Capitalism and Its Critics

Kerby Anderson provides a biblical perspective on capitalism, defending it against economic and moral criticisms.

Nearly two decades ago, I did a Probe radio program on capitalism and socialism. Since then, I have also written other booklets on socialism, which provide an answer to the claims of candidates from the Democratic Socialists of America. But there is also a need to set forth why capitalism and the free market need to be defended and supported.

Even back then, I was able to quote from a Rasmussen poll that indicated that a mere majority of Americans said that capitalism was better than socialism.{1} That majority quickly became a minority, especially among young people. A poll just a few years later of millennials found a majority (58 percent) would prefer to live in a socialist nation than a capitalist nation. And only a small percentage (42 percent) favored capitalism. Of course, many of them probably didn't even know how to define socialism (which is a problem today).

A recent Cato Institute poll of the GenZ population found that a majority of them (53%) view socialism favorably.{2} The poll also found that more than a third (39%) would be more likely to vote for a Democratic Socialist candidate.

Part of the problem with this shift to socialism is the fact that many young people do not understand what they are supporting. Socialism sounds fair to them. And capitalism sounds evil since they have seen numerous depictions of evil, greedy capitalists in the movies and television. Think of the last time you saw a successful businessman portrayed in the media.

Another obvious issue is the fact that younger Americans are less likely to associate socialism with Soviet-style repression. Instead, they are told (incorrectly) that

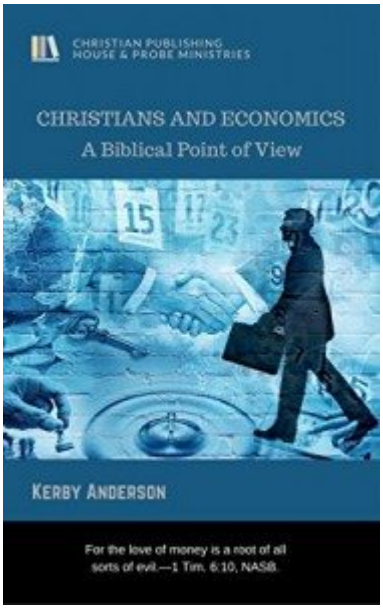
socialism is functioning well in Europe.

Also, young adults don't have "skin in the game" and thus do not think of the implications of an economic system on their future earnings. If they are in the economy, they are frustrated with the issue of affordability and naively think an economic transformation is the answer to their frustrations.

I am reminded of the famous phrase: "If you're not a liberal when you're 25, you have no heart. If you're not a conservative by the time you're 35, you have no brain." Arthur Brooks is someone I have interviewed many times, and he has proposed a variation: "A man who is not a socialist at 20 has no heart; a man who is still a socialist at 40 either has no head or pays no taxes."{3}

Capitalism Versus Socialism

How should we define capitalism and socialism? Here are some brief definitions of these two economic systems. You can find more information in my book on Christians and economics.{4}



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.

Many leaders of the Democratic Socialists argue that capitalism is doomed to fail because it leads to wealth inequality. Actor Mark Ruffalo concluded, “Capitalism today is failing us, killing us, and robbing from our children’s future.”

Steve Forbes disagrees. “Capitalism has done just the opposite! Deaths from famines are down 99% in the last 60 years. Standard of living, 10 times better than it was 50 years ago around the world.”{5}

He isn’t the only person saying that. Most people know Bono as a musician with the group U2. But here is what he said at the World Economic Forum: “Capitalism is not immoral—it’s amoral. It requires our instruction. Capitalism has taken more people out of poverty than any other ism.”{6}

Steve Forbes also argued: “Capitalism, free enterprise, free markets, whatever you call it is a moral system because success comes from meeting the needs and wants of others.” He further explained that capitalism is humane: “You may not love your neighbor, but you sure want to sell to your neighbor. It gets people working on a common objective, even if they don’t realize it.”

Another benefit of capitalism is technological innovation. Citizens are free to invent and are encouraged to do so because they can receive the financial benefits of their ideas and inventions.

This results in new products and technologies. It also results in higher-quality technologies. In a free market, the best way to get consumers to buy your product or service is to produce it more cheaply with higher quality. This, of course, also lowers consumer prices.

Economic Criticisms of Capitalism

People often reject the idea of capitalism because they believe one of the *economic* criticisms of capitalism. Here are two of these criticisms.

The first economic criticism is that capitalism leads to monopolies. These develop for two reasons: too little government, and too much government. Monopolies have occurred in the past because government has not been willing to exercise its God-given authority. Government finally stepped in and broke up the big trusts that were not allowing the free enterprise system to function correctly.

But in recent decades, the reason for monopolies has often been too *much* government. Many of the largest monopolies today are government-sanctioned monopolies that prevent true competition from taking place. Companies call for legislation that gives them a competitive advantage over other companies. The solution is for government to allow a freer market where competition can take place.

Let me add that many people often call markets with limited competition “monopolies” when the term is not appropriate. For example, the major car companies may seem like monopolies or oligopolies until you realize that in the market of consumer durables the true market is the entire western world.

The second criticism of capitalism is that it leads to pollution. In a capitalistic system, pollutants are considered externalities. The producer may incur costs that are external to the firm so often there is no incentive to clean up the pollution. Instead, it is dumped into areas held in common such as the air or water.

The solution in this case is governmental regulation. But this need not be a justification for building a massive bureaucracy. We need to find creative ways to direct self-

interest so that people work towards the common good.

The “capitalism leads to pollution” argument has failed. Instead, we find that as countries get richer there is more incentive and financial means to clean up pollution. This is called a Kuznets curve.{7} There are, of course, exceptions (especially with countries with inept governments and poor system of property rights). But the general rule is that as incomes go up, people focus on pollution.

Here’s what we find: when capitalism is wisely controlled, it generates significant economic prosperity and economic freedom for its citizens.

Moral Criticisms of Capitalism

Another reason people often reject the idea of capitalism is because they believe it is*immoral*.

One of the moral arguments against capitalism involves the issue of greed. And this is why many Christians feel ambivalent towards the free enterprise system. After all, some critics of capitalism contend that this economic system makes people greedy.

To answer this question we need to resolve the following question: Does capitalism make people greedy or do we already have greedy people who use the economic freedom of the capitalistic system to achieve their -ends? In light of the biblical description of human nature, the latter seems more likely.

Because people are sinful and selfish, some are going to use the capitalist system to feed their greed. But that is not so much a criticism of capitalism as it is a realization of the human condition. The goal of capitalism is not to change people but to protect us from human sinfulness.

Capitalism is a system in which bad people can do the least harm, and good people have the freedom to do good works. Capitalism works well if you have completely moral individuals. But it also functions adequately when you have selfish and greedy people.

Important to this discussion is the realization that there is a difference between self-interest and selfishness. All people have self-interests that can operate in ways that are not selfish. For example, it is in my self-interest to get a job and earn an income so that I can support my family. I can do that in ways that are not selfish.

Capitalism was founded on the observation that all of us have self-interest. Rather than trying to change that, economists saw that self-interest could be the motor of the capitalist system.

By contrast, other economic systems like socialism ignore the biblical definitions of human nature. Thus, they allow economic power to be centralized and concentrate power in the hands of a few greedy people. Those who complain of the influence major corporations have on our lives should consider the socialist alternative of how a few governmental bureaucrats control every aspect of their lives.

Greed certainly occurs in the capitalist system. But it does not surface just in this economic system. It is part of our sinfulness. Capitalism may have its flaws as an economic system, but it can be controlled to give us a great deal of economic prosperity and economic freedom.

Biblical Perspective

Many Christians are surprised to learn that the Bible does address economic issues, even if it does not endorse any economic system. But we can use biblical principles to evaluate an economic system.

We begin with a biblical view of human nature. The Bible has what we could call a balanced view of human nature. Human beings are created in God's image (Genesis 1:27-28) and have a noble side influenced by rationality, compassion, and even altruism. But there is also a flaw in human beings. The Bible teaches that all are sinful (Romans 3:23) and that the heart of man is deceitful above all things (Jeremiah 17:9).

An economic system that allows for human flourishing must also protect against economic abuse. As we have already discussed, capitalism provides that opportunity.

Capitalism is also based upon the foundation of private property. First, the Bible teaches that everything belongs to the Lord (Psalm 24:1 – "The earth is the Lord's, and all it contains, the world, and those who dwell in it"). Second, we have been given dominion over the creation (Genesis 1:26-28). And the Bible does grant private property rights to individuals (Exodus 22). In fact, one of the Ten Commandments is about stealing, which implies property rights.

As Christians, we can also add our moral perspective to the economy. We read in Deuteronomy 8:18 to "Remember that it is the Lord your God who gives you the power to get wealth, in fulfillment of the covenant that He made on oath with your fathers."

And we should enjoy the fruits of our labor. "There is nothing better for a man than to eat and drink and tell himself that his labor is good" (Ecclesiastes 2:24). We should also "work heartily as for the Lord rather than for men" (Colossians 3:23).

Capitalism also promotes the work ethic. That is implied in the title of Max Weber's book, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. It is also an important aspect of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*.

Many of the Proverbs (10:4, 13:4, 14:23) contrast the

difference between hard work and diligence versus idleness and sloth. In the New Testament, there is a strong emphasis on honest work (Ephesians 4:28) and self-reliance. There is also a warning in 2 Thessalonians 3:10 that "If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat."

As Christians we should support a free market and reject the current attempts to implement a socialist economy in this country.

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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 go 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.

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Socialist Surge

Kerby Anderson exposes the faulty thinking behind the pro-socialism messaging that is making alarming inroads in the U.S.



News articles proclaim, "socialism is on the march." The writers focus on the several Democratic Socialist candidates who are winning Democratic primaries. We already have socialist mayors in New York City and Seattle, Washington. Soon, we will have one in Washington, D.C.

American voters seem to be changing their minds about socialism. A 1942 Roper/Fortune survey found that 40 percent described socialism as a bad thing and 25 percent a good thing. The latest Gallup poll found that 43 percent of Americans believe socialism would be a good thing.{1} Also, two thirds (62%) of adults under 30 had a favorable view of socialism. For many young people, the term is associated with social safety nets and healthcare access rather than government control of the means of production.

Why the Interest in Socialism?

Socialist candidates have run for office in the past and rarely won. Why are these candidates winning in these midterm elections? Jim Geraghty has a suggestion that comes from a book he was reading by Mark Manson.{2}

The book talked about the strategy used by perennial presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche. His youth movement attracted many disaffected and agitated college students. Their tactic was simple. Tell these young people that the problems they faced weren't due to their parents or even the government. They explained that "it's the system's fault." If

they could just overthrow the system, everything would be okay. “No more war. No more suffering, No more injustice.”

Does this sound like what we are hearing from these candidates and the young people voting for them? Your problems are the fault of “the system.” This movement of young people are yearning for a vision of a better future. They want control over their lives but have been told that you need to overthrow “the system” to usher in utopia.

Of course, the system they want to overthrow is our constitutional republic and our free market economy. Granted, there are political and economic changes that need to be made, but overthrowing the current system for a socialist fantasy isn’t the answer. It will make their problems worse, not better.

Any student of history should be able to see that defunding the police, opening the border, abolishing jails and prisons, and having government take over the means of production will be a disaster. Unfortunately, too many young people haven’t studied history and have been seduced by the siren song of socialism.

In this article we look at the sad history of socialism, its failed economic claims, and even the question of whether the Bible teaches socialism.

Socialism and Tyranny

Socialism is more than an economic theory. Socialism is an all-encompassing view of the world. In his acceptance speech, Zohran Mamdani proclaimed, “We will prove that there is no problem too large for government to solve, and no concern too small for it to care about.” One historian compared it to the famous statement by Benito Mussolini: “All within the state, nothing outside the state, nothing against the state.”

Socialism is based on Marxist principles. The first is the abolition of private property. This is one of the foundational tenets of the *Communist Manifesto* by Karl Marx: "The theory of Communism may be summed up in one sentence: Abolish all private property." Many candidates state matter-of-factly that one of their goals is to "seize the means of production" in America.

The second principle is the end of religion. Karl Marx explained, "My object is to dethrone God and destroy capitalism." He added, "The first requisite for the happiness of the people is the abolition of religion." And a third is taxation. Karl Marx wrote, "A heavy or progressive or graduated income tax is necessary for the proper development of Communism." Every socialist candidate proclaims they will raise taxes on the rich. They will have to levy very heavy taxes on everyone to pay for all the promises made in their campaigns.

Ben Shapiro warns, "Socialism is bad because socialism is tyranny. It's not an aspect of tyranny. Socialism itself is tyranny." As one commentator put it, "Socialism is based on oppression. Oppression is not a bug of socialism. It's a feature."{3}

This can best be illustrated by the list Dinesh D'Souza details in his book about the many countries have tried socialism and all failed.{4} 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.

Many years ago, I did a week of Probe radio programs on

Friedrich Hayek's book *The Road to Serfdom*.{5} It is perhaps the best critique of socialism that very few have read. As the title of his book implies, the road to socialism may have good intentions, but it always leads to serfdom and tyranny.

Failed Economic Claims of Socialists

Margaret Thatcher famously observed, "The problem with socialism is that you eventually run out of other people's money." Democratic socialists are already running out of other people's money. They make economic claims that fall apart when given scrutiny. Here are just a few of the failing claims of politicians who propose socialist solutions to significant social and economic problems.

First, the economy is not a fixed pie. In a recent podcast, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez claimed, "Capitalism . . . is the absolute pursuit of profit at all human, environmental and social cost. That is not a redeemable system." She added that, "No one ever makes a billion dollars. You take a billion." In other words, there is a fixed supply of wealth. If you have more wealth, you are taking it from others.

One YouTube channel (Secular Talk) developed AOC's argument by saying that Jeff Bezos "made his wealth by making a lot of people poor." He argues that "because we have a finite amount of money." We do not have a finite amount of money. We do not have a finite amount of wealth. Entrepreneurs increase the amount of wealth by producing products and services that increase wealth in a society. Moreover, this wealth and value are increased by voluntary interaction in a free market.

Second, Sweden is not a model for socialism. Above, we listed the 25 failed experiments in socialism. The typical response from socialists is that these economic disasters were not implemented correctly. If you ask them about Cuba or Venezuela, they will instead point to democratic socialism in

Sweden or other similar countries.

In a short video, Anders Hagstrom points out that the policies that Bernie Sanders and AOC want go far beyond what you find in the Nordic countries.{6} Moreover, these countries have tiny populations of less than 10 million. In the past, they were successful and then had huge economic problems because they adopted socialist redistributive policies.

Now Sweden has come back to a free market. Sweden's market-oriented reforms have transformed it into an investment hub. The wealthy are flocking back to Sweden, and they're taking their capital with them. Swedish per capita GDP is the envy of the European Union, and the country has become a hub of tech and telecom innovation. One commentator concluded, "The Democratic Socialists Need a New Model."{7}

Does the Bible Teach Socialism?

Progressive and socialist candidates argue that the Bible teaches socialism. Some even argue that Jesus was a socialist. That is not surprising since many people "want Jesus on their team." Environmentalists argue that Jesus wouldn't drive an SUV. Gay activists maintain that Jesus said nothing about homosexuality. What does the Bible say?

If you have ever taught through the book of Acts, you know the question of socialism will likely surface. 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 Acts 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.

Socialism Is Not Biblical

Although the Bible doesn't endorse any economic systems, it does provide us with principles to judge economic systems. For example, the Bible clearly teaches that we are created in the

image of God (Genesis 1:27-28) and are made a little lower than the angels (Psalm 8:5). We can find noble characteristics in human beings such as empathy and altruism. We can make rational choices about goods and services in an economy.

But we also know that there is a flaw in human beings. The Bible teaches that all are sinful (Romans 3:23) and that the heart of man is deceitful above all things (Jeremiah 17:9). People can be greedy and ambitious. We need an economic system that protects us from anyone who might have too much power. In my Probe radio program on capitalism and socialism, I document that a free market is a system in which "bad people can do least harm, and good people have the freedom to do good works."{8}

Socialism also derives its philosophical foundation from Marxism. That philosophy is a direct attack on private property rights. God has given us dominion over the creation (Genesis 1:28). In the Old Testament, we see the book of Exodus establishing the rights of property owners. In fact, removing landmarks that protect property is clearly forbidden (Deuteronomy 19:14; 27:17, Proverbs 22:28).

Government should protect citizens and their rights in society. We are to obey government (Romans 13:1-7) and submit to civil authority (1 Peter 2:13-17). But we should not implement a government and economic structure that fails to protect those rights from leaders with an authoritarian impulse.

How to Respond

As we have mentioned, many young people are enamored with socialism. How can we respond? I would recommend you ask young people how much they like having other people telling them what to do. In a socialist economy, the leaders are constantly telling you and the economy what to do. Usually, they have never thought about how oppressive a socialist economy might

be.

You might also ask them how effective committees are in planning. A small group of bureaucrats would be making most of their economic decisions. Ask them if they have ever tried to get anything done with a committee. Now expand that to the millions of economic decisions that committee of bureaucrats needs to make.

And you might ask them to do the math. It is easy to argue for free college tuition when you aren't paying for it. It is easy to let the government pay for everything until you realize you are the government.

If you would like more information, please check these additional articles on socialism and capitalism:

- A Biblical Point of View on Socialism
- Capitalism and Socialism
- Socialism and Society
- Poverty and Wealth
- Can the Just Succeed?
- Wealth and Poverty

Notes

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6. Anders Hagstrom, “When you are forced to argue socialism with a liberal,” www.facebook.com/watch/?v=234493017230024.
7. Noah Rothman, Democratic Socialists Need a New Model,” www.nationalreview.com/corner/the-democratic-socialists-need-a-new-model/
8. Kerby Anderson, “Capitalism and Socialism,” probe.org/capitalism-and-socialism/

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A Biblical Point of View on Socialism



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.

The Promise of Socialism

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. Before we address those issues, it's worth mentioning why socialism and communism appealed to so many in the 19th century.

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 means never having to say you're sorry.

On the other side are all the promises of socialism that are so appealing to young people. 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 these programs would be very expensive once implemented.

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.

In one of his videos, Anders Hagstrom asks, “What does socialism mean to him?” 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 US 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.

One example he uses is Astrid Lindgren, author of the popular children's books, *Pippi Longstocking*. Because her books were popular and sold well, she experienced something Americans cannot even imagine. She had to pay a tax of 102 percent on any new book she sold.

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.

Nevertheless, the argument persists that these Scandinavian countries demonstrate the success of socialism. That is one reason why Dinesh D'Souza dedicated an entire chapter in his book on the subject of socialist experiments, Venezuela, and the Scandinavian illusion, in order to answer the arguments and rebuttals used to advance the idea of democratic socialism.{5}

Doesn't the Bible Teach Socialism?

If you have ever been teaching through the book of Acts, you know when this question will surface. 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 Acts is not a mandate for socialism.

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government. These can be used to evaluate economic systems.

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. In fact, even the poorest parts of West Germany (Schleswig-Holstein) were more than twice as wealthy as the richest region of East Germany (Saxony).

An even better example is North and South Korea, because it has 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.{6}

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." 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.

Citizens participate in a system of representative democracy (where their views are filtered through politicians who represent them). But a consumer votes in a system of direct democracy. You can choose Coke or New Coke or Pepsi or Dr. Pepper. You choose Fox over MSNBC and prefer an iPhone to another cell phone. You exercise your preferences by paying for it yourself.

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.

These are just a few arguments used to promote socialism. If we are to win the war of ideas, we need to understand how to respond to these arguments and make a convincing case for the free market. This booklet, and the previous one on *A Biblical View on Capitalism and Socialism*, are resources to use in that battle over these economic ideas.

Additional Resources

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Worldviews Through History – Compared to a Christian View

Kerby Anderson provides a summary of how mankind has viewed the world from the Romans until today. This summary provides us a perspective against which to compare and contrast a Christian, biblical worldview based on New Testament principles.

Roman Worldview

On the Probe Web site we often talk about worldviews. I want to explain how the worldviews we talk about developed through history. We will be using as our foundation an excellent book written by Professor Glenn Sunshine whom I have met and also had the privilege of interviewing. His book is *Why You Think the Way You Do: The Story of Western Worldviews from Rome to Home.*{1}



Glenn Sunshine is a member of the church that Jonathan Edwards attended when he was at Yale. Professor Sunshine gave a lecture about Jonathan Edward's worldview at a conference they held, and Chuck Colson invited him to teach with the Centurions program. He gave a talk about "How We Got Here" and then later turned it into *Why You Think the Way You Do*.

Since we will be talking about worldview, it would be good to begin with Glenn Sunshine's definition. "A worldview is the framework you use to interpret the world and your place in it."{2} You do not need to be a philosopher to have a worldview. All of us have a worldview.

Although Glenn Sunshine begins with the worldview of the Roman world, he quickly takes us back to neo-Platonism. It was the religion and philosophy based upon Plato's ideas. Neo-

Platonism was the belief that the fundamental ground of reality is non-physical. Instead it is found in the world of ideas (and is known as *idealism*). These ideas cast shadows that cast other shadows until they arrive at the physical world.

According to this worldview, the whole universe exists as a hierarchy. The spiritual is superior to the physical. This provides a scale of values for the world, but also provides a scale for humanity. In other words, those who are superior should rule over those who are inferior because they have demonstrated their ability to rule or conquer.

This view of hierarchy led to the idea of the father having superiority over all members of the family. It led to the idea that men are superior to women. It led to the idea that the emperor should rule and be worshipped. And it led to the idea that slaves are inferior to free people and nothing more than "living tools."{3}

This explains not only the success of Rome but also its ugly underside. Essentially there are two pictures of Rome: "the glittering empire and the rotten core."{4}

In Rome, human life did not have much value. While it is true that Romans abandoned human sacrifice, they engaged in other practices equally abhorrent. "They picked up the Etruscan practice of having people fight to the death in games in honor of the dead."{5}

Slavery provided the economic foundation for the empire. Abortion and infanticide were regularly practiced. "Roman families would usually keep as many healthy sons as they had and only one daughter; the rest were simply discarded."{6} And Roman law required that a father kill any visibly deformed child.

Transformation of the Pagan World

How did Christianity transform the pagan world? In AD 303, the Roman emperor Diocletian began a severe persecution of Christians. But because Christians were faithful and even willing to go to their deaths for their beliefs, their credibility increased. Eventually they were accepted and allowed to exercise their faith. Constantine even legalized the Christian faith by AD 313.

Once that took place, Christian ideas were allowed to percolate through society. One of the most important ideas was that human beings are created in the image of God. This idea has a profound impact. First, it meant that people are fundamentally equal to each other. No longer were there grounds for saying that some people are superior to others. In fact, "Christians were the first people in history to oppose slavery systematically."{7}

Christians (who believed that all are created in the image of God) treated the sick differently. They believed that even those who were deathly ill still deserved care. Dionysius of Alexandria reported that Christians (often at great risk to their own lives) "visited the sick fearlessly and ministered to them continually."{8} They would rescue babies abandoned in an act of infanticide. They would oppose abortion.

In economics, we can also see the influence of Christianity. The idea that God created the universe and then rested showed that God worked. That would mean that human beings (made in the image of God) are expected to work as well. God gave Adam and Eve intellectual work (in naming the animals) and physical work (in tending the Garden). Contrast this with the Roman world where physical work was seen as something that only slaves would do. Christians saw labor as something that was intrinsically valuable.

Labor is good; drudgery is bad. Drudgery is a result of the

Fall (Genesis 3). So Christians were the first to develop technology to remove drudgery from work. Other civilizations had technology, but the West uniquely applied such things as water power to make work more valuable and worthwhile by eliminating the drudgery and repetitive nature of certain tasks.

Property rights were also well-developed during this period. "The medieval world under the influence of Christianity has a much stronger emphasis on property rights than other cultures had."{9}

These ideas come from a biblical worldview and began to be developed during the Middle Ages. This led to a complete transformation of western society and set it on a trajectory to our modern world.

Christianity and Politics

Glenn Sunshine points out that in the West, the dynamic between church and state is unique. Christianity was originally a persecuted minority religion. Even when Christianity was declared a legal religion, the church did not depend upon the state. So the question of the relationship between church and state has been an open question.

During the Middle Ages, two men helped shape political thinking. The first was Augustine, who described two realms: the City of God and the City of Man. He argued that human government is the result of sin. He believed that it is based upon selfishness. Government itself is corruption. In the absence of government, anarchy reigns. So government is a necessary evil.

The City of God is different in that it is not based upon force or coercion. It is based upon love, charity, and repentance. That doesn't mean that the City of Man and the City of God cannot work together. But overall, Augustine had a

more pessimistic view of government.

Aristotle had a different view of government. As people in the Middle Ages began to rediscover Aristotle, they began to develop a different view of government. They saw government as a necessary institution that God has placed in the world. It had positive and legitimate functions.

Aristotle believed that government had a more positive role in society. But the Christian theologians had to also deal with the problem of original sin. They wanted to find a way to prevent original sin from corrupting the government. The tension between these two views is what drives the discussion of western political theory.

Sunshine notes that "another check on civil government involved the idea of rights."{10} We normally associate the idea of rights, especially inalienable rights, with eighteenth century political theorists. However, John Locke's idea that we have inalienable right to life, liberty, and property is already found in the writings of medieval theologians. The basis for this is a belief that all are created in the image of God. Therefore, all of us have a number of natural rights that the state cannot remove. Natural law was the idea that God wove moral laws into the fabric of the universe.

There also was the belief that there should be limitations on the jurisdiction of civil government and church government. One example is the Magna Carta, that stated that the English church was to be free and its liberties unimpaired by the crown.

The Renaissance and Enlightenment

What about the transformation into the modern world? In the early modern period, starting with the Renaissance in the fifteenth century to the seventeenth century, there are a whole series of events that shook the worldview consensus that

developed in the Middle Ages.

Previously there were certain beliefs about truth: (1) that truth was absolute, (2) that truth is knowable to the human mind, and (3) that truth is necessary for society (a society could not be based upon a lie). The best good guide for truth would be the great civilizations of the past that lasted for so long and thus must have been based upon truth.

The idea was to go to the past to find truth. During the Renaissance scholars were very successful in collecting manuscripts and finding ancient sources. Unfortunately, they found so many sources that they discovered there was not a coherent perspective. The ancient writers disagreed with each other. In a sense, the Renaissance was a victim of its own success. There was too much information. The more ancient sources they found, the less likely they would find agreement in the perspectives. Once it became obvious that this grand synthesis was not possible, the entire purpose of intellectual activity was thrown into question.

Then there were the wars of the Reformation in which various factions fought over who was the true follower of the prince of peace. The devastation of the religious wars left many people wondering if there really was religious certainty. No longer was the question “is Christianity true” but rather “which Christianity is true?” Now you had a multiplicity of options that left people confused. This also generated questions about the role of religion in society.

Then you also had the discovery of the New World and whole people groups that had never heard the gospel. Some began to ask questions like: Is it fair of God to send them all to hell because they had never heard of Christianity? Or, in light of biblical history, where did they come from? How do these people fit with the story of Noah? These discoveries called into question biblical morality and biblical history.

Also, people started using a new way of looking at knowledge. They began to use the scientific method to evaluate everything. This begins a significant shift in how we understand the world. There is a movement away from certainty toward probability. There is also a movement away from studying ancient authors toward scientific experimentation.

In the modern world, therefore, truth is not found in the past but in the present and future. With this is also questioning of biblical authority.

The Modern World and Christianity

Let me conclude by talking about our modern world and how Christians should respond. Sunshine concludes his book with chapters on "Modernity and Its Discontents" and "The Decay of Modernity." Essentially the modern world has left humans with a loss of truth, certainty, and meaning in life. "Materialism provides a ready answer to the question of the meaning and purpose of life: there is none."{11} From a Darwinian perspective, our only purpose is to pass our genes on to the next generation.

This rejection of spirituality and meaning has ushered in various other worldviews as alternatives. These would be such worldviews as postmodernism, neo-paganism, and the New Age Movement. Sunshine argues that in many ways we have been catapulted back to Rome.

Like Rome we value toleration as the supreme virtue. Rome believed that toleration was important because it kept the empire together. If you go beyond the lines of toleration, you are persecuted. This is similar to the mindset today. The highest value in a postmodern world is toleration. Toleration so defined means that we will embrace any and all lifestyles people may choose.

The Romans lived in an oversexed society.{12} So do we. Rome

practiced abortion. So does our society. Rome was antinatal and made a deliberate attempt to prevent pregnancy. They focused on sexual enjoyment and did not want to bother with kids. In our modern world, birthrates in most of the western democracies are plummeting.

Western civilization is a product of ancient Roman civilization plus Christianity. Sunshine argues that once you removed Christianity, modern society reverted back to Roman society and a recovery of the ancient pagan worldview.

So how should Christians live in this world? Of course, we should live out a biblical worldview. Every generation is called to live faithfully to the gospel, and our generation is no exception.

This is especially important today since we are facing a society that is not willing to accept biblical ideas. In many ways, we face a challenge similar to the early church, though not as daunting. From history we can see that the early church did live faithfully and transformed the Roman world. Christians produced a totally new civilization: western culture. By living faithfully before the watching world, we will increase our credibility and earn the respect from those who are around us by living in accordance with biblical principles.

Notes

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A Biblical View on Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory has been in the news. What is it, and why are so many people either defending it or opposing it? How is it being introduced in the schools, businesses, and the government?

Critical race theory is a descendant of a philosophical tradition known as critical theory. It 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 unfairly 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. That never really happened the way Karl Marx predicted. Instead, these cultural Marxists proposed a conflict that would develop based on race and some of the other factors just mentioned.

Assumptions and Euphemisms

Critical race theory is based on several assumptions. First, there is no absolute truth. There are only competing narratives. Second, the economy is a zero-sum game. The gain of one race is at the expense of another race. Third, individuals are either an oppressor or a victim. Fourth, America is systemically racist and must be dismantled.

There is a great deal of rhetoric and euphemisms that are deployed by practitioners of critical race theory. This includes such words and phrases as “equity” and “social justice” and “diversity and inclusion” and “culturally responsive teaching.” A word like *equity* might seem like a synonym for equality, but that is not the case. Proponents use the concept of equity to argue for suspending private property rights (UCLA professor Cheryl Harris) and for setting up a federal Department of Antiracism (Boston University professor Ibram X. Kendi) that would have power to nullify, veto, or abolish any law that does not provide racial equity.

Because critical race theory has its roots in cultural Marxism, proponents define people based on their group and practice identity politics. They also look at the intersection of victim groups and thus talk about intersectionality.

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. This also means that the claims of critical race theory are unfalsifiable. It becomes impervious to counter-evidence and thus cannot be rationally defended.

This is no small issue because the underprivileged can make demands, but do not need to make rational arguments. The assumption is that the whole system (including facts, counter-arguments, and even basic rationality) is rigged against the oppressed. This is why you often hear proponents of critical

race theory making statements without appealing to evidence and why they reject anyone trying to present evidence that might dispute their dogmatic statements.

In a recent article by James Lindsay, he argues that “For Racial Healing, Reject Critical Race Theory.” He starts with a thought experiment that shows how unpractical and confusing this theory becomes in everyday life.

He says we should imagine we own a small shop (perhaps a tailor shop) where you have to assist each customer individually. You are the sole proprietor and can only serve one customer at a time. Now imagine two people enter your store at exactly the same time. One is white, and the other is black. Which customer do you help first?

If you choose to serve the black person first, critical race theory would argue that you did so because you don’t trust the black person to be in your shop unattended while you help the other customer. That means you are acting according to racist stereotypes and chose poorly.

If you choose to serve the white person instead, then you are also demonstrating your racist bias. Choosing to help the white person shows that you favor white people and consider them first-class citizens. Once again, you have chosen poorly.

Perhaps you can see the dilemma created by the philosophy of critical race theory. It is a classic “heads I win, tails you lose.” There is no right choice in this example. No matter what you do, you will always be wrong and thus be condemned as being racist. This illustration provides one more reason why critical race theory will not promote racial healing.

Into the Schools and Government

How is critical race theory making its way into the schools? Often it is introduced by activists in the local school district. But sometimes it even comes from government action.

Stanley Kurtz has been warning that the Civics Secures Democracy Act (being considered by Congress) could be used by activists and educators to promote critical race theory. The Department of Education proposed a regulation that directs grant money to prioritize applications that "support the development of culturally responsive teaching and learning." As we have seen, phrases like "equity" and "culturally responsive" are key buzzwords for critical race theory.

Christopher Rufo has been documenting how critical race theory is already arriving in the schools. A California elementary school forced first-graders to deconstruct their racial and sexual identities, and then rank themselves according to their power and privilege. A middle school in Missouri forced teachers to locate themselves on an "oppression matrix," based on the idea that white, Christian males were members of an oppressor class. Although he is just one investigative journalist, he has already put together a database of more than 1,000 stories.

He has also documented how critical race theory made its way into government. The FBI has been holding workshops on intersectionality. The Department of Homeland Security was telling white employees that they have been "socialized into oppressor roles." That is why President Donald Trump issued an executive order banning critical race theory training. President Joe Biden rescinded that order on his first day in office.

Speaking out against critical race theory can be costly. Until recently, Lt. Col. Matthew Lohmeier served in the newly created Space Force. He was relieved from his post because he wrote a book denouncing critical race theory and Marxism in the US military. He said it wasn't his intent to engage in partisan politics. But he wrote the book because of the Marxist ideology that he saw being taught.

A Liberal Critique

Some of the criticism of critical race theory has been coming from people who would not be described as religious conservatives. Andrew Sullivan is one of these commentators sounding a warning that this perspective is “Removing the Bedrock of Liberalism.”

He acknowledges that even trying to accurately define critical race theory is difficult because of the “sheer volume of jargon words” that may be intended to “sow confusion.” He also asks himself through his commentary whether he is accurately portraying the theory and concludes that he is not exaggerating its attack on liberal modernity. Proponents of Critical Race Theory admit that they question the very foundations of liberal society.

One example can be found in the book, *Understanding Critical Race Theory*. It was written four years ago and is hardly the most controversial book on the subject. That book explains that “critical race theory questions the very foundations of the liberal order, including equality theory, legal reasoning, Enlightenment rationalism, and neutral principles of constitutional law.”

He also notes that critical race theory denies any claim to truth since “claims to truth are merely claims to power.” Secular liberals and Christians may disagree about many things, but at least they agree that truth exists and can be objectively discerned. He also critiques the idea that nothing has changed.
In other words, “slavery, segregation, mass incarceration are just different- words for the same experience of oppression.” He adds that critical race theory can also be defined by what it is not. “It is not an open-ended inquiry into buried history.”

He also explains that critical race theory is the cuckoo in

the academic nest. It used to be one school of thought. Over time, though, it has thrown out its competitors and does not allow open debate.

Response to the Criticism

Educators and parents who criticize critical race theory will quickly encounter push-back and accusations. These usually come in different forms.

One reaction from proponents is that anyone criticizing critical race theory is ignorant and doesn't understand it. A Texas state board of education member wrote that critics "have no idea what critical race theory is, what it does, who the founders are. They've never read a book, much less a paragraph on it." From there she goes on to use language inappropriate for an intelligent discussion.

Many commentators have even begun to argue that critical race theory has become the latest conservative "boogeyman." They believe right-wing politics is out of ideas (not true) and thus needs an enemy to attack. Many of the people speaking out are familiar with critical race theory and understand its potential for dividing America.

In several cases, parents have been able to find the syllabus for school courses and put them online. They find that the goal is to "develop awareness about social justice and diversity issues" and learn – about "the intersectionality of gender, race, class, and sexuality." Required textbooks usually include Ibram X. Kendi's *How to be an Antiracist* and Robin DiAngelo's *White Fragility*. Instead, we are being told (as one commentator put it) to "pay no attention to the curriculum behind the curtain."

Another reaction is to suggest that anyone opposing critical race theory wants to whitewash the past sins of America and perpetuate systemic racism in the future. One commentator

assumed that critics didn't want to talk about racial disparities because they want to normalize the behavior and allow current patterns of behavior to continue. We should talk about slavery and America's racist past. But that doesn't mean we have to accept the idea that this country is more racist today and riven with systemic racism in every institution.

Professor John McWhorter believes we should "assume that when politicos and parents decry critical race theory, what they refer to is the idea of oppression and white perfidy treated as the main meal of an entire school's curriculum." He adds that young children should not be taught they are guilty if white and oppressed if black. And they should not be taught that "the American story is mainly (note I write mainly rather than only, but mainly is just as awful here) one of oppression and racism."

A third reaction is to assure us that critical race theory is merely a philosophical tool and does not pose any threat to the social and political structures. That is not true. As one commentator put it, "No longer simply an academic matter, critical race theory has become a tool of political power." It is moving through our public institutions and "driving the vast machinery of the state and society."

One of the standard sources (*Understanding Critical Race Theory*) mentioned earlier "questions the very foundations of the liberal order, including equality theory, legal reasoning, Enlightenment rationalism, and neutral principles of constitutional law." It then goes on to argue that "radical measures are in order" because society is so racist. When it was written, the authors may not have meant "radical" to involve riots, protests, and burning cities. But we have seen the natural result of arguing that America is systemically racist, full of white privilege, and in need of a social revolution to overturn the existing order.

While we can applaud the boldness of some, there is still a

great deal of fear keeping many Americans from speaking out. A recent Gallup poll found that 77 percent of conservatives are afraid to share their political beliefs publicly. They rightly fear they will lose their jobs or get mobbed by social media. So they remain quiet.

Biblical Perspective

One of the foundational principles of critical race theory (along with postmodernism and other modern philosophical traditions) is a complete rejection of absolute truth. The Bible teaches that truth exists and can be discerned (Proverbs 30:5, John 8:32, 2 Timothy 3:16).

We should acknowledge that different groups of people might perceive Scripture differently, but that does not mean that one race has special access to biblical truth. The argument that our race (e.g., "whiteness") colors our interpretation suggests that we can all learn from each other in the body of Christ. But the real impediment to proper biblical interpretation is our sin (John 3:19-20). Paul teaches (1 Corinthians 2) that spiritual truth can best be discovered through the revelatory power of the Holy
Spirit.

The proponents of cri-tical race theory often reject rational arguments that contradict their dogma statements about race and society. By contrast, the Bible emphasizes the mind and rational discussion.
Paul calls for Christians 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). When a secular philosophy is being promoted in society, it is our responsibility to provide an honest critique of it. Our goal should be to think biblically and to "take every thought captive."

Critical race theory also creates division between races that

is contrary to Scripture. Paul addressed the divisions in his day that could have created division within the church. He explains how Christ has
pulled down the wall of division between Jews and Gentiles (Ephesians 2:14). He went further and taught that 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" (Galatians 3:28). There should be unity for believers and not division.

Proponents of critical race theory also propose a type of "guilt" on anyone who is identified as an oppressor merely because of their racial background. And people of this 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. Also, 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).

Additional Resources

Kerby Anderson, *A Biblical View on Racism*, 2020.

Doug Groothuis, "America, Critical Theory, and Social Crisis," Centennial Institute, September 2020. America, Critical Theory, and Social Crisis – Centennial Institute

James Lindsay, "For Racial Healing, Reject Critical Race Theory," October 19, 2020 newdiscourses.com/2020/10/racialhealing-reject-critical-race-theory/

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The Causes of War

Meic Pearse's book The Gods of War *gives great insight into the charge that religion is the cause of most war. History shows this is not true: the cause of most war is the sinful human heart, even when religion is invoked as a reason.*

The Accusation

Sam Harris, the popular author and atheist, says that "for everyone with eyes to see, there can be no doubt that religious faith remains a perpetual source of human conflict."{1} Writing for the Freedom from Religion Foundation, fellow atheist Richard Dawkins adds, "Only the willfully blind could fail to implicate the divisive force of religion in most, if not all, of the violent enmities in the world today."{2} Speaking more bluntly, one British government official has said, "theocrats, religious leaders or fanatics citing holy texts . . . constitutes the greatest threat to world peace today."{3}



War is the ultimate act of intolerance, and since intolerance is seen as the only unforgivable sin in our postmodern times, it's not surprising that those hostile to religion would charge people holding religious convictions with the guilt for causing war.

This view is held by many others, not just despisers of religion. A 2006 opinion poll taken in Great Britain found that 82% of adults "see religion as a cause of division and tension between people. Only 16% disagree."{4}

To be honest, religion has been, and remains, a source of conflict in the world; but to what degree? Is it the only source of war, as its critics argue? Is it even the primary source? And if we agree that religion is a source of war, how do we define what qualifies as a religion? This leads to another question. Are all religions equally responsible for war or are some more prone to instigate conflict than others? Once these issues are decided, we are still left with one of the most difficult questions: How does a religious person, especially a Christian, respond to the question of war?

When confronted with the accusation that religion, and more importantly, Christianity, has been the central cause of war down through history, most Christians respond by ceding the point. We will argue that the issue is far too complex to merely blame war on religious strife. A more nuanced response is needed. Religion is sometimes the direct cause of war, but other times it plays a more ambiguous role. It can also be argued, as Karl Marx did, that religion can actually restrain the warring instinct.

In his provocative new book, *The Gods of War*, Meic Pearse argues that modern atheists greatly overstate their case regarding religion as a cause for war, and that all religions are not equal when it comes to the tendency to resort to violence. He believes that the greatest source for conflict in

the world today is the universalizing tendencies of modern secular nations that are pressing their materialism and moral relativism on more traditional cultures.

The Connection Between Religion and War

When someone suggests a simple answer to something as complex as war, it probably is *too* simple. History is usually more complicated than we would like it to be.

How then should Christians respond when someone claims religion is the cause of all wars? First, we must admit that religion can be and sometimes is the cause of war. Although it can be difficult to separate political, cultural, and religious motivations, there have been instances when men went off to war specifically because they believed that God wanted them to. That being said, in the last one hundred years the modern era with its secular ideologies has generated death and destruction on a scale never seen before in history. Not during the Crusades, the Inquisition, nor even during the Thirty Years War in Europe.

The total warfare of the twentieth century combined powerful advances in war-making technologies with highly structured societies to devastating effect. WWI cost close to eight and a half million lives. The more geographically limited Russian Civil War that followed the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 resulted in nine million deaths. WWII cost sixty million deaths, as well as the destruction of whole cities by fire bombing and nuclear devices.

Both Nazi fascism and communism rejected the Christian belief that humanity holds a unique role in creation and replaced it with the necessity of conflict and strife. By the end of the nineteenth century, Darwin’s ideas regarding natural selection and survival of the fittest had begun to affect philosophy, the social sciences, and even theology. Darwin had left us

with a brutal universe devoid of meaning. The communist and fascist worldviews were both firmly grounded in Darwin's universe.

Hitler's obsession with violence is well known, but the communists were just as vocal about their attachment to it. Russian revolution leader Leon Trotsky wrote, "We must put an end once and for all to the papist-Quaker babble about the sanctity of human life." Lenin argued that the socialist state was to be "a system of organized violence against the bourgeoisie" or middle class. While critics of the Russian Tsar and his ties with the Orthodox Russian Church could point to examples of oppression and cruelty, one historian has noted that when the communists had come to power "more prisoners were shot at just one soviet camp in a single year than had been executed by the tsars during the entire nineteenth century."{5}

So, religion is not the primary cause of warfare and cruelty, at least not during the last one hundred years. But what about wars fought in the more distant past; surely most of them were religiously motivated. Not really.

Meic Pearce argues that "most wars, even before the rise of twentieth century's secularist creeds, owed little or nothing to religious causation."{6} Considering the great empires of antiquity, Pearce writes that "neither the Persians nor the Greeks nor the Romans fought either to protect or to advance the worship of their gods."{7} Far more ordinary motives were involved like the desire for booty, the extension of the empire, glory in battle, and the desire to create buffer zones with their enemies. Each of these empires had their gods which would be called upon for aid in battle, but the primary cause of these military endeavors was not the advancement of religious beliefs.

Invasions by the Goths, Huns, Franks, and others against the

Roman Empire, attacks by the Vikings in the North and the Mongols in Asia were motivated by material gain as well and not religious belief. The fourteenth century conquests of Timur Leng (or Tamerlane) in the Middle East and India resulted in the deaths of millions. He was a Muslim, but he conquered Muslim and pagan alike. At one point he had seventy thousand Muslims beheaded in Baghdad so that towers could be built with their skulls.{8}

More recently, the Hundred Years War between the French and English, the American Revolution, and the Napoleonic Wars were secular conflicts. Religious beliefs might have been used to wrap the conflicts with a Christian veneer, but promoting the cause of Christ was not at the heart of the conflicts.

Pearce argues that down through the millennia, humanity has gone to war for two main reasons: greed expressed by the competition for limited resources, and the need for security from other predatory cultures. The use of religion as a legitimating device for conflict has become a recent trend as it became less likely that a single individual could take a country to war without the broad support of the population.

It can be argued that religion was, without ambiguity, at the center of armed conflict during two periods in history. The first was during the birth and expansion of Islam which resulted in an ongoing struggle with Christianity, including the Crusades during the Middle Ages. The second was the result of the Reformation in Europe and was fought between Protestant and Catholic states. Even here, political motivations were part of the blend of causes that resulted in armed conflict.

Islam and Christianity

Do all religions have the same propensity to cause war? The two world religions with the largest followings are Christianity and Islam. While it is true that people have used

both belief systems to justify armed conflict, are they equally likely to cause war? Do their founder's teachings, their holy books, and examples from the earliest believers encourage their followers to do violence against others?

Although Christianity has been used to justify forced conversions and violence against unbelievers, the connection between what Christianity actually teaches and these acts of violence has been ambiguous at best and often contradictory. Nowhere in the New Testament are Christians told to use violence to further the Kingdom of God. Our model is Christ who is the perfect picture of humility and servant leadership, the one who came to lay down his life for others. Meic Pearce writes, "For the first three centuries of its history, Christianity was spread exclusively by persuasion and was persecuted for its pains, initially by the Jews but later, from 63, by the Romans."{9} It wasn't until Christianity became the de facto state religion of the Roman Empire around AD 400 that others were persecuted in the name of Christ.

The history of Islam is quite different. Warfare and conflict are found at its very beginning and is embodied in Muhammad's actions and words. Islam was initially spread through military conquest and maintained by threat of violence. As one pair of scholars puts it, there can be no doubt that "Islam was cradled in violence, and that Muhammad himself, through the twenty-six or twenty-seven raids in which he personally participated, came to serve for some Muslims as a role model for violence."{10}

Much evidence can be corralled to make this point. Muhammad himself spoke of the necessity of warfare on behalf of Allah. He said to his followers, "I was ordered to fight all men until they say, 'There is no God but Allah.'"{11} Prior to conquering Mecca, he supported his small band of believers by raiding caravans and sharing the booty. Soon after Muhammad's death, a war broke out over the future of the religion. Three civil wars were fought between Muslims during the first fifty

years of the religion's history, and three of the four leaders of Islam after Muhammad were assassinated by other Muslims. The Quran and Hadith, the two most important writings in Islam, make explicit the expectation that all Muslim men will fight to defend the faith. Perhaps the most telling aspect of Islamic belief is that there is no separation between religious and political authority in the Islamic world. A threat to one is considered a threat to the other and almost guarantees religiously motivated warfare.

Pacifism or Just Wars?

Although most Christians advocate either pacifism or a "just war" view when it comes to warfare and violence, Pearse argues that there are difficulties with both. Pacifism works at a personal level, but "there cannot be a pacifist state, merely a state that depends on others possessed of more force or of the willingness to use it."{12} Some pacifists argue that humans are basically good and that violence stems from misunderstandings or social injustice. This is hardly a traditional Christian teaching. Pearse argues that "a repudiation of force in all circumstances . . . is an abandonment of victims—real people—to their fate."{13}

Just war theory as advocated by Augustine in the early fifth century teaches that war is moral if it is fought for a just cause and carried out in a just fashion. A just cause bars wars of aggression or revenge, and is fought only as a last resort. It also must have a reasonable chance of success and be fought under the direction of a ruler in an attitude of love for the enemy. It seeks to reestablish peace, not total destruction of the vanquished, and to insure that noncombatants are not targeted.

However, even WWII, what many believe to be our most justified use of force, failed to measure up to this standard. Massive air raids against civilian populations by the Allies were just

one of many violations that disallow its qualification as a just war. As Pearse argues, “war has an appalling dynamic of its own: it drags down the participants . . . into ever more savage actions.”{14}

How then are Christians to think about war and violence? Let’s consider two examples. In the face of much violent opposition in his battle for social justice, Martin Luther King said, “be ye assured that we will wear you down by our capacity to suffer. . . . We shall so appeal to your heart and conscience that we shall win *you* in the process.”{15} Reform was achieved, although at the cost of his life, and many hearts and minds have been changed.

However, another martyr, German minister Dietrich Bonhoeffer, rejected pacifism and chose to participate in an attempt on the life of Adolf Hitler, mainly because he despaired that an appeal to the hearts and minds of the Nazis would be effective.

Neither King nor Bonhoeffer were killed specifically for their faith. They were killed for defending the weak from slaughter, as Pearse puts it. Perhaps Pearse is correct when he argues, “If Christians can . . . legitimately fight . . . , then that fighting clearly cannot be for the faith. It can only be for secular causes . . . faith in Christ is something for which we can only die—not kill. . . . To fight under the delusion that one is thereby promoting Christianity is to lose sight of what Christianity is.”{16}

Notes

1. Meic Pearse, The Gods of War (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 16.
2. Ibid., 15.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., 14.
5. Ibid., 31.

6. Ibid., 53.
7. Ibid., 54.
8. Ibid., 55.
9. Ibid., 134.
10. Ibid., 58.
11. Ibid., 59.
12. Ibid., 173.
13. Ibid., 175.
14. Ibid., 173.
15. Ibid., 180.
16. Ibid.

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C. S. Lewis and the Oxford Socratic Club

Dr. Michael Gleghorn explains how C.S. Lewis's pivotal role in this debate club shaped his huge contribution to Christian thought.

The Origins of the Oxford Socratic Club



In our day C. S. Lewis is probably best known as the author of *The Chronicles of Narnia*, as well as several important popular-level works of Christian apologetics. Yet he was also a formidable speaker and debater. He loved the dynamic "back-and-forth" of intellectual engagement with others over interesting and substantive issues. One of the most important outlets for this aspect of Lewis's personality was the Oxford Socratic Club. For about thirteen years, from 1942 to 1954, Lewis served as

the first president of this club. The significance of Lewis's contribution to its success can scarcely be overestimated. According to Christopher Mitchell, "no other activity that Lewis engaged in has proven more beneficial and far-reaching in its influence on Christianity than his participation in the Socratic Club."{1}

So what was the Oxford Socratic Club, why was it started, and what role did Lewis play in it? According to Walter Hooper, it was in late 1941 that a female undergraduate student at Somerville College in Oxford complained to Miss Stella Aldwinkle about the lack of any clubs for the serious discussion of "questions agnostics raised about God."{2} Now Miss Aldwinkle was a force to be reckoned with. Having recently joined the Oxford pastoral staff, she immediately posted a notice on the Somerville college notice-boards inviting "all atheists, agnostics, and those disillusioned about religion" to meet and discuss the issue.{3}

The meeting was well-attended, and many good questions were asked. It was soon decided "that what was needed was an open forum for the discussion of the intellectual difficulties connected with religion in general and with Christianity in particular."{4} The formation of an official university club, however, would require a president. After much consideration, Miss Aldwinkle wrote to C. S. Lewis about the issue. Lewis had already published several well-received books by this time and, according to Hooper, "was on the eve of becoming the most popular lay theologian in England."{5} Upon receiving her letter, Lewis immediately responded by return mail saying, "This club is long overdue! Come to coffee in my rooms on Tuesday, and we can talk it over."{6}

After meeting with Miss Aldwinkle, Lewis accepted the position as president and the Oxford Socratic Club was officially founded "shortly before Christmas of 1941."{7} In January 1942, the club held its first official meeting.

Lewis's Vision for the Oxford Socratic Club

Imagine for a moment a weekly meeting where "atheists, agnostics, and those disillusioned about religion"{8} could come together with intelligent Christians to discuss and debate their concerns about the claims of Christianity. This, it turns out, is largely what the Oxford Socratic Club became, under the able leadership of C. S. Lewis and Stella Aldwinkle. From its beginning in 1942, Lewis was excited about the club, and in his Preface to the first edition of the *Socratic Digest* he set forth his vision for the club's purpose and goals.

According to Lewis, "Socrates had exhorted men to 'follow the argument wherever it led them': the club came into existence to apply his principle to one particular subject-matter—the *pros* and *cons* of the Christian religion."{9} Lewis noted the uniqueness of the club, observing that, so far as he knew, no other society "had ever before been formed for such a purpose." He stressed the value of the club as a place where people could hear the very best arguments and evidence available, discussed in a civil manner by sincere advocates for the various positions.

Making use of gladiatorial imagery, Lewis went on to describe the club as an "arena" in which the contestants met to engage in intellectual battle. Indeed, he said, "It was the Christians who constructed the arena and issued the challenge."{10} He admitted that those who founded the club were not "neutral" about the great issues which they regularly met to consider. But he claimed that argument itself is impartial: "It has a life of its own," he noted. "No man can tell where it will go." And all who entered that arena met to face one another in honest (and sometimes passionate) argument.

The club's committee did their best to find intelligent

atheists, agnostics, and others to come and address the club. According to Hooper, "it was the practice of the club to have two speakers at each meeting." The first speaker would read a paper and the second would offer a reply. At that point, the meeting would be "thrown open to general discussion." An effort was also made to keep everything fair, so if the first speaker was a Christian, an atheist or agnostic would be asked to respond (and *vice-versa*).{11} As one might expect, this format regularly resulted in some "bang-up" discussions about some of the most important issues of the day that had bearing upon the Christian faith.

Lewis as Speaker at the Oxford Socratic Club

By all accounts C. S. Lewis was a very gifted speaker. He had a deep sonorous voice and an impressive ability to make even the most difficult topics readily accessible. He is said to have always had just the right word at his disposal, and his ability to illustrate his points with nearly perfectly chosen analogies and examples from everyday life and experience was remarkable.{12}

The Oxford Socratic Club was originally founded near the end of 1941 and began meeting early in 1942. Although Lewis had accepted the position as president of the club, and although he held this position for about thirteen years, Hooper notes that Lewis was the primary speaker "on only eleven occasions" during that time.{13}

But Lewis made much of those occasions, using his considerable speaking gifts as a Christian scholar to address a wide variety of issues during his tenure as president of the Socratic Club. For example, he spoke on "Christianity and Aesthetics," which probably dealt, in some form or fashion, with a Christian perspective on the nature of beauty, art and literature. He also spoke about issues surrounding ethics and

Christian doctrine, science and miracles, the nature of argument, theology and poetry, the doctrine of the resurrection, the nature of reason, the importance of religious doctrine, the existentialism of Jean-Paul Sartre, and the nature of faith and evidence.{14}

To offer just one example, on February 8, 1943, Lewis read a paper with the title, "If We Have Christ's Ethics, Does the Rest of the Christian Faith Matter?"{15} Lewis began by observing the great commonality in the moral values and duties endorsed by virtually all civilizations and cultures throughout history. The upshot of this is that "Christian moral principles" are substantially the same as all other "moral principles." He then noted that in spite of such agreement about these principles, humanity is plagued by a universal inability to consistently put them into practice. He concluded by arguing that it is "the rest of the Christian faith" that tells us how we might practice, rather than simply discuss and debate, the moral duties we all recognize as objectively binding.

Clearly Lewis was a gifted speaker. But even when he was not the primary speaker for the evening, he was still an important participant at the Oxford Socratic Club.

Lewis as Participant at the Oxford Socratic Club

If you like a good debate, you would have loved the Oxford Socratic Club. C. S. Lewis served as its first president from 1942 to 1954. Wanting to make room for others, he was the primary speaker only eleven times during those years.{16} But even when he was not the primary speaker, Lewis often played an important role at the meetings. Indeed, as president, he was often asked to offer the first response to whoever had addressed the assembly that evening.

Lewis relished the opportunity to engage with others over the intellectual challenges to Christianity. According to Christopher Mitchell, visiting speakers "typically viewed Lewis as a fearless and formidable opponent, yet equally 'generous' in argument. He was admired for the intellectual rigor he brought to each topic . . . and was known both for his 'courage' and 'open-mindedness.'"{17}

By far the most famous encounter between Lewis and a visiting speaker occurred in 1948, when Lewis squared off against the young Catholic philosopher Elizabeth Anscombe. Anscombe read a paper criticizing Lewis's argument against Naturalism, which had been published the previous year in his book, *Miracles.* Lewis had argued that Naturalism could not possibly be true because it claimed that human reason had arisen through a purposeless and unguided series of "irrational" physical causes. But if this were so, claimed Lewis, if reason was really a product of "irrational causes," then we could have no good reason for believing its conclusions to be true—and hence, no good reason for believing its conclusions about Naturalism to be true.{18}

In response, Anscombe claimed that an important distinction must be observed between the "grounds" or "reasons" for a person's belief, and the physical "causes" leading up to that belief. She said that "if a man has reasons, and they are good reasons, and they are genuinely his reasons, for thinking something—then his thought is rational, whatever causal statements we make about him."{19} Although some took Lewis's side in the debate that evening, and others sided with Anscombe, a story arose that Lewis was subsequently discouraged by this encounter.

Whatever the truth might be, Lewis later revised the chapter in *Miracles* that Anscombe had criticized. And though she still had criticisms of the chapter, she also thought it superior to the original version and appreciated Lewis's "honesty and seriousness" in so revising it.{20}

The Importance of the Oxford Socratic Club

Would you value a club whose purpose was to carefully consider some of the most important issues of the day, and their bearing upon the Christian faith? Under the leadership of C. S. Lewis, this is what the Oxford Socratic Club purposed to do. Although there were clubs "catering to practically every conceivable interest," there was nothing quite like the Socratic Club.{21}

From its inception the club was intended to be a place where students could gather to hear scholars from various disciplines debate a wide range of issues bearing (in one way or another) upon the Christian faith. This was followed by an opportunity for the students to raise questions and participate in robust discussion about these issues with all who were present. Given Lewis's formidable skills as a speaker and debater, he was (from the first) a major attraction for the students. As Christopher Mitchell observes, "At a time when many had begun to believe Christianity was dying, if not already dead, as a plausible system of belief, the Socratic Club reasserted the intellectual vitality and integrity of the Christian faith."{22} As one can well imagine, this was a key benefit for university students who were daily exposed to new ideas about the world, the nature of humanity, and our place in the universe.

Mitchell notes that after weekly meetings, some students would gather together and "sit up, often until 2 in the morning, going through all the discussions" from the evening.{23} The students were often particularly interested in what Lewis had said. "By retracing the points of Lewis's argument, they began to detect the fallacies of current objections" to the Christian faith.{24} This was another key benefit that students received through regular participation in the club. They learned to think carefully, honestly, and methodically

about the latest objections to Christianity.

By learning to reason their way through some of the most common objections to the faith for themselves (in light of Lewis's helpful example, of course), students were helped to see Christianity as a reasonable worldview that could offer good answers to the hard questions put to it by skeptics. "By breaking down the intellectual prejudices to Christianity, Lewis freed many to reaffirm a faith they had lost confidence in, and for some he made faith in Christianity plausible for the first time."{25} This, undoubtedly, was the most important legacy of C. S. Lewis's leadership of the Oxford Socratic Club.

Notes

1. Christopher W. Mitchell, "University Battles: C. S. Lewis and the Oxford University Socratic Club," in *Lightbearer in the Shadowlands: The Evangelistic Vision of C. S. Lewis*, ed. Angus J. L. Menuge (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1997), 329.
2. Walter Hooper, "Oxford's Bonny Fighter," in *C. S. Lewis at the Breakfast Table and Other Reminiscences*, ed. James T. Como (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1992), 137.
3. Stella Aldwinkle, "Socrates was a Realist," in *Socratic Digest* (No. 1), June 1943; cited in Mitchell, "University Battles," 331.
4. Mitchell, "University Battles," 331.
5. Hooper, "Oxford's Bonny Fighter," 138.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Aldwinkle, "Socrates was a Realist," cited in Mitchell, "University Battles," 331.
9. C. S. Lewis, "Preface," in *Socratic Digest* (No. 1), cited in Hooper, "Oxford's Bonny Fighter," 138. The entire discussion here is indebted to Lewis's Preface.
10. Ibid., and so for all quotations in this paragraph.
11. Hooper, "Oxford's Bonny Fighter," 139-40.
12. Mitchell, "University Battles," 340.

13. Hooper, “Oxford’s Bonny Fighter,” 141.
14. Ibid., 174-85.
15. See the summary of Lewis’s talk in the *Socratic Digest* (No. 1, p. 23), cited in Hooper, “Oxford’s Bonny Fighter,” 143-44. This paragraph is indebted to the discussion found there.
16. Hooper, “Oxford’s Bonny Fighter,” 141. This paragraph is indebted to the discussion found there.
17. See Mitchell, “University Battles,” 340.
18. Ibid., 342.
19. I am quoting from Anscombe’s essay, “Reply to Lewis” (1948), as provided in Arend Smilde, “Appendices to ‘What ewis really did to Miracles,’ available at www.lewisiana.nl/anscombe/appendices.pdf. Smilde is drawing from G.E.M. Anscombe, *The Collected Philosophical Papers of G. E. M. Anscombe*, Vol. II, *Metaphysics and the Philosophy of Mind* (Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1981), 224-32.
20. Ibid. This quote is taken from Anscombe’s “Introduction” to *The Collected Philosophical Papers of G. E. M. Anscombe*, Vol. II, *Metaphysics and the Philosophy of Mind* (Basil Blackwell, Oxford 1981), vii-x. The “Introduction” is also provided by Smilde, mentioned in the previous note.
21. Hooper, “Oxford’s Bonny Fighter,” 140.
22. Mitchell, “University Battles,” 346.
23. Ibid., 347.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.

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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/]

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.

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