

Fr. Perozich comments —

Michael Brown writes on a theme that I as a priest and confessor hear frequently. How do I hold onto my convictions in the face of so much opposition?

One thing he says illustrates how people become controlled by others:

- ***Many believers choose the safety of the camp over the pangs of their conscience, preferring to silence the inner voice rather than pay the price of following their convictions. When they do that, something inside them dies, and by trying to “save their lives” they actually “lose their lives,” at least in part. The Gospel of Jesus is never advanced through self-preservation!***

If I have read the bible, if I have prayed, if I have consulted God in my conscience and not just my personal opinions, experiences or feelings, then I have come to understand my convictions.

Brown’s example of an instrument in an orchestra is helpful, but falls short in saying just do your best without correcting another. The other is always playing too loud in my ear, so a response is necessary.

In my conscience, abortion, sexual license, cloning, embryonic stem cell research, euthanasia are always wrong. I will not vote for a politician who promotes these in order that I receive some other benefit.

Intimacy outside of marriage is wrong. I will not bless a couple, but will bless each person to restrain passions and live in chaste friendship.

Uncontrolled immigration is not scriptural. I will not support bishops or governments who promote this, fail to care for the people, and who bankrupt the country insisting that they must now spend money on new arrivals. The [Cloward Piven](#) principle of socialism and of welfare for all is moving into play as bishops and politicians bankrupt the country in the name of compassion.

Churchmen, politicians, professors, NGO’s, and others live in ivory towers with guaranteed income, security, social status, power. They are immune from the effects of their proposals.

Middle class Americans and Catholics are not immune. We suffer the consequences of their impositions.

Read the Holy Bible. Study the deposit of faith from the fathers of the church and the Catechism. Form your conscience, and then live your convictions with Jesus in your conscience and promote them in the church and in the world.

How to Hold Onto Your Convictions Without Becoming Arrogant



iStock.com/Lisa5201

•

By **MICHAEL BROWN** Published on March 10, 2024

What do you do with your controversial convictions? What do you do with those costly truths that burn in your heart, those certainties from which you cannot escape? What do you do when those convictions cause you to question what you've been taught in the past or to reexamine the structures and forms you once embraced? What do you do when those undeniable truths – at least, they appear that way to you – cause you to break from your old surroundings? What do you do when the unshakable confidence that your beliefs are right causes you to view your friends and colleagues as wrong?

And **how can you be so sure your convictions are correct?** What gives you the right to say that you have the truth and others don't? They are fellow believers in Jesus, brothers and sisters who love the Lord, too. What makes you better than them? What makes you so positive that you have more light than they do? What makes your revelation more biblical than theirs?

After all, they read the same Scriptures you read and pray to the same Heavenly Father you do. They also cry out for truth and clarity, humbling themselves in God's sight and seeking to obey His will. Who are you to differ with them? Some of them have been serving God longer than you've been alive! And if your own views have changed, what makes you so sure that your new views are right? Maybe in a few years you'll reject these very views as wrong.

These are not easy questions! **Being true to your conscience sometimes means “going outside the camp.”** That is never comfortable. On the other hand, **humility urges you to honor your elders and teachers, to submit to and align with their leadership. Yet you cannot deny your convictions. What then do you do?**

Right in the Head, Wrong in the Heart

Many believers choose the safety of the camp over the pangs of their conscience, preferring to silence the inner voice rather than pay the price of following their convictions. When they do that, something inside them dies, and by trying to “save their lives” they actually “lose their lives,” at least in part. The Gospel of Jesus is never advanced through self-preservation!

Many other believers, however, are determined to do what they feel is right regardless of the consequences or cost — but in the process, they become judgmental and proud, looking with disdain on their former friends and circles of fellowship. This is dangerous too, since a wrong attitude can be just as deadly as a wrong belief — if not even more deadly. What’s the use of being right in your head if you are wrong in your heart?

How then do you run your race without judging other runners negatively? How do you remain faithful to your convictions without denigrating the convictions of others? How do you stay true to your calling without denying the validity of other callings that seem to contradict yours? And how do you pursue the unity of Messiah’s Body — this is of great importance to the Lord! — without watering down your distinctives? How do you unite without compromising and hold fast to your convictions without becoming divisive?

You’re Part of an Orchestra

While praying about these issues almost 25 years ago, a simple analogy came to mind.

Let’s say that you play flute in an orchestra, and you look at some of the other instruments negatively — the ones that aren’t shiny and made of metal, like you. And they don’t sound anything

like the flute! How much better it would be if the whole orchestra sounded like you.

It doesn't take long to figure out how arrogant and foolish that view is. If the whole orchestra consisted of flutes, it would not be an "orchestra" at all; it would be a band of flutes.

On the other hand, feeling awkward about how you stand out from the rest of the orchestra, you try to make your flute sound like a violin or a timpani. You even try to play the flute with a bow! But now you've lost your sound entirely, which hurts everyone else.

Then you get the revelation: In order for the orchestra to succeed, you need to be the very best flutist you can be. That's your job, your assignment, your lane. That's the race you are called to run (to use Paul's terminology in 1 Corinthians 9:24 and 2 Timothy 4:7).

It's not your job to tell the others how to play. That job belongs to the conductor. Your job is to play the flute with excellence and artistry. And if all the other musicians do the same, the orchestra will do just fine. More than fine, in fact — it will play a complex piece of transcendent beauty.

You might say, "But what if I don't even believe the other instruments or players belong in the orchestra?"

Well, if your convictions are that deep and your differences that severe, you may have to separate. But in most cases, our differences are intramural, because we are part of the same family and on the same team.

So, be faithful to your convictions and calling and run your race so as to win. But rather than judging and denigrating others in the Body, encourage them to run their races with excellence too.

This is how we merge confidence with humility and conviction with honor.

Dr. Michael Brown is the host of the nationally syndicated Line of Fire radio program. He is the author of more than 40 books, including Can You be Gay and Christian?; Our Hands Are Stained With Blood; and Seize the Moment: How to Fuel the Fires of Revival. You can connect with him on Facebook, X, or YouTube.