

The St. Peter Option: To Everyone an Answer Living as Exiles in a Foreign Land

- 1 Peter, 2 Peter, Christian Vocation, and the Table of Duties

4. What Can We Learn from the Benedict Option?

Overview of the Book:

1 (Chapters 1-3) Defines the challenges of post-Christian America, explores the philosophical and theological roots of our society's fragmentation, and explains how the Christian virtues embodied in the sixth-century Rule of Saint Benedict played a powerful role in preserving Christian culture throughout the Dark Ages.

2 (Chapters 4-8) How the way of Christian living prescribed by the Rule can be adapted to the lives of modern conservative Christians of all churches and confessions. The Rule of Benedict offers insights in how to approach politics, faith, family, community, education, and work (examples are given from the lives of Christians).

3 (Chapters 9-10) The critical importance of believers thinking and acting radically in the face of the two most powerful phenomena directing contemporary life and pulverizing the church's foundations: sex and technology.

The Rule of Benedict chapter 3

1. Order
2. Prayer
3. Work
4. Asceticism
5. Stability
6. Community
7. Hospitality

The Roots of the Crisis: 5 Causes Cited

1. "In the fourteenth century, the loss of belief in the integral connection between God and Creation—or in philosophic terms, transcendent reality and material reality"
2. "The collapse of religious unity and religious authority in the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century"
3. "The eighteenth-century Enlightenment, which displaced the Christian religion with the cult of Reason, privatized religious life, and inaugurated the age of democracy"
4. "The Industrial Revolution (ca. 1760-1840) and the growth of capitalism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries"
5. "The Sexual Revolution (1960-present)"

Positive Accents:

- “The most important institution to conserve: the family” p. 1
- “Christianity...ought to be a powerful counterforce to the radical individualism and secularism of modernity” p. 1
- “Young adults are almost entirely ignorant of the teachings and practices of the historical Christian faith” p. 2
- “Christian conservatives...have to develop creative, communal solutions to help us hold on to our faith and our values in a world growing ever more hostile to them...a truly countercultural way of living Christianity” p. 2
- The importance of teaching the faith
- The importance of prayer
- The understanding that what we believe as Christians sets us up as living a countercultural way of life.

Areas of Concern:

- “The time [is] coming...when men and women of virtue would understand that continued full participation in mainstream society [is] not possible for those who wanted to live a life of traditional virtue” p. 2
- “Christians who hold to the biblical teaching about sex and marriage have the same status in culture, and increasingly in law, as racists. The culture war that began with the Sexual Revolution in the 1960s has now ended in defeat for Christian conservatives....the upset presidential victory of Donald Trump has at best given us a bit more time to prepare for the inevitable” p. 3
- “The choices we make today have consequences for the lives of our descendants, our nation, and our civilization. Jesus Christ promised that the gates of Hell would not prevail against His church, but He did not promise that Hell would not prevail against His church *in the West*. That depends on us, and the choices we make right here, right now” p. 5

Concluding Criticisms:

1. Confusion of the Kingdom of God with culture, nation, and society.
2. Confusion of what the Church is as a confessing community and that faithfulness to Christ is the measure of “success”
3. Misunderstanding of the role of persecution and suffering in the advancement of God’s kingdom
4. The lack of missionary fervor
5. The failure to connect Christology and the Gospel of God’s grace to the life of virtue and Christian living
6. The failure to grasp the significance of original sin, human corruption, and the bondage of the will
7. The loss of joy that is anchored in the redemptive work of Christ.