

Community Bible Church, Reno, NV
Pastor Keller Hackbusch
June 2, 2021

BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS

John MacArthur, *The Truth War* (Thomas Nelson, 2007)
Francis Schaeffer, *A Christian Manifesto* (Crossway, 1981)
David Scott Allen, *Why Social Justice is Not Biblical Justice* (Credo House, 2020)
Jeff Johnson, *What Every Christian Needs to Know About Social Justice* (Free Grace Press, 2021)
Richard Wurmbrand, *Tortured for Christ* (Living Sacrifice Book Company, 1998)
J.C. Ryle, *Five English Reformers* (Banner of Truth, 1960) – also included in *Light From Old Times*
John Foxe, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, 1563

Fighting the Culture War with Truth, Part 4 – Truth and Censorship

US Constitution, 1st Amendment

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

Pastor Jeffrey Johnson wrote:

Personal freedoms can be taken away by brute force, but this hypothetically goes against critical theory's ideologies of anti-oppression and authoritarianism. They would rather take away individual freedom by fear. This is how political correctness works. Make people feel so ashamed to use certain words that they willingly give up the freedom of speech. (Jeffrey Johnson, *What Every Christian Needs to Know About Social Justice*, p80)

William Wilberforce (1759-1833), British politician who fought to end slavery
"Let it not be said that I was silent when they needed me."

Martin Luther (1483-1546):

Unless I am convicted by Scripture and plain reason-I do not accept the authority of popes and councils, for they have contradicted each other-my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise. God help me. Amen.

Power, Knowledge, & Controlling Speech

For the Frankfurt school, language is a social construct of the ruling class used as a means of oppression. And, therefore, language is oppressive. French philosopher Jacques Derrida (1930-2004) carried forth these ideas in three books all published in 1967: *Of Grammatology, Writing and Difference, and Voice and Phenomenon*. Because knowledge is the construction of language, and because language is the construction of socially constructed definitions written by those in power, knowledge becomes a means of power and oppression. (Johnson¹, p69)

Free speech is dangerous because words are dangerous. Language is how the traditional values of oppression and authoritarianism spread. Such oppression must be removed for people to feel free to “sin” without a guilty conscience. (Johnson¹, p79)

Cultural Marxist Tactics & Cancel Culture

Dictionary.com definition:

Cancel culture refers to the popular practice of withdrawing support for (*canceling*) public figures and companies after they have done or said something considered objectionable or offensive. *Cancel culture* is generally discussed as being performed on social media in the form of group shaming.

The Bible, Censorship, & Speaking Truth Boldly

Acts 4:1 And as they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, **2** greatly annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. **3** And they arrested them and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. **4** But many of those who had heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand. **5** On the next day their rulers and elders and scribes gathered together in Jerusalem, **6** with Annas the high priest and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. **7** And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, “By what power or by what name did you do this?” **8** Then Peter, filled with

¹ Jeffrey Johnson, What Every Christian Needs to Know About Social Justice, Free Grace Press, 2021

the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders, **9** if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, **10** let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well. **11** This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. **12** And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” **13** Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus. **14** But seeing the man who was healed standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition. **15** But when they had commanded them to leave the council, they conferred with one another, **16** saying, “What shall we do with these men? For that a notable sign has been performed through them is evident to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. **17** But in order that it may spread no further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to anyone in this name.” **18** So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. **19** But Peter and John answered them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, **20** for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.” **21** And when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way to punish them, because of the people, for all were praising God for what had happened. **22** For the man on whom this sign of healing was performed was more than forty years old.

1st - They Spoke:

2nd – Some Are Saved:

Rom. 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

3rd – They Received Strong Resistance:

4th – Apostles Double Down on Truth:

Acts 4:5 On the next day their rulers and elders and scribes gathered together in Jerusalem, **6** with Annas the high priest and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family.

Acts 4:13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus.

5th - Attempt to Cancel Jesus:

Acts 4:17 But in order that it may spread no further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to anyone in this name.” **18** So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.

John 15:18 “If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. **19** If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. **20** Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you...”

John 15:22 If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin.”

6th – Apostles Triple Down on Truth

Acts 4:19 But Peter and John answered them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, **20** for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.”

Prov. 29:25 The fear of man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is safe.

Psa. 27:1 The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

Psa. 118:6 The LORD is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me? **7** The LORD is on my side as my helper; I shall look in triumph on those who hate me. **8** It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man. **9** It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in princes.

Luke 12:4 “I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do. **5** But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him!

Gal. 1:10 For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.

We Are Not Alone

Acts 4:23 When they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. **24** And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, “Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, **25** who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit, “‘Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain? **26** The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed’— **27** for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, **28** to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. **29** And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, **30** while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” **31** And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness. **32** Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. **33** And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.

Mark 13:11 And when they bring you to trial and deliver you over, do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit.

Be Strong & Courageous

Josh. 1:5 No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you. **6** Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them. **7** Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. **8** This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. **9** Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.”

Will we say, like Peter & John: “we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.”

Or like Paul: **1Cor. 2:2** For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

Acts 5:40 and when they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. **41** Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name.

Acts 8:1 And Saul approved of his execution. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

Acts 12:1 About that time Herod the king laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church. 2 He killed James the brother of John with the sword, 3 and when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. This was during the days of Unleavened Bread.

Examples from History

Ignatius & Polycarp

Puritan John Bunyan

Reformer Jan Hus

Puritans John Hooper, Nicholas Ridley, Hugh Latimer, John Bradford

Richard Wurmbrand

Pastor Yousef Nadarkhani

Some simple advice:

1. Know your Bibles
2. Pray often
3. Have deep, meaningful, spiritual relationships with your church family
4. Keep an eternal mindset
5. Live according to God's Word
6. Prioritize living for Jesus over all worldly comforts & interests
7. Pray for those that may persecute you
8. Be faithful to speak when the occasion arrives
9. Speak boldly, with love & gentleness
10. Expect blowback & possible persecution (from family, friends, jobs, church)
11. Always remember, God is with us, He will never forsake us...so we can be strong & courageous

JC Ryle on speaking boldly with love:

It will not be a bitter zeal. It will not be a fierce hatred of people. It will not be a zeal that is ready to take up the sword and to lash out with the weapons of the world. The weapons of true zeal are not worldly, but spiritual. True zeal will hate sin, and yet love the sinner. True zeal will hate heresy, and yet love the heretic. True zeal will long to smash the idol, but deeply pity the idolater. True zeal will detest every kind of wickedness, but labor to do good even to the vilest of sinners.

True zeal will warn as Paul warned the Galatians and yet feel tenderly, as a nurse or a mother over erring children. It will expose false teachers, as Jesus did the Scribes and Pharisees, and yet weep tenderly as Jesus did over Jerusalem when He came near to it for the last time. True zeal will be decided, as a surgeon dealing with diseased limb; but true zeal will be gentle, as one that is dressing the wounds of a brother. True zeal will speak truth boldly, like Athanasius against the world, and not care who is offended; but true zeal will endeavor in its speaking, to "speak the truth in love."
(Practical Religion, Banner of Truth, Chapter on Zeal, p183-184)