

# HOLDING ON.... AND LETTING GO

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March 13, 2022



I interrupt this talk with a rant against Meta (FB and Instagram)



March 11, 2022  
1:04 AM AST  
Last Updated a day ago

Europe



## Facebook allows war posts urging violence against Russian invaders

By Munsif Vengattil and Elizabeth Culliford



# If I wrote a book...

- And several times I wrote things like: "the heart of the matter is that we love all of our enemies"
- But once I wrote: "there is no place in our communities for stupid, violent people"
- What would loyalty to me look like?



# Faith takes a kicking... (once again)

- Vineyard Anaheim ("mother church") leaves the movement
- Once more - clergy sexual abuse (The Meeting House)
- An oldie: Donald Rumsfeld (openly Christian leader) and torture after 9/11

# Holding On and Letting Go

Emotional and a Rational Process



(I.e. we need to hold onto roots that nourish us emotionally AND we need both emotions and reason to help us prune and nurture)



Loyalty sounds like a  
good thing

**But** we are not called to loyalty that  
blocks compassion, peace and justice

# When necessary we let go of:

- Loyalty to systems of control, exclusion and harm (even when they're OUR tradition and roots)
- Loyalty to keep silent, avoid conflict or preserve reputations of respected leaders or even friends when it perpetuates harm and the status quo
- Loyalty to dogmatic faith traditions and particular beliefs that are inflexible and refuse to listen to people, to context, and grow
- Remember many anti-loyal sayings of Jesus: "Hate your father and mother"

# What do we hold onto?

First, some questions we might ask:

- In what way were emotionally rich and meaningful moments life-giving? (Family moments, relational moments, spiritual moments) Where was the life? Where was the love?
- Can this institution or tradition be transformed by our interaction? Have we “spoken the truth in love”? Have we tried change before we walk away?
- What does it mean to listen to, respect, and care for people when we need to act in separating and hurtful ways? (Parents, Friends, Communities)



# Holding On

- Hold onto emotionally rich, lifegiving (not just “warm and fuzzy”) practices and traditions that you can separate from systemic distortion
- Hold onto relationships that can withstand the tension and conflict
- Hold onto sources that can still challenge your own beliefs, practices and new communities
- More?

## An Example – the “Armour of God” (loosely paraphrased)

- Come, be joined with the power of Love, the strength that comes from letting go of your ego. There is a protection from the deception of Fear, Lies and Self-protection – take this protection and cover yourself. For the struggles that matter are not the ones we fight against people but those against the Powers that get a foothold inside of us and inside our human systems: powers like nationalism, patriarchy, the accumulation and distraction of “stuff,” the need to look “good enough” to others and succeed, and the myth that we’ll be redeemed by violence. These Powers are our true enemies.

## An Example – the “Armour of God” (cont’d)

- Against these Powers, you can take up the loving protection that God is offering, enabling you to stand strong when things get incredibly hard and not give in or give up. This protection comes as a complete set: Stand tall and wrap around yourself the Sash of Honesty, Humility and Integrity; say what you truly know and no more. Protect your heart with the Breastplate of Just and Caring Relationships with all those around you. For shoes, wrap your feet in the Message of Peace and Reconciliation that Welcomes Everyone, the news that you’re ready to take and show all who listen or receive.

## An Example – the “Armour of God” (cont’d)

- Lift up the Shield of Trust; knowing that God’s compassion is woven into every cell of your body will extinguish the flaming arrows that threaten to pierce your soul with fears. The Healing Hands of God will cover your head like a helmet and restore wholeness when you’re wounded. And the confident Guidance of God’s Spirit living in you will be like a shining sword that pierces the darkness around you. Practice listening to this Spirit as often as you can, and the Loving Breath of God will be the very air in your lungs. (Ephesians 6.10-18)