

# What COVID-19, Black Lives Matter, and 'Woke' America is Revealing About the Church

## The Church & Justice

If the church fails to disciple the nation,  
the nation will disciple the church.

– Darrow Miller

Let's not simply be anti-ideological social justice.

Let's be probiblical worldview.

– Scott Allen

### A Clash of Worldviews

	<b>Social Justice Presuppositions</b>	<b>Biblical Presuppositions</b>
What is ultimately real?	The human mind defines what is ultimately real.	The God of Genesis 1:1 defines ultimate reality: "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."
Who are we?	Creatures whose identity is wholly socially determined. We are products of our race, sex, and gender identity.	Creations and image-bearers of a good, holy, and loving God with inherent dignity and immeasurable worth.
What is our fundamental problem as human beings?	Oppression: White, heteronormative males have established and maintain hegemonic power structures to oppress and subjugate women, people of color, and sexual minorities (LGBTQ+) and others.	Rebellion: All have sinned, and fallen short of the glory of God. Our rebellion against God has resulted in broken relationships—between God and man, between man and his fellow man, and between man and
What is the solution to our problem?	Revolution: Oppressed victims and their allies must unite to unmask, deconstruct, and overthrow these oppressive power structures, systems, and institutions.	The gospel: On the cross, God incarnate bore the punishment we deserved for sinful rebellion in order to show us a mercy we could never deserve. His death on the cross and His resurrection opened the way for the reconciliation of all of our broken relationships.

How can we be saved?	Victims are morally innocent and do not require salvation. Oppressors can never be fully pardoned, but partial salvation is available if they confess their complicity in oppression and support the revolution.	"If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. . . . Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." (Romans 10:9, 13)
What is our primary moral duty?	To stand in solidarity with, protect, and defend the oppressed: women, people of color, sexual minorities (LGBTQ+), etc.	To love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength (which involves living in obedience to all that Christ commanded) and to love our neighbors as ourselves.
How do we know what is true?	The notions of objective truth, reason, logic, evidence, and argument are discredited tools that oppressors employ to maintain their hegemony. We gain knowledge of "truth" through victims, who, based on their lived experience of oppression, have greater insight than oppressors. This is referred to as Standpoint Epistemology.	Divine revelation: (1) God's written Word (2 Timothy 3:13); (2) the "law written on our heart," or human conscience (Romans 2:15); and God's revelation in creation (Romans 1:20). To this we apply our God-given capacity for reason, logic, discussion, and debate to assemble and weigh evidence in pursuit of truth.
Who has ultimate authority?	Victims are the final authority. The claims of victims based on their subjective, lived experience must be believed without question.	God (and His revealed Word in Scripture) is the final authority.
Is there a future, final judgment?	No. There is no god who will return to punish the wicked and reward the upright. Rather, injustice must be rooted out here and now by those with the power to do so.	Yes. Jesus will return and accomplish perfect justice. He will preserve all that is good and rid the world of all that is evil. Until then, He extends mercy and forgiveness to sinful people.

**So, where do weigh in?**

1) We \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ (and know *why* we do!)

Religion gives ... my source of IDENTITY ... COMMUNITY ... PURPOSE

"The dogmas of intersectionality, socialism, gender theory, and other leftist notions of social justice are efforts to fill the void left by the decline of churches, communities, and families. But these secular doctrines are poor substitutes ... They bring rage and misery, not peace."

- Nathanael Blake

2) Study to \_\_\_\_\_ so that we may \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ a solid and consistent \_\_\_\_\_.

"Most people catch their presuppositions from their family and surrounding society, the way that a child catches the measles. But people with understanding realize that their presuppositions should be chosen after a careful consideration of which worldview is true."

- Francis A. Schaeffer, *How Should We Then Live*

From: Dr. James N. Anderson, associate professor of theology and philosophy at Reformed Theological Seminary. He is the author of *What's Your Worldview?: An Interactive Approach to Life's Big Questions ...*

A **worldview** is a network of ultimate beliefs, assumptions, values, and ideas about the universe and our place in it that shapes how a person understands their life and experiences (and the lives and experiences of others) and how that person acts in response.

But what exactly are these ultimate beliefs, assumptions, values, and ideas? What do they concern? In teaching on this subject I've found it helpful to use a simple acronym - **TAKES** - to break down a worldview into five basic areas or subdivisions:

- **T**heology
- **A**nthropology
- **K**nowledge
- **E**thics
- **S**alvation

"If millions of Christians keep sowing seeds of truth in millions of conversations and PTA meetings and political caucuses and classrooms and board rooms and talk shows and public forums and sermons and books and essays and articles and letters, there will be a leavening effect that will shape ideas and restrain bad behavior and lead people toward the light.

If the truth is a seamless fabric, then speaking the truth anywhere on any issue will strengthen the cause of truth everywhere on every issue. God only knows how often the gospel of Jesus Christ has been made more hearable because preconditions of truth have been laid down by a thousand prior influences of right speaking. This is part of the salt that preserves the mental life of society so that it can be touched more effectively by the gospel message, which is also salt."

- John Piper

3) Make \_\_\_\_\_ with a \_\_\_\_\_. (\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_)

<sup>15</sup> He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

<sup>16</sup> For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. <sup>17</sup> And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. <sup>18</sup> And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. <sup>19</sup> For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, <sup>20</sup> and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

<sup>21</sup> **And you**, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, <sup>22</sup> he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, <sup>23</sup> if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

- Col. 1:15-23

"First-Inheritance Evangelicals worked from a biblical worldview that was comprehensive and wholistic in its application. This led to the first Great Awakening. Wesley exemplified this. He preached Christ crucified for salvation but argued that true revival would be followed by reformation, a change in society stemming from consequential conversions. In other words, the cross has both a *personal* application and a *social* application.

The Second Inheritance Evangelicals, working from the sacred/secular divide (what I call Evangelical Gnosticism), preached the gospel of personal salvation. They were interested in revival, but not necessarily in the reformation of society."

- Darrow Miller, Disciple Nations Alliance

**Discipleship at the level of \_\_\_\_\_:**

When people come to Christ through evangelism, they need to be discipled. The discipleship needs to take place on two levels. The first is the PERSONAL level of the "spiritual disciplines," i.e. to read the word of God, to pray, to fellowship with believers and to share the gospel.

But a second level of discipleship has implications for the social impact of the gospel. This is discipleship *at the level of culture*.

Culture at its most basic level is a product of "cult" - \_\_\_\_\_. In scripture we are told that we become like the God or gods that we worship (e.g. Ps 135:17-18; Is. 44:9-20).

Theologian Henry van Til has stated this as clearly as anyone: "culture is religion externalized." Or to say it differently, culture is the outworking of a people's FAITH. When people come to Christ, they are leaving their pagan god behind, be it a local idol or money, and are turning to the living God. His character is different from the nature of pagan gods. As the focus of our worship/cult changes, so too there should be a change in culture. As an example, most pagan gods can be bribed. This leads to a culture of corruption. The living God "shows no partiality and accepts no bribes." The worship of the living God should lead to a culture of justice.

Ken Meyers, journalist and graduate of Westminster Seminary explains it this way at Mars Hill Audio:

"Discipleship is not engaging with another culture to present a small set of new propositions. Rather, discipleship is a work of alternative enculturation - to present a new way to understand life and the world in which we live, that is, a new way to understand 'what is real'".

**Key Question: If Jesus is Lord, what does that \_\_\_\_\_?**

Missionary statesman Lesslie Newbigin put it this way:

*A preaching of the gospel that calls men and women to accept Jesus as their Savior but does not make it clear that discipleship means a commitment to a vision of society radically different from that which controls our public life today must be condemned as false.*

In short, evangelism and conversion should lead to a change in society.

Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Go therefore and **make disciples** of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

- Matthew 28:18-20

**4) Drive out a \_\_\_\_\_ worldview by offering a \_\_\_\_\_.**

The best way to drive out a bad worldview is by offering a good one, and Christians need to move beyond criticizing culture to creating culture. That is the task God originally created humans to do, and in the process of sanctification we are meant to recover that task. . . . In every calling we are culture-creators, offering up our work as service to God.

- Nancy Pearcey, *Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from Its Cultural Captivity* (Wheaton, Crossway, 2008), 58.

Better\* in (at least) these areas:

Human \_\_\_\_\_ ...

Source of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

Transforming culture ...

Justice/injustice

Poverty

Racism

Etc.

The \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

"We need to recover that older theology that seamlessly links the gospel, evangelism, and discipleship with faithfully living out the implications of the biblical worldview in every area of life and every sphere of society. After all, Jesus isn't merely King over some limited, spiritual area. He is King of heaven and earth! We need to remember this, and act like it."

- Scott Allen

Addendum:

**Here are some thoughts on the right way to respond to ideological opponents:**

- Always be gracious and civil, and not just in person, but also on social media.
- Give others the benefit of the doubt when it comes to their motives. Assume they genuinely want to pursue justice, fight for the oppressed, and stand against racism for biblical reasons.
- Be quick to listen, and slow to speak. Always try to learn and understand. Get the log out of your own eye first.
- Pray. Ask for God's help to engage in ways that honor and glorify Him. Pray that your opponents will turn from false beliefs and turn to the truth. Trust in God's supernatural power more than your own arguments or wisdom.
- Don't give up on engagement, discussion, and dialogue, even if your opponents do. You cannot control how they respond, but never be the first to break off relationship. Be quick to forgive. Quick to reconcile. Quick to affirm.
- Don't cow to pressure. Stand firm for the truth. Stand firm on biblical principles and biblical definitions. There is a mistaken idea that is now widespread in the evangelical community that "loving your neighbor" means affirming what they sincerely believe, even if it is false and unbiblical.
- Loving your neighbor means sacrificially working for their good. Affirming their false beliefs may seem loving, but it isn't, because false beliefs are destructive. They never lead to freedom or flourishing.
- Don't fear, but trust in God's sovereignty and power. Our opponents are powerful. They have massive amounts of cultural support in the media, the entertainment business, government agencies, various businesses, and on social media. They have seemingly unlimited amounts of money backing their cause.

Allen, Scott Allen, *Why Social Justice Is Not Biblical Justice: An Urgent Appeal to Fellow Christians in a Time of Social Crisis* (pp. 174-175).