

POSTMODERN CULTURAL MARXISM COMES TO CHURCH:
A CRITIQUE OF THE SOCIAL JUSTICE MOVEMENT AND ITS COMPONENTS

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Texts: Psalm 94:15; Romans 12:1-2; Ephesians 4:11-16; 5:11; Colossians 2:8; 2 Timothy 4:1-5; Jude 3.

Objective: The purpose of this presentation is to familiarize the reader and/or listener with key components of the Social Justice Movement, namely Marxism, Critical Theory, Critical Race Theory, Feminism, the Homosexual Rights Movement, a.k.a. LGBTQIA2+, Liberation Criticism/Theology, and Sociological Criticism in an effort to understand their interrelatedness and more easily recognize them, so as to protect against their further encroachment into Christianity, especially our churches, Baptist Associations, State Conventions, and SBC entities. The truth is, they are already present and remain largely uncontested, and the pressure to accept them and the ideologies they represent is increasing rapidly. We can no longer afford to be silent.

Introduction: Social Justice alleges to be a concept which promotes fair and just relations between individuals and society, particularly as measured by the distribution of wealth, opportunities for personal activity, and social privileges. The rigorous enforcement of these so called fair and just relations is the objective of the Social Justice Movement.

A Social Justice Warrior [SJW] is anyone who champions the modern Social Justice ideologies, especially through various media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, etc.). Now, these individuals are also finding their way into our churches as Pastors, staff, Sunday School teachers, and lay leaders. Further, they are also finding homes on the faculties of our Southern Baptist seminaries, and likely some of our universities, as well as on the staff of Southern Baptist boards and agencies, and even on State Convention payrolls too.

“Woke” has become a common term closely related to the Social Justice Movement. Originally, it was a political term of African-American origin. “Woke” refers to a perceived awareness of issues concerning social justice and racial justice. It is derived from the African-American Vernacular English expression “stay woke,” whose grammatical aspect refers to a continuing awareness of these issues, namely, *being alert to social injustice*.

But to a hammer, almost everything looks like a nail. So it often is with Wokeism. While racial reconciliation and justice are noble goals pursued by some often sincere people, the Social Justice Movement and its concomitants are not the way to get there.

To call this movement and its components "Postmodern" is to classify them as inclined somewhat against ordinary logic, for Postmodernism can be defined as an intellectual stance or mode of discourse defined by an attitude of *skepticism* toward what it considers as the grand narratives and ideologies of *modernism*. By *modernism*, I mean the accepted cultural norms which prevailed in America during the 19th and early part of the 20th centuries. Up until this time, America was deeply rooted in the Bible for matters of faith, morals, and ethics, and held high respect for the Pilgrims, the early colonists, the Founding Fathers, the U.S. Constitution, and its Amendments. But this was about to change.

With Charles Darwin's publication of *The Origin of the Species* in 1859, Darwinian Evolution began to erode confidence in God's word for some in higher education. The Civil War (1861-1865) soon followed which exposed the "sectionalism"¹ already present in America and the vast divide between religious practice and culture in the North and religious practice and culture in South. While Baptists in the North shared the theology and doctrines of Baptists in the South, the practice of slavery in the South caused a deep divide between those in the North and those in the South. When Baptists in the North refused to commission slave-owning Baptists in the South as foreign missionaries, Baptists in the South split off from the Northerners and formed the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845.

World War I (1914-1918) rallied Americans, despite their cultural and educational differences. But those differences were only temporarily set aside for a common cause against a mutual enemy which presented a clear and present danger. The differences did not go away.

The Scopes Monkey Trial (1925) helped launch the national debate regarding mankind's origins and God's ultimate authority as Creator, Lawgiver, and Sustainer. Modernism was gaining significant steam as long-standing biblical theology was under attack. But then along came another war.

¹Sectionalism can be defined as the presence of significant cultural differences indigenous to a particular region of the country and extremely strong loyalty to them and to the "section," even above the nation as a whole, i.e., slavery in the South.

World War II (1939-1945) rallied Americans again, despite their cultural, educational, and theological differences. The years following the victory over the Nazis and the Japanese Imperial Forces ushered in a time of flourishing in America. But brewing theological, cultural, and educational differences were still quite present, as was evidenced by the growing racial tensions in the United States displayed in the horrors committed by the Ku Klux Klan against blacks located mostly in the South. One would have thought that the abominable racism at work in Nazi Germany which helped fuel WWII would have been seen for the evil that it was and not allowed to grow any longer in America (see [Ku Klux Klan Brochure Misrepresents God: Racism Unsupported by the Bible](#)). But it did, and the Civil Rights Movement, with Martin Luther King, Jr., at the helm, was born. Modernism had been declining since about 1939 when [Postmodernism first surfaced](#), but by the late 1960s, with the sexual revolution, and certainly by 1973 with the Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade decision, Postmodernism had gracelessly ascended to assume the throne as the predominant philosophical framework which demanded the questioning of the validity of almost every belief, cultural norm, or institution once held dear by most Americans.

Postmodernism stands in opposition to certainty regarding what is claimed to be "known" about anything and how that which is "known" is even known. Indeed, Postmodernism denies objective reality, including any notion of evil, which it calls a "social construct," and many more objectively known realities, including sexual identification itself, would soon be felled by the Postmodern axe. Thus, Postmodernism is an assault on the very stability of meaning itself, wherein claims to objective fact are dismissed as naive realism. This approach inevitably opens the door to the undermining of sound logic, the redefining of words and their meanings, and, ultimately, the redefining of right and wrong, even to the point of the bizarre. Postmodernism breeds revolution in many forms.

With that, a Postmodern mind-set in society, especially in academia, politics, sexuality, feminism, and religion serves as fertile soil for the seeds of Marxism, Critical Theory, Critical Race Theory, Feminism, the Homosexual Rights Movement, a.k.a. LGBTQIA2+, Liberation Criticism/Theology, and Sociological Criticism/Theology to take root and grow; and this is precisely what has transpired. Now this postmodern revolution is racing full-steam ahead, and gaining momentum.

Letting the Social Justice Movement's components into the Church and its affiliates, like missions boards, seminaries, and denominational entities, then, becomes the equivalent of opening the sheep-gate to the wolf disguised as a sheep. Having gained

entry into the fold under the pretense of likeness, the invader's natural instincts result in savage devastation and ultimate destruction for the sheep. So will it be if the components of the Social Justice Movement are not kept out of the Christian church and its ministry affiliates.

Sincerity is never a test for right or truth. And, further, to quote commentator Gerald Cragg from his exposition on *Romans*, "To be well-meaning never exempts us from the consequences of being wrong."² Christians cannot afford to be wrong on either the matter of justice for all, regardless of race, sexual orientation, religion, or gender, or on the dangers associated with interpreting Scripture through the lenses of man-made, vain philosophies which undermine the inspiration, authority, and sole sufficiency of God's word for faith and practice, for salvation and sanctification, and for morals and ethics. Surrendering to such secular influences by regarding them as well-meaning "useful analytical tools" is to open the door to a plethora of soon-to-emerge heresies and close the door on Christian orthodoxy, that is to say the faith once for all delivered to the saints. Here, then, are some components of the Social Justice Movement about which we should beware and maintain vigilance against their encroachment.

I. Marxism

- A. The political, economic, and social principles and policies advocated by German philosopher Karl Marx (1818-1883).
- B. 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.
- C. Key terms
 - 1. *Dialectical Materialism*: the Marxist theory that maintains the material basis of a reality constantly changing in a dialectical [logically reasoned through the exchange of opposing ideas] process and the priority of matter over mind, i.e., no room for the spiritual.
 - 2. *Economic Equality*: socialism.

²John Knox and Gerald R. Cragg, *The Epistle to the Romans*, in *The Interpreter's Bible*, ed. George Arthur Buttrick, vol. 9, *The Acts of the Apostles, Romans* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1954), 514.

- 3. *Healthcare Equality*: free and/or socialized healthcare.
- 4. *Socialism*: a stage of society in Marxist theory transitional between capitalism and communism and distinguished by unequal distribution of goods and pay according to work done, i.e., everybody gets a piece of the pie even if they didn't work for it.
- D. Marxism emphasizes the presence of two distinct classes of people basically as the oppressed and the oppressors.
 - 1. Proletariat
 - a) The poor laboring class.
 - b) The lowest social or economic class of a community.
 - c) The "oppressed."
 - 2. Aristocracy
 - a) The rich upper class.
 - b) The capitalists.
 - c) The "oppressors."
 - d) The power brokers.
 - e) The hegemony: the predominance of one social group over another.
- E. See also:
 - 1. "[Understanding Marxism: The Enemy of Being Is Having](#)" [5:40 video].
 - 2. "[Understanding Marxism: From Each According to His Ability...](#)" [5:39 video].
 - 3. "[Understanding Marxism: Change the World](#)" [5:44 video].

II. Critical Theory

- A. Any approach to social philosophy with a focus on identifying and challenging supposed power structures exercising a perceived dominance.
- B. Its provenance is found in sociology and literary criticism in general and in German philosophy (the Frankfurt School) and Marxism in particular.
- C. Its end results typically lay blame on social structures and cultural assumptions as the perpetrators rather than individuals, whom it aims to liberate from enslavement in its many forms, in order to create a world which satisfies the needs and powers of humans.
 - 1. Usher in Socialism.
 - 2. Appears to want to "level the playing field," but actually intends to tilt it by orchestrating a great power shift toward those individuals and

groups claiming they have been marginalized, i.e., minorities, females, homosexuals, etc.

D. Key terms

1. *Oppressed*: the ones under the oppression.
2. *Oppressors*: the ones in power (the hegemony).
3. *Dystopia*: an imaginary place or state in which the condition of life is extremely bad, as from deprivation, oppression, or terror.

E. See also "[Critical Theory Glossary](#)."

III. Critical Race Theory (CRT)

A. See also "[What Is Critical Race Theory?](#)" [5:05 video].

B. Critical Race Theory has its roots in Marxism.

C. Critical Race Theory is the result of applying the Marxist classifications of oppressed and oppressor to the issue of race, .a.k.a. *Racial Marxism*.

1. *Cultural Marxism*: the application of the Marxist classifications of oppressed and oppressor to culture, now commonly called the Social Justice Movement.
2. *Gender Marxism*: the application of the Marxist classifications of oppressed and oppressor to gender, especially with regard to the egalitarian/complementarian debate.
 - a) Egalitarianism is also known as Equalitarianism, especially in the gender context the equality of females with males.
 - b) Complementarianism is the biblical perspective that God created woman to "complete" man (discussed more thoroughly under Feminist Criticism).

D. Definitional synopsis:

1. The view that race, instead of being biologically grounded and natural, is socially constructed and that race, as a socially constructed concept, functions as a means to maintain the interests of the white population that constructed it.
2. According to CRT, racial inequality emerges from the social, economic, and legal differences that white people create between "races" to maintain elite white interests in labor markets and politics, and, as such, create the circumstances that give rise to poverty (i.e., systemic generational poverty) and criminality (i.e., systemic generational criminality) in many minority communities.

E. Key terms

1. *Antiracism*: more than merely opposing racism, this is the process of actively identifying and opposing racism, with the goals of both challenging racism and working to change policies, behaviors, and beliefs that perpetuate racist ideas, insisting that steps - *action* - be taken to eliminate racism at the individual, institutional, and structural levels, which it already assumes exists.
2. *DEI*: diversity, equity, and inclusion or EDI; a hiring and employee training approach that utilizes the Marxist assumptions of the presence of oppression, privilege, social identity, and discrimination in an effort to supposedly improve diversity, equity, and inclusion in businesses and workplaces based on identifying, acknowledging, and combating, the presence of the assumptions.
3. *Ethnic Gnosticism*: the idea that people have special knowledge based solely on their ethnicity.
4. *Hegemony*: from a cultural perspective, hegemony is the idea that, by domination or rule, one social group predominates over another which allows those in power to strongly influence the values, norms, ideas, expectations, worldview, and behavior of the rest of society through ideological or cultural means (establishing society's consent in effect), which then results in the normalization of conduct not acceptable by biblical standards (or previously by society's standards), such as homosexuality, bisexuality, or transgenderism, and can even be extended to the legalization of addictive substances, such as alcohol or marijuana, for example; an aim of Marxism is to name the "hegemony" as the villain, cancel it, and then take over its position.
5. *Intersectionality*: the complex, cumulative (snowballing) way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, sexual orientation, and classism) combine, overlap, or *intersect*, especially in the experiences of marginalized (of a person, group, or concept) individuals treated as insignificant or peripheral (unimportant or nonessential).
6. *Identity Politics*: a political approach and analysis based on people prioritizing the concerns

most relevant to their particular racial, religious, ethnic, sexual, social, cultural, or other, identity [see also "[Unofficial Black Anthem Performed at Super Bowl Has 'Clearly Caused More Division'](#)" 5:40 video].

7. *Microaggression*: oppression by people who mean well but are nonetheless making others feel inferior.
8. *POC*: person of color.
9. *Reparation*: monetary payback for past social and/or racial injustices [see also "[A Short History of Slavery](#)" 5:35 video].
10. *Safetyism*: when those claiming to be oppressed victims demand a "safe place" where they can deal with their resultant anxiety and hurt feelings due to aggression and/or microaggression.
11. *White Fragility*: the disbelieving defensiveness that white people exhibit when their ideas about race and racism are challenged - and particularly when they feel implicated in white supremacy.
12. *White Guilt*: the willingness to do almost anything to avoid being called a racist.
13. *Whitesplain*: when a white person tries to explain racism to a person of color.
14. *Woke*: alert to social injustice [5:10 video "[Why Is Hollywood So Woke?](#)"].
15. *Woke-washing*: trying to buy influence [with the Left] by appearing to be Woke.

F. See also (videos):

1. "[How to End Systemic Racism](#)" [5:13 video].
2. "[Who Are the Racists?](#)" [5:25 video].
3. "[Kemi Badenoch on Critical Race Theory](#)" [9:49 video] Olukemi Olufunto Badenoch is a British politician serving as Secretary of State for International Trade, President of the Board of Trade and Minister for Women and Equalities since 2022. She previously served in a series of junior ministerial positions under Boris Johnson from 2019 to 2022.
4. "[Should We Be Colorblind?](#)" [5:02 video].
5. "[Watch Black Father Blast Critical Race Theory at Board Meeting](#)" [2:39 video].
6. "[Brad Taylor's Address to School Board District 196](#)" [Rosemount High School, Rosemount, Minnesota, 5:18 video].

IV. Homosexual Rights Movement

- A. Viewed as being "oppressed" by the heterosexual community, especially by the evangelical Christian community.
 - 1. In reference to sexual expression.
 - 2. In reference to same-sex marriage.
 - 3. In reference to adoption of children.
- B. Views gender as a social construct rather than as a biological fact.
 - 1. Instigates action against placing gender identification on birth certificates [AMA 2021].
 - 2. Adherents frequently decline to define the words "man" or "woman" [1:08 video].
- C. Key terms
 - 1. *Asexual*: lack of sexual attraction or interest.
 - 2. *Binary*: the view of gender whereby people are categorized exclusively as either male or female, commonly basing gender identity upon one's biological sex at birth; but the word may be used by the LGBTQIA2+ community to express the notion that one does not identify as either male or female.
 - 3. *Cisgender*: an adjective denoting or relating to a person whose sense of personal identity and gender corresponds with their birth sex.
 - 4. *Gender Equality*: legal protection for Transgender persons.
 - 5. *Genderism*: the belief that gender is a binary, comprising male and female, and that the aspects of a person's gender are inherently linked to their sex at birth, which the LGBTQIA2+ community vehemently rejects.
 - 6. *Heterosexism*
 - a) A term analogous to sexism and racism, describing an ideological system that denies, denigrates, and stigmatizes any non-heterosexual form of behavior, identity, relationship, or community.
 - b) Using the term *heterosexism* highlights the parallels between antigay sentiment and other forms of prejudice, such as racism, antisemitism, and sexism.
 - 7. *Homophobia*: dislike of or prejudice against homosexual people.
 - 8. *Intersex*: a general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a

- reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male.
9. *LGBTQIA2+:* Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning/Queer, Intersex, Asexual/Allies, Two Spirit, plus more to come.
 10. *Marriage Equality:* same-sex marriage.
 11. *Non-Binary:* someone whose gender identity cannot be described as exclusively male or female and may be used as an umbrella term encompassing many gender identities.
 12. *Pronoun Hospitality:* the idea that if a transgender, biologically male person wants to be addressed, affirmed, or identified as a female (if "he" wants to be called a "she"), or if a transgender, biologically female person wants to be addressed, affirmed, or identified as a male (if "she" wants to be called a "he"), then he or she should be granted their wish.
 13. *SSA:* same-sex attracted.
 14. *Transgender*
 - a) One having a gender identity or gender expression that differs from the sex that they were assigned at birth.
 - b) Some transgender people who desire medical assistance to transition from one sex to another identify as transsexual.
 15. *Transsexual:* people who experience a gender identity that is inconsistent with their assigned sex and desire to permanently transition to the sex or gender with which they identify, usually seeking medical assistance to help them align their body with their identified sex or gender.
 16. *Two-Spirit:* a third gender found in some Native American cultures, often involving birth-assigned men or women taking on the identities and roles of the opposite sex.
 17. See also:
 - a) "[Gay Men Giving Blood and Plasma for Transfusions Amid COVID-19: Renewing an Appreciation for a Christian Perspective on Homosexuality and Same-Sex Marriage.](#)"
 - b) "[A Christian Perspective on Homosexuality and Same-Sex Marriage.](#)"

V. Related Biblical Criticisms/Theologies

- A. Feminist Criticism/Theology presuppositions, principles and terms.
 - 1. Feminism
 - a) Belief in and advocacy of the political, economic, and social equality of the sexes expressed especially through organized activity on behalf of women's rights and interests.
 - b) The political oppositional term to patriarchy.
 - c) Emphasizes "sexism," which is prejudice, stereotyping or discrimination on the basis of sex, particularly against women.
 - d) Advocates a "Feminine Ferment," which is feminine upheaval.
 - 2. Egalitarianism
 - a) Also called Equalitarianism, is a school of thought within political philosophy that prioritizes equality for all people.
 - b) Egalitarian doctrines are generally characterized by the idea that all humans are equal in fundamental worth or moral status.
 - c) The opposite of Egalitarianism is *Complementarianism*, as in the biblical view that in the marriage covenant relationship, the wife complements (or completes) her husband.
 - d) In theological circles, Egalitarianism surfaces in the promoting of females into the office of Pastor, Minister, Deacon, and/or Preacher to include preaching to and teaching men in violation of 1 Tim. 2:9-15.
 - e) See also "[An Introduction to Feminist Criticism](#)."
 - 3. Presuppositions
 - a) "Loyalist" feminists.
 - (1) The Bible is regarded as the word of God and inspired.
 - (2) Biblical characters, books, and themes can be relevant to modern women's situations.
 - (3) The New Testament will not allow for a universal interpretation of 1 Cor. 14:34-36, 1 Tim. 2:11-15, or 1 Tim. 3:8-15, but only a particular (limited) interpretation.

- (4) Some of these troublesome texts may be glosses.
 - (5) Women are not second-class citizens for whom biblical ideals are scaled down.
 - (6) The prophetic tradition included women as well as men from the beginning.
 - (7) God wills men and women to live in true happiness and mutual respect.
- b) "Revisionist" feminists.
- (1) Biblical characters, books, and themes can be relevant to modern women's situation.
 - (2) Biblical texts are best read exclusively from a female perspective to see the difference this makes (note the Gender Gnosticism).
 - (3) The patriarchal mold in which the Judeo-Christian tradition has been cast is historically, not theologically, determined.
 - (4) Reform can be achieved by reading the Bible looking for positive role models for women and by depatriarchalizing the interpretation of texts.
- c) "Sublimationist" feminists.
- (1) The act of heightening, refining, purifying, or freeing (something) from baser qualities.
 - (2) There exists an essential distinction between the masculine and feminine.
 - (3) Female traits are exalted as equal to or greater than male traits.
 - (4) This mode tends to focus on the world of symbols.
- d) "Rejectionist" feminists.
- (1) Women's experience in the Bible has often been misunderstood or denigrated by men.
 - (2) Women's experience in the Bible has often been masked or trivialized by women.
 - (3) Biblical texts are best read exclusively from a female perspective to see the difference this makes (note the Gender Gnosticism).

- (4) The Bible myth of patriarchy must be exploded.
- (5) The Scriptures show an innate prejudice against women.
- (6) The Bible must be exposed as a potential tool of oppression (note the Liberation Theology).
- (7) Divine inspiration of Scripture is denied.
- (8) The Bible is written in androcentric [male centered] language.
- (9) Feminist interpretation can be a launching pad for transforming societal and religious institutions.
- (10) Feminist interpretation requires a rhetorical rather than scientific positivist conceptualization.
- (11) Feminist theology and theory empowers women to become theological subjects rather than objects, and to participate in the critical construction of biblio-theological meaning.
- (12) There is no need for canon; to create a female counter-canon simply supports the notion of "canon."

4. Principles

- a) Experience, tradition, intellectual research, and the biblical witness are sources of authority.
 - (1) Tradition must be used selectively since patriarchy has dominated the history of theology.
 - (2) Experience means that of oppressed women and others struggling for liberty.
- b) Ideological reading is somewhat required, reading Scripture with a definite political ethical agenda.
- c) A "hermeneutics of indeterminacy" is called for.
 - (1) This rejects the notion of Scripture as a consistent, unitary, true text.
 - (2) This insists on a multilayered, contradictory indeterminacy of meaning (anything goes).
 - (3) Canonical authority is rejected.

- d) A "hermeneutics of suspicion" is called for (approach the canonical text as a "cover-up" for patriarchal murder and oppression); do not take androcentric texts at face value.
- e) A "hermeneutics of re-vision" is called for.
 - (1) Search the text for values and visions that can nurture those living in subjection and authorize their struggles for liberation and transformation.
 - (2) Search for submerged meanings, lost voices, and authorizing visions.
 - (3) Seek to dislodge a text from its patriarchal frame by reading it against its kyriocentric [male dominated] grain.
- f) A "hermeneutics of remembrance," which seeks to move beyond specific texts on women to reconstruct women's history obscured by androcentric historical consciousness, is needed.
- g) A "hermeneutics of proclamation," which assesses all scriptural texts and evaluates them theologically for their own oppressive impact or liberating tendency, is needed.
- h) A "hermeneutics of creative actualization," which stimulates woman's creative powers to recall, embody, and celebrate the achievements, sufferings, and struggles of the biblical women who are the foremothers of the faith, is necessary.
- i) The "politics of submission" espoused by the Pastoral Epistles must be overcome.

5. Terms

- a) *Anatomy of Destiny Theory*: females are more gullible and easier to deceive (Eve), as a result of her sin pregnancy and childbearing became woman's lot in life.
- b) *Androcentric*: male centered.
- c) *Androgynous*: having the characteristics or nature of both male and female.
- d) *Decentering*: a hermeneutical strategy that avoids privileging a single interpretive framework by affirming multiple oppressions.
- e) *Decolonization*: the process of identifying the ideological assumptions and assertions of historical and discursive colonization [veiled women, chaste virgin, powerful

mother, obedient wife] in order to reevaluate or to reject them.

- f) *Discursive Colonization*: psychological domination of people through appeals to authority, based on asserted superiority of one race, gender, class, or culture over another.
- g) *Egalitarian*: equality of the sexes.
- h) *Endogamy*: marriage within a specific group or family.
- i) *Feminine Ferment*: feminine upheaval.
- j) *Feminism*: the political oppositional term to patriarchy.
- k) *Gynocriticism*: study and recovery of texts authored by women and ways in which women's writing is constantly in dialogue with male and female literary traditions.
- l) *Historical Colonization*: political, economic and social domination of people of less developed countries by those from more developed countries.
- m) *Imago Dei*: image of God.
- n) *Immasculation*: the process of a woman reading and identifying as a male when reading an androcentric and patriarchal text.
- o) *Kin-dom*: emphasizes relatedness of all and rejects androcentric overtones of king-dom.
- p) *Kyriarchal*: elite male domination.
- q) *Matriarchal*: social organization marked by supremacy of the mother.
- r) *Me Too*: the Me Too movement, with a large variety of local and international related names (and especially calls to mind the confirmation hearings of Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh), is a movement against sexual harassment and sexual assault (for example, one woman, who may or may not have an axe to grind, might say, "So-and-so sexually assaulted me," and then another woman, who also may or may not have an axe to grind, might shortly thereafter say, "me too" (implying she had been sexually assaulted as well)).
- s) *Misogyny*: the hating of women.
- t) *Mujerista*: Hispanic feminist.

- u) *Patriarchal*: social organization marked by supremacy of the father.
 - v) *Patrilineal*: lineage counted through the males.
 - w) *Patrilocal*: burial place of the patriarch was considered the home territory of the tribe.
 - x) *Polygynous*: having more than one legal wife [synonymous with polygamy and polyandry].
 - y) *Reproductive Equality*: abortion.
 - z) *Sexism*: prejudice, stereotyping or discrimination on the basis of sex, particularly against women.
 - aa) *Sororal Polygyny*: sisters marrying the same man.
 - bb) *Womanist*: Black feminist.
6. Examples of Feminist hermeneutical conclusions.
- a) Gen. 1-3
 - (1) The Genesis Creation accounts are best interpreted as creation occurring from lower forms of life to highest. Woman, then, is superior since she was the last or crown of God's creation.
 - (2) The serpent spoke to Eve because she was the more intelligent of the two, not more gullible.
 - b) 1 Cor. 11:10
 - (1) The text regarding women covering their heads in 1 Cor. 11:10 lacks authority because it is based on an absurd Hebrew legend.
 - (2) This is another obvious example where androcentrism and patriarchal overtones are heard.
 - c) 1 Cor. 14:34-36
 - (1) This text is a gloss [intentionally misleading explanation inserted as biblical text].
 - (2) Verses 34-35 are what the men were saying and verse 36 is Paul's response to them.
 - (3) Paul simply instructed the women to submit to the social codes of the day.
 - d) 1 Tim. 3:8-15 and leadership.
 - (1) This epistle does not prohibit women from being deacons in churches today.

- (2) Women were probably in authority over men or this would not have been an issue.
 - (3) Refuse to interpret the Bible's teaching on these issues in light of troublesome passages alone.
 - (4) Troublesome passages are not universals but particulars with temporal and local application.
 - (5) If God calls a woman to a job that requires ordination, then she should be ordained.
 - (6) Since woman gave birth to the child of God, women can be leaders setting the world right side up.
 - (7) Exclusion of women as priests in Israel was because of concern that people not think of God as a sexual being.
 - e) Mark 7:24-30 and Christology.
 - (1) Jesus' encounter with the Syrophoenician woman is her active challenge to Jesus' own prejudice.
 - (2) Jesus had his faults too.
 - (3) He was sometimes negatively affected by the culture and prejudices in which he was raised.
 - f) Theology
 - (1) Why do human beings adore a God whose main attribute is power, whose interest is subjugation, who is afraid of equal rights?
 - (2) How is it that this self-sufficient Being sides with certain lives and destroys others and justifies individual and collective murders in the name of life?
 - (3) Speaks often of God in terms of father and mother, sometimes even "she."
 - g) Soteriology
 - (1) Rom. 9-11, as a whole, suggests Paul envisioned separate paths of salvation for Jews and Christians.
 - (2) Religious pluralism is necessary since there is more than one road to salvation.
7. Feminist Criticism strengths and weaknesses.

- a) Strengths
 - (1) Important issues and themes are brought to light.
 - (2) A high view of the role of women has indisputable elements of truth.
- b) Weaknesses
 - (1) Reading the Bible through certain lenses (a pre-set agenda) often leads to distortion.
 - (2) Giving tradition, experience, and research equal authority with Scripture is ludicrous.
 - (3) Contexts are more easily allowed to control the texts.
 - (4) Feminist Criticism is far too subjective, even to the point of embracing a "Gender Gnosticism."
 - (5) Speaking of God in terms of both father and mother creates the notion of a bisexual God, not a sexually neutral God.

8. Key names and works utilizing the feminist approach.

- a) Key names
 - (1) Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza
 - (2) Elizabeth Cady Stanton
 - (3) Anna Julia Cooper
 - (4) Sojourner Truth
 - (5) Judith Plaskow
 - (6) Katie Geneva Cannon
 - (7) Rosemary Radford Ruether
 - (8) Mary Ann Tolbert
 - (9) Janice Capel Anderson
 - (10) Antoinette Clark Wire
- b) Key works
 - (1) Anderson, Janice Capel, and Stephen D. Moore, eds. *Mark and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*.
 - (2) Bridges, Linda McKinnish, "Silencing the Corinthian Men, Not the Women: An Exegesis of 1 Corinthians 14:34-36." in *The New Has Come: Emerging Roles Among Southern Baptist Women*.
 - (3) Cady Stanton, Elizabeth, et al. *The Woman's Bible*.

- (4) Cannon, Katie G., and E. Schüssler Fiorenza, eds. *Interpretation for Liberation: Semeia* 47.
- (5) Clark, Elizabeth. *Women in the Early Church*.
- (6) Colenso, John William. *The Pentateuch and The Book of Joshua Critically Examined*.
- (7) Cooper, Anna Julia. *A Voice from the South*.
- (8) Grant, Jacquelyn. *White Women's Christ and Black Women's Jesus: Feminist Christology and Womanist Response*.
- (9) Plaskow, Judith. *Standing Again at Sinai: Judaism from a Feminist Perspective*.
- (10) Pobee, John S., and Barbel von Watenberg-Potter, eds. *New Eyes for Reading: Biblical and Theological Reflections by Women from the Third World*.
- (11) Ruether, Rosemary Radford. *Faith and Fraticide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism*.
- (12) _____ . *Womanguides: Readings Toward a Feminist Theology*.
- (13) Russell, Letty, ed. *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*.
- (14) Schüssler Fiorenza, Elisabeth. *Bread Not Stone: The Challenge of Feminist Biblical Interpretation*.
- (15) _____ . *But She Said: Feminist Practices of Biblical Interpretation*.
- (16) _____ . *Discipleship of Equals: A Critical Feminist Ekklesia-logy of Liberation*.
- (17) _____ . *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins*.
- (18) Schneiders, Sandra M. *The Revelatory Text: Interpreting the New Testament as Sacred Scripture*.
- (19) Sugirtharajah, R. S., ed. *Voice from the Margin: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World*.

- (20) Suskin Ostriker, Alicia. *Feminist Revision and the Bible*.
- (21) Tamez, Elsa. *Bible of the Oppressed*.
- (22) Teubal, Savina. *Hagar the Egyptian: The Lost Tradition of the Matriarchs*.
- (23) _____. *Sarah the Priestess: The First Matriarch of Genesis*.
- (24) Torjesen, Karen Jo. *When Women Were Priests: Women's Leadership in the Early Church and the Scandal of Their Subordination in the Rise of Christianity*.
- (25) Trible, Phyllis. *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives*.
- (26) Wainwright, Elaine M. *Towards a Feminist Critical Reading of the Gospel According to Matthew*.
- (27) Weems, Renita J. *Just a Sister Away: A Womanist Vision of Women's Relationship in the Bible*.
- (28) Winter, Miriam Therese. *WomanWord: A Feminist Lectionary and Psalter: Women of the New Testament*.
- (29) Wire, Antoinette Clark. *The Corinthian Women Prophets: A Reconstruction through Paul's Rhetoric*.

B. Liberation Criticism/Theology

1. The theology of Liberation Criticism is a synthesis, or mixture, of Christian theology and socio-economic analyses, based in far-left politics, particularly Marxism, that emphasizes "social concern for the poor and political liberation for oppressed peoples."
2. Succinctly, it can be defined as different ways of interpreting the Bible from the perspective of looking through a set of lenses for groups who are perceived as having been marginalized [treated as insignificant, unimportant, or nonessential] or oppressed.
3. Liberation Criticism presuppositions, principles and terms.
 - a) Presuppositions

- (1) Ideological readers who peruse the Scriptures with a definite, usually political or ethical, agenda in mind.
- (2) Attend primarily to what is perceived as the needs of contemporary society.
- (3) Many base their interpretations from the perspective of Marxism.
- (4) The Exodus is viewed as a major paradigm for liberation.
- (5) Certain biblical interpretations are viewed as "smokescreens" for the power interests of a group.
- (6) Liberation is often synonymous with survival and salvation.
- (7) There is no equality within the present social-political-economic structures.
- (8) Oppressed groups are often set against one another for the benefit of those in power.
- (9) There must be comparable remuneration for comparable work.

b) Principles

- (1) The final word on the interpretation, appropriation, and use of the Bible in one's struggle for survival and liberation is left up to those struggling for liberation.
- (2) Accept as authoritative only biblical texts that are liberative to the particular group.
- (3) Using the Bible to enhance the moral agency of the oppressed weakens its power as an oppressive tool.

c) Terms

- (1) *Conscientization*: an ongoing process of critical reflection on action that leads to a critical awareness of oppressive structures and their interconnectedness.
- (2) *Liberation*: salvation, survival.
- (3) *Sin*: social injustice.

d) Examples of Liberation hermeneutical conclusions.

- (1) Mark 7:24-30
 - (a) Jesus' encounter with the Syrophoenician woman is her challenge to Jesus' own prejudice.

- (b) Jesus needed help to see his prejudice and her need for liberation.
- (2) Theology
 - (a) Why do human beings adore a God whose main attribute is power, whose interest is subjugation, who is afraid of equal rights?
 - (b) How is it that this self-sufficient Being sides with certain lives and destroys others and justifies individual and collective murders in the name of life?
- e) Liberation Criticism strengths and weaknesses.
 - (1) Strengths
 - (a) Development of theoretical frameworks and practical ways of interpretation that can make visible oppressive as well as liberative traces found in ancient Jewish and Christian Scriptures.
 - (b) Important liberation issues and themes are sometimes brought to light.
 - (2) Weaknesses
 - (a) Can modern social paradigms be applied to biblical texts and render accurate interpretations?
 - (b) Reading the Bible through certain lenses [a pre-set agenda] often leads to distortion.
 - (c) Contexts are more easily allowed to control the texts.
- f) Key names and works utilizing the Liberation approach.
 - (1) Key names
 - (a) Gustavo Gutierrez
 - (b) James H. Cone
 - (c) Norman Gottwald
 - (2) Key works
 - (a) Gutierrez, Gustavo. *A Theology of Liberation*.
 - (b) Cone, James H. *Black Theology and Black Power*.

- C. Sociological Criticism/Theology presuppositions, principles and terms.
 - 1. Begins with the hermeneutical [the theory and methodology of interpretation of biblical texts] insight that biblical interpretation is always affected by the *experience and social location* of the reader.
 - a) Ideological readers who peruse Scriptures with a definite, usually political or ethical, agenda.
 - b) Certain biblical interpretations are viewed as a "smokescreen" for power interests of a group.
 - c) People most attracted to early Christianity were individuals with status inconsistency, those who achieved higher status than their birth ascribed.
 - d) Understanding the New Testament strictly on theological grounds is woefully inadequate.
 - e) Biblical social settings are significant for interpretation.
 - f) Language is an integral part of the sociological matrix in which it is used.
 - g) Attend primarily to what are perceived as the needs of contemporary society.
 - h) Many base their interpretations on the perspective of Marxism.
 - i) The Exodus is viewed as a major paradigm for liberation.
 - j) Applies sociological principles to ancient texts for the purpose of interpretation.
 - k) Draws upon theories of social stratification, social conflict, group development, group self-identity, religious dynamics, religious communities, and organizational structures to help interpret Scripture.
 - 2. Principles
 - a) Study the social setting of the New Testament.
 - b) Describe the social dynamics of the New Testament world [understand interactions].
 - c) Use sociological models to define and analyze group and individual existence within society.

- d) Study the New Testament text within the sociological context of the Christian communities in the Roman world.
 - e) Careful distinction must be maintained between the sociological horizon of the interpreter and the text.
3. Terms
- a) *Anti-Judaism*: a desire to convert Jews to Christianity.
 - b) *Anti-Semitism*: a desire to annihilate all Jews everywhere.
 - c) *Externalization*: the establishing of a relationship with a world of data, experience, and ideas by structuring that world in a way that gives it an order and coherence that it does not appear to contain in and of itself.
 - d) *Humanism*: a godless philosophical position that emphasizes the individual and societal potential of human beings, making mankind the measure of all things.
 - e) *Internalization*: when objectified structures emerge from the externalization process and become the shaping dynamic of consciousness [the Nomos].
 - f) *Objectification*: when the structured world assumes the character of an object [just a thing].
 - g) *Radical Secularist*: humanist.
 - h) *Sociocentrism*: the reading of post-industrial society back into antiquity.
4. Examples of Sociological hermeneutical conclusions.
- a) Phil. 1:27-28
 - (1) To live as worthy citizens of the gospel of Christ implies that Christ is the embodiment of a new order of being, a new context of life, a new matrix of existence, and Philippian Christians should live out lives shaped by the ethos of this new realm.
 - (2) Reliance upon the invincibility of the "New Order" of Christianity based on the gospel, not the Romans, was the new rallying point for solidarity.

- (3) The entire social matrix of the Roman Empire was doomed to fail but not the new Christian matrix of existence.
- b) Phil. 3:20
 - (1) In the realm of Christianity the Christians' matrix of existence is clearly alternative to that of the Roman world whose savior and lord was the emperor.
 - (2) The term savior, to Roman citizens, represented one who either established, maintained and defended, or reestablished the sociological matrix within which the community and individuals found its meaning, value, purpose, identity, and welfare.
- 5. Sociological Criticism strengths and weaknesses.
 - a) Strengths
 - (1) It recognizes the impact of social structure in Scripture.
 - (2) Important sociological issues and themes are sometimes brought to light and clarified.
 - (3) Emphasis upon God bonding individuals and groups together.
 - (4) It helps us distinguish between our own sociological matrix and the New Testament's.
 - (5) It brings insight into the sociological dimension of language.
 - (6) Its focus upon the incarnational reality of human life is positive.
 - b) Weaknesses
 - (1) Can modern social paradigms be applied to biblical texts and render accurate interpretations?
 - (2) It is erroneous to read theological statements as sociological evidence.
 - (3) The study often turns out to be a tool for proving a thesis rather than an instrument for studying a movement.
 - (4) The focus upon human behavior tends to rule out or minimize divine activity.
 - (5) Has a tendency toward sociological reductionism [any theory which tries to reduce complex components into

individual pieces so simplistic that essential truths are neglected or altogether omitted].

6. Key names and works utilizing the sociological approach.

a) Key names

- (1) Anthony Saldarini
- (2) Derek Tidball
- (3) E. A. Judge
- (4) Fernando Belo
- (5) Gerd Thiessen
- (6) Howard Clark Kee
- (7) John Hanson
- (8) Richard A. Horsley
- (9) Wayne A. Meeks

b) Key works

- (1) Belo, Fernando. *A Materialist Reading of the Gospel of Mark*.
- (2) Elliott, John H. *A Home for the Homeless: A Sociological Exegesis of 1 Peter*.
- (3) Gager, John G. *Kingdom and Community: The Social World of Early Christianity*.
- (4) Holmberg, Bengt. *Sociology and the New Testament: An Appraisal*.
- (5) Jameson, Frederic. *The Political Unconsciousness: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*.
- (6) Judge, E. A. *The Social Pattern of Christian Groups in the First Century*.
- (7) Kee, Howard Clark. *Knowing the Truth: A Sociological Approach to New Testament Interpretation*.
- (8) Malherbe, Abraham J. *Social Aspects of Early Christianity*.
- (9) Malina, Bruce. *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*.
- (10) Meeks, Wayne. *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul*.
- (11) _____. *The Moral World of the First Christians*.
- (12) Myers, Ched. *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus*.

- (13) Osiek, Carolyn. *What Are They Saying About the Social Setting of the New Testament?*
- (14) Stambaugh, John, and David Balch. *The New Testament in Its Social Environment.*
- (15) Theissen, Gerd. *The Sociology of Early Palestinian Christianity.*
- (16) Tidball, Derek. *The Social Context of the New Testament.*

Conclusion: So, what, then, are the dangers of these ideologies and theologies and what must we do moving forward?

(1) God's word teaches that judgment [justice] "will again be righteous" (Ps. 94:15). In other words, God's intention for justice is that it be righteous, not social, because social factors cloud judgment and, thereby, skew justice. There is one justice and it requires no modifiers, and it is for all people at all times. The Bible, not a theory, ideology, or fabricated theological construct, is sufficient for establishing both the terms [laws, statutes, consequences] of justice and the principal attribute and goal of justice [righteousness]. When the focus is on the social, racial, sexual, etcetera, rather than the singular - justice, righteousness will be compromised or altogether eschewed, as is seen in the Social Justice Movement of today.

(2) These ideologies and theologies replace God with man-made doctrines, namely those teachings rooted in Marxism; yet, we are told not to be "tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming" (Eph. 4:14). And then we are told, "See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ" (Col. 2:8).³

(3) These ideologies and theologies either disregard Scripture altogether, regard it as uninspired, or employ a faulty hermeneutic which results in distortion of Scripture, if Scripture is ever referenced at all.

(4) These ideologies and theologies further stoke the fires of division, anger, hatred, and even vengeance including "Reverse Racism," "Reverse Sexism," "Reparations, and "Heterophobia,"

³All Scripture quotations are taken from the *New American Standard Bible* (La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1960). Reprint, 1977.

rather than promoting reconciliation under the banner of the cross and the truths of God's word.

(5) Use of these ideologies and theologies is intended not to "level the playing field," but rather, to tilt it in favor of the alleged "oppressed" and punish the alleged "oppressor."

(6) These ideologies and theologies present in the Social Justice Movement promote a narrative of "victimhood," that is to say the condition of having been hurt, damaged, or made to suffer, but then, in reality, enact the role of the villain, replete with anger, hostility, and violence (e.g., BLM, Antifa), and routinely act as if their villainy is justified by their alleged victimhood.

(7) When a narrative of victimhood is embraced and/or enacted, personal responsibility for choices and actions is frequently de-emphasized, or altogether absent, thus jettisoning personal accountability and typically laying blame, instead, on supposed systemic [affecting the entirety of a system] organizational infrastructures, even to the point of near demonization of them (e.g., law enforcement, judicial system).

(8) These ideologies and theologies promote conformity to society and popular culture rather than advocating spiritual transformation of individuals, cultures, and societies in accordance with Rom. 12:1-2 by the renewing of minds attuned to God's word and God's Holy Spirit.

(9) These ideologies and theologies threaten to pollute, compromise, and/or destroy truly biblical Christianity, sometimes infiltrating covertly and sometimes overtly.

(10) The Bible says, "And do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them" (Eph. 5:11). While written within the immediate context of combating immorality within the church, Paul's words nonetheless ring true with applicability in all other realms of moral and ethical failings, indeed, with regard to all sin, which these ideologies and theologies clearly embrace and encourage.

(11) The Bible says, "Preach the word; be instant in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths" (2 Tim. 4:2-4). There have rarely been times when speaking biblical truth against such extremely popular cultural ideologies and theologies as those inherent in the Social Justice Movement has been more "out of season," and when reproving, rebuking, and exhorting were more necessary, yet more vehemently resisted, ridiculed, and rejected.

(12) To quote commentator Lennox Kalifungwa, "Have you ever noticed that: Critical Race Theory has never cured racism. Feminism has never cured sexism. Socialism has never cured poverty. Transgenderism has never cured identity dysphoria. You ought to notice that: All these ideologies perpetrate what they claim to cure."

If we want to prevent the further encroachment of the destructive elements of the Social Justice Movement into Christianity, we must be aware of what its components look and sound like. Otherwise, we, our churches, Associations, State Conventions, denominations, and, indeed, evangelical Christianity itself will fall victim to this deceptive, flavorful, counterfeit, "cultural Christianity," and the faith once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3) will become irreparably compromised to the point of being unrecognizable, and, even worse, rendered relatively ineffectual for its intended purpose of transforming lives by the power of the risen Christ, having been replaced by a postmodern, counterfeit, cultural gospel packaged in enough Christian externalities for it to pass the optics test of most.

Author Henry Law wrote, "Vice stalks in virtue's garb" (*Christ Is All: The Gospel of the Pentateuch*), and Paul, much earlier in history, warned that evil does not always appear as evil when he wrote, "But what I am doing, I will continue to do, that I may cut off opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the matter about which they are boasting. For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:12-14). We, too, in our spheres of influence and stewardship, must cut off opportunity from those embracing and promoting the ideologies and theologies which are counter to authentic biblical Christianity.

We must, rather, be a "counter culture," in accordance with Rom. 12:1-2. We cannot afford to go to sleep at the wheel, to detach, or to sit on our seat cushions and let others stand, sparsely supported, against this insidious cancer.

What really needs to be canceled in today's world, and especially in Christendom, is sin, man-made models of biblical interpretation, and "Cancel Culture" itself, not the grammatical-historical hermeneutic and the biblical theology and Christian doctrines this faithful method of interpretation unveils and promotes.

In Matt. 24:10-12 Jesus warned that a time would come when "many will fall away."

In Gal. 1:6-7 Paul said that he was amazed that so many of the Galatians were deserting Christ "for a different gospel," which he regarded as a distortion.

In 2 Thess. 2:3 Paul himself, like Jesus before him, pointed to a coming apostasy.

In 1 Tim. 4:1 Paul wrote again of a coming apostasy when he stated, "But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons." We are currently living in one of these "later times."

In 2 Pet. 3:17 Simon Peter warned his readers to be on guard lest they be "carried away by the error of unprincipled men" and fall from their own steadfastness.

We must not be silent. But, rather, we must be vigilant, steadfast, principled, and firmly anchored to inspired, inerrant, infallible, authoritative Scripture in protecting and fortifying the Church by defending its theological and doctrinal underpinnings as we participate with the Lord Jesus in advancing his Kingdom. If not here, then where? If not on this, then on what? If not now, then when?

Therefore, we must get our own hearts right with God, get in his word, get back into our churches, get back to serving in our churches, and become recommitted to defending, vigorously, the faith once for all delivered to the saints and openly supporting those who do, because theology, interpretive methodology, and doctrine matter. If we do not, then, with our own silence and inaction, we will have helped facilitate the ushering in of an apostasy on a scale hitherto unknown to Christianity. To this every Pastor, church staff member, denominational servant, deacon, teacher, ministry volunteer, indeed every Christian, male and female, young and old, Democrat and Republican, vaccinated or unvaccinated, needs to stand and shout, "Not on my watch!"

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