# Twitter Thread by Pieter Friedrich



**Pieter Friedrich**
@FriedrichPieter



## I was raised as a Christian fundamentalist and used to write - in full belief - in support of basing society on the laws of the Torah (first five books) of the Bible.

I was taught that the Confederacy (the pro-slavery rebels of the southern US) were the “right” side. I remember my paternal grandfather (who was later convicted as a child molester) praising me for articles arguing as much. I remember my family flying a Confederate flag.

I once wrote supremacist, homophobic, Islamophobic, and even anti-Semitic blogs, arguing a religious nationalist ideology that was patriarchal, discriminatory, and outright offensive.

I was 17. 18. Early 20s. Back then, I wanted to join the US military. I thought every opinion I regurgitated was Gospel. I missed the part about “whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”

I once confused hatred for love.

I was taught that women have “their place” - by my mother, no less - and given detailed rules. Skirts or dresses, never pants. No college. No working “outside the home.” Authority passes from the father to the husband. The father must give permission to marry.

I was instructed, and regurgitated, that there is only one way for the Christian. One must check every box. The “reformation” meant only those “elect” who held the “right” beliefs - including endorsing a theocracy - had any reason for hope.

I was left hopeless. I fled my family.

Then they changed. Slowly. Very painfully. Parents divorced and remarried. Staunch Republicans turned disestablishmentarians turned liberals.

Long before that, I turned agnostic.

Then I found faith again. Faith that a wretch from a wretched family might still find redemption and try to stand for something true.

Faith for a future where I don’t have to discriminate, can reject supremacy, can try to speak for the broken, can empathize with those who embrace evil while attempting to stand against it, and may speak freely and forcefully against the forces of fundamentalism.

As an outcome, I still have very little contact with my family - although they have all, from parents to 9 siblings, overtly rejected fundamentalism. And I am left with a deep and abiding sense of guilt.

Guilt for my evil words. Guilt for obeying misguided and fundamentalist parents. Guilt for the harm and offense I caused by lies I perpetuated. Guilt for not waking up sooner.

And haunted by a commission, a mission, a drive that I must love more than myself those who are nothing like me. That I must prioritize that which does not affect me.

Tormented - and redeemed - with a conviction that the only way to turn a curse into a blessing is to do whatever I can to place my life on the line alongside those who truly face persecution and death for daring to be true to the equality of all humanity.

I’m sorry.