



# The Benedict Option: A Strategy for Christians in a Post-Christian Nation

*Rod Dreher*

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**In a radical new vision for the future of Christianity, NYT bestselling author and conservative columnist Rod Dreher calls on American Christians to prepare for the coming Dark Age by embracing an ancient Christian way of life.**

The light of the Christian faith is flickering out all over the West, and only the willfully blind refuse to see it. From the outside, American churches are beset by challenges to religious liberty in a rapidly secularizing culture. From the inside, they are being hollowed out by the departure of young people and a watered-down pseudo-spirituality. Political solutions have failed, as the triumph of gay marriage and the self-destruction of the Republican Party indicate, and the future of religious freedom has never been in greater doubt. The center is not holding. The West, cut off from its Christian roots, is falling into a new Dark Age.

The bad news is that the roots of religious decline run deeper than most Americans realize. The good news is that the blueprint for a time-tested Christian response to this decline is older still. In *The Benedict Option*, Dreher calls on traditional Christians to learn from the example of St. Benedict of Nursia, a sixth-century monk who turned from the chaos and decadence of the collapsing Roman Empire, and found a new way to live out the faith in community. For five difficult centuries, Benedict's monks kept the faith alive through the Dark Ages, and prepared the way for the rebirth of civilization. What do ordinary 21st century Christians -- Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox -- have to learn from the teaching and example of this great spiritual father? That they must read the signs of the times, abandon hope for a political solution to our civilization's problems, and turn their attention to creating resilient spiritual centers that can survive the coming storm. Whatever their Christian tradition, they must draw on the secrets of Benedictine wisdom to build up the local church, create countercultural schools based on the classical tradition, rebuild family life, thicken communal bonds, and develop survival strategies for doctors, teachers, and others on the front lines of persecution.

Now is a time of testing, when believers will learn the difference between shallow optimism and Christian hope. However dark the shadow falling over the West, the light of Christianity need not flicker out. It will not be easy, but Christians who are brave enough to face the religious decline, reject trendy solutions, and return to ancient traditions will find the strength not only to survive, but to thrive joyfully in the post-Christian West. *The Benedict Option* shows believers how to build the resistance and resilience to face a hostile modern world with the confidence and fervor of the early church. Christians face a time of choosing, with the fate of Christianity in Western civilization hanging in the balance. In this powerful challenge to the complacency of contemporary Christianity, Dreher shows why those in all churches who fail to take the Benedict Option aren't going to make it.

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