

Ten Problems with Being 'Woke'

By Mark Powell

2020 has been an incredibly difficult year. But of deeper concern, than even COVID-19, is the growing threat that Critical Race Theory—popularly expressed as being 'woke'—has had upon much of Western society. Leftist thinking that was once quarantined within the ivory towered walls of the universities, has suddenly escaped into the wet-markets of everyday life.

If you don't know what I'm referring to then take a look at the excellent five-part series by Dr. Owen Strachan titled, [Christianity & Wokeness](#). For a shorter—and far more shocking—example then see the following lecture by Ashleigh Shackelford:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5keqoXC1rq0>

Shackelford describes herself as a queer, non-binary Black fat femme writer, cultural producer, and artist. But note that according to Shackelford all white people are racists, non-humans and even demons! All this simply because of the colour of their skin. While this is obviously an extreme example, the arguments of critical race theory (CRT) are making significant inroads into the evangelical church.

According to Dr. Strachan—the Associate Professor of Christian Theology at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Missouri—the intellectual underpinning's of this anti-Christian movement are of grave concern. Indeed, Dr Strachan argues in an article for Patheos that for those who are [convinced and committed to being pro-woke](#), then church discipline should be applied!

What follows is a summary of what Dr Strachan outlines in his lecture [Christianity and Wokeness](#) as being the reason for such a strong response:

FIRST, BECAUSE WOKENESS PERVERTS THE IMAGO DEI. Rather than viewing all of humanity as being inherently equal, wokeness divides everyone into different races. Hence, rather than promoting peace and unity, it instead results in conflict and division. Note that in Genesis 1, while the LORD God made animals and plants “according to their kinds”, He made man and woman alone to be in His image. What's more, because we are all descendants of Adam and Eve (Acts 17:26; Romans 5:12), people from every nation under heaven are fundamentally the same in dignity and value (James 3:9).

SECOND, BECAUSE WOKENESS HAS A DIFFERENT VIEW OF SIN. Race, and especially being white, is itself viewed as being wicked rather than our own moral rebellion against a holy and loving God. What's more, authority systems and structures of any kind are viewed as being wrong while—ironically—establishing new hierarchies which show favouritism to one ethnic group over another.

THIRD, BECAUSE WOKENESS DENIES THE REALITY OF CREATION ORDER AND THE GOODNESS OF GOD'S DESIGN. According to Strachan, Wokeness is profoundly anti-binary, denying the different roles between men and women (1 Cor. 11:3; 1 Tim. 2:11-15). This affects both domestic and church order.

FOURTH, BECAUSE WOKENESS FOMENTS THE SIN IT SEEKS TO RESIST AND IN SO DOING ITSELF BECOMES RACIST. Tragically, being 'woke' turns one into the very thing that they set out to oppose. What's more, wokeness greatly complicates all inter-racial relationships. Just note, for example, the accusations of being a 'white coloniser' against Amy-Coney Barrett for adopting children from Haiti:

Ibram X. Kendi, an American author who became the new director of the Centre for Antiracist Research at Boston University in July, railed against Barrett on Twitter for adopting two Black children from Haiti, equating her and her husband to "White colonizers."

"Some White colonizers 'adopted' Black children. They 'civilized' these 'savage' children in the 'superior' ways of White people, while using them as props in their lifelong pictures of denial, while cutting the biological parents of these children out of the picture of humanity."

FIFTH, BECAUSE WOKENESS REVERSES THE ORDER OF CHRISTIANITY SHOWING COMPASSION ONLY TO SOME.

Once again, according to Strachan, Critical Race Theory cannot create a system of virtue and justice and instead, tried to take Christianity captive. This is because wokeness makes individuals the sum of their different groups. We lose the individual and their value as having made in God's image. To paraphrase George Orwell's Animal Farm, some people are seen as being more human than others.

SIXTH, BECAUSE WOKENESS REDEFINES WHAT SCRIPTURES VIEWS AS BEING GOOD AND EVIL (SEE ISAIAH 5:20).

This was especially evident in the Black Lives Matter™ movement. As has become clear, it is profoundly anti-Christian. Not only do their founders proudly acknowledge that they are "trained Marxists", but their own website states that their goals are to: disrupt the natural nuclear family, promotes transgenderism and queerness while being opposed to every form of heteronormativity.

SEVENTH, BECAUSE WOKENESS READS CULTURAL EVENTS IN TERMS OF ITS DOMINANT NARRATIVE, OMITTING MANY OF THE NUANCES AND MANY COUNTER TRUTHS.

Just because there are differences between various cultural groups doesn't prove that it is due to racism. As one quickly learns when doing any form of research, correlation doesn't equal causation. Thus, we must always beware of simplistic answers that ascribe mono-causality, and in particular, we need to be careful about reading cultural events to re-inforce the narrative we have already constructed.

EIGHTH, BECAUSE WOKENESS DESTABILISES THE FREE MARKET AND ATTACKS LIMITED GOVERNMENT.

Strachan refers to the 1619 project by The New York Times, a revolutionary economic approach which depends on a historical revisionist camp called, The New History of Capitalism. This is a recent scholarly movement that seeks to discredit capitalism as being inherently racist. They argue that half of the economic activity that came into the United States in 1836 was based upon the cotton industry and therefore the slave trade. Hence, slavery drives the free market.

However, Phillip Magness from the American Institute for

Economic Research argues that the American economy would have grown a much bigger and better free market without slavery. This is because slavery spreads poverty more than prosperity. In short, Strachan says, "Had chattel slavery never taken hold in the United States we would have been richer than we are today! To be pro-free market...doesn't mean that you are pro-slavery."

NINTH, BECAUSE WOKENESS DESTABILISES TRUTH MAKING IT 'NARRATIVE' RATHER THAN ABSOLUTE.

As what has recently been decided with the Academy Awards, minorities much be elevated. Their stories should gain greater prominence and have their 'truth' heard. However, God's truth is true for everyone in all times and in all places. What Francis Schaeffer referred to as 'True Truth'. Strachan rightly argues that while we want a diverse church we don't do it thinking that different groups have a greater grip on the truth as others (see John 17:17-19).

TENTH, BECAUSE WOKENESS PROMOTES A NEW SYSTEM OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND UNRIGHTEOUSNESS.

Ultimately, 'wokeness' preaches a different Gospel. It is not just a gospel of good works, but even worse than that, a system of salvation founded upon an ongoing system of penance. Reconciliation can never be achieved for sin can never be atoned. Hence, rather than leading to peace, wokeness only leads to division.

In 2 Corinthians 10 the apostle Paul exhorts believers to "...demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." (2 Corinthians 10:5). Likewise, in Colossians 2:8 Paul warns, "See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ." Thus, Strachan says:

'Do not sit quietly by as wokeness takes over institutions, universities, groups, friendship networks, and families. This is not a drill. This is not miles away. This is not a vague and distance threat. This is zero hour. By God grace, don't be taken captive.'

That is the challenge that is before us with the temptation of being 'woke'. Make no mistake, Critical Race Theory is a profoundly anti-Christian philosophy that should be soundly rejected. Followers of Jesus have been given something far richer, and that is the gracious gift of new birth. We are not merely 'awake', but born-again by God's Spirit. And as such, through His divine power we have everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him (2 Peter 1:3).

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