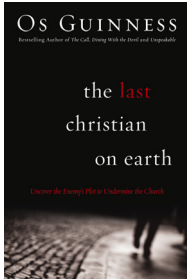


## WHO WILL BE THE LAST CHRISTIAN ON EARTH? Social Critic Uncovers “Top-Secret Memos” of a Spiritual Cold War on the Christian Church



**Washington, DC** – Why is there a growing number of Evangelicals who believe that Jesus is one of many ways to salvation? How have conservative churches allowed their teaching to become so distorted, that Evangelicals are now second only to Protestant liberals in worldliness? Why is the statistics of faith conversions and “church growth” not equal to the growth in discipleship and Christian maturity?

Author and social critic, **Os Guinness’ *The Last Christian on Earth*** has released a cultural analysis of how the Christian faith has contributed decisively to the rise of the modern world, but ironically has been undermined decisively by the modern world it helped to create.

Guinness, who challenged the church to ponder life's purpose in his previous book *The Call*, believes the deepest reason is that the Christian church is in profound cultural captivity. In the spirit of C.S. Lewis’ *The Screwtape Letters*, with the theme of an espionage thriller and the writing style of John le Carre’s spy-craft bestsellers, Guinness writes from the vantage point of an adversary of the church with chapters as memoranda's on how the church is being subverted by its own worldliness.

“But the message of this book is that we have become our own worst enemies. The problem is our ‘modern culture’ – which is now coming to the whole world through the spreading impact of globalization,” explains Guinness. “Christians in the West have fallen captive to the culture they helped to create, and have become worldly. In the past, Evangelicals were always the ones concerned for the renewal and reformation of the church, but now they are the ones who need renewing and reforming.” In *The Last Christian on Earth* Guinness expounds on:

**Christianity's Own Worst Enemy:** “Much of the opposition that Christians have asked for, has been brought down on our own heads through our sub-Christian behavior, as in the failure of Christians demonstrating love for their enemies in obedience to the call of Jesus.”

**Modern World Religion versus Biblical Faith:** “Biblical faith has been confused with ‘positive thinking’ and ‘possibility thinking.’ The last generation’s calls for ‘relevance,’ ‘innovation,’ ‘thinking out of the box,’ are uncritical accommodations to modern ‘fast-life’ and its idolatry of ‘change’ and ‘presentism.’ Each of these things is a dangerous form of worldliness because its cue is the power of the spirit rather than the gospel.”

**On Cultural Captivity:** “We've lost a tough-minded understanding of ‘worldliness.’ Though we're getting better at recognizing and resisting philosophies and ideologies – secularism, humanism, postmodernism, – we are often naïve about the shaping power of culture. But the real menace of the modern world comes in its philosophies – in things such as ‘consumerism’ and ‘secularization.’

**On the Modern World's Impact on Christianity:** “The modern world has done more damage to the Christian faith than all the persecutors in history – for example in making

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evangelism easier but real discipleship much harder. Christians need to resist the trends if they want to be faithful to Jesus. So the simple challenge is to *read* and *recognize* the distorting trends, and then in the power of the gospel to *reverse* them!”

*The Last Christian on Earth* is an updated re-issue of Os Guinness’ *The Gravedigger File*, which was a bestselling classic twenty five years ago. Yet it is even more relevant today than when it was first published because the cultural captivity of Evangelicals is deeper and the disastrous consequences are more obvious.

“Sin and worldliness are always myopic -- we only see ourselves, our own culture and our own age. It's of course relatively common for visitors to the US to be surprised or shocked at what is taken to be Christian but is really so American, and sometimes anti-Christian,” says Guinness. “My prayer is that this book will be a catalyst for enlightenment for people to pray urgently for revival and reformation.”

**Book Overview:** The gravedigger thesis can be put simply: The Christian faith contributed decisively to the rise of the modern world, but has been undermined decisively by the modern world it helped to create. The Christian faith has become its own gravedigger. In the 25 years since philosopher and social critic Os Guinness first published *The Gravedigger Files*, much has happened: the fall of the Soviet Union, the rise of the computer age, the re emergence of China and India, the rise of Islamic terrorism, and the worldwide revitalization and politicization of religion. Can Christians regain the full integrity of faith in Christ while fully and properly engaged in the advanced modern world? This new edition of *The Last Christian on Earth*, which includes previously unpublished, top-secret memos is Dr. Guinness's parable about the future of the Christian church in the West.

**Os Guinness** is an author and social critic, who is currently Senior Fellow with the EastWest Institute in New York. Great-great grandson of Arthur Guinness, the Dublin brewer, Os was born in China in World War Two where his parents were medical missionaries. He completed his undergraduate degree at the University of London and his D.Phil in the social sciences from Oriel College, Oxford. Guinness has written or edited more than twenty five books, including *The American Hour*, *Time for Truth*, and *Unspeakable: Facing Up to the Challenge of Evil*. His latest book, *The Case for Civility*, was published by Harper One in 2008. Guinness has been a freelance reporter with the BBC, a Guest Scholar at the Woodrow Wilson Center for International Studies, a Guest Scholar and Visiting Fellow at the Brookings Institution, a senior fellow at the Trinity Forum, and a frequent speaker and seminar leader at political and business conferences in both the United States and Europe. As a European visitor to the U.S. and a great admirer but detached observer of American culture today, he stands in the long tradition of outside voices who have contributed so much to America’s ongoing discussion about the state of the union. He lives with his wife Jenny in McLean, Virginia. For more information, visit [www.osguinness.com](http://www.osguinness.com).

**About *The Last Christian on Earth*:**

*The Last Christian on Earth: Uncover the Enemy’s Plot to Undermine the Church* by Os Guinness. Published by Gospel Light Publications/Regal Books. March 8, 2010. Paperback, 256 pages. \$14.99. ISBN: 9780830751242.

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## **Suggested Interview Questions** For Os Guinness, author of *The Last Christian on Earth*

1. Why did you write this book and choose the “leaked memo” format for your book?
2. How does the historical Cold War mirror the threat to the Christian church?
3. Is there an actual conspiracy against the church? Why you really believe the Church has enemies seeking to undermine it?
4. Aren't the real enemies of the Church secularism, Marxism, postmodernism, or Islam?
5. Explain “the Americanization of the Christian faith.”
6. How is this related to the Roman Emperor Constantine's adoption of Christianity?
7. Where do you see Evangelicals in cultural captivity today?
8. Explain “secularization,” “privatization,” and “pluralization.”
9. How does modern culture contaminate Christian institutions and Christian ideas?
10. Why do you believe so many Evangelical Christians are unaware of cultural captivity?
11. And also Christian involvement in the world?
12. Who are some of the Christian “resistance fighters” you know of?
13. What is the biggest difference between the negative impact our culture is taking on religion compared to other cultures and their religion?
14. How can a sort of “holy foolishness” save the Church?
15. Who is “The Old Fool” your Director refers to?
16. How did he inspire the creation of this book?
17. If the church is so error-prone, why to save it at all?

## STANDOUT QUOTES FROM *THE LAST CHRISTIAN ON EARTH*:

As a writer and social critic, Dr. Guinness assumes the role of a fictional enemy of the Christian faith, a man known only as “the Director,” who outlines the plot against the Church in “top-secret” memos. When the Director’s protégé “defects” from the plot, he leaks the memos in hopes that Christians will read them and awake from their spiritual lethargy.

### Memorandum 1: Operation Gravedigger

Pg. 21. “The Christian faith contributed to the rise of the modern world, but the Christian faith has been undermined by the modern world it helped to create. The Christian faith thus becomes its own gravedigger.”

Pg. 21. “Our interests are best served, not by working *against* the Church, but by working *with* it. The more the Church becomes one with the modern world, the more it becomes compromised, and the deeper the grave it digs for itself.”

Pg. 33. “When we manage to see that [God’s] gifts, such as the fruits of culture, are subtly changed and become revered in his place—which he then calls ‘idols’—he changes too: from giver to judge. In fact, some of his most severe judgments in history have been against *his own gifts and works once he sees they have been ‘idolized.’*”

Pg. 34. “...We achieved our magnificent victory in A.D. 312 when Constantine won the battle of Milvian Bridge and went on to declare the Roman Empire ‘Christian.’ It opened the door to one of the greatest subversions of all time. *The Christianization of Rome led to the Romanization of the Christian faith and away from the way of Jesus.*”

### Memorandum 2: The Sandman Effect

Pg. 45. “The Church is the Christian faith’s working model; its pilot plant; its future in embryo; its colonial outpost. So, if we can work on the Church as a social body until it is weak, shallow, distorted, hypocritical, or whatever, then it’s all up with the truth of the faith. Christian apologists can muster all the best arguments in the world, but they will not seem true. More accurately, they may be credible intellectually. But they won’t be plausible, and credibility without plausibility is tinny and unconvincing.”

### Memorandum 3: The Cheshire-Cat Factor

Pg. 60. “After all, it has been a standard operating principle from the beginning that *bad religion is more damaging to true faith than no religion.*”

Pg. 69. “Not all Christians enter the central areas of modern society, but all who do are constricted by secularization, even if unawares. Secularization, therefore, affects far more than the overt secularist. It touches the most spiritual people too.”

### Memorandum 4: The Private-Zoo Factor

Pg. 78. “Their weakness is not that renewal starts in the private world, but that *it ends there too.* Spiritual inspiration they may have. But social inhibitions overwhelm them in the end. If this were not so, the renewal movement would be extremely dangerous.”

Pg. 86. “The megachurches do not rock the boat of privatization. They reinforce it.”

Pg. 88. “Evangelicals (with our help) have created the most vicious backlash against the Christian faith in all American history, at least among the elites.”

### **Memorandum 5: The Smorgasbord Factor**

Pg. 93. “Whereas pluralism once left them more sure of the truth and superiority of their faith in contrast to others, it now leaves them less sure. ...As the Church grew from a tiny minority to a dominant majority, its experience of being a monopoly disarmed Christians and made them forget what the challenge of pluralism was like. Besides, the experience of centuries of dominance left them with a guilty conscience about all the evils and excesses of that dominance.”

### **Memorandum 6: Creating Counterfeit Religion**

Pg. 114. “As things proceed well, we push to make civil religion such an unholy alliance of faith and flag that Christian ideals and American interests are welded inseparably. ...Americans are literally worshipping themselves.”

### **Memorandum 8: Damage to Enemy Ideas**

Pg. 147. “Secularization makes the Christian faith seem less real, privatization makes it seem merely a private preference, and pluralization makes it seem just one among many.”

### **Memorandum 9: Fossils and Fanatics**

Pg. 173. “Conservatives claim to be a massive movement of resistance to the culture of today. But as we have seen from their uncritical use of modern methods (such as television and political action committees), and their unquestioning adherence to current values (such as personal peace and prosperity), no one is more modern. Not even the much-despised liberal is more liberal.”

### **Memorandum 10: Trendies and Traitors**

Pg. 199. “Face up to those elements in the faith that are obscure or difficult, [Christian apologists once] said, and you will break through to new understanding. Today’s liberals have reversed this. Quick to alter faith as soon as it puzzles or repels anyone, they become susceptible to the special silliness and subservience to fashion of the easily swayed thinker.”

### **Memorandum 11: The Last Christian in the Modern World**

Pg. 210. “The worst thing that could happen is this: The increasingly apparent weakness and captivity of the Church might jolt Christians into seeing the force of the extremes, and then spur a movement to recover a coherent and balanced, ruthlessly biblical “third way.”

### **On Remembering the Third Fool and the Devil’s Mousetrap**

Pg. 222. “For the fact is that our real enemy today is not secularism, not humanism, not Marxism, and not postmodernism. It is not Islam, or any of the great religious rivals to the Christian gospel. It is not even modernization. It is ourselves.”

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