



# Christian Citizenship

**“You are the salt of the earth . . . You are the light of the world” (Mt. 5:13-16). One way to be salty and let our light shine is by being good citizens on earth. Our vocation as citizens of both the secular kingdom and God’s kingdom gives us the responsibility to proclaim God’s Word and care for our neighbors. We are called to engage the “public square” with our message of Christ’s mercy for all. Please pray for God’s will to be done... in Jesus’ name.**

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## **Christian Life in Exile**

In a recent interview, Rod Dreher spotlighted a warning from the Rev. Peter Sanlon, a young vicar in the Evangelical wing of the Church of England. U.S. Christians are strongly encouraged to pay close attention to what Rev. Sanlon is saying. What British Christians are living with today, American Christians will almost certainly be living with tomorrow. What follows are excerpts of Rev. Sanlon’s warning:

The Titanic was believed to be “unsinkable,” yet 1,503 souls perished in the icy Atlantic waters. Orthodox Christians in the West are like passengers on the Titanic. Why? The Church in our Western nations has already hit the iceberg. Water is flooding into the hull—the ship will sink. The grinding judders of our ship impacting the iceberg have been felt—but the majority of Christians will do what the Titanic passengers and crew did—explain the evidence away and refuse to help one another prepare to save one another’s spiritual lives. The iceberg that has ripped open the Church is composed of not frozen water, but three things: radical gender ideologies, Islam, and governments’ totalitarian instincts. ...Why is it that these three movements are so certain to sink the ship? Mainline churches in the West are deeply compromised. Over many decades our leaders have fostered the hope that by political action, legal efforts, or even by embracing the cultures’ ideologies in these three areas, that it can prosper or survive. This has severely weakened the Churches and leaves us unprepared for the future.

... It is always the case that societies have many people who reject the beliefs of Christians. This is

different. British people in their sixties recall that when they were twenty, many thought Christians were ignorant due to their “unscientific” beliefs. Today, people in their twenties think Christians are not ignorant, but evil and dangerous due to their inability to commend the radical sexual ideologies, Islam, and further government control of life’s details. People who are evil must be silenced, protected from themselves, and prevented from infecting others with their beliefs.

... The UK has turned deeply and aggressively against public expressions of Christian faith because the mainline Churches have so compromised that they are no longer willing to teach things that run counter to the culture’s deeply held views. So one Church of England bishop told me that he “personally believed the Bible’s teaching on sexuality—but I can’t say so in public for fear of upsetting people.” (*Excerpted from “Christian Life in Exile,” posted by Rod Dreher on March 5, 2018, [www.theamericanconservative.com](http://www.theamericanconservative.com)*)

**What can we do?** Jesus said, “The world will hate you...by this all people will know you are my disciples: by your love for one another” (John 15:19, 13:35). According to Rev. Sanlon, believers must “help one another accept the reality that Exile is coming to the Western Church ... People’s commitment levels to church will have to change ... We need to develop friendships with believers who presently have more experience of these things.” We should read about how the Church has survived in previous ages, i.e. *For the Soul of the People: Protestant Protest Against Hitler* by Victoria Barnett or *The Whisperers: Private Life in Stalin’s Russia* by Orlando Figes. We should read the books of Daniel and Ezekiel, and pray over those texts.

Exile could well last for centuries, says Sanlon, and “it is clear in the Bible that Exile is often multi-generational ... The cycle plays out from parents to children to grandchildren to great-grandchildren and beyond.” Therefore, we “must prepare for the future by investing in and helping the future

leaders. They need to be prepared to suffer and serve in ways that we have not yet seen in our nations. At least not in living memory." How does a Lutheran do this? By catechizing the children and, as parents and grandparents, familiarizing ourselves with God's Word, the Catechism and Creeds passed on in spite of persecution from one generation to the next. God prunes the vineyard to bear more fruit. As for us, we preach the Word, repent of sins, and believe in the promise of the resurrection. We train our children to be stouthearted in the face of evil and to confess the name of Jesus even when it's not popular. We show that we are His disciples by loving one another. Although the intensity of hatred may ebb and flow, Christians have always found themselves in exile. For truly, we journey this earth as citizens of a heavenly country.

**Please pray** that as the "love of many" grows "cold," when the Lord returns, He will find us among the faithful confessing... in Jesus' name.

### **Voice of the Martyrs**

Richard Wurmbrand was a Romanian of Jewish descent. He married Sabina Oster in 1936 and both converted to Christianity in 1938. Wurmbrand was ordained twice—first as an Anglican and then, after WWII, as a Lutheran minister. In 1944, Wurmbrand began a ministry to his Romanian countrymen and to Red Army soldiers who were occupying Romania. When the government attempted to control churches, he immediately began an "underground" ministry to his people. After denouncing government control of churches, Wurmbrand was arrested.

Wurmbrand was released from his first imprisonment in 1956 after eight and a half years. He was arrested again in 1959 and sentenced to 25 years. He was beaten and tortured by mutilation, burning, and being locked in a large frozen icebox. His wife, Sabina, was also arrested and served three years in penal labor. In 1964, after an amnesty was negotiated with Communist authorities, Wurmbrand was convinced by underground church leaders to become a voice for the persecuted church. The Wurmbrands formed the interdenominational organization called Jesus to the Communist World but, after expanding their ministry to help persecuted believers in the Muslim

world, renamed the ministry The Voice of the Martyrs. ([www.persecution.com](http://www.persecution.com))

**What can we do?** Prepare for the challenge that faces Christians by reading *Tortured for Christ* by Wurmbrand. You will also find resources to share Christ's care for the persecuted and displaced by visiting [www.lcms.org/social-issues/persecution](http://www.lcms.org/social-issues/persecution).

**Please pray** for an encouraged and courageous Body of Christ, that we might not be ashamed of the faith... in Jesus' name.

### **The Transgender Movement**

Many Americans had never had a conversation about transgender issues before the 2015 interview of Bruce Jenner on ABC's *20/20*. But the Sundance Film Festival, Oprah Winfrey Network, and Hollywood in general were already ahead in the game of shaping public thinking with their films and reality cable shows. While Hollywood sought to mainstream transgender ideology, the federal government mandated it. Shortly after the Supreme Court redefined marriage, the then Obama administration redefined "sex" to mean "gender identity" in our nation's civil rights laws. "Gender identity" policies were imposed on schools and health-care providers. Although many gay and lesbian Americans believe that "gender identity" and "sexual orientation" have little in common, LGB added T, thus making the transgender cause officially mainstream.

Dr. Paul McHugh, professor of psychiatry at Johns Hopkins has tried to dissuade his colleagues from rushing into the fad of transgender-affirming treatment and "sex reassignment." McHugh points out, "a doctor who would look into the psychological history of a transgendered boy or girl in search of a resolvable conflict could lose his or her license to practice medicine," but there is no penalty for putting such a patient on drugs to block puberty, which may cause a host of problems. (Source: *When Harry Became Sally: Responding to the Transgender Moment* by Ryan T. Anderson.) See also "I'm a Pediatrician: How Transgender Ideology Has Infiltrated My Field and Produced Large-Scale Child Abuse," Michelle Cretella, M.D. *The Daily Signal*, 7-3-17.

**Please pray** that God's creation of male and female be honored... in Jesus' name.

