

BY WHAT
STANDARD?



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God's World...God's Rules

Edited by

JARED LONGSHORE



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INTRODUCTION

Either God created the world, or He didn't. Elijah asked what is still a pertinent question, "How long will you go limping between two different opinions" (1 Kings 18:21)? If Yahweh is God, follow Him. If man is God, follow him. In any case, "Choose this day whom you will serve."

Many have failed to see that a false religion is afoot. But it is getting harder to ignore. The philosophy and empty deceit which says man is the measure of all things has been with us since Protagoras. Yet it materialized in 1960's America in life-altering ways. Having thoroughly worked its way through our educational institutions, this vain ideology now advances in nearly every aspect of our civil and cultural experience.

This false religion is the same one God gave people up to in Romans 1. We have turned from worshipping the Creator to worshipping the creature. This religious system teaches that man is God and the human will is the holy standard. Salvation masquerades as that future state of universal equality attained by strict adherence to the Hegelian dialectic. But, in reality, it consists of satiating the unrestricted human appetite by any means necessary. So we do not leap upon altars crying out to Baal to send fire while cutting ourselves (1 Kings 18:26ff). But we do leap up on cars as we riot in fiery streets, cutting down people's livelihoods while crying out to finite, governmental gods. We do not sacrifice our children to Molech (Leviticus 18:21). But we do sacrifice them to Planned Parenthood.

The book you hold in your hand contrasts this false religion with the true Christian faith. It is an attempt to flesh out some of the message found in the film *By What Standard* (available at wwwFOUNDERS.org). Contributors address a variety of topics, including vain philosophies, cultural Marxism, race, manhood, womanhood, sexuality, and justice. These topics are set forth in the light of Scripture, providing insight into the times and how to live Christianly in them.

Jared Longshore

ONE

HOLLOW AND DECEPTIVE PHILOSOPHIES

By Tom Ascol

Sometimes I wonder how anybody makes it to heaven. Think about all the warnings the Bible gives to those who are walking with God through this world. We are constantly being opposed by that unholy trinity of the world, the flesh, and the devil, which means we have enemies around us, within us and above us.

In both Old and New Testaments, the Lord has seen fit to issue repeated warnings to His people to be on their guard against dangers that surround them at every step of their journey to the Celestial City. We are repeatedly warned about the deceitfulness of our own hearts, the strategies of the devil, and the enticements of the world.

In the Old Testament false prophets were regularly a threat to God's people. Moses gives specific instructions to resist false prophets and "worthless fellows" who will try to lead the people astray in the land of promise (Deuteronomy 13:12-13).

Jeremiah 9:6 says such false teachers heap “oppression upon oppression, and deceit upon deceit,” and they refuse to know the Lord. In Jeremiah 23:16 the Lord says, “Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you, filling you with vain hopes. They speak visions of their own minds, not from the mouth of the Lord.” Jesus plainly warned about such people in Matthew 7:15, “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves.”

Psalms and Proverbs are filled with calls to be on our guard against those who would lead us away from God, especially when they come to us with smooth talk and flattering words (Proverbs 26:23-26; Psalm 55:21ff).

Paul warns about such smooth talkers in Romans 16:17-18, where he writes, “I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them. For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive.”

Peter says that the devil prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour, so we must be sober-minded and watchful (1 Peter 5:8). He admonishes us in 2 Peter 3:17, to “take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability.”

In one of the most touching scenes in all of the Bible Luke records Paul’s final words to the elders of Ephesus in Acts 20:28–30. He told them: “Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them.”

Later, in the last letter we have from him, just a few months before he died, he tells Timothy in 2 Timothy 4 to preach the Word. Then he tells him why that is so important in vv. 3-4, “For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will

accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.”

I could multiply such passages as these and you are probably as familiar with them as I am. But as we reflect just on these that I have noted—the very words of God to us—doesn’t it highlight just how serious the danger is that confronts us? It is true—the world is filled with devils and they *do* threaten to undo us.

One of the reasons that I love Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress* is because he so graphically and helpfully depicts the life of a Christian as a dangerous journey. Yet, I fear, that we tend not to think of the Christian life that way today. We much prefer to think that we are safe; we are OK; that we really don’t have much to fear about our spiritual lives and therefore don’t really need to beware—to be careful.

Such complacency has set up modern evangelicals to be played. What I mean is that we are in the midst of a very subtle, intentional, and deadly maneuver by the devil that is designed to lead pastors, evangelical leaders and churches away from allegiance to the gospel of Jesus Christ, and the authority and sufficiency of His Word.

Theologian Kevin Vanhoozer has wisely noted that pastors and churches today must particularly brace ourselves for a particular kind of spiritual warfare, “For,” he says, “we wrestle not against flesh and blood, matters in motion, but against isms, against the powers that seek to name, and control, reality.”¹

That is precisely what I see going on today. There are godless ideologies that have spread throughout Western civilization in recent decades with a vengeance and with their agenda to “name and control” reality. In other words, they are telling us what we are supposed to see; naming it and defining it for us, and then demanding that we reorder our lives on the basis of this new, supposed reality.

1. Melvin Tinker. *That Hideous Strength: How the West Was Lost* (Welwyn Garden City, UK: Evangelical Press), 2018, 33.

In recent years many of these ideologies have been smuggled into many evangelical churches and organizations through the Trojan Horse of what is commonly called, “social justice.” In the name of racial reconciliation, honoring women and showing love and respect for the sexually confused, evangelicals have welcomed in ways of thinking that undermine the very teachings of God’s Word that actually do promote true love and true justice through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The devil has been very effective in confusing people about what constitutes real justice and what actually working for justice entails. We are being played precisely at this point. God is the only true source of justice. He is the righteous One who has created this world and He has defined justice for us in His Word. Yet, in the name of seeking justice many evangelicals are being told that we must see the world and work for certain outcomes on the basis of ideas and ideologies that are contrary to Scripture.

We are being played, manipulated, maneuvered, and deceived. Proponents of hollow and deceptive philosophies are telling us what we must see, think and do if we are to be faithful in pursuing justice in the church and the world.

PAUL’S WARNING TO THE COLOSSIANS

In Colossians 2:8 Paul specifically warns us not to allow anyone to deceive us in this way. I want to look at that verse in this chapter in order to understand what is going on and what we must do about it.

In the letter of Colossians Paul begins with an introductory expression of thanksgiving and prayer for the church. He then launches into a profound explanation of the supremacy of Christ in 1:15. Beginning in 1:24 he describes how that awareness of Christ informs his own ministry as an apostle and minister of the gospel. Our text is found in the middle of that description. Paul gives an admonition in vv. 6-7; then a warning in v. 8; followed by reasons to heed the warning in vv. 9-10.

Colossians 2:6–10 (ESV) — Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.

I like the way that JB Lightfoot renders v. 8. He puts it like this:

Be on your guard; do not suffer yourselves to fall prey to certain people who would lead you captive by a hollow and deceitful system, which they call philosophy. They substitute the traditions of men for the truth of God. They enforce an elementary discipline of mundane ordinances fit only for children. Theirs is not the gospel of Christ.²

In this text Paul calls on us to be so grounded in Jesus Christ that no one can take you captive with hollow and deceptive philosophies. Paul sticks with his theme of the greatness and sufficiency of Christ as he admonishes us in vv. 6–7 “walk in Christ.” Just as we received Christ by faith—taking Him at His Word—so we are to live in Him, being rooted, built up, and established in the faith just as we have been taught the faith from the beginning of our relationship with Christ.

In v. 8, he warns us not to be taken captive by hollow and deceptive philosophies which are not according to Christ. Then in vv. 9–10 he buttresses his argument by reminding us that in Christ the whole fullness of deity dwells and we have been filled in Him. In other words, why in the world would you let anyone lead you astray from the simplicity and fullness that is in Jesus!

Let’s look at v. 8 more closely: “See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according

2. Joseph Barber Lightfoot. *Colossians and Philemon*, Crossway Classic Commentaries (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1997), 89–90.

to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.”

This is the goal of our spiritual enemies. They want to take us captive. Paul uses a very rare word, used only here in the Bible and rarely anywhere else. It means to plunder; to take the spoils that come from being victorious in battle. This term indicates that Paul sees the threat as spiritual warfare. He says we must not allow this to happen: “See to it!” “Watch!” “Be on guard!”

This is what a Lieutenant says to his platoon as they move through enemy territory. Paul says that we must take care that *no one* takes us captive. He may have had specific people in mind who were propagating dangerous ideas in Colossae. But we must remember that such teachers spread deceptive philosophies as instruments of the devil, whether wittingly or unwittingly. And the devil’s desire is always to take people captive to do his will (2 Timothy 2:24-26). Paul says: Do not let this happen! Be on your guard.

So the goal of our spiritual enemies is to take us captive. But what methods do they employ? The methods of our spiritual enemies are philosophy and empty deceit. Now this is not a prohibition of all philosophy. While this is the only time Paul uses the word, we should not understand Paul to be rejecting philosophy in general. What he has in mind is a system of teaching used by the enemy to capture God’s people. He is saying there are ideas at play, intellectual arguments, which will lead people astray from the living God. Moreover, he is pointing out the problem with a specific kind of philosophy. One that is empty deceit.

The description is tightly woven. All three words are qualified by one definite article. There is one idea here. That is why I take Paul to refer to any hollow and deceptive philosophy. It is a way of thinking that is spiritually bankrupt. It is a way of thinking that is deceptive—that is, it sounds impressive and helpful. But in reality, it is deadly. Three sources of this hollow, deceptive philosophy are identified. Each one is introduced by the same preposition: “according to.”

First, this hollow, deceptive philosophy is according to human tradition. Now again Paul is not putting down all tradition. He speaks of tradition favorably in 2 Thessalonians 2:15. The problem is that it is merely

human, a tradition that is separated from God. It is not in keeping with that which God has revealed. This is precisely the problem with the Pharisees as Jesus pointed out when He applied Isaiah 29:13 to them in Mark 7:6-7, “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, “This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.”

As the Huguenot Pastor, John Daille put it, teachings coming from mere human tradition are “all of them nothing but folly and vanity in the sight of God,... And though men boast of their utility, they are extremely hurtful, as they pester consciences, and busy them about things which God has not ordained, and turn them aside from his pure service to things which do not profit.”³

Second, this empty philosophy is according to the elemental spirits of the world. Now this is a notoriously difficult phrase to interpret. Some say it refers to basic elements of the world: earth, wind, fire, and water. Others, that it signifies basic elements of an idea or system—the “A,B,C’s” of it. Some claim the phrase implies connection to supernatural beings.

It seems that the third of these ideas fits more closely with the way Paul thinks of spiritual warfare, but whatever his precise meaning is by this phrase, the real danger is found in the third description of this hollow philosophy’s source. And that is that it is not according to Christ. It doesn’t come from Christ. It is not revealed by God. It isn’t compatible with a right understanding of the person and work of Christ. In other words, it is incompatible with the gospel. Curtis Vaughan puts it like this: “Christ is the pole-star of theology, the standard by which all doctrine is to be measured. Any system, whatever its claims or pretensions, is to be rejected if it does not conform to the revelation which God has given us in Him.”⁴

3. John Daille. *Exposition of Colossians* (National Foundation for Christian Education, 1968), 290.

4. Curtis Vaughan. *Colossians and Philemon, Founders Study Guide Commentary* (Cape Coral, FL: Founders Press, 2016), 71.

This is always the great danger that we face—that we will be led away from Christ by ideas or practices that do not conform to the revelation that God has given us in Christ. This is the very concern that Paul expresses for the Corinthians as he warns them about the false teachers in their midst. He writes in 2 Corinthians 11:3 (NASB95), “But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.”

We must work hard to be so grounded in Jesus Christ that no one can take us captive with hollow and deceptive philosophies. How can we guard ourselves against being taken captive in this way? By having an unwavering, unqualified, unembarrassed, submission to the Holy Scriptures as the authoritative, sufficient Word of God. Let our cry be that of Isaiah 8:20, “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (KJV).

I believe that what Paul has written in Colossians 2:8 directly applies to what we are facing today in the so-called “social justice” movement. This is a movement that has its origins in the unbelieving world and has made rapid, and at some points, very deep inroads into Christian churches and institutions.

In fact, Colossians 2:8 is in a significant sense a main impetus behind the Statement on Social Justice and the Gospel which was recently published. I was involved in helping to write that statement that consists of 14 articles of affirmations & denials. The first line of the Introduction to the statement explains the concerns of the original framers of it—and presumably of the more than 11,000 people who have signed their names to it in support.

The statement begins like this: “In view of questionable sociological, psychological, and political theories presently permeating our culture and making inroads into Christ’s church, we wish to clarify certain key Christian doctrines and ethical principles prescribed in God’s Word.”⁵

5. Statement on Social Justice: February 26, 2020, <https://statementonsocialjustice.com>.

Those “questionable sociological, psychological and political theories” need to be identified, understood and kept in their proper places. In the time that I have left, I want to try to do just that by looking at the worldview by which the modern social justice movement is being driven. It is, at its heart, antithetical to biblical Christianity. As a result, when Christians uncritically embrace and promote today’s social justice movement they are in danger of being taken captive by unbiblical ideologies and led away from Christ.

Professor Thaddeus Williams of Biola explains it this way:

The problem is not with the quest for justice. The problem is what happens when that quest is undertaken from a framework that is not compatible with the Bible. And this is a very real problem, because the extent to which we unwittingly allow unbiblical worldview assumptions to shape our approach to justice is the extent to which we are inadvertently hurting the very people we seek to help.⁶

It is precisely because I believe that this is happening that I oppose the social justice movement. Let me say it this way. I oppose the social justice movement because I am for *biblical justice*. I oppose the modern social justice movement not because I deny the existence of injustices that we face, but because many of the proposals that come from that movement are based on dangerous ideologies that lead away from Jesus Christ and His gospel.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

What is meant by “social justice?” It is a difficult term to define precisely because it is used in so many different ways by its proponents. Antonio Martino, an Italian economist and politician has astutely noted that

6. Thaddeus Williams, “Interview: How Should Christians Think About Social Justice.” Josh McDowell Ministry, July 22, 2018, <https://www.josh.org/christian-social-justice/>.

social justice . . . owes its immense popularity precisely to its ambiguity and meaninglessness. It can be used by different people, holding quite different views, to designate a wide variety of different things. Its obvious appeal stems from its persuasive strength, from its positive connotations, which allows the user to praise his own ideas and simultaneously express contempt for the ideas of those who don't agree with him.⁷

Luigi Taperelli, an Italian Jesuit priest, is the first to use the term in the late 18th century to describe principles for a just society. Many, I dare say, most people who use the term today are not thinking in terms of 18th and 19th century Roman Catholic social theory. Most people today have a less sophisticated approach to social justice and usually mean by it that laws, cultural practices, economic policies, and such should be “just” and fair. Of course, that leaves us asking, “just and fair by what standard?”

One of the standard college textbooks on the subject (*Readings for Diversity and Social Justice*) defines social justice as “the elimination of all forms of social oppression.”⁸ Where oppression exists, justice seeks to eliminate it. That is a good thing, right? After all, God commands us to do this in Isaiah 1:17, doesn't He, when He says, “learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause.” And Psalm 82:3, “Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute.”

It is precisely at this point that I fear the sleight-of-hand comes in that results in many Christians being duped. Because the question that must be answered is this: Who determines who the oppressed are? And what does it mean to seek justice for them? Or, as we should again ask, *by what standard?*⁹

7. Ronald Nash. *Social Justice and the Christian Church* (CSS Publishing, 2002), 5-6.

8. Maurianne Adams. *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2013), 483.

9. Founders Ministries, *By What Standard? A Founders Ministries Cinedoc*, <https://founders.org/cinedoc/>.

CULTURAL MARXISM & CRITICAL THEORY

For more than 150 years, Marxism has been offering answers to that question, first in terms of economics and more recently in terms of culture or sociology. This latter neo or cultural Marxism has been a dominant influence in the academy and politics in helping to shape our understanding of oppression in society.

Joe Carter, of the ERLC, published an article at The Gospel Coalition entitled, “Kinism, Marxism and the Synagogue Shooter.” In that article and some later exchanges I had with him, Carter says that the term, “cultural Marxism,” is racist jargon that “originated from a racist worldview perpetuated by anti-Semites.”¹⁰ In a brief twitter exchange, Joe said that the use of “cultural Marxism” is “a racist and antisemitic [sic] dog whistle that...should be abandoned by Christians.” He then urged me to quit using the term.

Obviously, I have not acquiesced to his request because I believe that it remains helpful in understanding the play that is being made against our culture in the West and increasingly against many evangelical and reformed churches and organizations.

Al Mohler helps us understand why Carter and those like him object to the use of the term, as he explains how widespread this ideology is in the academy. Commenting on an article by David Brooks in the NY Times, Mohler explains that

many on the left are saying that cultural Marxism is the boogie man of the right, that it's an invented position amongst conservatives, but that is not so....What is driving the left is indeed nothing less than a form of cultural Marxism, which has been taught on college and university campuses for a long time, and is now...the lingua franca. It is the symbolic universe in which the younger progressives live.¹¹

10. Joe Carter, “Kinism, Cultural Marxism, and the Synagogue Shooter.” The Aquila Report, May 2, 2019, <https://www.theaquilareport.com/kinism-cultural-marxism-and-the-synagogue-shooter/>.

11. Albert Mohler, “The Briefing.” Albert Mohler, November 29, 2018, <https://albertmohler.com/2018/11/29/briefing-11-29-18>.

Cultural Marxism is an adaptation of classical Marxism moving it from an economic theory to a cultural and social one. Classical Marxism saw class conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat—or the “haves” and “have-nots.” Cultural Marxism views such conflict as between the oppressed and the oppressors; between those with privilege and those without it. The working class has been replaced by minorities. Majority groups are defined as “privileged” and “oppressive.” Minority groups are regarded as “underprivileged” and “oppressed.”

Whites, men, heterosexuals, and cisgenders are all majority groups and therefore inherently oppressive. They comprise the “dominant culture” and wield “hegemonic power” against sub-dominant cultures. Hegemony comes from a Greek term that means “to have dominance over.” Those who do not fit into such groups are “sub-dominant” minorities and by definition, in the cultural Marxist scheme, oppressed. Those in the dominant culture exert their hegemonic power over minorities by manipulating them—oftentimes inadvertently—to accept their cultural assumptions, mores, and values.

This way of viewing the world (cultural Marxism) has given rise to a philosophical movement or ideology known as Critical Theory (CT).

It is critical to grasp the true nature of Critical Theory. Michael Thompson explains,

Critical theory is not, however, simply a subfield within social theory, philosophy, or the social sciences. It is a distinctive form of theory in that it posits a more comprehensive means to grasp social reality and diagnose social pathologies. It is marked not by a priori ethical or political values that it seeks to assert in the world, but by its capacity to grasp the totality of individual and social life as well as the social processes that constitute them. It is a form of social criticism that contains within it the seeds of judgment, evaluation, and practical, transformative activity.¹²

12. Michael Thompson. *The Palgrave Handbook of Critical Theory* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 1.

Critical Theory's agenda, therefore, is to see the overthrow what it deems oppressive groups and the deconstruction of those structures that enable them to wield their hegemonic power, all in the name of love and compassion for the oppressed.

This ideology is already on full display across our nation in our political system (see Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez) as well as on our college and university campuses (google Professor Brett Weinstein of Evergreen State University). It is seen in everything from the innocent sounding "diversity departments" to the violent silencing of those heretics who dare to question its orthodoxy.

You can see how problematic this ideology becomes if it is allowed to define who the oppressed are and what constitutes seeking justice for them. Yet, that is precisely what is happening across our nation and it has begun to make inroads into the evangelical world. Consider three especially problematic principles of Critical Theory.¹³

First, your fundamental identity is not who you are as an individual but arises from the groups to which you belong. What matters most is whether you are a part of privileged, dominant "oppressor" groups or sub-dominant "oppressed" groups. This is how you can be racist, misogynistic and homophobic even though you personally harbor none of those sinful attitudes. If you are part of the white, heterosexual, cis-gender, male hegemony, you are guilty of systemic oppression.

Second, your fundamental moral duty is to work for the liberation of oppressed groups. This is what it means to do justice. If you are not undertaking this work in behalf of the oppressed then you are complicit in their ongoing oppression.

Third, when it comes to knowing oppression, your lived experience far outweighs objective evidence and reason. In fact, this standpoint epistemology argues that using objective evidence and reason is exerting he-

13. Neil Shenvi and Pat Sawyer, "Critical Theory & Christianity," Free Thinking Ministries, August 17, 2018, <https://freethinkingministries.com/critical-theory-christianity/>.

gemonic power over those in sub-dominant cultures (minorities) and is itself an act of oppression. This is why those in the hegemony need to sit down and listen rather than speak.

Note a few examples of evangelicals writing about justice issues in ways that betray the influence of critical theory on their thinking.

Timothy Isaiah Cho (MDiv, Westminster Theological Seminary), a contributor to White Horse Inn and writer for Core Christianity has said:

The Bible is written from the lens of the marginalized. If you come from a group or community that is historically not marginalized, you need these voices and perspectives or else your understanding of the Word, the gospel, and the Christian life will be thin and weak.¹⁴

If the references in your pastor's sermons, the books used in small groups, the resources passed between the laity, the music sung in worship, & even the reflection quotes in your worship bulletins are predominantly by White men, your church is promoting a truncated Christianity.¹⁵

Andy Draycott, Associate Professor of Theology and Christian Ethics at Talbot School of Theology, Biola University, presented a paper at the 2018 ETS entitled, "Walking Across Gender in the Spirit? The Vocation of the Church and the Transgender Christian."¹⁶ He asked the question, "Should we consider 'transgender Christians' as having a good self-understanding?" He gave an unqualified, "yes." Further, he used the ordinance of baptism as an analogy as a way to help us think about "transgendered Christians." They have died to their old, biological identity (the one they were born with), and have risen to a new life as transgendered.

14. Timothy Cho, Twitter, September 16, 2018, <https://twitter.com/tisaiahcho/status/1041357588770648064>.

15. Timothy Cho, Twitter, January 31, 2019, <https://twitter.com/tisaiahcho/status/1091108240660656129>.

16. Andy Draycott, "Walking Across Gender in the Spirit? The Vocation of the Church and the Transgender Christian." Word MP3, 2018, <https://www.wordmp3.com/details.aspx?id=33607>.

The pushback against his paper was so strong after the ETS meeting that Draycott issued a statement of apology for his “lack of clarity” in his presentation and basically contradicted what his paper actually says.

In the weeks leading up to Mother’s Day 2019, some evangelical women announced that they would be preaching in their churches that Sunday. The most prominent among them was Beth Moore. In the inevitable controversy that erupted the language defending Mrs. Moore and other women preachers included accusations of misogynistic oppression and the need for women to be liberated from such oppression.

I am not accusing any of the people I have named of being Cultural Marxists or of consciously promoting Critical Theory. What I am saying is that the influence of that worldview is apparent in what they are advocating and how they are contending for what they believe to be justice.

Such examples could be multiplied many times over, but my main concern is not to highlight all of the ways and places that the worldly philosophy of CT has infiltrated evangelical thinking, but to sound the alarm that it is doing so and to call us to recognize that this way of viewing the world is not according to Christ. You cannot buy into the world view of cultural Marxism or Critical Theory and maintain a commitment to the Bible as the Word of God written.

GOD’S WORLD, GOD’S RULES

Christ has given us His Word and that Word is authoritative, sufficient, and final. It teaches us that God is the Creator of this world. He has ordered it and has done so in various ways including ways that include some hierarchies in relationships and distinctions between people. He made men stronger than women and adults to have more maturity than children. He created human sexuality to be binary. In other words He created two and only two sexes: Male and female He created them. He providentially orders the times and places of our existence. He is the One who says plainly in His Word that the office and function of elders are restricted to qualified men.

He alone is righteous and He has revealed His righteousness to us in the moral law. Sin is any transgression of or lack of conformity to that law. To live justly is to live lawfully. Injustice is failure to live lawfully.

In a phrase, *this is God's world and He gets to set the rules*. If we want to live in it well, then we must live in it in keeping with His design. Our fundamental problem is that we have shattered His design by our own rebellion against Him. We do not have the righteousness that He requires and we cannot pay the penalty that our sin has incurred. Our only hope is His sovereign grace and that grace is exclusively revealed in Jesus Christ. If we are going to be reconciled to God we must come to know Him on His terms, through faith in His Son to whom we bow as Lord. In submission to Jesus Christ, we accept what the Bible says is right and wrong, good and bad, just and unjust. And we commit ourselves in faith, to keep His commandments.

Our world is a spiritually dangerous place. It has always been so since the fall of our first parents. The dangers confronting us are particularly insidious because of the subtlety with which they have entered into our ways of thinking and viewing the world. So let us face these days with the boldness and confidence of Martin Luther and sing his hymn after him:

*And though this world, with devils filled,
Should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear, for God hath willed,
His truth to triumph through us:*

*The Prince of Darkness grim,
We tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure,
For lo! his doom is sure,
One little word shall fell him.*

*That word above all earthly powers,
No thanks to them, abideth
The Spirit and the gifts are ours,
Through Him who with us sideth:
Let goods and kindred go,
This mortal life also;
The body they may kill:
God's truth abideth still,
His Kingdom is forever.*