

Morphing Marxism, Still a Bad Idea: Critical Theory and Christian Discernment

See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ (Colossians 2:8).

I. Social Crisis, Christianity, and Critical Theory

A. Fire in the streets and fire in the minds

BLM leader, Hawk Newsome, “If this country doesn't give us what we want, then we will burn down this system and replace it.”

B. The question of “social justice” and the Christian

II. The Christian Worldview and Society

A. Take every thought captive to obey Christ (2 Corinthians 10:3-5 Romans 12:1-2)

B. Basic worldview

1. Creation (Genesis 1-2; John 1:1-2)

2. Fall (Genesis 3, Romans 3)

3. Redemption (Romans 1-8)

4. Consummation (Revelation 21-22)

C. Specific matters

1. The State, civil government (Romans 13:1-7)
 - a. Assumes a fallen world of trade offs
 - b. It is essentially a restraining force, not an engine of total social change or regeneration (utopianism)
 - c. Can go very wrong and become an idol: statism (Ezekiel 28:1-10; Revelation 13)
2. Race (Genesis 1:26-28; Galatians 3:26-28; Revelation 7:9)

From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands (Acts 17:26).
3. Sexual identity and ethics (Genesis 1-2; Matthew 19:1-6; Romans 1:18-32): God-given gender, moral framework
4. Seek the welfare of the city where God has placed you (Jeremiah 29:7; Matthew 5:14-16)

D. Discernment: separating the true and false (1 John 4:1-6; Colossians 2:8-9)

III. **Critical Theory or Critical Race Theory**

A. Marxist roots: Karl Marx (1818-83), Fredrick Engles (1820-95)

1. Class conflict: owners (bourgeoisie) verses workers (proletariat)
2. Revolution as salvation: overthrow the owners and private property to eliminate alienation
3. An economics-driven and materialistic (atheistic) worldview
4. Anti-religion: Marx: “religion is the opiate of the masses”
5. History of unparalleled confiscation, oppression, murder, and terror in Russia, China, Cambodia—100, 000,000 killed at the hands of the state (not in war). See *The Black Book of Communism*.

B. The Frankfurt School (cultural Marxism)

1. Various thinkers (such as Theodore Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, Max Horkheimer, Eric Fromme) revised Marxism to include more cultural, racial, and sexual categories of oppression. Sometimes called *cultural Marxism*
2. Violent revolution may not be needed; cultural infiltration is the way: “the long march through the institutions” (Antonio Gramsci). Influence through education, politics, think tanks, and media

C. Influence of Michel Foucault: power relations are often subtle in oppressing the minorities, especially sexual minorities and those deemed mentally ill.

D. Basic critical theory or cultural Marxism

1. Society is divided into power groups: the oppressors and the oppressed based on race and gender (more than economic class, which is older Marxism)

2. Social disparities are based on cultural oppression of the strong on the weak: sexism, racism, heteronormativity, etc. *Identity politics*: political treatment is based first on your particular identity as one of the oppressed, not on your common humanity
3. *Intersectionality*: people belonging to more than one oppressed group are more oppressed; their oppression is compounded.
4. *Standpoint epistemology*: the oppressed standpoint according to their “lived experience” is the final authority on reality. Postmodernism meets absolutism.

Voddie Baucham: “Ethnic Gnosticism”

5. Objective truth, grammar, and laws of logic may be rejected as oppressive, white, male, etc.
6. Objective gender identity, based on nature or God’s design, is rejected in favor of gender fluidity, and multiple and fungible gender identities. Transgenderism.

IV. Critiquing Critical Theory

- A. Basic Americanism: no need to “fundamentally transform the United States of America” (Barack Obama, 2008).
 1. All have God-given objective rights: life, liberty, pursuit of happiness (or virtue in community). The Declaration of Independence (1776)
 2. The Constitution allows for the self-reforming of America through Amendments, as does the whole legal and voting system.

3. Five freedoms of the First Amendment (religion, speech, press, assembly, petition) give Americans unique opportunities to reform peacefully, but substantially.
4. The Constitution is not based on slavery (1619 idea). It allowed for it through a compromise between the northern and southern states; it was never practiced in all states and was abolished through the 13th Amendment. It is a correctable birth defect (Robert Woodson), not our original sin.

B. Standpoint epistemology: absolutizing subjectivity

1. Yes, listen to minority voices and heed real injustices. For example, consider the theology and spirituality of the Negro Spirituals.
2. No, “lived experience” does not determine truth, which is correspondence to reality. One may misinterpret “lived experience” and make false claims.
3. Objective truth, logic, and grammar are not tools of unjustified power, but intellectual necessities for rational discourse and political action (John 1:1-3).

Logic and grammar should be used to find and commend truth for the common good.

C. Social and cultural oppression is real, but not nicely divided into social groups. All have sinned (Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:9-18).

The root of sin is in the self (Mark 7:20-23)

Gradually it was disclosed to me that the line separating good and evil passes not through states, nor between classes, nor between political parties either—but right through every human

heart—and through all human hearts. This line shifts. Inside us, it oscillates with the years. And even within hearts overwhelmed by evil, one small bridgehead of good is retained. And even in the best of all hearts, there remains ... an un-uprooted small corner of evil—Alexandr Solzhenitsyn (1918-2008), author and Russian dissident.

D. Forgiveness and justification (atonement) only through Jesus Christ (John 3:16-18; Romans 5:1-8), not through social means of revolution.

E. Political and cultural justice should be based on human equality as made in God's image and God's objective standards as revealed in conscience (Romans 2:14-15) and Scripture (2 Timothy 3:15-16)

F. Our imperative

He has told you, O man, what is good;
and what does the LORD require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8)

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