

Marc Roby: We are continuing our break from studying theology to look at some current topics of great importance from a Christian perspective. Last week we showed that critical theory challenges cultural norms because it views them as part of an oppressive power structure. This anti-Christian theory has taken over our university system and our public K-12 system as well. It must be opposed by Christians. Dr. Spencer, what do you want to cover today?

Dr. Spencer: I want to begin by highlighting the seriousness of the problem. In Mark 3:25 Christ said that “If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand.”¹ Now this is a self-evidently true statement, but it gets at the root of the issue with neo-Marxist ideologies of all flavors. Their purpose is to divide and conquer. They seek to destroy this country from within.

Marc Roby: Surely that can't be true of all the people who support these different ideologies.

Dr. Spencer: Oh, no, it isn't. Most of the people who join with these different movements or espouse their views do so innocently enough, they have come to believe that the ideas are good for one reason or another, often because the stated goals deliberately hide the real purpose. But in each of the movements there are some number of individuals, typically those driving and guiding the movements, who are very conscious of what they are doing. They literally want to destroy this country.

Marc Roby: That probably sounds like a right-wing conspiracy theory to many.

Dr. Spencer: I'm sure it does, but there is no need for a conspiracy theory. As I have been laboring to show in these podcasts, you can read things these people published or said publicly and you can trace their connections to each other and see what they've done and why they've done it. Whether or not it meets the standard of being a “conspiracy” is another matter.

But that is also why I pointed out that most of the people who accept or promote these neo-Marxist ideologies in one way or another are not doing so from bad motives. They simply don't know the true motivations behind the movement. Take, for example, the Black Lives Matter movement, which we will talk about in detail in a later session. They chose that name for a good reason. Who is going to deny the truth of the statement that black lives matter?

Marc Roby: No one that I want to associate with.

Dr. Spencer: And that is why they chose that name. Only a wicked person would deny it. But the Black Lives Matter *organization* is very different from their name. It is not focused on saving or improving black lives as I will clearly show later. It is a Marxist organization whose real fundamental goal is the destruction of this country in order to create the conditions necessary for communism to come in and to move us closer to a world-wide utopia. And that is what you are supporting if you have a Black Lives Matter T-shirt or lawn sign.

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Marc Roby: I look forward to that discussion.

Dr. Spencer: And so do I, but we have a little more background to cover first. I just wanted to emphasize what is at stake here. Remember back in Session 165 when we were discussing the voluntary socialist experiment of Robert Owen, called New Harmony? I mentioned that Marx and Engels had nothing but contempt for the idea that communism could be brought about by peaceful means. True communism requires that the entire world become communist, it can't be just be one country. No truly communist nation, or group, is ever going to peacefully coexist with other forms of government, their theory demands that the whole world become communist before it is possible to reach heaven on earth. So they will *always* be working for the destruction of other forms of government. We need to understand that as individuals and as a nation or we are going to be taken advantage of and, eventually, destroyed because of our own naivete.

Marc Roby: That's a very strong statement.

Dr. Spencer: Yes, it is. But remember that in the Communist Manifesto, Marx and Engels wrote that "The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained *only* by the *forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions*. Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communistic revolution. ... Workingmen of *all countries*, unite!"²

Marc Roby: Yes, I see your point about how dangerous this is. Although it does appear that not all communists disdain to conceal their views, the real motives behind much of what they are doing in this country are not openly stated.

Dr. Spencer: That's true, although they don't work too hard to hide them. You just have to look and you can find them. We have seen that a number of people have realized that capitalist societies like ours have become too successful for the working class to want revolution. Therefore, Marxists needed to find a way to weaken our country, and others like it, in order to create a situation in which revolution is possible.

Marc Roby: And that is why we spent the last two sessions discussing Antonio Gramsci, Herbert Marcuse and critical theory, the theory that virtually every aspect of our culture is a part of a huge system of oppression. That theory is being used in our school systems and elsewhere to divide our country and create that revolutionary situation.

Dr. Spencer: That's exactly right. And we are seeing the bitter fruit of that movement right now with the riots that have been plaguing many of our major cities night after night for months.

Marc Roby: And we see it in the calls to abolish or radically reduce the police and the burning of police buildings and other symbols of authority.

Dr. Spencer: Very true. In Session 168 I noted that Gramsci was the first to publish the realization that capitalism is too successful. Working class people are able to achieve a comfortable lifestyle and don't see the need for revolution. Gramsci called this giving them a "false consciousness." And we noted that Marcuse built on Gramsci's ideas. Let me quote from

² *Great Books of the Western World*, Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., 1952, Vol. 50, pg. 434, also available at <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/Manifesto.pdf> (emphasis added)

Marcuse's most famous work, a book called *One-Dimensional Man*, which was published in 1964.

Marcuse wrote that "The people recognize themselves in their commodities; they find their soul in their automobile, hi-fi set, split-level home, kitchen equipment. The very mechanism which ties the individual to his society has changed, and social control is anchored in the new needs which it has produced."³ He then went on to write that "The products indoctrinate and manipulate; they promote a false consciousness which is immune against its falsehood."⁴

Marc Roby: That explains the phrase "false consciousness", he is referring to the false idea that someone could become fully satisfied in life as a result of material prosperity.

Dr. Spencer: And, in a way, we would agree with this. To be materially comfortable and to think that is all that is important is to completely miss the true purpose of life. Christ himself said, in Luke 10:42, that there is only one thing needful, and he wasn't speaking about material prosperity, he was speaking about our salvation.

Marc Roby: Jesus also told us in the Sermon on the Mount, as we read in Matthew 6:19-21, "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Dr. Spencer: And those verses make the same point. So, we would agree with Marcuse and others that material prosperity alone cannot fully satisfy man's needs, not even in this life. But, strangely, Marcuse should have been happy with a comfortable life if he was a truly consistent materialist. I mean, what else could really matter? You live, you die, and that's the end of it. But we know, because God has told us, that man is not just a physical animal, he has a spirit as well. And everyone, even an avowed materialist like Marcuse, has a sense that there is more to life than the physical. That is why many novels, short stories and plays have been written in the last century about how a person can lose his or her soul by being completely consumed with material prosperity.

Marc Roby: It is certainly a common theme. Especially since the industrial revolution.

Dr. Spencer: And I personally think the reason is that society has been so successful at supplying everyone's physical needs that people have more leisure time and are less consumed with the task of providing for their material needs. And from the perspective of a Marxist, who wants to bring about revolution, that is a problem. Marcuse wrote the following about the capitalist way of life, "It is a good way of life – much better than before – and as a good way of life, it militates against qualitative change. Thus emerges a pattern of one-dimensional thought and behavior in

³ Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, Routledge Classics, 2002, pg. 11

⁴ Ibid, pg. 14

which ideas, aspirations, and objectives that, by their content, transcend the established universe of discourse and action are either repelled or reduced to terms of this universe.”⁵

Marc Roby: In other words, successful people get lulled into a comfortable life that prevents them from thinking about more important things. Which is exactly what Jesus Christ warned about.

Dr. Spencer: That’s right. But Marcuse saw an opportunity to attack cultures that are materially successful. He wrote in the concluding chapter of *One-Dimensional Man* that “The totalitarian tendencies of the one-dimensional society render the traditional ways and means of protest ineffective – perhaps even dangerous because they preserve the illusion of popular sovereignty. ... However, underneath the conservative popular base is the substratum of the outcasts and outsiders, the exploited and persecuted of other races and other colors, the unemployed and the unemployable. ... their opposition is revolutionary even if their consciousness is not.”⁶

Marc Roby: Ah! So this is where the idea of needing to raise their consciousness comes from.

Dr. Spencer: Precisely. According to Marcuse, you need to take those people who are not doing well in society, and there will always be some, strip them of the idea that they are capable of working hard, living honest lives and moving up in that society, and get them to see themselves as an oppressed class. They must be convinced that they are victims. And society itself is the oppressor, so society needs to be changed. Mike Gonzales does a good job of describing this whole process in his book *The Plot to Change America*.⁷

Marc Roby: That all starts to bring many of the problems we see in our country today clearly into focus. The Marxist idea of class conflict, along with neo-Marxist ideologies of race have generated an almost endless list of groups who are supposedly oppressed and in need of liberation.

Dr. Spencer: And it isn’t just in terms of race relations or work environments. The whole sexual revolution is part of this plan to destroy America as well and has generated an almost endless list of supposedly oppressed groups needing to be liberated, the LGBTQIA and on and on.

In a second very influential work published in 1955, entitled *Eros and Civilization*, Marcuse argues, essentially, that sex in virtually any form should be freely used for pleasure. He concedes that this would be a reversal of what we normally think of as civilized culture, but he views it as a move *forward*, not backward. He wrote, “It would still be a reversal of the process of civilization, a subversion of culture – but after culture had done its work and created the mankind and the world that could be free.”⁸ He explains further, and his basic idea is that once civilization has reached the point of easily supplying our material needs, man should be freed from the constraints imposed upon him and be totally free sexually.

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Ibid, pg. 260

⁷ Mike Gonzales, *The Plot to Change America*, Encounter Books, 2020

⁸ Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud*, Beacon Press, 1966, pg. 198

Marc Roby: Which is, yet again, an attack on biblical morality. God created sex and he defines the proper role of sex in human life. It is meant to be something shared only between a husband and a wife. It is the glue in a marriage and also brings about families. So this idea of total sexual freedom is really an attack on the biblical family structure, which is the core of our civilization.

Dr. Spencer: And Marcuse *knew* that he was attacking the family. In that same work he wrote that this change in sexual mores “would lead to a disintegration of the institutions in which the interpersonal relations have been organized, particularly the monogamic and patriarchal family.”⁹

Marc Roby: Which disintegration, I assume, he viewed as a good thing.

Dr. Spencer: He did. He viewed anything that would help destroy our culture and country as good. And his student, Angela Davis, wrote in 2018 that “Marcuse’s ideas can be as valuable today as they were 50 years ago.”¹⁰

Marc Roby: And, of course, 50 years before she wrote that was 1968. The late 60’s were a time of violent student protests all over this country.

Dr. Spencer: Yes, they were. And those protests had a lot to do with the destruction of our universities. Those protests brought about the creation of a number of so-called ethnic studies departments in the universities and the creation of a number of new faculty positions to fill them. In general, these departments are really nothing more than a platform for activism. There is precious little, if any, meaningful scholarly activity in these departments. And whatever worthy scholarly activity there may be, could have already been accommodated in other, existing, programs like history, language, philosophy and so on. And these ethnic studies departments, once created, needed to make sure they had enough students, so they often pushed to have some sort of diversity requirement added to the general education requirements, which meant that all students typically had to take one or more of these courses.

Students can now get college credit, a minor and even bachelors and graduate degrees in things like Queer studies, Chicana/Chicano studies, African American and African Studies and Sexuality Studies.

Marc Roby: And what does one do with a degree in Queer studies for example?

Dr. Spencer: Well, not much useful. I’m pretty sure it isn’t going to land you a well-paying job or make a well-rounded citizen. As I said, these programs are really all about activism and trying to change, or I should really say destroy, our culture. There are college courses, for example, on pornography. Students literally get college credit for watching, or they would contend, studying pornography.

⁹ Ibid, pg. 201

¹⁰ *Angela Davis on Protest, 1968, and Her Old Teacher, Herbert Marcuse*, Read from Marcuse's Graphic Biography by Nick Thorkelson, edited by Paul Buhle and Andrew T. Lamas, available at <https://lithub.com/angela-davis-on-protest-1968-and-her-old-teacher-herbert-marcuse/>

Marc Roby: That is outrageous. And all of this has made its way down into our K-12 curricula as well.

Dr. Spencer: Not in quite as blatant a form, but yes. In Thomas Sowell's eye-opening book *Inside American Education* he carefully explains how our K-12 schools have been taken over by these neo-Marxist, or as they are sometimes called, cultural Marxist ideologies. In the K-12 schools they take on a psychological form, rather than an ideological form.

Marc Roby: Now, who is Thomas Sowell?

Dr. Spencer: He is an American economist who is currently a senior fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution. He has spent many years seriously looking into our nation's educational system and has written a number of intelligent, well-researched articles and books on the subject.

Marc Roby: And what did you mean when you said that these neo-Marxist ideologies show up in the K-12 schools in a psychological, rather than an ideological form?

Dr. Spencer: I mean that the schools focus on changing the attitudes and beliefs of our children. Chapter Three of Sowell's book is called Classroom Brainwashing. It begins with the following statement: "A variety of courses and programs, under an even wider variety of names, have been set up in schools across the country to change the values, behavior, and beliefs of American youngsters from what they have been taught by their families, their churches, or the social groups in which they have grown up."¹¹

He goes on to explain how tactics that are mild versions of the brain-washing techniques developed in China under Mao are used in these courses.¹² I don't want to spend much time on this, interested listeners are encouraged to read his book, but as just one simple example, it is common in grade schools to give assignments where the students are asked to write about family problems and other personal issues and to *not* tell their parents about the assignment, which produces a feeling of isolation in the student and makes him more susceptible to the teacher's ideas, even if they contradict what he is being taught at home.¹³

Marc Roby: That's frightening, and an obvious attempt to undermine the family.

Dr. Spencer: It is. There has been a real shift in our schools away from the idea of educating students by providing them with basic skills like reading, writing, mathematics and science, and to focus instead on indoctrination. The results are astonishing. For example, Sowell wrote, "the results of an international study of 13-year-olds ... found that Koreans ranked first in mathematics and Americans last. When asked if they thought they were 'good at mathematics,' only 23 percent of the Korean youngsters said 'yes'—compared to 68 percent of American 13-year-olds."¹⁴ So we are creating young people who are confident, but wrong.

¹¹ Thomas Sowell, *Inside American Education*, Free Press, 1993, pg. 34

¹² Ibid, pp 35f

¹³ Ibid, Chapter 3

¹⁴ Ibid, pg. 3

And look at the currently popular NY Times 1619 project. It is an ideological pack of lies about our country's founding that is being adopted by a number of public schools.¹⁵ I could quote all kinds of results that are very depressing, but I don't think there is much point. Anyone who is really interested can find the data easily. Sowell's book is a good place to start. But I would like to read one more statement to show that this problem has been growing for a long time.

Marc Roby: Alright, what statement is that?

Dr. Spencer: I want to quote from the famous 1983 report of the U.S. National Commission on Excellence in Education, entitled *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*. In that report they said, "If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war. As it stands, we have allowed this to happen to ourselves."¹⁶

Marc Roby: Wow. That's an amazingly strong statement.

Dr. Spencer: And it led to a nation-wide movement to reform our schools. But, unfortunately, that reform movement was led by the very people we have been talking about. People like Bill Ayers, one of the founders of the 1960's violent revolutionary group called the Weather Underground, which was responsible for numerous bombings in this country and is famous for declaring war on "AmeriKKKa" – spelled with three capital K's – in 1969.¹⁷ He is a graduate of the Columbia University Teachers College that we noted before as the center of the critical theory movement. He is a retired professor in the College of Education at the University of Illinois at Chicago, and formerly held the titles of Distinguished Professor of Education and Senior University Scholar.¹⁸

As just one indication of his wide influence, if you look at a Teachers College Press catalog from 2019-2020¹⁹, you will find some of his books for sale and you will also see that he is the editor of "The Teaching for Social Justice Series" of books.

Marc Roby: That's incredible.

Dr. Spencer: If you look through that catalogue you will be shocked. Let me just quickly give three examples. You can buy a book entitled *Same as It Never Was: Notes on a Teacher's Return to the Classroom* and we read that "this book invites readers into an award-winning teacher's classroom as he struggles to teach toward equity and justice." We can also get a book called *Letting Go of Literary Whiteness* and we are told the book will "challenge us to develop racial literacy in our students through the teaching of literature." And finally, we all need a copy of

¹⁵ e.g., see Kevin Portteus, *The War on America*, the American Mind, available at <https://americanmind.org/features/the-racial-marxism-of-blm/the-war-on-america/>

¹⁶ Available at <https://www2.ed.gov/pubs/NatAtRisk/risk.html>

¹⁷ David Horowitz, *The Professors: The 101 Most Dangerous Academics in America*, Regnery Publishing Inc., 2006, pg. 29

¹⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bill_Ayers

¹⁹ Teachers College Press Catalog, https://www.tcpress.com/filebin/PDFs/TCPress_MCEF19.pdf

Race, Justice, and Activism in Literacy Instruction, which “includes examples of student activism from across the United States”.

Marc Roby: Now that is truly shocking. I’m willing to bet that most of our listeners thought K-12 education was mostly about reading, writing, math, science, history and so on. Not about teaching equity and justice, racial literacy or student activism.

Dr. Spencer: I certainly hope you’re right. But the fact that our schools are failing at teaching our children reading, history, math, science and so on, as noted by the 1983 report *A Nation at Risk* is far from the worst part of the story. Remember that the report said that if this had been the activity of an unfriendly foreign power we might have considered it an act of war?

Marc Roby: Yes, I remember that statement.

Dr. Spencer: And remember that Bill Ayer’s group, the Weather Underground, declared war on America?

Marc Roby: Yes.

Dr. Spencer: Well, he and a lot of others, like Angela Davis, have followed through on that declaration of war by their long march through the institutions. The worst part of the failure of our public schools is the indoctrination that takes place instead of education.

Sowell gives a number of examples in his book of how the schools teach our children to hate the United States of America and to hate the Judeo-Christian values on which our nation was built. As just one example, so-called sex education curricula are used to push LGBTQ values. And this problem is dramatically worse now than it was when he published *Inside American Education* in 1993. Any student who is bold enough to disagree with these modern views and espouse a Christian view of sex and marriage is in for a very rough time in our public schools.

Marc Roby: That’s a sad statement. But I’ve seen enough examples to know that it is true.

Dr. Spencer: And I encourage all Christian parents, in fact *all* parents, who have children in the public-school system to be extremely vigilant. Find out what is being taught. I think you’ll be shocked. But be prepared to have dig a bit, these programs use deceptive names and really don’t want parents to know what is being taught. The parents are often viewed as the enemy.

Marc Roby: That is again very sad.

Dr. Spencer: Very sad indeed. But the anti-Christian bias in our schools is not new. We don’t have time to go through the whole history, but in our next session I will begin with a very brief and selected sketch of that history because it will be useful to make one final point before we move on to examine the modern problems that are, in large measure, a result of this war on America.

Marc Roby: Very well, I look forward to that. And now, let me remind our listeners that they can email their questions and comments to info@whatdoesthewordsay.org. We would love to hear from you.