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Get ready for a thread.

One of the privileges of therapeutic work is being welcomed into the inner life and sacred story of another human being. Yet, when you engage the story-work with someone who is diagnosably narcissistic, (in much the same way as it works with an addict) 1

you enter through armored walls of certainty protecting cherished securities built on unstable truths. Folks like this don't simply "change their minds." There is a need for a radical, inner re-orientation, a re-Storying process that is destabilizing, that provokes resistance, 2

that requires a long and painful wilderness of deconstruction and re-imagination. It took Saul three years in a desert to become Paul, to be re-Storied from fundamentalism to the Jesus-way.

This same dynamic characterizes collective narcissism. 3

When groups of people orient themselves around a particular person/ideology that meets deep needs for security, it's not surprising that they'll embrace factually in-credible things. Terrorist groups are groups of *believers.* 4

From the inside, it's unimaginable to believe anything else. And when threatened, the inner alarms sound with fury, the walls are re-armored, and the inner sense of threat is translated into a fight-response.

Groups like this will always be with us. But... 5

it's especially troubling for a follower of Jesus, like me, when the so-called alternative facts of the cause are wrapped in Christian lingo for the sake of a collectively narcissistic church-militant, conquering in the sign of a cross-draped-in-red-white-and-blue, 6

crusading against the infidels who don't share their constructed reality, conflating Cross and flag in a idolatrous amalgamation.

These kinds of groups were frightening to us when they flew planes into the Twin Towers. They ought to be just as frightening ... 7

when they ascend the Capitol steps wrapped in nationalistic garb.

In the end, these are groups that come and go throughout periods of history, who fizzle out ultimately because they've embraced a smaller story, a story unworthy to be called a Gospel (or good-news!) Story. 8

These cheap fundamentalisms can't offer the deep security, the ultimate hope, the radical belonging of the one called the way, the truth, and the life. My hope is that we'll grow weary of the church-militant with its false power and patriot peddlers... 9

...opening our hearts to a larger story of Love featuring the wide-open arms of one who doesn't demand your allegiance but invites your surrender.

Grace and peace, friends. (end)