

The Need to Return to the Reformation, Part 1

“Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein” (Jeremiah 6:16).

When you lose something, you must go back to where you last had it and look for it there. For those in the Protestant churches in the West, we have lost something – much of the spiritual as well as earthly blessings of the Reformation – and so we must go back to the Reformation to find what we have lost. But at the outset, we must not do this merely as an academic exercise in Church History. Rather, we must go back to the Gospel and the Scripture as the Reformers were blessed by the Spirit to wake out of the thousand-year slumber of the so-called church. The Reformation was indeed a Great Awakening, a Great Revival after such demonic darkness. So not only do we need to go back to the Reformation, but more importantly, we need a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit to believe and proclaim boldly the truth of the Gospel and the teachings of the Bible much like the Reformers were equipped by the Spirit to do.

To support my case, I would like to cite Dr. Paul Elliott of TeachingTheWord Ministries, who refers to Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones. In a series on “Remembering the Reformation,” Dr. Elliott wrote several articles in that series: “What Characterized the Reformers’ Preaching?” and “What Was the ‘Secret’ of the Reformation”:

What Characterized the Reformers Preaching?

As Martyn Lloyd-Jones continued his address of fifty years ago, *Remembering the Reformation*,¹ he spoke of the power and authority of the Protestant Reformers' preaching. In this part of his remarks he was wonderfully prescient about the agenda behind much of present-day radio and television “preaching” -

This brings me to the last point: their preaching. We have been reminded that the Reformers re-introduced preaching and that they put preaching at the centre instead of ceremonies and sacraments.

Yes, but let us remember that there is preaching – and *preaching*. Merely to speak for twenty minutes is not necessarily preaching. Though you may

¹ Quotations in this article are from D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, “Remembering the Reformation” in *Knowing the Times: Addresses Delivered on Various Occasions, 1942-1977* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1989).

have taken a text and divided it up very cleverly, it is not necessarily preaching. Oh, there is preaching and, preaching!

The Test of Preaching: Power

What is the test of preaching? I will tell you; it is power! 'Our gospel came unto you', says the apostle to the Thessalonians in the First Epistle, chapter 1, verse 5, 'not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance'. Who had the assurance? The preacher! He knew something was happening, he knew God was using him, he knew that he was the vehicle and channel of divine and eternal grace. 'Much assurance'! And that was the sort of preaching you had from the Protestant Reformers. It was prophetic preaching, not priestly preaching. What we have today, is what I would call priestly. Very nice, very quiet, very ornate, sentences turned beautifully, prepared carefully. That is not prophetic preaching!

The Need in Preaching: Authority

No, what is needed is authority! Do you think that John Knox could make Mary Queen of Scots tremble with some polished little essay? These men did not write their sermons with an eye to publication in books, they were preaching to the congregation in front of them, anxious and desirous to do something, to effect something, to change people. It was authoritative. It was proclamation, it was declaration.

Is it surprising that the church is as she is today; we no longer believe in preaching, do we? You used to have long sermons here in Scotland. I am told you do not like them now, and woe unto the preacher who goes on beyond twenty minutes! I was reading in the train yesterday about the first Principal of Emmanuel College in Cambridge, Chadderton, who lived towards the end of the sixteenth century. He was preaching on one occasion, and after he had preached for two hours he stopped and apologized to the people: 'Please forgive me, I have got beyond myself, I must not go on like this.' And the congregation shouted out, 'For God's sake go on!' You know I am beginning to think that I shall not have preached until something like that happens to me. Prophetic! Authoritative! Proclamation! Declaration!

Today's Preaching: "A Friendly Discussion"

Their view of preaching was certainly not our modern idea of having a friendly discussion. Have you noticed how we have less and less preaching on the [radio]? Instead we have discussion. Let the young people say what they think, let us win them by letting them speak; and we will have a friendly chat and discussion, we will show them that after all we are nice,

decent fellows, there is nothing nasty about us; and we will gain their confidence; they must not think that we are unlike them! If you are on the television...you show that you are like the people, one of them!

Can You Imagine John Knox on Television?

Was John Knox like one of the people? Was John Knox [when he entered the pulpit] a matey, friendly, nice chap with whom you could have a discussion? Thank God he was not!... Can you imagine John Knox having tips and training as to how he should conduct and comport himself before the television camera, so as to be nice and polite and friendly and gentlemanly?

Thank God prophets are made of stronger stuff! An Amos, a Jeremiah, a John the Baptist in the wilderness in his camel-hair shirt – a strange fellow, a lunatic, they said, but they went and listened to him because he was a curiosity, and as they listened they were convicted! Such a man was John Knox, with the fire of God in his bones and in his belly! He preached as they all preached, with fire and power, alarming sermons, convicting sermons, humbling sermons, converting sermons, and the face of Scotland was changed...

Then continuing with the next article, Dr. Elliott discusses:

What Was the “Secret” of the Reformation?

What was the “secret” that brought the Reformation about? As Martyn Lloyd-Jones pointed out, the "secret" of the Reformation was not the Reformers, but their God. Do you want a renewal of the Reformation in our time? Here is the only Source.

Continuing his address, *Remembering the Reformation*, Martyn Lloyd-Jones called upon his audience to recognize the one thing that is necessary above all else, to have a renewal of the Reformation in our day:

What was the secret of it all? It was not the men, as I have been trying to show you, great as they were. It was God! God in His sovereignty raising up His men. And God knows what He is doing. Look at the gifts He gave John Knox as a natural man; look at the mind He gave to Calvin and the training He gave him as a lawyer to prepare him for his great work; look at Martin Luther, that volcano of a man; God preparing His men in the different nations and countries. Of course, even before He produced them, He had been preparing the way for them. Let us never forget John Wyclif and John Hus; let us never forget the Waldensians and all the

martyrs of these terrible Middle Ages! God was preparing the way; He sent His men at the right moment, and the mighty events followed.

Righteousness Alone Exalts a Nation

Shall I try to draw certain lessons for ourselves? The conclusion of all this is that righteousness, and righteousness alone, exalts a nation, and there is no righteousness without a preceding godliness. The times are cruel; the world is in a desperate plight; there is an appalling moral breakdown before our eyes. Marriage is breaking down, home life disappearing, little children not knowing home and loving parents. It is a tragedy! Can nothing be done? Is there no hope?

To me the main message of the Protestant Reformation of [five] hundred years ago is to point us to the one and only hope. Things were bad in Scotland when God called John Knox and sent him out as a burning flame and the others with him. Our position is not hopeless, for God remains, and with God nothing shall be impossible! The conditions could not have been worse than they were immediately before the Reformation; yet in spite of that the change came. Why? Because God was there and God sent it.

Where is the Lord God of Elijah?

So the only question we need ask is the old question of Elisha face to face with his problem: 'Where is the Lord God of Elijah?' And I want to ask that question this evening: Where is the God of John Knox? Our meeting will have been in vain if we do not ask that question. If we stop with John Knox it is not enough; the question is, Where is the God of John Knox, He who can give us the power, the authority, the might, the courage, and everything we need, where is He? How can we find Him?

I suggest to you that the answer is to be found again in the Epistle to the Hebrews, in chapter 4 this time, in verses 14 to 16. They seem to me not inappropriate as I end this evening. How can we find this God? Here is the answer: 'Let us hold fast the confession.'...You will never find the God of John Knox without that. 'Seeing then that we have a great high priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast the confession'. What is the confession? It is the confession about 'Jesus the Son of God', our great high priest...We must have it because without it, who dares go into the presence of God?

As it is put there in Hebrews 4:16: 'Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace.' What is the 'therefore'? The knowledge that we possess, that we have got this great high priest that has passed through

the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, and that He is ‘touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin’.

Where is the God of Elijah? How can we find Him? How can we receive the power that we need? We must go back to the confession, go back to the faith, go back to the Word, believe its truths, and in the light of it go with boldness; confidence, assurance, to the throne of grace; to obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Jesus Christ the Same Yesterday, Today, Forever

We are living in an appalling time of need, sin and evil rampant; the whole world is quaking and shaking. Is the end upon us? The times are alarming - 'time of need'. The one thing necessary is to find this God, and there seated at His right hand, the One who has been in this world and knows all about it, has seen its shame, its sin, its vileness, its rottenness face to face; friend of publicans and sinners, a Man who knew the hatred and the animosity of the Pharisees, scribes and Sadducees, the doctors of the law, and Pontius Pilate.

The whole world was against Him, and yet He triumphed through it all; He is there, and He is our representative and high priest. Believe in Him, hold fast to the confession. Let us go in His name with boldness unto the throne of grace, and as certainly as we do so we shall obtain the mercy that we need for our sinfulness and unfaithfulness, and we shall be given the grace to help us in our time of need, in our day and generation.

The God of John Knox is still there, and still the same, and thank God, Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and for ever. Oh, that we might know the God of John Knox!

Let us go back to Jeremiah 6:16, which I read at the beginning. Let us start at the end of the verse: “But they said, We will not walk therein.” In the church in the West, this is where we are. We are not walking in the old paths where is the good way, and so we have no rest for our souls. We need to obey the Lord, “and stand in the ways – not keep walking in the broad way –, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein...” First, let us see where we have left the old paths. The Holy Spirit equipped and enabled the Reformers to first recover the Gospel of Justification by faith / belief alone in Christ alone by Grace alone to the Glory of God alone found in the Scripture alone, which they proclaimed boldly standing seemingly against the whole world – think of Luther before the Diet of Worms standing against the Roman Catholic Church-State and the holy Roman emperor Charles V, standing on the Word of God alone. Much of the church in the

West has left the old paths and the good way in terms of the Gospel. So-called “Free will” and “Good works” have replaced faith / belief alone in Christ alone in much of the church to the point where we have apostate groups (one cannot call them churches anymore) with “woke” “pastors” who are more concerned with the LGBTQ+ agenda than with the Gospel. These groups left the Gospel, as well as the Scripture as the sole authority long ago, and this is often the trajectory for many churches that leave the good way of the old paths. Often the drift starts with the Word of God, as I wrote in my *Review* “The Bible, Critical Theory, and Critical Race Theory, Part 1: The View from the 30,000 Feet.” Let me quote from the section on “A Little History”:

Throughout human history, God’s Word has been attacked, first by Satan, then by those who follow him. The first instance of this was the temptation of Eve and the Fall of Adam in the Garden of Eden as Satan in the form of a serpent asked Eve, “Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?” (*Genesis* 3:1). Ever since, God’s Word has been questioned, attacked, burned, ignored, counterfeited and changed.

Throughout the Dark Ages, the Roman Catholic false Church-State banned the Bible for the “laity” and burned copies of it translated into the languages of the common people. Then at the beginning of the 16th century, Erasmus “laid the egg that Luther hatched” when he published his New Testament Greek text based on the Byzantine texts, lately come out of the Eastern Orthodox church after the Muslims took Constantinople. This became known as the *Textus Receptus*, the Received Text, which was the basis for all the Reformation translations of the New Testament from Luther’s German to Tyndale’s English, the *Genevan*, and finally, the *King James* or *Authorized Version*. It was this English Bible that went throughout the world carried by missionaries to the nations which proved to be a “mortal wound” to the Roman Catholic false Church-State. God’s Word was set free, and the true church of Jesus Christ was reformed and grew in a mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the people of God, and the false church was exposed for what it truly was – Babylon the Great who persecutes the true saints of God.

Rome could not defeat the Word of God. Instead, she tried once again to persecute the saints of God. During the Middle Ages, the Dominicans headed the Inquisition, which tortured and murdered millions of faithful followers of Jesus Christ – men, women, and children, even organizing crusader armies to hunt them down and murder them. After the Reformation, it was the Jesuits who not only took the leadership of the Inquisition, but also were more devious, infiltrating Protestant groups by deception, in order to bring back the “heretics” to the pope of Rome, reestablishing Rome’s dominance in the world, and

healing the “mortal wound.” This is demonstrated in the Jesuits’ futurist and preterist distractions on the identity of the Antichrist, whom all the Reformers, as well as the Dissenting church throughout the Dark Ages, knew to be the pope of Rome. Futurism eliminates the need to worry about a present Antichrist, he will come only in the Future and be revealed during the “Great Tribulation”; or Preterism relegates to the first century emperor Nero. Unfortunately, most non-Catholics (one cannot call them Protestants because they do not stand for the Word of God) believe the Jesuits’ eschatology – mostly Futurism, but a few Preterism – instead of the Historicist eschatology of the Reformers and their descendants.²

Another tactic of Rome and her Jesuits was infiltration from within and downright taking over Protestant Bible Societies and institutions of higher learning. All of the Protestant Bible societies with the exception of the Trinitarian Bible Society have been taken over by Rome and her Jesuits and are promoting the Critical Text (now known as the Eclectic Text) revised by Westcott and Hort, based primarily upon two early but suspect manuscripts – *Vaticanus* and *Sinaiticus*, either discovered or promoted in the 19th century. The manuscript of the Reformation, the *Textus Receptus* was eschewed for the Vatican influenced Critical Text, which is the basis for all modern English translations, with the exceptions of the *KJV* and *NKJV*.³ Rome employed the strategy of “If You Can’t Beat ‘Em, Join ‘Em.”⁴

It is to the 19th century that we now turn. Despite the relative peace of that century, with the obvious exceptions of the War of 1812 and the American Civil War or the War of the Rebellion as it is officially called in the records of the United States, there was a great deal of spiritual upheaval during that century. During the middle of that century the rise and growth of cults and false teaching permeated much of the United States and beyond. After the Second Great Awakening of Charles Finney, in the “Burned-over district” of western and central New York state many cults and false teachers arose, such as Charles Taze Russell of the Jehovah’s Witnesses, Joseph Smith of the Mormons, and Ellen G. White of the Seventh Day Adventists. John Nelson Darby gave rise to Dispensationalism, which was later promoted and popularized by C. I. Scofield and his reference Bible, again promoting a Jesuitical futurist eschatology. Many of these cults not only cast doubt upon the Word of God, but also offered up

² For more on this topic, see the following *Trinity Reviews*: “Antichrist,” October-December 1994 and “Antichrist 1999,” May-June 1999, both edited by John W. Robbins; and “Antichrist Is Coming, April 15, 2008,” selected by Thomas W. Juodaitis, March-April 2008.

³ Unfortunately, the footnotes in the *NKJV* are influenced by the Critical Text.

⁴ See the excellent articles by that title in the British Journal *The Reformer* published by The Protestant Alliance of Great Britain. See also Paul M. Elliott’s republication of them with added notes in the Knowledgebase at www.teachingtheword.org. Also see the April, May 2019 *Trinity Review* of the same.

their own false “revelations” and false “scriptures.” This has only increased exponentially in the 20th and 21st centuries. With the growth of Protestant sects, the rise of the cults, the concomitant decrease, in the influence of Biblical, Reformed theology, and the rise of unbiblical doctrine, especially Arminianism, Rome could smell blood in the water. Thus, she sent her Jesuits out to make the texts that dealt her “mortal wound” irrelevant by the growth of a new text based on her manuscript – *Vaticanus*⁵ along with other suspect texts. Additionally, the influence of Charles Darwin and his popularization of molecules-to-man evolution gave a rationale for a new theory of history and human development, including how the text of Scripture was approached. Even in the church God’s Providential preserving of his Word was eschewed, extolling instead the skills of the textual critic, who picked and chose what was really Scripture based on “science” not upon providential history (His story) and the divine preservation of the Word of God.

Another stream of this attack upon the Word of God came from the European Continent in German Higher Criticism, which denied the inerrancy and infallibility of the Word of God, denying not only the divine authorship of the Holy Spirit, but even the human writers who were named as the penmen of the books they authored. This attack on the Word of God spread throughout the world, especially in the institutions of higher learning and especially the formerly Protestant seminaries, universities, and colleges. The critic set himself above the text in authority, not submitting to the authority of the Text as the Word of God.

With this attack on the Word of God, all the major doctrines of Biblical Christianity were attacked from Creation *ex nihilo* to the denial of the doctrines of Christ – his virgin birth, sinless life, his miracles, his resurrection, even to the subsidiary doctrines of the implications of the Christian system, such as the checks and balances of a Christian representative form of government, and the Christian economic system of *laissez-faire* capitalism. Another Jesuit-influenced movement arose to attack these latter systems – Marxism / Communism. This attack came with the publications of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, especially their co-authored *Communist Manifesto* (1848) and Marx’s *Das Kapital*, which Engels financially supported, allowing Marx to research and write. Later after Marx’s death, Engels edited volumes 2, 3, and 4. It is interesting to note that most, if not all of the planks in the *Communist Manifesto* have been implemented here in the United States, including free

⁵ See the excellent documentaries on the history of the Bible produced by Adullam Films: *A Lamp in the Dark*, *Tares Among the Wheat*, and *Bridge to Babylon*. See also Trinity Foundation Radio Episode 12 interview with Dr. Wilbur Pickering.

(though citizens pay for it through their property taxes) government education and a graduated income tax.

Satan laid the intellectual foundations of this attack upon God's Word and God's people in the 19th century with all the leaders and movements listed above. In the 20th and 21st centuries these demonic philosophies bore much rotten fruit in attacks on the individual, the family, the institutions of society, and the church. The growth in technology was paralleled by the growth in materialism and naturalism. For many, the god of technology and science replaced the true and living God of the Bible. Further, the ideas of Darwin and Marx were applied more broadly to society with the rise of "Social Darwinism" and the Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School, infusing Marxist coloring and interpretation in academia, all of which took for granted a denial of God and his Word. Along with these the eugenics movement attacked life itself, again denying God and his Word. In the church, God's providential preservation of his Word was exchanged for the new evolutionary viewpoint, the true Gospel of Jesus Christ was exchanged for the "Social," "Prosperity," and other false gospels, and true justice and righteousness were replaced by Marxist "social justice," and Romanist-Marxist liberation theology.

In geo-political terms, the fruit born of these ideas was totalitarian murder, torture, genocide, and "scientific" experimentation on non-consenting people. Again, God's people were attacked. Rome gained its revenge on the birthplace of the Reformation in the destruction of Germany in the two World Wars. The bloodline of the Old Testament was again sought out to be wiped off the face of the Earth, and the attack was taken to God's people – believers in Jesus Christ, as witnessed by the increasing attacks and persecutions of Christians all around the world by her enemies – Islam, Judaism, Romanism, and atheist, rather Satanic, governments.⁶

Satan and his followers have marshalled several weapons in this warfare against God, his Word, his Gospel, and his people, such as: divide and conquer; infiltration – "If you can't beat them, join them;" and "science [knowledge]" falsely so-called. Rome, as Satan's masterpiece, has utilized these throughout her history, and has especially ramped up their use in the 20th and 21st centuries with the ecumenical movement. Jesuit-influenced Marxism⁷ has used the divide

⁶ Please see John W. Robbins, "Religious Wars of the 21st Century," *The Trinity Review*, August 2006.

⁷ See James Arendt, "The True Authors of Communism and Socialism: The Jesuits," June 19, 2020, viewed July 11, 2022, <https://www.jamesjpn.net/government/the-authors-of-communism-socialism-jesuits/>, originally in Walt Stickel, "The Roots of Communism: The Jesuits," <http://www.granddesignexposed.com/eisenhower/walsh.html>. For the Jesuit influence on Marx, the article notes "For five years Karl Marx went to the Jesuit school in Trier, which during the Prussian period was known as the Friederich-Wilhelm Gymnasium."

and conquer tactic starting with class but more recently pivoting to “race.”⁸ Rome and her Jesuits infiltrated and co-opted most of the Bible Societies that translate and publish Bibles for the nations, with the exception of the Trinitarian Bible Society.⁹ Further, the present occupant of the seat of Antichrist, Francis is using the climate change hoax (science falsely so-called) to call for a global order to hold nations accountable for not following the draconian measures of the global puppet masters. To be sure, Francis is not alone in this, as the media, NGOs, and many governments are all pushing this agenda with the mantra of “Believe the Science,” and if one does not, he is a “Science denier.”¹⁰

With this attack on the Word of God, all other doctrines found therein are made void, and we see the nonsense or what Dr. Ronald Cooke calls “clap-trap” that goes on in so-called churches. Is it any wonder that the West is in “civilizational collapse”? It was the Reformation and the return to the Scripture as the only rule for faith and life that gave rise to Western Civilization, and once that foundation is destroyed or abandoned all the superstructure of the blessings of such implications of the Gospel, such as the freedoms enshrined in the Constitution crumbles into dust. Witness the attack on the fruit of the Reformation:

In the 1930s the demoralization of the West, especially the attack on the fruit of the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century, that is Western civilization, began in earnest with ideas coming out of the Frankfurt School founded in 1929 at the Goethe University in Frankfurt, Germany and associated with the Institute for Social Research in the decadent and depraved Weimar Republic between the two World Wars. The Frankfurt School incorporated the ideas of Freud, Hegel, and Marx, applying them to the social conditions of the day, being the first Marxist research institute at a German university. Several of the intellectuals associated with it were philosopher Max Horkheimer who began directing the Frankfurt School in 1930, and fellow philosophers, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, and psychoanalyst Erich Fromm. They applied what became known as Critical Theory to the social sciences, again using the ideas of Freud, Hegel, and Marx beyond economic and political thought. The American Council of Christian Churches presented a Resolution on Critical Theory at their 78th Annual Convention in 2019 in which they state:

⁸ There is only one race, the human race, but there are different nations or ethnicities. See Acts 17:26: “And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation.”

⁹ Again, the reader may wish to consult the excellent articles referenced in note 3 above.

¹⁰ For more on this see Ronald L. Cooper, “The Bible and the Idolatry of Science,” *The Trinity Review* September – December 2019.

Since the 1930s, Critical Theorists have sought to supplant [B]iblical Christianity with their brand of Marxist ideology. They have taught that the Holy Bible should be superseded by the writings of the Frankfurt School [such as Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse, Fromm, Walter Benjamin, and Jürgen Habermas], Liberation Theologians [such as Gustavo Gutiérrez and James Cone], and / or other false prophets [such as Marx, György Lukács, Antonio Gramsci, Paulo Freire, Derek Bell, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Peggy McIntosh, Alison Bailey, Robin DiAngelo, Barbara Applebaum, George Yancy, and Richard Delgado]. Federal headship likewise should not be found in Adam or Christ, but in race, class, gender, physical ability, age, or any combination of these. Sin should then not be exclusively defined as any violation of God’s law in thought, word, deed, or state of being, but today rather should be predicated on one’s proximity to being identified as an older, rich, white, able-bodied, heterosexual male, which is the chief of sinners [according to Intersectionality Score Calculator found at <https://intersectionalityscore.com>].

Critical Theorists thereby have taught two false gospels, depending on the group to which they say a person belongs. Salvation for a person in an “oppressed” minority group entails 1) an awareness [sometimes called getting “woke”] of their innocent, victimhood status and 2) a relentless push to overthrow the hegemonic power [such as “heterosexual / straight privilege,” “male privilege,” “white privilege,” or “systemic / institutional / structural racism”] in order to attain social justice. The gospel for a person in an “oppressor” group includes 1) a perpetual feeling of guilt [often called “white guilt”] for the group’s collective sins and 2) a life of penance involving endless apologies, reparations, affirmative actions, and silent listening to “marginalized” groups, as well as the mortification of all purported “microaggressions” of sexism, racism, ageism, ableism, cisgenderism, colonialism, misogyny, patriarchy, and toxic masculinity.¹¹

Further, David Held of Open University wrote the following about the Frankfurt School:

Their work set out to expose the complex relations and mediations which prevent modes of production – perhaps the most central referent of the Marxian corpus – from being characterized simply as objective structures, as things developing “over the heads” of human agents. They took issue

¹¹ “Resolution on Critical Theory,” American Council of Christian Churches, 78th Annual Convention, October 22-24, 2019, Faith Chapel, Carlisle, PA, April 25, 2022, <https://acc4truth.org/2019/11/14/critical-theory/>. All information in brackets originally in footnotes.

specifically with the “determinist” and “positivist” interpretations of historical materialism, which emphasized unalterable stages of historical development (driven by a seemingly autonomous economic “base”) and the suitability of the methodological mode of the natural sciences for understanding the stages....

Throughout the 1930s and ‘40s, the Institute of Social Research, under Horkheimer’s directorship, pursued research and analysis in a number of different areas including individual identity formation, family relations, bureaucracy, state, economy, and culture. Although what has become known as “Frankfurt” social theory often began from Marxian axioms, many of the conclusions reached ran counter to traditional Marxist theory as their findings highlighted many obstacles to social transformation in the foreseeable future....

Horkheimer and Adorno believed that the products of the great artists of the bourgeois era, as well as those of the Christian Middle Ages and the Renaissance, preserved a certain autonomy from the world of purely pragmatic interests (Horkheimer and Adorno, [*Dialectic of Enlightenment*] 1947).... As such, art has a cognitive and subversive character. Its “truth-content” resides in its ability to restructure conventional patterns of meaning.

....

Using many psychoanalytic concepts, the school examined the way society constitutes the individual, producing social character types. They found that in the socialization process, the importance of parents is dwindling. As families provide ever less protection against the overpowering pressures of the outside world the legitimacy of the father’s authority is undermined. The result is, for example, that the male child does not aspire to become like his father, but more and more like images projected by the culture industry in general (or by fascism in Nazi Germany). The father retains a certain power, but his demands and prohibitions are, at best, poorly internalized. The father’s power, therefore, appears arbitrary. In this situation the child retains an abstract idea of force and strength, and searches for a more powerful “father” adequate to this image. A general state of susceptibility to outside forces is created – to fascist demagogues, for instance.¹²

Of the utmost importance here is the epistemology of the Critical Theorists. They have rejected the *Logos* – the incarnated as well as the inscripturated Word of God – from the outset. Thus, they have no sure foundation upon which

¹² David Held, “Frankfurt School,” *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought*, Tom Bottomore, editor. Harvard UP, 1983, 184-186.

to build up society and its institutions; rather, their philosophy is destructive of it and them. Like the critics in the Critical Text movement, replacing the Received Text of the New Testament with their so-called improvement based primarily on texts provided by the Vatican, and another of dubious origin found in a monastery being used for tinder, so too have the Critical Theorists shown their rank unbelief by their absolute rejection of the Word of God and their downright attack on Christianity and all that it teaches. Whereas, the textual critics undermined the Word of God, placing themselves above the Word, the Critical Theorists dismissed and attacked the Word of God completely. This goes back to the first doubt and lie planted: “Hath God indeed said...?”

Once the foundation – epistemology based on the Word of God – has been attacked, then all of society and its institutions are fair game to be reinterpreted in light of the Critical Theorists, which they have indeed done.¹³ Witness the attacks on the individual, the family, the church, and the state being waged through the carnal weapons of art and culture – both popular and high – through mass media and elite institutions of highbrow culture. Notice also from the above paragraphs the attacks on those things – “the Institute of Social Research, under Horkheimer’s directorship, pursued research and analysis in a number of different areas including individual identity formation, family relations, bureaucracy, state, economy, and culture.... [T]he legitimacy of the father’s authority is undermined.” Without the foundation of the Word of God being the ground of meaning for those things, the Critical Theorists and other sinful people could then conform those things to the ungodly ideas and agendas they were proposing, most often with a Marxist underpinning.

There were two methods for Marxists to take over a country. Early on, it was by violent revolution, and once established, all traditional culture would be quashed, and new Marxist culture would be imposed, as seen in the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, leading to Leninist then Stalinist forms of Communism, the Maoist Cultural Revolution in China, and various violent communist revolutions in Eastern Europe and South America. The other method was far more subversive though less violent, at least at first. The Communists would take over the intellectual and cultural institutions and subvert a society. Witness the growth of Marxism in mass culture and in the educational system in the latter half of the 20th century, even as regional and national cultural traditions were dismissed and replaced by those Marxist ideas. The Frankfurt School with its Critical Theory was instrumental in this regard, even as it gained a stronghold at Columbia University in New York.

¹³ Epistemology will be discussed more in Part 2, especially the epistemology of Critical Race Theory.

From Critical Theory to Critical Race Theory

Voddie Baucham Jr. has traced the roots of Critical Race Theory – CRT (also known as Social, Emotional Learning)¹⁴ through Marx’s Conflict Theory and the Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School stating

Marx viewed society as a group of different social classes all competing for a limited pool of resources such as food, housing, employment, education, and leisure time [Heather Griffiths, *Introduction to Sociology 2nd Edition*, OpenStax, 2015]....

After the Marxist revolution failed to topple capitalism in the early twentieth century, many Marxists went back to the drawing board, modifying and adapting Marx’s ideas. Perhaps the most famous was a group associated with the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt, Germany, which applied Marxism to a radical interdisciplinary social theory. The group included Max Horkheimer, T. W. Adorno, Erich Fromm, Herbert Marcuse, Georg Lukács, and Walter Benjamin and came to be known as the Frankfurt School.

These men developed Critical Theory as an expansion of Conflict Theory and applied it more broadly, including other social sciences and philosophy. Their main goal was *to address structural issues causing inequity*. They worked from the assumption that current social reality was broken, and they needed to identify the people and institutions that could make changes and provide practical goals for social transformation.¹⁵

Owen Strachan, another Christian writer, echoes Baucham on the roots of Critical Race Theory flowing from the Critical Theorists of the Frankfurt School. He writes the following under the heading “Where Did All This Ideology Come From?”:

In two words: Karl Marx. And two more: Friedrich Engels. This duo sent shockwaves through the West following the publication of *The Communist Manifesto* in 1848. Alongside the economic argument, they made this foundational claim: “Hitherto, every form of society has been based, as we have already seen, on the antagonism of oppressing and oppressed classes.” Therefore, “the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave...lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman,

¹⁴ See Nancy Huff, “The Dangers of Social, Emotional Learning,” *Intercessors for America* blog, March 1, 2022, <https://www.ifapray.org/blog/the-dangers-of-social-emotional-learning/>.

¹⁵ Voddie T. Baucham Jr., *Fault Lines: The Social Justice Movement and Evangelicalism’s Looming Catastrophe*, Salem Books, 2021, xii-xiii. Emphasis original, and bracketed information was originally footnoted.

in a word, oppressor and oppressed” [Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, 9]. This perspective on human identity and societal ordering fit fluidly with Darwinian cosmology, the spread of which Marx cheered in his era....

...In truth, humanity is divided into two groups: saved and unsaved. But Marx reframed our fundamental categories along economic lines—“class struggles,” to be precise. He saw history playing out as a great conflict between oppressors (those who control the means of production) and the oppressed (those who are not economically privileged).

Marx located this critique more specifically in societal institutions. Jeffrey Johnson concisely captures the anti-authority dimensions of the bibliographic wet bomb that Marx (and Engels) sent into society through *The Communist Manifesto*:

Marx believed that the great moral problem of society could be reduced to the institutions of authority within society. He held that because authority by its very nature is oppressive, all authoritative structures and institutions must be destroyed. And when all decentralized divisions of authority have been dismantled, a globalized classless society must take its place in a new world order. In this new world order, people will no longer have to relate to each other as superiors and inferiors, rich and poor, leader and follower. Not until there are no class divisions, diversity, or hierarchical stature of authority will society be free of oppression. Only then will the world be rid of evil and experience utopia. [Jeffrey Johnson, *What Every Christian Needs to Know about Social Justice*, (Conway, Arkansas: Free Grace Press, 2021), 28-29.]

This worldview was rooted in atheism: godlessness. But Marx did not only shake his fist at the divine. He hated the world God had made. He despised what theologians call “creation order.” He wanted to wipe out every trace of divine making from the earth. We quote Johnson again on this count:

But most importantly, because our present institutions derive their delegated authority from God, these institutions (individualism, family, church, and state) must first be deconstructed and stripped of their authority in order to fully eliminate God from society. In fact, for Marx, deliverance from the evils of capitalism cannot occur until all traces of God are removed from this world. [*Ibid*, 29.]

Critical Theory would adapt Marx's categories and critiques in the mid-twentieth century. It applied the Marxist grid not solely to considerations of class, but also to anthropology more broadly. As Marx maintained, everyone is either an oppressor or an oppressed person. The Frankfurt Critical Theorists like Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer argued that bourgeois institutions mediated the oppression in question. People outside the cultural mainstream came off as essentially righteous in their struggle against cultural norms. In essential terms, minority groups gained favored status during this time. The challenge to institutions first posed by Enlightenment thinkers gained serious steam as the Critical Theorists challenged the integrity of the "bourgeois" social order.

In fact, *reason itself* was lost in modern society, driven as it was by capitalist ideology. Commenting on the thought of Frankfurt School theorist Max Horkheimer, Roger Scruton noted that:

Reason, he argues, is corrupted by the capitalist order and loses its natural focus in human life.... For bourgeois reason, therefore, humanity is strictly *imperceptible*. The true critical philosophy is the one that, by turning the gaze of philosophy on philosophy itself, sees the poisoned sources of its own polluted reasoning.

Scruton summarizes Horkheimer's burden: we must "pass beyond philosophy into 'critical theory' and discover the true possibility of emancipation, which begins with the emancipation of thought itself." [Roger Scruton, *Fools, Frauds, and Firebrands: Thinkers of the New Left* (London: Bloomsbury Continuum, 2017), 138.] In simpler terms, to understand humanity, the Critical Theorists argued that one must recognize the corrupted nature of society, but not only of society—of ordinary reason itself. It is for this reason that Voddie Baucham Jr. has argued that such thinking—including Critical Race Theory, derived from this system—is gnosticism. [Voddie Baucham Jr., "Ethnic Gnosticism," in *By What Standard?: God's World...God's Rules* (Cape Coral, Florida: Founders Press, 2020), 105-116.] He means that according to this ideology, there is a higher knowledge that only some possess; ordinary perception alone will not do. The structures of reality, whether economic or cultural or "racial" (in our time), may look sound, but they are not. They must be exposed, for they actually contain surging injustice within them. Only some can see this—the woke. ...

There is intellectual lineage here. CRT owes its major categories to Critical Theory, which owes its major categories to Marx. Yet this combative

mentality of unfair victimization was whispered long before Marx. The ultimate source of this ideology does not sound like the voice of God, but like the slithery hiss of a serpent.¹⁶

Another voice tracing Critical Race Theory back to Critical Theory is Christopher Rufo, a scholar critical of Critical Race Theory. He said the following in a lecture he delivered at Hillsdale College on March 30, 2021:

In explaining critical race theory, it helps to begin with a brief history of Marxism. Originally, the Marxist Left built its political program on the theory of class conflict. Marx believed that the primary characteristic of industrial societies was the imbalance of power between capitalists and workers. The solution to that imbalance, according to Marx, was revolution: the workers would eventually gain consciousness of their plight, seize the means of production, overthrow the capitalist class, and usher in a new socialist society....

By the mid-1960s, Marxist intellectuals in the West had begun to acknowledge these failures. They recoiled at revelations of Soviet atrocities and came to realize that workers' revolutions would never occur in Western Europe or the United States, where there were large middle classes and rapidly improving standards of living. Americans in particular had never developed a sense of class consciousness or class division. Most Americans believed in the American dream—the idea that they could transcend their origins through education, hard work, and good citizenship.

But rather than abandon their Leftist political project, Marxist scholars in the West simply adapted their revolutionary theory to the social and racial unrest of the 1960s. Abandoning Marx's economic dialectic of capitalists and workers, they substituted race for class and sought to create a revolutionary coalition of the dispossessed based on racial and ethnic categories.¹⁷

It should be clear that Marx's ideas flowing through the Critical Theorists down to the Critical Race Theorists of our day have their roots in what communist Saul Alinsky in his *Rules for Radicals* wrote in an epigraph:

¹⁶ Owen Strachan, *Christianity and Wokeness How the Social Justice Movement Is Hijacking the Gospel—and the Way to Stop It*, Salem Books, 2021, 19-22. All emphasis original, and bracketed information was originally footnoted. For more information on the topic of this last sentence, please see Richard Wurmbrand, *Marx and Satan*, 1986.

¹⁷ Christopher F. Rufo, "Critical Race Theory: What It Is and How to Fight It," *Imprimis*, March 2021, 1-2.

Lest we forget at least an over-the-shoulder acknowledgement to the very first radical: from all our legends, mythology, and history (and who is to know where mythology leaves off and history begins—or which is which), the first radical known to man who rebelled against the establishment and did it so effectively that he at least won his own kingdom—Lucifer

—Saul Alinsky¹⁸

Let us in the church in the West repent of where we have left the Word of God and the wonderful doctrines recovered in the Reformation of salvation by Grace Alone received by Faith or Belief Alone in Christ Alone to the Glory of God Alone, and ask the Lord for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and [w]e shall find rest for [our] souls. [And let us not say], We will not walk therein” (Jeremiah 6:16).

¹⁸ Saul D. Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals: A Practical Primer for Realistic Radicals*, 1971, ix.