Twitter Thread by Aaron Corwin



Aaron Corwin
@CapnCorwin



Can confirm. I lived in C. Springs in 98-99, and sporadically for years after that, when fate brought me through.

Focus on the Family had its claws DEEP in that town, at every level, and especially in the military families stationed there.

> Focus on the Family moved to Colorado Springs in 1992, and soon, megachurch pastor Ted Haggard, who helped to radicalize the town, would come to head the National Association of Evangelicals.
>
> My family moved to the Springs in 1993. Our milieu adored the nearby Air Force Academy. https://t.co/gEFV2cc8Jd
>
> — Chrissy Stroop in the winter of our discontent (@C_Stroop) January 10, 2021

For years, including my own military service, FOTF was my yardstick for crazy, over-the-top evangelical conservatives.

Until I met a particularly memorable Air Force chaplain, who opined that he felt Rev. Dobson didn't go nearly far enough.

And I grew up in Indiana, a hotbed of Christianity-motivated murders and mutilations.

Like, parents cutting off their own kids' hands to keep them from masturbating. That kind of crazy.

But back home it was individuals going off the rails. Not massive, organized megachurches.

The Air Force Academy is a place where people enter as children, are immediately thrust into a deeply traumatic environment, their personalities assaulted and broken down from all sides, then built back up to be leaders.

Anyone going through that experiemce--ANYONE--will reach out for any emotional lifeline they can find.

And a lifeline of unconditional love and salvation sounds mighty good when the rest of your life is people screaming at you for being a worthless failure.

The community gets into people, becomes a habit. A foundation. A rock to stand on when their whole world is blood and chaos. It gives them the strength to do what they could never do alone.

But when the foundation of your personality is poisoned, you have no defense against it.

I was an Army chaplain assistant. In summer/fall of 2000 I was the ONLY U.S. chaplain assistant stationed in the Middle East.

I was flown around, loaned out to every branch, every religion, even allies from other countries. I heard confessions that still keep me awake at night.

And the common thread running through it all was a simple need for acceptance.

People. Flawed, scarred, terrified people, needed to know that somebody loved them, despite everything they'd done.

And if you're the one selling acceptance, you will have no shortage of customers.

Community is a powerful force. Maybe the most powerful in human experience.

If you can sell someone an identity, you can make them do anything.

ANYTHING.

And none of us are immune.