



WALNUT CREEK CHURCH[®]

Thinking Biblically About Race, Gender, and Justice

Dr. Neil Shenvi

Sept. 17, 2021

Thinking Biblically About Rae, Gender, and Justice

- Thinking About Race

- Race as Social Construct
- Race as Historical Tool of Oppression
- Race and Identity
- Race and Experience
- Oppression and Phenomenology
- Race versus Sexuality/Gender

- Thinking About Gender
- Thinking About Justice
- Advice for Dialogue

Race is a Social Construct



“he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place” – Acts 17:26

“CRT also relies on Racial Realists, or individuals who not only recognize **race as a social construct**, but also realize that ‘racism is a means by which society allocates privilege and status.’” – Harper, Patten, and Wooden, *The Journal of Higher Education*, 2009

Race as Historical Tool of Oppression

“[Tenet 3] race has been constructed socially, much to the detriment of people of color.” - Hartlep, “Critical Race Theory: An Examination of its Past, Present, and Future Implications”



Identity in Christ is primary

“If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the **people of Israel**, of the **tribe of Benjamin**, a **Hebrew of Hebrews**; as to the law, a **Pharisee**; as to zeal, a **persecutor of the church**; as to righteousness under the law, **blameless**.

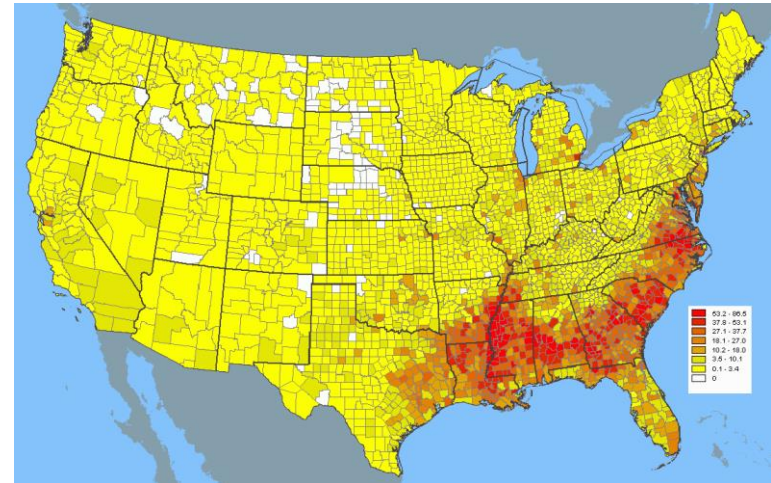
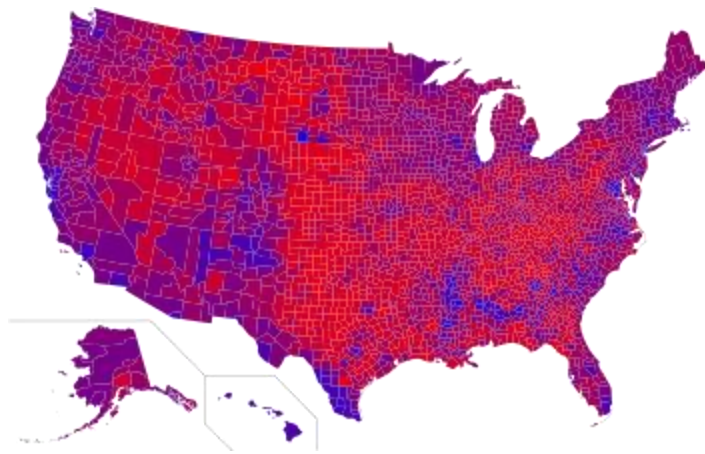
But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as **loss** because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as **rubbish**” – Phil. 3:4-8

Experience is not homogeneous

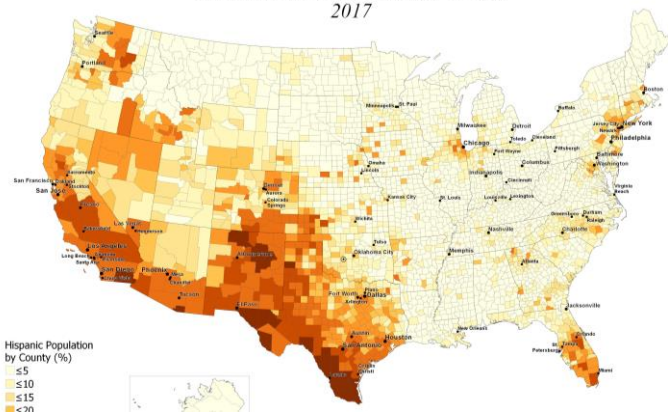
“The continuing assumption of universal marginalization across every era of African-American history actually flattens the African-American experience and contributes to the increasing irrelevance of black preaching. What do I mean? The experience of African-Americans in 1830 could be fairly characteristic as near universal enslavement, oppression, and marginalization. Few would deny that. But how should we describe African-Americans in 1930?... Moreover, the 1930s seem like a lifetime ago for African-Americans born around 1980. The experience of 1980s-generation African-Americans is so different from previous generations that a burgeoning number of books dare to argue for a ‘post-Black’ self-understanding... **Any monolithic understanding of black experience crumbled long ago** under the shifting weight of African-American progress and hard-earned victories...” – Anyabwile, *Reviving the Black Church*, p.39-40



Oppression and privilege are contextual



U.S. Hispanic Population by County
2017

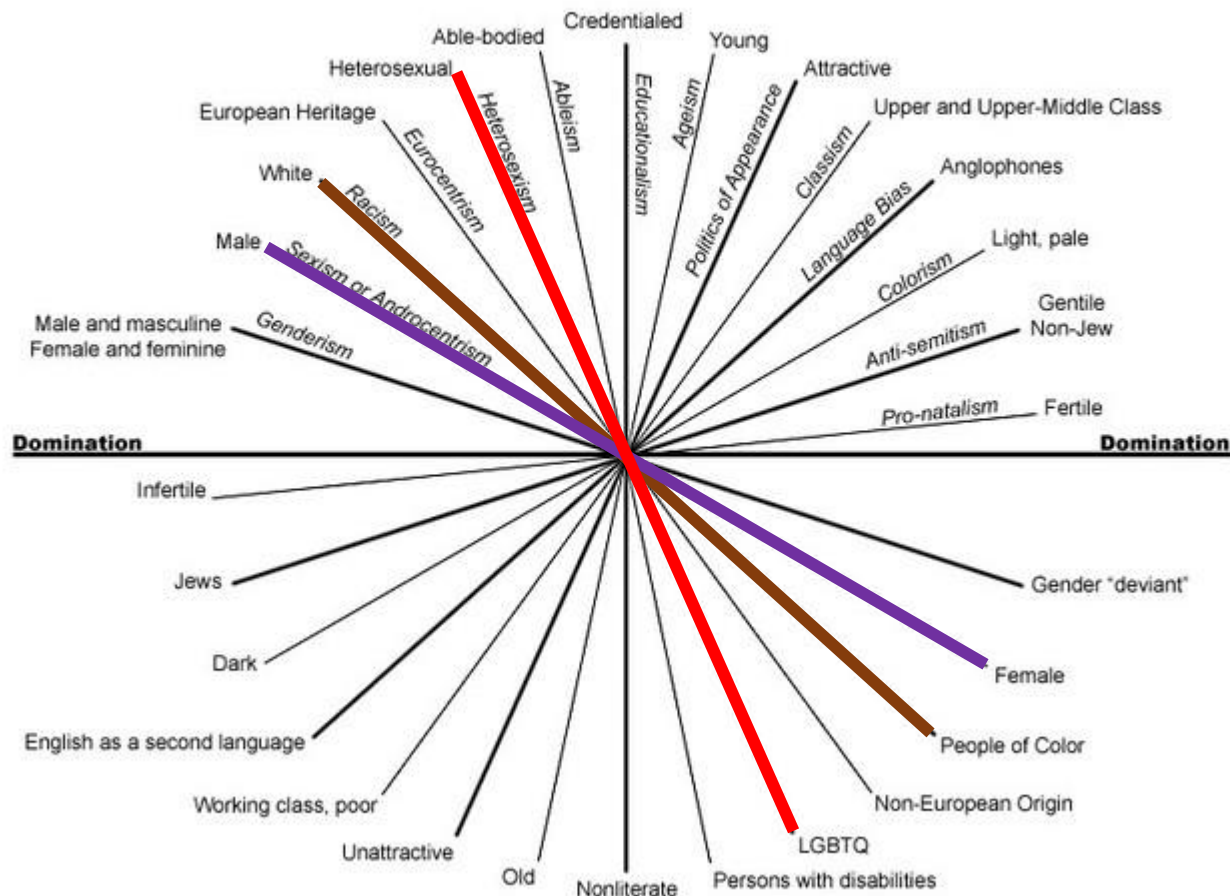


source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census Redistricting Data (Public Law 94-171) Summary File, Table P1.

Race, gender, and sexuality are not equivalent

Intersecting Axes of Privilege, Domination, and Oppression

Adapted from Kathryn Pauly Morgan, "Describing the Emperor's New Clothes: Three Myths of Educational (In)Equality,"
The Gender Question in Education: Theory, Pedagogy & Politics, Ann Diller et al., Boulder, CO: Westview, 1996.



Thinking Biblically About Rae, Gender, and Justice

- Thinking About Race

- Thinking About Gender

- Gender is a good, God-ordained category
- Some, but not all, norms are social constructs
- Some, but not all, norms are oppressive
- Love does not require affirmation

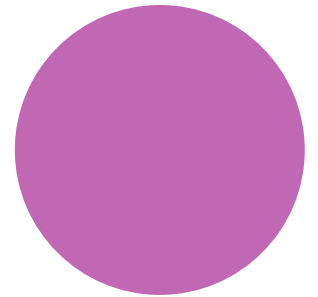
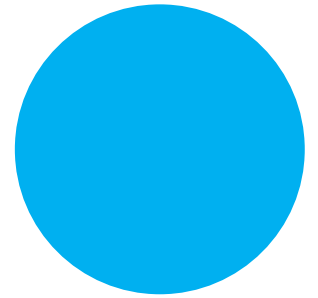
- Thinking About Justice

- Advice for Dialogue

Gender is a God-ordained category

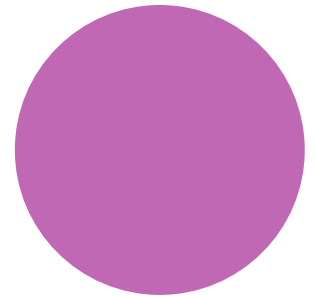
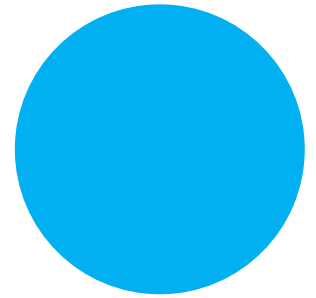
“So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.” – Gen. 1:27

[Jesus said:] “But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’ ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.” – Mark 10:5-9



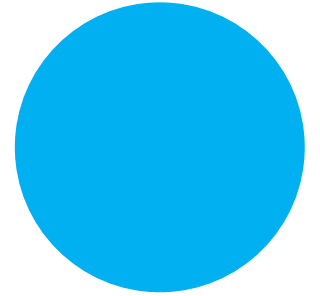
Gender is a God-ordained category

“Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. **Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her,** that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” **This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.** However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.” – Eph. 5:32-39

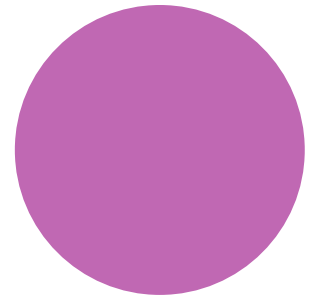


Gender is good

“And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.” – Gen. 1:31

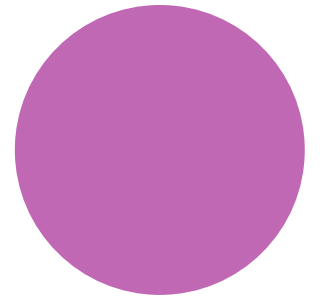
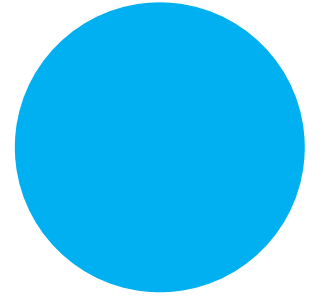


“And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” – Rev. 21:2



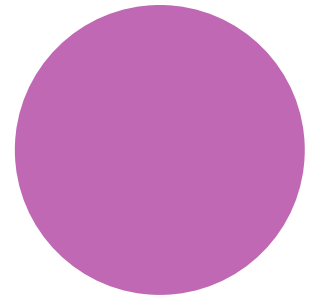
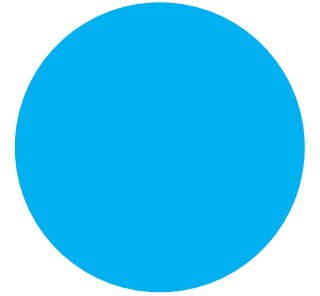
Some, but not all, norms are social constructs

- Blue is for boys; pink is for girls
- Husbands should lead their families
- Men shouldn't wear skirts
- Children should obey their parents
- Physical aggression is a masculine trait
- Boys like trucks; girls like dolls
- Only men should be pastors
- Hunting is a masculine activity; cooking is a feminine activity



Some, but not all, norms are oppressive

- Women shouldn't be educated
- People shouldn't walk around naked in public
- Men shouldn't express emotion
- Widows should commit *sati*
- Children shouldn't be left unsupervised
- A wife should take her husband's last name
- Men shouldn't have long hair

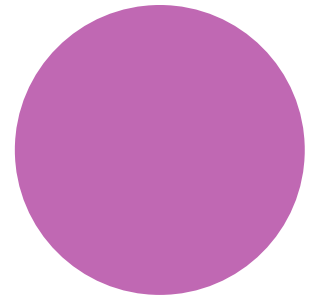
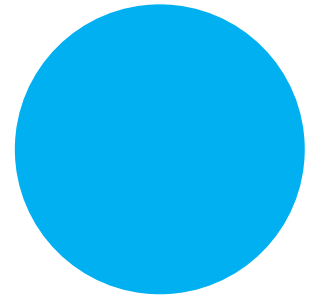


Love does not require affirmation

“You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him.” – Lev. 19:17

“Love takes no pleasure in evil, but rejoices in the truth” – 1 Cor. 13:6

“Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent.” – Rev. 3:18-19

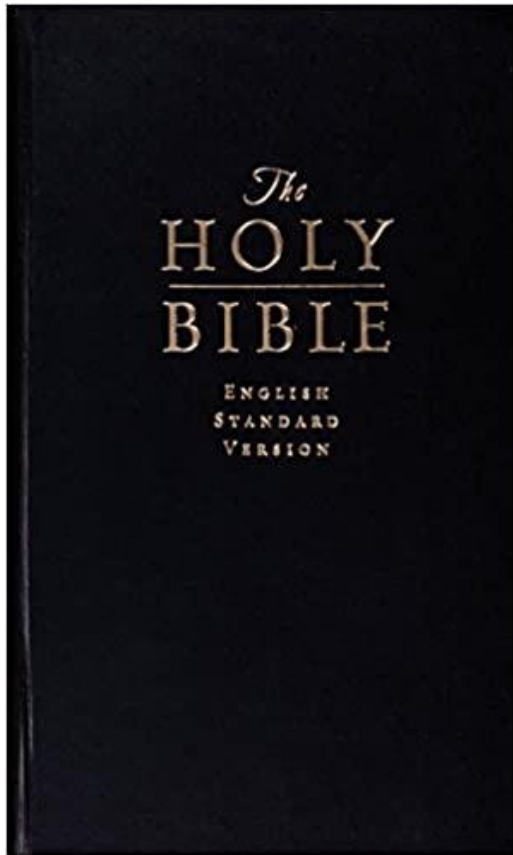


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 - Biblical Justice
 - Critical Social Justice
 - A Christian approach to social justice?
- Advice for Dialogue

Biblical Justice

Biblical justice is “giving to each person what they are due”



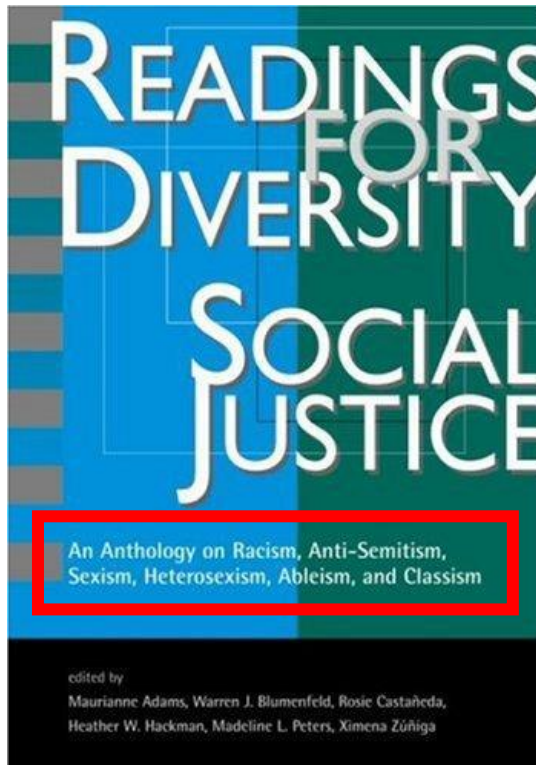
- Protecting the vulnerable: “Learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause.” – Is. 1:17
- Judging impartially: “You shall do no injustice in court. You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor.” – Lev. 19:15
- Punishing evil: “Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain.” – Rom. 13:3-4

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Critical Social Justice

“Social justice [is] **the elimination of all forms of social oppression**”



“*Heterosexism* is the institutionalization of a heterosexual norm or standard, which establishes and perpetuates the notion that all people are or should be heterosexual, thereby privileging heterosexuals and heterosexuality, and excluding the needs, concerns, cultures, and life experiences of LGBT people.” – Blumenfeld, p. 262

“First, in considering oppression theory, the question ‘what is *sexism*?’ is addressed through a definition that combines prejudicial attitudes or beliefs with social power. Suzanne Pharr defines sexism as ‘an enforced belief in male dominance and control’ held in place by system of power and control that ultimately keep women subordinate to men.” – Hackman, p. 199

“Like other forms of oppression, *ableism* operates on individual, cultural, and institutional levels. Ableism affects those with disabilities by inhibiting their access to and power within institutional structures that fulfill basic needs, like health care, housing, government, education, religion, the media, and the legal system.” Castaneda and Peters, p. 320

Children are Oppressed

"People are just beginning to have a glimpse of what oppression based on age involves... Children are ... being considered helpless, dependent, and cute - creatures to be cherished and taken care of but not full human beings to be deeply respected... and trusted with significant power. They experience 10-15 years of unpaid labor and brainwashing in our current form of education." - Blood, Tuttle, and Lakey in "Race, Class, and Gender", p. 140



Whiteness as child abuse



“Thandeka (1999) argues that **raising White children to be White is a form of child abuse** because ‘the child learns to silence and then deny its own resonant feelings towards racially proscribed others, not because it wishes to become White, but because it wishes to remain within the community this is quite literally its life’ (p. 24)... If Whites are reared in this manner, then emotional and psychological damage on the White psyche results...we hope to offer a **new approach to racial healing by affirming Thandeka’s (1999) postulation of Whiteness as a form of child abuse** and tracing what happens when that abuse goes unchecked”

“No consensus criteria for assigning sex at birth”



“No unfair advantage”



ACLU
@ACLU

...

Replying to @ACLU

FACT TWO: Trans athletes do not have an unfair advantage in sports.

MYTH: Trans athletes' physiological characteristics provide an unfair advantage over cis athletes.

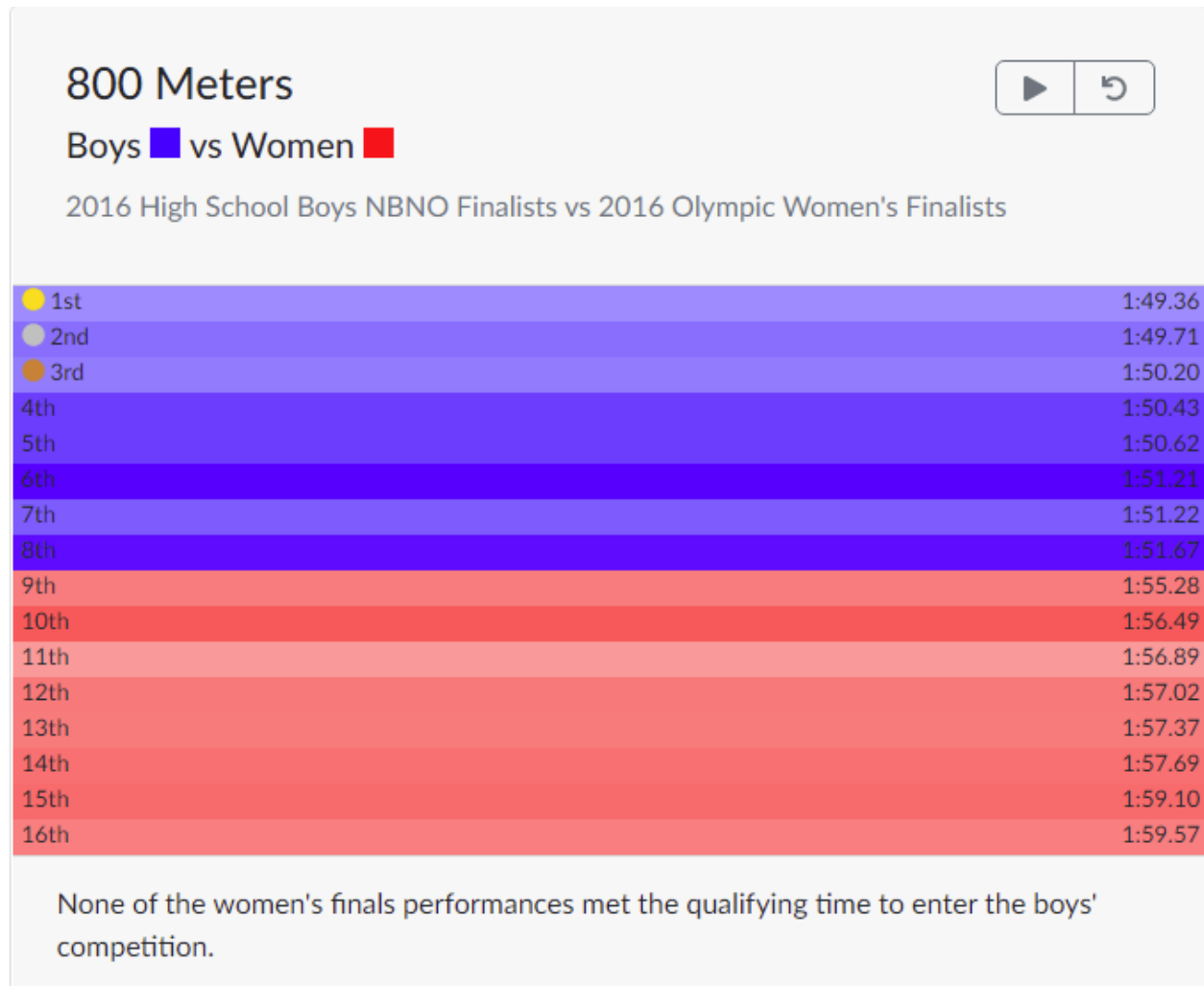
Trans athletes vary in athletic ability just like cisgender athletes. In many states, the very same cis girls who have claimed that trans athletes have an “unfair” advantage have consistently performed as well as or better than transgender competitors.

ACLU

3:23 PM · Feb 3, 2021 · Twitter Web App

221 Retweets 2,144 Quote Tweets 670 Likes

“No unfair advantage”



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Basic biblical foundations

- All people are made in God's image
- All people are morally obligated to love and protect the vulnerable
- The Mosaic Law made legal provision for the vulnerable
- God's commands plus OT precedent do not entail modern legislation
- Not everything that is immoral should be illegal
- All legal compulsion is through the threat of force



All people are made in God's image

- “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. – Gen. 1:27
- “he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, for “In him we live and move and have our being”; as even some of your own poets have said, “For we are indeed his offspring.” – Acts 17:26-28
- “Love your neighbor as yourself.” – Mark 12:30



All people are morally obligated to love and protect the vulnerable

- “Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.” – Prov. 31:8-9
- “Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” – Luke 12:33-34
- “Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.” – James 1:27



The Mosaic Law made legal provision for the vulnerable

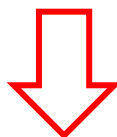
- "Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the alien. I am the LORD your God." – Lev. 19:10
- "When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Leave them for the poor and the alien. I am the LORD your God." -Lev. 23:22
- "At the end of every three years, bring all the tithes of that year's produce and store it in your towns, so that the Levites (who have no allotment or inheritance of their own) and the aliens, the fatherless and the widows who live in your towns may come and eat and be satisfied." - Deut. 14:28-29



God's commands plus OT precedent do not entail modern legislation

Love and protection for the **vulnerable** is morally obligatory.

Love and protection for the **vulnerable** is enshrined in Mosaic Law.

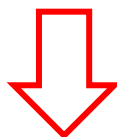


We ought to create legislation to mandate **love and protection for the vulnerable**.

God's commands plus OT precedent do not entail modern legislation

Adultery is morally wrong.

Prohibition of adultery is enshrined in
Mosaic Law.



We ought to create legislation to **prohibit adultery**.

God's commands plus OT precedent do not entail modern legislation

Idolatry is morally wrong

Prohibition of idolatry is enshrined in
Mosaic Law.



We ought to create legislation to **prohibit idolatry**.

Not everything that is immoral
should be illegal



All legal compulsion is through
the threat of force



A Christian approach to social justice?

- All people are made in God's image
- All people are morally obligated to love and protect the vulnerable
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- Thinking About Gender
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- Advice for Dialogue
 - Be charitable
 - Read broadly
 - Recognize the biblical issues at stake
 - Justice and the gospel

Be charitable



LET EVERY PERSON BE
**QUICK TO HEAR,
SLOW TO SPEAK,
SLOW TO ANGER.**

- JAMES 1:19 ESV -

Don't be that guy



Avoid labels



I think immigration laws should exist.

AMERICAN EVANGELICALISM is captive to
**CONSERVATIVE, FASCIST, WHITE
SUPREMACIST, NATIONALIST** ideologies
that have more in common with the
philosophy of **AYN RAND** than the teachings
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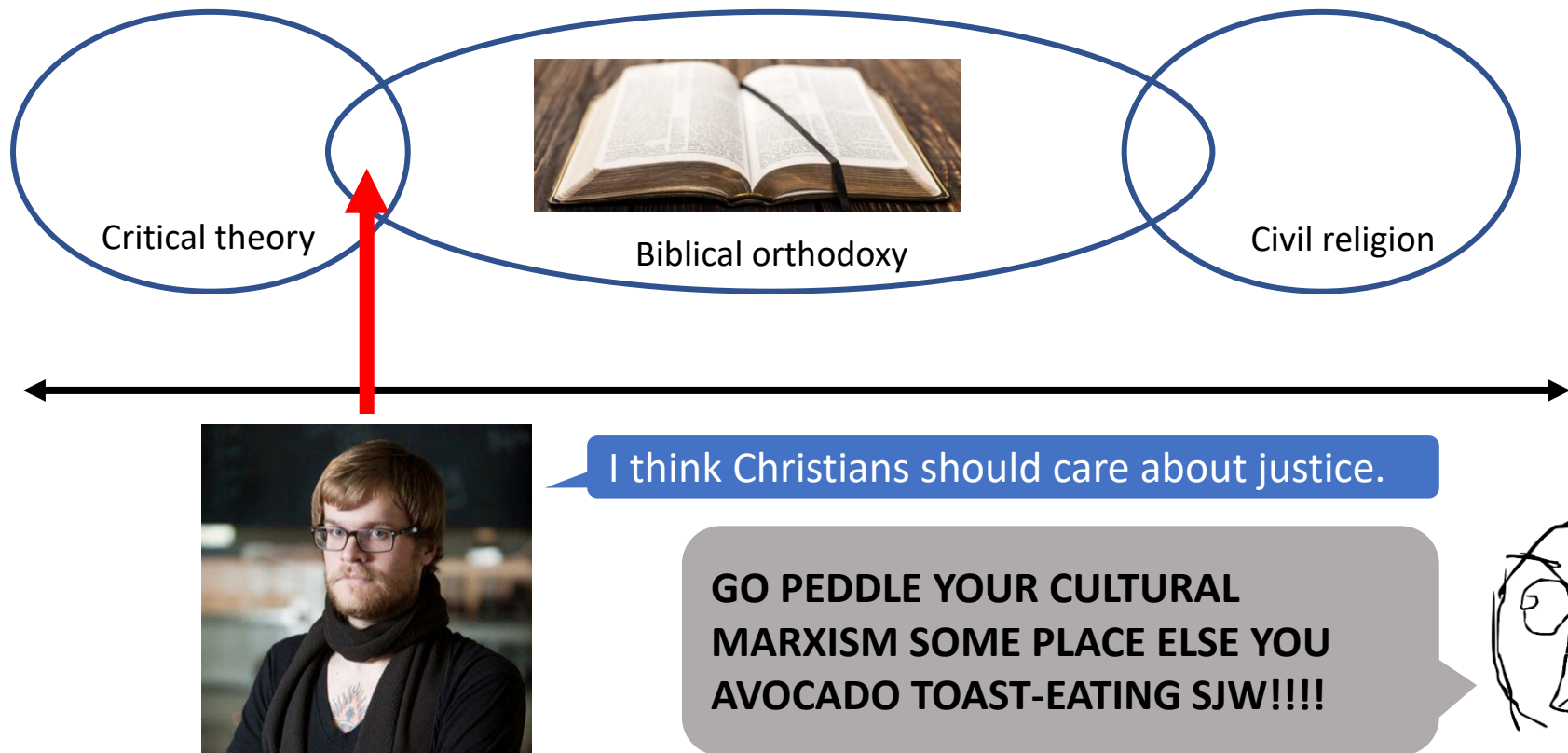
I think affirmative action laws should exist.



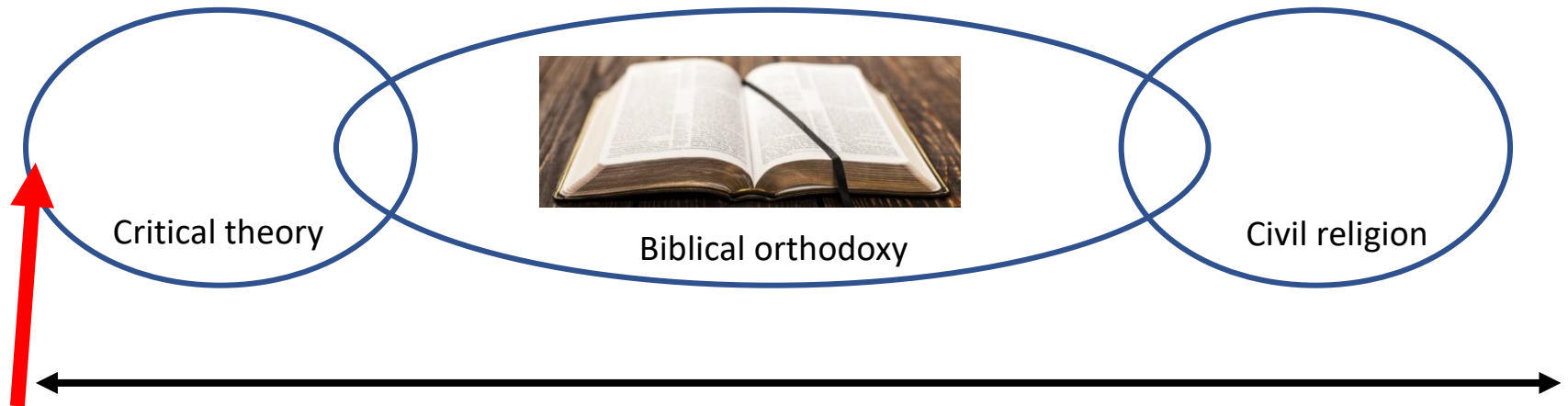
'WOKE' EVANGELICALISM is captive to **PROGRESSIVE, SOCIALIST, THIRD-WAVE FEMINIST, GLOBALIST** ideologies that have more common with the philosophy of **KARL MARX** than the teachings of Jesus!!!!



Beware of polarization



Beware of polarization



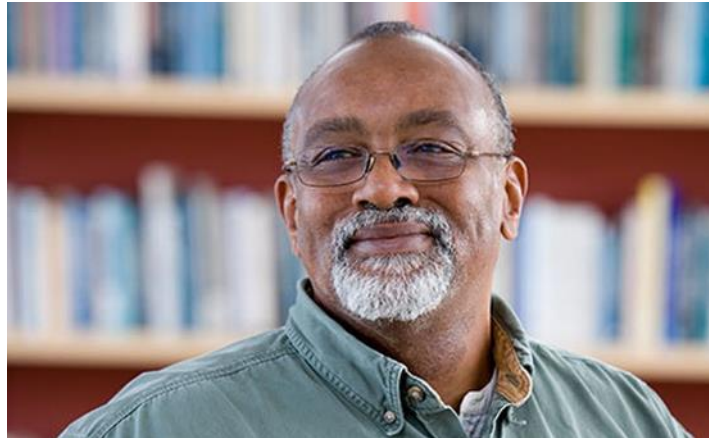
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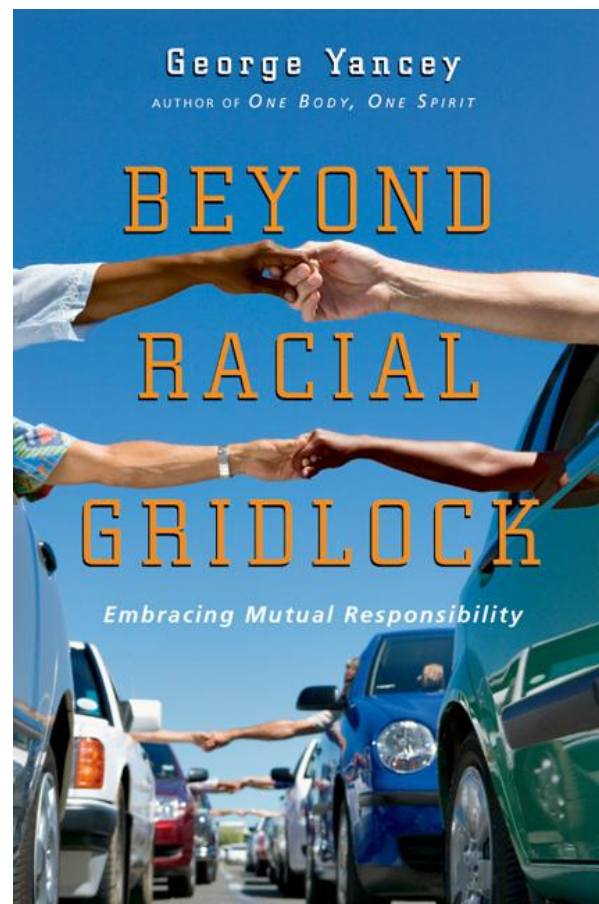
Read broadly



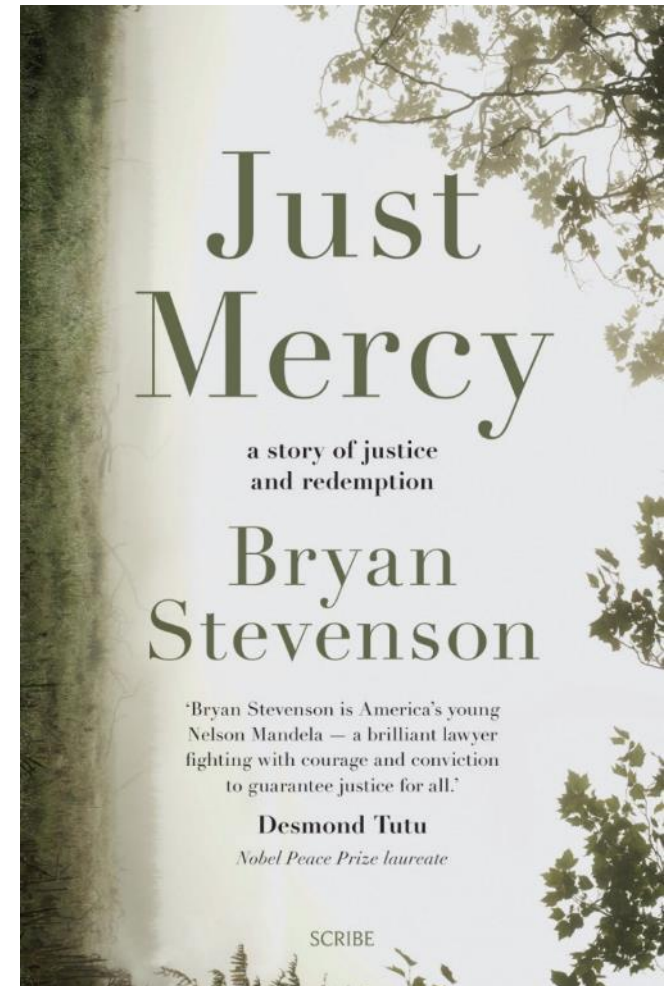
Read broadly



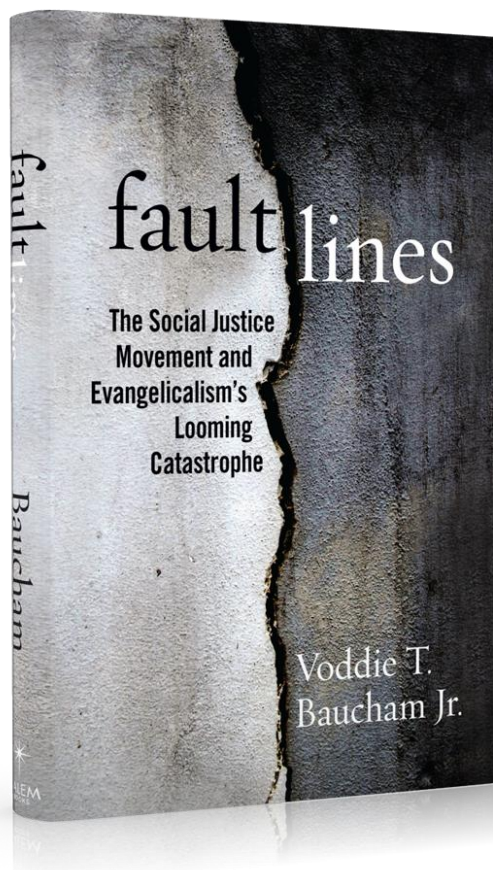
Beyond Racial Gridlock, by Dr. George Yancey



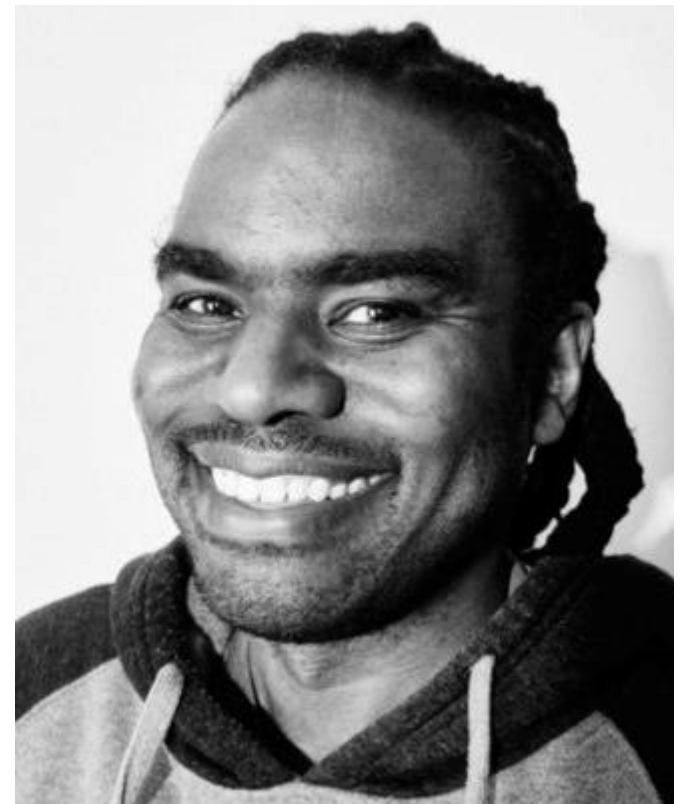
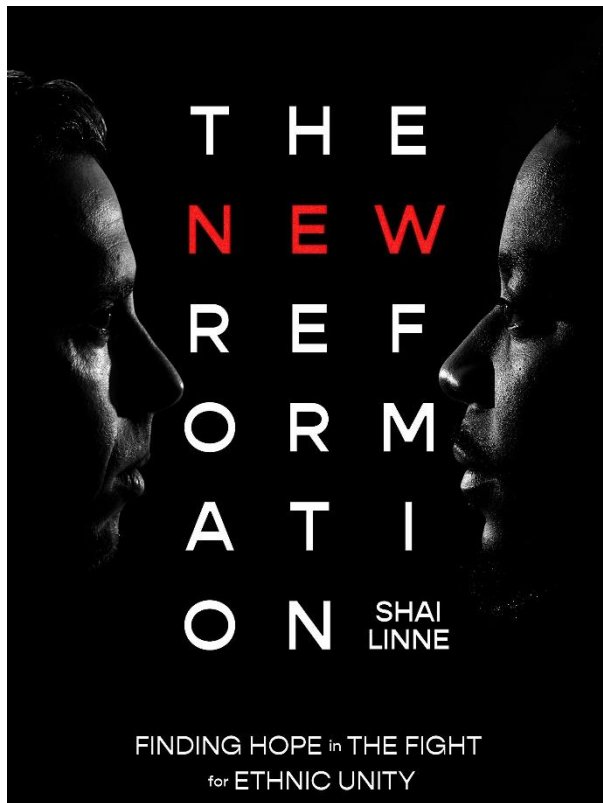
Just Mercy, Bryan Stevenson



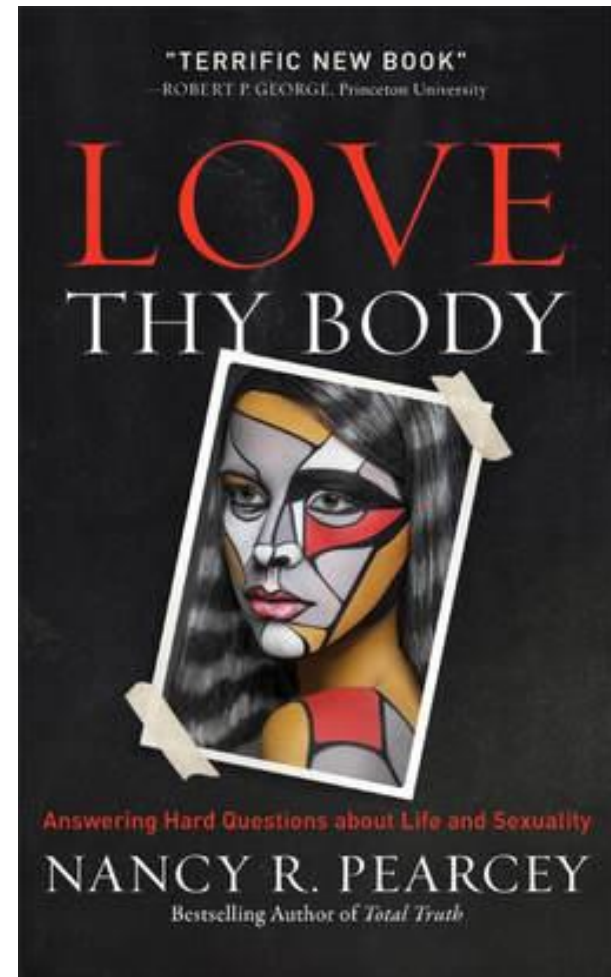
Fault Lines, by Voddie Baucham



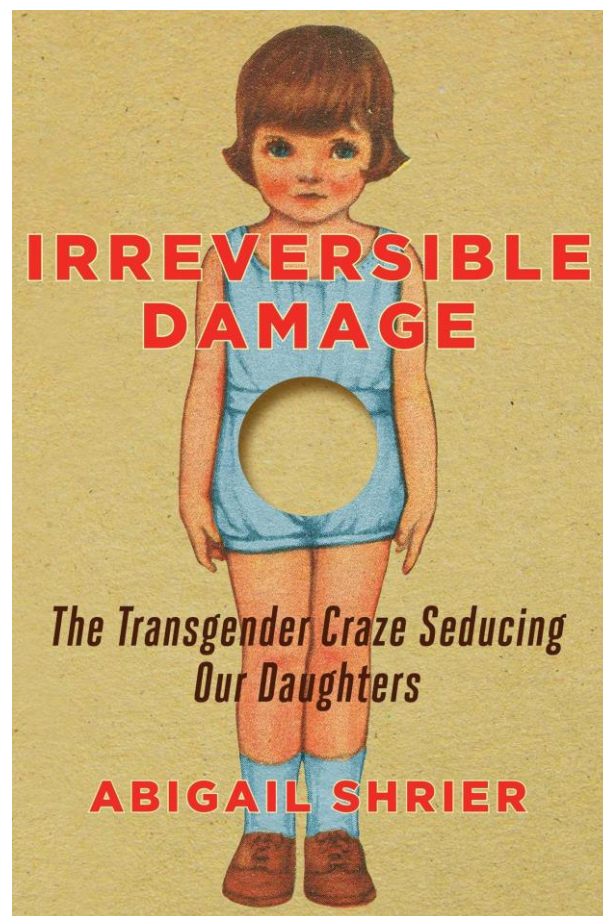
The New Reformation, by Shai Linne



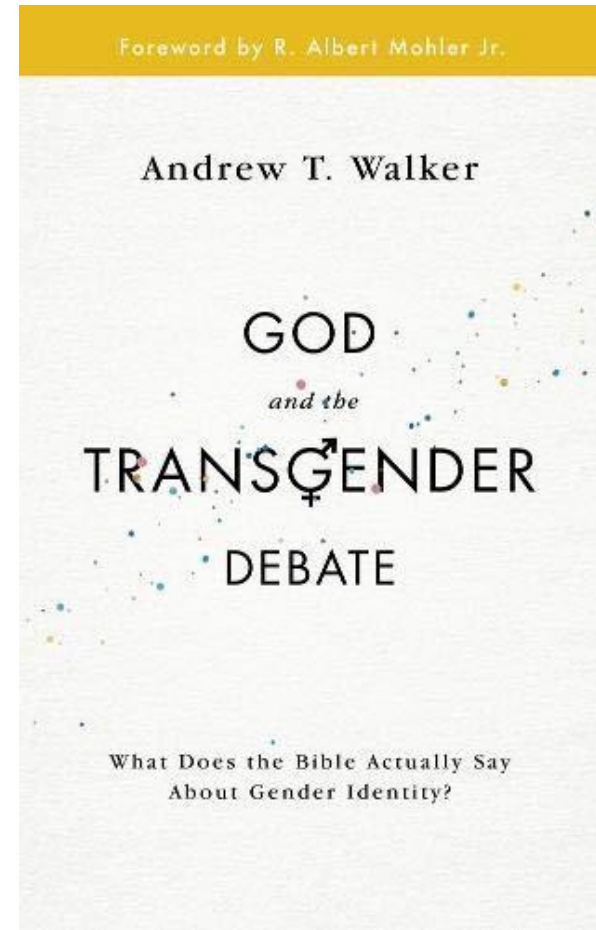
Pearcey's *Love Thy Body*



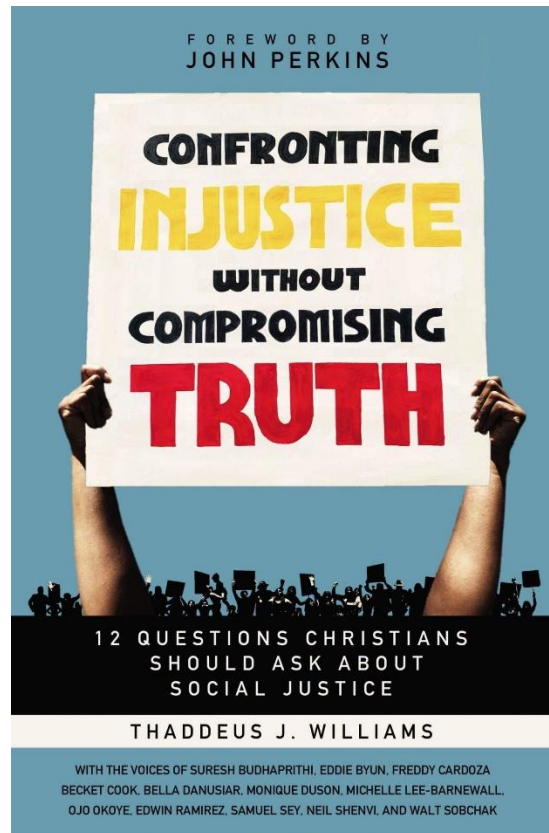
Shrier's *Irreversible Damage*



Walker's *God and The Transgender Debate*



Confronting Injustice Without Compromising Truth by Thaddeus Williams



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What's at stake

- Our primary identity is in Christ, not in race, ethnicity, gender, or anything else. (Gal. 3:26-28, Phil. 3:3-11)
- We can only repent for our own sins. (Ez. 18:14-20, Deut. 24:16 and Jer. 31:27-34)
- No one's "lived experience" makes them infallible. (Prov. 14:12, Jer. 17:9)
- Biblical justice means "giving people their due," not "dismantling hegemonic norms." (Rom. 13:1-7, Is. 1:17)
- Diversity is not always good. (Jdg. 21:25, Rev. 17:13-14)
- The gospel is an indicative, not an imperative. (Rom. 4:5, John 6:29)

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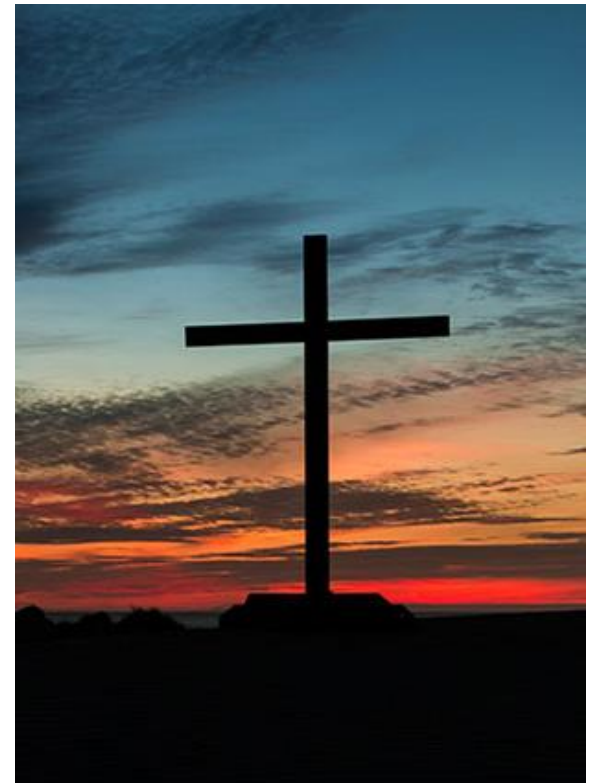
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Just and Unjust



Unjust and Justified

- What are your **moral obligations**?
- Have you **kept** them?



Acknowledgements

Dr. Christina Shenvi



Dr. Pat Sawyer



- “Engaging Critical Theory and the Social Justice Movement” *Ratio Christi*
- shenviapologetics.com/defend19
- Twitter @NeilShenvi, @RealPatSawyer