

"If someone asks me, *'What is wokeness and what is wrong with it?'*,
this is the first book I'll recommend." || KEVIN DEYOUNG, senior pastor and author

NEIL SHENVI & PAT SAWYER

P O S T



ASSERTING A BIBLICAL
VISION OF RACE,
GENDER, AND SEXUALITY

“This book is a great introduction to and refutation of wokeness—what Shenvi and Sawyer define as ‘the contemporary cultural expression of critical theory.’ To put it more plainly, this book is about race, gender, and sexuality—what our culture would have us believe about all three, and, by contrast, what the Bible teaches about each. With clear writing, careful research, and calm evaluation, Shenvi and Sawyer have provided an articulate and accessible resource that will serve students, schools, pastors, and churches—and really, any Christian living in the West—for years to come. If someone asks me, ‘What is wokeness and what is wrong with it?’ this is the first book I’ll recommend.”

Kevin DeYoung, senior pastor, Christ Covenant Church, Matthews, NC; Associate Professor of Systematic Theology, Reformed Theological Seminary, Charlotte, NC

“If you think wokeness is gone, you need to think again. The effects of wokeness (i.e., critical theory) remain in the culture and church. Shenvi and Sawyer masterfully explain how we got to our cultural moment and how to think biblically about race, sexuality, and gender. *Post Woke* offers practical steps for raising discerning kids and lovingly engaging our neighbors in meaningful conversation. This is on my must-read list for every Christian.”

Sean McDowell, PhD, apologetics professor at Biola University; author or editor of over 20 books; popular YouTuber

“Many people claim that the church should stay out of politics. So what happened? Politics become a ‘protected category’—if one could classify something as political, then the church would stay silent. As Shenvi and Sawyer show, that is not an option for us anymore—not if we want to be salt and light in the world. The problem is that most churchgoers are still blind to the spiritual implications of these so-called political topics that are redefining Christian morality. In *Post Woke*, Shenvi and Sawyer show exactly how objective truth, the nuclear family, gender, and sexuality were all removed from acceptable pulpit topics and relegated to the political arena. We can’t refute what we don’t understand. But once we understand? Game on.”

Hillary Morgan Ferrer, founder/president of Mama Bear Apologetics; primary author/editor of *Mama Bear Apologetics* and *Mama Bear Apologetics Guide to Gender and Sexuality*

“Even though the excesses of the various social and political tendencies often referred to as wokeness seem to have subsided in the last year or two, Christians should not be complacent: Many of the social problems that made such impulses plausible still remain, and without a robust understanding of the flaws in critical theory and the Christian view of man, we remain vulnerable to the resurgence of radical ideologies. In this book, Shenvi and Sawyer offer a clear, thoughtful guide to the intellectual roots and cultural dynamics of critical theoretical discussion of such things as race and gender and provide calm, well-reasoned Christian responses that readers will find helpful as they think through these issues for themselves. A very fine book.”

Carl R. Trueman, visiting professor,
Center for Citizenship and Constitutional
Government, University of Notre Dame

“This is truly a great book. For the first time, I felt as if I understood the attraction of wokeism and why Christian young people buy into its agenda, often believing it is consistent with Scripture. We all know brokenhearted parents whose children have been swept away by seductive cultural currents, and they will not accept superficial answers to their questions. In this book, the authors present critical theory very fairly and then answer it carefully with Scripture.

“Read this book like I did, with a pen in hand, rereading certain paragraphs to get the full impact of their argument. When you are finished you will be prepared to dialogue with those who confront you with a whole range of critical theories and you will help them better understand where they took a wrong turn. Best of all, you will be better equipped to point them confidently to the Scriptures as the source of all moral, cultural, and spiritual truth.”

Erwin W. Lutzer, pastor emeritus,
Moody Church, Chicago

“In *Post Woke*, Shenvi and Sawyer cut through cultural confusion with biblical conviction, exposing the theological and moral bankruptcy of contemporary critical theory. They offer much-needed clarity on race, gender, and sexuality—boldly rejecting the false notion of ‘gay Christianity’ while holding fast to the gospel’s call to repentance and faith. Accessible yet theologically robust, this

book will equip both leaders and laypeople to stand firm in truth and love in a world that has lost both.”

Dr. Christopher Yuan, speaker; author of *Holy Sexuality and the Gospel*; creator of The Holy Sexuality Project video series on biblical sexuality and gender (holysexuality.com)

“I love it when books slap me in the face with clarity and conviction, making me think harder, not just nod along. This is one of those books. Shenvi and Sawyer admirably tackle the tangled web of wokeness with a rare mix of intellectual precision, humility, and genuine compassion. They don’t use the term *wokeness* as a cheap insult, but as a helpful description to explain a cultural moment many are struggling to understand. No longer can we send our kids to college without this ideology being shoved in their faces. No longer can we turn on the TV or scroll through social media without encountering the very issues exposed in this book. The cultural current is strong, and it’s everywhere. We need to be prepared. This book offers a much-needed flashlight in the cultural fog.”

Melissa Dougherty, apologist and author of *Happy Lies*

“Christians today sense a need to think carefully about wokeness but often feel confused or uncertain about how to go about this. Shenvi and Sawyer offer a nuanced, careful, and biblically faithful account that all Christians will benefit from reading. They don’t strawman contemporary critical theory, and they are careful not to overreact in their thinking. They also bring forceful critique against the acidic aspects of this ideology. Regardless of where you fall in this discussion, you will find much wisdom and insight in this fair-minded book.”

Gavin Ortlund, president, Truth Unites; author, *Why God Makes Sense in a World That Doesn’t*

NEIL SHENVI & PAT SAWYER

P O S T

WOKE



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*Worthy are you to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
for you were slain, and by your blood
you ransomed people for God
from every tribe and language and people and nation.*

REVELATION 5:9

*God created man in his own image, in the
image of God he created him;
male and female he created them.*

GENESIS 1:27

The Groom
*“Like a lily among the thorns,
so is my darling among the young women.”*

The Bride
*“Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest,
so is my beloved among the young men.
In his shade I took great delight and sat down,
and his fruit was sweet to my taste.”*

SONG OF SOLOMON 2:2-3 (NASB)

*If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.
The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17

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THE GREAT AWOKENING

In the mid-2010s, America underwent a profound religious awakening. Prophets and evangelists rose up to condemn the wickedness of our society. They called for repentance and a changed life. Acolytes wept openly as they confessed their sins, begged for forgiveness, and tearfully promised to do better. Bestseller lists were dominated by devotional material and weighty tomes written by longtime believers. Fortune 500 companies around the world brought in consultants to nurture the spiritual life of their employees. Enthusiastic believers displayed their creedal commitments on yard signs, social media profiles, and resumé. While the movement's initial fervor may have cooled, we still live in a time of religious revival.

But that religion isn't Christianity.

The prophets and evangelists who toured the country and railed against its wickedness were not preachers like John Wesley or George Whitefield; they were activist-scholars like Robin DiAngelo and Ibram X. Kendi. They did not call Americans to repent for their idolatry, greed, or adultery, but for the sins of "whiteness" and "structural

oppression.” Bookstores didn’t do a brisk business in Bibles or Charles Spurgeon devotionals but sold millions of copies of books like *Me and White Supremacy* or *Why I’m No Longer Talking to White People About Race*. Companies didn’t recruit new chaplains, but did hire hordes of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion consultants. Yard signs didn’t proclaim “I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.” Instead, they announced “In This House, We Believe Black Lives Matter. Women’s Rights Are Human Rights. No Human Is Illegal. Science Is Real. Love Is Love. Kindness Is Everything.”¹

But, despite the differences between Christianity and the Post-modern Religion of Social Justice, we should recognize that the “Great Awakening” was indeed a spiritual affair.² People were being called out of an old way of life and into a new one, with a new set of commitments, values, and practices. Though the cultural winds may be shifting, many of the Great Awakening’s converts are still clinging to their faith with all the tenacity of true believers.

This book is our attempt as evangelical Christians to explain what happened (and is still happening) to our culture and to equip people to push back against it by reasserting a biblical perspective of race, gender, and sexuality. We want to show people not only how wokeness gets these topics wrong, but how the Bible gets them right.

WOKENESS IN THE WILD

Let’s begin with the Great Awakening itself. What did it look like on the ground? What are some of the cultural artifacts demonstrating the spiritual fervor that gripped large parts of the United States and the world for at least a decade? A comprehensive list would fill an entire book, but a few representative examples should suffice.

In 2020, the Smithsonian Institute’s National Museum of African American History and Culture published an infographic listing

the “Aspects and Assumptions of Whiteness and White Culture in the United States.”

These included:

- “Emphasis on the Scientific Method”
- “Objective, rational linear thinking”
- “Cause and effect relationships”
- Concepts like “plan for the future” and “delayed gratification”
- Patterns of communication like “Be polite.”³

After a public outcry, the Smithsonian removed the chart, but in early 2025, its website still featured an entire page on “whiteness” that explained concepts like “white privilege,” “internalized racism,” and “white fragility.” It also featured a video of critical race educator Robin DiAngelo explaining that her “psychosocial development [as a White person] was inculcated in the water of white supremacy... a system in which whiteness and white people are central and seen as inherently superior [to] people of color.”⁴ After reading this material, it’s natural to ask questions like, Is politeness really an element of whiteness? Were most people in 2020 taught to believe that Whites are inherently superior? And what are statements like these doing on the website of a taxpayer-funded national museum?

Over the course of the Great Awakening, the usage of phrases like *systemic racism* and *white supremacy* skyrocketed at major newspapers like *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and the *Los Angeles Times*, more than quadrupling in the space of a few years.⁵ Viral articles featured headlines like:

- “Straight Black Men Are the White People of Black People”⁶
- “Can My Children Be Friends With White People?”⁷
- “Why Can’t We Hate Men?”⁸

- “I’m a Trans Man. I Didn’t Realize How Broken Men Are”⁹
- “How White Women Use Strategic Tears to Silence Women of Colour”¹⁰
- “The Most Dangerous Threat to America? White Male Entitlement”¹¹
- “The Dad Who Gave Birth: ‘Being Pregnant Doesn’t Change Me Being a Trans Man’”¹²
- “How White Women Use Themselves as Instruments of Terror”¹³

Once again, it’s natural to ask: Do these articles offer accurate perspectives on race or gender or basic biology?

While race was obviously a central concern during this period, the Black Lives Matter organization was representative of the broader social justice movement in linking race to gender and sexuality. BLM was founded by three Black women, two of whom identify as queer. Despite its focus on race, the group’s statement of beliefs made multiple, explicit references to gender and sexuality, stating:¹⁴

We make space for transgender brothers and sisters to participate and lead.

We are self-reflexive and do the work required to dismantle cisgender privilege and uplift Black trans folk, especially Black trans women who continue to be disproportionately impacted by trans-antagonistic violence.

We foster a queer-affirming network. When we gather, we do so with the intention of freeing ourselves from the tight grip of heteronormative thinking...

Clearly, the founders of BLM saw some deep connection between race, gender, and sexuality. But why? Aren’t these categories very different?

The 2018 Netflix reboot of the kids cartoon *She-Ra and the Princesses of Power* featured numerous LGBTQ characters, relationships, and plots. According to *Rolling Stone*, the show's executive producer, Noelle Stevenson (a gay woman who later began to identify as non-binary and who now uses male pronouns), "steeped the world of the She-Ra reboot in queerness" such that it "features multiple side characters in same-sex relationships, characters who flout traditional gender roles, and even a nonbinary character."¹⁵ Does sexuality really need to be a major theme in kid's cartoons?

Controversy surrounding J.K. Rowling, the billionaire author of the Harry Potter series, provided another example of the progressive consensus on sexuality and gender identity. In December 2019, Rowling ignited a firestorm on social media when she tweeted out her support for British consultant Maya Forstater, who was penalized for her belief that trans women (i.e., biological men who identify as women) are, in fact, men. Rowling wrote: "Call yourself whatever you like. Sleep with any consenting adult who'll have you. Live your best life in peace and security. But force women out of their jobs for stating that sex is real? #IStandWithMaya #ThisIsNotADrill."¹⁶

The backlash was tremendous. The stars of the Harry Potter movies responded independently but with nearly identical language:¹⁷

- "Transgender women are women." (Daniel Radcliffe, who played Harry Potter)
- "Trans people are who they say they are." (Emma Watson, who played Hermione Granger)
- "Trans women are women. Trans men are men." (Rupert Grint, who played Ron Weasley)
- "Transwomen are women." (Bonnie Wright, who played Ginny Weasley)

- “Trans women are women, trans men are men.” (Eddie Redmayne, who played Newt Scamander)

Rowling wrote a follow-up article stating that, as a survivor of domestic violence and sexual assault, she could not support legislation that would allow biological men access to women’s prisons or homeless shelters.¹⁸ She detailed how she had talked extensively to transgender people, supported their choices, and had no animosity toward them. All to no avail. Why? Is it really a cancellable offense to suggest that male rapists should not be housed in women’s prisons?¹⁹ Apparently, yes.

Despite increasingly fervent and unbalanced manifestations of wokeness in our culture, some conservatives were insisting in early 2023 that we’d hit “peak woke,” presumably because they assumed things couldn’t possibly get any worse. For those who dreamt that wokeness was in decline, progressive responses to the Hamas terrorist attacks of October 7, 2023, provided a rude awakening.

While most Americans were still reeling at the news that Hamas, a terrorist organization that currently governs the Gaza Strip, had killed hundreds of Israeli civilians in a coordinated surprise attack, a number of groups immediately voiced their support for Palestinians and even for Hamas. For instance, Black Lives Matter Grassroots issued a “Statement in Solidarity With the Palestinian People,” declaring that “we must stand unwaveringly on the side of the oppressed,” and that “we see clear parallels between Black and Palestinian people.”²⁰ Black Lives Matter Chicago tweeted out an image of a paraglider with the text “I stand with Palestine” (Hamas had used paragliders to launch their attack).²¹ Slow Factory, a progressive organization with more than 600,000 followers on Instagram, posted a statement claiming that “Free Palestine is a Feminist issue. It’s a reproductive rights issue. It’s an Indigenous Rights issue. It’s a Climate Justice issue, it’s a Queer Rights issue, it’s an Abolitionist

Issue.”²² And, most astonishing of all, a group called Queers for Palestine appeared at many rallies waving signs indicating their support for the Palestinians, despite the fact that homosexual activity is illegal in Gaza and that Islamic culture tends to be extremely hostile to homosexuality, to put it mildly.

These radical attitudes were widespread, especially among young people. In December 2023, a Harvard-Harris Poll surveyed 2,034 registered voters about their perspectives on various political topics. Pollsters explained: “There is an ideology that white people are oppressors and nonwhite people and people of certain groups have been oppressed and as a result should be favored today at universities and for employment.” They then asked respondents: “Do you support or oppose this ideology?” Among seniors over age 64, 81 percent answered “oppose” and 19 percent answered “support.” The numbers among young adults ages 18-24 were almost completely reversed: 21 percent answered “oppose” and 79 percent answered “support.” In other words, the overwhelming majority of young people explicitly subscribed to an oppressed-oppressor ideology.

A follow-up question asked: “Do you think that Jews as a class are oppressors and should be treated as oppressors or is that a false ideology?” Again, there was a stark generational divide. Only 9 percent of seniors agreed that Jews should be treated as oppressors, while 91 percent disagreed. In contrast, 67 percent of young adults agreed that Jews should be treated as oppressors, while only 33 percent disagreed.²³

Support for radical gender ideology also showed few signs of dwindling. On December 6, 2023, the official X (formerly Twitter) account of the Democratic National Convention posted a graphic that said, “Protect Trans Kids. Protect Trans Kids. Protect Trans Kids. Protect Trans Kids. Protect Trans Kids,” with the explanation “Unlike Republicans, we stand with trans kids across the country.”²⁴ That year, the Netflix preschool cartoon series *CoComelon Lane*

featured a song entitled “Just Be You.” In it, a preschooler named Nico who has two gay fathers is confused about how to dress when he gets his pictures taken. At one point in the song, he puts on a dress and a tiara and dances for his fathers, who encourage him to “just be you.”²⁵ A 2023 Gallup poll found that 22.3 percent of Generation Z adults (born between 1997 and 2012) identify as LGBTQ+ compared to 9.8 percent of Millennials (born between 1981 and 1996), 4.5 percent of Generation Xers (born between 1965 and 1980), and only 2.3 percent of Baby Boomers (born between 1946 and 1964).²⁶

Not only is the rising generation embracing the ideas of queer theory, it is also increasingly intolerant of anyone who rejects them. A 2023 survey found that 27 percent of college students (and 36 percent of liberal college students) believe that a college professor or course instructor should be reported to the university for making the statement “Biological sex is a scientific fact. There are two sexes, male and female.”²⁷

With all that said, the re-election of President Donald Trump in 2024 was indeed a serious setback for woke ideology. Once in office, President Trump immediately issued numerous executive orders that were intended to root wokeness out of the government and other institutions. These included EO 14187, “Protecting Children from Chemical and Surgical Mutilation”²⁸; EO 14188, “Additional Measures to Combat Anti-Semitism”²⁹; EO 14190, “Ending Radical Indoctrination in K-12 Schooling”³⁰; and EO 14201, “Keeping Men Out of Women’s Sports.”³¹

However, Christians should not assume that wokeness will simply vanish. Consider just a few post-election examples. On February 14, 2025, *The New York Times* published an article entitled “As a White Man, Can I Date Women of Color to Advance My Anti-racism?,” in which a “straight white dude” with “very progressive beliefs” asked the paper’s resident ethicist whether it was permissible

for him to “prioritize dating women of color” to “combat implicit bias.”³² On February 26, 2025, less than a year after the United Methodist Church lifted its prohibitions on gay clergy and same-sex marriage, it announced a three-year plan to train congregations to “welcome the gifts of LGBTQ clergy” and to promote “intersectional justice.”³³ On June 7, 2025, *USA Today* published an op-ed declaring: “There is no scientific evidence that transgender women athletes have a physical advantage over cisgender women athletes.”³⁴

The younger generation has been steeped in woke ideology for a decade. Current high school and college students will graduate and will bring their deeply held beliefs with them when they become our nation’s next crop of lawyers, doctors, company executives, judges, educators, politicians, campus ministers, and pastors. Moreover, even if the Overton window³⁵ shifts rightward and woke ideology becomes less acceptable and normalized in general society, it will still continue to affect individuals. Thus, Christians will need to be hypervigilant in detecting its influence and exceedingly prayerful in understanding the most effective ways to fight it and keep it out of our families and churches. No matter how the culture changes, we will always need to anchor our understanding of race, gender, and sexuality in the Bible.

As we’ll show in this book, the cultural phenomenon most people know as *wokeness* has its roots in a body of scholarship known as the critical tradition and in an area of knowledge known as critical theory, which traces its origins to the writings of Karl Marx. We understand that the word *woke* has sometimes been abused by conservatives, who employ it to malign any movie, advertisement, song, or remark they dislike, no matter how benign it actually is. However, many progressives and even academics self-identified as woke prior to 2019, so it did not always have negative connotations. Moreover, we will use the terms *woke* or *woke ideology* or *wokeness* descriptively, not pejoratively, to refer to the contemporary cultural expression of

ideas rooted in the decades-old philosophical and sociological framework of the critical tradition.

To avoid arguing over semantics, we will often substitute the neutral term *contemporary critical theory* to describe the ideas that undergird wokeness. In the end, however, it is immaterial whether we use the label *wokeness* or *contemporary critical theory* or *critical social justice* or *cultural Marxism* or *postmodern Neomarxism*. Something was and is clearly going on in our culture, and we should try to understand it.

WHY CHRISTIANS SHOULD CARE

Public manifestations of contemporary critical theory may go viral and end up featured by social media accounts like Libs of TikTok, but all of us are likely to be impacted at a personal level as well. This is certainly the case with us. Before either of us began writing or speaking publicly about contemporary critical theory, we were seeing its ideas unfold in our everyday lives.

For example, Pat's PhD is in the critical tradition. In one of his graduate classes, there was a notable degree of verbal tension between some of the students. Pat suggested the class explore and agree on some core values to guide discussions, such as being other-oriented and courteous. This suggestion provoked the ire of some of his classmates. In their minds, Pat—as a White male—was trying to control the speech, and therefore the mouths, and therefore the bodies of minoritized students, particularly Black females. They assumed he was trying to weaponize “politeness” to mute the voice and temper the expressions of frustration of those who had been treated in racist and bigoted ways. Even an attempt to promote open dialogue was viewed as a patriarchal, white-supremacist bid for power.

Below, we provide additional, specific, real-world examples that

demonstrate the perniciousness of woke ideology. We omit identifying information and alter names. Our goal is to provide anonymity for those who are referenced while also warning professing Christians who believe there is “nothing to see here” when it comes to the deleterious influence of critical social theory and the woke perspectives derived from it.

Here are a few stories that we’ve lived through:

George is a neighbor with a teenage son, Caleb, who began to identify as a woman after leaving for college. Though he was raised in a Christian home, Caleb walked away from the faith and pursued a life that wreaked emotional havoc on the rest of his family. While his family shows great concern and love for him, and prayerful engagement in how he is doing, he can’t seem to grasp how showing up at his family’s and friends’ special occasions in a dress, high heels, and makeup might draw undue attention to himself and dampen the festivities. Nor can he seem to understand that the abnormality of his behavior ought to be a red flag to himself that his gender dysphoria is something to be treated instead of trusted.

Julia is the daughter of close friends, who grew up in a loving Christian home. As a young girl, she made a profession of faith and had a childhood that revolved around homeschool, family devotions, and a Reformed church. She maintained her profession and commitment to orthodoxy through her undergraduate studies at a Christian university. However, in her secular graduate program, she was introduced to the critical tradition, and her commitment to sound doctrine began to fade. It was ultimately displaced as she bought into the lie of queer theory. She cut off her parents and siblings, leaving them devastated and heartbroken.

Danielle is an old friend who went to a very conservative church for years and became enamored with critical social justice and anti-racism. She came to embrace whiteness discourse and aspects of third-wave feminism and vocally value-signaled her allyship with

the marginalized through woke yard signs and condescending social media posts. As with many who value woke perspectives, an inflated sense of self-importance began to define her as she seemed to believe she was “doing the work” while others weren’t.

Jamal was a fellow small-group member who was derailed by Trump’s 2016 election. He adopted a social binary (oppressor/oppressed) model as a way to see Whites and Blacks in society. Being a Black man married to a White woman, division ensued. He left his majority White church and began to pull away from family members.

Bill and Lauren had been fellow church members for more than ten years when they began to espouse antiracism discourse that coincided with radical changes in their cultural and political expressions. They started to explore churches they believed would be more sympathetic to their evolving views while simultaneously becoming activist oriented in their disdain for Trump and their zeal for Biden and then Harris. The husband, a former office-bearer in the church, eventually announced that he was deconverting from Christianity and that he should best be understood as an atheist or secular humanist.

Some of these stories are so extreme they may sound fictional. Sadly, they aren’t. These are incidents we’ve witnessed firsthand. They have affected us in real ways. We take no pleasure in recounting these situations and are heartbroken for these people. We have prayed for them many times, and in some instances, we have met with them and pleaded with them to return to their senses and to Christ. Yet these stories need to be shared because they are all too common and are manifestations of a disease that, if left untreated, will endanger the souls of real people.

Woke ideas are not pure, scholarly abstractions. They are being put into practice in our workplaces, in our schools, and in our churches. Therefore, it’s crucial for Christians to understand the ideology we’re confronting so that we can push back against it.

CONTRAST WITH *CRITICAL DILEMMA*

Post Woke is a follow-up to our previous book *Critical Dilemma: The Rise of Critical Theories and Social Justice Ideology—Implications for Church and Society*.³⁶ However, this book is neither an abridged version nor a sequel. In other words, we did not merely condense *Critical Dilemma*. Nor did we assume that readers have already read *Critical Dilemma* and have been eagerly awaiting the next installment, like *Star Wars* Episode 17 fans waiting for *Star Wars* Episode 18 to drop.

Instead, we intend *Post Woke* to be a standalone resource that is equally valuable to people who are entirely new to this discussion and to people who have been following our work for years. So what specifically distinguishes this book from *Critical Dilemma*?

First, *Critical Dilemma* was accessible but intentionally academic, containing almost 800 footnotes and references to over 200 primary sources. While this approach was—and still is—needed, *Post Woke* is written for a broader audience. Readers who are intimidated by the thought of hacking their way through a dense, 500-page forest of citations will hopefully find the concise approach of the present work more manageable.

Second, *Post Woke* is focused less on the esoteric theories that undergird wokeness and more on its everyday expression in the real world. You are less likely to encounter a co-worker quoting Michel Foucault than an HR manager who wants to know your pronouns. We therefore aim to show how woke ideas show up “on the ground” by offering numerous examples, anecdotes, case studies, hypothetical situations, and even diagrams.

Third, *Critical Dilemma* was a resource for anyone—Christian or non-Christian—who wanted to understand what wokeness is, where it came from, and how to respond to it. Indeed, several of our endorsers were secular scholars who disagreed with our evangelical beliefs but who appreciated the book simply because it provided a thorough and compelling overview of contemporary critical theory.

However, *Post Woke* is more specifically written for a Christian audience. That's not to say it will be incomprehensible to non-Christian readers, but we will assume a basic, shared Christian theological framework that we did not assume in *Critical Dilemma*.

Fourth, *Post Woke* is meant to be practical. Readers expressed great appreciation for the action steps we offered in one of the final sections of *Critical Dilemma*. You will find many more recommendations scattered throughout this book, as well as an entire chapter dedicated to reaching your children, co-workers, neighbors, and pastors. We want you to walk away from our book not only with new knowledge, but with a plan of action.

Finally, and most importantly, *Post Woke* articulates a biblical perspective on race, gender, and sexuality. Yes, we offer very clear and unequivocal refutations of woke ideology. But we also offer constructive proposals for tackling controversial topics. We don't merely want Christians to stop thinking about race, gender, and sexuality in terms of critical theory. Instead, the focus of the present work is how Christians should think about these topics in terms of what the Bible says about God, humanity, sin, and salvation.

ROADMAP

Our book is organized as follows:

In chapter 2, we explain how we got here. Why is race still such a polarizing social issue? Where did the #MeToo movement come from, and why was it so popular? How do our impulses toward compassion and the culture's growing secularization affect the uptake of woke ideology?

In chapter 3, we provide a very brief overview of what we call *contemporary critical theory*, the set of academic ideas upstream from wokeness. We sketch a brief history of the critical tradition, from Karl Marx and Antonio Gramsci to Kimberlé Crenshaw and Judith

Butler. We then demonstrate how these ideas express themselves in three major subdisciplines—critical race theory, feminism, and queer theory—and show how they explain various manifestations of woke-ness within our culture today.

Chapter 4 is a primer on basic logic. We highlight informal fallacies and rhetorical strategies like the *motte-and-bailey*, equivocation, and others, which frequently show up in discussions about social justice.

Chapter 5 offers a broad critique of contemporary critical theory, focusing on questions like “What is oppression?,” “What is justice?,” and “How do we know the truth?” We explain how the Bible answers these questions and how biblical answers conflict with the answers provided by contemporary critical theory.

In chapter 6, we begin by explaining what critical race theory is and why it fundamentally conflicts with Christianity. We then lay out a biblical framework for understanding race, asking questions like “What is race?,” “Is America racist?,” and “Are people of color oppressed?” Because some Christians have overreacted to the errors of critical race theory by questioning the idea that racism is a biblical category, we also explain why racism is indeed a sin rooted in ethnic partiality, which the Bible explicitly rejects.

Chapter 7 demonstrates that feminism is a critical social theory like critical race theory or queer theory and contrasts feminists’ understanding of gender with a Christian understanding of gender. We then address biblical gender roles, and the concepts of hierarchy and authority in the Bible. Finally, we show that while the Bible does obviously condemn sexual assault and domestic violence, critical theory can warp our understanding of concepts like abuse and moral agency.

The topic of sexuality is covered in chapter 8. Queer theory, which applies a critical framework to the subject of sexuality and gender identity, is wholly incompatible with a biblical sexual ethic. We answer

questions like “How should Christians think about transgenderism?” “Are people ‘born gay’?” and “Does love require affirmation?”

Chapter 9 opens with general guidance for having hard conversations. We then explain how Christians like us, who are concerned about woke ideology, can reach our children, our neighbors, our schools, our workplaces, our pastors, and the dissident right.

Finally, our conclusions are presented in chapter 10.

Each of these chapters can be read largely independently of the others. For instance, if you’ve already read *Critical Dilemma*, you can probably skip chapters 3 and 5, even though both contain a fair amount of new information not presented in our previous book. Alternatively, if you’re unfamiliar with critical theory, but do have a grasp of basic logic, you could skip chapter 4 and come back to it later. Or, if you’re somewhat familiar with critical theory and are primarily interested in race, you could begin with chapter 6. However, the book does follow an overall logical sequence, so if you’re new to this subject or want to understand all the connections we make between critical theory and progressive views on social issues, we recommend reading it cover to cover.

THE NEED FOR ENGAGEMENT

In summary, wokeness is a powerful force shaping our culture. *Wokeness* is not merely a slur, a baseless accusation lodged by conservatives who—at best—are indifferent to and—at worst—complicit in injustice, racism, and misogyny in our society. Neither is it a nebulous, incomprehensible collection of progressive slogans and social justice vibes. Rather, it is the popular expression of a coherent, comprehensive view of reality that emerged from a particular stream of scholarship known as critical theory.

Given the proliferation of false and unbiblical views of race, gender, and sexuality that are pervasive in our culture, Christians can no

longer stay above the fray. Instead, we must seek to understand this new worldview and respond with a distinctly biblical, Christian perspective on ideas that are increasingly shaping the minds and imaginations of our co-workers, friends, and children.