

Retaining Faith and Integrity While Swimming Upstream In the Woke Culture

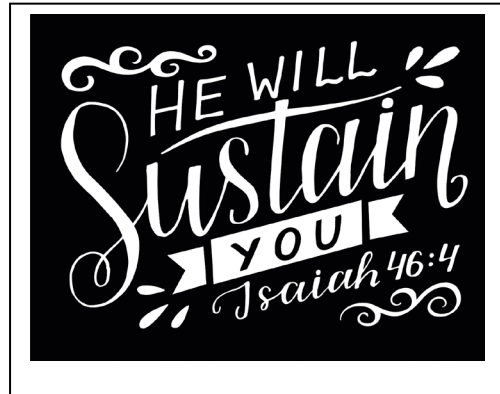
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*The prudent sees danger and hides himself,
but the simple go on and suffer for it.*

Proverbs 27:12 ESV



I wrote last month about the broken hearted and broken minded people that this ongoing “soft totalitarianism” have been breeding among us. If you recall, “**Hard**” totalitarianism is when compliance and control for a required belief/practice is brought about through terror, imprisonment, torture and death. “**Soft**” totalitarianism is when compliance is more subtly demanded through peer pressure, media “slant,” corporate political positioning, and social ostracizing/discrediting /censoring those who don’t follow the politically correct or “woke” narrative. Both forms have the end goal of eradicating Christianity. It all has deep ties to Marxism. Marx taught that man could become as god. Sound familiar? It really does come down to a spiritual issue being fought through political forums. The belief in this totalitarianism ideal is rooted in ideology that seems to resonate to people who have yet to learn it has invariably brought suffering and harm every time it has been tried.

It seems the current “culture war” is over and we, conservative, Biblical believers have lost. Once again, here at SAM we ask if this is simply another in the recurring cycle as recorded in Judges OR if it might be the final push to shatter the saints and establish satan’s desire to be worshiped as god. HAMAS attack of Israeli citizens seems poised to become a much bigger theatre of war. All these issues are no longer regional but in multiple nations. Despite some pushback those who serve wickedness are deeply entrenched. Humanly speaking, has too much water gone over the dam? The exposure of the WEF, the WHO and covid illness, masking, lockdown and vaccination issues have helped many to see how these schemes have infiltrated much of the World, but many remain unaware.

We can no longer expect that younger Americans will be able to fall back on the foundational Judeo-Christian beliefs that have been a part of the founding of America. (I am SO thankful when I do see young people who confirm Biblical values! They DO exist!) For decades now, our educational institutions have been teaching that this background is not only unnecessary to know, but even the root of the current evils. (Hillsdale College recently did a IMPRIMIS report on the **Transgender Kingdom**, well worth reading.)

Homeschooling continues to grow exponentially as parents DO begin to recognize the “critical race” theories and such being taught their children, but many parents are still unaware, and/or feel unable to do anything else but continue to send their children to public schools. I can confirm this change in content, having experienced it already back in the late 70’s in undergraduate schooling. I didn’t know just what I was confronting but I did know it wasn’t agreeable to me as a Christian. My prof in Marxism just

seemed to be someone with a weird outlook, but I didn't see him as representative of anything else in America! Now I can see that I REALLY missed the deepest implications of what was taught there!

Did you know that the American dream has been "reframed" from the pursuit of the ability to worship and serve God to live a virtuous life to the pursuit of material wealth and stability so that one can achieve well-being as each one determines for themselves? Check this out in conversations with people of different generations to get a better "feel" for what motivates people! I was challenged to do this in my early 20's as far as my friend's faith. Boy, was I surprised to find that only one of them was serious about their faith! I thought they were like me... NOT!

Many young people have grown up now hearing how evil the American system is and have accepted this as their own belief. The "one hour a week in church" model has not been enough to counter this storm. People have not been able to remain firmly standing on the rock of Messiah but have been persuaded that the louder and more pervasive voice of the "Woke" culture is where they should stand. It is also sadly true that a number of churches have already gone along with transgenderism, homosexuality, same sex marriages and other practices that are far outside Biblical commandments. They have adopted the "New" meaning of tolerance, no longer standing with the original meaning. People trust those in authority, sometimes more than they should! We could also say the salt has lost its saltiness.

We are clearly the minority, with Barna confirming only 1 in 4 American's to be Biblically practicing Christians of one form or another. No matter how artfully we speak God's Truth, it is shocking to realize that it will not automatically bring those in authority up short. Many do not have eyes to see or ears to hear. "**Moralistic Therapeutic Deism**" is the term coined by sociologists Smith and Denton in 2005; summarized as "faith that God exists and that He only wants us to be nice and to be happy."

How familiar does this sound to you?

The question becomes how do we hold on to our own identities and faith while we are swimming upstream to the "woke" culture that is controlling all major institutions? It is hugely surreal to me that the people who agree with these heavy-handed tactics seem blind to recognize it as strongarming. Silencing anyone who doesn't agree seems entirely acceptable to them. There were even those who called for death to those who refused to be vaccinated.

The works of Benda and Kolakovich about their experience in Croatia and Czechoslovakian totalitarianism are the voices of people of faith who were convicted and strong enough in their faith to refuse to go along with lies. (*"The Long Night of the Watchman"* is a collection of essays written by Benda during the time he and his family were enduring the constant surveillance and harassment of the secret police and government. A sense of humor as well as love and faith in what is good are evident as he wrote about what was being done to them. It is not so different from what is happening today.)

What can we learn from them while we are seeing the heavy hand bear down harder on those who do not go along with lies?

Some people of faith try to cope with this by retreating into a totally 'spiritually focused' life, trying to rise above or disregard what is going on in the world. I can certainly vouch for the joy of being immersed in His Word while shutting out the cares of the world! Although this seems "noble," it really doesn't reflect the Biblical understanding that we are IN the world but not OF it and ARE called to be a witness and to stand for what is right! Our God is relational and created us to be relational as well. We were not

intended to be hermits completely withdrawn from life, but rather to engage with it and be the “salt” that preserves and protects life.

One man of you puts to flight a thousand, since it is the LORD your God who fights for you, just as he promised you. Joshua 23:10 ESV

On May 4, 2020, Pope Benedict XVI wrote in the Catholic Register that: “a worldwide dictatorship of seemingly humanistic ideologies” pushes dissenters out of public view. He called it a manifestation of “the spiritual power of the antichrist.” This is quoted in Rod Dreher’s book, “Live Not By Lies.” Dreher went on to write that “This spiritual power takes material form in government, and private institutions, in corporations and academia and media and in the changing practices of every day American life. It is empowered by unprecedented, technological capabilities to surveil private life. There is virtually no where left to hide.”

Dreher notes that it all depends on the ability to induce fear of standing against it...who will be the one to say out loud, “The emperor has no clothes!” Often difficult to identify, it wears a mask of being helpful and concerned about people’s well-being. That has been called “**therapeutic totalitarianism.**” For example, when someone has been defined as a victim being oppressed, such as transgender children being oppressed and “at risk of suicide” if they aren’t permitted to have “Gender Affirming Care (GAC).” Their conservative Christian parents are assumed to be the enemy if they resist this fantasy that chemicals and surgery can alter the genetic make-up of a person. That position is NOT consistent with their “narrative!” It exposes their nakedness! This rationale appeals to many even though there is no solid body of study to confirm this is a real risk. Teachings about this have permeated professional organizations from medical to psychiatric to educational/school counselors. Who would want to “deny” a child getting care without which could lead to their suicide? So even well-meaning people have been carried along to the point of the “pipeline” of children being drawn into GAC from the schools while hiding transition steps from parents.

My question in recent months as we experience more and more confusion and chaos in relationships around us and the world at large, has been how do we support one another when everyone is under too much pressure in their own lives? As hard as this is, I am seeing that it can get much worse. Some want to take the battle point blank into the face of the enemy. Others see a different path. I believe that BOTH ways can be productive.

Clearly, we must understand that this battle is spiritual and cannot be fought out in the physical realm. I have written about this in several ways in the past year and before... a battle with a physical enemy who is clothed with the powers of darkness would be foolishness without girding up in every aspect of our relationship with our Messiah and Redeemer. He is also the Commander of the LORD’s army. He is Who we must look to in order to walk into His victory in His authority.

The loud voices of the world system need to be countered by the small still voice of our Messiah within our faith or family assembly that also listens for His voice. Here, we get the corporate encouragement to stand for what we know to be right and righteous.

Benda proposed and he and his family developed an alternate community, a “parallel polis” in which people could safely express themselves, rather than trying to directly counter the system. The growing underground network of people and assemblies was the launching place for the counter protests that

finally did succeed in toppling the totalitarians. There, people could remember “who they are, and Whose they are,” and “remember, remember, remember” what He has done and will do for His people away from the controlled environments. These are the same kinds of things I have said to my children when they were young, and which are some of our ‘pithy maxims” or parables in SAM.

How many times have we sung the song, **I Surrender All**, and not really thought about what it means? Those who have rebelled and stood against totalitarian control have paid a price in this way. If one is an accomplished academician or corporate person, they can still lose their employment and reputation if they do not go along to get along. Are we willing to lower our expectations for the comforts and prestige of life that is lost when we don’t go along with the party line? In countries where this has happened, it is not unusual for highly educated people to be only able to do menial labor for employment, WHEN they get out of prison. Their eyes are focused on the treasures stored up in Heaven, NOT on the vision of material wealth, prestige and comfort. For the joy set before us may it be so for us, too!

If you’d like to participate in discussion about development of an American “parallel polis” please contact us at info@set-apart-ministries.org