

## **Our Post Truth Culture** **Why it is Imperative that Christians Stand Up**

Barbara Buzzard

These days require a constant drumming into us of Truth and the love of the Truth because of the massive pressures and temptations surrounding us to exchange Truth for lies.<sup>1</sup> But the opposite is happening under the guise of inducing us to be more embracing, more inclusive, and even more loving. Can we not see that the very inclusiveness which is being promoted, required, and even demanded - *excludes* Christians who choose not to or cannot compromise?

Many have come to advocate approaches which would bless all sides and condemn a hard line or a non acceptance stance as impossibly narrow, even sinister. On the other hand – how can one have conviction without taking a stand? This thing called neutrality – is it biblical? Normally seen as a good thing, neutrality would wipe out one’s testimony to Truth. Paul’s many uses of “I testify to” would be re-written. Neutrality would erase conviction. It does not *allow* for conviction. Neutrality would be canceled as soon as one decides where Truth is (and where it isn’t) and when one is prepared for the consequences.

Lack of conviction brings with it weakness. It yields weakness. We cannot, as Christians, run the race we are required to run without conviction. Can conviction co-exist with neutrality on spiritual /biblical issues? What are the New Testament writers trying to instill in us? Boldness, spiritual strength and courage – *and conviction*. Conviction comes about as a *reaction to Scripture*. Without conviction we are dead in the water, easy prey for the enemy. Indecision with regard to biblical admonitions will bring us down. *God wants a response* from us – a reaction to the Truths He lays out in Scripture. Our response will honor Him. Our response will serve as the gauge as to whether God can trust us.

Is being neutral a good thing or a lukewarm sign of weakness? Although it is possible that this could depend on the situation (and no reference is intended re: international relations) - it *can be* failure and reluctance to face a tough decision. Doing the right thing is surely harder than giving in to the wrong thing. Neutrality is a *state of artificial calm* which I cannot imagine Jesus embracing. It might make for peace but only at a cost that is far too great. Isn’t that why Jesus warns so strongly against being lukewarm – because that approach is worthy only of being spat out.<sup>2</sup>

We cannot respect weakness, either that which we see in ourselves or in others. God could not possibly respect it because it signals that we have opted/settled for something short of Truth rather than taking the hard and narrow road. Neutrality does not allow us to stand for the right nor does it allow us to condemn the wrong. Are you not at war with yourself if you try to bless both opposing views?

### **A New Dimension to the Faith– Hating Evil**

The more one looks at this thing called Christianity – the more demands and requirements we have to acknowledge. I am humbled by the fact that at various stages of my walk – I could say honestly – I haven’t even been doing half of it! Or “if I had known at the beginning what I know now, I wonder if I would have made the commitment.” Oh, the riches of God’s forgiveness!

The biblical injunction to “hate evil” is not often brought to the discussion table. What does it even mean? We are helped by the concise “The fear of the LORD is hatred of evil...”<sup>3</sup> Tragically, it is not common biblical knowledge that we must love the truth *so as to* be saved.”<sup>4</sup> That in itself is monumental. But is there even more to it than that? Must we also hate evil?

Psalms 15 gives us a good answer to the question – who may abide in God’s presence? “Those who walk blamelessly, and do what is right, and speak the truth from their heart, who do not slander

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<sup>1</sup> Rom. 1:25

<sup>2</sup> Rev. 3:15, 16

<sup>3</sup> Pro. 8:13

<sup>4</sup> 2 Thess. 2:10, Emphasis mine.

with the tongue, and do no evil to their friends nor take up a reproach against their neighbors; *in whose eyes the wicked are despised...*” Practically speaking, what would that mean?

This cautionary verse answers in part; we are seriously warned against wearying the LORD by saying: “All who do evil are good...”<sup>5</sup> A further and very somber instruction: “...Since you did not hate bloodshed, bloodshed shall pursue you.”<sup>6</sup>

In other words, we are not free to ignore evil, cover for it, appease it, accommodate to it, compromise with it, excuse it *or be blind to it*. We are saturated with approved ways to keep our noses clean, not get involved, keep our heads down, and all that nonsense. But the fact is that God hates evil.<sup>7</sup> An astonishing corollary is that, according to Scripture, it is evil to be deceived. This unpleasant fact that it is a sin to be deceived is often ignored or not even recognized. But, nevertheless, it is there. We are told that “Wicked people and imposters will go from bad to worse, deceiving others and *being deceived*.”<sup>8</sup> How carefully we must read the Scriptures! How tenaciously we must apply these principles! How diligently we must pray for protection from evil! How aware we must be of The Evil One’s desire to derail us!

As we are to imitate Jesus we must note that one of his characteristics which brought him his Father’s approval and anointing is that he “loved righteousness and *hated wickedness*.”<sup>9</sup>

### **Your audio and your video must match!**

While not a fan of Shakespeare, I find the truth is this quotation to be remarkable: “This above all: to thine own self be true, And it must follow, as the night the day, Thou canst not then be false to any man...”<sup>10</sup>

I must live my conscience. I am not blinded to the fact that not everyone does. Is this a problem? Well, yes. We excuse, we soften, we let slide, we might even defend those who don’t stay true to what they know is right. We even joke about middle-of-the-road Christians. Our Father requires more. The race to the finish will not be won by the one who blesses all sides because without the “oomph” of conviction one will be weak and therefore vulnerable. Scripture warns about a double minded man and we are commanded to let our yes be yes and our no be no. Some say that inconsistency leads to moral corruption. Both inconsistency and failure to live up to convictions are hugely dangerous. They might be on the order of *theological malpractice* – against one’s self. The most dangerous (and the easiest!) person to deceive is actually yourself.<sup>11</sup> And Twain’s truthful insight that it is easier to fool someone than to get someone to admit that he had been fooled! We even double-down on our foolishness in order to avoid admitting that we were wrong. And yet the truth is that when two are on the wrong path, the one who turns around first is the one who will arrive first.

### **Stand Up!**

If God has perhaps given us time to “toughen up” for yet harder times, and even more importantly - to bless others with the Truth which can save them and if we do not stand up - we shall be found most wanting. Any inconsistency or failure to follow one’s conscience will actually lead to moral corruption. (Think politics.) Now is not the time to hide; it is the time to stand up. *What breeds corruption? Failure to stand up.*

It is noteworthy that the end result of too much compromise is to be “compromised,” a dangerous state. We can become so deeply compromised that we lose our allegiance to what is right and take the path of complicity. There comes a time when silence is betrayal, betrayal of what we know and betrayal of what is right.

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<sup>5</sup> Mal. 2:17

<sup>6</sup> Ezek. 35:6b

<sup>7</sup> Prov. 6:16-19

<sup>8</sup> 2 Tim. 3:13

<sup>9</sup> Heb. 1:9a, Ps. 45:7a

<sup>10</sup> Polonius, in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*

<sup>11</sup> M. Scott Peck

The word witness not only means to see. It means to speak. To see is to speak. There is a necessity of bearing witness. As has been said<sup>12</sup> – we are only one generation away from not having freedom of speech. (From the American Dream to the American Horror Story?) The same holds true theologically: we are only one generation away from not knowing the Truth – from doctrines which matter. We must take seriously the possible corruption of our faith. *Could the faith be on the books but not in the hearts and minds?* Demise happens when Truth is not safeguarded as with a “Here I stand” mentality and fought for

### **Can God Trust You?<sup>13</sup>**

We are being watched – not only by Jesus and his God, but by our fellow men. And we are hurting those who watch us and doing them a great disservice if our example is not bold and clear. Friends must know us as one who is not afraid to stand up. They should not be nervous about our next step because they should know us to be true to our beliefs. This, of course is not the order of the day. Rather, the tendency is to go along to get along, to rubber stamp issues and to be “yes men” so as not to incur the disapproval of higher ups or perhaps you have been given orders (think politics *and* church). Being noncommittal, I fear, will not be what Jesus wants to hear. Surely you are not saying that I must be vocal? But I am! Crypto Christians are not the real thing. Invisible Christians are not the real thing.

The trick is to identify the turncoat! Is he the one urging compromise or is he the one who warns against deviating from Jesus’s words?

“Courage is the ladder on which all the other virtues mount.”<sup>14</sup> “...Stop letting your mind be troubled or cowardly.”<sup>15</sup> May God bless us with “steadfast spirit.”<sup>16</sup> The word steadfast occurs at least twelve times in Scripture. We must consider it and weigh our options when we are being urged to compromise.

Truth “speaks” by and through the testimony of Truth’s believers. When one stands, he is *inviting other people to see what he sees!* As one man said: if I don’t speak up now – what is the whole point of my career? May we all develop a strong compulsion to recognize and accept our duty to bear witness to the Truth, wherever it is found. Integrity demands that we do so.

Now is the day for courageous decisions to be made, for leaders to lead, for people of discernment to *participate* in the war of good and evil. Can there be a more lethal emotion or idea than indifference and the resulting silence about things that matter?

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<sup>12</sup> Former Pres. Reagan

<sup>13</sup> I hope this is not too harsh a question to ask. Answering it could be an essential exercise for us all.

<sup>14</sup> Clare Booth Luce

<sup>15</sup> John 14:27b

<sup>16</sup> Ps. 51:10