

Candice Schutter: [00:00:00] Welcome to The Deeper Pulse and another episode in the 'cult'ure series.

Today, we're going to be picking up with Part 2 of a two-part conversation that started last week. So if you missed Episode #81, I highly encourage you to circle back and start there.

Before we dive into the content, just a heads up that as always, I'm diving deeper over on Patreon, sharing what's going on behind the scenes as I do research for main feed content. And on Friday, I dropped Episode 61 in the Deconstructing Dogma series. A solo episode, where I share some personal stories, and I also revisit some of the research I did as a part of my graduate dissertation in 2021 that focused on human agency. Sharing ways to continue to ask the big questions [00:01:00] in life and develop our own personal cosmology, instead of getting mired in wellness word salad or religious dogma. It's a work in progress and an ongoing conversation with the community of patrons there. So if you want to check it out and help support the pod, keeping this main feed ad-free. Visit patreon.com/thedeeperpulse.

Okay. Now onto today's episode.

The stories and opinions shared here are based on personal experience. And are not intended to malign any individual group or organization.

Welcome back. I hope that you took some time to listen to Episode 81 before you dropped in here today, because we're going to pick up right where we left off in my conversation with Nikki G.

Last week, Nikki was generous enough to lay the foundation for us of the history behind what is known as the NAR movement and how it's slow and steadily over the course of a [00:02:00] few decades has been laying the foundation for Christian dominion and essentially a religion-based ideological takeover of the US government.

And I know that sounds really dramatic, but again, this series that's focused on cult dynamics has been laying the foundation for conversations of this magnitude, where we are really able to look at large group identities, how they form and the psychological mechanisms that keep people entranced in certain types of thinking.

And I really want to underscore as we head into this week's episode, that one of the reasons I love having Nikki here to talk about these topics. Not only can she help us to understand the history behind this movement, she's spent time in these ideological spaces. As a former NAR activist, she was very involved in what's known as governmental intercession. And as she'll share it in this episode, the pro-life [00:03:00] movement.

And one of the things I hope that you experience, as I did, walking away from this conversation is really a deeper understanding and a sense of empathy for folks who have been radicalized, in many cases, people who are unknowingly sacrificing themselves to a movement that ultimately, in its long game, is putting the rights of those very individuals on the chopping block.

Did you know that abortion wasn't really a conservative talking point until shortly after the Civil Rights movement and desegregation when conservative lawmakers were desperate for a hot button issue that would drive voter turnout. The pro-life movement really became a smokescreen for power hungry political operatives to engage their political base to turn out in high numbers.

And as you'll hear, Nikki describe it's no accident that so much of the pro-life movement is driven by charismatic, evangelical leaders.

Do you remember back in February when, in Alabama, [00:04:00] there were some couples whose frozen IVF embryos were accidentally destroyed. And they brought a wrongful death lawsuit to the Alabama Supreme Court. And the court ruled that frozen embryos must be granted personhood under state law.

Chief Justice, Tom Parker, of the Alabama Supreme Court wrote in his ruling, that these frozen embryos quote, "cannot be wrongfully destroyed without incurring the wrath of a holy God who views the destruction of His image as an affront to Himself."

Rather than citing legal precedent, this Chief Justice in Alabama chose to use biblical language in his statement, concurring with the ruling.

All three branches of government in this country have been heavily influenced by the NAR movement and Christian nationalism. And we're seeing more and more where the vast majority of Americans don't agree with rulings that are coming through the court and the legislative branch.

And when it comes to the executive branch, just [00:05:00] a reminder from the last episode, if Trump wins the election, the Heritage Foundation has drawn up a 920 page document known as Project 2025, which will provide marching orders with plans to restructure and essentially do away with checks and balances.

I urge you to give it a Google and perhaps take time to read some of what's contained in it. Specifically unitary executive theory, which essentially hands the levers of power to the president within his first few days of office.

This is big stuff. And unfortunately, Nikki and I don't have answers for you aside from helping to educate the public and encouraging record voter turnout.

And because our nation is so divided right now, many of us know folks who may prescribe to some of these beliefs. And so toward the end of the episode, Nikki talks about how we might be able to maintain relationships with folks who are under the influence of this ideology.

Again, this is heavy stuff. So content warning. This episode [00:06:00] includes discussion around politics, abortion rights, and coercive control. But this is not trauma porn folks. This is a call to acknowledge the threat to democracy that we're currently facing. And to continue to show up in the fight to save it.

Here's part two with Nikki G.

Yeah.

I mean, they're essentially putting the church back in state. Blatantly, that's the aim.

Obviously the whole narrative has been spun, you know, the founders, vastly imperfect humans, had the ideal vision of separating the two.

And you know, it's interesting, I was just watching some footage. They were asking MAGA supporters questions about the constitution. The interviewer asked this gentleman, what's the first line of the constitution? And he said, *in God we trust*.

And it was just [00:07:00] so revealing, like the way the indoctrination's functioning, right? Even the constitution wants us to do this. To the point where if we look at like setting constitution aside, which, you know, also should always be re-examined. I mean, it was written how many, how many, you know, how many centuries ago? It's like, it's not a perfect document by any stretch of the imagination, which is why we have amendments and we should have many more if you ask me.

But the thing I want to emphasize here that feels really important because it speaks to this, is that in that document, that Project 2025. One of the things that's so critical for folks to know right out of the gate is that there is a systematic plan for essentially dismantling checks and balances in the government, the three branches of government, so that everything actually spills.

And the reason I'm bringing it up now is because this vision of this mountain, where there's this, you know, pinnacle at the top where the president sits, in their mind, [00:08:00] who is the anointed one, who's carrying out this vision of God. And again, Trump being the perfect candidate because he doesn't care as long as he has power. He'll do whatever they want him to do. He has no, I mean, in my opinion, I don't think he really gives a damn about any of the issues. He just cares about himself.

So he'll carry out all of these functions. And what makes him the most terrifying candidate is because what they're creating is basically a plan where all of the branches of government serve the executive Commander In Chief. He has the ability to call all the shots. And this is laid out in ink, really specifically how this would play out. How agencies would be reauthored. And I mean, it's terrifyingly specific in terms of how they would make this happen.

And I just want to bring it in now because I feel like I want folks to really understand what's on the line here. At this point we're kind of in survival mode as a democracy. And we need to think about it that way.

And if Trump gets into office, this is what we're looking at folks.[00:09:00]

Nikki G: Yeah.

Candice Schutter: The manifestation of what Nikki's talking about.

Nikki G: Absolutely. I think this article, if you feel comfortable putting in the show notes, by Politico. And it was, um, published, I think, uh, in February of this year. And this is the title.

Trump allies prepare to infuse Christian nationalism in his second administration, if he has one.

And you know, I think when people think Christian nationalism, a lot of times we think of just January 6th. We think of what's happening when we look in the news and people are screaming and yelling, *don't tread on me*. And that is a part of it. But it is very strategic. It is very planned out for decades. And what they want to do, guy named Russell Vought, VOUGHT. He was part of the Trump administration [00:10:00] when he was president. He the president of The Center For Renewing America. Which is a conservative group preparing for Trump to return to power.

They believe that America was founded as a Christian nation and the values should be prioritized throughout government, throughout the laws, throughout all of public life. But the country has, like I said earlier, has become less and less religious and more diverse, and they don't like that. So this Project 2025, which The Heritage Foundation, an organization that has been so popular to craft public policy for decades.

Candice Schutter: Mm hmm.

Nikki G: Reagan was the first one where you really saw the power of The Heritage Foundation. And you know, that was founded and it's backed by a lot of, you know, billionaire capitalists, to speak. And they are the ones that are looking at the [00:11:00] landscape of the seven mountains. And The Heritage Foundation, though, you may say, okay, well, Nikki, those seem like a lot of politicians. But the politicians and the lobbyists and all these people that making policy, they are connected to the NAR leaders. And the NAR leaders are feeding it to The Heritage Foundation. The Heritage Foundation, people who can write public policy, they're looking at the seven mountains and say, where is the are we gaining ground and taking dominion?

Okay, the mountain of government we've been, you know, full and steady since Trump was in office. We have to keep that momentum. We got to get Biden out of here. But we want to go after the family mountain. We want to go after the mountain of education. We want to get C critical race theory. We want to, you know, get all this stuff out here. We want to remove the language of diversity and inclusion. We don't want to give rights anymore to those who are part of the LGBTQIA+ community anymore. And we're tired of this [00:12:00] nation looking like this.

We're gonna have the power. We're going to wield the power. And you know what, we gave y'all a little breathing room before. But now the gloves are off. And like you were saying, that Project 2025, the playbook is, they want to get to the point where the House and the Senate, Congress is not involved in voting on policy that will affect America.

They want the president, and obviously more of a conservative president is their choice, to wield their power by executive orders only.

We're looking at the ending of democracy and we're not trying to scare people. But it's already been scary, you know what I mean.

Candice Schutter: But It's scary. Yeah.

Nikki G: uh, It is. It is. It is, it's very scary.

And think you have either people whose heads are in the sand, because either life is hard or

Candice Schutter: Yeah.

Nikki G: It's scary and they don't want to [00:13:00] deal with it, whatever reason. And I get that, right? But then you have some people that say, all right, I'm reading these articles. I'm seeing what's going on social media. That is never going to happen here in America. I wanna talk to you.

Because let me tell you how close. You see what happened in January 6th? Here's another article you might want to put up.

Candice Schutter: Mm hmm.

Nikki G: This was written in January 2023. I want you to see the connection and the marriage of the NAR leaders and the people that believe it and politics.

When the Capitol building was under siege on January 6th, four of the six protest permits that were issued that day were to independent Charismatic Christian groups. They had spent previously two months waging a spiritual war focused on overturning the election. They were able to get in [00:14:00] on a tour through a permit before January 6th.

Eight days prior to the attack, 15 Charismatic leaders held a meeting for more than two hours at the White House with high-level Trump officials to talk about spiritual war strategy that would join the natural to the spirit. Or in other words, that would let thy kingdom come and his will be done. And since they felt they had an open door from Trump and Pence. Pence was the quiet one. But Pence had a lot to do with gathering these people.

Candice Schutter: Uh huh.

Nikki G: As a matter of fact, he allowed when they were in office, there was some function where there was a lot of worship leaders and some of these NAR people. And I don't know how he, like who he decided, what was the criteria as to who he invited. But he invited a lot of them. And they were [00:15:00] worshipping in the White House and Pence was mainly running that meeting. But towards the end of their meeting, they got a chance to meet Donald Trump. And all of those worship leaders and pastors and apostles and prophets took a picture

with Trump the, um, his Oval Office, behind his desk. And the picture's everywhere to be seen.

And I can identify so many people in that picture. As a matter of fact two of the people I have had breakfast and dinner at their house before. And I'm just like, what are y'all doing? Do you know what's going on?

You know, and so I want people to really understand they are highly connected. They've been connected before Trump. But Trump has given them an open door. And if Trump gets back in office, we are dealing with, not baby steps to establish the things that I talked about in the belief system. They're going to knock the [00:16:00] door down completely. Because they believe in their own press. They believe that we're not going to turn this nation over to the woke agenda. We are tired of wokeness. Which makes me want to throw up because that is not even what the word initially meant, but.

Candice Schutter: Mm hmm.

Nikki G: This is what they believe.

And we're talking about Project 2025. They want to get involved with employers and health care and what is actually part of a health care package. So if you are having a baby, because they want more babies to be born.

There's a book called The Birth Dearth that was written, I don't know in the 60s or 70s about this whole mandate of more white babies needing to be born because there was a deficit. And if that did not happen, then whites would not be the majority anymore. That has been fused into the pro-life [00:17:00] movement. That has been fused in the conservative movement. And having more babies is still onto the agenda.

No, I'm not talking about Handmaid's Tale, I'm talking about what they actually are planning. And so Project 2025, if you are one that wants to have a baby or you want to adopt, you will get better healthcare for that. If you are one that needs to use your health care to get birth control, then you will get less health care.

I know that sounds like really, Nikki? I encourage y'all. It's all out there for people to see they so believe they're going to do this they don't even care who has access to it.

Candice Schutter: Yeah.

Nikki G: Go and look up Project 2025 on google. And read it if you dare, because they are very indignant about thy kingdom come thy will be done.

Candice Schutter: Yeah. It's, it's, it's shameless at this point. It really is. It's, it's right there in black and white.

[00:18:00] Let's talk about what happened with Roe. And let's go back a little bit in time and your journey. If you are, if you feel comfortable sharing today a little bit about, kind of, what was happening behind the scenes since you were there before the rug was pulled out from under so many of us. Because I think that that conversation is really revealing. It helps to understand the psychology of the folks who are pushing for this and what they're really pushing for. Which I think, it would be really interesting.

I think for listeners, I'm sure some listeners are thinking out there like, okay, so how is this, you know, you as a Black woman praying on this issue of outlawing abortion, but this under this sort of underbelly where really the, the aim is, is to create more white babies. But of course they're not saying that to you.

Like, can you speak to that? Just all of that, like the complexity of that and what [00:19:00] came to pass. And what we have to look forward to if they, you know, continue on this trajectory.

Nikki G: As I start, the first quote I'm hearing is, my life is like a box of chocolates. Because it really is. So here's some more, uh, tea on Nikki as far as all the different things I was involved in.

And I really, again, I didn't know my heart was, I just wanted to love God. And you know, I was indoctrinated with a lot of these, these, um, these ideologies that I had to partner with what was on God's heart. But I didn't realize it was these leaders that was deciding what was on God's heart. Because when police brutality was happening in our neighborhoods and people in my community were getting gunned down, these apostles and prophets, all of a sudden they couldn't see and strategize about how to pray for the ending of police brutality.

They wouldn't mention on the microphone about when Alton [00:20:00] Sterling got shot. Or, or, you know, they didn't say any of that. But it was always what they want it pushed through.

Candice Schutter: That's right.

Nikki G: And I didn't realize that when I was there as a Black woman, you know. Um, I, like I said in the beginning, I loved intercession. So, um, I'm a backtrack and tell you how I connected with being a pro-life, intercessor, activist, whatever you want to call it.

I had yet to move to Kansas City and be a part of that whole ministry. I was still in my, um, my home state. And I watched this video by this organization that, I don't even know if they're still out, they may be out now, called The Ramp. And it's filled with young adults. And it was, I think it was in Alabama. And I was watching a DVD of a conference or something that had taken place. And the young people there had put on like this, uh, [00:21:00] performance. And it just really gripped me. And I forgot the whole, like, what the whole performance was, but in essence, it was showing what woman would go through after having an abortion, when she was deliberating should she have one. And you know, how there's a tug of war spiritually in her decision making, you know. You had the dark demons trying to come at her. You had angels trying to come at her to help her to choose rightly and what.

So I'm watching all of this and I am just like taking it all in. And I'm like, oh my gosh, and I'm crying tears. It was it was very very well put. You're gonna be pro-life after.

Candice Schutter: Compelling piece of propaganda.

Nikki G: There you go.

And after they finished, then. And I will say his name, because he's a big part of the whole Roe v. Wade being overturned for people that are not in this world or never knew about this world.

Lou Engle came up [00:22:00] to preach. And Lou Engle is the founder of a movement called The Call. Um, and the call is about, um, political activism to some degree, but it's merging that NAR ideology with politics. And the call was, it was a series of events. And it was a 12 hour prayer and worship event at different locations throughout the years. And so at The Call, 12 hours you are praying and fasting.

So he mobilizes people, the young people, the old people that are pro-life, that are against um, the LGBTQ, you know, back then they didn't say that. They just said the homosexuality agenda. I even hate saying it like that now, but this is what they said. And so there was a lot of stuff, you know media and everything come come come and pray. The first one I went to was in Flushing Meadow, Queens, New York. And I went by myself. I was so compelled [00:23:00] after watching this whole video that I found out coming to do a call in New York, and I went by myself. Didn't tell anybody. I just jumped in the car because I'm like I have to be there.

And after they did that performance, he started talking about abortion. He started talking about what it's like for woman, what it's like for the baby. He started talking about the statistics in the Black community. And how supposedly, you know, Black babies are being aborted or minority babies are being aborted more than, you know, any other race. And, you know, these are your future doctors or lawyers or future presidents that are being taken away.

And so, you know, I'm already crying. And this is the first time I'm really taking hold to this message. So I started researching, started getting involved, went to The Call, stayed there. And there's fasting. And there are sometimes politicians that attend these calls that speak the microphone. There are other NAR leaders that come. You [00:24:00] have worship singers that come. But you're literally praying all day for God to overturn Roe v. Wade. And he's been leading these calls decades.

And the prayer that he has said continuously throughout these calls, and other people that are part of this, they wore a band, a red band. And it was a reminder to pray this prayer.

And the prayer was simple. It said, *Jesus, I plead your blood over my sins and the sins of my nation. God end abortion and send revival to America.*

And so at The Call, we chanted that several times. And you look at your red band. And it reminds you, hey, I should pray the prayer. It was in a lot of apostolic centers. They have been praying this prayer for decades, believing that one day, God was going to do this.

And so, you know, kind of fast [00:25:00] forwarding, I was involved with so many different things praying for the ending of abortion myself. There was an event that took place in, I think it was 2012. And this is even deeper, I think, a little bit with my personal history when I get past The Call. And it was in the state of Texas.

Candice Schutter: And what do they say about Texas, Nikki? What do they say about Texas?

Nikki G: As Texas goes, so does the nation.

Candice Schutter: There it is.

Nikki G: They say that about Texas and they say that about Florida.

And I'll explain that a little bit later, but, um.

The Esther Call was in 2012. And remember, these calls were 12 hours long, but this call was different because it was a call filled with women. No men led it. It was all women. And it was specifically on the theme of abortion.

But before the call took place on April 6th, 21 days before that, a group of women, 39 [00:26:00] women, decided that they wanted to symbolize how important the turning of Roe v. Wade was, so that the unborn could be born and have a voice. So 39 women took a walk for 21 days from the city of Houston to the city of Dallas over a 21 day span. They took breaks. But they kept moving until they got to Dallas. And they ended the walk in front of the Dallas courthouse, which is where Roe v. Wade was officially established.

Everything is metaphoric and symbolic. The dates and everything like that is very important in the NAR type movement. And so I wanted to be a part of that 39 women so bad. But I was a single mom and I knew that my responsibility is to take care of my child trumped that. I had some common sense in some areas.

So I did not go. I did not attend. But several friends of mine were part of that [00:27:00] and I connected with them. And okay, what do y'all need to pray for? Let me pray. And I connected vicariously through them that way, but I did go to the Esther Call itself. And so I was at the front of the courthouse where they ended the walk.

And before we went into the Dallas convention center on April the 6th, we stood outside of the courthouse. And The Call and Lou Engle was known for the symbol of silent intercession sometimes. And there was a red 'life' tape that we would put over our mouth. Red tape and it had the word 'life' on it. And we stood in front of the courthouse, and we silently interceded that God would overturn abortion and send revival to America the birthplace of it all.

And so, you know, all of this symbolism and timing. You couldn't convince someone that God was not in this. You see what I'm saying? So I believed this stuff [00:28:00] wholeheartedly when I was in it.

And then we went into the convention center and we started the 12-hour fast and, um, a lot of prayer, a lot of worship. I heard women on the stage talking about statistics. So it wasn't just emotionalism and music. There were real strategy going on, even within The Call. There were women on stage that talked about, we don't want to just stop at abortion. We want to go after birth control, because it is still going after the unborn. They had a whole agenda and this is back in 2012.

And so to see things come full circle and actually happen. I'm going to be honest. Even though I'm a trauma coach. Even though I've been speaking out about spiritual abuse and all this stuff, it was jarring for me.

Candice Schutter: I bet.

Nikki G: You know, at first. Because I was like, wait, what?

You know, because when I came out of a lot [00:29:00] of the spaces I was in, I had to take time to process and really rationalize. The stuff that people were saying, was that really God? Or was that really them? And for people that are in that position right now, I can't tell that for you. That's something you're going to have to do. But a lot of the stuff I realized, this is not representative of God.

But when that happened, I said, well, wait a minute now. I was, uh, first of all, I felt guilty. You know, I mean. The moral, the moral injury part of it. I felt like, oh my gosh, I took part in this happening, you know Now I will say I am not one to say hey, everybody, just go get a whole bunch of abortions and we can sing kumbaya. I'm not at that place, personally. But I believe in the power of choice and agency, you know.

And if you who are pro-life really believe that people should not do this, then you pray and ask [00:30:00] God to do, to touch their heart. Or you even, you know, talk to them yourselves and let them make that decision. You don't, you don't impose your will politically, spiritually on another person. Their will is who they are. You don't do that.

And so when I started to see this whole pro-life movement through those lenses, I said, Oh my goodness. What did I do? You know, what was I a part of?

And I'm okay with that now. And I realized I did not know. And I had you know, self compassion kind and forgive myself. But it was very jarring. Cause then I'm like, well, it actually happened.

Candice Schutter: Of course, if you're indoctrinated to believe that's God's will and then the thing happens, of course that conditioning is gonna kick in.

Nikki G: Yeah. I'm like, so were they right?

But how I rationalize it. And everybody, like I said, that is your personal process that you have to do. But for me, I [00:31:00] said, wait a minute. Now, Trump put people on the Supreme Court. Some of them had no business on the Supreme Court. There was a lot of backdoor deals being done.

I see this being taken by force politically and usurping people's will and choice. I don't see this as.

Candice Schutter: Yeah.

Nikki G: God intervening. But they see it as God intervening. And so the celebration that ensued when that happened, in the pro-life movement, I mean, I'm not connected to any any of that anymore. But I got some wind of it. And I just was like, y'all, you just took people's agency away, you know.

And then the Texas bill, the heartbeat bill. The person who crafted that bill she was not from um, Texas. She was from Ohio. And she tried to get it pushed in other states, and it wasn't able to be pushed in other states. But somehow that, [00:32:00] that fetal bill which is, you know, no one can get an abortion after six weeks. Because six weeks is when we can actually supposedly hear some type of fetal cardiac activity. And so once Texas started getting involved and in Ohio and a few other states, then it was ripe to be taken up by the Supreme Court to decide.

And you know, it is jarring where a provider who provide who, who does an abortion operation on a woman can go to jail for life. The actual woman can go to jail for life in the state of Texas. You know, if you cross state lines.

And that's the thing, there are still some states that are pro-choice, and that's great. But guess what y'all that's not their agenda. They want all, all the states.

Candice Schutter: That's a line item agenda is a national ban on abortion.

So yeah, if you're living in a state that's [00:33:00] pro-choice, it might not be that way for, for much longer if, if things continue the way they want them to.

Nikki G: Yeah. Cause people are saying like, we need to move to this state and that state. And I'm like, we might want to wait, because we don't know where this is going, you know.

Candice Schutter: Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

Nikki G: It, it is scary, you know. And like I said, I've made peace that I was a part of it because I was young. I was in my twenties. You know, my early thirties and, and, I didn't know. I was very vulnerable, wanted to make impact. And really believed that, you know, I'm doing what God wants me to do. You know, his agenda is all that's important.

But I forgot about you know, who might have been, you know, sexually assaulted and found themselves pregnant, you know. And, you know, I forgot about the stories.

You know, a lot of this stuff with NAR, they don't look at people on a human level. You're numbers. You're an army. To create an agenda [00:34:00] to get passed so the bigger group can get spiritual colonization and personal supremacy and power. You're not a person. You're not an individual. You're not Nikki. You're not Candice.

Candice Schutter: Right.

Yeah.

Nikki G: missed all of that when I was in those movements. And coming out of all of that and trying to heal and make sense of all this, I started to see people for like who they are and their humanity.

Candice Schutter: Yeah.

Nikki G: I don't hold a lot of the same beliefs that I did. I'm not going to talk about them all now. But I felt, you know, it's okay to be vulnerable in this area because these groups, you know. And I'm just talking about NAR, we've not even talked about, there's a convergence. There's a convergence of, you know, the Christian nationalism. There's convergence of, you know, the [00:35:00] Proud Boys and QAnon and the conspiracy theory groups. And they're all converging.

Candice Schutter: And the way that it's like right and left is even becoming a big blurry line at this point. Because of the way that that convergence is happening. The, the way that the right is actually pushing agendas that are pulling progressives away from the Democratic vote. And that a lot of propaganda you're seeing is actually the right pushing these progressive, extremist viewpoints.

Nikki G: Yeah.

Candice Schutter: And folks who are more progressive minded who think that they're actually kind of leaning left are actually getting pulled into these vacuums that are actually moving them towards a greater authoritarian outcome.

Nikki G: Mm hmm. Mm hmm,

Candice Schutter: And without even realizing it. I just want to say, um, before we go down that rabbit hole a little bit that, you know, I just want to express my gratitude to you, for being willing to share with vulnerability.

And I think it's so important as a part of this [00:36:00] project, this larger project of this 'cult'ure series, a big piece of it is restoring our sense of humanity. And part of that is in the healing process, really owning and seeing like where we were under the influence of certain ideologies and waking up to that. And shifting and being willing to course correct and see things differently. So I just applaud you for doing that. And I want to thank you for being willing to, to name that.

And, and this dehumanization piece is so important. And when we speak to like the issue of abortion as a great example. The thing that I really want folks to hear is like, this cultic headspace is deeply dehumanizing in the sense that Nikki just described. Like the, the stories are ignored. People become numbers. But also people become a part of this larger vision. There's a sacrificing of self, quite literally, they say it in the NAR movement to these, this larger purpose. It's very common.

And then also dehumanization happens in the other direction. And what I mean by that is like, these apostles, these prophets, this [00:37:00] idea of superhumanity where you can have a direct line to God. Like that's, that's dehumanization at the other end of the spectrum.

And what we're, we're trying to move toward, which like an ideal democracy has to make room for this vast degree of complexity. So if you take an issue of like abortion. It's not a black or white issue. It's not should people be allowed to do it all the time? Or should we make it so that people can't do it ever? There's this massive gray area where we have to listen and make room for all viewpoints.

And that I think part of the reason why this is catching on the reason I'm bringing it up is I think part of the reason why they've been able to dig in so deep with this, is because this age of social media where we're sort of turned into these one-dimensional people with opinions rather than having nuanced conversations. So everything seems very black and white all of a sudden.

Are you with Palestine? Are you with Israel? Are you, you know, are you for abortion or against abortion? Is it Biden or is it? [00:38:00] It's very black and white. When in fact the antidote to all of this is to get into that messy middle.

Nikki G: Yes, yes.

Candice Schutter: And I just love that you named that so much. I just wanted to underscore that. Because you're doing that here today. And I think it's setting just such a beautiful example. And the awkwardness of those conversations. Where you're like, hey, you know, you said to me when we were talking about this in our last conversation, you said, " I thought that was on the right side of history."

Nikki G: Yeah.

Candice Schutter: And I really felt your heart there. And at that point, you were talking about being in IHOP during Obama's second election. And the anti LGBTQ+ agenda that was going on in the church. And where you were placing yourself when it came to that issue.

Because all you knew was black and white. And you probably didn't have, I'm guessing, I don't know. But at that time, you probably didn't have a lot of relationships with people who are actually queer or experience the real issues that folks face. So you're in this silo.

Nikki G: [00:39:00] Yes.

Candice Schutter: And then, more and more online, we're in these silos.

Nikki G: Uh huh.

Candice Schutter: The situation continues to cascade and get worse, because we aren't willing to have conversations that are nuanced around like, here's what I thought. Here's what I believe. Here's how it's changing. Here are things I'm still thinking about. I haven't, like you said, I haven't quite figured out exactly where I stand with this.

Like being able to make room for those conversations feel so critical in terms of what we need right now. So I just wanted to celebrate that.

Nikki G: And the middle is not bad. I was taught that it is.

Candice Schutter: Mm.

Nikki G: Being indecisive, you're either for God or you're against him. That was drilled in our head in, in, you know, so many different ways. So I was afraid of the middle. I was afraid to sit and ponder. I was afraid to not have an answer. I was afraid of the unknown.

You know, that felt very, um, jarring to me. And, and now I love the middle. I love the gray. [00:40:00] It's okay if I don't know the answer. It's okay if I'm going to sit with this for a minute. You know, part of recovery from all this stuff that I've been talking about today, or even in the last episode for me, at least, was being able to sit with a lot of this stuff and say Nikki, what do you believe? And I didn't rush.

You know, I I often talk about my life shelf. And my life shelf, metaphorically has themes and topics that, when I first came out, I was not ready to touch. I've pulled some topics off since then. But there's still some that are there. And my body says, uh, not right now. We're gonna a little bit. And i'm like, okay. There's no rush. Because it's my life. I get, I get to choose my beliefs. I get to choose, you know, what safety feels like. I get to choose.

And this is why this is like, uh, all this agenda that they have planned because it will be removing [00:41:00] choice. And even getting down into our own houses, into our own bedrooms, is where they want to go with this. And the extremes is where a lot of these ideologies live. Can't be in the middle because then that's where you can critically think. That's when you can have healthy skepticism. That's when you can start to ponder. They don't like that. So they keep people in that, you know, black or white thinking, us versus them thinking, you know, they're the big bad wolf. They're out to get us. We have to engage in spiritual warfare. Everything is a fight, you know. It was exhausting being in those spaces. I mean, really exhausting. There's all the, you know, the devil's here, the devil's here, you

know. And you know, it was exhausting with having that mentality, but then it was exhausting in the labor itself.

You know one thing I forgot to say about the Seven Mountains. Because that whole ideology exists, now you've [00:42:00] had a lot of the apostles that have taken that and they start to strategize even further. And there's one particular ministry. I'm not going to name it. But there's a ministry that exists and it's strictly on intercession, governmental intercession. The woman apostle that runs it.

And when I say strategic, I mean, they took out the map of America. They looked at all of the states. Okay, who do we have in Maine as a representative that believes this ideology? Let's call her. She's going to be the front person for Maine. Who do we have in California? Who do we have in Florida? Let's call her. Okay, you will be interceding in the mountain of government in the state of California. You will be interceding in the mountain of family in the state of New York. We've got to get into the court systems. We have to change some laws. Who's going to be interceding in the finance and you know, uh, Chicago? And so they have so much strategy. Besides just coming to church, singing [00:43:00] songs and praying. They have strategy.

And they have been doing this for years. The other thing is with Lou Engle and the call, he had those prayer events, but that wasn't it. He believed in governmental intercession. So he raised up, I don't even know if it's functioning now, it probably is. But it was something called the Justice House of Prayer. And the first chapter of that established in Washington, D. C. So several young people moved wherever they were. I am called to the government mountain. I'm going. And they would stand out in front of the Capitol. They would stand out wherever they could legally. And they would have the tape over their mouth, the life tape, and they would be out there for hours praying. And after a while, they would connect with different politicians, connect with different lobbyists.

Lance Wallnau doesn't even consider. On his website, if you check it out, he doesn't call himself an [00:44:00] apostle anymore. He calls himself a strategist. Global strategist for Christian dominionism. You know, and this version, I would equate this version of Christianity, what has been crafted under this type of, of ideology, I will say this as Nikki G.

I believe it is very violent. It is not the same violence that we witness in the Middle East or even what's going on in the Gaza Strip and everything that's going on with Israel. We see, you know, the ideologies and the belief systems with that, and we witness physical violence. This is different. This is different.

But I equate this as religious violence. This extremism, it is not safe. It is not healthy. And even if you consider yourself or identify as a Christian and you say, Nikki, I don't believe any of that. I've never heard of this a day in my life. That's great, but just understand, [00:45:00] this exists. And it's been existing and it is getting its claws deeper and deeper into our government.

So much so, so much so that politics is not even the agenda anymore. Politics is the face of this movement. They're using politics as an arm and legs to get this movement to walk out amongst us. But what their agenda is, eventually there will be no need for politics. It is

Christian Dominionism, Christian Supremacy, Christian Nationalism will replace politics. Because when Trump was in office, he already shook the foundation of the three branches.

So even when he's out and Biden is in, we can see from the Supreme Court and what they ruled on, the checks and balances are gone. The balances of the three house have [00:46:00] eroded. It is still there. It's not fully gone, but it's hanging on by a thread or a fruit of the loom, as they used to say. But it's hanging.

And now that, it's like that, if he were to get an office. And people are like, there's no way that could be abolished. There's no.

Again, they want rulership by executive order only. And at the end of the day, politics, the stability of it, good, bad or indifferent will start to dissipate and democracy as we know it will start to dissipate. And now we are moving into the establishment of authoritarianism, of fascism, of all this stuff.

And again, people been saying it, and I know we like, this can never happen. Well, nobody thought Donald Trump could be president.

Candice Schutter: That's right.

Nikki G: And nobody thought January 6th could happen.

Candice Schutter: That's right. And how many democracies have fallen around the world where the folks who live there thought the same thing? We're not, American exceptionalism is one of [00:47:00] our biggest hurdles. This idea that somehow it can't happen to us.

Nikki G: Right, right.

I mean, this is so important. And you know, people may say, okay, Nikki. All right. I've listened to you know, you and Candice. What am I supposed to do?

I don't have no answers for you. I don't. I wish I did. I don't. The only thing I really say is at least be informed beyond just QAnon, January 6th, what comes on Fox News, CNN, maybe social media. At least start with Project 2025 and then work your way backwards. I provided enough information that you can understand a little bit of what's been going on on the, the Christian extremism end. If you want to go deeper in that, we'll provide some books or some articles that you can go in.

I didn't name a lot of apostolic centers really at [00:48:00] all. And people like to be very happy in the, the legalities when you start mentioning their name. So I didn't do that. But you know, there are several, if you want to reach out to me personally, I can tell you, but.

Candice Schutter: Yeah.

Nikki G: Cause someone may say, I want to know.

Candice Schutter: If you're in an environment where you have questions, you know, we can link to, to how to get in touch with Nikki. And maybe she can.

I mean, hopefully what you've provided, if the red flags are waving, pay attention. If, if Nikki and I have learned anything in our lives,

Nikki G: Mmhmm.

Candice Schutter: Pay attention to those red flags.

Nikki G: I know that's right. Don't push 'em down anymore.

But I believe education is power. And the momentum right now is theirs. Biden is in office, but it was there's before him. It was theirs when he's been in office, and I don't know what the future holds.

So it's going to take more than Nikki knowing a little bit about it, Candice knowing a little bit about it. As scary as this stuff is, we're going to have to at least look at it and do what we can in our [00:49:00] own circle of influence. You know, in our communities, to at least educate people.

Especially because this is election year. And I know a lot of people are so jaded with the whole political system. And they're jaded with all of this stuff. And they're like, I don't care anymore. I don't like this president. Maybe he's okay to come back I don't know, you know. Or people like, I'm not voting. And I'm not here to be get out the vote, you know, go vote. I'm not even into politics like that.

But I see where this is going. And I've been in these circles and I've lived this stuff, and it is not pretty. I wasn't conscious of it when I was in it. But I understand the magnitude where what they want to achieve is far worse than Handmaid's Tale.

Candice Schutter: Yeah. And what's on the ballot is bigger than it's ever been. It's, it's a whole different animal. [00:50:00]

Nikki G: They used to talk constitution a lot when I was in those spaces. Constitution, this, the founders, you know, all this stuff. Now they are talking the agenda. They may not admit it to themselves, but many of them, this Project 2025, you know, getting woke-ism off the country's, uh, you know, agenda, over overturning Roe v. Wade, dealing with the LGBTQ, dealing with birth control. This trumps the constitution for them. This trumps the 10 commandments for them. It is no longer.

And you know how like when you're on, on the beach. Your feet is in the sand and you're just looking out. And you look back and you're like, how did I get swept this far in? I didn't even realize I was this far into the water. That is what's happening where many of them might've started out thinking, oh, I think this is [00:51:00] what God wants for this country so I'm going to support it. I'm going to pray for it. I'm going to vote that way.

But now I don't think a lot of them realize that their lust for power and control is so insatiable at this point. That they are now far away from the shoreline of, you know, at least allowing people to vote and have their own choice and will. They are now at control and dominionism by any means necessary, because they want the power.

They have traded in the constitution, which they stood by for power. You know, so that's why I go back to say, Trump and a lot of them, not much of a difference if you think about it. You know, it's about what they want. I don't even think a lot of them realize most of the stuff they thought was what God wanted was really what they wanted.

And this is what Martin Luther and the Martin Luther Protestant [00:52:00] Reformation was about, even with the Catholic Church. Hey, hold up. You're not going to run the show. You're not God. We don't have to. And they turned around and did the same thing, whether they realized it or not.

So like the emperor with, with no clothes on that book. He's walking around. I don't think they realize they don't have clothes on. We now see what's been underneath the cloak, which is, I'm going to control every form of government. I want to turn America like other countries. No democracy, and you know, it's, It's scary.

And I hate to make it be so blunt and raw. But we don't have time for pontificating and, you know, dressing it up. It is really what I'm saying, you know.

Candice Schutter: And for the folks who are listening, who maybe have friends, loved ones, family members who are in support of this agenda. Who maybe, I think in many [00:53:00] cases, don't even fully understand what they're supporting.

You know, I mean, it's one thing to be one of those power players who is the emperor, who's not wearing any clothes, who may or may not know that that's the case. It's another thing to be, um, submitting yourself to those folks.

And what would you suggest as somebody who's been in that head space, indoctrinated in that way to people who have friends and loved ones who are planning to vote for all of this? What would be your advice to them in terms of, of how to navigate having a conversation? Is a conversation possible?

Like what are your thoughts, given what you know, personally having been there, but also what you know as a, a, counselor in terms of people who are under the influence of spiritual and religious abuse.

Like what do you, what would you say to that?

Nikki G: Well, I mean, it's very similar to, like, having a loved one in a high-demand group or a cult. You know, um, a lot of what I've been describing thus far [00:54:00] is very cultish. You know, we have so many different markers to show that this is cultish. And we had a cult leader as a president before Biden. I mean, call it what it is, but he was a cult leader and still is and wants to come back.

And so, just like I would share with someone who's loved one is in a cult. You're not going to be able to give them facts to make them all of a sudden have an epiphany and realize, whoa, what have I? It doesn't happen that way. It doesn't happen that way by arguing with them and, you know, having political debates. Um, this is probably something that people like, that's it?

You Gotta love them. You love them. To the point where it is not hindering you, where you have to back up. And there will be times that you have to do that. But engaging in those type of conversations, a lot of them just as [00:55:00] myself when I was in those spaces, my belief system was so tied into that. I don't care who loved me, if they started to talk about these things to me, I would, you know, but the Lord said this and God said this and blah, blah, blah, blah. And you know. But inwardly, I'm like, I can't trust that person. I need to remove myself from that person.

But the few people that I did hang out with, even though we had different belief systems, were the ones that could just love me even as zealous as I was. You know. Um, the ones that would remind me of things that we used to do together, you know. That was more natural and, you know, fun. Remember that time when we? I'm like, Oh yeah. You know, the ones that would just call, how you doing? Do you need anything? The ones who were letting me know, come hell or high water, whatever your beliefs are, I'm still connected to you. I still love you. I'm not going anywhere.

You know, now, that may have, you know, a [00:56:00] spectrum. Because some of these, uh, loved ones were involved in January 6th and the events with that. Some of it, it is a spectrum. But if you have one, that's just like, they're really dogmatic with their beliefs. They really believe this wholeheartedly. Just come to the conclusion that you don't have the smelling salt that's going to wake them up. You are loving them through this.

It's almost like, and I hate to use this, these words. But it's like you're sowing a seed of love so that when it gets to the point where, at some point in time, the light bulb may come on or they get a whiff of reality. They know they can go to you and say, listen, I've been thinking about some of my belief systems and you never let go of me throughout all of this. So many people have walked away. I remember. You will be the one that they can go to perhaps.

And it's [00:57:00] hard. I'm not going to lie. It's hard to be in that position. And sometimes for your own mental health, you do have to step back. And you can only engage periodically and that's okay. But creating that relationship where they know that you'll be there. You are gonna love them despite of their beliefs. And it takes some strength to do that.

But it's very similar to someone who's in a domestic violence relationship right now., And you love them. You wanna come on out, come on out. But if you do that, will just possibly turn things even crazier. So

Candice Schutter: Yeah.

Nikki G: loving them through it to me sometimes is one of the best antidotes. Um, because they're going to have to unfortunately have their own experience with their belief system and reality, just like I did. And when I started to sift through my belief systems and [00:58:00] connect with people who knew me before and during and after, you know. It was, I let them

speak freely to me. And one of them was like, you know, Nikki, I love you, but you were so gung ho on end times. Like I couldn't even have a conversation with you without you, you know, judging me and talking to me about all this stuff. And I just like cried. And I said, I so sorry. I, you know, and he forgave me.

But he, he was not sure he could come around me. I connected with his sister and his sister said, no, she's, she's, she's fine. He was like, I don't know. I don't know if she's going to judge me, you know?

And so, um, when I was ready to see, I was able to see. But you never know. Some people, once they're indoctrinated, they get stuck in it. And you don't know.

And I know that's a fear for many loved ones. Like I don't want that to be my child, my uncle, my husband, you know, my sister. But love them enough to know [00:59:00] that you can't control that. They, they're already being controlled. Don't add to that, you

Candice Schutter: Right. I think that's beautifully summarized. Because that was my thinking was as somebody who's been in high-control relationships or environments, that moment when, um, you know, when Janja Lalich talks about the shelf. Like the shelf, the doubts keep piling up, and there's a moment when it breaks. And if you're, if you're somebody that's top of mind, when that shelf is starting to collapse. Because ultimately in a high-control environment, there are definitely things happening that don't feel good that lead to questioning and doubt.

And if you're the person who's not adding to the cognitive dissonance by arguing the other side till you're blue in the face. But you're just creating a landing place.

And and again, we're both emphasizing, assuming that's a safe thing for you to do. Like I can understand if your uncle let's say is completely [01:00:00] homophobic and he's just you know incredibly disrespectful in your presence. Obviously, you don't need to stick around and love him. Like what's a safe distance that you can love that person from? Is a question we all have to answer for ourselves.

So this isn't advice, like for you to go embrace everybody who's toxic in your life.

Nikki G: Mm

Candice Schutter: this sense of when there is a capacity there and a possibility to offer that love and forgiveness. And if you're a person that comes to mind, when that person is wavering, it's very possible that you could be somebody who kind of helps them across that threshold.

So I think that's really beautiful advice. Yeah. Cuz it's difficult.

Nikki G: And it, it is difficult. But it can also encourage us to love in a creative way. Love in a different way. Cause now it's not about how I love you and what makes me feel comfortable. And this is how I give love. It's how can they, how are they receiving love now

in this season? It may look different because [01:01:00] the ideology and the indoctrination has take root and center in their life.

So that example with the uncle that's, you know, bashing the LGBT community. You know, and you can't get that close. Maybe sending them a card once a month. I love you. Thinking. You find creative ways to love them differently. And it may be an inconvenience for us. But your mindset is I'm gonna attempt to be here as they're going through this difficult time. And in hopes that maybe they will come, when they come to, that they'll see like, you know, I love them.

But it is hard. And that's why I encourage people to get support when you're going through that from others who are also have loved ones in in those type of spaces. So yeah.

Candice Schutter: Yeah for sure.

Nikki G: But I didn't talk about how jarring this is to have been in these spaces and come out of these spaces. It's my life now where I'm out of the cult, but you're trying to [01:02:00] turn the whole damn country into a cult. And it's, I feel like I'm still being sucked into a cult. And that is some form of abuse.

So for me, this is serious to me. Because I made the choice to leave these places. And now, against my will, you are trying to make these places be everywhere I'm at. I don't know if I'm articulating it the best way. But you know what I mean?

Candice Schutter: Absolutely. The layers of trauma, whenever you're exiting any, any high-demand environment. But then to have it.

I can't, I can't imagine. I think I said this to you last time when we talked. I'm glad this came up. I can't imagine some of the hyper spiritualized dogma that was, sort of, lorded over me, that I've been able to exit from and separate myself from and find safe spaces where that's not operating and this, that, and the other. If that became the rule of the land.

So I just, my heart goes out to you and anyone who's left these communities behind. Not only the confusion of seeing it all play out and how that must wreak havoc on your [01:03:00] psychology. That like just re-traumatizes you. But also, what you just said, like, is the whole country going to turn into this environment that I just stepped away from very consciously?

Wow. That's huge, Nikki.

Nikki G: Because it's almost like a feeling, though it's not reality, but it's almost like a feeling that it's following you.

Candice Schutter: Yeah.

Nikki G: I left it, but it's still following me.

But then I come back to my being and myself and say, okay, at least safety is in here. Choice is in here, you know.

I choose not to engage in heavy listening to the news and everything, you know. I keep up with stuff, but I don't immerse myself into it. Because I need to create sacred space for me to live and to heal from being a part of all these spaces and the abuses that I've been through.

However, this is a time where I have to learn a little bit, [01:04:00] come away, learn a little bit and come away. And there may be some people out there and you say, you know, Nikki, I've been in it. I can't even turn on the news. It's terrifying. I get it. I understand. Like it, it, it is hard to deal with.

You know how they say focus on your internal locus of control, what you do have control of, you know. I specifically can't stop the progression of Project 2025. That is on a macro level, and I personally can't do anything about it.

But, you know, I can vote. I can educate people about this. I can be kind to myself and be gentle to myself and make sure I take time to connect with nature and laugh and, you know, play and enjoy myself. And I don't say that as a small thing. It is not a small thing. There has to be balance.

Because in a lot of these spaces, it is extremism. It is black and white. There is no gray. The gray is okay. Maybe I should put that on a t-shirt. The [01:05:00] gray is okay. You know, is okay to be there, you know. And just allowing myself to heal. Because what I can't change, I can be informed about. But I'm not going to be consumed with it.

Candice Schutter: Yes, yeah.

Nikki G: And I think that's, that, that's a key.

But speaking to those who have been sitting with this in their bodies. I see on the news. I see in the land what's progressing. And I just came out of it.

Where is safety now?

Candice Schutter: Yeah. Mm hmm. Well said.

Nikki G: That's why I said start here.

Candice Schutter: That's all we got.

Nikki G: As I am talking to you, even about these horrific things, I am safe. I am safe within my body. I am grounded where my feet are on the ground. I am safe in the room that I'm in. I'm safe in the house I'm in. I'm safe on the block that I'm in, you know.

You start right where you know you're [01:06:00] safe. And if you have to stay there for a while for your nervous system to be okay and to regulate, that's okay.

You know, I, it's weird because I'm encouraging people to be informed. But don't consume it where it consumes you.

Candice Schutter: Yeah, it's both-and.

Nikki G: So, you know, yeah, know when you're supposed to go in and learn and know when you need to pull out. Because this scary. It's heavy. And, you we don't want people getting physically taken out in order to be informed of these things.

Candice Schutter: That's right. That's right. Yeah.

And I'll add just on a closing note that we can also find safety with each other. And having, having, these conversations and also changing the subject, you know. We talk about other things, Nikki and I. This isn't the only thing, Mm right?

So it's like, by having community where we're not sticking our heads in the sand and we're engaging about these things and doing what we can. And also, where we're able to turn our attention toward other things and [01:07:00] other means of connecting and finding a sense of safety just in being able to be in relationship with others who see us and love us and appreciate us.

And I feel all of those things for you, Nikki. I'm just so grateful that you came into my life and that you, have added so much to, uh. Yeah, that you, you've just added so much to the series. And I just love talking with you. And if you want to come back and explore anything else, the door's always open.

And thank you for being so generous with your knowledge and your personal story, for being so vulnerable and so brave. I just appreciate you so much.

Nikki G: Thank you. And thank you for the listeners for listening to all this. It's important. And, you know, share it with those who are not really knowledgeable about what I discuss. Not because it's about me or Candice, but this is about, you know, the fate of our nation.

And it's very interesting because my whole thing before was like, I love to pray. I love to pray for the nation. I love to get involved. And, you know, I'm still getting involved, but in a whole [01:08:00] different way. One where I see people on a human level, where I connect with people on a human level. And I don't look at them as a mobilizing army ready to and take dominion in the land. That language is far removed from me. Um, but this is how I make a difference.

And so hopefully this will help someone.

Candice Schutter: I know it will. Thank you.

A huge, thank you to Nikki for showing up with us here today and to all of you out there for tuning in. After listening in on this conversation, you might be thinking, well, what can I do?

As Nikki and I said, we don't have the missing piece of this puzzle as to what's going to turn the tide. But I just want to say that sharing information with others is key. Especially in this age of social media, you know, information that educates and informs.

It doesn't have to be this podcast, but I encourage you to do your research. [01:09:00] Look into Project 2025. Come to your own conclusions. And be willing to have difficult conversations.

And you know, in all transparency, I notice when I cover these hot-button topics that the number of episode downloads tends to go up while engagement on social media goes way down. And I totally get it. Because emotions are so high, you may be reluctant to share links to articles and to engage in conversations and debates on these topics. And I totally get that.

But even just to click or follow in support of somebody whose insights you're benefiting from. Or perhaps you'd rather share a link with somebody to a video or a podcast episode, and then plan a time to sit and talk it out. And specifically look at ways that you can make a difference around all of this in your own local community.

Of course, turning out to vote is important, but also consider connecting with community organizers in your area, adding your voice to the [01:10:00] conversation. It may feel like just a drop in the bucket. But if everyone does their part, we can make a real difference.

And having said that, as Nikki underscored, when it's all too much, take care of yourself and circle back later.

Next week, I'll be off the main feed, but content will still be rolling out over on Patreon. And I'll see you in a couple of weeks with another amazing conversation that I can't wait to share with you.

Until then. Be well, and bye for now.