

## Capitulation or Confrontation: A Time to Man Up

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A seminary professor of mine once was assigning a term paper to the class when he paused to emphasize, "Gentlemen, define your terms!" I resonated with that admonition because few faults so obscure one's meaning as foggy definitions. Racism, sexism, discrimination, Christian, anti-Semitism, love, hate, etc.

As "beauty" seems to be in the mind of the beholder, so these days what terms mean seems to be in the mind of the speaker. A famed literary critic once said that the new reigning rule is: "You bring the words, I bring the meaning."

Hence a communicative climate where no stable meanings seem to be available. So, people talk past one another regularly. Frustrating, to say the least.

Since in this blog I will be addressing the problem of Christian capitulation to culture, let me stipulate a definition of culture. For our purposes "culture" means approximately the same thing that the NT means by the "world." That term refers to the godless spirit, ways, values and corrupt institutions of our age, inspired by Satan. Specific cultures change like a kaleidoscope within a frame, but somehow from place to place and age to age, they remain the same in godless temper, whatever their variables.

With that definition in mind, our question for (Bible-believing) Christians is clear, I think. In trying to be faithful to Christ, is the path forward to make peace with the culture by capitulating or conforming to its views and values, surrendering or modifying our biblical views and values, to go along and get along, and to turn down the heat in order to evade hate, vilification and persecution? Or, should we consider it our duty, when necessary, to courageously confront and frankly contradict the pervasive perversities and lies of our culture?

Put that way, is there any honorable choice? Yet in droves many reputed Christians, leaders and lay folks, scads of millennials, are so anxious to be welcomed on the cultural playground, they will sell the farm to placate a Bible- and Christian-adverse culture. Weirdly they seem to think the way to win over the world is to tone down their own Christian identity by denying its biblical views and values.

Somewhere along the line they missed that warning of James: "You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world (culture) is hostility toward God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." (4:4). Trying to pacify the culture is a losing game.

Like, e.g., ignoring the savagery of the abortion murder "industry." The silence from this sector is deafening. Yet unaccountably, here they are surrendering tamely to what I call the "alphabet community" (you know, LGBTQ+) in their aggressive attempt to redefine the obvious---gender identification. No protest from them when the secular cultural mavens want to turn everything on its head and make gender a psychological rather than an anatomical assignation.

But that is just one thing. Along with that, they condone the effort to "naturalize" homosexuality and to declare homosexual *affinities* just another example of human diversity rather than another sad example of the whole garden of human perversities. Some of them are so anxious to placate the culture and court its affirmation that they even come forward, if you can believe it, with proclamations of

repentance and confession for their historic sins for doing injury to the “alphabet community” with their “judgmental” stance inherited from the past (meaning the Scriptures). This biblical stance proclaims that so-called same-sex attraction is a lust to be progressively mortified by the Spirit working through the Word, just as other sinful desires should be. **Notice that it is a *temptation to be rejected, not proof of an unchangeable orientation*.** Yet I fear we are not done with these ever-evolving travesties. The same cultural sycophants can be expected, as it gathers momentum and on the same specious logic, to jump up in support of normalizing pedophilia. It’s coming.

Many persist in this path, believing in their muddled thinking, that they are doing Christ a service by, for example, finding a way to wrench the teaching of the Bible into agreement with the moral devolution of our culture. Papering over sexual excesses or trying, for example, to establish some kind moral equivalence between same-sex “marriage” and heterosexual marriage is not at all loving, but simply lying to all concerned and making God out a liar for condemning it.

And then, unbelievably, some believers naively allow themselves to be co-opted by those folks who want to “victimize” themselves (doesn’t everybody these days?) in their surfeit of sin and glut of excess. In the good name of social justice, they with straight faces call upon us to “rectify” the supposed “wrongs” society (and especially Christians) have unjustly inflicted on them. Calling these so-called wrongs, “sin,” is a far cry from the categories of what the biblical prophets decried as social injustice. Can we get some moral perspective here?

There *are* true victims in dire need of justice. And there *are* sinners in dire need of repentance. And there are those who are sadly victims of a life of sin and sexual excess who do, in fact, need our compassion, but not our moral approval.

Now, to be sure, those of these unnatural dispositions and deviations are not to be loathed, but loved like everybody else for whom Christ died. Still, sin is sin. And in all forms, sexual or otherwise, it needs to be acknowledged and repudiated for what it is, not rationalized and justified. Love the sinner, but hate the sin. That is God’s way. It must be ours also without apology.

And if that stance causes us to be bullied (and it will) in this culture of death and moral deformity, and castigated as “haters,” we should not be, like sensitive little children, intimidated by the tactical defamation of our enemies. Nothing has changed with the world. Even the Roman historian, Tacitus, famously called Christians “haters of humanity.” Sound familiar?

Can we just get a grip? The world has from time immemorial tried to hang bad raps on the people of God in a vain effort to find any and every excuse to get God off their consciences. Smear them. Make them out as hypocrites. That will do it! Well, in every great house there will be vessels of honor and dishonor, some holding the treasure and some containing trash. People will see what they want to see. Still, we have the truth and we ought to stick with it, not run for cover when evil people in fits of projection try to pin their own hateful tails on us.

One wonders how, in the name of God and all that is holy, did ostensible Christians get caught up in this cultural drift into amorality (what it amounts to, at least) by performing all these exegetical gymnastics and pirouettes in order to accommodate the cultural insanity?

As Rev. Thomas Littleton explains in his 9/12/18 blog ([thirtypiecesofsilver.org](http://thirtypiecesofsilver.org)), those capitulating to the homosexual agenda now assert that “Christians retain homosexual or SSA (Same-Sex Attraction)

desires well after conversion. These retained desires now, in the broader narrative, are not temptations but are taken as proof of ‘orientation.’ This ‘orientation’ is a proven reality, and therefore this temptation is actually a permanent sexual identity.”

If all this seems baffling to you, I will explain later what I think drives this drift. But first a word about our calling.

Our Christian calling is to come out from among them, not join them, and to be a morally separate, not immorally fused, people. We are not to be like the excluded children next door with an inferiority complex who keep looking over the fence, making fools of themselves, by trying too hard to get the attention of the kids in the sandbox, so they will invite them to come over and play.

The world is not our sandbox, people.

“Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” 1 John 2:15

No, our mission is not to look silly by cozying up to the culture, lamely capitulating to its views and values, hat in hand, but to boldly contradict it. Conformity is not an option. “Be not conformed (to the world and its views and values) but be transformed by the renewing of your minds.” Romans 12:2

That all seems too obvious.

So why all this cultural and political posturing to appease hateful cultural forces who despise Christ, despise Christians and despise the word of God? How do we explain why some flying under our banner keep making such an effort at the expense of the truth to “befriend” a world that scorns all we stand for? O that some could hear the rebuke of Joab to David as David lamented the loss of his rebel son, Absalom:

“Today you have covered with shame the faces of all your servants. . . . By loving those who hate you, and by hating those who love you.” (2 Samuel 19:5-6). David got the message; unfortunately, many of our contemporaries have not. Beyond weird.

Jehoshaphat was one of the better kings of Judah, but he had at least one glaring flaw that marred his record. He had this penchant for being too friendly with his godless neighbor to the north, the wicked Ahab, king of Israel. He had just returned safely from a joint military campaign with Ahab against the king of Syria when he was accosted by Jehu, a prophet of God.

“Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the Lord and so bring the wrath upon yourself from the Lord?” 2 Kings 19:1-2

I think it is high time a lot of contemporary Christian leaders and lay people, particularly millennials, wake up and ask themselves in approximately the same situation, that same question.

*Let us confront the culture, not capitulate to it.* We are not called to be panty-waisted panderers in this world, but to be hairy-mantled prophets within it. Can we find our Christian manhood and stand up to the culture and stop standing with it (on the pretense of Christian love)? If you are one of those, nobody is fooled but you. Even the world despises religious bootlickers almost as much as God.

Let us stop this silly catering to the corrupt culture about us. Let us find the holy sand to be prophets within it. True, God did not set us up to judge the world. But that misses the point. Make no mistake about it, God most certainly did appoint us to pronounce *His own* judgment upon the world. Ask all the prophets. And if we shirk that assignment, our own judgment will be the same condemnation God warned Ezekiel about if he ducked his watchman role and became a pussy willow: the blood of the wicked would be on his head (and ours). (See Ezek. 3:16-18)

One may ask: What drives this throwing down of our shields of truth in the face of the Enemy? God knows; I only suspect, but I know I am right in at least some cases.

In the case of Christian leaders, I have learned this: celebrity is like cash. The more status people gain, the more they like it and want to keep it or increase it. They fear nothing so much as losing their standing, losing some of their “market share.” So, I have seen it over and over, these high profile folks will shuck and jive and twist the truth every way imaginable to keep in the limelight. They always dread being forced into a stance that jeopardizes their public optics.

It’s all about appearances. No way do they want to take a stand that brings down upon themselves public reproach. They dread nothing so much as finding themselves scorned in the secular media, becoming almost overnight pariahs in the press instead of respected spokespersons, and then like overexposed entertainment-types, dropping off the popularity charts due to a run of bad publicity. Man, they run like rabbits from any smear of being “haters” upon the wicked. They carefully maneuver their postures and craft their positions to remain safe and respectable in the public eye. They like to keep themselves safely distanced from those rough-edged John the Baptist types who, indifferent to secular perceptions, elect to stay behind the lines, hold the fort of the faith and safeguard biblical moral principles, come what will.

Then with some, it is the more benign concern about being culturally marginalized to the point of social irrelevancy. So, wise as they are, they try this ploy and that to earn a little respect from society in order to gain a more strategic platform from which to speak. And so far, they appear ready to make all the necessary concessions and compromises to get a seat at the table so the world will speak well of them (bad sign right there!)

Can we get our head lamps on bright here? The Church of Jesus Christ was born on the margins. Nothing on earth could have seemed more irrelevant in the beginning. Biblical Christianity (exclude nominal or cultural Christianity) has always lived on the margins and has always seemed a basically irrelevant social force to the powers that be.

Breaking news, people! God prefers, always has, to launch His power from platforms of weakness, like a Roman cross. Look at ancient Israel, for example. The sovereignty of God historically mocks worldly power and its players. Culture is not sovereign. God is.

In the case of many lay people, most especially young people (the above mentioned millennials), a large sector of them very much resemble some in Israel, cakes half-baked, appallingly ignorant of or uncommitted to the Scriptures. Deeply indoctrinated by our progressive culture and post-modern mentality, they don’t even realize in many cases how far they have run off the reservation. In truth, I suspect many of them were never really *of* the reservation, no matter how long they may have spent on it (1 John 2:19).

Though some may have been raised in Christian (more or less) homes, they have managed to emerge with their native unbelief pretty much intact, though maybe still arrayed in a thin gauze of Christian profession and mantras. One thing they are sadly not wedded to is the finality of biblical authority in all matters of Christian faith and practice. What they are most wedded to and driven by is peer pressure. They very much love the world and want, more than a baby loves its mother's milk, to be embraced and accepted by the culture around them. To achieve that safety, they would sell out their mother. Their fear of social rejection and scorn trumps all, including any sense of the fear of God.

Where they are is not mystery, but where they are and are headed is a calamity.

And some of those Christian leaders and churches, ever trying to pander to (euphemistically they say, "reach") that youthful constituency, are sacrificing any prophetic voice in a pathetic effort to capture or retain their share of the millennial "market." If the truth can't hold them, why? What's the point?

Can we just get over it? Can we cease and desist from all this capitulating to the culture? Can we just man up, take the heat, and confront it, come what will? Where are the prophets today? Where are the voices of contradiction in the face of all this insanity?

This is not a time for wieners; this is a day for warriors who know the truth, speak the truth and live the truth.

I think that is what Jesus meant when He said that if anyone wanted to be His disciple, "let him deny himself (not the truth), and take up his cross, and follow Me?" Matt. 16:24 [parentheses mine]

Let's stop trying so hard to find a way to be comfortable in this culture. Let's pick up our crosses and follow Christ, not the culture.