

How Contemporary American Christendom Has Been Caught Up in Sloth

The military strategist, classical scholar, author and Pentagon net assessment guru Edward Luttwak was born in 1942 to Jewish parents in Arad, Romania. Raised in Italy and England, Luttwak graduated from the London School of Economics and received his Ph.D. from John Hopkins University. He speaks five languages.

The American non-fiction writer and journalist David Samuels sat down in his function as literary editor of *Tablet Magazine* for a Q&A with Dr. Luttwak in his home in Maryland. The text of the three-hour long conversation appeared in *Tablet Magazine* of June 8, 2022, under the title “Three Blind Kings.”

When the conversation turned to the subject of who’s in charge in America, Samuels included the United States as one of the “three weak kingdoms that dominate the world,” along with Putin’s Russia and Xi’s China.

“When I look at the United States from the outside, as an America-loving outsider, I see a country in the throes of one of those periodic implosions that are not entirely legible to non-Americans. You have manias about race. Manias about gender identity. You have the willful disaggregation of universities and other institutions under the banner of wokeness, which is a doctrine of blind obedience to a party line established by people who are 95% illiterate and can’t remember what they decreed last week. Policy is a product of hardened dogma, and therefore inevitably fails.

“And you have a so-called elite that spits hysterical contempt for the people in whose name they ostensibly rule, denouncing them as a pack of racist, sexist, white supremacist,

transphobic, gun-toting disease-spreaders who will hopefully soon die out and be replaced by a more obedient class of servants ... The last aristocracy that showed this kind of contempt for its own people and popular folkways was the French in the days of Marie Antoinette.

“So, in two years, does it all go back to normal? The wonder and the terror of American life has always been the country’s capacity to destroy itself, and then be born again. Joe Biden looks lost. But is Kamala Harris really any better?

“So far as I can tell, the person who is in charge of the main parameters of U.S. government policy commutes between his mansion in Kalorama and his mansion in Hawaii, on his way to becoming a billionaire. But it is forbidden to speak of him. Good luck finding a single news story about how the ex-president of the United States communicates with his proteges in the White House, while he zips back and forth on the private jets of his billionaire friends talking ‘expletive’ about poor Joe Biden.”

From a Christian perspective, America finds itself in an interesting period of time. Having been adopted through Christ, man is theologically not a bit player on the history stage, but a captain of the whole of God’s earthly creation. The world was given to Adam, and he commissioned to transform it from glory to glory.

Defined in Scripture as a failure to do things that should be done, sloth or slothfulness is denounced in the Bible nearly 40 times. Yet, contemporary American Christendom has been caught up in sloth, preferring to focus on expected future retirement benefits in heaven.

Take into account Dr. Bruce K. Waltke’s theological insight of God’s unending order from Genesis 3:14-15: “The serpent’s final defeat under Messiah’s heel [3:15] is delayed to effect God’s program of redemption through the promised offspring. In

the interim, God leaves Satan to test the fidelity of each succeeding generation of the covenant people [Judges 2:22] and teach them to fight against untruth [Judges 3:2].”

Operating over the last century in non-compliance with this doctrine, today’s culture’s vice parades proudly about in virtue’s raiment, wholly untroubled by the tens of millions of preborn babies killed in their mother’s womb, while injudiciously jubilant of the Supreme Court’s recent fictitious finding, in a 5-4 split, of the “right” to same-sex intercourse and marriage in the Constitution.

As for the antivenin to secularism’s virulence and toxicity, how can one come up with a cure when one doesn’t even acknowledge the depravation and malignancy? Due to Christian withdrawal from the public square in disobedience to Jesus’ *ekklesia* kingdom assignment from Matthew 16:18, America’s culture is in free fall.

In his excellent work *Primeval Saints: Studies in the Patriarchs of Genesis*, James B. Jordan observes that, “When God gives Christians the right to rule they must not shrink from the hard task of passing judgments. We must never shrink from our duty. Respect for established order and authority [of God] is one of the cardinal keys to dominion.

“Rebellion and revolution against established order and authority [of God] is the quickest road to slavery. Rebellion leads to slavery, and as the generations go by slavery worsens.”

This brings us to Dennis Peacocke and his *Doing Business God’s Way*: “Those of you familiar with Greek history know about the role of *ekklesia* in ancient Greek politics within the city-states. They were the rulers and the business managers of their culture. The church is supposed to be an army of rulers, hence the Holy Spirit chose the word *ekklesia* to describe her. This is no small truth.

“The major problem is the workforce—the believers. They don’t understand the work project because they have focused on their retirement benefits in the future and in heaven. Clearly, they should focus on the work project God has given them to do on Earth.

“Alas, God’s employees have been told by many of their leaders that what really counts is the retirement village in heaven and not the passion and challenge of contributing to His enterprise here on Earth. Let me ask those of you who manage or hire people what you would think about the character and motivation of a prospective employee whose primary focus was on the benefits and retirement plans of your organization. Would you really want to have such a self-oriented person? Can you now see why so much of Christendom is in such an apathetic mess?”

If the most important thing is winning people for Christ, it makes sense that the second most important thing, as William Federer puts it aptly, would be preserving the freedom to do the most important thing. In that context, let God be praised that Gideons and Rahabs are entering the public arena. {eoa}

David Lane is the founder of the American Renewal Project.

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