Twitter Thread by hannah anderson

hannah anderson
@sometimesalight

Okay folks, you all have been very kind over the last few days. I promise this account hasn't been highjacked. There's a lot going on & evangelical proximity to it is maddening.

But I promised you a thread about cancel culture, socioeconomics, & vocation.

First, let me say that I believe peer pressure & shunning happens in every social group. I believe the group can rally against the individual to force them comply w/ established norms & established powers. It is feature of human community.

So I don't disbelieve that something akin to "cancel culture" exists. But living in & ministering in working class spaces, I've never understood the emotion attached to popular iteration.

Sure, we talk about political correctness & the pressure to not say things, but the cancel culture narrative always felt imported somehow. Like, it wasn't organic to the way we moved thru the world.

So it's always puzzled me. The emotion that is. The fear. The panic of the woke mob coming for your job. Why is it framed this way? None of this made sense to me until I started mixing more w/ mid-upper class conservatives, particularly Xians.

Exhibit A: Lunch w/ a woman w/ college-aged children in private university who tells me how worried she is that they'll be black-balled at school & lose opportunities & career path.

Exhibit B: Anonymous commentors on Twitter who when I challenge their anonynimity tell me that they don't use their real names & pics b/c they're afraid they'll be fired for opinions that they share online.

Exhibit C: SENATOR Josh Hawley claiming a canceled book contract equates to loss of individual liberty & infringement of rights.

And all I can think is "Have you all never lost a job in your life? Have you never experienced work insecurity? What makes you believe that your position will be there tomorrow?"

Again, my point is not about the legitmacy of leveraging work against people. My point is that only a certain type of worker expects that their job will always be there (barring cancel culture of course). Only a certain level of worker thinks a career path is a right.

B/c where I live, work instability is more norm than not. And our own family has cycled thru 2-3 periods of unemployment brought about, ironically enough, by philosophy differences w/ CHURCHES that my husband pastored. (Ain't no cancel culture like church cancel culture amirite?)

So I'm no stranger to feeling the pressure to conform, to knowing that your beliefs might put you at odds w/ your employer, to facing the loss of work & income for speaking truthfully.

But my empathy for the dilemma doesn't mean that I share the assumption that we're owed work or that our children are owed a certain career path. (I say this carefully b/c I know the devastation that our own family has experienced when career dreams are shattered.)

And this I think is a significant blindspot of the faith & work conversation: What happens when you're locked out of the C-Suite? What happens when you can't expect a certain career or that work will be there tomorrow?

A robust theology of vocation teaches us that we'll be okay. It teaches us that we work "as unto the Lord" & that "my God shall supply my every need." A robust theolgy of vocation rests not on a certain career path but on a certain God.

In this respect, I simply cannot share the panic I see among conservative Christians regarding cancel cutlure. Does it exist? Sure. Every community, every culture has ways of policing its boundaries. The Q is whether I should fear it.

I do not. B/c I know that ultimately my calling & vocation is sure w/ the Almighty. If *he* calls me to speak things that set me at odds w/ my employer or publisher, I best obey him & not them.

And this I think is another part of the dilemma: Too many of us want impunity to say & do whatever WE want, not whatever we're called to. We have become our own masters & none shall master us. But this is not the way of Christ, either.

What we do & what we say is direct by the One we're called to serve. And if HE calls you to speak truths that go against your cultural norms--whether in the church or outside--you can better believe that he'll preserve you as you obey him. BUT...

As the Apostle Peter wrote, make sure "none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters" (I Peter 4:15)

2021 version: Don't get canceled b/c you did something that deserves cancelling.

IN SUMMARY:

Work is good, but no one owes you a career path. Live peacefully w/ all men, & be willing to go against the flow when necessary. Protect your integrity & know that your God will supply your needs.

But don't be a jerk b/c if you are, that's on you.