

“Reflections on current cultural trends”

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Introduction

- I don't have to tell you that, by any measure, we are living in challenging times.
- On one level this shouldn't surprise us because the NT has taught us to expect hard times as we seek to live faithfully for Jesus, esp. as we approach the end of the present age. In one NT text, Paul warned us:

2 Timothy 3:1-4

“But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.”

- **The church of Jesus Christ needs to take a long hard look at what is going on around us with spiritual discernment, then respond in a prophetic and redemptive way that reflects a true understanding of where we are in God's plan of salvation history.**
- **What should be our response?**

Matt 10:16-17a

“I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves. ¹⁷ Be on your guard...”

- So, in this spirit I want to offer up a few reflections on some of the changes taking place right now in American culture that are disturbing and potentially consequential to us as a republic.

· I want to be clear from the outset. My intent is not to bum you out or terrify you by the things we will talk about today. My goal is threefold:

1. That you would be aware of what is going on, take additional steps to educate yourself.
2. That you would be more prayerful than you've ever been before for yourself, your family, our church and our country.
3. That you would see our moment in history as a unique opportunity to do great good for building the kingdom of God to the glory of Christ.

Two troubling cultural trends

1. The legitimizing of lawlessness

· As you watch the videos of the riots, it feels like we're transported back 3000 years to the pre-monarchy days of Israel. Judges 17:6 says famously: **"In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes."**

· Lawlessness is more than an individual proclivity; it is a primal instinct as well as a spiritual force. Paul put it in these terms when he wrote to the Thessalonians in **2 Thessalonians 2:7-8: "For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains *will do so* until he is taken out of the way. Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming."**

· **How do we know the mystery of lawlessness is already at work?** Just look at the newsfeed on your computer. Everyday, you see different examples of lawlessness. As you identify these, you will notice at least five common expressions. First, lawlessness says:

1. **"Laws are for everyone else, but not me"**
2. **"I will take what is yours and make it mine"**

3. **“I will tear down what I don’t like”**
4. **“Because you disagree with me, I will oppose you, lie about you, even kill you if needed”**
5. **“I will do whatever it takes to get what I want”**

- What all five of these expressions share in common is a commitment to the use of raw, unbridled power to accomplish what is right in eyes of the one wielding the power, rather than what has been legally agreed upon through constitutional means over our 231 year history as a republic.

- Jesus said that the enemy of our souls comes to “steal, kill and destroy.” Powerful words: Steal, Kill, Destroy - three verbs that summarize the lawlessness that characterizes what is playing out on American streets and, at times, in the halls of Congress.

- What can you do? Protect yourself. Be careful and prayerful. Elect officials who will preserve order and work to correct the problems that are inevitably part of any government.

SOME RESOURCES

Jonathan Haidt – Coddling of the American Mind interview
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FG6HbWw2RF4>

Stossel: Jordan Peterson vs. “Social Justice Warriors”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jnJEEdp6W24>

Have We All Gone Mad? The Snowflake Epidemic
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xdnSweR7F0Q>

Yale students bullying professor Nicholas Christakis
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kMc8pczn-hs>

Back story in the Atlantic:

<https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/11/the-new-intolerance-of-student-activism-at-yale/414810/>

Actual email:

<https://www.thefire.org/email-from-erika-christakis-dressing-yourself-email-to-silliman-college-yale-students-on-halloween-costumes/>

Bio of professor: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicholas_Christakis

Nice summary: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xK4MBzp5YwM>

Jordan Peterson being bullied by students at McMaster

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vMSmUzDt-7U>

Michael Knowles being shouted down at GW

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uaMqzlo5KWY>

Evergreen State University vs. Bret Weinstein, white professor

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2cMYfxOFBBM&pbjreload=101>

I Love America Too Much to Stay Silent: Nestrive Yumga (4:29)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l1Aj9YnKXIs>

The Flip Side

<https://www.theflipside.io/>

2. The “lefting” of American institutions

- What this means is that, through the last half of twentieth century and the first twenty years of the twenty-first, there has been a steady move to the left side of the political spectrum.
- “The Left” can be a kind of catch all phrase, so let me explain what is meant. It is not the same as the Democratic party.
- The left is an ideology that embodies several foundational beliefs:
 1. **Secularism**: a faith commitment founded on philosophical materialism; anti-theism and moral relativism
 2. **Statism**: the belief that centralized government control is preferred to individual freedoms

3. **Socialism:** State control of some industries and resources; income redistribution based on a Marxist class struggle model
 4. **Globalism:** A disdain of American exceptionalism, a world without borders; international treaties. Trump: “Make America Great Again” is a threat.
- How is this ideological agenda playing out in the sectors of society?
 - K-12 education. Kids being indoctrinated into certain ideological values, whether on climate change, non-traditional family structures, LGBT norms, or, most recently, white privilege through the 1619 project.
 - In higher Ed, we’ve gone from teaching young adults how to think critically to teaching them what to think: indoctrinating them into a dominant worldview and shutting down free speech.
 - Mainstream media. Abandoned objective analysis in favor of reinforcing values espoused by those on the ideological left.
 - Social media is controlled by left-leaning CEOs who routinely promote a certain narrative and censor material that doesn’t fit that agenda.
 - Sports (NFL, NBA, ESPN)
 - Legal system: DAs who refuse to prosecute for crimes (Portland, Chicago, Seattle). George Soros has funded numerous local DA elections.

SOME RESOURCES

Left or Liberal?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tlIjMJBSnRE>

The Hill: The Democratic Party and its leftward drift

<https://thehill.com/opinion/white-house/386403-the-democrat-party-and-its-leftward-drift>

Why I left the left: Dave Rubin (4:22)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hiVQ8vrGA_8

The Left ruins everything: Dennis Prager (5:50)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JXbR3oADwaM>

The left's extreme reaction to Ginsburg's death

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VQGDwGQ8GUg>

Why Are Conservatives Happier Than Liberals?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9txz6_61Qnl

How Morals Influence If You're Liberal Or Conservative

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vxoKi1zOns0>

No, Kamala Harris is not a moderate

<https://thefederalist.com/2020/08/12/no-kamala-harris-isnt-a-moderate-shes-a-radical-threat-to-america/>

Two other issues

1. Technocratic oligarchy

- Definition: an ideological system in which experts in various disciplines determine policy, control industry and/or run the government rather than elected representatives.

SOME RESOURCES

TECHNOCRACY

What Is A Technocracy? Pro

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eqmPbzqCQOI>

Technocracies: Power to the Experts? (3:26) Pro

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Al-Q6AJDy38>

America Is a Technocracy, Not a Democracy: Ryan McMaken (13:01) Con

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l0_WY5jYiNI

Humans 2.0: GMO Vaccinations and Transhumanism: Patrick Wood, Con

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vjHAcZY6l00>

Patrick Wood's website (warning against the dangers of technocracy)

<https://www.technocracy.news/>

Technocracy and The Global Political Consensus

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TKHGDPeak2s>

SOCIAL MEDIA

The Social Dilemma (Netflix documentary)

<https://www.netflix.com/title/81254224>

You Will Wish You Watched This Before You Started Using Social Media (13:19)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PmEDAzqsw8>

The Media Research Center has launched CensorTrack, a website dedicated to #FreeSpeechAmerica, a campaign designed to fight online censorship of conservatives.

<https://censortrack.org/tech-company-bias>

2. Transhumanism

1. Definition: The incorporation of technology into humans to extend life, increase knowledge and enhance other sensory and cognitive capacities. NBIC research and the Human 2.0 projects.

SOME RESOURCES

Transhumanism: Will humans evolve to something smarter? | A-Z of ISMs Episode 20 - BBC Ideas

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RVmuU04-X5E>

[A Transhumanist Timeline](https://www.theverge.com/a/transhumanism-2015/history-of-transhumanism)

<https://www.theverge.com/a/transhumanism-2015/history-of-transhumanism>

Transhumanism 2.0 (4:45:15 documentary)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ILzPKHkrVwo>

How transhumanist technologies will change everything? Zoltan Istvan (4:07)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NhBaXoB4iA8>

The Science Behind 'Genetically Modified Humans'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mAmHoCbhyaw>

"This Could Be a Tragedy For Humanity" - The First Brain Chip Implant

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SI3RWFZQ_RE

Our Post-Human Future: David Simpson

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uAb-mSq615g>

The coming transhuman era: Jason Sosa

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Ugo2KEV2XQ>

"Human 2.0"? A Wake-Up Call To The World: Carrie Madej, DO (21:16)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ywuCRVJVDqs>

ID, Wallet, Keys All In Your Hand: Sweden Moves Into The Future With Microchipping

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ksw-arkvMPk>

U.S Employee microchip implants raise ethical questions

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NkoPQa_0SKg

Take aways

- Jesus told his disciples not to freak out when things started going whacky. He told them to be on their guard, to pay attention to the warning signs and to prayerfully entrust themselves into the care of the Father.
- Be wise as serpents. Don't be intimidated into silence and go along with the crowd.
- At same time, be gentle as doves, loving God and others, even those who want to take away your rights and silence you. Ultimately our fight is "not against flesh and blood" and our allegiance is to a far higher authority: the One who bears "the name that is above every name."