Right Thinking for a Culture in Chaos

Defining Terms

Critical race theory (CRT) - the view that the law and legal institutions are inherently racist and that race itself, instead of being biologically grounded and natural, is a socially constructed concept that is used by white people to further their economic and political interests at the expense of people of colour. https://www.britannica.com/topic/critical-race-theory

Intersectionality - the complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, and classism) combine, overlap, or intersect especially in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups”
http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/intersectionality

Racism - the belief that humans may be divided into separate and exclusive biological entities called “races”; that there is a causal link between inherited physical traits and traits of personality, intellect, morality, and other cultural and behavioral features; and that some races are innately superior to others. https://www.britannica.com/topic/racism

Bigotry (racial) - regarding or treating the members of a group (such as a racial or ethnic group) with hatred and intolerance.

Socialism - any of various economic and political theories advocating collective or governmental ownership and administration of the means of production and distribution of goods.
https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/socialism

Marxism - a theory and practice of socialism including the labor theory of value, dialectical materialism, the class struggle, and dictatorship of the proletariat until the establishment of a classless society. http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/marxism

Why is understanding these terms important from an apologetic point of view?

Part 1 - Cultures Fundamental Problem

Depravity’s Dead End

Passages illustrating God’s behavior toward chronic wickedness:

Judges 16:19-21 reads:

19 She (Delilah) made him (Samson) sleep on her knees. And she called a man and had him shave off the seven locks of his head. Then she began to torment him, and his strength left him. 20 And she said, “The Philistines are upon you, Samson!” And he awoke from his sleep and said, “I will go out as at other times and shake myself free.” But he did not know that the LORD had left him.
And the Philistines seized him and gouged out his eyes and brought him down to Gaza and bound him with bronze shackles. And he ground at the mill in the prison.

Of individuals Proverbs 1:24-31 reads:

24 Because I have called and you refused to listen,
    have stretched out my hand and no one has heeded,
25 because you have ignored all my counsel
    and would have none of my reproof,
26 I also will laugh at your calamity;
    I will mock when terror strikes you,
27 when terror strikes you like a storm
    and your calamity comes like a whirlwind,
    when distress and anguish come upon you.
28 Then they will call upon me, but I will not answer;
    they will seek me diligently but will not find me.
29 Because they hated knowledge
    and did not choose the fear of the LORD,
30 would have none of my counsel
    and despised all my reproof,
31 therefore they shall eat the fruit of their way,
    and have their fill of their own devices.

Of a nation, specifically its spiritual leaders Hosea 4:1-6 reads:

Hear the word of the LORD, O children of Israel,
for the LORD has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land.
There is no faithfulness or steadfast love,
and no knowledge of God in the land;
2 there is swearing, lying, murder, stealing, and committing adultery;
    they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed.
3 Therefore the land mourns,
    and all who dwell in it languish,
and also the beasts of the field
    and the birds of the heavens,
    and even the fish of the sea are taken away.

4 Yet let no one contend,
    and let none accuse,
    for with you is my contention, O priest.
5 You shall stumble by day;
    the prophet also shall stumble with you by night;
    and I will destroy your mother.
6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge;
    because you have rejected knowledge,
    I reject you from being a priest to me.
And since you have forgotten the law of your God,  
I also will forget your children.

Speaking to the Chief priest Jesus said in Matthew 21:43:

43 Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits.

Matthew 15:14:

14 Let them alone; they are blind guides. And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit.”

What happens when God takes His presence from a person or a people?

When God Abandons a Culture

Romans 1:18-32:

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. 19 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world (Lit. clearly perceived from the creation of the world.), in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. 21 For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

24 Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

26 For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; 27 and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.

28 And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. 29 They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. 32 Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.
Five Categories of Divine Wrath

1. Eternal Wrath
   • God punishment of the wicked dead in hell.
2. Eschatological Wrath
   • Poured out on the wicked at the end of the age, i.e., the tribulation.
3. Calamitous Wrath
   • God unleashing His fury at different times and places in history, e.g., the Noahic flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, Pompeii.
4. Consequential Wrath
   • When people suffer the consequences for their sinful behavior, e.g., depression, anxiety, withdrawal symptoms from addictions, sexually transmitted diseases, etc.
5. Wrath of Abandonment
   • When God lets go of a society and allows it to destroy itself.

The Character of a Collapsing Culture

• “God Gave them over” (paradidomai), is used three times in Rom. 1:24-28. This is where God allows a people to implode by removing His restraining grace.
• Each time this phrase is used it marks three levels of the downward spiral:
  1. Tolerance for sexual immorality (v. 24).
  2. The celebration of homosexual sin (v. 26).
  3. The complete loss of moral and mental sense (v. 26).

Sexual Promiscuity
Romans 1:24 reads:

24 Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, 25 because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

• The sexual revolution of the 1960s opened “Pandoras Box” as the wickedness lying dormant in society and restrained by a cultural Christianity was tolerated and even celebrated.

20 And he (Jesus)said, “What comes out of a person is what defiles him. 21 For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, 22 coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. (Mark 7:20-22)

Homosexual Perversion
Romans 1:26-27 reads:

26 For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; 27 and the men likewise gave up natural rela-
tions with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.

- Celebrating homosexuality in the name of pride and pressuring others to do the same is evidence of God giving a nation up.

Skewed Perspectives

Romans 1:28 reads:

28 And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done.

- Reasoning faculties fail, e.g., identifying as someone of the opposite sex, an animal, etc.

Wickedness that characterizes a culture without God:

29 They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. 32 Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.

How does the ungodly typically respond to Christians who advocate Biblical standards to fight against things light pornography, fornication, adultery, homosexuality, abortion, infanticide, etc.?

The Reason for Ruin

Why are we where we are now?
Again, verses 18-23.

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. 19 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world (Lit. clearly perceived from the creation of the world.), in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. 21 For although they knew (acquainted with) God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.
Suppressing Truth – Lit. to hold down.

- In suppressing the truth, they reject all that God reveals about Himself.
- Vss. 19-20 speak of natural revelation, outside of God’s written word which is what the ungodly have and which, because of their active unbelief, is enough to damn them.

What are some obvious ways our culture denies the truth of God’s created order?

Cultivating Folly

- Vss. 21-22 illustrate the result of turning from worshipping God to idols of the heart. This is what suppressing the truth looks like.

Society’s Only Hope

The evidence of God’s abandonment:
- They claim intelligence but cannot define truth, e.g. Supreme Court nominee Ketanji Jackson Brown when asked to define a woman replied, “I’m not a biologist.”
- Our society has rejected God and He has abandoned us. Judges 21:25 could be said of us:
  25 In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

Psalm 81:11-16 points the way for us:

“They did not listen to My voice.  
And Israel did not obey Me.  
So I gave them over to the stubbornness of their heart,  
To walk by their own plans.  
Oh that My people would listen to Me,  
That Israel would walk in My ways!  
I would quickly subdue their enemies  
And turn My hand against their adversaries.  
Those who hate the Lord would pretend to obey Him,  
And their time of punishment would be forever.  
But I would feed you with the finest of the wheat,  
And with honey from the rock I would satisfy you.”

- If we were to repent, God would graciously respond as he did in Nineveh (Jonah 3:6-10).
- We are not Israel but God’s character is the same.