

A revealing insight into European and world politics

A review of
The World Turned Upside Down: The Global Battle over God, Truth and Power
by Melanie Phillips
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Melanie Phillips is an award-winning British/Jewish journalist and author, who appears regularly on BBC television and radio discussion programs. Despite her being an agnostic, she is known for energetically defending Judeo/Christian values and warning of the consequences of Britain's and Europe's descent into secularism and moral decline. Her latest book is a staggering exposé of the extent to which irrationality and aggressive, anti-Christian ideologies now dominate the corridors of power in the parliaments of Britain and the European Union.

Covering subjects as wide-ranging as global warming, the Iraq war, Israel, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, secularism, scientism and the creation/evolution debate, Phillips claims that much of the public discourse has departed sharply from reality. Anthropogenic global warming, she believes, is a myth; the Middle East situation consistently and deliberately misrepresented; reason and science worshipped; the evidence for creation ignored; and the perfectly rational belief in God deemed, by a self-appointed ruling intelligentsia, to be the height of ignorance and folly.

Scientific fantasy

Although not a scientist, Phillips makes a commendable effort to

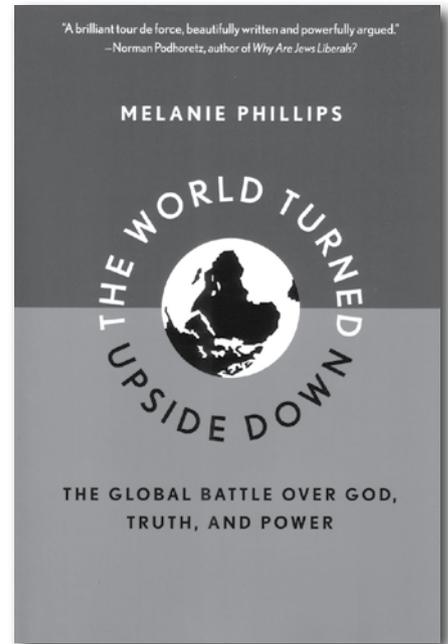
understand the arguments marshalled against a belief in God and creation, and exposes them as nothing more than scientific materialism. Unmasking the circular nature of the atheists' claims, she deftly lays bare their folly:

“The fact that science cannot answer questions of ultimate purpose proves to them that there is no such thing as ultimate purpose. The fact that science cannot prove the existence of God proves to them that God does not exist” (p. 78).

In reality, as the Oxford University mathematician and philosopher of science Professor John Lennox points out, the assertion that science provides the only means of discovering truth is not itself deduced from science—it is a statement about science for which there is no evidence (p. 79).

This blind acceptance of scientism, Phillips opines, has actually led to an astonishing degree of irrationality. Dawkins' view that matter probably arose from nothing, she considers, is nothing more than a belief in magic, and his view that life on Earth may have been seeded by aliens, she describes as a fetish. For many, she recognises, the passionately held ideology of materialism has a purpose—to ‘free’ mankind from superstition, and especially its expression in religious faith.

A major theme of the book, and of particular interest to many Christians, is the attitude of many politicians and academics towards the Middle East. Israel, she writes, is portrayed as a bully, hell-bent on oppressing the Palestinians, and is equated with Nazism and apartheid. The reality, she claims, is that Israel is the historic victim of the Arabs, and its behaviour, although not perfect, is generally reasonable, given that it is fighting



for its existence. This, she believes, is tragic, as the State of Israel is the free world's front line defence against the Islamist assault on Western civilisation (p. 408).

The abandonment of reason

Another major theme is Phillips' belief that the rejection of our Judeo/Christian heritage has led to an abandonment of reason, the suppression of freedom and the imposition of a tyranny of the mind. The levers of political power, she argues, have been seized by a small minority who are determined to dismantle the building blocks of Western civilisation. In the name of 'progressive' politics, freedom and tolerance, these self-appointed 'custodians of reason' are increasingly imposing irrationality, prejudice and intolerance. 'Human rights' legislation has institutionalised injustice.

Courts allow criminals to roam the streets, while their victims are arrested when they attempt to defend themselves. Teachers dare not impose discipline lest they infringe the children's 'human rights'. Illegal immigrants are provided with generous welfare benefits, and terrorist suspects, who are understood to pose a mortal danger to society, cannot be deported if there is just a possibility that *their* human rights might not be protected.



Figure 1. Lillian Ladele, the Christian registrar who was told to perform same-sex civil partnerships or face dismissal, lost her case for religious discrimination at the UK Court of Appeal.

In the UK, a Christian registrar who refused to carry out gay ‘weddings’ was forced to resign. Grandparents of two children who were given up for adoption to a gay male couple were told that if they didn’t drop their opposition they would never see their grandchildren again (p. 101). The British Association for Adoption and Fostering described people who oppose gay adoption as “retarded homophobes” (p. 102). An elderly evangelical preacher, Harry Hammond, was convicted of an offence because he carried a poster calling for an end to homosexuality, lesbianism and immorality. In fact, *he* had been the victim of a physical attack, but only *he* was prosecuted (p. 289). Self-designated ‘victim groups’ have turned right and wrong, victim and aggressor inside out. Their ‘right’ not to be insulted or discriminated against has become the basis for discrimination and injustice against the representatives of majority values.

The secular inquisition

Today’s governing assumption, Phillips argues, is that religion and

reason are incompatible, and all faiths are no more than superstitious beliefs of a bygone age of myth and bigotry. However, rather than this leading to increased objectivity and freedom, it has resulted in a retreat from reason and suppression of free speech. Truth, logic and objectivity have been replaced by ideology, and any dissent from the ‘correct view’ is confronted with a ‘secular inquisition’. Everything is tolerated except that which is held to be normal by the majority. Whether the subject is the creation/evolution debate, anthropogenic global warming, homosexuality or Israel and the Palestinians, there is to be no dissent from positions that are “indisputably true and right”. Facts are ignored or denied on the grounds that those who argue from them are unenlightened, deranged or even evil. Power has now hijacked truth, she maintains, and made it subservient to its own ends. Politically correct dogma is sustained by the abuse of authority and intimidation of dissent. According to the ‘Father of the new left’, the Harvard University academic Herbert Marcuse, freedom of expression is not tolerance at all, but oppression, because it enables people to express the ‘wrong’ sorts of views (pp. 273–274).

An attack on Western civilisation

According to Phillips, what is happening in the UK and Europe is nothing less than a deliberate and carefully planned attack, by the intelligentsia and self-styled progressives, on Western civilisation. New legislation supporting single motherhood, trans-sexuality and gay rights are not primarily intended to remove prejudice, but are an attempt to use ‘modern’ ideas of sexuality as a battering ram to destroy the fundamental tenets of Western culture.

Among others, she quotes the Gay Liberation Front, who declared in their manifesto, “We must aim at the abolition of the family”, which was founded upon the “archaic and

irrational teachings” of Christianity (p. 290). She also cites Dr Brock Chisholm, the first director of the World Health Organization, who believed that the most persistent barrier to civilised life was the concept of “right and wrong”. Children, he argued, needed to be freed from cultural and religious prejudices forced on them by parents, and sex education should be introduced from the age of nine, eliminating “the ways of the elders—by force if necessary” (p. 291). Daniel Dennett¹ is quoted as extolling Darwin’s “dangerous idea” as a “universal acid”, dissolving traditional ideas about religion and morality (p. 308), and Nobel laureate Steven Weinberg² as arguing that

“[t]he world needs to wake up to the long nightmare of religious belief ... [A]nything we scientists can do to weaken the hold of religion should be done, and may in fact be our greatest contribution to civilization” (p. 318).

Secularism and gullibility

The loss of Christian belief in the Western world, Phillips claims, has also led to a widespread moral, emotional and intellectual chaos, resulting in great loneliness and gullibility (p. 6). Fantasies and cult followings dominate people’s lives with the near deification of society icons such as Princess Diana. Britain has been transformed, she writes, from a country of reason, intelligence, stoicism, self-restraint and responsibility into a land of credulousness, sentimentality, emotional excess, irresponsibility and self-obsession. Cherie Blair, the wife of former UK Prime Minister, Tony Blair, is reported to believe in the transcendent properties of stones and to wear a crystal pendant around her neck to ward off harmful rays from computers and mobile phones (p. 1). Mrs Blair, a high profile barrister and judge, it is understood, regularly consults a healer who is able to read her DNA by consulting rocks and swinging a pendulum over her body.

This healer, apparently, has been given hair and toenail clippings from both Mr and Mrs Blair to assist him in giving them advice (p. 2). In 1990 there were, reportedly, five thousand practising pagans in Britain, whereas a decade later this had risen to a hundred thousand (p. 3).

Hospitals now allow pagans to practise meditation, healing rituals and special prayer in hospitals, and pagan priests are allowed to use wine and wands during ceremonies in jails. Conspiracy theories abound, such as the belief that AIDS was created in a CIA laboratory, Princess Diana was murdered to prevent her marrying a Muslim and the 9/11 attack on New York was orchestrated by the Bush administration (p. 4). This new culture Phillips describes as empty, amoral, untruthful and manipulative. Eventually people see through the deceptions, but they can last long enough to create presidents and prime ministers.

Is Phillips exaggerating?

As a British citizen who has followed these aspects of UK and European politics carefully, I think not. Like many others, I have found the changes in the behaviour of state authorities deeply disturbing, and many of their policies appear to be based on such a denial of reason that it is sometimes hard to believe what one is reading. While never ceasing in their claims to support democracy, tolerance and free speech, they continually act in ways that fly in the face of public opinion, show great intolerance towards all who disagree with them, and pass laws which effectively criminalise the expression of ‘politically incorrect’ views.

The recently proposed EU ‘Equal Treatment Directive’ is so draconian in its implications for free speech that lawyer Professor William Wagner has described it as having the potential to bring about “cultural genocide” and to “extinguish Christianity from the face of Europe.” Of particular concern

is the ‘Harassment Provision’, which enables people to sue others if they say things which offend them, such as Christian views on sexual behaviour. Wagner argues that the wording has been deliberately chosen so as to shift the burden of proof to the defendant, requiring him to show that his accuser was not really offended. Since this is impossible in practice, the only way to avoid conviction will be to remain silent.³

What is really taking place is a deliberate, systematic dismantling of the foundations of the Western world, with the intention of replacing them with secular ideologies which are, at heart, anti-Christian. All restrictions on the individual’s ‘freedom’ to act as he or she wishes are to be removed. Men, women and children are to be ‘liberated’ from the restrictions of Christian morality, and laws prohibiting ‘harassment’ and ‘incitement to hatred’ will ensure that they may behave exactly as they wish without being subject to criticism. The preaching about sin and righteousness is effectively being outlawed.

A basis for hope?

In an interview shortly after the book’s publication, Phillips was asked, “What was the most consoling fact you learned during the course of writing *The World Turned Upside Down*?” She answered, “That so many, many people throughout the West think as I do.”⁴ Presumably, for her, the fact that many share her concerns provides hope that rationality and sense will eventually prevail. From a biblical perspective, however, the outlook for the Western world is bleak. With a society increasingly devoid of, and even hostile to, Christianity, there is little ground for optimism.

In his letter to the Romans, the Apostle Paul made it abundantly clear that a decent society, based on compassion and reason, cannot exist apart from God. He wrote:

“The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness

of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness” (Rom 1:18).

The order of the words is most significant: first godlessness and then wickedness. The truth about God and his claims upon us as our creator is rejected; wickedness and corruption follow as surely as night follows day; wickedness then reinforces the rejection of truth. Claiming to be wise, people become fools (v. 22) and finally God gives them over to depraved thinking, and every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity (vv. 28, 29). Only the gospel of Christ crucified can rescue the Western world from plummeting into increasing corruption, violence and hatred. Only by turning to God can we avoid the breakdown of the Christian political and economic systems enjoyed for so long, and for which society owes so much.

References

1. See also, Universal Acid. An analysis of Daniel Dennett’s book, *Darwin’s Dangerous Idea*, *Creation* 19(2):4, March 1997; creation.com/universal-acid.
2. American physicist and author of many books, e.g. the influential *The First Three Minutes: A Modern View of the Origin of the Universe*, 1977, 2nd edition, 1993.
3. Grave concerns over EU Directive on Equal Treatment. Interview with Professor William Wagner, CCFONtv, 29 September 2009, www.ccfon.org/mediacentre.php?avid=266&avap=1.
4. Melanie Phillips on a World Gone Mad, Interview by Kathryn Jean Lopez, 20 May 2010, article.nationalreview.com/434521/melanie-phillips-on-a-world-gone-mad/interview?page=1.