

# Daily View

*"But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called 'today'" Hebrews 3:13*

July 15, 2020

## "I may get cancelled, but..."

I've tried to stay out of politics and cultural issues in this daily dispatch. My aim, generally, has been lighthearted stories with a biblical message. But today, I feel compelled to talk about some issues that are cropping up in our time — issues that I have not seen before (and that, *ahem*, covers a lot of time). If you don't want to be subjected to my opinion on a couple of things, feel free to bail out right here.

For those who are still with me...I've always been able say, when some strange news item pops up, "I've seen this before... it'll pass." But now, I'm not so sure. For example, the "cancel culture" — the child of extreme political correctness — is something right out of Orwell's novel, 1984, published in 1949:

"Hardly a week passed in which 'The Times' did not carry a paragraph describing how some eavesdropping little sneak — 'child hero' was the phrase generally used — had overheard some compromising remark and denounced its parents to the Thought Police."

Journalist Bari Weiss resigned from the *NY Times* citing bullying as the reason. Here's an excerpt from her letter:

My own forays into Wrongthink have made me the subject of constant bullying by colleagues who disagree with my views. They have called me a Nazi and a racist; I have learned to brush off comments about how I'm "writing about the Jews again." Several colleagues perceived to be friendly with me were badgered by coworkers. My work and my character are openly demeaned on company-wide Slack channels where masthead editors regularly weigh in. There, some coworkers insist I need to be rooted out if this company is to be a truly "inclusive" one, while others post ax emojis next to my name. Still other *New York Times* employees publicly smear me as a liar and a bigot on Twitter with no fear that harassing me will be met with appropriate action. They never are...I do not understand how you have allowed this kind of behavior to go on inside your company in full view of the paper's entire staff and the public. And I certainly can't square how you and other Times leaders have stood by while simultaneously praising me in private for my courage. Showing up for work as a centrist at an American newspaper should not require bravery. Read the entire letter here: <https://www.bariweiss.com/resignation-letter>

I'm aware that some of our members who work in the public arena are worried about the same kind of treatment. This is one of many ways culture and the church intersect — or *collide*. For example, if I preach from Romans 1 and describe homosexuality as Paul describes it, with terms such as "dishonorable passions" and "shameless acts" and a "debased mind" and a company finds out that a member attends church here, what might happen? If the company takes its cue from the *NY Times*, a person's job could be in jeopardy. That is a real concern — and it's relatively new.

The governor's banning of worship in a building is also new. I've never experienced it before. It's not like we haven't faced health and other crises before — we have. But never in my lifetime has a government official ordered a church to shut its doors or told a church what it can or can't do in an assembly. There may be extenuating factors and this pandemic could be one of them. — but it's new.

I'm all for doing everything possible to keep everyone as healthy as possible. I agree with Terry and others that this virus

is different: highly contagious, easily transmitted and often hidden: people with no symptoms can still infect others. There is no effective treatment at the moment, or a vaccine, so that makes it especially dangerous. And as I told a friend, I don't want to be a leader in a church that is stamped: "Covid-19 Lives Here. That would be terrible, for several reasons.

That's why we comply with the health orders. But it would be naive to think that there may not be other motives involved. I learned a long time, through observation and experience, "if you don't understand something, look for the financial interest." You can substitute "publicity" or "power" or "control" for "financial" and it works. A lot of people are gaining money and/or fame during this pandemic. Many are or will capitalize on this pandemic (and some honest souls have been "cancelled").

Besides Covid, there are the [not peaceful] protests, "movements" cloaked as a good cause but with evil intent, ("wolves in sheep's clothing, as Jesus would say") and lying politicians and others (who will all "have their place in the lake of fire" according to Revelation 21:8).

But protests, movements and dishonest "public servants" are not new. Governmental intervention in churches and the "cancel culture" — that's somewhat new, and especially troublesome. It's not a stretch to call it "Orwellian" and if it's allowed to grow and fester, it could be dangerous. However, I expect the pendulum to swing back the other way; it usually does. But how far back? Are we being destroyed by a million paper cuts? Who knows?

I tend to teach and preach with an *a*political viewpoint. I do this because I don't see Jesus or the apostles railing against Caesar. I also don't believe that a Christian's role is social engineering or to engage in a culture war. Jesus wants us to preach the gospel and that will cover everything else.

There is much more we can say about all that. But when governments or other entities begin to encroach on our service to God and our practice of Christianity, then we should be aware that we may have to choose whether to obey God or man. We may have to choose God over a job or even over a fine or worse. The apostles were put in that situation constantly and they made it very clear where they stand: "we must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). Each of us must ask, "at what point must we follow their example?"

Meanwhile, as individual citizens, remember Edmund Burke's famous statement: "*The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.*"

*Reminder: As I mention in the footnote below, the opinions in this publication are mine; I am not speaking for anyone else, including the elders.*