

DISCUSSING SECURITY

The recent furor over Greenland, culminating at January's annual meeting of the World Economic Forum, heightened public concerns over global security, Western values, and traditional alliances. Fears are real and animosities are clear amid a felt sense of history being made.

RUSSIA AND CHINA

While high in the thoughts of participants, the Russians and Chinese were minimally present at Davos. Preoccupied with Ukraine, economically strapped by sanctions and recession, and given to maximalist demands for peace, Putin's administration had little to discuss. Dependent regionally on battlefield control, and globally on its superior nuclear stockpile (sharing with the U.S. 90 percent of the world's atomic warheads), Russia keeps the West wary and troubled, whether about Europe or the Arctic Circle.

Beijing, however, sent Vice-Premier He Lifeng to declare China open for business. Typically operating through stillness, China looks to the long term, utilizing an art of war that waits patiently for rivals and enemies to exhaust themselves. With economic tentacles the world over, Western powers fear that China's military aspirations lie not far behind. Time will tell.

Together, Russia and China seek an end of Western dominance, and view democracy at odds with its authoritarian models of leadership. Whereas Russia looks to China to boost its Western security, China sees in Russia a huge market for its goods.

CANADA AND EUROPE

These traditional bastions of Judeo-Christian principles, such as respect for the law of God and the pursuit of liberty from tyranny, are now perilously close to becoming unrecognizable from what they once were. Canadian Premier Mark Carney presumed the high ground at Davos with an articulate call to the "the middle powers" to embrace the rupture with America, but glided past the reality that the values of the elites among the middle powers no longer track with American or even European conservatives.

(Image: <https://www.researchgate.net/>.)



The mainstream media pins on the lightning rod that is President Trump the faltering of the trans-Atlantic alliance, yet their bias has been rumbled (think BBC) and their support of the Canadian and European elites' attack on traditional Judeo-Christian values is clear. Thus, Bible quotations in public are being banned, as are peaceful prayers outside abortion clinics. Meanwhile, Imams stir the influx of Muslim immigrants to utilize the spiritual void for power, to offer the West submission or *Jihad*.

It is not, then, President Trump who caused the rupture with Canada and Europe, although his "America First" agenda has occasioned it. Rather, they walked away from their Judeo-Christian roots in favor of the unlikely bedfellows of socio-progressivism and Islam. These are united in muffling and marginalizing Christianity and are reducing Canada and Europe to pitiful shadows of their former selves. Australia, to which Mark Carney appeals, ought to watch very carefully. To follow the applause of the Davos elites may be tempting, but no nation fares well that rejects God's law.

AMERICA AND HER ALLIES

For all his personal flaws and ignorance of the gospel of Christ, Donald Trump seeks externally to preserve America's security and internally her freedoms, opposing the Democratic Party's alignment with the Canadian and European post-Christian agenda. Without the revival of Christianity and the awakening of their societies, leading to the restoration of the West's Judeo-Christian values and bigger families (in part through depleted abortions), the Republicans may increasingly question funding the security of nations that march to a different drumbeat, unless to do so serves American interests. An iron dome over Greenland is a case in point, since in thwarting Russian and Chinese encroachment on the Western hemisphere (hence the intervention in Venezuela), the dome also seeks to protect Canada and Europe.

Where does all this leave us? Placing neither our personal nor global security in the hands of men! Rather, the Davos discussions remind us to pursue our security in God. This he offers us, irrespective of our allegiance and perspective.

DESIRING SECURITY

Shifting national alliances unnerve us. They are emotional equivalents to the movement of earth's tectonic plates and shake the ground under us. Yet God allows them, revealing:

OUR SMALLNESS

We should know how infinitesimal we are, for we are creatures of God. We live but decades, yet he is eternal and overarches history (Psalm 90:2). We are bodily, but he, says the prophet Isaiah (739–685 B.C.), sits upon the circle of the earth (Isaiah 40:22). Indeed, God is a spirit who fills heaven and earth (Jeremiah 23:23-24; cf. John 4:24). To him, the nations ***“are like a drop from a bucket and are accounted as the dust on the scales.”*** Indeed, ***“all the nations are as nothing before him, they are accounted by him as less than nothing and emptiness”*** (Isaiah 40:15, 17, 22).

So small are we that we pale in comparison not only with God, but with the nations he so dwarfs. We are as grasshoppers in his sight (Isaiah 40:22), and fill at death in nation states of hundreds of thousands of square miles but a six-foot plot. How bizarre, then, is our pride.

Naturally, we suppose God to be like ourselves (Psalm 50:21), yet our confidence swiftly ebbs when touched by his presence, or when rattled by earthquakes. Just as we run for cover when they erupt, so we capitulate to fear and panic when nations totter and alliances falter. Yet, such epochal changes can profit us spiritually, for they remind us that only God is secure in himself, unphased by all that is apart from him.

OUR SINFULNESS

Epochal changes also profit us because they remind us of sin in our world. This realism we must embrace, for we have had two centuries of insistence on man's ascendancy, yet the theory of evolution (increasingly questioned by scientists) perpetually confuses technological advance with moral improvement. The world wars exhibit this.

Despite the progress from horses to tanks, World War I screamed of greed and folly. Its carnage humbled man, yet man was not humbled. Within three decades, World War II revealed our capacity to commit unspeakable atrocities against our fellow man. All these decades later, we remain overshadowed by them. Stated English historian R. G. Collingwood (1889–1943), “The only clue to what man can do is what man has done.” Thus, we fear today the deadly combination of our nuclear capability and abiding depravity. It threatens the unthinkable: a largely uninhabitable earth. (Image: [https://www.pinterest.com/\[Francesco Lochi\]](https://www.pinterest.com/[Francesco Lochi]).)

We are not only small, then, but a race rent asunder by



pride, greed, jealousy (possessiveness of what is ours) and envy (desire for what is not ours). True, there's nothing wrong with healthy competition between nations, or with wars to end injustice and brutal dictatorial overreach, yet history is peppered with unjust oppression and conflict, with politicians and military complexes all too ready to sacrifice young men and civilians for power and wealth.

OUR SECURITY

As pawns in a global chess game, sensing sin within and without us, and daily bombarded by biased and prejudiced news coverage, replete with outright lies and toxic commentary (the fruit of postmodernism's denial of truth), we long for a haven of forgiveness, security, and hope.

To the Bible we must go. It was given us by God to help us find security in him. While he permits our self-defense, he calls us not to trust in our limited resources for survival or prosperity. This counsel is especially relevant given how our pride resists reliance on God no matter how damaged and frail are our supports, and given how easier we find it to rely on what can be seen and touched than on God.

Thus, although our context differs from biblical times, God's counsel not to trust in princes is ever germane. Although presiding over Israel's golden age, King David remarked, ***“It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man. It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in princes”*** (Psalm 118:9-10). Likewise, he counsels us not to trust in horses—the symbol then of earthly power: ***“The war horse is a false hope for salvation, and by its great might it cannot rescue”*** (Psalm 33:17). God's ***“delight is not in the strength of the horse, nor his pleasure in the legs of a man, but the LORD takes pleasure in those who fear him, in those who hope in his steadfast love”*** (Psalm 147:10-11). Indeed, the Lord prophesied through Hosea that he would not save his people ***“by bow or by sword or by war or by horses or by horsemen”*** (Hosea 1:7) but by his own mercies. David's son Solomon forgot this. Feeling strong in himself, gathering 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horsemen in chariot cities (1 Kings 10:26), he neglected his relationship to God and sowed the seeds of Israel's demise.

We, too, forget at our peril that our security lies in God. We can pursue peace through strength (whether offensively by a nuclear stockpile or defensively by an iron dome), but without God's mercies we remain liable to his judgments and are insecure. King David, despite his strength, shows us another way: ***“Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God”*** (Psalm 20:7). We would do well to do likewise.

DISCOVERING SECURITY

If God's call to trust in him is getting through to us amid today's litany of military conflicts, political tensions, and societal anger, we are likely asking ourselves what it is about God that makes him so trustworthy, and how we may trust him. These are excellent questions—ones that Christians delight to answer from Scripture and experience.

WHAT MAKES GOD SO TRUSTWORTHY?

The question is boldly ironic given that our first parents, Adam and Eve, broke loose from God, and thus created through their sin the historical, personal, and global insecurities we have come to view as normal. Remarkably untrustworthy ourselves, we somehow expect God to prove himself trustworthy to us. What double standards!

Yet God, being under neither necessity nor obligation to prove himself to us, graciously woos us back to himself. Holy Scripture tells us how he does this, and how his self-revelation corroborates his trustworthiness.

God's character: Note that God is truth, and never misleads. He is just, ever upright, living in perfect conformity to his own law. He is holy, sinless and unable to sin. He is love, willing in Christ, the Son of God, to give of himself for our security. He is grace personified, offering us undeserved favor. Furthermore, he is merciful, ever ready to be pitiful to sinners who seek him for forgiveness. All these attributes and more are his, and perfectly so. Nothing suggests, then, that God is anything other than perfectly and enduringly trustworthy. He never operates out of character.

God's covenant: Consistent with his loving, gracious, and merciful character, God has condescended to man to inaugurate a covenant with him. He planned and initiated this for our salvation and security, and invites us into this covenant with him. He does so, not as a cold business contract but as a loving relationship—yes, with *us* whose first parents rejected him and in whose place we have foolishly substituted ever since unworthy, unstable, and unending props.

While intrinsically secure on account of God's character, this covenant is sealed by the shed blood of Christ. His blood, by the divine plan, turns God's anger away from sinners and covers their sin from God's sight. Thus, those sealed in the covenant have a relationship with God that never succumbs to circumstances, nor deteriorates over time, or expires at death. It is ever sustained by God.

God's promises: Out of God's faithfulness to his covenant and out of love for those in covenant with him, he has made many precious promises. By these, God intends to

sustain those whom he saves. Knowing, then, that God does not bale out on sinners, we rest in his promises and believe, with Paul, that ***“for those who love God all things work together for good”*** (Romans 8:28).

HOW MAY I TRUST IN GOD?

This trust is not merely intellectual but spiritual. We look to God not just for a repaired relationship that broke down in Eden and because of Adam and Eve, but a new, enhanced (inviolable) relationship with him. It entails:

Repentance toward God: Authentic repentance is marked by a change of mind about God (*metanoia*); a sense of deep-seated conviction of how our sins have broken God's law, grieved God's Spirit (*metamelomai*), and marred the beauty of his plans for us; and a retracing of our steps back to God (*epistrepheō*). After all, we cannot find security in God unless and until we are ready to trust his security above all others and in all circumstances.

Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Our repentance toward God believes there is forgiveness available in Christ, God's Son. This saving faith involves knowledge of what God has revealed about himself, conviction of our sins in the light of this revelation, leading to our collapse on the mercies of God in Christ. In short, trust in Christ is the gateway to finding security in God. (Photo: Bethany, Cheung Chau, Hong Kong.)

To rely on Christ for time and eternity is, then, to relinquish ultimate confidence in anyone or anything else. Other resources come and go. Not so Christ. History is his-story! He is ***“is the same yesterday and today and forever”*** (Hebrews 13:8). “Yesterday,” he was prophesied as coming for our salvation, “today” he holds out to us his atoning death for sin, and “forever” he lives having risen from the dead never to die again. Now exalted in our humanity to the throne of the universe, Christ ever intercedes for those resting in him, and will return to fulfill on a new earth the security believers embark on through faith in him.

Between now and then, Christ remains for believers their truth in a world of deception, their cleansing in a world of sin and shame, and their security in a vulnerable world. In Christ, we can never be separated from God's love—not by tribulation (pressure or stress), distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger, or sword (Romans 8:35-39). Countries may shift alliances, fall, and be absorbed, yet the kingdom of our God and Savior knows no end. Belonging to it we are anchored and sheltered amid the storms of life. To quote Corrie ten Boom, a survivor of Nazism, “If you look at the world, you'll be distressed. If you look within, you'll be depressed. But if you look at Christ, you'll be at rest.” Her life lends authority to her opinion.



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DEMONSTRATING SECURITY

Beset by today's fears of World War III, we can glean much about security from the era of World War II.

DISCOVERED SECURITY

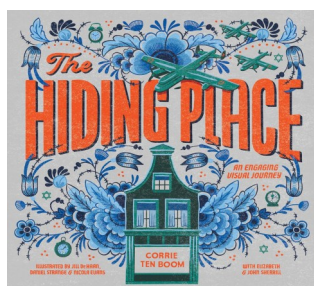
Long before German forces invaded the Netherlands, the Ten Boom family had discovered their security in God. They were a Christian family raised in the continental Reformed tradition and were committed to Christ, his Word and his church. Affirming the Heidelberg Catechism (1563) published during the persecution of Protestants, they knew Question I: "What is your only comfort in life and in death?" and could answer, "That I am not my own, but belong with body and soul, both in life and in death, to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ."

Thus, the Ten Booms served God as a loving, prayerful, and hard-working family, fond of music, art, and language. Casper ten Boom and his daughters, Corrie (Cornelia) and Betsie (Elisabeth) sold watches and clocks from their shop in Haarlem, with Corrie becoming the first Dutch female qualified to make watches.

OFFERED SECURITY

As Christians, the Ten Boom family strongly believed in individual equality before God, and thus ensured that the shop was an "open house" for the needy. Already interested in God's ancient people, the Jews, the Ten Booms began assisting those escaping the Nazi oppression.

Casper, Corrie, and Betsie joined the Beje Resistance group which found shelter for dozens of Jews and their children either in their area or another. Additionally, the Ten Booms opened their home to a large number of fugitives and Resistance workers. About 80 from different underground movements visited regularly, with Corrie taking charge of the provision of food. Additionally, Corrie cared for fugitives hiding elsewhere, checking out havens before sending on the fugitives, and supplying them with ration cards, and maintaining good connections with the police.



NEEDED SECURITY

On February 28, 1944, however, the Ten Boom family was betrayed by two fellow Dutchman. With the raiding of their home all those hiding escaped, yet every member of the Ten Boom family and 30 other co-workers were arrested and interrogated. No one revealed new information, with Casper, 84 years old, holding out for 10 days before dying.

Corrie and Betsie, though, were held in Oranjestad for 3 months before being taken to the Vught concentration camp. In September 1944, they were transferred to Ravensbrück—"The concentration camp of no return." In December 1944, Betsie died from the brutal conditions, but Corrie was released two weeks later due to a clerical error. She returned to Haarlem until the liberation in May 1945, then went on to establish a home in Holland for victims of concentration camps and a home for refugees on the location of the former concentration camp in Darmstadt, Germany. Caspar, Corrie, and Betsie are now recognized by *Yad Vashem* as "Righteous Among the Nations." Among Corrie's books is *The Hiding Place* (1971). It is out in 60 languages, having sold 23 million copies.

UNDERSTOOD SECURITY

Clearly, Christians put their trust in God not for the sake of a charmed life, but because life is out of our control, and God is the only one we can trust with it. For sure, there are things we don't understand about God's ways—we are not God!—but he never lets down or go those resting in him. Having experienced the darkest imaginable circumstances, Corrie could say: "Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God," and "There is no pit so deep that God's love is not deeper still." May we, in these uncertain days, be able in Christ to say that, too.



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