

THE LIGHT AT THE END OF THE POSTMODERN TUNNEL:

Responses to wokeness, critical theory, cancel culture, identity politics, toxic masculinity & more

By Alane Rozelle, July 2022

FIRST OFF: This presentation is by no means comprehensive. It may be impossible to cover everything about “post-modernism” because post-modernism is so wide and pervasive and refuses to be put in a box. I have been reading and researching since early February and more just keeps coming. I first started with scholarly articles because I wanted to get views more from the academic perspective than from the layman’s. There is a bibliography at the end of this paper, including the last two books that I read which I highly recommend to you: “Live Not By Lies” and “Why Social Justice is not Biblical Justice.”

AND NOW

THERE IS NOTHING NEW UNDER THE SUN: This “postmodern” attitude—throwing off authority, denying Truth, disenchantment with life, nothing matters so do whatever you want to do—has been around before. The spreading of rumors and lies by the media is not new—remember the term “yellow journalism” from the last 1800s?—but the speed with which the lies can be spread and the multiplicity of forums is unheard of in previous generations. You might cut off Facebook but there’s still Insta and Twitter and TikTok, etc. Once the lie has been thrown out—and it has become front-page news—it’s almost impossible to retract it. How many of you still hear that rumor [conspiracy theory] about the JFK assassination? Or that Proctor and Gamble’s logo proved they supported Satanism? The Bible tells us:

2 Timothy 4:3-4—people grow tired of sound teachings, follow their own desires, find teachers to tickle their ears, turn away from hearing the truth, and wander into myths.
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Ecclesiastes 1:1-11—a generation comes, a generation goes; the sun rises, the sun sets; the winds blow in circles and the rivers flow on; the seasons repeat over & over and the years pass... there is nothing new... and there is no remembrance of earlier things!

Eccles. 7:29—God made men upright but they have sought out many “devices” (foolish pleasures).
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Genesis 6:1-13, esp. v. 6-7—The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD <u>regretted</u> that he had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in his heart!

Genesis 18:20, 21; 19:13, 27-28—story of the sinfulness and consequent destruction of Sodom & Gomorrah
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Judges 21:25 closes with: “In those days there was no king (they wouldn’t even accept God as King) in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes!”

Romans 1:18-20-- For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. ¹⁹ For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. ²⁰ For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, ^[a] in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.
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Despite writing down histories and reciting epic poems and stacking rocks of remembrance, we have failed to remember. We have failed to remember the great things God has done for us. We have failed to remember God’s commands and the warnings for breaking those commands. We have failed to remember the downfalls of the past—slavery in Egypt. We humans keep repeating the mistakes of thousands of years ago. For very good reasons, God told Israel NOT to associate with other cultural groups. He knew that the ungodliness of the Other would more easily infect the Israelites, rather than vice versa. Why is that? Why is the Other, the false, seemingly more powerful, more enticing, than our wonderful God and the Truth he gives us?

TIMELINE:

PRE-REFORMATION AND REFORMATION: before 1500s—

--existing forms of govt were supposedly endorsed/ sanctioned/ put in place by God.

--Man in his “immaturity” was bound/ shackled/ necessarily cared for by Bible/ Church/ State bc Man wasn’t “developed” enough to govern himself.

--Truth lay with God.

THE ENLIGHTENMENT/ AGE OF REASON: MODERNISM—beginning 1600s/ 1700s—

--Kant: Now Man must “grow up” and throw off the chains of the Church.

--Hegel (1770-1831) began sow seeds of Relativism with the idea that history may be viewed as a progression of world views, none exactly all true nor false—some Truth in all worldviews.

--Descartes: I think, therefore I am. Man’s ability to think & reason gives him purpose and reason to exist.

--Truth now lies with Man.

--Positive: The Age of Modernity was characterized by remarkable scientific and technological advancements.

--Negative: The success of science and tech caused people to think of Science, and thus Man’s ability, as the source of Truth. God/ Bible/ Church no longer necessary; they were a crutch, a cage, holding Man back.

--Questions arose regarding the correct source of political authority: Hobbs, Locke, Rousseau—idea of social contract: the people get to decide. Gov’t by the people and for the people: the US Declaration of Independence. Not all bad: to deter tyranny, dictatorship, rule without representation.

--Rousseau: professed belief in a “supreme being,” renounced all creeds while asserting that all beliefs should be brought to the “bar of reason,” which of course is Man-made.

--Voltaire: influenced by English Deism, maintained that true religion, “unlike Christianity!”, was one of reason and nature.

**Yet GOD is a God of reason and the God of nature. The problem lay with the Church (capital C). The Church was not reasonable; the Church did not allow for thinkers. The Church fed on power and prestige, worked hand in hand with the Gov’ts.

--reason over revelation.

--Kant proposed a morality independent of divine command. (The prob here: who then determines what is moral?) The Social Contract theory of ethics combined morals with rights: moral rules ensure the rights of others are respected. (But where do these “rights” come from?) Utilitarianism: a good action is one that does the maximum good (is useful) for the maximum number of people. (Who or what determines if the action is good or bad?)

--Disenchantment with the Age of Reason/ Enlightenment/ Modernism:

*The French Revolution (1789) was a failure. Expected to create a nation of free individuals protected by the law (utopia), instead created a Reign of Terror in which thousands of people were executed unlawfully.

*Marxism: another attempt at utopia, proposed the liberation of the oppressed (is this sounding familiar?!) would usher in a classless, humane society. Failure on even grander scale than the French Revolution: 20 million Soviet citizens murdered under Stalin.

*Two World Wars did not gain world peace.

*Science did not deliver the absolute and final Truth. Many advancements/ theories of that period have now been challenged and disproven or improved upon further.

*In addition, Science sometimes caused more problems than it solved, including the threat of nuclear destruction and widespread pollution.

*And finally: people began to realize the poverty of Science—its neglect of the spiritual side of Man, the innate need for something greater than Man's self.

POSTMODERNISM: mid-1700s, (depends who you read)—

--Originated primarily in France with: Derrida, Foucault, Lyotard; also Richard Rorty (U.S.), Nietzsche (Germany) and Kierkegaard (Denmark).

--Sparked by two reactions to Modernism:

*Romanticism (Kant, Rousseau, Byron, Shelley, Goethe) opposed the Rationalism (focus on Science as the savior) of the Enlightenment. These writers instead emphasized the emotions as the key to human fulfillment.

*Existentialism (Sartre, Camus, Heidegger) revolted against the mechanistic materialism of Hegel, Marx and Darwin. They said that objective reality is absurd and advanced the idea that meaning is a purely private and personal phenomenon.

*Thus: Romanticism and Existentialism dismantled absolute Truth and elevated Relativism.

--Connection with Marxism and how Marxism entered the U.S.:

*The Frankfurt School (Germany) comprised of intellectuals, academics and dissidents who were dissatisfied with the inadequacies of the social and political lack of successes of that time; believed that society was divided into the bourgeoisie (rich/powerful) and the proletariat (poor/powerless) and that if given the right circumstances, if properly educated (indoctrinated), if the proletariat would overthrow the bourgeoisie, equality/ utopia would be established.

*The group included some Jews, so when Hitler's regime began to rise up, began to persecute the universities, some from the Frankfurt School—Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse, for instance—fled to the U.S. and decided to re-establish themselves (infiltrate) universities such as Harvard. When they saw that their dream of revolution did not have the desired result in Europe, they tried again here in the U.S. It did not succeed here either, at least not in their lifetime, but now we are in a new generation.

*The debacle of the Vietnam War, the women's lib movement of the 70s, the civil rights movement of the 60s, all began to lay the ground for the unhappiness, chaos, strife that we are reaping today.

--Postmodernism is difficult to define precisely because it eschews all definitions. Postmodernism rejects absolutes, definitions, finite descriptions. However, it is mainly a philosophical movement, a way of thinking, but it's way of viewing the world has permeated every sector of society/culture, including, unfortunately, Christendom.

--Unanimity even between postmodern thinkers is hard to find: some ideas of modernity it rejects, some it holds on to, and some it reinterprets! In addition: the term "postmodern" has become a buzzword in contemporary society and is often used loosely to refer to anything that diverges from traditional standards or is relativistic.

--1. Greatest dif between postmodernism and modernity: denial of an objective natural reality. *Look at those 3 words separately: denial of objectivity, denial of anything being natural, denial of reality. Thus, everything loses its meaning. Up is down; black is white; sky is earth—utter nonsense—but then you're not allowed to say that!

--2. Also: denial of objective truth: truth is now constructed; it's whatever you or I or society or the group says it is; you speak your truth, I speak my truth, and it's all valid "truth." Truth is constructed based on use of language and experience (both of which are subjective!) Different "linguistic communities" will have different "truths." In other words: how "we" use words, what the words mean to "us," vs how "you" use the language/words and what "you" mean by them. Divisive: pits "us" against "you" or "them."

*Irony: to say there is no objective truth is itself an assertion of a truth, therefore, contradicts itself. Yet, postmodernism answers this: self-contradictions are part of postmodernism! Logic and reason are not universally valid, but are constructions of our own minds, they are invented concepts, and so what makes sense to me does not have to make sense to you! (Picture the Postmodernist sticking out his tongue at you!)

--3. Denial of the law of contradiction: lose all ability for reasoned argumentation! All "truths" (stories/opinions) are equal; everybody is right; everybody must just agree. Reappropriate language to make it mean whatever you want it to mean; redescribe the opinion to make it palatable to everybody. We must all be agreeable, get along with one another, be tolerant and accepting of every viewpoint/ story/ truth/ opinion (no matter how wrong or ridiculous we might think it is, keep that opinion buried deep inside and never let it out!)

--4. Denial of one's ability to think for oneself: it is impossible to think for ourselves bc all our opinions/judgements/ideas are passed on to us by tradition; we are products of our environment; we are helpless, shaped by the prevailing cultural norms surrounding us. [Now you can see how this leads to the current Victim vs Oppressor mentality?]

--Scepticism/ disenchantment with Science: it did not become the Savior of Mankind as promised but instead created more problems—more disease, more environmental issues, more devastating ways to destroy humankind, etc.

--5. Denial of anything "basic": foundationalism (in the Enlightenment) said that beliefs can be justified if based on basic or "foundational" truths. (Without God, who decides what is basic or foundational?!) Similar to tracing the make-up of all things back through the molecule to the atom to electrons and quarks—the "basic building blocks" of all created things--, so foundationalism says that beliefs can be traced back far enough to a "basic building block" of truth (notice the small "t") that everyone would undeniably agree upon.

--6. Denial of Meta-Narratives: The Bible as God's work in Creation, throughout history, with a determined purpose and future for Mankind is a Meta-Narrative; an over-arching story. Postmodernism does not like meta-narratives b/c it does not see purpose or order or connection in life, but rather all is random and chaotic and senseless. P.M. says meta-narratives are dangerous b/c they have been used to legitimize or empower harmful cultural practices and have often led to abuse and persecution. [This may sometimes be true; does that mean NO meta-narrative is then valid?]

--7. Denial of Meaning in Language: Language is extremely malleable: language is "self-contained" and "self-referential." Meaning/definition is not static; language is a social construct; words mean whatever the speaker wants them to mean. Words are reappropriated and redefined. Language effectively loses meaning. Prime example: the redefinition of Truth into "your story/ my story."

*The meaning of a word is not a static thing in the world or an idea in the mind, but rather a range of contrasts and differences with the meaning of other words. When we use conceptual opposites like masculine/feminine, literal/metaphorical, soul/body, we tend (in our word order or in our minds) to put one word above the other, to give more authority to one word over the other; hence, we get these relationships wrong, too rigid. A more relativistic conceptual scheme shows the interdependence of words for their meaning.

*Deconstruction: break down, take apart, analyze and criticize and examine every thought/ word/ concept to reveal the instability, the contradictions, the falseness of words which are "masks for cultural power and justifications for oppression."

--8. Denial of a human essential nature (biology): humans are not "born with" an identity or gender or nature or personality—it's all results of manufactured, societal constructions. Identity is foisted upon the newborn—gender is "assigned" by the "oppressor," not chosen by the child/oppressed party. Furthermore, to "fit in," the "Self" is forced to adopt various roles in different circumstances—masking, playing the game, dancing the jig to placate the Oppressor—can't be Authentic Self. In this paradigm we are not one but many selves—[does this sound like schizophrenia or multiple personalities?!] Rather than seeing themselves as autonomous and rational, the P.M. views oneself as dominated and controlled by language systems, by imposed definitions constructed by others. Reject labels/ categories/ boxes—neither male nor female but wandering in-between. Labels are harmful. Identities are fluid. [Today I'm male, tomorrow I'm non-binary, the next day I'm a Furry.] [If I told my doctor I'm Abraham Lincoln ...]

--9. Denial of outside source of ethics & morality: P.M. is highly relativistic and maintains that values are culturally determined. No absolute transcendent standards as set by Scripture/God, or even in terms of what is good for society (Kant). Instead:

*Tolerance is paramount—any action/ opinion/ worldview/ identity must be tolerated for the sake of the greater "ideal," such as the "right" of others to speak their "truth." To "impose" our views or values on others is against the principle of tolerance and therefore morally wrong, which then, ironically, is an intolerant stance. The P.M. is tolerant of all viewpoints except the viewpoint that disagrees with them! To disagree with someone's choice of identity or even to disagree with their worldview is now considered a violent act that can result in your "cancellation" from the public eye and possibly even prosecuted in court!

*Choice—actions are permissible if based on choice. Thus abortion is permissible b/c it is the woman's choice. [No thought is given, however, to the unborn child's choice!] [What if everyone acted on their feelings—the thief, the embezzler, the adulterer, the liar, the murderer, etc. If it makes them "feel good" or "they're born this way," how can we say their actions are wrong?]

--10. **FRAGMENTATION:** While the current situation is not unlike other contexts in the history of theology, this time it is distinctively fragmented, broken into numerous factions, a disintegration that is affecting ALL dimensions of Western culture more than anything before. Even within theology: the conservatives have fragmented within themselves as well as the liberals.

COMPARISON:

<p>MODERNISM Knowledge thru science/ proven experiments only Accepts universal truths: math, gravity</p>	<p>P.M. No objective reality; no absolutes Reality is constructed by language which can be interpreted in dif ways Your truth/ my truth: relative</p>	<p>P.M.-INFECTED CHRISTIANITY Theology is based on meanings in <u>humans</u> not on God—if people don't like it: throw it out! Believe in "faith" but not in The Faith: deny virgin birth, resurrection, miracles Big names: Jen Hatmaker, Rob Bell, Glennon Doyle, Richard Rohr</p>	<p>BIBLICAL CHRISTIANITY Objective reality is derived from God and his Word Truth is found in scripture God's truth / absolutes Accepts revelation</p>
	<p>"Righteousness" depends on your worldview It's a social & linguistic construction</p>	<p>Hypercritical of: purity culture, gender views, conservative politics. Demonize fundamentalism. No such thing as SIN, just immature thinking Pro-choice</p>	<p>"There is none righteous, no not one." (Romans 3:10)</p>
	<p>Denial of law of contradiction Madrid is in Spain. = Madrid is not in Spain: insanity Logic & reason are also social constructs</p>		<p>God gave us reason b/c he is a rational God.</p>
<p>Elevated Science to godlike status Evolution is a fact Science is the base, the foundation</p>	<p>Scepticism towards science Its foundation is to deny all foundations</p>	<p>Accuse evangelicals of being anti- science</p>	<p>God created Science God created all things God is real and his word is true--basic</p>
	<p>Denies meta-narratives which itself is a meta-narrative No room for debates</p>	<p>Deny the gospel meta-narrative. Sermon on Mount is outdated. "Christ" is just a spirit in all of us. Bible is majorly flawed.</p>	<p>Grand Meta-Narrative of God's work in His creation Can see God's work throughout man's history; can see the goal</p>

		The scripture must be reinterpreted according to changing culture.	Allow debates, questions
	Deconstruction: tear apart all language, challenge all suppositions Uses language to claim language is unreliable!	Use critical judgmental language to accuse the evangelical church of being critical and judgmental!	Builds upon a sure foundation Words have meaning, language can have meanings that are transferable, universal
	Claims all truths, language, meta-narratives are plays for power and oppression—this itself is a power-play. Reality is only personal perceptions and interpretations--private	Story-telling = Truth—if the gay man says he's happy, that proves the rightness of homosexuality	God's truths present reality as it really is
	No such thing as "sin"—it's a social construct	Cannot point out sin bc that's judgmental, not loving. Sin is "unrealized ambitions" therefore cast off the shackles of God	Fallen human nature
Identity is based on science—what you are biologically; you're just a giant bag of atoms	Identity is a social construct: rejection of categories, yet have created even more categories! Only "victims" lives matter.	Accept the spectrum of identities. Listen to the victim: their story trumps bible truth.	God gives us identity; God tells us who we really are. ALL lives matter.
Objectivism; Empiricism Everything based on Science	Ethics/ morals are "relative"—what seems good to me may be offensive to you—cannot be judged Inconsistency in behavior: example: claim there is no God, but in a crisis, often even the atheist will cry out to God for help. No defined boundaries.	Tolerance & Acceptance of ALL: Support for the LGBTQ+ community surpasses scripture. You must accept and agree; "love" is not enough. Do not obey any scripture that causes emotional pain. Self is most imp; feeling good. If no rules, people are left floundering.	Standards of right and wrong are set by an authority figure outside of Man. Jesus is the perfect human; he is the standard for us to look to and model after.
A future only thru science and technological advances	Self-absorption, loneliness, no future, no hope Death Intolerant	Hyper-critical of Biblical Christians and all facets of conservative society; want to destroy it all, but offer no solutions. They have no answers, no plan. Universalism: everybody gets eternal life.	A future and a great hope. LIFE now and in the future. Explanations, answers, solutions. Victory, eternal life with God and his Son, a perfected world.

Gene Veith: Postmodernism is a worldview that denies all worldviews. It's a philosophy that explodes all comprehensive systems without offering to build anything new in their place. In place of purpose, design, logic and meaning, it affirms and embraces uncertainty, anarchy, chaos and chance. It considers any effort to impose order upon the world or human life as purely provisional and arbitrary.

POSTMODERNISM IN PROGRESSIVE CHURCHES TODAY: See chart above.

From "The Hidden Unchristian Beliefs of Top Progressive Christian Influencers," by Mike Winger, youtube

NOW LET'S LOOK AT SOME TERMS AND WHAT THESE IDEAS MEAN FOR US:

<p>WOKENESS/ being WOKE</p>	<p>From Wikipedia: Woke is an adjective meaning "alert to racial prejudice and discrimination" that originated in black vernacular English in the 2010s. It means a broader awareness of social inequality, such as sexism, and also far leftist ideas involving identity politics and social justice notions such as "white privilege" and reparations to former slaves & their descendants. *BUT: who is more "woke?"—People who know and walk in Truth!</p>
<p>IMPLICIT BIAS TRAINING</p>	<p>Special seminars designed to "wake you up" to your biases & prejudices. Basically aimed at "white" people to force them to admit that they are racist. But having a "bias" is not wrong. We all have "preferences." If we all liked exactly the same things, the world would be boring. The danger is if we act upon our preferences for certain people by ignoring or treating the "other" differently or preventing their growth.</p>
<p>WHITE PRIVILEGE</p>	<p>inherent advantages possessed by a white person on the basis of their race in a society characterized by racial inequality and injustice. (Oxford online dictionary) Supposedly became a tool for justifying the cruel treatment and discrimination of non-white people. If you are "white," it is demanded that you acknowledge your privilege and repent of it. "Whites" can never be victims no matter what deprived social background they may have; they are always all oppressors, even if they don't know it, simply by the fact that they are "white."</p>
<p>IDENTITY POLITICS</p>	<p>A political approach wherein people of a particular gender, religion, race, social background, social class, environmental state or other "identity," develop political agendas based upon these [created] identities.</p>
<p>INTERSECTIONALITY</p>	<p>The interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage. The more "victim categories" to which a person belongs, the more weight his/her voice has.</p>
<p>CANCEL CULTURE</p>	<p>A practice of ostracizing / "cancelling"/ negating & eliminating people whose viewpoints are not "politically correct" according to the current political agenda. Their voices are silenced on social media; they're not even allowed to post or their account is limited for a certain amount of time as "punishment" for saying anything that the Left declares offensive. It could be as innocuous as stating that abortion is wrong. Ironic: the same groups that scream that their voices are being suppressed, turn around and suppress the voices of anyone who disagrees with them. *The religious establishment tried to "cancel" Jesus and the disciples! Acts 5:29—When told to "shut up," Peter replied, "We must obey God rather than men."</p>
<p>TOXIC MASCULINITY</p>	<p>Toxic masculinity involves cultural pressures for men to behave in a certain way. And it's likely this affects all boys and men in some fashion. Toxic masculinity refers to the notion that some people's idea of "manliness" perpetuates domination, homophobia, and aggression. The claim is that toxic masculinity harms women: basically, all men are bad and need to become more feminine or, ideally, eliminated from society.</p>

CRITICAL THEORY	Depending on how it is used, critical theory—critiquing, questioning—is not necessarily negative. It has, however, evolved into a weapon to break down society, to question everything our society has been built upon, to destroy our past, present and future. There are multiple subcategories such as critical race theory, feminist theory, critical legal studies, queer theory, even critical geography!
CRITICAL RACE THEORY	Very basically: all societal probs are result of white man’s policies designed to keep the minorities subjugated. Rewrite history: The 1619 project claims the U.S. was started and built on the back of the black manj.Capitalism is bad. Very hypocritical: the leading proponents, such as Ibram X. Kendi, make their \$ by writing books and giving lectures for \$\$\$. Kendi was also awarded Boston University’s Mellon Professorship, a high honor held by only one other person—Elie Wiesel, a Holocaust survivor & 1986 Nobel Peace Prize winner who fought for human rights around the world. What a dichotomy.
SOCIAL JUSTICE /WARRIORS	Social justice refers to a political and philosophical theory that focuses on the concept of fairness in relations between individuals in society and equal access to wealth, opportunities, and social privileges in a society. The concept of social justice first emerged in the 19 th century, as there were wide disparities in wealth and social standing perpetuated through the social structure of the era. The five main principles of social justice include access to resources, equity, participation, diversity, and human rights. The “warriors” are the proponents of social justice.
JUSTICE (REDEFINED)	Justice in P.M. means tearing down of traditional structures & systems deemed to be oppressive, and the redistribution of power & resources from oppressors to victims in pursuit of equality of outcome. Taking from those who have (esp. those who worked hard for and suffered for what they have) and give to those who have not (esp. those who did not work but threw a tantrum and created chaos in the streets.)
MORE WORDS I DON’T HAVE SPACE FOR	Trolls, virtue-signaling, rape culture, patriarchy, heteronormative, cis-gender, marginalization, DBEI, political correctness, deplatforming, microaggressions, non-binary, pansexual
RESULTING ATTITUDES	Negative, critical, judgmental, angry. We are right; anybody who disagrees with us is wrong, is homophobic and racist and misogynistic. White, male, conservatives are the worst. Need to tear down and rewrite history b/c we’ve been lied to for 250 years. Super-sensitive, easily-offended. Irrational, chaotic. They don’t even know they are being manipulated by their own emotions/feelings, and by the militant powers that are stirring up trouble.

WHAT SHOULD BE OUR CHRISTIAN RESPONSE?

Matt Walsh, in his book “Church of Cowards: A Wake-Up Call to Complacent Christians,” (2020) accuses the church universal of not taking seriously Jesus’ commands; we live as the world does. Worship services are all noise & flash like a rock concert; they are for entertainment. Lack of solid biblical teaching; lack of time for meditation/contemplation.

Walsh says we have lost our awe of God. (We throw around the word “awesome” lightly.) Isaiah 6:1-5—Isaiah was so struck with awe at the vision of God—thunder, smoke, flapping wings, shaking doorposts-- that he thought he was going to die!

Many Christians have more reverence for America and its symbols than for God and His things.

First of all, we've got to get ourselves straight with God. The P.M. church has allowed culture to carry it along, to determine what's right or wrong. The P.M. church looks at culture then finds justification in Scripture or reinterprets or even throws out that scripture that doesn't support current culture.

Instead, we must start with God's words and with Jesus's teachings/example, then we will accurately see what's wrong with the culture and with us. We must cultivate Kingdom Culture in ourselves and our churches.

FALSE "VIRTUES" IN THE CHURCHES:

1. **Welcoming:** We try to entice people to come with coffee bars, lively music, fun activities for kids, smiles and hugs. It's a club with no rules!
2. **Tolerance & Acceptance:** We don't just tolerate (allow) sin, we accept it. We embrace and agree with the homosexual, the adulterer, the abortionist, the embezzler—all behavior is acceptable. We are not to agree with Sin.
3. **Non-judgmental:** we will never tell someone they are wrong; that would damage their self-esteem; that would be an act of violence. But Jesus' point was that we must judge rightly and fairly. Synonyms for judge: discern, decide, weigh the evidence, consider, conjecture, think, etc.
4. **Compassion:** we sympathize, commiserate, pity, jump into the hole of despair instead of offering a (righteous) hand up and out. Show the sinner their sin in order to save their life!

Let's not deceive ourselves for one minute. Here are some of the requirements of a Christ-follower vs those who are not:

THOSE WHO CAN ENTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD	THOSE WHO CANNOT ENTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD
<p>MATTHEW chapters 5-7 GALATIANS 5:22,23 EPHESIANS 5:1-3 EPHESIANS 4:31,32 PHILIPPIANS 4:8,9 REVELATION 21:7 2 TIMOTHY 3:10-4:5 ROMANS 2:7 1 PETER 2:9</p>	<p>1 CORINTHIANS 6:9-10 GALATIANS 5:19-21 EPHESIANS 5:3-5 EPHESIANS 4:17-19 REVELATON 21:8; 9:20-21; 21:27; 22:15 LUKE 9:57-62 2 TIMOTHY 3:1-9 ROMANS 1:18-32</p>

A CULTURE BUILT ON JUSTICE & MERCY: (excerpts from "Why Social Justice is not Biblical Justice," by Scott D. Allen (see bibliography):

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF A TRANSCENDENT LAWGIVER	If no objective basis of righteousness above/outside of man, morality will be determined by man, imposed by whoever holds power at the moment, and we all know man is fallible.
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RESPECT FOR THE RULE OF LAW	Laws must apply equally to everyone. Politicians or special interest groups or “oppressed” peoples cannot change the law to favor their interests or to harm others.
HUMAN DIGNITY & GOD-GRANTED HUMAN RIGHTS	As God’s image-bearers, ALL human beings matter and have worth and are extraordinary. Atheism has no basis for human dignity, and w/o human dignity and equality, there is no justice. Injustice results when certain groups are dehumanized. Ideological social justice says dominant/oppressor groups have purposely created systems that marginalize the Other. Ironically, this belief is itself oppressive and dehumanizing.
A CHECK ON CORRUPTION	Why the USA has 3 branches of gov’t that are supposed to keep check on one another. If your “gods” / gov’t can be bribed/bought, then the culture will follow in the same footsteps. Micah 6:8—doing justice is an act of worship.
ESTABLISHMENT OF DUE PROCESS	Due process allows respectful treatment of the accused (as image-bearers of God). The right to a fair trial, etc. and innocent until proven guilty. Nowadays, guilt until proven innocent, and even then, protests against the decision.
ENTRUSTING FINAL JUDGMENT TO GOD	Not every injustice will be righted on this side of Jesus’ return. By not forcing (screaming for) justice NOW, Christians can extend grace and mercy. God’s heart desire is that ALL be saved.

BUILD UP YOUR FAMILY! [excerpted from “Live Not By Lies,” by Rob Dreher]

Families are resistance cells that offer their members: the Fruitful Fellowship of Love, Freedom and the Dignity of the Individual within family fellowship. You can create a strong family by:

1. Modeling Moral Courage.
2. Filling your children’s imaginations with what is GOOD.
3. Do not be afraid to be weird in society’s eyes.
4. Prepare to make great sacrifices for the greater good.
5. Teach your children that they are part of a wider movement with a great purpose.
6. Practice hospitality and serve others.

IN CONCLUSION: (And this is by no means the end or all there is to say! I could’ve included another 10 pages.)

1. We must “rise up” by getting down on our knees. A reverent and devoted faith is militant, aggressive. It relentlessly pursues God.
2. We must LOVE. 1 Corinthians 13 details true, honest, godly love—not the “love you!” we so easily fling about here and there to anyone. We must LOVE GOD enough to then LOVE OTHERS. It’s all in the heart—we must have changed, renewed, reborn hearts.
3. We must MINISTER to others. Jesus didn’t just “hang out” with sinners; he ministered to them as he spent time with them—Zacchaeus, the prostitute, etc.
4. We must be good Bereans! Evangelicals are not seen as high academics; they’re considered to be more touchy-feely. Thus, not taken seriously. You need to know what GOD says about an issue. You need to know your scriptures!

5. Ask God for wisdom, open eyes, understanding so that you can discern the lies, the double-talk, the twisted definitions.
6. **THERE IS LIGHT AT THE END OF THE POSTMODERN TUNNEL**—but first it may get very dark. In fact, the scriptures tell us that when we see troubles, that those are only the beginning. The truth of our current cultural and political situation is very frightening if we look it straight in the face. We must keep our focus on GOD or else we would lose all hope. Strengthen your own faith and prepare your children and grandchildren. **THERE IS LIGHT AT THE END**—the beautiful light of God, the light of his son, Jesus, our Messiah, the light of truth and eternal life.

TWO LIFE VERSES:

John 8:31b-32—“If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples. Then you will know the Truth, and the Truth will set you free.”

Proverb 9:10—“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.”

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