

The Iran and Israel Conflict Crisis: 4 Insights Relating to the U.S., Israel, and the Middle East

Iran and Israel Conflict Crisis and Regional Security

Iran nuclear threat: Does it pose a threat to the U.S., Israel, and the Middle East? What can we learn about the Iran and Israel conflict?

Many Americans might wonder why the president has focused so much attention on Iran. After all, it is a country 6,000 miles away in the Middle East. Some may also conclude that military action against Iranian leadership might not be warranted since the previous administration did not deploy troops or significant military hardware to the region.

Two years ago, however, the Biden administration considered action after more than 160 attacks on U.S. troops took place in Iraq, Syria, and Jordan. There were also about 40 clashes with the Houthis in the Red Sea. Iran funded many of these attacks, either directly or indirectly. They were part of a mounting proxy battle between the U.S. and Iran.

At the time, reporters asked what President Biden would do. Some argued that the U.S. and Iran have essentially been at war for decades. Even the Pentagon press secretary

acknowledged that this was true if one considers the larger conflict. To understand why reporters were asking this question, we need to review some history.

Modern History of Iran

The conflict between Iran and the United States can be traced back to 1953, when the U.S. cooperated in overthrowing Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh. Afterward, the Shah of Iran (Mohammad Reza Pahlavi) was placed in power.

The U.S. viewed the Shah as a key ally and a pillar of security in the Middle East. His pro-Western government advanced Western interests and served as a Cold War counterbalance to Soviet influence. The United States supported Iran through significant arms sales and strong economic ties, despite concerns about the Shah's authoritarian rule.

The turning point came in 1979 when the Shah was overthrown by radical Islamic clerics led by Ayatollah Khomeini. The Iranian Revolution transformed the U.S. from an ally into "The Great Satan" in the eyes of the new regime.

This hostility became clear when the Iranian Revolutionary Guard seized the U.S. Embassy and took 52 American diplomats hostage. They were not released until President Reagan was sworn in on January 20, 1981. This crisis marked the beginning of what many view as a half-century-long undeclared conflict between Iran and the United States.

The U.S. strategy had been to promote stability in the Middle East. That effort became increasingly difficult because of Iran's growing influence. Complicating matters further, Saudi Arabia supported anti-Western Islamic movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood, while Turkey—though a NATO member—began positioning itself as a leader of a renewed Islamic political

vision in the region.

Iran has engaged in a proxy war against the U.S. for decades. In April 1983, Iranian-backed Hezbollah forces bombed the U.S. Embassy in Beirut, killing 63 people. Later that year, Hezbollah bombed the U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut, killing 241 service members.

Despite these attacks, decisive retaliation never fully materialized. Iranian influence continued to expand through proxy groups across the region.

During the Iraq War following 9/11, evidence showed that Iran was supplying weapons and support that contributed to American casualties. While the U.S. was focused on Iraq as the primary enemy, Iranian operatives and Iranian-manufactured munitions were also responsible for attacks on U.S. troops.

Iran is often described as the chief sponsor of terrorism in the Middle East. It funds groups such as Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Houthis, which regularly target Israel and U.S. interests. Israeli and American responses to these groups are now reshaping the balance of power in the region.

Missiles and Nuclear Weapons

Iran possesses the largest stockpile of ballistic missiles in the Middle East. Many of these missiles have a range of up to 2,000 kilometers, allowing them to strike Israel and other countries throughout the region.

Iran has also demonstrated its long-term intentions toward Western nations. Earlier this century, it launched ballistic missiles from ships in the Caspian Sea. Although the test missile did not carry a nuclear warhead, it demonstrated how such a weapon could be deployed.

A missile detonated high in the atmosphere could create an

electromagnetic pulse (EMP), potentially destroying the U.S. electrical grid and causing catastrophic damage.

If Iran were to acquire nuclear weapons, it would destabilize the Middle East and surrounding regions. However, the latest assessment from Tulsi Gabbard suggests that Iran is not currently building a nuclear weapon and that its supreme leader has not authorized such a program since it was suspended in 2003. Some officials, however, dispute this assessment.

The Donald Trump administration resumed talks with Iran after withdrawing from the nuclear accord several years earlier. Initial negotiations produced few concrete results. Meanwhile, a United Nations nuclear watchdog reported that Iran violated nuclear nonproliferation agreements.

Iran maintains that its nuclear development is intended for civilian energy. However, the discovery of secret nuclear sites has raised concerns that the program may have military ambitions.

Tensions escalated when Iran launched a massive ballistic missile attack on Israel following Israeli strikes on Iranian targets.

In June 2025, Israel launched **Operation Rising Lion**, targeting key nuclear and military facilities, including an enrichment site. The strike lacked the bunker-busting capability needed to fully destroy the facility.

Soon afterward, the United States launched **Operation Midnight Hammer**, striking several Iranian nuclear locations. The administration announced that the sites had been "obliterated." Yet satellite imagery later suggested Iran had begun rebuilding portions of its nuclear infrastructure.

Diplomatic talks between the United States and Iran have produced few breakthroughs. Negotiations aim to limit uranium

enrichment, restrict missile development, and address human rights concerns within Iran.

Since diplomacy failed, the Trump administration began military endeavors. However, many Americans remain wary of another prolonged conflict in the Middle East. Limited strikes might damage nuclear facilities, but meaningful regime change would likely require a large-scale ground invasion.

Religious Component

Another reason [Iran's nuclear ambitions](#) raise concern is the religious worldview of its leadership.

Most Iranians are Shia Muslims, and a significant branch follows the tradition known as the “**Twelvers**.” This sect recognizes twelve divinely appointed leaders known as Imams.

According to their belief system, the twelfth Imam—often called the Mahdi or messianic figure—is currently in hiding and will return during a time of global conflict.

Just as Christianity has an eschatology, or doctrine of the end times, Shia Islam also holds an apocalyptic worldview. However, its narrative is essentially the reverse of what Christians read in the book of Revelation.

Twelver theology teaches that global conflict may precede the arrival of the Mahdi. Some analysts fear that extremist interpretations of this belief could view large-scale conflict—including potential attacks on Israel or the United States—as a way to usher in that messianic era.

During the Cold War, the United States relied on the doctrine of **Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD)** to deter nuclear war. The Soviet Union would not launch nuclear weapons because retaliation would guarantee its destruction.

Critics argue that radical religious interpretations might weaken this deterrence model. Some Twelver believers might assume divine intervention would protect them from destruction.

Author Joel C. Rosenberg explored this scenario in his political thriller *The Twelfth Imam*.

Yet there is another side to this story. Reports indicate that Christianity is growing rapidly in Iran, with some describing the Iranian church as the fastest-growing Christian movement in the world.

Christians should continue praying for Iranian believers who often face persecution. We should also pray for U.S. leaders and their allies as they navigate these complex challenges.

The Persian people are an ancient civilization that deserves peace and freedom. Unfortunately, many Iranians suffer under economic sanctions and harsh authoritarian leadership.

They deserve both our prayers and our compassion.

[For more articles by Kerby Anderson follow here: https://probe.org/author/kerbyanderson/](https://probe.org/author/kerbyanderson/)

Christian Nationalism and the Question of Racial Purity

Tom Davis examines how some Christian Nationalists call for racial purity despite the lack of a biblical basis for the idea.

In recent years, a new political movement has started within

Christian circles. This movement, Christian Nationalism^{1}, is theologically diverse. They have disagreements on issues like race, discipleship, and the relationship of church and state.

There is a group within Christian Nationalism that has become concerned about racial purity. They stop short of calling interracial marriages a sin, but they do claim that it is God's norm for people to marry within their own race. Their view of race seems to be based on skin color more than anything else. My understanding is that they would be fine with a French man marrying a Norwegian woman, but they think that an Asian man should not marry a Hispanic woman. Granted, all these particular Christian Nationalists are white, so the conversation tends to focus on white people marrying outside the white race.

Christian Nationalists will use DNA markers to show that different races exist, but their reason for claiming that the races should not intermarry is an argument from scripture. They think it is unbiblical for a white woman to marry a man of another race. In this article, I will examine their argument and evaluate its strengths and weaknesses. Next, I will assess their understanding of the relevant biblical passages. Finally, I will consider the passages they reference and explore the biblical teaching on race.^{2}

The Argument for Racial Segregation

The argument for racial segregation begins with creation (Genesis 1-2). Christian Nationalists admit that **“all humanity descends from Adam and shares a common origin**, essence, and dignity.”^{3} Christian Nationalists admit that all human races descended from Adam. Biblically, all races bear the image of God and can be traced back to Adam and Eve. They are equal in dignity. However, God's intention for humanity was for them to spread out throughout the earth, and the races would naturally occur in different regions of the world.

Their argument then proceeds to Genesis 10, which is known as the Table of Nations. Due to the sinfulness of humanity, God destroyed everyone except Noah and his family. Then Genesis 10 lists the descendants of Noah's sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

"These are the clans of the sons of Noah, according to their genealogies, in their nations, and from these nations spread abroad on the earth after the flood." (Genesis 10:32).

The author's understanding of this verse makes the separation of races and nations one of the norms that God wants people to live by.

The Genesis narrative proceeds to the rebellion at the Tower of Babel. The people will not disperse. They try to build a tower that will reach heaven, so God decides to confuse their language and to force the different nations to disperse throughout the land. Christian Nationalists claim:

"Biblically, God's design post-Babel emphasizes diversity through separated nations and peoples (Genesis 10-11; Acts 17:26), with endogamy [*Note: per Wikipedia, "Endogamy is the cultural practice of only marrying within a specific social group, religious denomination, caste, or ethnic group, rejecting any from outside of the group or belief structure as unsuitable for marriage or other close personal relationships."*] as the normative pattern in Israel's laws (for example, Deuteronomy 7:3-4 warning against intermarriage with Canaanites to preserve covenant fidelity, though not solely racial)."[{4}](#)

Here, the author connects Genesis 11, the Flood, and the Tower of Babel incident with Acts 17:26, which states, "And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place." The Christian Nationalist understands Acts 17:26 to be reaffirming the Table of Nations in Genesis 10.

This gives them an Old Testament verse and a New Testament verse that they think justifies their view that God desires the races to remain separate. The author also references Romans 9:3, "For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh," to support his argument that the normal practice according to the Bible ought to be marrying within one's own race.

A Critique of the Argument

This group of Christian Nationalists claims that God's intent was for people to spread across the earth and naturally develop different nations. The issue is that there is no mention of nations prior to the Flood. If the concept and development of nations were something that God intended as part of his creation of mankind, why is it not mentioned before the Flood, or before the fall of Adam and Eve? The structure of the Genesis narrative indicates that nations did not develop until after the Flood, and this was a consequence of sin.

This position also does not address whether there will be nations after the return of Christ. Are the races still to remain segregated after Christ returns? Will there be nations on the New Earth that are ruled from Jerusalem? It seems that the Christian Nationalist answer to these questions would be yes, people will still be segregated into nations and races. If that is the case, the Christian Nationalist needs to explain why the races need to be segregated and the nations need to exist when Christ is ruling from Jerusalem. The Christian Nationalist also believes that this diversity was intended by God, that interracial marriages and multicultural nations are in violation of God's command to subdue the earth, and that they violate God's creation of diversity.

If people were not originally intended to divide into different nations and races, why are races and people divided?

The consistent answer to the question for the Christian Nationalist would be to say that this segregation is God's will. This seems to imply that the races would have to remain segregated after the return of Christ as well. The Christian Nationalist believes that interracial marriage somehow violates God's creation of diversity. How can that be? When two people of different races have children, those children are not a pure race. This means that interracial marriage does not restrict racial diversity; it increases it.

The Christian Nationalist's appeal to Deuteronomy 7:3-4, Acts 17:26, and Romans 9:3 simply takes these verses out of context. In Deuteronomy, the restriction from marrying people from the tribes in the land that the Israelites were about to invade is not about racial purity. This passage is about spiritual purity. Moses is telling the people that they are not to marry people who worship other gods. We see Rahab (Joshua 6), Deborah (Judges 4), and Ruth who reject their pagan gods, turn to the One True God, and join the Israelite society. God allowed this because they rejected other gods, which shows the issue was not racial purity.

In Acts 17:27 Paul is speaking in front of the philosophers in Athens. Paul tells the philosophers that God made the nations from one man. In Romans 9:3 Paul is explaining God's sovereignty over all nations. These verses are irrelevant to the question of segregating the nations. The burden of proof is on the Christian Nationalist to show that these verses support their view of segregating races and nations. They have not met that burden.

The Biblical View of the Nations and Races

If the Christian Nationalist is wrong, then what does the Bible teach about nations? Things do start with God creating Adam and Eve and telling them to reproduce and subdue the

earth (Genesis 1:28). God's intent for humanity was for them to govern the earth as His local representatives.[{5}](#) However, things went wrong because Adam and Eve were disobedient and ate from the tree of life (Genesis 3:1-7). Adam and Eve gave in to the temptation of Satan instead of remaining faithful to God, which led to their banishment from the garden. The human family that God created was now broken. The Fall reveals that there is a conflict between spiritual beings, and between the people of God and the spiritual beings that followed Satan.

Humanity continues in their sin, which eventually leads to the Flood (Genesis 6), which is followed by the incident at the tower of Babel. The people were supposed to spread out and subdue the earth. Instead, the people stayed close together and built a tower. This tower was something like a ziggurat, which was meant to call gods down to earth. In building this tower, the people once again rejected their relation to God.[{6}](#) In response, God confused their languages and dispersed them throughout the earth. The dispersion of the people and the confusion of languages were the result of the rebellion of the people against God. Deuteronomy 32 is a record of the nations.

After the people were dispersed throughout the earth, the narrative of the Bible continues through the development, then the life of Israel. Jesus comes and trains His apostles. Jesus has been crucified, resurrected, and ascended into heaven. His disciples are waiting for the coming of the Holy Spirit. In Acts 2, the event of Pentecost is recorded. At Pentecost each person hears the apostles speak in their own language. The apostles are most likely speaking in Aramaic, but the Greeks who are present hear them in Greek, the Romans hear them in Latin, etc. This is an undoing of the confusion and division of people that occurred at Babel. As a result of their rebellion at Babel the people were dispersed throughout the world. At Pentecost the undoing of Babel, as well as the original sin in the garden, begins.[{7}](#)

Conclusion

When we examine the Christian Nationalist case for racial purity and against interracial marriage, we can see that they have not met the burden of proof for their claim. They end up reading their view into the text of the Bible instead of allowing the text of the Bible to shape them. Will one face challenges in an interracial marriage? Yes, but those challenges come from what is ultimately a sinful attitude against one race or the other. The picture the Biblical narrative paints is one of people rebelling against God by refusing to spread out and care for the earth and trying to control God to get what they wanted. This rebellion resulted in a curse, and beginning with Pentecost, God is undoing the curse.

While the Christian Nationalist is mistakenly concerned about racial purity in marriage, Christians should be concerned about spiritual purity. Paul makes two points in his letters. First, Paul states, "Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?" (2 Corinthians 6:14). What Paul points out here is that a marriage between two people that have different worldviews will often put the Christian in situations where they will have to choose between their spouse and faithfulness to Christ, including fellowship with other believers. I experienced this early on in my walk with Christ. I left the church when I was growing up. When I returned to Christ, I naturally started attending church. I was dating a woman who was not a Christian and was not interested in attending church. I went to church three times a week. Eventually my church attendance, along with other disagreements, led to us breaking up.

Second, if you are a Christian and are already married to someone who is not, you should not get divorced if the

marriage relationship is healthy. Paul discusses this in 1 Corinthians 7:12-16. Paul teaches that if the unbeliever wants to remain married, the Christian should agree. If the couple has children, divorcing when the unbeliever does not want one can cause resentment among the children. Paul also teaches that the unbeliever can become “made holy” because of the spouse.

Christian Nationalists are correct in their view that people of all races are created in the image of God. They also admit that the lives of people of all races are valuable to God. Their error is in thinking that God is concerned with racial purity. They end up reading their view of racial purity into the Table of Nations and the Tower of Babel. God did create the races, and Scripture never commands or implies that the races should be separated.

Notes

1. Per Britannica, “Christian nationalism is an ideology that seeks to fuse a nation’s identity, laws, and public life with a particular vision of Christianity, treating the nation as if it should be explicitly Christian in character and governance.”

2. While I think I know who wrote the articles, they are technically anonymous, and I have not verified who the author is. Since I have not verified the identity of the author, I will not name him. I will say that I found the link to the substack with these articles on Joel Webbon’s account on X.

3. nxrstudios.substack.com/p/the-table-of-nations-and-the-biblical

4. nxrstudios.substack.com/p/a-historic-christian-view-of-interracial

5. Block, Daniel I. *Covenant: The Framework of God’s Grand Plan of Redemption* (Baker Academic, Grand Rapids) 2021, 24.

6. Heiser, Michael S. *The Unseen Realm: Recovering the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible* (Lexham Press, Bellingham WA) 2015, 114-115.

7. Heiser, 298-302.

©2026 Probe Ministries

Loneliness and the Lockdown

Kerby Anderson looks at the isolation and longing for human contact that has become endemic even before the pandemic.

America was already facing a crisis of loneliness, and then the coronavirus pandemic hit. People sheltering at home had even less human contact. That made the crisis of loneliness even worse. The best thing people could do to protect themselves from the virus was to isolate themselves. But that is not the best thing they could do for their physical or mental health.

A study by Julianne Holt-Lunstad found that loneliness can be as bad for your health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day. Another study by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine found that social isolation in older adults increased their risk of heart disease, stroke, dementia, high cholesterol, diabetes, and poor health in general.[\[1\]](#)



More than a quarter century ago (1994), I wrote a book (*Signs of Warning, Signs of Hope*) making a number of predictions for the future. Chapter eight set forth the case for a coming crisis of loneliness.[\[2\]](#) Years earlier Philip Slater wrote about *The Pursuit of Loneliness*. The US Census Bureau documented the increasing number of adults living alone. Dan Kiley talked about living together loneliness in one of his books. Roberta Hestenes coined the term “crowded loneliness.” The trend was there for anyone to see if they began reading

some of the sociological literature.

In the last few years, many authors have written about the crisis of loneliness. Robert Putnam wrote about it in his famous book, *Bowling Alone*.^{3} He argues that people need to be connected in order for our society to function effectively. Putnam concludes, "Social capital makes us smarter, healthier, safer, richer, and better able to govern a just and stable democracy." Senator Ben Sasse, in his book, *Them: Why We Hate Each Other—and How to Heal*, laments that our traditional tribes and social connectedness are in collapse.^{4}

Living Alone

The reasons are simple: demographics and social isolation. More people are living alone than in previous generations, and those living with another person will still feel the nagging pangs of loneliness.

In previous centuries where extended families dominated the social landscape, a sizable proportion of adults living alone was unthinkable. And even in this century, adults living alone have usually been found near the beginning (singles) and end (widows) of adult life. But these periods of living alone are now longer due to lifestyle choices on the front end and advances in modern medicine on the back end.

People have been postponing marriage and thus extending the number of years of being single. Moreover, their parents are (and presumably they will be) living longer, thereby increasing the number of years one adult will be living alone. Yet the increase in the number of adults living alone originates from more than just changes at the beginning and end of adult life. Increasing numbers are living most of their adult lives alone.

In the 1950s, about one in every ten households had only one person in them. These were primarily widows. But today, due to

the three D's of social statistics (death, divorce, and deferred marriage), more than a third of all households is a single person household.

In the past, gender differences have been significant in determining the number of adults living alone. For example, young single households are more likely to be men, since women marry younger. On the other hand, old single households are more likely to be women, because women live longer than men. While these trends still hold true, the gender distinctions are blurring as both sexes are likely to reject traditional attitudes toward marriage.

Marriage Patterns

The post-war baby boom created a generation that did not make the trip to the altar in the same percentage as their parents. In 1946, the parents of the baby boom set an all-time record of 2,291,000 marriages. This record was not broken during the late 1960s and early 1970s, when millions of boomers entered the marriage-prone years. Finally, in 1979, the record that had lasted 33 years was finally broken when the children of the baby boom made 2,317,000 marriages.

The post-war generations are not only marrying less; they are also marrying later. The median age for first marriage for women in 1960 was 20 and for men it was 22. Today the median age for women is 27 and for men it is 29.

Another reason for a crisis in loneliness is marital stability. Not only are these generations marrying less and marrying later; they also stay married less than their parents. When the divorce rate shot up in the sixties and seventies, the increase did not come from empty nesters finally filing for divorce after sending their children into the world. Instead, it came from young couples divorcing before they even had children. That trend has continued into

the 21st century.

The crisis of loneliness will affect more than just the increasing number of people living alone. While the increase in adults living alone is staggering and unprecedented, these numbers are fractional compared with the number in relationships that leave them feeling very much alone.

Commitment is a foreign concept to many of the millions of cohabiting couples. These fluid and highly mobile situations form more often out of convenience and demonstrate little of the commitment necessary to make a relationship work. These relationships are transitory and form and dissolve with alarming frequency. Anyone looking for intimacy and commitment will not find them in these relationships.

Commitment is also a problem in marriages. Spawned in the streams of sexual freedom and multiple lifestyle options, the current generations appear less committed to making marriage work than previous generations. Marriages, which are supposed to be the source of stability and intimacy, often produce uncertainty and isolation.

Living-Together Loneliness

Psychologist Dan Kiley coined the term “living-together loneliness,” or LTL, to describe this phenomenon. He has estimated that 10 to 20 million people (primarily women) suffer from “living together loneliness.”[\[5\]](#)

LTL is an affliction of the individual, not the relationship, though that may be troubled too. Instead, Dan Kiley believes LTL has more to do with two issues: the changing roles of men and women and the crisis of expectations. In the last few decades, especially following the rise of the modern feminist movement, expectations that men have of women and that women have of men have been significantly altered. When these

expectations do not match reality, disappointment (and eventually loneliness) sets in. Dan Kiley first noted this phenomenon among his female patients. He began to realize that loneliness comes in two varieties. The first is the loneliness felt by single, shy people who have no friends. The second is more elusive because it involves the person in a relationship who nevertheless feels isolated and very much alone.

To determine if a woman is a victim of LTL, Kiley employed a variation of an “uncoupled loneliness” scale devised by researchers at the University of California at Los Angeles. For example, an LTL woman would agree with the following propositions: (1) I can’t turn to him when I feel bad, (2) I feel left out of his life, (3) I feel isolated from him, even when he’s in the same room, (4) I am unhappy being shut off from him, (5) No one really knows me well.

Women may soon find that loneliness has become a part of their lives whether they are living alone or “in a relationship,” because loneliness is more a state of mind than it is a social situation. People who find themselves trapped in a relationship may be lonelier than a person living alone. The fundamental issue is whether they reach out and develop strong relationship bonds.

Crowded Loneliness

Loneliness, it turns out, is not just a problem of the individual. Loneliness is endemic to our modern, urban society. In rural communities, although the farmhouses are far apart, community is usually very strong. Yet in our urban and suburban communities today, people are physically very close to each other but emotionally very distant from each other. Close proximity does not translate into close community.

Dr. Roberta Hestenes at Eastern College has referred to this as “crowded loneliness.” She observed that “we are seeing the

breakdown of natural community network groups in neighborhoods like relatives." We don't know how to reach out and touch people, and this produces the phenomenon of crowded loneliness.

Another reason for social isolation is the American desire for privacy. Though many desire to have greater community and even long for a greater intimacy with others, they will choose privacy even if it means a nagging loneliness. Ralph Keyes, in his book *We the Lonely People*, says that above all else Americans value mobility, privacy, and convenience. These three values make developing a sense of community almost impossible. In his book *A Nation of Strangers*, Vance Packard argued that the mobility of American society contributed to social isolation and loneliness. He described five forms of uprooting that were creating greater distances between people.

First is the uprooting of people who move again and again. An old Carole King song asked the question, "Doesn't anybody stay in one place anymore?" At the time when Packard wrote the book, he estimated that the average American would move about 14 times in his lifetime. By contrast, he estimated that the average Japanese would move five times.

The second is the uprooting that occurs when communities undergo upheaval. The accelerated population growth along with urban renewal and flight to the suburbs have been disruptive to previously stable communities.

Third, there is the uprooting from housing changes within communities. The proliferation of multiple-dwelling units in urban areas crowd people together who frequently live side by side in anonymity.

Fourth is the increasing isolation due to work schedules. When continuous-operation plants and offices dominate an area's economy, neighbors remain strangers.

Fifth, there is the accelerating fragmentation of the family.

The steady rise in the number of broken families and the segmentation of the older population from the younger heightens social isolation. In a very real sense, a crisis in relationships precipitates a crisis in loneliness.

Taken together, these various aspects of loneliness paint a chilling picture of loneliness in the 21st century. But they also present a strategic opportunity for the church. Loneliness will be on the increase in this century due to technology and social isolation. Christians have an opportunity to minister to people cut off from normal, healthy relationships.

The Bible addresses this crisis of loneliness. David called out to the Lord because he was “lonely and afflicted” (Psalm 25:16). Jeremiah lamented that he “sat alone because your hand was on me and you had filled me with indignation” (Jeremiah 15:17). And Jesus experienced loneliness on the cross, when He cried out, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Mark 15:34).

The local church should provide opportunities for outreach and fellowship in their communities. Individual Christians must reach out to lonely people and become their friends. We must help a lost, lonely world realize that their best friend of all is Jesus Christ.

Notes

1. Joanne Silberner, “In a time of distancing due to coronavirus, the health threat of loneliness,” looms, STAT, March 28, 2020.
2. Kerby Anderson, *Signs of Warning, Signs of Hope* (Chicago: Moody, 1994), chapter eight.
3. Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (NY: Touchstone, 2001).
4. Ben Sasse, *Them: Why We Hate Each Other—and How to Heal* (NY: St. Martin’s Press, 2018).

5. Dan Kiley, *Living Together, Feeling Alone: Healing Your Hidden Loneliness* (NY: Prentice-Hall, 1989).

©2020 Probe Ministries

Why Empires Fall

Kerby Anderson looks at six insightful books and videos exploring alarming parallels between the U.S. and failed empires of history.

Collapse of Empires

If you study world history, you realize that empires come and go. In this article I want to look at what has happened to some of the major empires because we can also learn about what is happening today in our country. I will be quoting from recent books that have documented the decline and fall of empires.

First, I will merely quote from a recent YouTube video^{1} that describes a pattern in history that has destroyed three global superpowers in the last 500 years: Spain, Britain, and the Soviet Union. Today, the U.S. is following a similar pattern.



In 1590, Spain was the richest empire on earth. Spain controlled half the world's gold and silver. Spain's military dominated Europe. Their currency was accepted everywhere. Yet within 80 years, the Spanish government was bankrupt.

The Spanish coin that was supposed to be pure silver became 50% copper, then 75% copper. By 1600 Spanish coin contained barely any silver. Inflation exploded. Spain went into a debt spiral and borrowed constantly. Manufacturing declined.

Agriculture stagnated.

In 1914, Britain ruled the largest empire in human history. At the time, it was said that the sun never set on British empire. Britain controlled 25% of the land surface. The pound sterling was the global reserve currency. Yet within 40 years, the empire was gone. The currency collapsed.

Britain had too many military commitments around the world. They won World War I, but at a terrible cost. By 1931, Britain had to abandon the gold standard. The pound lost 25% of its value overnight.

In 1991, the Soviet Union still seemed dominant. It was another superpower. It had nuclear weapons, global influence, and satellites spanning the globe. Yet the Soviet Union ceased to exist 900 days later due to economic implosion.

The idea that nations follow a pattern as they collapse isn't new. Decades ago, I did a week of radio programs on ["The Decline of a Nation."](#) A decade later, I did another week on ["When Nations Die"](#) because of a book that was published with that title.

What is new is how this video explains the seven stages of collapse and applies them to previous empires. But the key point of the video is the reality that America has already completed five of the seven stages. We aren't approaching the pattern but are within it.

As I often suggest, we can resolve some of these issues, but the first step is to admit that we are following this pattern of collapse. Below we will be looking at some of the reasons other empires fell and connect it to what is happening in our world today.

End of Everything

Now we will look at the book by Victor Davis Hanson, *The End*

of Everything: How Wars Descend into Annihilation. {2}

In his book he provides four historical examples: the city-state of Thebes, ancient Carthage, Byzantine Constantinople, and the Aztec Empire. The leaders believed their illustrious pasts would be enough to prevent their destruction. Alexander the Great, Roman Scipio, Muslim Mehmet, and the Spanish conquistador Cortés proved them wrong.

He explains that the leveling of Thebes by Alexander the Great, the erasure of Carthage by Scipio, the conquest and transformation of Constantinople by Sultan Mehmet, and the obliteration of the Aztecs all marked the end of cultures and civilizations.

Alexander, for example, brought an end to classical Greece. The fall of Constantinople marked the end of the Mediterranean world as the nexus of European commerce. And the largest Christian cathedral in the West became the greatest mosque in the Islamic world.

The book is a warning to us today, but I also realize that few people will read his book. That is why I would encourage you to watch his five-minute video summary produced by Hillsdale College. {3}

He says his book “is about the existential destruction of the losing side in a war. This is very rare in history. It doesn’t happen very often. But when it does, it should enlighten us how it does why it does, and can it happen again?”

He explains that he wrote his book “not just as a historical journey to document the rare cases of a targeted nation being completely destroyed, but as a warning that human nature doesn’t change.” We naively assumed that globalization would create a common humanity and bring an end to global conflict. Instead, he “noticed that there were more and more existential threats coming from autocratic regimes.”

He reminds us that the same mentalities and delusions that doomed the Thebans, Carthaginians, the Byzantines, and the Aztecs are still with us today. Even as they were about to be slaughtered, some may still have been thinking, "It cannot happen here."

He wants us to be aware that what happened in the past could happen in the future. We need to learn from the past and protect ourselves in the future. This is a sobering call for contemporary readers to heed the lessons of obliteration, lest we blunder into catastrophe once again. He reminds us that the world needs a strong America so that we can prevent "the end of everything."

Peak Human

Let's now turn to examine the book *Peak Human*, [\[4\]](#) written by historian Johan Norberg.

His book explains what we can learn from the rise and fall of "golden ages." He describes seven of humanity's greatest civilizations from ancient Athens and the Roman Republic to Renaissance Italy, the Dutch Republic, and today's Anglosphere.

Each had their golden age and contributed to our world today. Ancient Greece gave us democracy and the rule of law. From the Muslim world came algebra and modern medicine. The Dutch Republic gave us economic ideas and some of the greatest artistic movements.

He explained that he picked these civilizations because each of them exemplifies what can be described as a golden age. This was a period of innovations that revolutionized many fields and sectors in a short period of time. The characteristics are cultural creativity, scientific discoveries, technological achievements, and economic growth.

He laments that human history is a long list of deprivations

and horrors. But it is also the source of the knowledge, institutions, and technologies that have set most of humanity free from such horrors. It requires raw material, but the citizens needed to be free to experiment and innovate, without being subject to feudal lords, centralized governments, or raving armies.

In a recent interview with John Stossel^{5}, he talked about how Rome inspired our form of government, a republic with a system of checks and balances. “There is a reason why we have a Senate, and they meet in the Capitol,” Norberg explained. “We borrow these ideas from the Romans.”

Of course, these empires fell. “The emperors wanted to become popular by handing out free stuff to people. Originally, this started small. You just handed the very poor means of subsistence. But it was popular, so the group that lived on the public’s expense grew larger all the time.”

Eventually the ever-expanding system of entitlements became too much. Norberg observed, “Romans could conquer the world, but they couldn’t do entitlement reform.” To pay for this, the Roman emperors devalued their currency by putting less gold and silver in each coin. He concluded that, “Inflation was much worse than barbarian invaders.”

This sounds like our world today. Modern governments, including our own, make more financial promises than they can keep. To pay for it, they print more money. We have been living in a golden age, but the question before us today is whether it will continue.

Loss of Moral Values

In this section we will look at an essay by Allen Mashburn who reminds us that “Societies That Surrender Moral Foundation Historically Self-Destruct.”^{6}

This is not a new idea. Decades ago, I did a week of radio

programs on "[The Decline of a Nation](#)." A decade later, I did another week on "[When Nations Die](#)" because of a book that was published with that title. And more recently I even did [a week of programs](#) based on a book that compared America to Rome.

The reason for Mashburn's article were several events that took place during Pride Month. He "never envisioned a day where transvestites would lecture us on human biology, or sterilizers would pose as health professionals advocating for human rights. It seems that our nation has descended into a state of utter madness, where men can now claim pregnancy and the number of genders rivals the alphabet."

Those issues are just a few of the many legitimate concerns which point to the well-documented decline and fall of other civilizations. Greece tolerated and even celebrated immoral behavior. And "the decline of the Roman Empire can be attributed to the abandonment of strong familial bonds and moral values in favor of weakness and laxity." He observes that the similarity between Rome and America is alarming.

Of course, the pattern we recognize in Greece and Rome can be seen in other civilizations in the past. That would include the Egyptians, the Babylonians, the Persians, and even the nation of Israel. In Isaiah 5:20 we read that God pronounced judgment on Israel. "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter."

Of course, there is another side of this equation. Mashburn reminds us that "whenever a nation upholds high moral standards, it reaches the pinnacle of success." Yes, it is true that nations decline when they lose a moral foundation for society. But they also flourish when it upholds morality and integrity while also supporting and encouraging strong families.

He also quotes from the book, *Christians in the Wake of the*

Sexual Revolution, by Randy Alcorn. He warns that unless our country experiences spiritual repentance and undergoes a profound reversal of moral values, we risk inviting the same judgment that befell Sodom and Gomorrah.

That is why Christians should devote themselves to daily prayers for our nation's spiritual and moral well-being. The only way to reverse this downward moral spiral is for a spiritual revival and spiritual repentance in this country.

America's Expiration Date

Finally, we will look at a book by Cal Thomas, *America's Expiration Date*.[\[7\]](#)

He asks, what is America's future? The book came out years ago but has a new preface and is more relevant today. [He was on my radio program](#) to talk about the fall of empires and the future of the United States.

He begins with an observation by Sir John Glubb, who wrote *The Fate of Empires and the Search for Survival*. He noticed an interesting historical fact. The average age of a nation or empire's greatness is only 250 years. Most nations lose their way in a relatively short amount of time.

Using that ruler, Cal Thomas gives us a history lesson of the Persian Empire, the Roman Empire, the Byzantine Empire, the Arab Empire, the Spanish Empire, the Ottoman Empire, the British Empire, and the Russian Empire. He concludes with the United States.

Each empire fell for different reasons, but they are lessons to us today. Sometimes they fell because they became too prosperous and thus too apathetic. Sometimes they fell because the empire was over extended. Most had a period of decadence and decline. The Spanish empire was so riven with conflict, they were never invaded because other countries saw nothing worth conquering.

Persia's decline was due to class struggle. The common people, who were not part of the upper class, began organizing riots and revolts. Kings became greedy and started stealing from the nation's wealth rather than sharing the wealth with the people. The social structure collapsed.

As we have discussed above, Rome's fall was gradual. The familiar saying, "Rome wasn't built in a day." Neither was it destroyed in a day. As the Roman empire grew, more money needed to be provided to the military. The empire's infrastructure suffered. And the common people suffered because the ruling class cared more about what was on the next horizon than what was at home.

He does believe that there is still time to resurrect the republic, but the answer can't be found in politicians. Our future doesn't depend on the White House, but instead is dependent on what we do in our house.

Cal Thomas ends his book with valuable suggestions. First, set standards of decency and morality for your yourself and your family. Reevaluate the education of your children. Don't send them to schools or universities that have largely become propaganda centers for secular progressives. Gather with other believers to worship, celebrate, and to encourage one another. Daily obey the call to "go and make disciples" (Matthew 28:19), often witnessing with words and actions.

Notes

1. The 7-Stage Collapse Pattern, www.youtube.com/watch?v=wb39CeK_yWg.
2. Victor Davis Hanson, *The End of Everything: How Wars Descend into Annihilation*, NY: Basic Books, 2024.
3. Victor Davis Hanson, www.youtube.com/watch?v=H8c0EuIUTTw.
4. Johan Norberg, *Peak Human*, London: Atlantic Books, 2025.
5. John Stossel, *Golden Ages*, www.youtube.com/watch?v=opHnY8tjzug
6. Allen Mashburn, "Societies That Surrender Moral Foundation

Historically Self-Destruct,”

amgreatness.com/2023/07/06/societies-that-surrender-moral-foundation-historically-self-destruct/.

7. Cal Thomas, *America's Expiration Date*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2020.

©2026 Probe Ministries

Woke Theology

We frequently hear the term “woke” in current discussions. Campuses, corporations, and even some churches are described as being woke. What does the term mean? How are these ideas influencing society? Is there any connection to ESG mandates and stakeholder capitalism? And how should Christians respond to the influence of wokeness?

Definition of the Term

The term means that one is “awake” to the true nature of the world at a time when so many in society are asleep. In his book on *Christianity and Wokeness*, Owen Strachan explains that “wokeness occurs when one embraces the system of thought called critical race theory. CRT teaches that all societal life is structured along racial power dynamics.”



According to this view, race is a “social construct,” not biologically based, and merely exists in our imagination. This is one place where there might be some agreement between wokeness and the Bible. The Bible teaches that we are “one race.” Some translations, for example, for Acts 17:26 refer to all humans as “one blood.” Another verse would be Galatians

3:28 which says, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

I have found that woke theology often surfaces in the non-Christian world as a substitute religion. Woke theology also surfaces in some churches that are legitimately concerned about injustice. They want to be relevant to the cultural dialogue and thus adopt wokeness.

These terms are sometimes misused, which is why Strachan also devotes a section on explaining what wokeness is *not*. Here are just five statements of the fifteen he discusses:

- Wanting societal harmony across backgrounds does not make you woke.
- Seeing massive failings in American and Western history, sustained patterns of racist thought, does not make you woke.
- Doing everything you can and know to do to build bonds with people different from you in various ways does not make you woke.
- Praying for greater diversity in your church through saving of fellow sinners does not make you woke.
- Wanting greater justice in the world doesn't make you woke.

In this article we will be looking at various aspects of woke theology. What is the ideology? How does it relate to critical race theory? What about corporations that have adopted a woke ideology? And how can we as Christians respond to this current cultural trend?

Woke Ideology

Wokeness includes the ideas of critical race theory and antiracism but is broader than just these ideas about race and racial justice. It also includes other social, legal, and even

environmental concerns. These ideas were first developed and promoted on university campuses but have made their way into government, corporations, and nearly every part of society.

It is most visible through the actions of people who call themselves “social justice warriors.” Critics might describe them as “virtue-signaling liberals” or merely call them “the woke.” Whatever name you give to these groups, they have been successful in influencing nearly every institution in America and much of the Western world.

They use inflamed rhetoric and what one commentator calls “*ex-cathedra* incantations of pseudo-values so absurd that only a few years ago it would have seemed like they must be kidding.” That’s a fancy way of saying that you can’t believe people are completely serious when they are saying crazy things about race, gender, and science.

Much of this began on university campuses across the nation. Professors promoted ideas about cultural transformation that influenced the young minds who became the future opinion-forming elite of today. These ideas were reinforced because of a liberal media forming a feed-back loop between a leftist academy and a liberal establishment media.

This is an important principle to understand. In the past, we used to hear parents and others argue that the nutty ideas in the heads of college students would fade away as they had to earn a living and deal with the realities of the world of business. What happened was the fact that these college graduates found previous graduates in some of these corporations who were woke soul mates. The woke ideas on campus often became the foundational ideas in business and government. The media continued to reinforce those crazy woke ideas.

In her book, *Awake: Not Woke*, Noelle Mering explains how many in this emerging generation do not believe they are defined as

being in the image of God but instead are called to fight evil in society. They are merely one entity in a group identity rather than someone made in the image and likeness of God. They aren't praised or criticized by their actions and attitudes. Instead, they are elevated or condemned based on their group, their racial background, or their gender. They are not only being indoctrinated by critical theory on race but also by critical theory on sex and gender. And obedience to these ideas is achieved through thought and speech control.

Critical Race Theory

One aspect of wokeness is critical race theory. Critical theory began at the University of Frankfurt's Institute for Social Research, which came to be known as the "Frankfurt School." The Frankfurt scholars fled to Columbia University's Teachers College in New York in 1934 to escape the Nazis.

Critical theory traces all social injustice to inequities in power that are based on class, race, gender, or sexual orientation. In classical Marxism, the focus was on class, with the assumption that the working class would rise up against the capitalist oppressors. By contrast, critical theory is a form of cultural Marxism that seeks a radical transformation of society by uprooting present social authorities. Cultural Marxism retains basic Marxist assumptions but advocated a "long march through the institutions," to quote a leading thinker, Antonio Gramsci.

You are either in power or out of power. If you are in power, you are automatically discredited. If you are underprivileged, you are immune from criticism. The underprivileged can make demands, but they need not make arguments, since the whole system, including basic rationality, is rigged against them. This also means that the claims of critical race theory are unfalsifiable.

At its core, critical race theory is impractical. James

Lindsay asks you to imagine you own a small tailor shop where you must assist each customer individually. Two people enter your store: one is white, and the other is black. If you choose to serve the black person first, it shows you are racist because you don't trust a black person in the store unsupervised. If you choose to serve the white person first, it shows you are racist because you value white people over black people.

How should we respond to these claims? First, the Bible teaches that truth exists and can be discerned (Proverbs 30:5, John 8:32, 2 Timothy 3:16). Racial bias may be a problem, but the real impediment to proper biblical interpretation is our sin (John 3:19-20). Proponents of the woke agenda reject rational arguments and censor contrary ideas about race and society.

Christians are to love God with our minds (Mark 12:30). We are to “destroy arguments and every proud obstacle raised up against the knowledge of God” because we are to “take every thought captive to obey Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:4-5).

Second is the issue of grace. According to their view, members of an “oppressor” race will never really be forgiven because they will always be part of that race. By contrast, the Bible teaches that we are guilty because we are sinful (Romans 3:23, 6:23) not because of our racial status. We cannot earn salvation by good works because salvation is a gift of grace (Ephesians 2:8-9). We are redeemed through Jesus Christ (Romans 3:22-24).

Woke Corporations

Corporations that have gone woke have been increasingly involved in politics. Here are just a few examples from the last year.

When the Georgia legislature debated and then passed voter

integrity laws, the CEOs of several corporations took to the media to express their displeasure. For example, the CEO of Coca-Cola complained the voting law was oppressive, which then brought attention to the fact that the company was doing business in China with oppressive human rights violations. The CEO of Delta Airlines complained about voter IDs as other critics were reminding them that you couldn't get on a Delta flight without showing a form of ID. But if these Georgia laws were supposedly an attempt at voter suppression, they failed since the number of voters in the latest election set records.

Many of these companies seem to be reevaluating their past actions. They can see the downward financial trajectory of past woke companies. The common phrase "get woke, go broke" seems to be true.

They also have noticed how members of Congress have responded. Senator Rick Scott wrote an open letter to "Woke Corporate America," saying that he hoped they were having fun with their virtue signaling and the attempts to one-up each other. But he reminded them they destroyed working people's jobs and destroyed some small businesses.

Although there are some members in Congress who want to pressure corporations to be less woke, there are other significant pressures on these companies to be more woke. This comes from the enforcing of ESG standards. The "E" stands for environmental concerns. What is the company doing to address the threat of climate change by lowering carbon emissions? The "S" stands for social and looks at the company's relationship with stakeholders (often called stakeholder capitalism). The "G" stands for governance and desires diversity on the board of directors and corporate transparency.

While many of the ESG goals are admirable, recent examples show how it has been used as a political tool against anyone who dissents. A senior HSBC banker was canceled merely because he correctly observed that some of the climate change rhetoric

was shrill and unsubstantiated.

Recently Tesla was removed from the S&P 500 ESG Index, even though they are the largest producer of electric cars and a few months ago had the fourth largest weighting in the index. Could it be that this change had more to do with the words and actions of Elon Musk than anything at Tesla?

How Should We Respond?

We are living in a time when we can be canceled for something we say or even for our lack of enthusiasm for a particular policy or piece of legislation. That is why Rod Dreher warns us in his book, *Live Not by Lies*, of a coming “soft totalitarianism.” The old, hard totalitarianism came from the state (Germany, Russia) and was dedicated to the eradication of Christianity. This new totalitarianism usually comes from the Left in society but is also dedicated to the eradication of Christianity.

The soft totalitarianism of today demands allegiance to a set of progressive beliefs. Compliance is forced less by the state than by elites who form public opinion, and by private corporations that control our lives through technology. Citizens won't be taken away in handcuffs by the state, but their lives will be devastated by Leftist elites that will do what they can to destroy their lives.

Dissenters from the woke party line find their businesses, careers, and reputations destroyed. They are pushed out of the public square, stigmatized, canceled, and demonized as racists, sexists, and homophobes.

His book is full of stories from Christians who endured hard totalitarianism and provide us with models for how to address this more insidious form of soft totalitarianism. Often this is coming from business and the media.

What is a biblical perspective on race and gender? Christians

and churches are facing persecution because many of these woke ideas are contrary to Scripture. Nevertheless, many of these woke ideas are making their way into the pulpits and Sunday School classes of many churches.

Woke religion rejects the salvation of Christ and supplants it with a utopian view that true salvation can be found in environmental activism, racial activism, and stakeholder capitalism. We can applaud young people looking to make the world a better place, but they have put their allegiance into a worldview contrary to biblical principles.

Woke faith at its core is atheistic and denies God and Christ. Much of it is rooted in a Marxist view of the world. Second, it also replaces the biblical idea of sin (Romans 3:23) with salvation through environmental activism and racial struggle. Third, it is a utopian vision that assumes we can create “heaven on Earth” without Christ.

If we want to address real social problems in our society, we need to come back to biblical principles. Many of the successful social movements in the last two centuries (abolition, suffrage, civil rights) rested on a biblical foundation. We don't need woke theology to bring salt and light to our fallen world.

Additional Reading

Kerby Anderson, *A Biblical View on Wokeness*, Point of View booklet, 2022.

Kerby Anderson, *A Biblical View on Critical Race Theory*, Point of View booklet, 2021.

Rod Dreher, *Live Not by Lies: A Manual for Christian Dissidents*, New York: Sentinel, 2020.

Noelle Mering, *Awake: Not Woke, A Christian Response to the Cult of Progressive Ideology*, Gastonia, NC: Tan Books, 2021.

Vivek Ramaswamy, *Woke, Inc.*, New York: Center Street, 2021.

Owen Strachan, *Christianity and Wokeness: How the Social*

Justice Movement is Hijacking the Gospel and the Way to Stop It, Washington, DC: Salem Books, 2021.

©2023 Probe Ministries

The Liberal Mind

Kerby Anderson tries to understand the liberal mind from a biblical perspective. What are the assumptions the liberals make? How do those assumptions square with the Bible?

As we begin this discussion, I want to make a clear distinction between the terms “liberal” and “leftist.” We often use the terms interchangeably but there is an important difference.



Dennis Prager wrote about this and even described those differences in a PragerU video.[\[1\]](#) His argument is that traditional liberalism has far more in common with conservatism than it does with leftism. Here are some examples he uses to make his point.

Liberals and leftists have a different view of race. The traditional liberal position on race is that the color of one’s skin is insignificant. By contrast, leftists argue that the notion that race is insignificant is itself racist. Liberals were committed to racial integration and would have rejected the idea of separate black dormitories and separate black graduations on university campuses.

Nationalism is another difference. Dennis Prager says that liberals always deeply believed in the nation-state. Leftists, on the other hand, oppose nationalism and promote class solidarity.

Superman comics illustrate the point. When the writers of Superman were liberal, Superman was not only an American but also one who fought for "Truth, justice, and the American way." The left-wing writers of Superman comics had Superman announce a few years ago that he was going to speak before the United Nations and inform them that he was renouncing his American citizenship.

Perhaps the best example is free speech. American liberals agree with the statement: "I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend your right to say it." Leftists today are leading a nationwide suppression of free speech everywhere from the college campuses to the Big Tech companies.

Capitalism and the free enterprise system would be yet another example. Dennis Prager says, "Liberals have always been pro capitalism," though they often wanted government "to play a bigger role" in the economy. Leftists oppose capitalism and are eagerly promoting socialism.

Liberals have had a love of Western civilization and taught it at most universities. They were promoters of the liberal arts and fine arts. In fact, one of the most revered liberals in American history was President Franklin Roosevelt who talked about the need to protect Western Civilization and even Christian civilization.

Today Western Civilization classes are rarely if ever taught in the university. That's because leftists don't believe Western Civilization is superior to any other civilization. Leftists label people who attempt to defend western values as racist and accuse them of promoting white supremacy. And attempts to promote religious liberty are dismissed as thinly

disguised attacks on the LGBT community.

In conclusion, liberals and leftists are very different.

Ethics and a Belief in Right and Wrong

The philosophical foundation for most liberal perspectives is secularism. If you don't believe in God and the Bible, then you certainly don't believe in biblical absolutes or even moral absolutes. Dostoyevsky put it this way: "If God is dead, then everything is permitted."

Even atheists admit that a view of God affects human behavior. Richard Dawkins recently expressed his fear that the removal of religion would be a bad idea for society because it would give people "license to do really bad things."

He likens the idea of God to surveillance, or as he puts it, the "divine spy camera in the sky."[2](#) People generally tend to do the right thing when someone is watching them. They tend to do bad things when no one is watching. He goes on to add that the "Great Spy Camera theory" isn't a good reason for him to believe in God.

It is also worth mentioning that more and more young people aren't making decisions about right and wrong based on logic but instead based on feelings. I began to notice this decades ago. College students making a statement or challenging a conclusion used to say "I think" as they started a sentence." Then I started to see more and more of them say "I feel" at the start of a sentence. They wouldn't use reason to discuss an issue. Instead, they would use emotion and talk about how they felt about a particular issue.

The liberal mind also has a very different foundation for discussing right and wrong. Dennis Prager recently admitted that he had been wrong. All of his life, he has said that the left's moral compass is broken. But he has concluded that "in

order to have a broken moral compass, you need to have a moral compass to begin with. But the left doesn't have one." [\[3\]](#)

He doesn't mean that conclusion as an attack. It is merely an observation that the left doesn't really think in terms of good and evil. We assume that other people think that way because we think that way. But that is not how most of the people on the left perceive the world.

Karl Marx is a good example. He divided the world by economic class (the worker and the owner). One group was exploiting the other group. Good and evil aren't really relevant when you are thinking in terms of class struggle. Friedrich Nietzsche, for example, operated "beyond good and evil."

To the Marxists, "there is no such thing as a universal good or universal evil." Those of us who perceive the world from a Judeo-Christian worldview see ethics as relevant to the moral standard, not the person or their social status.

A biblical view of ethics and morality begins with the reality that God exists and that He has revealed to us moral principles we are to apply to our lives and society. Those absolute moral principles are tied to God's character and thus unchanging.

A Naïve View of Human Nature

In this article we are talking about the liberal mind, while often making a distinction between liberals and the left. When it comes to the proper view of human nature, both groups have a naïve and inaccurate view.

You can discover this for yourself by asking a simple question: Do you believe people are basically good? You will get an affirmative answer from most people in America because we live in a civilized society. We don't have to deal with the level of corruption or terror that is a daily life in so many

other countries in the world.

But if you press the question, you will begin to see how liberals have difficulty explaining the holocaust and Muslim terrorism. Because the liberal mind starts with the assumption that people are basically good. After all, that is what so many secular philosophers and psychologists have been saying for centuries. Two world wars and other wars during the 20th century should have caused most people to reject the idea that people are basically good.

The Bible teaches just the opposite. Romans 3:23 reminds us that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Jeremiah 17:9 says, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?" This statement about the deceitfulness of our heart may seem extreme until we realize that Jesus also taught that "out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander" (Matthew 15:19).

This naïve view of human nature should concern all of us. Young people, two generations after Auschwitz, believe people are basically good. One reason is biblical illiteracy. Another reason is historical illiteracy. A recent survey found two thirds of young people did not know six million died in the Holocaust and nearly half could not name one of the Nazi death camps.[{4}](#)

This naïve view of human nature may also explain another phenomenon we have discussed before. One of the untruths described in the book, *The Coddling of the American Mind*, is the belief that the battle for truth is "us versus them."[{5}](#) If you think that people are basically good and you have to confront someone who disagrees with you, then they must be a bad person. They aren't just wrong. They are evil.

Tribalism has been with us for centuries. That is nothing new about people joining and defending a tribe. But that has

become more intense because of the rhetoric on university campuses and the comments spreading through social media. We don't have to live this way, but the forces in society are making the divisions in society worse by the day.

A biblical perspective starts with the teaching that all are created in God's image (Genesis 1:27) and thus have value and dignity. But all of us have a sin nature (Romans 5:12). We should interact with others who disagree with us with humility (Ephesians 4:2) and grace (Colossians 4:6).

Big Government

We will now look at why liberals and the left promote big government. The simple answer relates to our discussion above about human nature. If you believe that people are basically good, then it is easy to assume that political leaders and bureaucrats will want to do the best for the citizens.

Christians agree that government is necessary and that it is one of the institutions ordained by God (Romans 13:1-7). There is a role for government to set the rules of governing and to resolve internal disputes through a legal system. Government is not God. But for people who don't believe in God, then the state often becomes God.

Friedrich Hayek wrote about this drive toward big government and the bureaucratic state in his classic book, [*The Road to Serfdom*](#). He argued in his book that "the most important change which extensive government control produces is a psychological change, an alteration in the character of the people."[\[6\]](#)

The character of citizens is changed because they yield their will and decision-making to a more powerful government. They may have done so willingly in order to have a welfare state. Or they may have done so unwillingly because a dictator has taken control of the reins of power. Either way, Hayek argues, their character has been altered because the control over

every detail of economic life is ultimately control of life itself.

Friedrich Hayek wrote *The Road to Serfdom* to warn us that sometimes the road can be paved with good intentions. Most government officials and bureaucrats write laws, rules, and regulations with every good intention. They desire to make the world a better place by preventing catastrophe and by encouraging positive actions from their citizens. But in their desire to control and direct every aspect of life, they take us down the road to serfdom.

He argued that people who enter into government and run powerful bureaucracies are often people who enjoy running not only the bureaucracy but also the lives of its citizens. In making uniform rules from a distance, they deprive the local communities of the freedom to apply their own knowledge and wisdom to their unique situations. A government seeking to be a benevolent god, usually morphs into a malevolent tyrant.

The liberal mind is all too willing to allow political leaders and bureaucrats to make decisions for the public. But that willingness is based on two flawed assumptions. First, human beings are not God and thus government leaders will certainly make flawed decisions that negatively affect the affairs of its citizens. Second, liberals do not believe we have a sin nature (Romans 3:23), and that includes government leaders. Even the best of them will not always be wise, compassionate, and altruistic. This is why the founders of this country established checks and balances in government to limit the impact of sinful behavior.

Tolerance?

If there is one attitude that you would think would be synonymous with the liberal mind, it would be [tolerance](#). That may have been true in the past. Liberalism championed the idea

of free thought and free speech. That is no longer the case.

Liberals have been developing a zero-tolerance culture. In some ways, that has been a positive change. We no longer tolerate racism. We no longer tolerate sexism. Certain statements, certain jokes, and certain attitudes have been deemed off-limits.

The problem is that the politically correct culture of the left moved the lines quickly to begin to attack just about any view or value contrary to the liberal mind. Stray at all from the accepted limits of leftist thinking and you will earn labels like racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic.

Quickly the zero-tolerance culture became the cancel culture. It is not enough to merely label an opponent with a smear, the left demands that an "enemy" lose their social standing and even their job and livelihood for deviating from what is acceptable thought. A mendacious social media mob will make sure that you pay a heavy penalty for contradicting the fundamental truths of the liberal mind.

One phenomenon that promotes this intolerance is the use of smears and negative labels. For example, patriotism and pride in your country is called xenophobia. Acknowledging the innate differences between males and females is labelled sexist. Promoting the idea that we are all of one race (the human race) and that all lives matter is called racist. Questioning whether we should redefine traditional marriage is deemed homophobic. Arguing that very young children should not undergo sex assignment surgery is called transphobia. Pointing out that most terrorist attacks come from Muslim terrorists is labelled Islamophobic.

Should Christians be [tolerant](#)? The answer is yes, we should be tolerant, but that word has been redefined in society to argue that we should accept every person's behavior. The Bible does not permit that. That is why I like to use the word [civility](#).

Essentially, that is the Golden Rule: “Do to others whatever you would have them do to you” (Matthew 7:12).

Civility requires humility. A civil person acknowledges that he or she does not possess all wisdom and knowledge. That means we should listen to others and consider the possibility that they might be right, and we could be wrong. Philippians 2:3 says, “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself.” We can disagree with other without being disagreeable. Proverbs 15:1 reminds us that “A gentle answer turns away wrath.”

This is an important principle as we try to understand the liberal mind and work to build bridges to others in our society.

Notes

1. Dennis Prager, *Left or Liberal?*, <https://www.prageru.com/video/left-or-liberal/>.
2. David Sanderson, “Ending religion is a bad idea, says Richard Dawkins,” *The Times*, October 5, 2019, www.thetimes.co.uk/article/ending-religion-is-a-bad-idea-says-richard-dawkins-sqqdbmcpq
3. Dennis Prager, “The Left’s Moral Compass Isn’t Broken,” September 15, 2020, townhall.com/columnists/dennisprager/2020/09/15/the-lefts-moral-compass-isnt-broken-n2576225.
4. Ryan Miller, “Almost two-thirds of millennials, Gen Z don’t know that 6 million Jews were killed in the Holocaust, survey finds,” *USA Today*, September 16, 2020, www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2020/09/16/holocaust-history-millennials-gen-z-cant-name-concentration-camps/5792448002/.
5. Jonathan Haidt and Greg Lukianoff, et al., *The Coddling of the American Mind: How Good Intentions and Bad Ideas Are Setting Up a Generation for Failure*. New York City: Penguin Press, 2018,

probe.org/coddling-of-the-american-mind/.

6. F.A. Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom: Text and Documents, the Definitive Edition*, ed. Bruce Caldwell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 48.

©2020 Probe Ministries

Gen-Z: The Generation That Ends Christian Influence in America?

In order to grow the number of Gen-Z Christians, we need an understanding of ways to build bridges from their pluralistic, secular worldview to seriously contemplating the unique grace of God. Steve Cable draws upon the wisdom of two pastors who are making a real difference in the lives of young adults to address this important topic.

What Are Gen-Zs Like?

In this article we look beyond the Millennials to consider the latest generation and what they tell us about the future of Evangelicals in America. Gen-Z is the generation born between 1995 and 2010.

This year, half of the Gen-Z generation are 18 or older. By the time they are all at least 18, the Millennials and Gen-Zs will make up almost 50% of the adult population. We will consider how this generation compares with previous generations. We want to understand this generation to truly communicate the good news of the gospel to them; to help them “to walk in a manner worth of the Lord.”[{1}](#)



In their book, *So the Next Generation Will Know*^{2}, Sean McDowell and J. Warner Wallace identified some key traits common among Gen-Zs. They are:

1. Digital Multitaskers – “spending nearly every waking hour interacting with . . . digital technology,” often while watching television
2. Impatient – quickly moving from thing to thing with an attention span of around 8 seconds
3. Fluid – constantly blurring the lines; making truth, genders, and family structures personal choices
4. Lonely – swamped in social media where personal relationships are minimized while personal troubles follow them everywhere. Sean points to “the availability of endless counterfeits that claim to be able to fill their hearts with meaning.”^{3}
5. Individualistic – individual feelings more important than facts while judging the choices of others is avoided. As James White points out in *Meet Generation Z*^{4}, “the ability to find whatever they’re after without the help of intermediaries . . . has made them more independent. . . . Like no other generation before, Gen-Z faces a widening chasm between wisdom and information.”^{5}

Most importantly, most of these young Americans are thoroughly secular with little exposure to Christian theology. As White opines, “They are lost. They are not simply living in and being shaped by a post-Christian cultural context. They do not even have a memory of the gospel. . . . They have endless amounts of information but little wisdom, and virtually no mentors.”^{6}

As they enter adulthood, the culture around them will not encourage them to consider the claims of Christ. In fact, the Millennials going before them are already seen leaving any Christian background behind as they age into their thirties.

Gen-Z: How Are They Trending?

What can we truly know about the religious thinking of Gen-Zs age 11 to 25? Pew Research surveyed teens and their parents giving us a glimpse into both^{7}.

They found *one third* of American teens are religiously Unaffiliated.^{8} In contrast, their parents were less than *one quarter* Unaffiliated. Another Pew survey^{9} found more than *half* of young adult Gen-Zs are unaffiliated. This group is easily the largest religious group among Gen-Zs.

Teens attend church services with their parents, but lag behind in other areas. Less than *one fourth* of teens consider religion very important. And on an absolute belief in God and praying daily, the teens trail their parents significantly.

Using an index of religious commitment^{10}, almost *half* of the parents but only *one third* of teens rated high. In fact, almost half of teenagers with parents who rated high did not rate high themselves.^{11}

Perhaps the minds of teenagers are mush. Their views will firm up as they age. In reality, older Gen-Zs and Millennials also trail older adults by more than 20 points in believing in God and praying daily.^{12} Also, church attendance drops dramatically among these young adults who are no longer attending with parents.

If religion were important to teens, they would look to religious teaching and beliefs to help make decisions about what is right and wrong. But less than *one third* of teens affiliated with a religion turned to its teachings to make such decisions.

As George Barna reports,^{13} “The faith gap between Millennials and their predecessors is the widest intergenerational difference identified at any time in the last seven decades.” It seems that Gen-Z will increase this

gap.

Gen-Z: Worldview and Apologetics

Why have the Unaffiliated been growing dramatically over the last 25 years while doctrinally consistent Christians have been declining? At one level, we recognize the watered-down gospel taught in many churches encourages people to pursue other things and not waste time on church. That may have been the primary issue at one time. But in this decade, we are seeing a real reduction in the number of Evangelicals as well. The self-professed Evangelicals^{14} among those ages 18 to 29 has reduced from 29% down to 20%, a reduction of almost one third.

One major driver is the dominant worldview of our young adult society. The worldview promoted by our schools, media, and entertainment industry has changed from a Christian inspired worldview to a worldview which is secular and specifically anti-Christian. As James White observes, “It’s simply a cultural reality that people in a post-Christian world are genuinely incredulous that anyone would think like a Christian—or at least, what it means in their minds to think like a Christian.”^{15}

Almost all Gen-Zs have been brought up hearing the worldview of Scientism espoused. This worldview teaches “that all that can be known within nature is that which can be empirically verified . . . If something cannot be examined in a tangible, scientific manner, it is not simply unknowable, it is meaningless.”^{16} At the same time, most Gen-Zs have not even been exposed to an Evangelical Christian worldview. Consequently, apologetics is critical for opening their minds to hear the truth of the gospel. Many of them need to understand that the basic tenets of a Christian worldview can be true before they will consider whether these tenets are true for them. Answering questions such as: “Could there be a creator of this universe?” and “Could that creator possibly be

involved in this world which has so much pain and suffering?" is a starting point to opening their minds to a Christian view.

Encouraging Gen-Zs to understand the tenets of their worldview and comparing them to a Christian worldview begins the process of introducing them to the gospel. As White points out, "I have found that discussing the awe and wonder of the universe, openly raising the many questions surrounding the universe and then positing the existence of God, is one of the most valuable approaches that can be pursued."[{17}](#) The Christian worldview is coherent, comprehensive and compelling as it explains why our world is the way it is and how its trajectory may be corrected into one that honors our Creator and lifts up people to a new level of life.

Gen-Z: Removing the Isolation of Faith

What will it take to reach Gen-Z? James White says, ". . . the primary reason Gen-Z disconnects from the church is our failure to equip them with a biblical worldview that empowers them to understand and navigate today's culture."[{18}](#) If we want to equip Gen-Zs to embrace faith, we must directly discuss worldview issues with them.

The challenge is exacerbated as most Gen-Zs are taught a redefined tolerance: to not only accept classmates with different worldviews, e.g. Muslims and the Unaffiliated, but to believe that it is as true for them as your parents' worldview is for them. As Sean McDowell states, "Gen-Zs are exposed to more competing worldviews—and at an earlier age—than any generation in history."[{19}](#)

The new tolerance leads directly to a pluralistic view of salvation. Christ stated, "No one comes to the Father except through me,"[{20}](#) and Peter preached that "There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven . . . by which we must be saved."[{21}](#) Yet the survey of American

teens{22} finds *less than one third* believe that only one religion is true, broken up into *two-thirds* of Evangelicals and *less than one-third* of Mainlines and Catholics.

Compounding these issues is the growing practice of limiting the impact of religious beliefs on real life. Sean points out, "The biggest challenge in teaching worldview to young people is the way our increasingly secular culture fosters the compartmentalization of faith." {23} We need to help them see how a consistent Christian worldview applies to all issues. It is foolish to segregate your spiritual beliefs from your life decisions.

As an example, many Gen-Zs are enamored by a socialist view that the government should provide everything we need, equally distributing goods and services to all. Those who work hard and excel will have their productivity redistributed equally. It sounds like a possibly good approach and yet it has destroyed the economies of many countries including Russia, Cuba, and Venezuela. It fails because it is based on a worldview that "assumes greed comes from inequality in the distribution of material goods in society." {24} In contrast, the Bible is clear that greed is part of the fallenness of the human heart. As a result, any centralized function with no competition discourages productivity and becomes an inefficient bureaucracy.

Reaching Gen-Zs

Today, most Gen-Zs move into adulthood with little exposure to the gospel. The majority are either Unaffiliated, another religion, or have a nominal Christian background. Current surveys find that 98% of young Americans do not have a Christian worldview. {25}

This sobering data does not mean giving up on reaching Gen-Z. But if we are not intentional about it, we are not going to stem the tide. As James White observes, "What is killing the

church today is (focusing) on keeping Christians within the church happy, well fed, and growing. The mission . . . must be about those who have not crossed the line of faith.”

And Sean McDowell points out that we need “to teach the difference between subjective and objective truth claims and make sure they understand that Christianity falls in the latter category.”[{26}](#)

Sean encourages a focus on relationships saying, “Relationships are the runway on which truth lands. Take the time to listen with empathy, monitor from a place of wisdom, and demonstrate your concern.”[{27}](#) White agrees, saying, “If we want (them) to know the faith, we have to teach, model and incarnate truth in our relationship with them.”[{28}](#) From a place of relationship, we can address challenges keeping them from truly hearing the gospel.

One key challenge is the role of media. As Sean notes, “Media shapes their beliefs, and it also shapes the orientation of their hearts.”[{29}](#) To counter this pervasive influence, he suggests engaging them in a skeptic’s blog. Help them consider 1) what claim is being made, 2) is the claim relevant if true, and 3) decide how to investigate the claim.[{30}](#) By learning to investigate claims, they are examining the truth of the gospel. We should never fear the gospel coming up short when looking for the truth.

Key ways White’s church is connecting with the Unaffiliated include:

1. Rethinking evangelism around Paul’s message in Athens. Tantalizing those with no background to search for truth in Christ.
2. Teaching the grace/truth dynamic in quick segments consistent with their learning styles.
3. Being cultural missionaries – learning from those who have not been Christians.

4. Cultivating a culture of invitation by creating tools to invite friends all the time.

If we focus on growing the number of Gen-Z Christians, we could change the trajectory of American faith. If we devote ourselves to prayer, the leadership of the Holy Spirit, and reaching the lost in America rather than continuing church as usual, God can use us to turn the tide.

Notes

1. Colossians 1:9.
2. Josh McDowell and J. Warner Wallace, *So the Next Generation Will Know*, 2019, David C. Cook.
3. McDowell and Wallace, p. 66.
4. James White, *Meet Generation Z: Understanding and Reaching the New Post-Christian World*, Baker Books, 2017.
5. White, p. 44.
6. White, p. 64-65.
7. Pew Research Center, U.S. Teens Take After Their Parents Religiously, Attend Services Together and Enjoy Family Rituals, September 10, 2020.
8. These are people who self-identify as atheist, agnostic or nothing in particular. In previous surveys, we referred to them as the Nones. Calling them the “unaffiliated” helps us avoid the confusion between “Nones” and “nuns.”
9. Call out Pew survey from 2019.
10. The index of religious commitment looks at the answers to questions on church attendance, belief in God, prayer, and importance of religion and rates a respondents commitment from high to low based on their answers. General Social Survey, 2018.
11. 42% of the teenagers with parents with a high index had a medium or low index.
12. General Social Survey, 2018
13. American Worldview Inventory 2020, Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University.
14. Pew Research surveys 2007, 2014, 2019.

15. White, p. 130.
16. White, p. 141.
17. White, p. 139.
18. White, p. 80.
19. McDowell and Wallace, p. 81.
20. John 14:6b.
21. Acts 4:12.
22. Pew Research Center, U.S. Teens.
23. McDowell and Wallace, p. 87.
24. Ibid, p. 93.
25. American Worldview Inventory 2020.
26. McDowell and Wallace, p. 113.
27. McDowell and Wallace, p. 78.
28. White, p. 64.
29. McDowell and Wallace, p. 164.
30. Ibid, p. 173-4.

©2021 Probe Ministries

Socialism and Society

Kerby Anderson provides an overview of the popularity of socialist ideas in America from a biblical perspective.

Socialism is more popular today than anyone would have predicted a few years ago. A significant number of socialist characters can be found in Congress. Universities have many professors who are promoting socialism. And more young people than ever believe socialism is superior to capitalism.



Why is socialism so appealing to so many Americans? Young people are drawn to the siren song of Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. Part of the reason is that it appeals to their sense of fairness. Another reason is that it promises lots of free stuff.

Free college tuition and student loan forgiveness are examples. The millennial generation (Generation Y) and the iGen generation (Generation Z) have lots of student debt. They see the need but forget that someone would have to pay for this new massive entitlement. And they rarely stop and think about why someone who didn't go to college and took a blue-collar job should pay for their university education. These may be the most educated generations in history, but they don't seem to spend too much time reflecting on what they supposedly learned in economics.

The cost of some of these policies is enormous. Just covering the cost of tuition at public colleges and universities is estimated at \$70 billion a year. One study of the cost of government-run health care (called "Medicare for All") was estimated to cost \$32 trillion during the first ten years. Some estimate the cost of the "Green New Deal" to be \$93 trillion. We can certainly debate how accurate some of those estimates are, but we can't ignore that they would be very expensive once these programs are implemented.

There is some evidence that the popularity of socialism is waning. A post-election survey done by the Cultural Research Center shows a significant decline in support for socialism. George Barna believes that another reason for this decline is the aggressive marketing of a government-driven culture that show young and old what socialism in America would really be like.

He found that the most precipitous decline in support for socialism was among Americans ages 30 to 49. Just a decade ago, they were the demographic I often pointed to as those who

supported socialism more than capitalism. That has changed significantly.

Socialism is less popular even for Americans who are age 50 years or older. In the past, they have been the group most consistent in their support of capitalism. But even in this group, there was an eight percentage-point decline of support for socialism.

The demographic groups with the least support for socialism were Christians who had a biblical worldview and what George Barna calls SAGE Cons (Spiritually Active Governance Engaged Conservative Christians). But there are still a small percentage of them who support socialism. That is why I also address whether the Bible teaches socialism.

The Promise of Socialism

In order to understand the appeal of socialism, we need to make a clear distinction between capitalism and socialism. *Capitalism* is an economic system in which there is private property and the means of production are privately owned. In capitalism, there is a limited role for government. *Socialism* is an economic system in which there is public or state ownership of the means of production, and the primary focus is on providing an equality of outcomes. In socialism, the state is all-important and involved in central planning.

Often when young people are surveyed about socialism, the pollster does not provide a definition. If you merely believe socialism means more equality in society, then you can see why so many choose socialism over capitalism. Also, young people under the age of 30 are probably the least likely to associate socialism with Soviet-style repression. Instead, they may have in their minds the current government push toward European socialism and find that more attractive.

There is also an important philosophical reason for the

popularity of socialism. When Karl Marx first proposed the concepts of socialism and communism, he enjoyed an intellectual advantage. He could talk about the problems with capitalism the modern world was going through as they were adapting to the difficult process of industrialization. He could contrast the *reality* of capitalism with the *utopian* ideal of socialism.

Utopian visions will always win out over the harsh reality of the world. But we now have the terrible record of socialism. Unfortunately, socialism's death toll never quite gets factored into any equation. The late columnist Joseph Sobran said: "It makes no difference that socialism's actual record is terribly bloody; socialism is forever judged by its promises and supposed possibilities, while capitalism is judged by its worst cases."[\[1\]](#)

Dinesh D'Souza reminds us that many countries have tried socialism and all failed. The first socialist experiment was the Soviet Union, then came lots of countries in eastern Europe (Poland, Yugoslavia, Albania, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, and East Germany). Add to that countries in Asia (Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, North Korea, and China) and countries in South America (Cuba, Nicaragua, Bolivia, and Venezuela) and Africa (Angola, Ghana, Tanzania, Benin, Mali, Mozambique, Zambia, and Zimbabwe). By his count, there are 25 failed experiments in socialism.[\[2\]](#)

The typical answer to these failures is that each of these wasn't done correctly. The failure of these socialist experiments was a failure of implementation. But this time, they say, we will get it right. Believing in socialism apparently mean never having to say you're sorry.

In the next section we will look at the argument that democratic socialism is the ideal we should pursue. We should ignore this list of socialist failures and focus on socialism in the Scandinavian countries.

A Different Kind of Socialism

Proponents of socialism not only argue that it was not implemented correctly in the past but also argue that what they are proposing is “democratic socialism.” They usually point to the Scandinavian countries as examples.

Anders Hagstrom in one of his videos asks, “What does socialism mean to [people such as actor and comedian Jim Carrey]?” He says that conversations about socialism often go like this: “A liberal says we should be socialist. A conservative points to Venezuela, and says socialism doesn’t work. A liberal says, What about Sweden and Norway? The conservative then points out that those countries aren’t actually socialist.”[\[3\]](#)

He says that even if we accept the comment by liberals, there is a problem. “Nordic countries have tiny populations of less than 10 million. And copying and pasting their policies to a country of 330 million isn’t going to work.” These Nordic countries were successful before they adopted the redistributive policies they have now. Here’s a reality check: if Sweden were to join the U.S. as a state, Sweden would be poorer than all but 12 states.

Hagstrom also explains that the policies of true socialists like Senator Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio Cortez go far beyond what the Nordic countries have. For example, Bernie Sanders wants a planned economy. None of the Nordic states have this. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez wants to abolish profit. None of the Nordic countries have done that. And both of them want a universal minimum wage. None of the Nordic states have that.

There’s another problem with the argument. These countries aren’t socialist. John Stossel in one of his videos interviewed a prominent Swedish historian.[\[4\]](#) Johan Norberg makes it clear that “Sweden is not socialist—because the

government doesn't own the means of production. To see that, you have to go to Venezuela or Cuba or North Korea." He does admit that the country did have something that resembled socialism a few decades ago. The government heavily taxed the citizens and spent heavily. That was not a good period in Swedish history, especially for the economy.

Yet even with the high Swedish taxes, there was simply not enough money to fund Sweden's huge welfare state. Norberg explains that "People couldn't get the pension that they thought they depended on for the future." At this point, the Swedish people had enough and began to reduce the size and scope of the government.

John Stossel says, "They cut public spending, privatized the national rail network, abolished certain government monopolies, eliminated inheritance taxes and sold state-owned businesses like the maker of Absolut vodka." While it is true that Sweden does have a larger welfare state than the US and higher taxes than the US, there are many other areas where Sweden is actually more free market.

Socialism and Equality

One of the moral arguments for socialism is that it creates a society with more social and economic equality. Proponents want us to consider the fairness argument when applied to a free market. How fair is it that basketball star LeBron James makes more than \$37 million when a social worker starting out only makes about \$30,000? Even more extreme is the estimate that Jeff Bezos makes more than \$320 million a day while the average Amazon salary is around \$35,000 a year.

Of course, this is what happens in a free society where people with different skills, different abilities, and different motivations are allowed to participate in a free market. You will get inequality, but you also have a free society where

people can use their gifts to pursue their calling and still receive a good income.

We don't have to guess what will happen in a socialist economy because we have lots of historical examples. In a desire to bring equality, socialism doesn't bring people up out of poverty. Instead, it drives them into poverty. Consider two test cases (Germany and Korea).

After World War II, Germany was divided into two countries: West Germany was capitalist, while East Germany was socialist. Throughout the time they were divided, there was a striking difference between the two countries. When the two countries were reunified, the GDP of East Germany was a third of the GDP of West Germany.

An even better example is North and South Korea, because it lasted longer and continues to this day. South Korea is now more than 20 times richer than North Korea. Of course, people in South Korea are also freer than North Korea. They are also taller and live about 12 years longer than people in North Korea.[\[5\]](#)

By contrast, capitalism provides every person a chance to influence the society. In his book, *United States of Socialism*, Dinesh D'Souza doesn't ignore the issue of justice but actually embraces it. Capitalism, he says, "far more than socialism, reflects the will of the people and expresses democratic consent."[\[6\]](#) A consumer is like a voter. As a citizen, we get to vote in an election every two to four years. But a consumer gets to vote every day with his or her dollar bills. That money represents the time and effort put in to get those dollar bills.

The free market provides you a level of popular participation and democratic consent that politics can never provide. You get to vote every day with your dollars and send economic signals to people and companies providing goods and services.

Essentially, capitalism, like democracy, is a clear form of social justice.

The Bible and Socialism

Perhaps you have heard some Christians argue that the Bible actually supports socialism. The book of Acts seems to approve of socialism. In Acts 4, we find a statement that the believers in Jerusalem “had all things in common.” It also says that those who possessed land or houses sold them and brought the proceeds to the apostles’ feet. They distributed these gifts to anyone in need. This looks like socialism to many who are already predisposed to believe it should be the economic system of choice.

First, we need to realize that this practice was only done in Jerusalem. As you read through the rest of the book of Acts and read the letters of Paul and Peter, you see that most believers in other parts of the Roman world had private property and possessions. Paul calls upon them to give voluntarily to the work of ministry.

Second, the word voluntary applies not only to Christians in other parts of the world, but it also was a voluntary act by the believers in Jerusalem to give sacrificially to each other in the midst of persecution. This one passage in the book of Act is not a mandate for socialism.

If you keep reading in the book of Acts, you can also see that the believers in Jerusalem owned the property before they voluntarily gave the proceeds to the apostles. The next chapter (Acts 5) clearly teaches that. When Peter confronted Ananias, he clearly stated that: “While it remained, was it not your own? After it was sold, was it not in your own control?”

Owning property contradicts one of the fundamental principles of socialism. In the *Communist Manifesto*, “the abolition of

property” is a major item in the plan for moving from capitalism to socialism and eventually to communism.

By contrast, the Ten Commandments assume private property. The eighth commandment forbidding stealing and the tenth commandment about coveting both assume that people have private property rights.

In fact, we can use biblical principles to evaluate economic systems like capitalism and socialism. Although the Bible does not endorse a particular system, it does have key principles about human nature, private property rights, and the role of government. These can be used to evaluate economic systems like socialism and communism.

Socialism is still a popular idea, especially among young people. Recent polls along with various books about capitalism and socialism illustrate the need for us to discuss and explain the differences between capitalism and socialism. Socialism may sound appealing until you begin to look at the devastating impact it has had on countries that travel down the road of greater governmental control.

Notes

1. Joseph Sobran quoted by Robert Knight, “Bernie’s siren song of socialism,” *Washington Times*. September 13, 2015, www.washingtontimes.com/news/2015/sep/13/robert-knight-bernie-sanders-siren-song-of-sociali/
2. Dinesh D’Souza, *United States of Socialism*, New York: All Points Books, 2020, 3.
3. Anders Hagstrom, “When you are forced to argue socialism with a liberal,” www.facebook.com/watch/?v=234493017230024.
4. John Stossel, “Sweden is not a socialist success,” www.facebook.com/watch/?v=407319650027595.
5. *Ibid.*, 5.
6. *Ibid.*, 186.

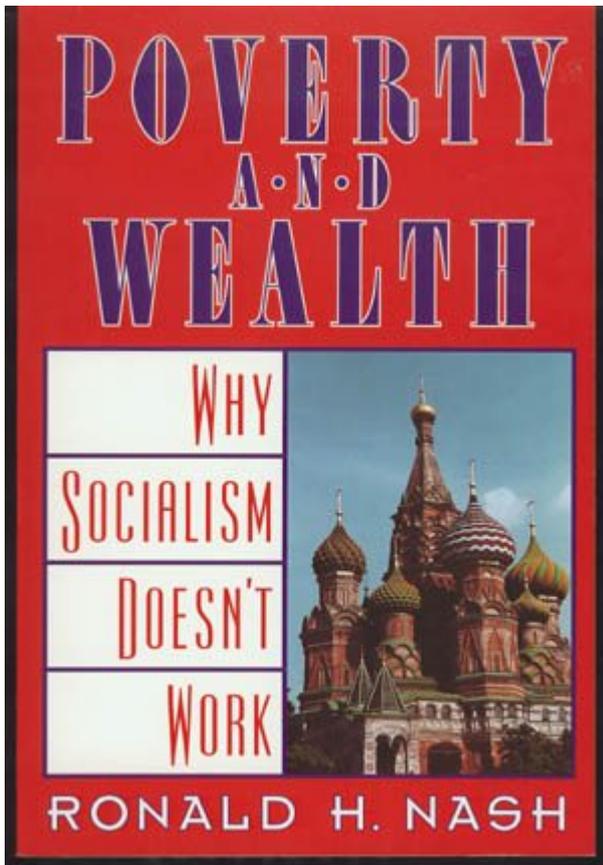
Poverty and Wealth

Don Closson examines the arguments in Ronald Nash's book Poverty and Wealth: Why Socialism Doesn't Work and concludes that capitalism is compatible with biblical ethics.

It's disheartening to meet young Christians who are convinced of the immorality of capitalism and the free market system. Sincere Christians often quote the second chapter of Acts which describes how the church in Jerusalem held all things in common as proof that socialism or collectivism is more biblical than the free market. Sometimes they use the Marxist critique that "poor nations are poor because rich nations oppress them." It's unusual to meet students who wholeheartedly endorses capitalism. They recognize that it works well enough to make the U.S. the richest nation on earth, but it's not something to be proud of or openly endorse.

There continues to be a heated debate in our country over which economic system is the most just and best able to weather the inevitable economic ups and downs in today's complex worldwide economy. Christians wonder if capitalism is inherently incompatible with Christian ethics. Is it driven by greed and self-interest alone? Does it thrive on oppression? Does it conflict with a biblical view of human nature?





Ronald Nash's book *Poverty and Wealth: Why Socialism Doesn't Work*[\[1\]](#) faces these questions head on and concludes that free market capitalism leads to abundance and political freedom because it is based on the laws of economics and the truth about human nature. Social and economic programs that ignore these laws will inevitably cause more harm than good. Even more importantly, Nash argues that capitalism is compatible with biblical ethics. He writes,

Capitalism is quite simply the most moral system, the most effective system, and the most equitable system of economic exchange. When capitalism, the system of free economic exchange, is described fairly, there can be no question that it, rather than socialism or interventionism, comes closer to matching the demands of the Biblical ethic.[\[2\]](#)

In order to understand Dr. Nash's point we will define some basic economic concepts and compare capitalism with socialism and interventionism. Neither Dr. Nash's book nor I question the intentions of Christians who have accepted Marxist solutions, but we do question their wisdom. In the words of Dr. Nash,

“Unfortunately, many Christians act as though the only thing that counts is intention. But when good intentions are not wedded to sound theory, especially sound economic theory, good intentions can often result in actions that produce consequences directly opposite to those we planned.”

Even the acceptance of free markets by China and Eastern Europe have not swayed the true believer of Marxist thinking. Our young people will encounter a Marxist critique of capitalism and the free market system at some point in their education. As parents we owe it to our children to have an answer to their certain questions.

The Market System

The market system is the set of rules that creates a voluntary system of exchange resulting in the price, selection, and quantity of products that are made and sold in an economy. Those who support capitalism believe that both parties benefit from the voluntary exchange of goods and services. Marxists, on the other hand, often argue that the free market system results in a win/lose relationship. What are the rules that define a free market system and what role should government play in maintaining it?

The rules of a free market system are simple. First, people should not be coerced into making economic exchanges. This means that they should be free from force, fraud, or theft. Another rule is that people must honor their contracts to buy or sell with another party. Just as local government provides for the traffic signals in a town, government is responsible for enforcing the basic rules of the free market. Traffic signals create order out of potential chaos on our roads. Likewise, the rules of the free market system create order out of potential economic chaos. But in neither case do the rules tell people where to go or what to trade. Both systems are neutral to an individual's personal goals.

The decentralized actions of producers and consumers encourage the production of a vast array of products at prices that people are willing to pay. These goods and services are produced, not because someone is forced to, but because they know that by satisfying needs they can earn an income and satisfy their own desires. Free market capitalism is based on this principle of mutual accommodation. The market also encourages the efficient use of resources. Price is a factor of demand for a product and the scarcity of its components. It is the market which takes into account an almost infinite number of decisions and variables to make goods available at the best possible price. Profits and losses within the market encourage producers to move into or out of the production of a given item. Inefficient production or over-production of an item will result in losses sufficient enough to change a producer's behavior.

Government is necessary for enforcing the basic rules of a free market economy. Its interest should be to make sure that justice prevails, and to ensure the common good. This includes the right to own and exchange property, the enforcement of contracts, as well as laws forbidding the use of force, fraud, and theft. If the government itself begins to intervene beyond this role, it becomes a detriment to the market and can itself become the source of injustice. A system based on, or highly influenced, by government coercion cannot be called a free market system.

Capitalism vs. Socialism

A former president of the Evangelical Theological Society has written that capitalism violates "the basic ethical principles of Christianity" and that there is an essential political and economic dimension to the Kingdom of God which capitalism defiles. This thinking has the effect of placing supporters of capitalism among the heretics and against the Kingdom of God. Does capitalism really violate the gospel message and a

biblical worldview? Does socialism offer the only righteous means for creating and distributing wealth?

Capitalism argues that individuals have the right to make decisions about what they own. This not only assumes the right to own property, but to exchange what one owns for something else, and to be free from force in the form of fraud, theft, or the violation of a contract. The moral base of "thou shalt not steal" and "thou shalt not lie" are essential to the success of a capitalistic system. In fact, these basic rules of capitalism are very similar to an Old Testament view of righteousness which focused on the completion of covenant agreements. God is considered a righteous God partially because He fulfills His covenants with His creation.

Marxists love to point to examples like the Philippines under Ferdinand Marcos in order to criticize capitalism. This corrupt regime can surely be criticized, but not as an example of capitalism. It is representative of what might be called an interventionist economy. There are three general types of economies: capitalist, interventionist, and socialist. Capitalism and socialism are at the two ends of the continuum with interventionism in the middle. The two opposites represent two possible means of exchange. Capitalism is defined by its advocacy of free or peaceful exchange, allowing individual choice regarding the use of personal property. Socialism is defined by centralized planning, using force to get individuals to conform to its decisions. A system becomes less capitalistic and more interventionist as more and more economic decisions are coerced by the government. It becomes socialistic when basic needs are met only by the government, forcing people to deal with it exclusively. The ideal of capitalism is freedom; the ideal of socialism is forced compliance with government planning.

Critics of capitalism condemn economic systems in which interest groups use the power of government to intervene on their behalf, forcing consumers via taxes or mandates to spend

their money or use their talents in a way they would not freely choose. But this isn't capitalism; it's interventionism, and unfortunately a pretty good description of where the U.S. is headed.

Economic Systems and Human Nature

Is capitalism the primary cause of world poverty? Although the Bible does teach that exploitation is one cause of poverty, it also teaches that it results from indigence and sloth as well as accidents, injuries, and illness. When the prophet Amos condemned the Jews for forcing the poor to give them grain, for taking bribes, and depriving the oppressed justice, he was highlighting violations of free market capitalism as well.

Some believe that capitalism is built on greed, which the Bible condemns. However, the Bible does teach a certain level of self-interest. For example, 1 Timothy 5:8 is critical of anyone who does not provide for the needs of his family. And although selfishness exists in capitalistic countries, it is not inherent to the system; it is inherent to humanity. Either we allow people to make choices based on their own self-interest and moral virtue, or we turn those decisions over to a central government. Could it be naïve to think that government officials will use wealth in a morally superior way to those outside of government? History teaches that when power is centralized it has the tendency to be abused.

In a non-coercive free market environment, those who serve the needs of others will prosper. As long as the rule of law prevails and the government isn't allowed to stack the deck for one particular group against another, the market protects us from the greed of others. The free market is by definition one place where coercion is not possible.

Socialists contend that competition is another evil of capitalism, but is competition itself an evil? We can agree

that using force, fraud, or theft to compete is morally wrong, but can we really say that all competition is wrong? Scarcity demands competition; as long as resources are limited we will find some competitive means for allocating them. Socialist societies use long waiting lines and bureaucratic red tape to dole out limited goods, and competition is intense for political positions that result in material gain.

There are only two ways to resolve conflict that results from scarcity. One is by force, the other is by free market competition. Non-violent free market competition has helped to alleviate the effects of scarcity by stirring people to high levels of excellence in manufacturing and services. Socialist countries are not usually known for the quantity or quality of their goods and services.

Economist Walter Williams notes that “Capitalism has a strong bias toward serving the common man. . . . Political allocation of resources, regardless of its stated purpose, is strongly biased in favor of the elite.”[\[3\]](#) Maybe that is why the elite have such disdain for capitalism.

Critiquing Socialism

Highly collectivist economies are not known for producing what people need at a price they can afford. In the 1920s, economist Ludwig von Mises showed why central planners can never replace the market: they are unable to gather the necessary information to plan accurately. The market system provides incentives to both producers and buyers that are missing in socialistic countries. Under socialism “rewards are not related to effort and commercial risk-taking, but to party membership, bureaucratic status, political fiat and corruption.”[\[4\]](#) Sociologist Peter Burger writes, “Simply put, Socialist equality is shared poverty by serfs, coupled with the monopolization of both privilege and power by a small (increasingly hereditary) aristocracy.”[\[5\]](#)

One evangelical writer contends that Marxism has “a deep compassion for people. Unlike present political systems—big business, even the Church—it [Marxism] does not seem to have any particular vested interests to defend.”^{6} In other words, only Marxists really care about people. However, history has not been kind to Marxist collectivism. Some of the worst human rights records have been accumulated by Marxist regimes in the U.S.S.R., China, Cambodia, North Korea and Cuba. I find it hard to imagine that the millions who died at the hands of Stalin, Mao Tse Tung, or the Khmer Rouge were very impressed by the compassion of their nation’s Marxist leaders.

But what about the example in Acts of all Christians sharing their goods in common or of Barnabas selling his property for the good of other believers? What some people miss is that both of these examples are of individuals making free moral choices to use their property for the good of others. They are making free market decisions regarding their possessions. This can only occur when individuals have the freedom to use their possessions to help others. If all economic decisions are made by centralized planners, moral choice is removed and the option to act upon personal moral convictions is reduced.

Living within a capitalistic society allows believers to exercise their personal responsibility to provide for the poor and less fortunate. This has resulted in remarkable examples of philanthropy in America and other capitalistic nations. In fact, no other people on earth have given as much to other nations as have Americans.

A properly functioning market system is an effective tool against oppression and corruption because it promotes the rule of law for all citizens. However, a strong moral system is necessary to keep it from being controlled by special interests. There are too many examples of economies that have been shaped for the benefit of a few. Christ’s advocacy for the poor should make us a strong moral barrier to this kind of corruption.

Notes

1. Ronald H. Nash, *Poverty and Wealth: Why Socialism Doesn't Work* (Dallas: Probe Books, 1986).
2. Ibid., 80.
3. Ibid., 75.
4. Ibid., 87.
5. Ibid.
6. Andrew Kirk, *The Good News of the Kingdom Coming* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 45, quoted in Nash, *Poverty and Wealth*, 191.

© 2009 Probe Ministries

Coddling of the American Mind

Drawing on the book The Coddling of the American Mind, Kerby Anderson examines the insanity on college campuses where students cannot handle ideas and people they disagree with.

In this article we will talk about what is happening on college campuses, and even focus on why it is happening. Much of the material is taken from the book, *The Coddling of the American Mind*.[\[1\]](#)



Greg Lukianoff was trying to solve a puzzle and sat down with Jonathan Haidt. Greg was a first amendment lawyer working with the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE). He was trying to figure out why students (who used to support free speech on campus) were now working to prevent speakers from coming on campus and triggered by words or phrases used by professors.

Greg also noticed something else. He has suffered from bouts

of depression and noticed some striking similarities with some of the comments by students. He found in his treatment that sometimes he and others would engage in “catastrophizing” and assuming the worst outcome. He was seeing these distorted and irrational thought patterns in students.

After a lengthy discussion they decided to write an article about it for *The Atlantic* with the title, “Arguing Towards Misery: How Campuses Teach Cognitive Distortions.” The editor suggested the more provocative title, “The Coddling of the American Mind.” The piece from *The Atlantic* was one of the most viewed articles of all time and was then expanded to this book.

That book used the same title: *The Coddling of the American Mind*. Jonathan was on [Point of View](#) last year to talk about the book. The authors believe that these significant psychological changes that have taken place in the minds of students explain much of the campus insanity we see on campus today.

They point out that two terms rose from obscurity into common campus parlance. Microaggressions are small actions or word choices that are now thought as a kind of violence. Trigger warnings are an alert the professors now must use if they may be discussing a topic that might generate a strong emotional response.

Before we talk about some of the insight in the book, it is worth mentioning that though there is a psychological component to all of this insanity, there is also an ideological component. When the original article appeared, Heather MacDonald asked if “risk-adverse child-rearing is merely the source of the problem. For example, why aren’t heterosexual white males demanding safe spaces?”[\[2\]](#) They all had the same sort of parents who probably coddled many of them.

It would probably be best to say that the mixture of psychological deficits also with the liberal, progressive ideological ideas promoted on campus have given us the insanity we see today. We have had liberal teaching on campuses for a century, but the problem has become worse in the last decade because of the psychological issues described in the book, *The Coddling of the American Mind*.

Three Untruths (Part 1)

The book can easily be summarized in three untruths that make up the first three chapters of the book. The first is the "Untruth of Fragility: What Doesn't Kill You Makes You Weaker." Nietzsche's original aphorism was, "What doesn't kill you makes you stronger." The younger generation has turned this idea on its head.

It is true that some things are fragile (like china teacups), while other things are resilient (and can withstand shocks). But they also note that some things are *antifragile*. In other words, they actually require stressors and challenges to grow. Our muscles are like that. Our immune system is like that. And university education is supposed to be like that. Students are supposed to be challenged by new ideas, not locked away in "safe spaces."

Unfortunately, most young people have been protected by a culture that promotes what they refer to as "safetyism." It has become a cult of safety that is obsessed with eliminating threats (whether real or imagined) to the point where fragility becomes expected and routine. And while this is true for the millennial generation (also called Generation Y), it is even truer for the iGen generation (also called Generation Z) who are even more obsessed with safety.

Part of the problem in these untruths is what they call "concept creep." Safety used to mean to be safe from physical

threats. But that has expanded to the idea that safety must also include emotional comfort. In order to provide that comfort, professors and students a few years ago introduced the idea of creating “safe spaces” for students. And in order to keep those students emotionally safe in the classroom, professors must issue “trigger warnings” so these students don’t experience trauma during a classroom lecture or discussion.

The second untruth is the “Untruth of Emotional Reasoning: Always Trust Your Feelings.” You can get yourself in some difficult circumstances quickly if you always trust your emotions. It is easy in this world to get frustrated, discouraged, and even depressed. Psychologists have found that certain patients can get themselves caught in a feedback loop in which irrational negative beliefs cause powerful negative feelings. We are seeing that on college campuses today.

Psychologists describe “the cognitive triad” of depression. These are: “I’m no good” and “My world is bleak” and “My future is hopeless.” Psychologists have effective ways of helping someone break the disempowering feedback cycle between negative beliefs and negative emotions. But very few adults (parents, professors, administrators) are working to correct mistaken ideas.

Three Untruths (Part 2)

In a college classroom, students are apt to make some sweeping generalization and engage in simplistic labeling of the lecture or reading material. In that case, we would hope that a professor would move the discussion by asking questions or even challenging the assertion.

Instead, many professors and colleges go along with the student comments. In fact, many even argue that any perceived slight adds up to what today are called “microaggressions.” In

many cases, slights may be unintentional and actually wholly formed from the listener's interpretation.

Here is how it develops. First, you prevent certain topics from being discussed in class. Next, you prevent certain speakers from coming to campus because they might present a perspective that aggrieved students believe should not be discussed. In the book is a chart illustrating how many speakers have been disinvited from universities. Five years ago, the line jumps up significantly.

The third untruth follows from that assumption. It is the "Untruth of Us Versus Them: Life is a Battle Between Good People and Evil People." The authors argue that "the human mind is prepared for tribalism." They even provide psychological research demonstrating that. But that doesn't mean we have to live that way. In fact, conditions in society can turn tribalism up, down, or off. Certain conflicts can turn tribalism up and make them more attentive to signs about which team a person may be on. Peace and prosperity usually turn tribalism down.

Unfortunately, in the university community, distinctions between groups are not downplayed but emphasized. Distinctions defined by race, gender, and sexual preference are given prominence. Mix that with the identity politics we see in society, and you generate the conflict we see almost every day in America.

The authors make an important distinction between two kinds of identity politics. Martin Luther King, Jr. epitomized what could be called "common-humanity identity politics." He addressed the evil of racism by appealing to the shared morals of Americans using the unifying language of religion.

That is different from what we find on college campuses today that could be called "common-enemy identity politics." It attempts to identify a common enemy as a way to enlarge and

motivate your tribe. Their slogan sounds like this: Our battle for identity and survival is a battle between good people and bad people. We're the good guys and need to defeat the bad guys.

An Example: Evergreen State College

One good example of how these untruths play out can be found at what happened on a college campus in Olympia, Washington. The entire story is described in chapter five but also is featured prominently in the opening chapter of the book *No Safe Spaces* and in the movie with the same title.

Just a few years ago, Evergreen State College was probably best known as the alma mater for rapper Macklemore and Matt Groening, the creator of *The Simpsons*. That all changed with an email biology professor Bret Weinstein sent.

In the past, the school had a tradition known as the "National Day of Absence." Usually, minority faculty and students leave the campus for a day to make a statement. But in 2017, the college wanted to change things and wanted white students and faculty to stay away from campus.

Professor Weinstein argued in an email that there is a difference between letting people be absent and telling people "to go away." And he added that he would show up for work. When he did, he was confronted by a mob of students. When the administration tried to appease the demonstrators, things got worse.

Weinstein has described himself as a political progressive and left-leaning libertarian. But his liberal commitments did not protect him from the student mob. The campus police warned him about a potential danger. The next morning, as he rode his bike into town, he saw protesters poised along his route tapping into their phones. He rode to the campus police department and was abruptly told: "You're not safe on campus,

and you're not safe anywhere in town on your bicycle." Weinstein and his wife eventually resigned and finally received a financial settlement from the university.

The Evergreen students and faculty displayed each of the three great untruths. The Untruth of Fragility (What doesn't kill you makes you weaker) came from a faculty member who supported the protesters and addressed some of her faculty colleagues in an angry monologue. She warned, "I am too tired. This [blank] is literally going to kill me." A student at a large town hall meeting verbalized her anxiety and illustrated the Untruth of Emotional Reasoning (Always trust your feelings). She expressed, "I want to cry. I can't tell you how fast my heart is beating. I am shaking in my boots."

And the whole episode illustrates the Untruth of Us Versus Them (Life is a battle between good people and evil people). The students and faculty engaged in common-enemy identity politics by labeling a politically progressive college and liberal professors as examples of white supremacy. One student (who refused to join the protest) later testified to the college trustees, "If you offer any kind of alternative viewpoint, you're the enemy."

What Can We Do?

The book, *The Coddling of the American Mind*, identifies many disturbing trends on college campuses that are beginning to spill over into society. What can we do to stem the tide?

Obviously, the long-term solution to the insanity on campus and in society is to pray for revival in the church and spiritual awakening in America. But there are some practical things that must be done immediately.

First, college administrators must get control of their campus. The riots at some of these universities resulted in

violence and property destruction. Often the campus police and even the local police failed to take action. Sadly, the university administration rarely took action afterwards.

Some form of deterrence would have prevented future actions on the University of California, Berkeley campus. Instead, the inaction established a precedent that likely allowed the conflict at Middlebury College. Students not only shut down the lecture, but they assaulted one of the campus professors. Once again, no significant action was taken against the students and outside agitators. The problem will get worse if there is no deterrence.

Second, professors must get control of their classrooms. Students cannot be allowed to determine what subjects cannot be taught and what topics cannot be discussed. The authors of this book are concerned about the tendency to encourage students to develop extra-thin skins just before they enter into the real world. Employers aren't going to care too much about their feelings. Students don't have the right not to be offended.

Third, we need to educate this generation about free speech. One poll done by the Brookings Institute discovered that nearly half (44%) of all college students believe that hate speech is NOT protected by the First Amendment. And since many students label just about anything they don't like as hate speech, you can see why we have this behavior on college campuses. More than half (51%) of college students think they have a right to shout down a speaker with whom they disagree. A smaller percentage (19%) of college students think it is acceptable to use violence to prevent a speaker from speaking on campus.

Finally, the adults need to make their voice heard. We pay for public universities through our tax dollars. Parents send their kids off to some of these schools. We should not tolerate the insanity taking place on many college campuses

today.

The authors have identified certain concerns that colleges and universities need to address. They remind us how hostile the academic world has become, not only to traditional Christian values, but also to mere common sense. We need to pray for what is taking place in the college environment.

Notes

1. Jonathan Haidt and Greg Lukianoff, et al., *The Coddling of the American Mind: How Good Intentions and Bad Ideas Are Setting Up a Generation for Failure*. New York City: Penguin Press, 2018.

2.

www.thecollegefix.com/heres-the-9-best-takeaways-from-heather-mac-donalds-new-diversity-delusion-book/

©2020 Probe Ministries