

[Announcer:](#) Welcome to the Carey Nieuwhof Leadership podcast. A podcast all about leadership, change, and personal growth. The goal? To help you lead like never before in your church or in your business. Now, your host, Carey Nieuwhof.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#) Well, hey, everybody. Welcome to episode 255 of the podcast. My name is Carey Nieuwhof. I hope our time together today helps you lead like never before. I hope it is a good day wherever you are as you listen to this. We are in for a treat. Today we have Os Guinness. He is a PhD from Oxford. He's written or edited more than 30 books. He spends a lot of time really in the field of philosophy, that's what his doctorate from Oxford is in, and we are going to talk about freedom in the current moment we're in.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#) Sometimes we do deep dives in really sort of bizarre directions, and this would be one of those that I just loved, because I also ... Well, I don't have a doctorate, but I have a degree in history, and sometimes it's very, very difficult to sense the moment you're in. I think we're in one of those seasons where everything's changing so fast, and we've got to get a little bit of perspective around it. Os is going to help us with that, so I'm really, really excited.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#) Do you know what else he is? He is the great-great-great-grandson of Arthur Guinness, the brewer from Dublin. Yeah, yeah, yeah. So we've never had a guest like that before. We've got a whole lot of great guests coming up on the podcast. Who do we have? Next week we are back with Carly Fiorina. We also have Andrew Stanley, who is a standup comedian and, yes, also the son of Andy Stanley. Mike Hyatt is coming up. I've been so looking forward to that. Nona Jones from Facebook. The founder of the Ritz-Carlton, Horst Schulze, is here. Les McKeown is back. Sean Cannell, the You Tube sensation, is coming up. Ken Coleman, and, well, a whole lot more. It's going to be a pretty incredible lineup.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#) If you haven't subscribed yet, please do so. For all of you who continue to share this program with the people you love, thank you. Whether you're on a run, on a ride, on your commute, cooking, I don't know what you're doing, but thanks for tuning in. I am super excited about being part of this year's Pushpay Summit in Dallas, Texas. It's happening May 22, 23. I'll be keynoting along with Patrick Lencioni, Cheryl Bachelder, Bobby Gruenewald, Clay Scroggins, Nona Jones, the said Nona Jones from Facebook. Last year I was at their summit, had a great time. Steven Furtick spoke, Erwin McManus. I interviewed Scott Harrison. It was incredible.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#) They throw a great event, and I sat down with Troy Pollock, who's one of the vice presidents of Pushpay, and I said, "So, who goes there? Is this like senior pastors only?" Here was his answer:

[Troy Pollock:](#) Anybody can attend. If you are a customer of ours, we would love to see you in Dallas. If you are not a customer of ours, we would love to see you in Dallas. When we think about putting on this conference, Carey, it truly is to just

assemble thought leaders and great communicators inside the church and outside the church that are doing great things in their lane.

[Troy Pollock](#):

That's really what it is about. It's not about pushing the Pushpay brand on anybody, or self-serving for us and what we build in terms of technology; it's more to equip the Church, capital C, with great practical examples from these thought leaders of how they're scaling their organizations, that you can actually bring back to your organization on Monday morning and apply those best practices and help you be more effective in your role.

[Carey Nieuwhof](#):

So I would love for you to join us. We have a special offer for you, okay? Lots of strategy, lots of access to so many of the speakers. I would be there, would love to interact with you. If you go to the website, you'll see the early bird pricing is \$159, but because you listen to this show, we're going to give you a special coupon code. It's just on checkout, use the word "CAREYN." Use that coupon code. That will bring your cost per person down to \$89 per team member. That's it. Almost half price. So head on over to [pushpay.com/summit](http://pushpay.com/summit) to learn more and to register today. I can't wait to see you there.

[Carey Nieuwhof](#):

Also, I know so many leaders who struggle with staffing, and it's a real problem. We're in a full employment economy, so finding good people is really hard. If you are looking to grow your team or, frankly, to be honest with you, some of you who are solo pastors, solopreneurs in the business world, you don't have a team, and you're like, "I can't afford it." Sometimes you can't afford not to.

[Carey Nieuwhof](#):

The solution that I've turned to again and again over the last few years is BELAY. You can head on over to [belaysolutions.com/carey](http://belaysolutions.com/carey), and get started today with a virtual staffing. My entire company is virtual. I have people in Tennessee, in Nebraska, in California, here in Canada, and elsewhere. Guess what? It works amazing, and we produce things like this show for you. I think you're absolutely going to love it. I would love for you to check that out, so go on over to [belaysolutions.com/carey](http://belaysolutions.com/carey), and get started. Build your team today. You can start with as little as 10 hours a week.

[Carey Nieuwhof](#):

Here's what they do: They actually source people, so 90% of applicants to BELAY don't get through. They pick the very best of the best and present them to you. I know, because I've had a number of those very best of the best. I would love for you to get some help, the help that you need, even in a full employment economy. Head on over to [belaysolutions.com/carey](http://belaysolutions.com/carey). Remember to join me in Dallas. That is [pushpay.com/summit](http://pushpay.com/summit) and use the coupon code CAREYN, and we will be hanging out together this year. I'm so excited for that.

[Carey Nieuwhof](#):

Hey, without further ado, why don't we jump into my conversation with Os Guinness. Well, Os, welcome to the podcast.

[Os Guinness](#):

My privilege to be on with you.

[Carey Nieuwhof](#): It's great to have you. I think, as any regular listener of this podcast will know, we have talked about everything changing, and I think we live in a time of kind of unprecedented cultural change, at least in our lifetime, and that's certainly the argument that you are making. You say that 2016 was a really pivotal year for America. Tell us what, in your mind, changed in 2016.

[Os Guinness](#): Well, obviously, that was the year of the election, and election of Donald Trump. I think the surprise and the shock of Donald Trump has just brought things out of the woodwork, which had been there for quite a while, but are now becoming increasingly blatant, and you can see it even more with the Kavanaugh hearings a little later, and then with the midterm elections. You probably know my argument, that Americans are deeply divided anytime since Civil War, and what's the deepest division that's between those who understand America in the lens of the light of the American Revolution, 1776, which was decisively, although not consistently, Christian because of the Reformation.

[Os Guinness](#): Those who understand America through the lens of the French Enlightenment, and ideas that have flowed from that, so often without realizing it, closer to 1789, than they are to 1776. If you look at things like political correctness or the sexual revolution or the new rage in the US for socialism, and so on, you can see things that would've been unrecognizable just a few years ago, and they all owe their roots to the French Revolution, not the American.

[Os Guinness](#): So that's what began to come out in opposition to Trump. Now, a lot of people blame Trump for everything, and I argue, he's not the cause of the problem, he's the consequence. He's the symptom. If he fails drastically, the reaction against him could actually lead things even further towards the secular progressive left. So very significant year, 2016.

[Carey Nieuwhof](#): Yeah, and just so people know, too, you're not making a partisan argument as in, "Hey, democrats versus republicans."

[Os Guinness](#): No, no.

[Carey Nieuwhof](#): This is much bigger; this is much deeper. It's a larger narrative, and in 2016, it's kind of a symptom. Now, I happen to have a degree in history and political science, so I'm always fascinated in revolutions, but for those who may not be completely up-to-date on the differences between the French Revolution and the American Revolution, talk to us what the distinction is that you see in those two events, which were just a few years apart.

[Os Guinness](#): Go back even earlier than that. There are two revolutions: The English, 1642, and the American, 1776, which were biblical. The English one, of course, failed, and historians call it the Lost Cause. What was the lost cause in Old England became the winning cause in New England. You can see that the reformation put its stamp on America through things like covenant, which became the

American Constitution, and was a direct borrowing from the Old Testament and so on.

[Os Guinness:](#)

Now the three other major revolutions: The French, 1789; the Russian, 1917; and the Chinese, 1949, and I remember that as a boy, they were decisively coming from an antireligious direction, and they were secular and had a completely different understanding. Take one difference. The American Revolution has a biblical anthropology at its heart. In other words, realism that the abuse of power and fallen nature, so you have checks and balances.

[Os Guinness:](#)

In the Old Testament, kings, priests, and prophets, and the prophets were the social critics holding the priests' and the kings' feet to the fire in terms of the covenant. Well you can see James Madison, coming from Witherspoon at Princeton with his notion of human beings fallen, ambition checking ambition, separation of powers, checks and balances. The French Revolution was decisively and, the Chinese one, too, utopian. The utopian revolutions lead, in each case, to a reign of terror, and anything but what is hoped for. And you go on down the line.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

Well, that's interesting. I don't know whether you're familiar with the writings or teachings of Jordan Peterson, but that is a point that Peterson makes over and over again.

[Os Guinness:](#)

Who isn't?

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

Oh, yeah. It's kind of hard to ignore him these days, right? I mean, he is like a dog on a bone about the power, or the corruption of totalitarian or secular revolutions. He says in many of his works how horrible the 20th Century was as the most godless culture in history. Is it similar to that? Like when you try to create utopia and you lose, even ... I don't know whether you'd call them Christian principles, but he certainly teaches about the Bible quite extensively, but his argument is that when you remove God from the process, you really set ourselves up to be tyrants. Similar vein of thought? Different vein of thought? I'm curious.

[Os Guinness:](#)

Very similar, and you've got in Canada, too, one of the strongest critics of the enlightenment, John Ralston Soul, who wrote Voltaire's Bastards, and showed rather than producing some pacific and utopian, idealistic outcome, he produced antisemitism, violence, racism, and so on, and even many of the great thinkers like Hume and Kant. You can go back and show the racism and antisemitism in their writings. So the enlightenment sowed the seeds for a good deal of this, and I think Jordan Peterson's exactly right.

[Os Guinness:](#)

One of the great things coming from the biblical view is that it's a sustained critique of the abuse of power. Of course, it was a catholic layman who gave us the famous quote, "All power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." Sadly, he said that in the context of his own church, and he knew

well it was the catholic church which borrowed Roman institutions, and the Roman institutions were hierarchical. They were not biblical. Hierarchical institutions based on power, it's easily corrupted and produced the Inquisition, the forced conversion of Jews and various other horrendous evils. Lord Acton was opposing those. I think the Bible itself has a magnificent critique of power, and nowhere more than in the Exodus and in the prophets.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#) You know, it's one of the reasons I wanted to have this conversation with you and bring it to the podcast is I think a lot of us are trying to figure out what's going on, and I love the fact that you root this in centuries and even millennial old thinking, because we tend to think of ourselves as the only generation that ever lived, and we're making this up as we go along, but these roots are actually quite deep.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#) One question for you before we move on, so I've read numerous critiques or analyses of the faith of the founding fathers in the United States, and there's a strong argument that America was never intended to be a Christian nation, that some of the leading fathers were not Christians but deists. Thomas Jefferson was more of a deist, the argument goes, than a Christian. What are your thoughts on that? Because you're saying, "No, no, no, no. In 1776, in the Constitution, it was fundamentally based on Christian principles as opposed to the French Revolution." Any thoughts on that school of thinking?

[Os Guinness:](#) Well, absolutely. When people say Christian America, it's like a red rag to a bull to say to the Jewish community and to many others, too. I think we have to say America was never officially formally established Christian, like, say, France was established catholic, or Spain was established catholic, and England was established protestant, and Scotland was established presbyterian. None of those. In other words, the First Amendment makes a break. So it's true that most of the early Americans were Christians, no question. It's also true that most of the ideas in the Revolution were Christian. Was America officially Christian? Absolutely not. In fact, the First Amendment prohibits that. Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, and so on. I think a lot of Christians have put their foot in that one unnecessarily.

[Os Guinness:](#) The trouble is when George Washington described it as a great experiment, experiments are open-ended. So you can immediately guess two ways that the experiment can undermine itself. One, is through being so open to every new idea, which American freedom is, but it welcomes ideas that undermine the whole system. Or, the other is, you become so tolerant to every new idea around, that the tolerance just slips into indifference, a sloppy indifference. Either way, you undermine the very ideas you need to keep the system thriving.

[Os Guinness:](#) Because you mentioned the framers. They go from, Patrick Henry was an evangelical. George Mason, fully orthodox anglican believer. Washington, orthodox, but rather vague. Our God is the great architect and this sort of stuff. Jefferson, as you said, a deist. And you move across to Franklin and further still

to Tom Paine. That was a terrific variety of faith. But I would say this, Carey. Every one of them believed in what I called in an earlier book, the golden triangle of freedom. It wasn't the faith was established, but freedom required virtue; virtue required faith of some sort; and faith of any sort required freedom. Rather like recycling triangle, that goes round and round and round. Freedom requires virtue, which requires faith, which requires freedom, which requires virtue, ad infinitum. They all believed in that. You can find quotations supporting that in all of them, but I'm not for a minute saying they were all orthodox Christians.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

Right. No, you hear that argument, though, floated around, which is why I wanted to nuance that a little bit. Yet, Christian principles were underneath the understanding of governance. I love your understanding of the checks on power, too. I think most people would look back at the election of 2016, however you voted or didn't vote, and go, "Wow. That surfaced ... That was like the worst election no matter how you look at it, that we've had in a long, long time." You wrote about the election in your book of 1800, which was Jefferson versus John Adams. That was perhaps the most raucous, until recently, election in US history. Tell us a little bit more about that, because I think often we have an idealized view of the past, and we don't realize that we are not the first generation to struggle with division. To the extent that you can, take us back to 1800, Jefferson versus Adams, and what was that election like?

[Os Guinness:](#)

Well, every time people complain about, say, civility, someone will say, "Well, it was worse in 1800," and that was a pretty bad one. Accusations of illegitimate children, all sorts of things. It was just perilous, but I do think we're much worse now. I think civility has broken down, and even the last two weeks here. For instance, people are saying some white is going to have to die. Well you probably know they're talking about white privilege. You probably know the ideas of Rene Girard, the French anthropologist from Stanford, who was a mentor to Peter Thiel, who put money into Facebook for that reason. So these things are not just academic.

[Os Guinness:](#)

His idea was that the basic way of handling what he calls imitative desire, or [inaudible 00:18:41] desire, it leads to a conflict, rivalry, resentment, which breaks out either in scapegoating enemies outside you, or in scapegoating some victim within you. Of course, the left thinks Trump is trying to do that. Equally, you could argue there are many people, almost every week, someone calling basically for the assassination of the president. And you see a very, very dangerous breakdown of civility in America.

[Os Guinness:](#)

Of course, biblically, when words break down, violence is never far away, and that's why I think we are worse than the 1800 election, at a very dangerous point, but here's something I would add, though, Carey. While I mentioned Trump in 2016, he talked Make America Great Again, MAGA. Now that's connected with racism and all sorts of things. He never asked what made America great in the first place.

[Carey Nieuwhof](#): Interesting.

[Os Guinness](#): And you can see the missing, the great difference in now and just before the Civil War, which was equally divided, is there's no Lincoln-like leader. What Lincoln did in the 1850s, he addressed the evils: slavery, division, a house divided cannot stand, and so on, in the light of what he called the better angels of the American nature, and he appealed to the Declaration. In other words, there were evils built-in to the American system, by the Constitution three-fifths, and all that stuff, racism, slavery. He tackled them, but he believed in the Declaration. So did Booker T. Washington. So did Frederick Douglass. So did Martin Luther King.

[Os Guinness](#): In the '60s, from Stokely Carmichael right down to Black Lives Matter, there are people who attack on the evils, but no longer appealing to the better angels, because America now is seen as chronically sexist, racist and all sorts of other rude words. In other words, there's no Lincoln who's speaking on behalf of the better angels, and that's a huge difference. That's why I think America's close to a Rubicon moment, where there are many ... You look at the democratic candidates appearing for the next election. They're far closer to the French Revolution than the American, any of them. America is near the Rubicon moment, which Caesar of course crossed, and it'll be a point of no return unless there's a leader who speaks up, or people who speak up.

[Carey Nieuwhof](#): Does some of this have to do ... ? Because what I've heard in the subtext of the conversation so far, as you're describing other eras, there was an appeal to a higher ideal. So, for example, Christian values that were outside of an individual, or as Jefferson wrote in the Declaration of Independence, there are certain inalienable rights that, Kant would've called them a universal maxim. Has that broken down? Is that somehow underneath this like, all we have is each other, and we don't like each other, and we hate each other, and we fight all the time? What is missing now that was present in previous dialog in civil discourse?

[Os Guinness](#): What you just said is absolutely true. I would argue, there's a lot of talk in the last 10 years of a post truth world. The economists cover, things like that. Of course, that goes back to Nietzsche in the 1880s, not to the economists. For quite a while now, we realize we're in a post truth world. In other words, everything's power without the principle of truth. I would argue we're actually going beyond that now. We're not only increasingly post truth, we are post rights. It wasn't long ago when people were saying, "Well, universal declaration, 1948, is the Bible of the human rights revolution, which will sweep the world, a kind of secular equivalent of the Bible." Nonsense. Now people are saying, "Well, universal declaration is Western-centric." It has no philosophical roots and, of course, it's being weaponized by people like the Americans.

[Os Guinness](#): In other words, there's no one defending the basis of human rights. Now where did the basis come from? Obviously, the Bible. There is no high view of the preciousness of the human individual outside the Bible. I would go on beyond

that and take, say, something connected to that, like freedom. People say "Freedom, freedom, freedom, freedom," almost as a cliché. Actually, you try and ground freedom; you cannot ground it to the Babylonians or the Egyptians or the Persians. That's no surprise. You can't ground it in the Greeks, behind freedom, fate. You cannot even ground it in the atheists. You take someone like Spinoza or Freud or Marx, or modern new atheists like Sam Harris, freedom is a fiction. Everything is determined by chance and necessity.

[Os Guinness:](#)

The grounds of human dignity and the grounds of personal liberty are in the Bible and nowhere else. That's a very dangerous moment for people to be rejecting the Bible. You can see the French Revolution was antireligious which, of course, meant antiChristian, and so increasingly is the American culture for a similar reason.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

Yeah, and I think you could argue that there's been a secularization on both sides of the house in America, as well. It's not like one party embodies Christian ideals and the other doesn't. Is that fair?

[Os Guinness:](#)

Mm-Hmm. Oh, absolutely. There are republicans who are much more interested in conservative economics than they are in anything, touching anything cultural, social, spiritual. Yes, it's on both sides, but the blatancy of it is now much more audible and visible in the democratic party, openly antiChristian statements coming out increasingly.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

I'm interested, too, in what you said about 2016 revealing what was already there. There's another book, I actually hope to have him on the podcast this year, by Seth Stephens-Davidowitz, it's called Everybody Lies: What the Internet Can Tell Us About Who We Really Are. His argument is now that we have 15 years of Google data, it's proving a lot of the polls wrong. So what I might tell you, to summarize his argument in brief, then I'll get to the question is, "Os, yeah, I believe in freedom and I believe in rights for everybody," and so, yeah, that's how I'm answering this question publicly, and that's what I say on my profile, but he says Google operates as a confessional. What they're discovering is that a lot of the racism that you see verbally and visually in American culture today, was there a decade ago and 15 years ago. It just wasn't polite to say it, and that people were Googling those results and their questions and jokes about people of other races at very high levels.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

In other words, what I tell you to your face, because I want to be a member of civil society, what I'm doing behind closed doors and what I believe behind closed doors are two different things. So he's saying this Google data paints a much grimmer picture of American and global culture than we would've thought. You're also arguing that these divisions that we have in our culture, that kind of run through our heart, I think that was Hume, right? Good and evil runs through every human heart, have been around for a long time. Two things: Number one, why were they suppressed for so long? I guess three things: Have they gotten worse? Then why all of a sudden have they erupted?

[Os Guinness:](#)

Well, absolutely. I think people didn't realize the power of the social media in amplifying what the Bible would call the inclination to sin in all sorts of ways. So you go back to, say, Peter Thiel's original 500 million investment in Facebook, as I understand from his friends, he thought it would be a new alternative community, a human community, which would help to channel emotions and be a check on the worst of emotions, and so on, but it's done the opposite. It's reinforced the various negative inclinations we have.

[Os Guinness:](#)

So you have the increase in resentments and increase in rivalry, and this is what's leading to the potential for increased violence. I had a paragraph in my book on words break down, violence may break out, and the fear is scapegoating, and attempted assassination. I think that's a very serious problem. In other words, a cleansing of the nation through the purging of violence, which would be horrendous, and it was cut out. It was cut out of the book. People thought that was just too extreme. I personally don't think it is, if you look back in history and look into the human heart and what things like the social media are doing to us.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

This is kind of where we go historically, right? Things get really bad, and then all, literally, civilization in the most literal sense, breaks down, and we treat each other horribly. Whether that's genocide or slaughter involved. Then the next generation goes, "We'll never do it again," and the cycle repeats.

[Os Guinness:](#)

Well, I think we're at ... We've been talking mainly about the American republic. You're in Canada and I'm an Englishman, but we could equally look more widely at the West. Many of the other countries including Canada. I was at your national prayer breakfast last year, and then I was out in Australia talking to some Australian leaders there. You can see that certainly the English-speaking world and, of course, across Europe, too, now as we are witnessing the decline of the West as a civilization, and people are so concerned with the rise of China and military and economic power, but they don't ask what made the West the West, and the West has never been inspired or united without faith.

[Os Guinness:](#)

Now there's no question that the Christian faith, especially in Europe, became extremely corrupt. My actual family's Irish, and the reaction against the corruptions of the catholic church are vicious and rapid. Now Ireland is secularizing as fast as any nation in history. So we all know the abuses, but the question is what's going to rebuild civilization? I want to shift my thinking now more and more to the questions of hope and rebuilding foundations, because a lot of people have fear; many people are despairing and discouraged, and I think this is no time to be discouraged, but is rather like an Augustinian moment. Augustine had the privilege and responsibility of living as Rome collapsed, but he didn't despair. He gave his vision of the City of God outlasting the city of man, and we've got to do the equivalent in our own day.

[Carey Nieuwhof](#): Well, let's talk about that. Where is the opportunity? Because it's easy to paint a bleak picture. That's not hard to do, and I think it resonates with a lot of people, but I'd love to know what you think our Augustinian moment might be.

[Os Guinness](#): Well, clearly, the Church will survive the worst. The gates of hell will not prevail. In other words, the councils and strategies of darkness will not prevail. I think our challenge is ... I love a little phrase of Reinhold Niebuhr, "The end is not the end." By which he meant, you look in the Bible, there's two types of end. There's end as finished, ending, full stop, period. That happens. The summer ends, and then winter. Our lives end, we die. There's a certain built-in ending in the very natural course of things.

[Os Guinness](#): There's a second end in the Bible, that's end of telos, in the Greek sense, end as objective, goal. Others say every ending in the first sense is not the end of the world, no. God has His purposes, and in our times of trust and faithfulness and obedience and living actively and intentionally, as He calls us to, we're laying the foundation for whatever comes. We don't know if the Dark Ages is coming, or a massive awakening, which would be wonderful, we just simply don't know. We've got to be faithful in our time and live out the truths, unlike the church, which has abused power, or has compromised the faith.

[Os Guinness](#): So we've got to look at all the diminishing of the faith today, whether that's under the impact of eternity, I've written on that a lot, or whether it's the impact of modern ideas, whatever it is, and really seek to live faithfully and trustingly, because we know that the end is not the end, and the Lord has His purposes for the next time, and all we're called to be is faithful.

[Os Guinness](#): Now, I think that means we've got to think through what are the foundations. In other words, the way I put it, talking, say in political circles here in Washington, the challenge of our time can re-create human societies that respect dignity and achieve freedom with justice, stability, peace, etc., etc. Sounds utopian. Now what would it take? Well, it takes a certain view of human dignity. It takes a certain view of truth and words and freedom and justice. They're all there in the Bible, and we need to unpack them, explore them, live them out with incredible confidence in our time, and lay the foundation so that people will look back on us in a hundred years' time and say, "Well, at least they were in tough times, but they were faithful, and their vision is something that outlasted the decline of their own societies."

[Carey Nieuwhof](#): What does that look like practically? For someone saying, "That's great on a philosophical level," and I love the distinction between a finished and telos, from which on a practical level, you even get telescope, right? You're looking through something toward a greater end, which I think is the Christian understanding of time and purpose and history and that kind of thing. What can we do? People are going to have to vote in another year, not that they want to necessarily, they have to act in a civil society, they're on their social media feeds. This is increasing, like I think for most people, you want to look at it at a

very practical level. Anxiety is on the rise; depression is on the rise, understandably so. With people trying to cope in post Christian America, or the post Christian West, what does that mean?

[Os Guinness:](#)

Well, you mentioned the social media. If you just take a biblical view, one, of words, and, two, of truth, no Christian should be caught up in a lot of the nonsense that comes out on the social media today. We are people of truth. We are not only called to believe the truth or defend the truth, we're called to become people of truth, to live in truth, and so on. Now we've got to figure out what that means in the age of social media, of constant lying, of ads and political speech, and political correctness and so on. We are the champions of truth. There's an immense amount there that comes out, the very notion of words. We have a very different view of words than every where else. I'm writing on freedom, human dignity.

[Os Guinness:](#)

Take the notion, Carey. There's almost no defense of the individual today. Now we're in a very individualistic culture, but the sense of the preciousness of the individual, you take algorithms or utilitarianism, the greatest go to the greatest number. Everything's in terms of groups and statistics and big numbers and big data and all this. There is no philosophy of the preciousness of the individual. Where does that come from? The Bible.

[Os Guinness:](#)

As our Jewish brothers say, to save one life is to save the universe. To kill one life is to destroy the universe. We are the guardians, Jews and Christians, of the biblical view that's being called the magna carte of humanity. We should start there, and then look at all the stuff coming from Silicon Valley, with cyber and all this. We are the highest humanism in the world today in the sense of a view of human worth, but a high humanism with realism. We know that humans go wrong, and so on.

[Os Guinness:](#)

I think basic truths are incredibly practical, but they need to be unpacked. Let me be absolutely rude about a lot of American preaching I've heard. With a few distinguished exceptions, much of the preaching today is so trivial at an urgent time. I grew up under Martyn Lloyd-Jones or John Stott, who is a friend and mentor. When John Stott preached in the old, old souls, you couldn't see him. He was prostrate on his face before the Lord before he opened the Word. I look at some of the young preachers today, hands in their pockets, the Bible off to the side somewhere, with jokes and all sort ... They're brilliant speakers, but are they servants of the Word, unpacking the Word, exploring the Word?

[Os Guinness:](#)

The Word is rich in the truths which are so desperately needed in our times, and much of the American preaching I've heard, I haven't heard a sermon in Canada, to be honest, so I can't comment there, much of the American preaching I've heard is just trivial.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

On that note, one of the things that I've been kind of preoccupied with in the back of my mind is this idea that intellectually, preachers today are losing

ground to even the new atheists and to many other areas of discourse, and I think we've ... Jordan Peterson, to quote him again, is right. We have grossly underestimated the attention span and the level of intelligence at which people want dialog. Hence, millions of copies sold of the 12 Rules for Life; long-form podcasting, three-and-a-half, four-hour podcasts multiple times a week that are being consumed in the tens of millions, and people want nuance thought. So you think a good step would be better study and a better faithfulness in the pulpit? I'm all for that. I'd love to hear you comment on that.

[Os Guinness:](#)

Absolutely. Again, I mentioned our Jewish friends. If you look at the Exodus, the key thing is transmission and thinking. So what did Moses talk about the night of the Passover? He didn't talk about freedom or the Promised Land or the howling desert they would cross. He talked about children. For the Jews from then on, was especially after AD 130 when they lost their capital, lost their king, they lost everything, and they were scattered to the far corners of the earth and persecuted. What kept them alive was the Torah and the study of the Torah, believe it or not. The Jews have had education for every Jew since the first century.

[Os Guinness:](#)

It came in in England in 1870. You can see Christians, evangelical, I'm an evangelical. I'm not ashamed of evangelical, but I am ashamed at some of the things in evangelical including the anti-intellectualism and the fear of being serious about the big ideas of our time. This is really so stupid. Not just a hunger for it, as you were saying, and Jordan Peterson taps on that, there's a desperate need for it. We've got to have a seriousness, because we're living in serious times.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

What I do see on social, because I'm on it daily for better or for worse, is a lot of partisan positions. In other words, react against this law, react again ... I can't believe candidate X, or politician Y said, XYZ. Any thoughts on how, as Christians, we ... I stay very apolitical in my own posting in terms of partisan politics, but any idea on what is a good posture for Christians today to take on social, if there is a posture?

[Os Guinness:](#)

I'm an Englishman here in the US, so I'm totally nonpartisan, bipartisan. I don't get into the nitty-gritty of the day-to-day politics. Now that's partly because many of the deeper issues run deeper than the partisan things. You said earlier, the republicans in many cases, just as bad as the democrats, so there are not partisan issues and, of course, if we move beyond America, many of the things we're talking about are Western issues or human issues. As followers of Jesus, we're passionate about everything human. Certainly, we're concerned about the West departure from things with a biblical basis, much of the best of the West, so I'm rarely partisan and always trying to get people to think more deeply about the root issues and what they really mean.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

So maybe that's a good direction is to say, rather than commenting on whatever came across your newsfeed or candidate X or position Y, to think through at a

deeper level and perhaps refrain a little bit more from adding to the noise. Is that what I hear you saying?

[Os Guinness:](#)

Absolutely. Yeah. Thinking holistically, you mentioned early history. Take, say, the sexual revolution, which is a huge part of the modern Western discussion. Many people I meet, they just think in terms of anecdotes. Who am I to disagree with my neighbor, my sister-in-law, my colleague, or whatever? You get into this new, or that dreadful thing's happening, wherever. Whereas, I would urge Christians to look at the sexual revolution in its holistic completeness. It didn't come from Playboy and Hugh Hefner and a few things like that, it traces back through Wilhelm Reich, who is the architect of the term, all the way back to people like Rousseau.

[Os Guinness:](#)

When you look at the whole ... For example, if you look at the whole, one thing that comes again and again and again, the sexual revolution has two main enemies. They'll never win unless they beat these two enemies. One is parents, that's why sex education at three and four. The other is the church. It's quite deliberately a subversion of everything that Jews and Christians stand for, and the naivety of some Christians in dealing with it, because they don't think holistically; they don't go back to the roots; they don't look at history.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

I'm curious. Parents, that you've got my interest piqued. Parents and the church. So sex education. Talk about that. What we're not ... We're afraid of it? We went there too soon? We're educating too early? What were you saying with that? Just so I understand.

[Os Guinness:](#)

No, I'm saying they want sex education at three and four, pro-gay, pro-transgender, or whatever, in order to knock out the influence of parents. For example, I was listening to Ryan Anderson, a catholic defender of traditional marriage in a wonderful way. He was telling about schools where kids go to school to the principal's office and change into the clothes in the office, in the morning, of whatever sex they want to be, and they live in those clothes the day, then they go back to the principal's office, change back into their normal clothes, by which their family knows them and expects them to pick them up, and the parents don't actually know. A deliberate attempt to subvert the influence of the parents. Of course, you read Wilhelm Reich. That is quite intentional. Now we should know that. Now, of course, they want to undermine the church, too.

[Carey Nieuwhof:](#)

Yeah, and yet a lot of parents are very reticent to talk to their kids about anything like that, because we're under-prepared. We don't want to talk to her. We don't want to have "the talk" or multiple talks with our kids on that.

[Os Guinness:](#)

It's tricky. It is tricky to keep up with all the crazy stuff that's going on today. One of the things I learned from Francis Schaeffer was you always try to keep people just ahead of the game. So they're going to high school, prepare for what they meet in high school; they're going to college, well, at college you'll meet X

and Y, and so on. Just keep people, if you can, just that bit ahead of the game. Then it doesn't surprise them, and they're ready to take it on.

[Carey Nieuwhof](#):

All right. Well, this has been fascinating, and I'm glad that we could kind of lift our eyes a little bit and go deeper, go further back, go above the skirmish that we find ourselves in. I'll give you, in light of time today, just a chance for one more word on what you think people can do, the tens of thousands of people who listen to an episode like this, can do to make a difference and guard really the fabric of what you're saying is our liberty, our freedom, before things really kind of collapse in on us. I'd love to hear you say what else we can do as we close today.

[Os Guinness](#):

Well, I think we need to ask the Lord to awaken each of us, that we may be all that He wants us to be. So knowing Him, knowing the scriptures, understanding our faith, being able to defend our faith, having a clear sense of our individual calling, having friends around us for fellowship and inspiration, encouragement, and people to hold our feet to the fire. We need a lot of these simple things, and then have a vision of what it is that's our contribution to the world. I love that little verse in Acts 13:36, where Paul just says as a tribute to King David, "David, after he served God's purpose in his own generation, fell asleep, died." I love that. All we're responsible for is living faithfully in our time. That means knowing the Lord, knowing our time, and knowing what our tiny part of it is.

[Os Guinness](#):

Very few of us can do very much, but we can all do what the Lord's put in our lives, in our spheres of influence. We do that, then we hope we can hear His words at the end, "Well done, good and faithful servant." Calling should be at the heart of it all.

[Carey Nieuwhof](#):

Os Guinness, thank you. The book is called *The Last Call for Liberty: How America's Genius for Freedom Has Become Its Greatest Threat*. Thanks so much for being with us today.

[Os Guinness](#):

Great privilege, Carey. Thank you.

[Carey Nieuwhof](#):

Hey, if you want more, make sure you check out the show notes. You can go to [careynieuwhof.com/episode255](http://careynieuwhof.com/episode255). You'll get all the show notes and even transcripts. Yeah, we've been doing transcripts for a while. I know a lot of you love those. Then next week, we are back with a fresh episode. I am sitting down with the former CEO of HP. She ran for President of the United States. Her name, Carly Fiorina. We had a fascinating conversation. The truth bombs in our almost hour-long chat, unbelievable. Here's an excerpt:

[Carly Fiorina](#):

I can't design the product, but if I can't understand, if anyone can't understand the benefits of a product, the cost of a product, the use of a product just as one example, then whoever's trying to explain it, doesn't understand it either, and it's time to send them back to the drawing board. My point being, never underestimate the power of a question, and don't dismiss your own ability to

understand the essence of what's important if you're in a decision-making mode. Get to that essence. If someone can't tell you what the essence of the decision is, then it's time to go back to the drawing board.

[Carey Nieuwhof](#):

So that's next week on the podcast. Subscribers, you get that automatically for free, of course. You can subscribe wherever you get your podcasts: Apple podcast, Spotify. Don't forget the Pushpay Summit. If you haven't registered yet, what are you waiting for? Go to [pushpay.com/summit](http://pushpay.com/summit), and you can get a discount if you use the coupon code CAREYN at registration, you'll bring the cost down almost half, to \$89 per person. You're going to learn from some of the best, from Patrick Lencioni, Cheryl Bachelder, former CEO of Popeye's. She's also been a podcast guest. Nona Jones, and I'm really looking forward to giving some keynotes there, as well.

[Carey Nieuwhof](#):

Anyway, join us at the Pushpay Summit. [pushpay.com/summit](http://pushpay.com/summit). Use coupon code: CAREYN. We will talk to you next week. Thank you so much for sharing this. Thank you so much for all the encouraging interaction that I see on the socials. So whether you're on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, share this. You can even email it to people that you care about. We will see you next time. In the meantime, I hope our time together today has helped you lead like never before.

[Announcer](#):

You've been listening to the Carey Nieuwhof Leadership podcast. Join us next time for more insights on leadership, change, and personal growth to help you lead like never before.