

**LIVE
NOT BY
LIES**



STUDY GUIDE

**to accompany
Rod Dreher's
Manual for
Dissident
Survival**

- *A complete chapter-by-chapter guide*
- *For independent study, reading groups or as part of a more formal instructional environment*
- *With exercises to help you think and develop a strategy for surviving the West's soft totalitarianism*

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CONTENTS

Preface to the Study Guide 1

Part One: Understanding Soft Totalitarianism

CHAPTER ONE

Kolaković the Prophet 2

CHAPTER TWO

Our Pre-Totalitarian Culture 7

CHAPTER THREE

Progressivism as Religion 14

CHAPTER FOUR

Capitalism, Woke and Watchful 21

Part Two: How to Live in Truth

CHAPTER FIVE

Value Nothing More Than Truth 28

CHAPTER SIX

Cultivate Cultural Memory 32

CHAPTER SEVEN

Families Are Resistance Cells 38

CHAPTER EIGHT

Religion, the Bedrock of Resistance 43

CHAPTER NINE

Standing in Solidarity 47

CHAPTER TEN

The Gift of Suffering 52

Preface

Live Not by Lies is a manual for Christian dissidents. This Study Guide is meant to accompany Rod Dreher's excellent text with the aim of: 1) assisting the reader in processing the heroic stories of past dissidents, 2) ascertaining events leading up to totalitarianism in the past and recognizing those fueling the soft-totalitarianism in the West today, and 3) developing a strategy for building a personal, family, and community plan in order to resist it.

The stories of the lives of brave and courageous Christians who stood up to tyranny during the communist takeover and subsequent occupation of Russia, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Romania, and Hungary are inspiring. It is my hope as you turn the pages of the book and read the accounts of Christians who committed to live in truth, no matter the cost, that you will find courage as you face in the months and years to come the imminent totalitarianism and thrive spiritually as you *live not by the lies* informing such totalitarianism.

In addition to Dreher's dissident manual recounting courageous stories, totalitarian history, and warning signs for us today, he provides very specific calls to action that we as Christians can all heed now while there is still time to organize – in the spirit of the one the author dedicates the book to: Father Tomislav Kolacović.

To maximize your learning outcomes as a Christian dissident-in-training this Study Guide has been crafted by an instructional designer, using the latest pedagogical tools. At the beginning of each chapter *Learning Objectives* are outlined so as a learner, you have an idea as to what you should be able to *do* after completing the reading and answering questions. *Guided Reading Questions* assist you in tracking along with the book as you read on your own, challenging your memory of the content in order to facilitate retention. The *Group Discussion Questions* challenge your ability to analyze what you have read and apply to your own life; these can be discussed in the context of a group or answered on your own. Finally the *Essay/ Project Prompts* enable you to more deeply appraise what it is you have read and synthesize a plan for effective resistance.

This Study Guide will work well with church groups, Christian schools, homeschool communities, and as part of a neighborhood reading group. It is recommended that such groups assign the *Guided Reading Questions* for individuals to complete on their own, and then reserve group time for the more thought-provoking *Group Discussion Questions*. At the end of each chapter, educators can assess their students' knowledge by assigning them the various *Essay/ Project Prompts*, by which students can submit an essay, present a slide presentation to their class, or even a brief video.

It is our prayer that as you navigate your way through *Live Not by Lies* and the Study Guide that you will not wax hopeless at the coming totalitarianism; rather know that there are things you can do to thrive and live not by the liars lies. This starts today, by strengthening your ties with Christ, family, a good church community, and your own friends and neighbors to stand in solidarity with one another for the purpose of resisting soft totalitarianism.

Kolaković the Prophet

Guided Reading Questions

Answer the questions below, as you read through the text.

1. Who was Father Kolaković? (3)

2. Father Kolaković perceived two threats to Christian life and witness; what were they? (4)

- i. _____
- ii. _____

3. What two factors in Slovakian Catholicism would prove problematic in combatting communism? (4)

- i. _____
- ii. _____

4. What was Kolaković's definition of *freedom*? (5)

5. Briefly describe the three elements in the motto of the Jocists that Kolaković himself adopted: (5)

- i. _____
- ii. _____
- iii. _____

6. What happened to the followers ("Family") of Kolaković shortly after 1944? Did they succumb completely to communistic thought? (6)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of Chapter One, the reader should be able to:

1. **Summarize** who Father Kolaković was, and how he preserved Christian tradition in Czechoslovakia
2. **Identify** the factors which left Slovakian Christians unprepared for communist persecution
3. **Illustrate** today's soft totalitarianism in the West
4. **Identify** groups and institutions which propagate and enforce left-wing totalitarianism currently in the U.S.
5. **Compare and contrast** the groups of utopian focus from Marx to the 1960s to present day
6. **Characterize therapeutic culture**, and how it has effectively neutralized the contemporary Christian defense against wokeism and anti-culture
7. **Describe** what *doublethink* is, and provide examples of its use today
8. **List and develop** an actionable plan informed by Solzhenitsyn's 1974 essay, detailing how *not* to live by the lies of left-wing progressivism
9. **Illustrate** the importance of preserving Biblical traditions by following the philosophical footsteps of Father Kolaković

7. Historically, what did the underground church inspired by Kolaković's followers do? (6)

Father Kolaković's efforts were so effective, "by the end of the school year 1944, it would have been difficult to find a faculty or secondary school in Bratislava or larger cities where our circles did not operate."

- Vaclav Vaško, *Professor Kolaković: Myths and Reality*

Candlelight demonstration – March 25, 1988 in Bratislava, in show of support for religious freedom and human rights thousands of Slovaks quietly holding candles were met with water cannons and arrests¹.



8. What prepared Kolaković to wax seemingly prophetic regarding Soviet totalitarianism? (7)

9. Today's survivors of Soviet communism are warning us of a coming totalitarianism, which is a form of government that combines _____ with an ideology that seeks to _____ all aspects of life. (7)

10. Today's totalitarianism masks its hatred of dissenters from its utopian ideology in the guise of _____ and _____. (7)

11. How is totalitarianism different from *authoritarianism*? (7, 8)

12. While Soviet-era totalitarianism demanded love for the Party, what are the demands of today's totalitarianism? (8)

13. How does the left-wing campus kookiness of the 1990's manifest itself today? (8)

14. In today's world, what does left-wing totalitarianism appeal to, and how does it masquerade? (9)

15. The contemporary cult of social justice identifies members of certain social groups as _____, calling for their _____ as a matter of _____. (10)

16. Why will the public support the coming soft totalitarianism? (10)

17. According to James Poulos, what is the “Pink Police State?”

Key Terms

Bolshevism – the doctrine or program advocating the violent overthrow of capitalism⁶.

Hedonism – the doctrine that pleasure or happiness is the sole or chief good in life⁶.

Individualism – the doctrine that the interests of the individual are or ought to be ethically paramount⁶.

Five Basic Tenets of Moralistic Therapeutic Deism⁵

- A God exists who created and orders the work and watches over human life on earth.
- God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other as taught in the Bible and by most world religions.
- The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself.
- God does not need to be particularly involved in one’s life except when he is needed to resolve a problem.
- Good people go to heaven when they die.

18. What is “anti-culture,” and what are the dangers of this? (12)

19. In the therapeutic culture Phillip Rieff wrote about, what is the greatest sin? (13)

20. According to the “Party” Orwell writes about, what is the definition of “truth”? (14)

21. What is the practice of *ketman*, and what are its dangers to the individuals who practice it and to society? (16, 17)

22. According to Soviet dissident Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, what does it mean to *live by lies*? (17)

Group Discussion Questions

1. How is today's coming totalitarianism in the West different from that of the U.S.S.R.'s? (7)
2. What are some of the traditions and institutions that are viewed as a threat to totalitarianism? Why are they threats? (7)

[A] totalitarian state seeks not just to control your actions but also your thoughts and emotions.

- Rod Dreher, *Live Not by Lies*

3. Dreher argues that allegiance to a set of progressive beliefs in today's totalitarianism is not enforced by an administrative state, but other entities. What are those entities and what are their coercion tactics? (8)

4. Why do more people not dissent from the woke party? What are the consequences of such dissent? (9)

5. Contrast Philip Rieff's *Religious Man* with *Psychological Man*. (11, 12)

6. Why will Christian resistance to anti-culture and wokeness be fruitless for the foreseeable future? What is the role of suffering in this resistance? (12, 13)

7. What is doublethink? Provide some examples and evidence refuting them, of the doublethink the progressive left demands we engage in today. (15)

"The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion told you to reject the evidence of your eyes"

Essay/ Project Prompts

Select from one or more of the prompts below, addressing the issues raised by either 1) composing an essay in APA format of 300-600 words, 2) developing a three-minute slide presentation for the class, or 3) creating a video lasting two to five minutes.

1. If you were establishing "families," today as Father Kolaković did, elaborate on how you would follow in his philosophical footsteps in preparing them for surviving contemporary totalitarianism.

2. Hannah Arendt states when a society has fallen to totalitarianism, an ideology has (1) effectively supplanted all its previous traditions and institutions and, (2) has forced all aspects of that society to succumb to it (pp. 7, 8). Has this already happened in the U.S.? Defend your response citing specific examples that support or negate this notion.

3. How has the utopian focus changed from the sexual revolutions of the 1960's to today? How are the victims represented by today's social justice warriors different from those Marx advocated for?

The current process of spiritual demagoguery and rhetorical overkill has transformed the concern for victims into a totalitarian command and a permanent inquisition.

- Rene Girard, *I Saw Satan Fall Like Lightning*

4. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, George Orwell wrote, "The Party told you to reject the evidence of your eyes and ears. It was their final, most essential command." How do you observe this sentiment today? Who is the "Party" today issuing this command?

5. Develop an actionable plan based off of Solzhenitsyn's prescriptions (p. 18) for refusing to live by the lies proffered by the totalitarian left today.

Notes

1. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/>
2. <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/gestapo>
3. <https://aleteia.org/2018/08/23/what-is-clericalism/>
4. <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/what-was-the-velvet-revolution.html>
5. Source: Rod Dreher – *The Benedict Option: A Strategy for Christians in a Post-Christian Nation*
6. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary>

Suggested Further Reading

Solzhenitsyn, A. (2009). Live not by lies. *The Solzhenitsyn reader: New and selected writings, 1947-2005*. (E. E. Ericson, Jr., & D. J. Mahoney, Eds). ISI Books: Wilmington, DE.

References

1. Rod Dreher - *Live Not by Lies: A manual for Christian dissidents*.

Our Pre-Totalitarian Culture

Guided Reading Questions

Answer the questions below, as you read through the text.

1. How did industrialization in Russia set the stage for the radicalization of the peasant class by late 19th century? (22)

2. What were some of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's observations concerning the speed by which utopian dreams had been turned into grisly nightmares? (23, 24)

3. To what did Karl Marx attribute class inequality? (24)

4. What was the role of government in Karl Marx's utopian vision? (24)

5. To which group did Marxism appeal to the most and why? (25)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of Chapter Two, the reader should be able to:

1. **Explain** how the notion of communism found appeal among Russian citizens
2. **Delineate** the historical antecedents giving rise to political Marxism in late nineteenth, early twentieth centuries
3. **Enumerate** the institutions that political Marxism viewed as a threat to its spread and **explain** how they got in the way
4. **Compare and contrast** nascent elements within our own culture today with those in Eastern/ Central Europe that paved the way to totalitarianism
5. **Recognize** the cultural signs of imminent totalitarianism
6. **Explain** how loneliness/ social atomization seed the ground for totalitarianism
7. **Characterize** hierarchies and institutions that Americans are losing faith in today
8. **Illustrate** how the societal banality of post-World War I writers and artists enabled them to embrace totalitarian ideologies
9. **Describe** the role of propaganda and ideology in the facilitation and sustenance of errant belief systems
10. **Provide examples** of how totalitarian movements prize loyalty above expertise
11. **Explain** the logistics of how totalitarian movements are promulgated by the intellectual class
12. **List** the catalysts that undermine the legitimacy of liberal democratic systems

Key Terms

Agrarian – a society or community characterized by farming and agriculture².

Bolsheviks – revolutionary far-left Marxist faction in Russia led by Vladimir Lenin¹.

Bourgeoisie – in Marxist terms, the capitalist class owning the majority of society's wealth and means of production.

Intelligentsia – intellectuals within a society who form an artistic, social, or political vanguard or elite³.

Proletariat – workers or working-class people, regarded as a collective³.

Social atomization – societal condition by which individuals suffer from isolation from one another.

6. Would you characterize the Marxist faith as a *world view*? Why or why not? (25, 26)

7. The Marxist “gospel” had its birth in the _____ and then found its way into the _____. (26)

8. Marxist revolutionaries emerged from which socioeconomic class? _____ (26)

9. What did the 1917 Bolshevik victory under Vladimir Lenin prove? (27)

10. List the circumstances by which Russia’s neighbors succumbed to communist rule. (27, 28)

11. Which institutions - independent of the state - do you think were considered threats to the spread of Marxism and by necessity had to be eliminated? Why were they a threat? (28)

12. Name a few of the conditions in the United States that make us ripe for totalitarianism. (29)

13. How did Benito Mussolini define totalitarianism? (30)

14. List the conditions for totalitarianism Hannah Arendt outlined in her 1951 book, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*: (31 – 39)

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____
- f. _____

15. For many very lonely Americans, it seems they aspire to a _____ that can replace the _____ they wish they had. (31)

16. What did the Soviet government do to monopolize control? (32)

17. What is the risk of alienated individuals sharing little sense of community and larger purpose? (32)

18. Name the institutions that Americans have little confidence in anymore. (33)

19. What is the danger of people no longer looking outside of themselves for authoritative sources of meaning? (33)

20. According to sociologist Emile Durkheim, what happens to people when they are “set free” from the bonds of religion? (33)

21. What were post-World War I writers and artists signaling when they embraced and celebrated anti-cultural philosophies? (34)

22. According to Heda Margolius Kovaly, how do totalitarian regimes convince large majorities of people to believe their propagandistic assertions? (36 – 38)

Once you relinquish your freedom for the sake of “understood necessity,” for Party discipline, for conformity with the regime . . . you cede your claim to the truth.

- Heda Margolius Kovaly, *Under a Cruel Star: A life in Prague 1941-1968*

23. What is the goal of the 1619 Project? (36, 37)

24. What is Arendt’s view of how propaganda changes the world? (37)

25. Arendt stated that the masses do not trust their eyes and ears; what do they trust instead? What is the danger in this agent of trust? (38)

26. Why are people so willing to believe obvious lies? (38)

27. What is meant by the phrase *the personal is political*? (39)

Social justice ideology is forcing physicians . . . to ignore their medical training and judgement when it comes to transgender health.

- Rod Dreher, *Live Not by Lies*

28. Why do totalitarians prize loyalty over expertise? (39)

29. Why is it critically important to keep an eye on intellectual discourse? (41)

30. Describe demographically the majority of SJW ranks, and the possible reasons for their malcontent. (42)

31. On what does the social justice warrior gospel depend for its promulgation? (43)

32. Identify the catalysts that can greatly challenge the legitimacy of our democratic institutions. (45)

Group Discussion Questions

1. In a totalitarian takeover, what is the purpose of politicizing all aspects of life? (28, 38-41)

2. What are the parallels between a declining United States and a prerevolutionary Russia?

3. The Soviet government encouraged Russian people to turn on one another (p. 32), for the purpose of consolidating control. Do you see parallels of this kind of behavior today in the U.S.? Who do you think are the people or institutions encouraging this?

4. Explain the statement, “. . . you can destroy as much by failing to build as by actively wrecking”. Describe ways in which American society has failed to build. In this context, what is in need of building? (34)

5. In speaking of the post-World War I writers and artists, what did Hannah Arendt mean when she wrote, “They read not Darwin but the Marquis de Sade”? (34)

6. What factors contributed to the hedonism in Russian culture after World War I? (34, 35)

7. What parallels can you note between the allegations of the 1619 Project and the mid-century propagandistic arguments of totalitarianism for forging a “respectable society”? (36-39)

8. What do you think will be the long-term implications of the claims of the 1619 Project being taught in public schools?

9. What arenas of public and private life have you witnessed the evidence of progressives making the personal, *political*, and what is the danger in this? (39)

10. Why do you think universities are demanding faculty candidates (not just in the social sciences, but in engineering, math, and natural sciences) demonstrate their affirmation to the cause of “equity, diversity and inclusion?” (40)

Essay/ Project Prompts

Select from one of the prompts below, addressing the issues raised by either 1) composing an essay in APA format of 300-600 words, 2) developing a three-minute slide presentation for the class, or 3) creating a video lasting two to five minutes.

1. Why are people so willing to believe demonstrable lies?” Dreher asks this question about totalitarianism in the USSR. What is the answer? Do you see evidence of this phenomenon in American society today?

2. In her 1951 study *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Hannah Arendt identified several factors indicating that a society is susceptible to totalitarianism. Discuss the extent to which these factors are present in our own society today and give examples:

- a. loneliness and social atomization
- b. loss of faith in hierarchies and institutions
- c. the desire to transgress and destroy
- d. the willingness to believe useful lies
- e. a mania for ideology
- f. valuing loyalty more than expertise

3. A Russian man helped Dreher understand why communism seemed like a good idea to people at the time of the Russian Revolution: because it offered an answer to deep problems the government and society’s institutions had failed to address. What serious problems do you see in our society today that the state and private institutions are not dealing with, and that open the minds of people to radical proposals?

Notes

1. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Bolshevik>
2. <https://www.worldatlas.com/what-is-an-agrarian-society.html>
3. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/>

Suggested Further Reading

<https://salvomag.com/post/science-goes-ldquowokerdquo8212part-i>

<https://salvomag.com/post/science-goes-woke-part-ii>

<https://salvomag.com/post/woke-mathematics>

References

Dreher, R. (2020). *Live Not by Lies: A manual for Christian dissidents*. Penguin.

Families Are Resistance Cells

Guided Reading Questions

Answer the questions below, as you read through the text.

1. From Václav Benda's writings quoted in the text, summarize the three gifts the Christian model of marriage and family bestow to believers struggling within a totalitarian state. (131, 132)

- i. _____
- ii. _____
- iii. _____

2. Why was the family under direct and sustained assault by the communist government? (132)

3. In what form does the assault on the traditional family take today from the Left? (132, 133)

4. In what form does the assault on the traditional family take today from the Right? (133)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of Chapter Seven, the reader should be able to:

1. **Summarize** Václav Benda's thesis on the role the traditional family plays in building anti-communist resistance
2. **Explain** why totalitarian movements view the family as a threat to fulfilling their purposes
3. **Catalog** the sources of left-wing assault on traditional marriage and family in the West since the 1960's to present
4. **Identify** right-wing dogmas that destabilize traditional family values and elucidate how they do this
5. **Classify** organizations and institutions which undermine the traditional family today, and identify the undermining message
6. **Outline** Václav Benda's plan for rearing children who are capable of resisting totalitarianism
7. **Provide examples** of literature and movies with heroic characters and plots that inspire people to act with courage
8. **Develop** narratives that would encourage people today suffering from soft totalitarian persecution

5. Identify some of the blind spots of conservative parents today.



We disrupt the Western-prescribed nuclear family structure requirement by supporting each other as extended families and “villages” that collectively care for one another, to the degree that mothers, parents, and children are comfortable.

- Black Lives Matter, *What We Believe*

“While the totalitarian power has not yet succeeded in totally solving the family problem, this is not to say that this institution has not been dealt a mortal blow.”

Václav Benda, *The Family and the Totalitarian State*

6. What belief systems embraced by individualism today undermine the modern family? (133)

7. How would Benda describe the Christian family home? (134)

8. Václav Benda did not allow his children to drift into _____ or _____, because the _____ into which all of them had been thrown by _____ was too important. (136)

9. In her aims to fill her children’s moral imaginations with good, what did Kamila read to them every day? (138)

10. How were the Benda children “weird” and different from other children? (139)

11. According to Patrik Benda, what happened to parents who gave in to the government for the sake of their children? (140)

12. Václav reminded his children that their suffering was not meaningless. Why? (141)

The Family and the Totalitarian State

Václav Benda¹

“From the first, the communist state has used its totalitarian position to launch an attack on all the social institutions.

“Some of these – the army, the police, the powerful political machinery – were taken over wholesale, while others – economics, education, science and culture – were virtually annihilated or reformed according to the communist ideal.

“In fact, only two such institutions, the church and the family, put up any significant resistance to the totalitarian state, and to this day create problems for it.

“[T]he family unit itself . . . is more difficult to destroy, prohibit or completely infiltrate . . . than other more complex social groups.

“[T]he state has always kept a tight rein on the family, attempting to devalue it totally and rob it of all vitality – social, moral and even reproductive.

13. According to Marketa Benda, what was it about the Bible that gave her father strength to endure persecution? (141)

14. What was the Charter 77? (142)

15. How did Kamila and Václav teach their children that they were part of a wider movement? (142)

16. What is the danger in America today with the division between groups of people? (143)

17. “It’s no accident that every _____ always tries to break down the _____, because it’s in the _____ that you get the _____ to be able to _____.” (148)

18. Dreher calls on Christians to grow very sober on the importance of family, and to do what? (149)

The family does not exist for itself alone, but first for God, and then for the sake of the broader community – a family of families.

- Rod Dreher, *Live Not by Lies*

19. What enabled the Benda family to enjoy the good things in the world around them? (149)

20. Did the Benda's draw the shutters to their apartment and hide in the face of totalitarianism? What did they do? (150)

Group Discussion Questions

1. The Benda family apartment was located near the headquarters of the communist-era secret police. People summoned for interrogations would stop by their apartment for advice on how to endure what was about to come, and afterwards for encouragement (p. 135).

What kind of encouragement and support would you need to provide to Christian dissidents today? How would you counsel them to not "break" under the pressure of a culture growing more totalitarian?

Dictatorship can make life hard for you, but they don't want to devour your soul.

Totalitarian regimes are seeking your souls.

- Marek Benda remarks to Rod Dreher, *Live Not by Lies*

2. Václav and Kamila Benda built up the inner strength of their children as faithful Catholics and dissidents, by modeling moral courage (pp. 136, 137). Provide some ideas as to how you might model moral courage.

3. When the communist government offered to release Václav Benda from prison on the conditions he emigrated with his family to the West, Kamila told him it would be better if he stayed in prison and fought for what the family believed to be true. This was a sacrifice the family was willing to make. What sacrifices would you be willing to make today to stand for truth? Job? Promotion? Access to an elite club or organization?

4. The Benda family did not hide from the world around them, but rather acted with openness (pp. 149, 150). Today, many Christians proverbially draw the shutters and hide themselves in the face of the challenges of the culture. What are they hiding from and why do you think they are hiding? What are the consequences to engaging the culture?

Essay/ Project Prompts

Select from one of the prompts below, addressing the issues raised by either 1) composing an essay in APA format of 300-600 words, 2) developing a three-minute slide presentation for the class, or 3) creating a video lasting two to five minutes.

1. The Benda children were inspired by movies and literature providing examples of good fighting evil, and moral courage (pp. 136 - 138). Put together a list of movies and books which would do the same and justify your choices.

2. Patrik Benda remarks that his parents vaccinated the children against communist ideology by reminding them that it was okay and in fact desirable to be different (p. 139). Provide a scriptural defense for Christians to be different today. What parts of our culture do you think God finds undesirable in a Christian?

3. The hospitality practiced by Kamila and Václav Benda continues on in their children (144, 145). Put together a plan outlining some creative ways in which you might demonstrate hospitality to other Christian “dissidents.”

4. Research the “faith” statements of Black Lives Matter and ascertain how these statements undermine the nuclear family today.

Notes

1. Sourced from: Benda, V. (1984). *The Problems of the Family in a Totalitarian State*, retrieved from: https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/rcl/16-2_186.pdf

Suggested Further Reading

Benda, V. (1984). *The Problems of the Family in a Totalitarian State*, retrieved from: https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/rcl/16-2_186.pdf

Morales, E. (2020). Church goes woke: Welcome the capitulating clergy class of 2020. *Salvo Magazine*. Retrieved from: <https://salvomag.com/post/church-goes-woke>

References

Benda, V. (1984). *The Problems of the Family in a Totalitarian State*, retrieved from: https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/rcl/16-2_186.pdf

Dreher, R. (2020). *Live Not by Lies: A manual for Christian dissidents*. Penguin.

Religion, The Bedrock of Resistance

Guided Reading Questions

Answer the questions below, as you read through the text.

1. When the Bolsheviks were exiled to Siberia by tsarist forces, what enabled them to survive *and* thrive in exile? (152)

2. A _____ one holds as statement not of one's subjective feelings, but as a _____ is a priceless possession, enabling one how to discern _____ from _____. (152)

3. For Kolaković follower Silvester Kréméry, explain the basis for his resistance? (152)

4. How did Kréméry keep himself hopeful in the wake of torture and humiliation? (153)

5. During times of physical and spiritual uncertainty, how did Kréméry regard material things? What became the greatest reality? (153)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of Chapter Eight, the reader should be able to:

1. **Summarize** the basis for resistance for many of the anti-communist dissidents in the past century
2. **Develop** a disciplined plan like Silvester Kréméry's for personal resistance in the countenance of today's soft totalitarianism
3. **Contrast** the winsome qualities of the Gospel that Viktor Popkov and other former atheists recognized, with those of totalitarian (Soviet society) falsehoods
4. **Identify and delineate** those Christian values you would sacrifice everything for and what those sacrifices might be
5. **Compile** several scriptures which would provide you strength when encountering persecution
6. **Discriminate** between those qualities making up a follower of Christ verses an admirer only
7. **Recognize** the qualities that make progressive-left totalitarianism a religion as opposed to a mere political ideology
8. **Explain** why post-Christian values represent a rival religious system to authentic Christianity

Indeed, as one's spiritual life intensifies, things become clearer and the essence of God is more easily understood.³

- Silvester Kréméry, *This Saved Us: How to Survive Brainwashing*

6. Describe Kréméry's personal routine, and how he structured his long days in imprisonment. (153, 154)

Hope in the Face of Tyranny¹

¹If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. ³For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

- *Colossians 3:1-4*

¹⁹Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

- *Matthew 6:19-21*

²¹For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. ²²If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. ²³I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.

- *Philippians 1:21-23*

7. Explain why atheists, intellectuals, Christians of all denominations, Jews and even Marxists came to hear Father Dmitry preach. (157)

8. Describe Viktor Popkov's characterization of the new life he found in those underground church meetings. (159)

9. Viktor Popkov states, "Maybe this will sound strong, but the _____ and the things that you _____, you need to be ready to die for them – and only then will you have the strength to _____." (159)

10. To what does Christ call his followers to share in? What has he promised those who follow Him? Finally, what has he not promised and what are we not to participate in? (162, 163)

Group Discussion Questions

1. Kréméry, Richard Wurmbrand, and other former captives of communist regimes recognized that within the context of persecution, there is a “solidity of the shattered” that becomes vital to spiritual survival (p. 155). In practice, what would such solidarity look like in the face of soft totalitarian threats today?

2. An atheist, listening to Father Dmitry preach noted in the sermon the stark contrast between immoral Soviet society and those of Christ’s teachings (p. 156). Contrast those two sets of values.

3. Viktor Popkov sought Christian fellowship (p. 158) after reading the 1942 celebrated novel *The Stranger*, by Albert Camus, which prompted him to ask, “What is the point of living? If Christ is real, what is that supposed to mean for me?” Answer those questions for your own life and discuss how your answer may mean a departure from embracing capitalism or progressivism, in their entirety.

4. How is a follower of Christ different from an admirer? (162, 163)

5. Kréméry committed to memory many texts in the New Testament which prepared him for critical times and imprisonment (pp. 153, 154). Research, locate, and share four such texts which would lend you tremendous comfort and strength when confronted with soft totalitarian persecution.

Essay/ Project Prompts

Select from one of the prompts below, addressing the issues raised by either 1) composing an essay in APA format of 300-600 words, 2) developing a three-minute slide presentation for the class, or 3) creating a video lasting two to five minutes.

1. Kréméry developed a disciplined personal routine for maintaining his sanity and faith in the face of persecution, imprisonment, and interrogations (pp. 153, 154). Design a discipline personal routine for your own life, which will enable you to hold on to your faith in light of the soft totalitarian threats of today.

On Jesus, Seeking Followers, Not Admirers...¹

⁵³So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.

⁵⁴Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.

⁶⁰When many of his disciples heard it, they said, “This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?” ⁶¹But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, said to them, “Do you take offense at this?”

⁶⁶After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. ⁶⁷So Jesus said to the twelve, “Do you want to go away as well?” ⁶⁸Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, ⁶⁹and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.”

- John, 6:53,54,60,61,66 – 69 (ESV)

2. Viktor Popkov reminds us that we will only have the strength to resist totalitarianism if we are *willing to die* for the principles and things we confess (p. 159). While we are still only experiencing soft totalitarianism in the West, consider the principles you are willing to lose a friendship over, or a business deal, a job, access to higher society or prestige. Discuss these principles at length and draw from any experience you may have had suffering persecution for holding to them.

3. Mathematician and author James Lindsay, in a June 2020 article, *Postmodern Religion and the Faith of Social Justice* makes the case that the social justice movement of today is not merely a political movement, but a religious one. Dreher echoes this sentiment as well in Chapter Three – Progressivism as Religion. Compare and contrast the social justice movement with Biblical Christianity, addressing how each characterize the issues of original sin, repentance, and redemption.

Notes

1. Retrieved from *The Holy Bible – English Standard Version*.

2. Quoted from Benda, V., Šimečka, M., Jirous, I. M., Dienstbier, J., Havel, V., Hejdánek, L., ... & Wilson, P. (1988). Parallel polis, or an independent society in Central and Eastern Europe: an inquiry. *Social Research*, 211-246.

3. Quote from Kréméry as cited by Dreher, R. (2020). *Live Not by Lies: A manual for Christian dissidents*. Penguin.

Suggested Further Reading

Lindsay, J., & Nayna, M. (2020). Postmodern religion and the faith of social justice. *New Discourses*. Retrieved from: <https://newdiscourses.com/2020/06/postmodern-religion-faith-social-justice/>

References

Dreher, R. (2020). *Live Not by Lies: A manual for Christian dissidents*. Penguin.