**Classical Liberal Christians in a Polarized Age**

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**Thesis**: American culture has become mistrustful and polarized. This creates a special vocation for classical liberals, for Christians, and *especially* classical liberal Christians, to be peacemakers.

1. Trust
	1. Particularized
	2. Institutional
	3. Social/Generalized
2. Polarization
	1. Mass vs. Elite
	2. Ideological vs. Emotional
	3. Changing vs. Sorting
3. Trust and Polarization
	1. Elite ideological polarization, mass affective polarization, large-scale sorting.
	2. Falling social and institutional trust.
	3. Media culture.
	4. A potential doom loop.
4. Political Thinking within a War-Like Politics
	1. Most communication is strategic and insincere (propaganda).
	2. Out-Group media sources can’t be trusted.
	3. In-Group media sources can’t be fully trusted (your leaders will lie to you).
	4. Our own tribal biases are ginned up. We coalesce around false clusters of beliefs.
5. Solution 1: Classical Liberal Peacemaking
	1. A central concern of classical liberalism is cooperation across difference.
	2. Another central concern is the reduction of violent conflict.
	3. But classical liberals have become polarized too.
	4. A gift we can give to other classical liberals is to step back and reduce conflict.
	5. At times, we must take a side.
	6. But we always look for opportunities for peace and reconciliation.
6. Solution 2: Christian Peacemaking
	1. Jesus has to come first in our emotional and intellectual commitments.
	2. The Gospel does not fit any ideological tradition. Every tradition has tried to claim Christ and all have failed.
	3. It’s a gift: we can stand on Christ, our solid rock, to depolarized, and debias.
	4. We have to take seriously Jesus’ call of non-violence.
	5. Rulers don’t get a free pass to ignore those teachings just because of Romans 13.
	6. We used to have a liturgy for soldiers, even those who fought justly.
	7. We need healing when we use violence, even if that violence is justified.
	8. We should create peace where we can, to heal wounds, to forgive and reconcile.
	9. Blessed are the peacemakers. God wants to bless this endeavor.