What's Causing Christianity's Decline in America?

By Scott Cleland

Christianity is declining in America. Its leading cause is outdated U.S. Internet unaccountability policy in Section 230 of the 1996 Communications Decency Act, that imposes amoralism, a doctrine of not caring about right and wrong.

One cause-effect dynamic is as universal, purposeful, time and trajectory coincident, and scale, scope, and reach similar as U.S. Internet unaccountability policy's demoralization of Christianity in the 21st century. It also is scriptural that anarchy's amorality demoralizes Christians.

It's no coincidence that during the Internet era U.S. adult church membership has fallen 33% from 70% 1940-2000 to 47% in 2020, per Gallup. And Americans' confidence in the church and organized religion fell 25% from 56% to 42% from 2000-2020 per Gallup.

A recent Pew Research survey projects that Americans who identify as Christians could fall under 50% by 2070. That prompted a Christianity Today headline "Decline of Christianity Shows No Signs of Stopping."

America's founders feared today's anarchic amoralism online. President George Washington warned "…morality is a necessary spring of popular government." President John Adams warned "Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other." Founder Ben Franklin warned "laws without morals are in vain."

How can Internet technology design and U.S. policy cause Christianity to decline in America? Both are systemically amoralist and antithetical to Christianity's purposes, priorities, and principles. And both systemically promote, incent, and reward, anarchic amoral, behaviors and outcomes.

By design the Internet is a peer-to-peer (P2P) system that has proliferated many other P2P networks that have proven prone to cybercrime and corruption.

P2P technologies are inherently nonreciprocal, i.e., self-oriented by design, self-governing, self-executing, autonomous, and permissionless. Self-oriented inputs yield selfism and a '*for self alone*' creed. Christianity is inherently reciprocal and others-oriented in every way.

P2P design and U.S. Internet unaccountability policy inherently rejects principles existential to Christianity, e.g., sovereignty, authority, accountability, and responsibility.

Online, the imposed amoralism inherent in U.S. Internet unaccountability policy abdicates authority to legislate, administrate, and adjudicate right vs. wrong, legal vs. illegal, and good vs. evil. For example, Congress' 1996 policy is Internet and Internet services be "*unfettered by Federal and State regulation*." The Executive Branch's 1997 policy is ecommerce is "*global*," "*self-regulated*," and "*minimalist*" government. The Supreme Court's 1997 lone Internet precedent put adult's rights over minors well-being.

Specifically, anarchic amoralism by design and policy subverts Christianity's purposes, priorities, and principles.

1. Anarchic amoralism subverts Christians' belief in God, His sovereignty and first commandment to love your God. Instead, they idolize the Internet, technology, and innovators as gods and idols to worship -- all-knowing, all-seeing, saviors that claim technological answers and solutions to satisfy all the world's problems, needs, and wants.

2. Anarchic amoralism subverts God's Second Commandment "love your neighbor as yourself" and the Golden Rule Ethic of Reciprocity of 'treat others as one wants to be treated' that every major religion and ethical tradition believes in some form. Anarchic amoralism de facto promotes a 'neglect your neighbor as a nobody' policy and a 'Rotten Rule' of 'do whatever you want to others.'

3. Anarchic amoralism dehumanizes, devalues, and neglects people, who are preciously created in the image of God. Five Administrations, fourteen congresses, and seventeen Supreme Court Justices, together, have neglected to protect people and minors from harms and crimes online for twenty-six years. Sadly, this appears to be an American 'Ezekiel 34 period' where shepherds do not protect, but plunder, their flock – the American people -- to God's dismay.

4. Anarchic amoralism empowers evil to overcome good by ensuring that every person is not subject to the governing authorities that God instituted to punish wrongdoing, encourage good, and provide people with a conscience.

5. Anarchic amoralism rejection of right vs. wrong or good vs. evil, imagines no sinful nature and therefore no government need for a constitution, rule-of-law, rights, or duty-of-care, and no human need for truth, justice, repentance, mercy, or forgiveness.

This decline is not inevitable, but only His Church can keep the Holy Spirit in America.

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