

Colossians 2: 8-15

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. In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

- I. **Into:** Perhaps the most iconic line in all rock music: “*You can check out anytime you want, but you can never leave.*”
- II. **Topic:** Keeping Faith in a Woke World”—To keep faith in a woke world, you need to know three things:
 - What is wokeness is AND why should you care?
 - What is wrong with wokeness?
 - How should we respond to wokeness?

WHAT IS WOKENESS? (Yes, it can be defined)

Short definition — “Wokeness” (street name for Critical Race Theory) is a comprehensive worldview that divides people into groups pitted against one another—the oppressed versus the oppressors. It scrutinizes all reality and human interaction through the lens of race; insisting that all social interactions are the result of and reflect on-going systemic racism and white supremacy. Wokeness seeks to undermine America, her history, and her founding documents as the products of intrinsic racism aimed at oppressing Blacks and other minorities.

- III. **Significance:** Why should we care? Topic matters because wokeness (CRT) is dominating not only culture, but seeping into our churches and Christian institutions, poisoning our theology, and threatening to undermine the

biblical worldview you've taught to your kids and grandkids. You may think that you can check out and ignore it, but you can't! Wokeness is a demanding ideology that accepts nothing less than full-surrender to its claims. In fact, it says you can never leave! If you are White, you are always and forever a racist! You and your family will bow to anti-racism or else! On wokeness, your kids can be transitioned without your knowledge or consent and can be taken from you if you do not affirm that transition (See California). At the same time, you can lose your job for not affirming woke orthodoxy. After all, "Silence is violence!"

A. As Christians, we don't get to sit this one out. First, Biblical faith is not about parking your brain at the door and letting the secular culture determine which ideas will dominate culture, **Instead the Christian life is one of:**

1. **warfare**, where we have divine weapons to "destroy arguments and lofty opinions that exalt themselves against the knowledge of God. (2 Cor. 10: 3-6)
2. **Love** for God by loving Him with our minds (Matthew 22:37).
3. **Concern for the lost**—Wokeness is not a political or sociological lens that is compatible with Christianity, but as we shall see, **is another worldview altogether**. Indeed, it's a false gospel that wrongly diagnosis our primary problem and thus presents the wrong fix. You can have a Christian worldview or a woke one, but you can't have both at the same time.
4. **Faith**, not a blind leap in the dark, but trust based on evidence (Hebrews 11: 1): "Faith is the evidence of things unseen."
5. **Discernment**, we are to be on-guard against bad philosophy (Bible nowhere condemns good philosophy, only bad (Col. 2:8). The men of Issachar "understood the times" (1 Chron. 12:32). Elsewhere, Jesus rebuked his generation for not knowing the times (Luke 12: 54-56) while Paul admonishes us to "know the times" (Romans 13: 11-14).
6. **Influence**, the Hebrew captives in Babylon (Dan. 1) mastered Babylonian culture, philosophy, and science and knew it better than

their captors. And when Neb had his dream, God enabled His men to influence how the King made sense of it.

(a) Mark Knoll: *“The scandal of the evangelical mind is there is no evangelical mind.”*

(b) J. Gresham Machen:

“False ideas are the greatest obstacle to the reception of the Gospel. We may preach with all the fervor of a Reformer and yet succeed only in winning a straggler here and there, if we permit the whole collective thought of a nation or of the world to be controlled by ideas which, by the relentless force of logic, prevent Christianity from being regarded as anything more than a harmless delusion.”

7. **Truth:** (Titus 1:2). Alexander Solzhenitsyn’s final address to Russian people before exiled to West— *“Live not by lies.”*
8. A **transformed mind** (Romans 12:1-2). How? By not conforming to this world, but renewing our minds so we can prove what the will of God is. Instead of “ghost buster” mystery approach to knowing God’s will, we are to develop a Biblically informed mind so we can know God’s will.

B. Definitions—What wokeness is and is not:

Wokeness is NOT:

1. Celebrating Black Heritage
2. Celebrating MLK Day
3. Celebrating Jackie Robinson Day
4. Honestly acknowledging where we’ve failed as a nation (Slavery, Jim Crow, Japanese internment in WWII)
5. Desiring racial harmony
6. Grieving death and suffering of racial minorities made in the image of God (Emmett Till, for example)

7. Celebrating the marriage of two people with different skin color
8. Condemning individual acts of racism and praying for greater justice in the world
9. Intentionally promoting fellowship with believers of different skin color
10. Recognizing our sin nature and our propensity to put ourselves above others.

C. **Deeper look at “Wokeness”**—The devil is in the details):

1. Wokeness is grounded in **Critical Theory**—a Marxist-rooted ideology with origins in the Frankfurt School of Critical Thought that divides the world into binary groups pitted against one another--**oppressors** versus the **oppressed**. Dominate groups (opressors) subjugate subordinate groups (the oppressed) via **hegemonic power**—that is, they force their values, norms, and expectations on society in ways that harm the oppressed and alienates them from participating in the goods of society. While Marx divided the world based on economics (working class versus those who control the means of production) Critical Theory does on the basis of group identity (Oppressors vs. Oppressed).
2. **Critical Race Theory** (wokeness)— asserts that the entire civilization is **shot-through** with intrinsic racism that favors Whites and oppresses Blacks and other minorities. Only the “woke” can see the systemic injustice on which society is structured. To remedy the systemic racism, revolution is needed to destroy power structures that dominate Blacks and other minorities. **Key tenants of wokeness:**
 - (a) “**Racism**” is **not** about individual acts of hatred or violence against individuals of another skin color, but about how society is structured—that is, how it is intentionally structured to promote racism that allows ‘oppressors’ (whites) to sustain racist ideas and norms to protect their self-interests. Thus, the American Founding itself was racist and revolution is needed to overthrow it’s racist assumptions. Civil Rights era reforms did nothing to alleviate America’s intrinsic racism. To the contrary those reforms only benefited Whites. Meanwhile, MLK’s appeal for a color-blind society is nothing more than an a distraction from these inherently racist structures.

- (b) **“Identity”**--Group identity determines your status a racist not your behavior. A “racist” is no longer an individual who commits hateful acts against someone with different skin color, but a member of an oppressive identity group (whites). Your status as a racist (i.e., an oppressor) is determined by your group identity (being White) not your actions as an individual. Guilt is collective based on group identity, not your specific acts as an individual. If you are White, you are a racist whether you intend to be one or not. As a white person, racism is literally in your DNA (as Jonathan Wilson Hartgrove claims).
- (c) **“Interseccionalidad”**—Your identity status as an oppressed person is determined by how many oppressed categories you intersect with, which in turn establishes your moral authority to speak from “lived experience.” Thus, a white woman has more authority to speak than a white male (who has none), but less than a black female. The latter, however, has less than a lesbian black female or black transgender. A white male has zero authority to speak because he is an oppressor. White heterosexual males are complicit in the sin of racism simply by the fact of being white and male.
- (d) **“change”**--You can’t!—Oppressors remain racist and can never change, in fact, they are blind to their racism, even if they are the kindest people on earth. A white housewife who gives generously to help Black families is still racist, though not overtly so, because she benefits from a racist structure constructed by White oppressors that puts down people of color. Whites can never get free of their racism, only become “woke” to their white privilege and do the work of becoming **“anti-racist”** (DiAngelo). Said differently, you can check out anytime you want, but you can never leave.” You will always be a racist.
- (d) **“Power”**—The dominant group (oppressors) exercise hegemonic power to control society and keep it favorable to oppressors. **Hegemony** refers to the control of the ideology (worldview) that structures society. Logic, evidence, objective morals, capitalism, and even the traditional family are instruments of oppression used by oppressors to enforce their norms and values on oppressed groups. Though older White males comprise only 15% of the U.S.

population, they have the power in society and they use that power oppress non-whites.

(e) “**Truth** is not real and objective. In fact saying so is racist and only serves to reinforce the dominant group. Rather “truth” is lived experience that trumps reason, logic, and evidence. Indeed, objective truth claims are nothing more than tools of oppression used by oppressors to silence People of Color and other minorities. To use evidence or reason to challenge the claims of wokeness and CRT is to challenge the lived experience of non-Whites, and, thus, is oppressive, racist, and proof that dissenters are part of the problem. Any proof presented against wokeness (CRT) is actually proof that CRT is true! (How convenient)

D. **In short**, the world is divided between those who have power (oppressors) and those who don’t (the oppressed). The dominate Western narrative of objective truth is really an ideological construct designed to preserve the power structures of the status quo (white culture and norms). The goal of an anti-racist society must therefore be to destabilize the dominant narratives that are used to justify racist structures. Meanwhile, every piece of evidence that might be marshaled to refute wokeness (critical theory) is transformed into further evidence of how deep and comprehensive the problem of oppression is. It’s literally a “Heads I win, Tails you lose” equation!

E. Key Secular Players:

1. **Robin DiAngelo**, *White Fragility*—All White people are racist even if they outwardly treat Blacks well. They are part of a racist system that privileges Whites and harms Blacks and other minorities, thus they participate in racism simply by being white. They must be taught to realize this privilege (i.e., become “woke” to it). However, when confronted with their racism and privileged status, Whites become defensive (fragile) and attempt to justify themselves by denying the problem. Such denial is proof of their racism and is further proof they cannot change. *“As a result of being raised as a white person in this society, I have a racist worldview. I have a deep racist bias. I have developed deep racist patterns. I have investments in the system of racism because it has served me really well.”*

2. **Richard Delgado & Jean Stephanich:** *Critical Race Theory*— “Many critical race theorists and social scientists hold that racism is pervasive, systemic, and deeply ingrained. If we take this perspective, then no white member of society seems quite so innocent.” CRT claims that a generally-defined group, “white” people, are inherently evil, or at a minimum unethical, by nature of their congenital ethnic and ancestral makeup. All non-whites are therefore considered victims of whites.
3. **Sister Soljah** (pop culture)— “You can’t call me or any other Black person anywhere in the world racist. We don’t have the power to do to white people what white people have done to us. And if we did, we don’t have that low-down dirty nature.”
4. **Meghan Slan**—(academia) “Whiteness, White Privilege, and Racial Inequality are Pervasive in K-12 Schools and Universities.” (University of San Francisco study)—*White educators must reckon with their own racial identities as White people in a White supremacist society. White educators are complicit in reproducing White supremacist societal structures through K-12 schooling and in universities, thus bearing responsibility to disrupt, dismantle and rebuild a more just and equitable education system.*
5. **Stephanie Wildman & Adrienne David**— “All whites are racist.... because we benefit from systemic white privilege.”

F. Key “Christian” Players:

1. **Michael O. Emerson & Christian Smith:** *Divided by Faith*—American racism has not lessened. There vast inequalities that exist can be attributed to systemic racism. ALL White Evangelicals are complicit in the racial inequalities that exist because they support an American system that privileges them. Along with their eneration and historical sins or racism, they must repent of “racialized structures of inequality” the have benefited from. Gospel Coalition placed the book near the top of its recommended reading for 2016.
2. **Eric Mason,** *Woke Church*—Wokeness means holding White people accountable for entrenched racial injustice. Whites have created a privileged system of institutions and structures that keep Blacks in a state

of oppression. Thus, Blacks and other minorities must help Whites grow their racial IQ to see that their conscious and unconscious racism creates the problem. Understood theologically, “justification” that is at the heart of the Gospel is NOT merely a forensic position (status), but a practice—in this case, one of confronting racism. He is suspicious of true Christian unity in building organizations: “I fear that if we participate with Whites that they will find a way to subjugate blacks and make us dependent on them in a way that kills our freedom as truly Black institutions.”

3. **Jamar Tisby**, *The Color of Compromise*—White Christians in America have been complicit in racism against Blacks throughout history; racism does not go away, it just adapts. Even if they are not overtly racist, Whites create and sustain a racist structure for society that benefits them and oppresses Blacks.
4. All of these books are recommended reading by **Acts 29 Network** of Churches. <https://www.acts29.com/resources-race-and-justice/>

G. Examples of Wokeness is seeping into Evangelicalism:

1. EXAMPLE: **Salvation Army**—Training Guide Let’s talk about Racism states America is a systemic racist country and that White people are guilty of racism by participating in societal structures that benefit whites.
2. EXAMPLE: **Acts 29 Church planting network** hosts woke panel telling pastors present they are privileged and should not question anything said by the panel because they lack standpoint to speak.
3. GCC, a concerned parent writes about her daughter’s experience in R.A. training: “She said that **Justin Jose**, of the Diversity Council, came and spoke at their training. His wife was there, too. They talked about inner racism, White privilege and White guilt. Jose’s (Caucasian) wife admitted to being a racist, and encouraged others to admit it. My daughter asked him a question when he allowed for it. He called on her and she asked if her mom is White and her dad is Hispanic, where does she fall on the racism scale? Basically, does he see her as a victim or an oppressor?”

4. EXAMPLE: **Christena Cleveland**: “Christ our Black Mother” /” 10 Ways You Can Actively Reject Your White Privilege” where #10 reads—“*Recognize that you are still a racist, no matter what.*”
5. EXAMPLE: **Margaret Anderson & Patricia Hill Collins** write, “*The idea that objectivity is best reached only through rational thought is a specifically Western and masculine way of thinking – one that we will challenge.*”
6. EXAMPLE: **Ryan Polly** (DEI officer at Maine Health, at prayer service) “*This evening has been designed with White people in mind not to take the stage. We have plenty of places to take the stage,, starting off the prayer. "We [need] to... begin the work to join the fight... We need to ensure we... do the work to challenge our ignorance, our biases and the racist thoughts that we've acquired through the life of Whiteness."*
7. EXAMPLE: **CT featured article**—“Whiteness 101”: “Don’t demand proof of a Person of Color’s lived experience or try to counter their narrative.” And “Don’t get defensive when a POC tells you that your words/tone/behavior are racist/oppressive/triggering. You stop! Don’t try to explain yourself. Remain cognizant of the dynamics of white fragility.”
8. EXAMPLE: Evangelical author **Jonathan Wilson Hartgrove** (16k Twitter followers)— “*My problem as a White man was that I didn’t know how to live in skin. Racial blindness was in my DNA*” Many white people would rather do something to address the symptoms we can see rather than acknowledge our original sin. Racism isn’t only part of who we’ve been. It is in ways we don’t even comprehend, who we are.” For Hartgrove, being “born again” is not a metaphor for spiritual regeneration, but for the emergence of a liberatory consciousness. “Blindness” is about racial insensitivity, not our hard-heartedness towards God.
9. EXAMPLE: Again, **Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove** at a women’s conference on racial reconciliatio: “*White people suffer from a malady [called] ‘shriveled-heart syndrome.’ It is rooted in the experience of white people enslaving black people.*”

10. EXAMPLE: Pastor **Daniel Hill** (w/ 86,000 Twitter followers) at a CRU conference: *“The greatest problem of all Whites is our conditioned blindness.... We are blind wanderers who need help to see a world that according to a different set of rules than we’ve been raised with.”*
11. EXAMPLE: **Lisa Sharon Harper** (featured in CT) posted this diatribe at Tim Keller on Facebook: *“Tim Keller has NO AUTHORITY to teach on justice—NONE!” He is “a RICH WHITE MAN WHOSE MINISTRY TARGETS RICH PEOPLE...” The only ones with divine authority to define the bounds of oppression are the oppressed themselves.”*
12. EXAMPLE: **Matthew Hall** (Provost of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary): *“I am a racist. If you think the worst thing someone can call you is a racist, then you aren’t thinking biblically. I’m going to struggle with racism and white supremacy until the day I die and get a glorified body and a sanctified mind, because I am immersed in a culture where I benefit from racism all the time.”*
13. EXAMPLE: **Ekemini Uwan** (Sparrow Women, Dallas Evangelical Conference): *“The reality is that whiteness is rooted in plunder, in theft, in enslavement of Africans, in genocide of Native Americans.”*
14. EXAMPLE—**influencer student at Evangelical seminary**—The author is responding to the death of missionary John Allen Chau, who attempted to bring the gospel to the Sentinelese and was killed. The author writes: *“I’m sad that Chau’s stupidity and colonialist mindset got him killed and that his family is mourning him. But he was not a martyr. The colonialized rhetoric that I’m hearing from Christians is appalling. Y’all really believe that God would just send someone to go into someplace balls to the wall with all of their diseases and everything just to preach a colonized Jesus?”* Note that Chau was Asian. But because he was a Western missionary evangelizing a non-white unreached people group, he had a ‘colonialist mindset’ and was preaching a ‘colonized Jesus.’

IV. **KEY TAKEAWAY:** Wokeness is not a helpful tool for understanding race from a biblical perspective, but a destructive alternative worldview to a biblical one.

Definition: What do we mean by “Worldview?”—Worldviews are clusters of foundational beliefs, glasses through which you view reality. All worldviews, including the woke one, must grapple with **five foundational questions** that determine how you see the world:

1. **Metaphysics:** What is the nature of reality? What is ultimate reality?
2. **Epistemology:** How can we know the world? What counts as knowledge?
3. **Anthropology:** What is human nature? What makes humans valuable?
4. **Ethics/morality:** What’s right and wrong? What’s wrong with us? What’s the fix?
5. **Cosmology:** How did we get here? What happens after death? Where is history going and is it guided or unguided?

Neutrality on these fundamental questions is impossible. And as we shall see, biblical Christianity and wokeness give radically different answers to these questions.

A. Wokeness does not align with biblical Christianity on the question of Ultimate Reality (Metaphysics):

1. **Biblical view:** Ultimate reality is found in a transcendent but personal God that created the world and is sovereign over it. History starts and ends with His story. Morals (right/wrong) are grounded in his holy character. The Christian worldview of reality is best seen in four parts: Creation->Fall->Redemption->Restoration. God created the world and though sin entered it, he redeems those that he calls to salvation and one day He will restore the world (new Earth).
2. **Wokeness**—There is no creation story. And no essences to humans or to qualities like justice, dignity, respect, right and wrong, etc. Rather ultimate reality is grounded in Hegemonic power and the brute fact of systemic racism that favors oppressors and harm the oppressed. These racist structures are a permanent feature of the world and infect every level of society and every human interaction. But such a view is not neutral. Without a creation narrative and coupled with its rejection of essences, Wokeness defaults to Naturalism as its underlying view of reality.

3. Problems with woke view—

- (a) Grounding: That is, Wokeness doesn't have the worldview resources to ground its moral claims such as "We should be anti-racist," and "We shouldn't oppress people"—all of which presuppose that humans have intrinsic value we ought to recognize and respect. However, if humans are not made in the image of God and if nature is all there is (i.e., the universe came from nothing and was caused by nothing) where do moral obligations like pursuing justice and practicing anti-racism come from? Moral rules need a moral lawgiver.

Moreover, if there are no essences to things like justice, human dignity, or moral obligations, oppression itself and our obligation to oppose it aren't real (because they have no real essences). They are just constructs of power that can be used by groups any way they choose.

- (b) Ultimately, wokeness is relativistic in nature. "Relativism" says that right and wrong are either up to you the individual or your society, but there are no objective truths you must line up with. Relativism, however, has 3 fatal flaws: First, it is self-defeating. It claims there are no moral rules, but then says, "Here's one: You must be anti-racist." Or, "You must oppose hegemonic power structures. But why? Says who? Second, relativism can't tell us why anything is right or wrong, including racism. Third, as we've seen already, nobody can live as a relativist. As Lewis points out in *Mere Christianity*, the same man who tells you there are no objective morals will complain if you cut him off or refuse to give him a piece of your orange. He will say "That's not fair," which appeals to a source outside the individuals present. Likewise, we see woke activists casting judgments all over the place: "Whites are fragile" and Whites must be held accountable for their systemic racism." But, again, says who? And is racism objectively wrong or is that just the view of woke people?

B. Wokeness view of knowledge (Epistemology) does not align with a biblical view of Truth / knowledge. In fact, it views them as tools of oppression.

1. **Biblical view:** God is a god of reason ("Come let us reason together") and the gospel itself is presented as objectively true. ("Truth" corresponds to reality). The earliest sermons in the book of Acts appeal

to evidence in making the case for risen Christ (“we saw” / 500 witnesses). In both the New and Old Testaments, We are told to love God with our minds (Matthew 22:37). Thus, Christians should pursue truth—Let the best argument win based on the evidence.

2. **Woke view:** Appeals to objective truth are oppressive in nature and are hegemonic power moves designed to dismiss the lived experiences of Blacks and other minorities. Indeed, **Standpoint Epistemology** asserts that truth is determined solely from the standpoint of the oppressed. Think back to the attack on Tim Keller—His critic (Lisa Sharon Harper) did not say that Keller’s argument was bad, only that he lacked standpoint (legitimacy) to address the topic at all because he is a rich, white male.

Well, maybe he is and maybe he isn’t, but as anyone who’s taken a 7th grade logic class knows, arguments stand or fall on their merits, not the person making them. To say otherwise is to commit the **Genetic Fallacy**—that is faulting an idea based on its origins rather than its merits. Yet that is precisely what wokeness does. Consider this quote from **Charles R. Lawrence**:

“We must learn to trust our own senses, feelings, and experiences and to give them authority, even when (or especially) in the face of dominant accounts of social reality that claim to be universal.”

Or this from ed. **Margaret L. Anderson** and **Patricia Hill Collins**, *Race, Class, and Gender: An Anthology*, 8th edition, suggesting that objective truth is a tool of oppression:

“The idea that objectivity is best reached only through rational thought is a specifically Western and masculine way of thinking.”

Translation by Groothuis: *“We do not play by the rules set down by the oppressors, but forge our own critique, which is shielded from criticism, because we must struggle against the oppressors. We do not win arguments, but discredit our opponents, who are nothing but power – mongering and privileged oppressors.”*

In other words, what we get from The Woke is no refutations, only smear tactics.

Again, rationality rather than ideology ask whether the *argument* is a good one, not *who* makes it. When wokeness is challenged, instead of evaluating claims for validity and soundness, woke activists cast aspersions on the motives and intentions of the person challenging their claims in hopes of discrediting them. The issue becomes the person making the argument rather than the argument itself. For example, when critics of wokeness challenge it, they are said to be fragile or wanting to protect their white privilege.

Instead, arguments should be evaluated for validity (does the conclusion follow?) and soundness (are the premises true?) and clarity (are the terms used presented in unequivocal ways?). If the argument passes those hurdles, it is home free, regardless of who is presenting it. Indeed, a bad person may still make a good argument. If Stalin argues that gravity is real, therefore, you ought not jump out of an airplane without a chute, his argument is good, even if he himself is a moral monster.

Wokeness rejects appeals to reason because privileged groups, so the unsupported claim goes, are blinded by their privilege and thus use logic and objectivity to dominate oppressed groups. By contrast, oppressed people, in virtue of their social location, can uniquely see racism in ways Whites cannot. Put simply, wokeness isn't grounded in knowledge, only ideology. Ideology is a set of beliefs set off from criticism or refutation. Rather, ideologies are self-sealing arguments that must never be questioned. Anyone who does question is dismissed as “racist” or “unenlightened,” or dangerous. Indeed, as DiAngelo asserts in *White Fragility*, when Whites resist the label of racist, it only goes to show that they are indeed racist and are denying it only to sustain their power and privilege.

Problems with Standpoint Epistemology:

- It's precisely Woke activists who should check their privilege. As alleged victims, they do not get to single-handedly define reality. Logic and evidence, not lived experience, determines truth.
- It is self-refuting! If truth is determined solely from the standpoint of the oppressed, it is not objective. Thus, the claim that oppression is wrong or that “silence is violence” are not objectively true, but only so from the standpoint of the person making the claim. Thus, why

should we be forced to accept it? Maybe my standpoint is different. Is it true we should fight oppression and tear it down? Or, is that just the view of one group?

- Also, if humans have no essences (that is, no fixed natures) then there are no real victims of oppression--only constructed ones. Injustice and indignity are not real and apply to no one in the real world.
- Can the Gospel survive wokeness? It cannot, because the Bible makes exclusive truth claims that are objective. Wokeness considers those claims a tool of oppression. Moreover, in conveying the Gospel, missionaries are guilty of colonial malpractice, that is trying to subjugate non-white cultures to a western, oppressive way of thinking built on objective truth claims. Remember the comments about missionary John Allen Chau:

But because he was a Western missionary evangelizing a non-white unreached people group, he had a 'colonialist mindset' and was preaching a 'colonized Jesus.'

- Do the ethical claims of wokeness have an essential nature to them and thus are objectively true or just a matter of one group's interpretation? On CT and Wokeness, there can be no objectively true morals since morals are the product of hegemonic power exercised by a dominant group to retain power.

C. Wokeness does not align with a biblical view of human nature (anthropology)

What makes us equal and valuable? (Look around room) Where is a fundamental identity grounded?

1. **Biblical view of man:** All humans have intrinsic value because they equally share the image of God. Our value is not based on performance or non-essential traits like skin color. Rather, our value is grounded in our common human nature which bears the image of our Creator. True, sin has impacted our ability to live up to our natures as endowed beings, but sin has not marred the image of God in us. There is one human race made

in God's image, regardless our superficial differences in intellect, physical ability, skin color, etc.

2. **Wokeness** denies our fundamental equality as humans made in the image of God and instead divides humans into two categories, oppressors and the oppressed. If you are White, your fundamental nature (identity) is intrinsically racist, even if you don't know or intend it to be.
3. Categories like "Whiteness" or "Blackness" are inventions of sinfully motivated people driven by partiality. There is no such thing as "whiteness."
4. In short, whatever our skin color, a biblical worldview grounds our identity and equality in a transcendent Creator whose image we bear. Wokeness rejects our fundamental unity and defines us strictly along racial lines, according to group identity.

D. Wokeness does not align with biblical teaching on ethics:

Ethics asks two questions, what is wrong with us? And What is the fix? Christianity and wokeness give two radically different answers to both.

What is wrong with us?

1. **Bible:** Our fundamental problem is our sin natures and our wicked hearts that are oriented toward rebelling against our Creator (Jer. 17:9— "*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*"). It's not just that we do bad things, we are bad by nature, enemies of God and dead in our sins (Eph.2:1-3— "*And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.*"). We are each judged individually for our rebellion against God (Ezekiel 18— "*The soul that sins will die.*".)
2. Wokeness: Our fundamental problem is systemic racism and we are judged by our group identity (oppressor vs. oppressed). Our primary sin is "whiteness,"—the historical practice of institutionalizing "white

supremacy” and privilege by forcing white norms (Objective truth, morals, etc.) on non-white oppressed groups. If you are white, your primary guilt is collective AND generational, in virtue of belonging to a historical oppressor class. You are indeed guilty because of skin color. Self loathing (over your skin color) is the only way to do the work of being an anti-racist.

What is the fix?

1. **Wokeness—there is no fix!** You are forever an oppressor, you can never change categories. Thus, if you are White, you will always be a racist. Like an alcoholic, you can perhaps manage your problem by doing the work of anti-racism and self-negation, but you remain a racist all of your days.
2. **Bible—The fix is the new birth, conversion.** For the Bible, the ultimate divide is NOT oppressor vs. Oppressed, but Redeemed vs. Unredeemed. It is individuals who must repent and believe the gospel, not collective groups. The bible does not teach generational or group guilt. It holds individuals responsible for sin:
 - Ezekiel 18— *“The one who sins is the one who will die. The child will not share the guilt of the parent, nor will the parent share the guilt of the child. The righteousness of the righteous will be credited to them, and the wickedness of the wicked will be charged against them.”*
 - Luke 1:4— *“Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. Jesus answered, “Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish. Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them—do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.*
 - Bible does not teach that only some are guilty (oppressors). It says all have sinned and fallen short (Romans 3:10-11). Think back to the dark western *Unforgiven* starring Clint Eastwood as Will Munny. Will is a seasoned killer and his young sidekick, the Schofield Kid, has just killed a man and is shaken by second thoughts. Munny’s response is devastating:

Munny: It's a hell of a thing, killing a man...

Kid: Yeah, well, I guess they had it coming.

Munny: We all got it coming, kid.

When Christ spoke of a tower that fell on unsuspecting people, he did *not* say the victims belonged to a group that deserved to die while everyone else did not. Instead, He gave this stunning response to the individuals present: “If **you** don't repent, all of you will likewise perish” (Luke 13:1-9). Jesus said that everyone has it coming. And if we don't repent, we, too, will perish.

- **Wokeness says “You can never change.** Just do the work of becoming an anti-racist” (though you remain a racist).
- **The bible says through new birth, you can change:** “and such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”

But wait! How can a righteous God treat people as righteous who are not righteous?

We find the answer in 2 Cor. 5:21—“For *our* sake He made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (ESV). Here we have a great exchange: Christ's righteousness for my sinfulness. To use a fancy term, my sin is *imputed* to Christ; his righteousness is *imputed* to me. On the cross, Christ is treated as I deserved so that I can be treated as he deserved. Theologians call this righteousness an “alien righteousness”—not something we get from a popular horror flick—but righteousness outside of us that we can't manufacture. Thankfully, the righteousness we need is the righteousness God provides through Jesus. Paul writes in Romans 3:21-22, “But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.” Here we have the perfect alien righteousness we need. And it's a gift! We aren't *made* righteous by doing good stuff. We're *declared* righteous because God provided a perfect substitute to stand in our place condemned. Paul writes in Romans 4:5, “But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness.” You read that right. God is in the business of justifying the

ungodly—sinners like you and me who fail to love those different from ourselves. Forget about justifying yourself. It won't work. We need grace greater than our sin.

That's a game changer! Rebels like us can now experience true forgiveness knowing that God accepts us on the basis of Christ's righteousness, not our own. All of us have defeats and failures. All of us have cringe-worthy moments, born of our wickedness, we'd love to undo. If only we had a gigantic "do over" button we could push to fix the wrong done to others, including those with different skin color. Whatever you've done, I have incredibly good news for you. When you trust Jesus to save you, God the Father is no longer your judge. He's your Heavenly Father, and He adopts you into His family as a dearly loved child. He does not treat you as you deserve. He treats you as Christ deserves. Your legal status before God is changed from Rebel to Son! That's the glory of the gospel!

- If we truly understand that gospel, our motivation for loving our neighbor, whatever his or her skin color, changes from merit to gratitude. As adopted sons and daughters of God, we don't do good deeds to *earn* God's favor; we do them because we *have* God's favor. Only then, through the power of the Holy Spirit, can we become more Christ-like in loving our neighbor.
- We have but one hope—a savior who stood in our place condemned and bore the judgment we justly deserved. Are you trusting solely in Him as your only hope for salvation? I hope so. The gospel of Wokeness is a false gospel offering no salvation and no hope of change—only ongoing resentment, anger, and hostility toward fellow image bearers.

The Bible offers a different story. We are no longer slaves to what we once were:

Col. 1:12-13— *“giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”*

Wokeness—You can never change your essential racism. Just do the work of anti-racism.

Bible—Your works can't save you. Rather, trust in God who justifies the ungodly (Rom. 4: 4-5-- *Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. And to the one who does not work but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted (reckoned, declared) as righteousness.*

Unlike the oppressive ideology of wokeness, The Bible says you can change. You are not what you once were. Critical Theory preaches self-loathing as the only means of salvation. But self-loathing can't save you. Only Jesus can. (This is one major reason why bowing to Black people is wrong.)

Wokeness: judges by outside appearance--Skin color determines guilt

Bible: God is not impressed with outward appearance, but judges the motives and intentions of the heart. Critical Race Theory judges solely by outward appearance without knowing the hidden motives of the heart — knowledge only God possesses (1 Cor. 4:5).

Owen Strachan:

“If you have heard that you are guilty of white supremacy simply because of your whiteness, you have been falsely convicted and unbiblically indicted. You do have real sin, and your sin manifests in numerous ways and demands repentance on penalty of everlasting judgment. But your skin color and heritage not inherently sinful...if you have been demeaned for your skin color, you have been wronged. In Christ, you are freed from false guilt, false shame, and the trappings of a false gospel. You are free to enjoy your heritage, background, and community.”

To **review** what's wrong with Wokeness (Critical Race Theory) in five minutes or less:

- According to wokeness, all of society is infected with intrinsic (structural) racism that favors Whites and oppresses Blacks and other minorities. Guilty White people (all Whites) can never overcome their intrinsic racism; they can only practice personal negation. Only the “woke” — those awakened to the systemic racism of White society and how it impacts victims on a scale of intersectionality — can recognize the problem and permissibly speak about it.

- Wokeness rejects the correspondence view of truth and thus undermines a biblical view of knowledge.
- On Christian Theism, ultimate reality is transcendent, namely, a personal God who created the material world. According to Wokeness, ultimate reality is socially constructed through racial power dynamics and intrinsic racism.
- On Christian Theism, the physical world can be known, but so can non-physical things like morals, human nature, and the laws of logic (to name a few). Standpoint Epistemology, a key aspect of wokeness, says truth is determined solely from the standpoint of the oppressed. Only the “woke” can see the inherent racism shot through all of society.
- On Christian Theism, all humans have intrinsic value because they equally share the image of God. Wokeness denies our fundamental equality, dividing humans into two categories, oppressors and the oppressed. If you are White, your nature is intrinsically racist, even if you don’t know it.
- On Christian Theism, right and wrong are grounded objectively in the character of a holy God. According to wokeness, right and wrong are based solely on racial and power dynamics. Our fundamental problem is not sin; it’s intrinsic racism. The fix is not repentance and restoration, but revolution which tears down inherently racist structures such as the nuclear family, fixed genders, objective moral standards, capitalism, the rule of law, reason, religion, etc., and replaces them with a new society grounded in wokeness.
- On Christian Theism, God is not impressed with outward appearance, but judges the motives and intentions of the heart. Wokeness judges solely by outward appearance without knowing the hidden motives of the heart — knowledge only God possesses (1 Cor. 4:5).
- Wokeness says you can never change. By nature you are always a racist based on group identity, not you individual acts. Christian theology says “and such were some of you.” But you were washed, justified, and transferred from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of God’s beloved Son (Col, 1:13)

- Ultimately, wokeness in reverse racism, it proposes to cure racism by judging people exactly as racists do—by outward appearance rather than, as MLK taught, by the content of their character.

E. Wokeness does not align with a biblical view of cosmology (where we came from and where history is going)

Bible: Begins with God—creation-Fall-redemption-restoration

Wokeness-no creation account and no future restoration, only never-ending revolution to tear down racist structures (including family, capitalism, education, etc.)

6. Recall quote from academic journal: “*White educators are complicit in reproducing White supremacist societal structures through K-12 schooling and in universities, thus bearing responsibility to disrupt, dismantle and rebuild a more just and equitable education system*”

WHAT SHOULD WE DO ABOUT WOKENESS?

1. As biblically grounded Christians, we should not be defensive about racism. Where it exists, we should repent of it. HOWEVER, we must not stand by while fellow image-bearers are falsely convicted and unbiblically indicted simply because of skin color. This is precisely what wokeness does.
2. We should honestly admit where our nation has failed (Slavery, Jim Crow, Japanese internment WWII, etc.) America is not exceptional because we always do the right thing, but because our founding principles grounded in the natural rights of all humans represent the best hope for human dignity and flourishing.
3. We must expose the damning fruit of wokeness—never ending bitterness, envy, anger, and strife with no hope of restoration.
4. We must puncture misconceptions:

- 1619 Project that says America’s foundational principles are intrinsically racist. (MLK, Rosa Parks, Frederick Douglass did not see country as intrinsically racist, only that some Americans were not living up to our founding principles—namely, that all men are created equal”)
 - The false claim that capitalism is racist (was built on backs of slaves.)
 - The false claim that all inequalities in outcomes are the result of racism.
5. Take a hard look at where we are sending our kids to college or they will return for Thanksgiving “woke.”—Look for red flags, even at a Christian school:
- Diversity councils, multi-cultural departments and initiatives
 - Statement committing institution to Diversity, Equity, and inclusion (these terms sound good, but have completely different meanings in a woke world)
 - Chapel programming
 - R.A. Training
 - Choose major carefully! –Sociology /Education department pages (often a cesspool of woke thinking)
 - Freshman orientation content
6. Do better at training youth in apologetics (Summit, for example)
7. School Board Elections Matter!!!!!!
8. **Refuse** to live by lies—whether its affirming pronouns or rejecting false indictments against you based on skin color, stand your ground! (So-called “White Fragility” that is nothing more than an ideological, self-sealing rigged assertion.)
9. Be slow to judge – Refuse to be crowd pressured! (George Floyd case, for example—“Silence is violence.” In 2020, We were told to post BLM on social media or we weren’t Christian or pro-life). Wait for facts. Demand evidence when told racism is systemic.

10. Ground ourselves in Gospel (Col. 2:8-14). Paul says that when we do, we'll stay grounded and not be taken captive by empty (and, ultimately damning) ideas.

A few concluding points:

- 1) If you are convicted by the Gospel that you have heard here tonight and have yet to repent of your sins and turn to Christ alone for salvation, we'd love to talk with you. The false gospel of wokeness can't save you. Only Jesus can. When we dismiss, come up and let us know. We'd like to meet you and point you to the truths found in Scripture.
- 2) If you are not grounded in a local fellowship of believers, you need to be. We fight the good fight of faith together, not as lone rangers. We are happy to talk with you about that.
- 3) If you are parent struggling with kids who've bought into ideas contrary to everything you taught them, we do not view you as a failure. You can't save your kids. Only God can, and we are happy to pray with you. Many of us share the same struggles you do. You are welcome to fellowship with us.
- 4) Finally, here are some **resources** to further ground you in your faith:
 - Owen Strachan, *Christianity and Wokeness: How the Social Justice Movement is Hijacking the Gospel and the Way to Stop it* (Wilmington, NC: Salem, 2022)
 - Douglas Grootuis, *Fire in the Streets: How you can Confidently Respond to Incendiary Cultural topics* (Wilmington, NC: Salem, 2022)
 - Rod Dreher, *Live Not by Lies* (New York, NY: Sentinel, 2020)