interplays with four other equally powerful forces.

## **FIVE FORCES SHAPING WORLD EVENTS TODAY**

More than seven billion people are alive today. In a precise sense, there may be as many factors in global change as there are people, religions, and cultures. However, we will see that five dominant forces underlie most world events.

If we can understand these Five Forces, we will be less surprised and shaken by the changes set to erupt during the next thirty years. Let's consider them in summary:

1. Humans Are Sinning
2. Satan Is Scheming

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3. Ideologies Are Warring
4. Western Civilization Is Unraveling
5. Christ and His People Are Prevailing

These Five Forces are swirling currents that contradict and complement each other in various ways. Our reality each day is the by-product of these Five Forces competing, advancing, and struggling with each other. Just as our universe is constantly moving at the atomic, planetary, and cellular levels, in the same way, global humanity is constantly moving under these Five Forces. It is not a stagnant system.

Four of these forces (1, 2, 3, and 5) are true in every generation, and I do not write them as journalistic observations but as scriptural truths. These are outlined in the Word of God, and they will remain true in every generation from Eden until Christ's return. Understanding them allows us to make sense of reality in ways non-believers cannot.

The fourth force, Western civilization's decline, is unique to our era. In the simplest sense, you might think of Western civilization today as North America and Western Europe. By *Western civilization*, I refer to the once-Christianized cultures of the United States and Western European nations such as the United Kingdom, Norway, Sweden, Germany, and so forth;<sup>48</sup> my use of the term *Western civilization* includes "Western" offshoot nations such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and other societies where foundational laws, norms, and values were heavily influenced by Christian values and ideas.

Fragments and remains of Western ideas can now be found worldwide, but we will use *Western civilization* to refer to those Christianized populations that were largely Western/Christian in their lawmaking and culture in the last five hundred years. This includes both Protestant and Catholic Christianized societies.

What we are witnessing is the unraveling, the descent, of Western civilization. This decline may drag on for two hundred years,

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during which the standards of living, personal freedom, and prosperity slowly deteriorate in America and other Western nations. Or the decline could become more sudden if accelerated by other factors (internal or external). Only God knows that future. I do not pretend to know if the decline of the West will be sudden or gradual, but I aim to prepare myself and you to thrive for Christ in either scenario.<sup>49</sup>

For now, if you'd like a simple demonstration of the reality that Western civilization has peaked, ask five Americans under the age of thirty what "the West" or "Western civilization" is. Then note how many of them give answers about rattlesnakes, cowboys, Arizona, or the Wild West.

Their ignorance is not incidental. The National Association of Scholars has found that "Western Civilization"—for generations a required freshman college course—is no longer a required course at America's leading universities.<sup>50</sup> In fact, many of the leading universities in the US today do not allow Western Civilization as a course in the curriculum. More often, the very concept of Western civilization as an ideal is something to be mocked.

Many in my generation do not know what Western civilization is. They do not know how the West has lifted humanity from darkness or that we have inherited Western civilization.

Separately, those incoming young Americans who *do* have a historical understanding of Western civilization are likely to view the West as dangerous, imperialistic, colonialist, white, nationalist, or populist.

For the most part, Americans under age forty have not been taught to see the West as the society that produced widespread literacy, doubled life expectancy, established modern medicine, abolished slavery, and created the women's rights movement and Western democracy.

Rather, they've been taught to see the West in Marxist terms—as a monopolizing, colonizing, imperialistic group of rich white people who have taken advantage of everyone else in the world. The West

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is only rich, they've been taught, because it exploited the rest of the world, not because of its ideas, work ethic, values, or truth beliefs.

Contrast the West's self-ignorance and self-loathing with the ideological education of young people in China or in any Muslim nation. In those societies, any young person can tell you with clarity what communism or Islam is, respectively.

And those young people can also tell you why communism or Islam is vastly superior to Christianity, the West, and any other ideology. They far outnumber Westerners, and they are far more unified and clear in their ideologies.

We will further define and explore the West's unraveling (both its ideological unraveling and the practical consequences) in chapter 6.

When we understand all five of these forces together, world events will begin to make more sense to us. Again, the Five Forces are, in summary:

1. Humans Are Sinning
2. Satan Is Scheming
3. Ideologies Are Warring
4. Western Civilization Is Unraveling
5. Christ and His People Are Prevailing

Our exploration of Forces 3 and 4 (Ideologies Are Warring and Western Civilization Is Unraveling) will be our deepest dives; they'll be the most thorough chapters in this book. In them I will aggregate the best sociological research, demographic data, global statistics, historical trend lines, and expert opinions to shed light on these two unique forces today.

The Five Forces may appear theoretical or distant, but I assure you, they affect the food in our refrigerators, the balances in our retirement accounts (even the fact that we have retirement accounts), global war and peace, and the way of life for our children and grandchildren.

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It is because of these Five Forces that our society is now a post-Christian society. And it is because our society is post-Christian that it is also a Post-Truth society. And it is because we are a Post-Truth society that we are witnessing massive and frightening shifts in American culture, the European Union, and the global order—shifts that will have an impact on governments, the global economy, and our entire way of life in ways we cannot fully predict.

While many close their eyes and hope these global and societal shifts will resolve themselves, the reality is that these shifts are likely small pre-tremors preceding far more dramatic tectonic shifts.

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## Chapter 3

# PRE-TREMORS

**T**o demonstrate that the Post-Truth shift is not mere theory, here are five present-day examples of the Post-Truth shift and its consequences in American culture today. These examples are pre-tremors or foreshocks compared to the future ruptures that may result from the Post-Truth shift as it saturates US courts, classrooms, neighborhoods, laws, and global policies.

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**Example 1: American parents are taking children to watch sexualized public nudity in city-sanctioned events.** Some of my Christian friends in the San Francisco Bay area have struggled with what to do about the annual gay pride parade. The event now attracts more than one million spectators and has become a sort of local holiday. The city removes the American flags so that the flag holders on many downtown streets are occupied by gay pride rainbow flags.

Some of the large tech companies whose logos you would recognize and whose products you use require their employees to attend the gay pride parade. This is an annual point of difficulty for some Christians who work at these companies.

At the parades, the ultimate driver of the movement can't help but slip out—sometimes literally, in the form of public nudity. *SFGate*,

which is the online website of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, compiled a guide to encourage families who want to take their children to the celebration. The reporter writes, “To help families going to Sunday’s Gay Pride Parade have a smooth experience, *SFGate* gathered some words of wisdom and practical tips from parents who’ve taken their children over the years.” Here is the first tip:

**Don’t worry.** “We have been bringing our daughter (now 7) annually since she was a baby,” shares S.F. mom Beth Winegarner. “Yes, there is some nudity and leather but there’s little to no overt sexual stuff as there is at, say, Folsom Street Fair. Kids in general aren’t at all fazed by seeing nudity—after all they like to run around and play with as little on as possible too.”<sup>1</sup>

So, yes, your child will see public nudity, lots of phallic imagery, and possibly a “little . . . overt sexual stuff” from naked people, but—the article continues—don’t let that stop you from taking them to the celebration.

Minors have been exposed to sexualized nudity and even public masturbation at parades and events on the streets of San Francisco. The *East Bay Times* documented children who were wearing bondage leather at the annual Folsom Street Fair in San Francisco, where there is public sex, hundreds of naked adults in bondage gear, and “masturbating in public.”<sup>2</sup>

Without going into graphic detail, the Folsom Street Fair includes hundreds of nude people arousing each other, public orgasm, and demonstrations of sex toys—along with public “play places” for using those toys on others—and most of this carries with it the themes of bondage, whips, chains, and S&M.<sup>3</sup>

This quote from a dad who brought his two-year-old daughters dressed in bondage-style leather summarizes a culture severed from any objective definition of truth. Answering the question of whether it’s appropriate to dress his young daughters in bondage leather and let them witness public sex acts, the dad replied, “Every parent has

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to decide for themselves what is right for them. And I respect that. And we decided that this is right for our children.”<sup>4</sup>

Note the values of the statement that “every parent has to decide for themselves what is right for them.” This is a model display of the Post-Truth ideology. Some Post-Truth thinkers will have more reservations than this dad (because of the families they were raised in), but most likely their children will end up believing exactly what this dad believes—that “every parent has to decide for themselves what is right for them.”

Note the lack of any moral standard outside of felt opinion. The dad believes it is a good thing to dress his two-year-olds in leather bondage gear and expose them to public masturbation. “We decided that this is right for our children.”

Disgusting, perverse, and immoral as this approach is, this man is merely practicing with purity the ideology that millions of American children have been taught to believe for decades—that there is no truth standard and that the only real evil is to judge another person as wrong.

The Post-Truth ideal is in *not judging others* and in others *not judging him*. There is no objective truth standard of right and wrong apart from this. We’ll see in chapter 5 that, while it does not always surface so dramatically, this is the prevailing ideology of Americans under the age of thirty-five.

The same *East Bay Times* article quoted a ten-year-old boy who has attended the Folsom Street Fair for six years in a row, walking between nude adults, abusive arousal, and public acts of sex. Of kids attending the festival, the executive director is quoted as saying, “I’ve seen a thousand doting aunts and uncles, and a kid having the time of his life.”<sup>5</sup>

The story again demonstrates the Post-Truth absurdity when it quotes event volunteer Adam Hawkins as saying it is up to the parents to decide what is best for their kids, and he isn’t going to stop them at the gates.

This *East Bay Times* story incited a public backlash, and the Folsom Street Fair has since changed its official policy. Technically, it now claims to bar children from entering the gates. However, parents

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who live in the area warn that the fair takes over entire neighborhoods of San Francisco and is held on the streets in the daytime, so it's difficult to leave the house and not have your children see the naked festival-goers or observe what they're doing with their bodies.

An acquaintance of mine serves in law enforcement in San Francisco. He is routinely assigned to patrol the Folsom Street Fair. He stated that he still sees children there every year and that his every impulse is to confront their parents. But to do so, he said, would probably lead to him getting sued. "It'll come out that I'm a conservative Christian," he said, "and I would probably lose my job on grounds of prejudice and discrimination."

The scene of naked adults arousing each other in the city streets—occurring openly in the daylight and with no regard for children—conjures images of some well-known Bible stories.

The Folsom Street Fair is not the only public festival of this nature in the daylight streets of San Francisco. The annual Nude Valentine's Day Parade has featured at least one naked prepubescent minor marching alongside groups of naked men.<sup>6</sup>

That some of my millennial peers would call me a prude or closed-minded for critiquing an invitation for children to view sexualized nudity or to walk naked with a group of naked men who are celebrating complete sexual freedom, well, that is in itself a demonstration of the Post-Truth culture.

Others will argue that events like these only represent the fringe of the culture. But the corporate sponsors for the headline Gay Pride parade are anything but fringe. Recent corporate sponsors include Bud Light, Alaska Airlines, Blue Shield of California, Xfinity, Amazon, Apple, Disney, Facebook, McDonald's, BMW, Uber, T-Mobile, AT&T, Bank of America, Gap, Levi's, Nordstrom, Macy's, Safeway, Wells Fargo, State Farm, and US Bank, among many others.<sup>7</sup>

The reality is that every year on the streets of San Francisco, multiple events expose children to graphic sexualized nudity in ways that would be rightly deemed sexual abuse if they were ever done in

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a church or school. But out in the street, with thousands of other adults cheering and waving flags, this is deemed acceptable and literally applauded. Such are the liquid morals of a Post-Truth society. Welcome to a leading edge of American culture. The overt exchange of societal values is perhaps best summarized by the 2011 annual theme for the Gay Pride parade: “In Pride We Trust.”

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**Example 2: A convicted murderer is given hundreds of thousands of dollars to get sex-change surgery for free, while law-abiding, tax-paying citizens don't get the same or life-saving procedures for free.**

A legal ramification of the Post-Truth culture shift is that words like *rights* and *justice* become subjective in their meaning. Because truth is no longer based on an external standard, words like *fascist*, *bigot*, or even *constitutional right* become expressions that anyone can apply to their opinion rather than words actually defined by an objective dictionary or the Constitution.

Demonstrating this, a California court recently ruled that it was the “constitutional right” of a convicted murderer serving a life sentence to receive hundreds of thousands of dollars’ worth of sex-change surgery—paid for by the state. The Associated Press filed this report:

A 57-year-old convicted killer serving a life sentence has become the first U.S. inmate to receive state-funded sex-reassignment surgery, the prisoner’s attorneys confirmed Friday.

California prison officials agreed in August 2015 to pay for the surgery for Shiloh Heavenly Quine, who was convicted of first-degree murder, kidnapping and robbery for ransom and has no possibility of parole.<sup>8</sup>

Quine, who was to be relocated to a women’s prison after the surgery, shot and killed a thirty-three-year-old father of three in 1980 while robbing him of \$80 and his car. The ruling that Quine deserves

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government-funded transgender sex surgery now requires the state to provide the same surgery for other inmates. In the process, California officials have agreed to provide male inmates who identify as female with scarves, necklaces, nightgowns, and similar items.

The Associated Press reported that the daughter of the man murdered by Quine “objects to inmates getting taxpayer-funded surgery that is not readily available to non-criminals, regardless of the cost.”

“My dad begged for his life,” said Farida Baig, who tried unsuccessfully to block Quine’s surgery through the courts. “It just made me dizzy and sick. I’m helping pay for his surgery; I live in California. It’s kind of like a slap in the face.”<sup>9</sup>

This \$100,000-plus award of “justice” and “rights” for the murderer—at the literal expense of the victims—symbolizes well the absurdities that take place in a Post-Truth culture’s courtroom.

Capturing well the Post-Truth impact on law and justice, California Department of Corrections spokeswoman Terry Thornton explained why the state had no choice but to pay for the sexual-reassignment surgery: “The 8th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution requires that prisons provide inmates with medically necessary treatment for medical and mental health conditions.”<sup>10</sup>

Now, my point here is not to disparage in any way those individuals who identify as transgendered; God loves these individuals, and God wants the best for them. The point here has nothing to do with sexual orientation. The reality for the larger culture is that a very costly surgery is not freely provided to law-abiding citizens but is now guaranteed for all law-breaking citizens. Furthermore, biologically life-and-death surgeries (such as organ transplants or open-heart surgery) are not given freely by the state to law-abiding, tax-paying citizens.

And so the Post-Truth impact on law is this: convicted murderers are awarded hundreds of thousands of dollars in surgical procedures that are not awarded to tax-paying, law-abiding citizens.

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A Post-Truth culture will become saturated with such incongruences. Let's be intentionally clear again that God loves all people, including those who identify as transgendered, and we as Christians have the joy of demonstrating God's love for all people, including those who self-identify as LGBTQ. The point of this example is that convicted murderers now have more rights than law-abiding, tax-paying citizens because the definitions of "constitutional rights" and "medically necessary" have been changed to fit the Post-Truth cultural mood rather than to correlate to the actual Constitution or to physiology.

Some who read this may say "Well, that's just California." But it's not that simple. This ruling affects all fifty states, and more significantly, this way of thinking is the fruit of Post-Truth thinking. We'll see in coming chapters that such Post-Truth thinking is becoming the dominant way of thinking in all fifty states.

And so in fighting for the "rights" and "justice" of one group (convicted criminals who identify as transgendered), the basic "rights" and "justice" of another group (law-abiding taxpayers and victims of crimes) have been eclipsed and ignored. We will continue to see this trend in Post-Truth society. The vigorous fight for one group's rights will come at the expense of another group's rights because the foundational standards of justness and fairness have been removed.<sup>11</sup>

I use the word *absurd* to describe this scenario—not as pejorative to any individual or party, but as a literal descriptor for any government that would treat its citizenry with such basic unfairness—rewarding law-breaking murderers with benefits not afforded to law-abiding taxpayers. It's a socially absurd position.

We'll see this same miscarriage of justice carried out in a thousand variations during the next thirty years—often benefiting people from the classes that the Post-Truth moral scaffolding deems as deserving of special protection and often at the expense of those classes of people that the Post-Truth moral scaffolding deems as deserving of being put in their place because they were the majority or the oppressors in past decades.

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**Example 3: Dis-integration is taking place in Western nations and the European Union.** While the European Union never explicitly stated that Christian values or Christianized society held it together, it is a fact of history and sociology that the vestiges of Christian values bound the nations in the European Union together.

The nations of the European Union had vastly different languages, currencies, and cultures, along with a bloody history of disputes. The one thing they had in common was a trajectory—over the course of nearly one thousand years—of Christian influence. This resulted in shared Christian values and a shared somewhat Christian vision for a cohesive culture, even if those values weren't explicitly stated.

The dissolving of the European Union (beginning with the United Kingdom's exit, Brexit) is a clear example of what happens when older generations assume some of their inherited Christian values, even while the truth foundation erodes beneath. In time, younger generations inherit the structure, and—having no foundational reason for some of the Christianized policies and values—the new generations adjust the structure to fit their new foundation.

Without unifying values, there can be no European Union as it was envisioned. There can only be a corrupt union or no union. And with Christianity largely removed from the popular cultures in the European Union nations, we can expect to continue to see the individual national cultures deteriorate and infight socially.

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**Example 4: Western leaders—with far superior military technology—are unable to contain or defeat terrorism.** Western leaders, equipped with the best military technology in history, are unable to uproot violent Islamic terrorism from regions of the world that were recently centuries behind in weaponry and technological innovation. Why?

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Because many Western leaders are impotent to combat the *ideology* that drives Islamic strains of terrorism.

During World War II, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) accurately identified that the bloody conflict was, in fact, a conflict of ideologies. He stated that the unconditional surrender by Germany, Italy, and Japan “does not mean the destruction of the population of Germany, Italy, or Japan, but it does mean the destruction of the philosophies in those countries which are based on conquest and the subjugation of other people.”<sup>12</sup>

Note the final sentence. FDR recognized what World War II was actually about: “*the destruction of the philosophies in those countries which are based on conquest and the subjugation of other people.*” FDR wisely saw that an ideological struggle was at the heart of World War II. The ideology of the peaceful Western nations was in combat against the ideology of the Axis powers that sought “the conquest and the subjugation” of others.<sup>13</sup>

FDR understood that the enemy in World War II was not Germany or Japan, but the ideologies that motivated their populations and armies. And so FDR and Western leaders (who had been trained by American universities to understand ideology at that time) declared war on a way of thinking.

A reality of world history is that most ideologies aspire to conquest and subjugation. And yet some Western leaders today have been educated to believe that all ideas and cultures are equal and can all be embraced simultaneously.<sup>14</sup> Leaders who have been indoctrinated into this Post-Truth view are ill-equipped to operate in the real world, where muscular ideologies seek to conquer, defeat, and subjugate *any* other ideology, including the American way of life.

This book is not a call for nativism or nationalism, nor is this book a call to stop globalism. Rather, this book calls Christians to our highest citizenship, which is in heaven, and then to operate globally with an understanding of our neighbors’ ideologies rather than with blind ignorance of other world cultures, values, and aspirations.

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**Christianity applies to “every nation, tribe, people and language.”<sup>15</sup> It is the first and largest multiethnic, global movement in which people of all races and nations are viewed as equally valuable and made in the image of God.** In this way, Christians seek a spiritual globalization, but culturally we do well to operate with an awareness of what others believe. While we will always pursue peaceful coexistence, we will not fall under the blind assertion that all cultures seek peaceful coexistence.

Today, global terrorism continues advancing because of the rigid ideology underneath it. But many Post-Truth European and US leaders do not have the vocabulary or tools to identify the ideology that continues recruiting terrorists from a massive population. And so, even if the ideology is beheading children, stoning women, and attacking innocent people, many Western leaders lack the moral vocabulary, the understanding, or the basic education to identify that *ideas* are what is driving ISIS, al-Qaeda, Boko Haram, and hundreds of other violent expressions of the same ideology. They also fail to understand the scope and size of that ideological movement.

It is too politically incorrect to declare the reality that many millions of people in the world are being indoctrinated toward variations of this violent ideology every day. Additionally, because of the failure to understand ideology, Western nations are routinely arming, weaponizing, and training the very people and nations who share that violent ideology but have not acted it out yet.

As a result, we will continue to see the fight against terrorism drag along in its bloody, impotent cycle. Like the frog in the kettle, the frequency and bloodiness of terrorist attacks in the US and Europe have increased every few months during the last decade.

Fighting terrorism in only the physical realm when the opponent is an ideology is akin to following a toddler around a house. Every time the toddler throws a vase or picture frame on the floor, you pick it back up, but you never teach the toddler that it’s a bad idea to throw things down.

Until the West acknowledges in a unified fashion that *ideas are*

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*driving violent terrorism*, the West will constantly be cleaning up bloody messes, with no slowing of the destruction. And those bloody messes will continue to spill deeper into American and European cities.

Barring a radical change in Western posture, we can expect to see violent, ideologically driven terrorism continue to spread around the world during the next thirty years. Many billions of dollars in weaponry and training may slow its progress, but they will not stop it.

And all too often, because of a failure to understand ideology, those weapons and training end up in the hands of future terrorists. Consider, for example, the number of ISIS leaders in Syria and Iraq who were previously trained and armed by the US military or the CIA simply because the Western leaders organizing those programs failed to understand ideology.

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**Example 5: There is a trend toward taxing churches and Christian ministries.** Spend some time with influential Post-Truth thinkers in New York, Los Angeles, leading news outlets, or higher education, and you may hear this theme: It makes no sense that American churches are not taxed, especially those churches that discriminate against the LGBTQ community by not hiring LGBTQ individuals on their staffs or by declining to perform same-sex weddings.

Consider just two examples of this kind of thinking. First, the *Washington Post's* online magazine *Slate* recently published an article declaring, "Let's tax churches! All of them, in a non-discriminatory way that doesn't consider faith or creed or level of political engagement. There's simply no good reason to be giving large tax subsidies to the Church of Scientology or the Diocese of San Diego or Temple Rodef Shalom in Virginia or the John Wesley African Methodist Episcopal Zion church around the corner from me."<sup>16</sup>

As Bill Maher voiced, "Almost a quarter of us are being forced to subsidize a myth that we're not buying into."<sup>17</sup>

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The most symbolic argument for this emerging position came in *Time* magazine when a columnist declared, “Now’s the time to end tax exemptions for religious institutions.”<sup>18</sup> This essay embodies two Post-Truth views held by many young Americans: (1) Any church that holds a traditional view on sexual morality is discriminating against LGBTQ individuals. As such, these churches and religious institutions should be penalized for their bigotry rather than rewarded for it. The *Time* article puts it this way: “So yes, the logic of gay-marriage rights could lead to a reexamination of conservative churches’ tax exemptions . . . When that day comes, it will be long overdue.”<sup>19</sup> (2) The article demonstrates the erroneous but prevailing view that if all the church’s money was in the hands of the government, the government would be more effective at using the funds to help the poor.

Defenders of tax exemptions and deductions argue that if we got rid of them charitable giving would drop. It surely would, although how much, we can’t say. But of course, government revenue would go up, and that money could be used to, say, house the homeless and feed the hungry. We’d have fewer church soup kitchens—but countries that truly care about poverty don’t rely on churches to run soup kitchens.<sup>20</sup>

Of course, those of us who are Truth-Based thinkers and Christians would challenge the author to identify one country in world history where the poor and homeless have better care than in the Christianized nations. But as we’ll see in upcoming chapters, presenting facts does not often sway an argument in a Post-Truth setting. And as the writer above demonstrates, today’s cultural leaders have zero historical understanding of the Christian influence in the land they inherit.

I’m not suggesting that conservative churches may lose their tax exemptions because of one *Time* magazine essay. Rather, I’m suggesting that this essay embodies beliefs that will be held by a majority of

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Americans at some point in the coming decades. These two views are inevitable by-products of the Post-Truth and post-Christian culture shifts. As Post-Truth thinking overtakes Truth-Based thinking, this sort of reasoning is on track to become the majority view among the Americans who select lawmakers and shape policy.

I'm not confidently predicting that churches and Christian colleges will lose their tax-deductible status within fifteen years, but I will say—based on the body of research in the following chapters—that such a change would not surprise me at any point after 2020, particularly in regions like California and New York where a majority of the populations are Post-Truth thinkers.

Of course, the ramifications for churches and religious schools are massive. For many, the loss of tax-exempt status would force them to shut their doors.

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As Post-Truth thinkers become the largest voting bloc, we can expect trends like these—which seem sporadic now—to surface more frequently and more consistently across the national social fabric. For Americans under the age of thirty-five, the social peer pressures away from the old traditional values are incredibly strong—perhaps stronger than I can summarize in the written word.

These pre-tremors are brief examples of the blindness that Post-Truth thinking produces. We will witness many more Post-Truth consequences in our lifetime. In time, there may be social pushback on conservative Christians, perhaps including the eventual loss of state and federal loans for students who attend Christian universities. In some regions, basic licenses to operate religious schools, colleges, or churches could also be denied to those organizations that hold to “discriminatory” or “prejudiced” beliefs about morality, according to the Post-Truth definitions.

I hope I'm wrong.

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