

# **Biblical Analysis and Feedback on the GCJR Class and Discipleship Resource**

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## ***Introduction***

First, as individuals who have invested collectively over 100 years of our lives in McLean Bible Church, and motivated by a deep appreciation for MBC and a shepherd's heart for its congregants, it is *not* our intention to attack any man or any man's motives or intentions. We assume that all involved are genuine followers of Christ, who sincerely seek to glorify God, just like we do. It *is* our intention, however, to attack what we believe are bad ideas, which have bad consequences. Good people, redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, sometimes have bad ideas. We are certain we have had our fair share of bad ideas.

Our immediate concern is that MBC is drifting toward the "social gospel" and "social justice" interpretations of scripture based on a flawed hermeneutic that takes into account modern sociological principles and findings, rather than just using the standard literal-historical-grammatical hermeneutic. The shift has been subtle, but it is certainly evident in the structure, tone and emphasis of the recent class, "The Gospel, the Church, Justice and Racism" (GCJR). However, we share deeper, underlying concerns regarding elder oversight, staffing and outside influences, which we view as perpetuating the current predicament, and jeopardizing the Biblical/ecclesiastical fidelity of McLean Bible Church moving forward.

We see parallels in Paul's interaction with Peter, noted in the book of Galatians. As the Judaizers were seeking to utilize the Old Testament law, in a way that it was never intended to be used, we have similar concerns regarding Scripture passages, albeit well intentioned, utilized inappropriately. As Paul articulated how the gospel alone can produce godliness, something the law could not accomplish, we are appealing to the power of the Gospel alone, untainted by worldly ideologies, to produce Christlikeness. As Peter was impacted adversely by an intense cultural climate, we share concerns regarding the danger of evangelicalism and MBC being adversely impacted by current cultural chaos and worldly ideologies. As Paul urgently felt Peter, and the others, had to be stopped, we believe whole-heartedly that we are at a critical moment in the life of MBC, where foundational issues undermining the health of the flock must be accurately assessed and adequately addressed. As Peter's actions had created a fracture within the entire church, we see unnecessary confusion and division within the MBC church body. As Paul viewed Peter's actions as not merely an issue of discord but a theological assault on the Gospel, we, likewise, hold deep doctrinal concerns at this moment. As the

episode with Peter exhibits, no church leader is infallible, and therefore each one needs to avail himself of wise counsel, to be found in proper church polity. Finally, we believe that in His sovereignty God can utilize serious problems to very beneficial ends, as seen in Peter and Paul's interaction then and, prayerfully, stemming from our interaction now, as we work together to earnestly contend for the faith.

## ***Background***

The "social gospel" is a philosophy championed by Baptist pastor Walter Rauschenbusch in New York City in the early 1900s. In his 1917 book *A Theology for the Social Gospel*, Rauschenbusch states that the individualistic gospel has made sinfulness of the individual clear, but it has not shed light on institutionalized sinfulness: "It has not evoked faith in the will and power of God to redeem the permanent institutions of human society from their inherited guilt of oppression and extortion." Today the "social gospel" relies heavily on three major secular philosophies – Critical Theory, developed by the Frankfurt School, Cultural Marxism, developed by Antonio Gramsci (Secretary of the Italian Communist Party), and Intersectionality developed by Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, who was also a pioneer of Critical Race Theory (CRT), which is the application of Critical Theory to the anti-biblical category of "race".

The central idea of CRT is that racism is engrained in the fabric and systems of the American society. The individual racist need not exist to note that "institutional racism" is pervasive in the dominant culture. This is the analytical lens that CRT uses in examining existing power structures. CRT identifies that these power structures are based on "white privilege" and "white supremacy", which perpetuates the marginalization of "people of color". Every one of these CRT terms and categories were employed during the GCJR class.

The central goal of Cultural Marxism is to soften up and prepare Western Civilization for economic Marxism after a gradual, relentless, sustained attack on every institution of Western culture, including schools, literature, art, film, the Judeo-Christian worldview tradition, marriage and the family, sexual mores, national sovereignty, etc. The attacks are usually framed in Marxist terms as a class struggle between "oppressors" and "oppressed"; the members of the latter class allegedly include women, "racial" minorities, and homosexuals. In the area of "race" relations, the typical tools used to create the Cultural Marxist narrative of "oppressed" and "oppressor", are CRT and Intersectionality.

Intersectionality is a theoretical framework, based on Standpoint Theory, for understanding how the intersection of a person's social and political identities (e.g., gender, sex, race, class, sexuality, religion, disability, physical appearance, etc.) combine to create unique modes of discrimination and "privilege". Intersectionality identifies advantages and disadvantages that are felt by people due to a combination of factors. Crenshaw stated that Intersectionality is "not about supplication, it's about power. It's not about asking, it's about demanding. It's not about convincing those who are currently in power, it's about changing the very face of power itself."

**All three of these secular ideas (Critical Race Theory, Cultural Marxism, and Intersectionality) are designed to divide people into artificial groups of "oppressed" and "oppressors" or sometimes "privileged" and "marginalized", based on superficial, unbiblical categories, in order**

**to pit people against one another. These secular ideas have already torn our society apart and now the terminology and assumptions of Critical Race Theory, Cultural Marxism and Intersectionality have begun to penetrate even the church.**

For example, Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Resolution #9 from 2019 says, “critical race theory and intersectionality should only be employed as analytical tools,” but Al Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, stated, “Both critical race theory and intersectionality are a part of the continuing transformative Marxism that is now so dominant in higher education and increasingly in policy. Critical race theory emerged from worldviews, and from thinkers who were directly contrary to the Christian faith.” Mohler further observed, “They emerged as analytical tools, but **they were never merely analytical tools**, and in the common discourse in the United States — and especially in public argument, and in higher education — **both critical race theory and intersectionality are far more than analytical tools**. The main consequence of critical race theory and intersectionality is identity politics, and identity politics can only rightly be described as **antithetical to the gospel of Jesus Christ**. We have to see identity politics as disastrous for the culture and nothing less than **devastating for the church** of the Lord Jesus Christ.” [emphasis ours]

<https://statementonsocialjustice.com/>

The link above is to “The Statement on Social Justice & the Gospel” (SSJG), which was carefully crafted in 2018 by a group of evangelicals led by John MacArthur and Voddie Baucham in response to a perceived drift among some prominent evangelicals away from the Gospel and towards the “social gospel”. It has been signed by representatives from 14,000 different churches. The tendency in the evangelical church toward the “social gospel” is very recent, and is most often associated with the current leadership of the SBC, and especially the SBC president J. D. Greear. Note that this does NOT mean that anyone believes that J.D. Greear, or anyone else in SBC leadership is a Marxist, or even a Cultural Marxist. All it means is that they appear to have grafted many of the “social gospel” ideas into the church, through a social-gospel-friendly hermeneutical approach to scripture, and through actions like adopting Resolution #9.

Here is the introduction to the SSJG, also referred to as the Dallas Statement, which very clearly articulates the purpose:

In view of questionable sociological, psychological, and political theories presently permeating our culture and making inroads into Christ's church, we wish to clarify certain key Christian doctrines and ethical principles prescribed in God's Word. Clarity on these issues will fortify believers and churches to withstand an onslaught of dangerous and false teachings that threaten the gospel, misrepresent Scripture, and lead people away from the grace of God in Jesus Christ.

Specifically, we are deeply concerned that values borrowed from secular culture are currently undermining Scripture in the areas of race and ethnicity, manhood and womanhood, and human sexuality. The Bible's teaching on each of these subjects is being challenged under the broad and somewhat nebulous rubric of concern for “social justice.” If the doctrines of God's Word are not uncompromisingly reasserted and defended at these points, there is every reason to

anticipate that these dangerous ideas and corrupted moral values will spread their influence into other realms of biblical doctrines and principles.

We submit these affirmations and denials for public consideration, not with any pretense of ecclesiastical authority, but with an urgency that is mixed with deep joy and sincere sorrow. The rapidity with which these deadly ideas have spread from the culture at large into churches and Christian organizations—including some that are evangelical and Reformed—necessitates the issuing of this statement now.

In the process of considering these matters we have been reminded of the essentials of the faith once for all handed down to the saints, and we are re-committed to contend for it. We have a great Lord and Savior, and it is a privilege to defend his gospel, regardless of cost or consequences. Nevertheless, while we rejoice in that privilege, we grieve that in doing so we know we are taking a stand against the positions of some teachers whom we have long regarded as faithful and trustworthy spiritual guides. It is our earnest prayer that our brothers and sisters will stand firm on the gospel and avoid being blown to and fro by every cultural trend that seeks to move the Church of Christ off course. We must remain steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

The Apostle Paul's warning to the Colossians is greatly needed today: "See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ" (Colossians 2:8). The document that follows is an attempt to heed that apostolic command. We invite others who share our concerns and convictions to unite with us in reasserting our unwavering commitment to the teachings of God's Word articulated in this statement. Therefore, for the glory of God among his Church and throughout society, we offer the following affirmations and denials.

The SSJG has been signed by more than 14,000 evangelical pastors and church leaders. When the SSJG first came out in 2018, we started asking MBC leaders whether we were going to sign as a church, but to our knowledge no one from MBC leadership ever signed. Then, we were very surprised when we had a 5-session, 15-hour class without once mentioning the SSJG. Since all that hard work by leading evangelical scholars had already been done on exactly the topic at hand, one would think that we should at least discuss the SSJG, even if there were points of disagreement. We personally mentioned the SSJG in numerous class feedback forms, and we know others who also brought it up. Why has the SSJG been so obviously avoided in conjunction with our current discussions? Was the SSJG thoroughly debated among the elders and rejected? If so, on what grounds?

## *A Careful and Biblical Review of the Discipleship Resource*

The following detailed analysis lists points from the GCJR Discipleship Resource and then carefully considers the biblical citations provided, many of which we believe are off-target.

1. On page 1 of the GCJR Discipleship Resource in the opening section it says, “becoming like Jesus necessitates doing justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly with God.”<sup>6</sup> [Micah 6:8]

- Micah 6:8 is a summary of the law in three phrases. The purpose of the law is to show us that we cannot earn salvation through the law and point us to Christ [Gal 3:23-25].
- Jesus gave a better summary of the law in only two phrases in Luke 10:25-37. Love God and love your neighbor. Jesus’s purpose here is the same as in Micah 6:8 – to demonstrate that it is impossible to earn salvation by following the law and to point to Himself as the only way. That is the purpose of the parable of the Good Samaritan. And notice how it ends: “Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers’ hands?” And he said, “The one who showed mercy toward him.” Then Jesus said to him, “Go and do the same.” So, the focus is on love and mercy, not justice. The man beaten by the side of the road would have had no legal “right” to the Samaritan’s aid, so it is an act of love and mercy, not justice. Also, notice that it is an individual act from one person to another person. This is a better model for what “becoming like Jesus” looks like from Jesus himself.
- In James 2:8-13, the passage about the sin of partiality, which is the sin most closely aligned with the secular notion of “racism”, James mentions “the royal law” to love your neighbor. Notice that this passage once again ends by tying this royal law to mercy. “So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.” So, once again the emphasis is on love and mercy. The Christian is under the “law of liberty” with mercy triumphing over judgement.
- This is our working definition of the Biblical doctrine of Justice: Conformity to God’s moral standard as revealed in the Ten Commandments and the Royal Law: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”
- It is vital that we adhere to the long-standing, classical understanding of justice that has been a core feature of Christian theology and Western civilization (e.g. Cicero and Justinian) for millennia, that is to render to each person what is due to him. Specifically, we must clearly identify the duty that a person owes to another person and uphold due process, including appropriate evidence to support one's claim regarding the grant or denial of a claim of justice.

2. On page 2 of the GCJR Discipleship Resource in the section called “The Gospel Compels Our Activity” it says, “The gospel of Jesus Christ supernaturally compels our activity as Christians.”<sup>39-49</sup> [Matt 7:21-27, James 1:22; Micah 6:8 among others.]

- This is a potentially dangerous mixing of the law and the gospel. The gospel is stated best and most clearly in I Corinthians 15:1-4 – “Christ died for our sins according to the

Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,” – that is the gospel, it is the finished work of Christ. And then our appropriate response to the gospel is given in Romans 10:9 – “if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”

- Matthew 7:21-27 and James 1:22-25, along with James 2:14-18 are teaching us that there are people with “fake faith” who are not true believers. These scriptures are there to give us discernment when doing a self-evaluation or an evaluation in love of others in the church, so we can recognize true, saving faith, which is always characterized by a changed life [2 Cor. 5:17]. These scriptures are **not** there to “compel” certain activity, which would be a dangerous mixing of law and grace, but to show us what true faith looks like.
- The parable of the unmerciful servant in Matthew 18:23-35 helps us understand this principle. We show mercy to others out of gratitude for the mercy God has shown to us, not out of compulsion to act. The emphasis is on showing mercy out of gratitude for something that has been done for us. This parable points forward to what would soon become the finished work of Christ on the cross, which cancelled our great debt. Nothing about the gospel, and our freedom in Christ (John 8:36 and Rom. 8:1-2) is compatible with the notion of being compelled to certain action.
- Micah 6:8 is a summary of the law. Jesus’s own summary of the law in Luke 10:25-37 is superior, and its emphasis is on love and mercy, one individual at a time, rather than a compulsion to do certain tasks.

3. On page 2 of the GCJR Discipleship Resource in the section called “The Gospel Creates and Sustains Our Unity” it says, “We have committed our lives to cultivating an other-worldly unity.”<sup>54</sup> [Rom 15:5-7, Eph 4:1-3; 1 Pet 3:8.] And then on page 3 a similar thing in the section called “The Bible Our Sole Foundation”, where it says, “We are zealous to promote and protect our unity.”<sup>71</sup> [Eph 4:1-6]

- However, according to Gal. 3:23-29 we “are all one in Christ Jesus” based on His finished work on the cross. Notice that this is something we **are** as a matter of fact, not something we make or build or strive for or cultivate. Further, the passage continues, “And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s descendants, heirs according to promise.” So, once again, this is something we **are**, not something we strive to become. That is the tone of the whole passage – that the things we have in Christ are based on His finished work, and, as believers, we must be exhorted to walk in the reality of what Christ has procured.
- In Eph 4:1-16, Paul makes a general appeal for unity in vs 1-3; describes the nature of the unity in vs 4-6; describes the variety in the unity and the means which God has taken to preserve it in vs 7-12; and finally describes the unity perfected in vs 13-16. But the key to the whole exposition of Ephesians chapter 4 is the word “therefore” in vs 1. It points us back to the first three chapters, and emphasizes that the theme of unity is something which follows as a consequence of what has gone before. The doctrine expounded in chapters 1 – 3 is the basis and the background for everything Paul has to say about unity. For example, in Eph 2:13-16, Paul reminds the Ephesian Christians that they are people who have realized that all their own good works, all their good living, all their activities, their nationality, their religion, and everything they had before, are entirely useless, and that they are made Christian, and brought into this unity which is in the church, entirely by the action

of the Lord Jesus Christ, and particular by the shedding of His blood upon the cross – an action completed in the past. We must get rid entirely of the notion that the Ephesians are being exhorted to produce or to arrive at something. [*The Basis of Christian Unity* by Martin Lloyd-Jones, pp. 17-28].

- Colossians 3:10–11 tells us “<sup>10</sup> and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him—<sup>11</sup> *a renewal* in which there is no *distinction between* Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all.”

4. On page 4 of the GCJR Discipleship Resource in the section called “Listening, Learning, Lamenting, and Loving” it says, “In all of our interactions over disagreements and differences, we follow a pattern of *listening*,<sup>82</sup> *learning*,<sup>83</sup> *lamenting*,<sup>84</sup> and *loving*.<sup>85</sup> First and foremost, we *listen* to our brothers and sisters as they share their thoughts, desires, and experiences.” [James 1:19-21; Ps 18:2; Rom 12:15; John 13:35]

- However, the passage of scripture encompassed by James 1:18-25 is clearly talking about **listening to the Word of God**, not to human “thoughts, desires and experiences”. So, we should all be *listening* to the Word of God.
- And Proverbs 18:2 does not say anything about learning from other people’s human “thoughts, desires and experiences”. So, we should all be *learning* from the Word of God.
- Therefore, the first two steps in this sequence seem to us to be without Biblical support. Romans 12:3-15 is a list of how the body of Christ functions to support one another, including rejoicing and weeping with our brothers and sisters in their triumphs and tragedies, which brings to mind events like weddings and funerals. However, this passage of scripture is not connected to listening to, or learning from, human “thoughts, desires and experiences” in any way we can discern.
- John 13:34-35, along with 1 John 2:7-8 is Jesus (and his disciple, John) emphasizing that the command to love one another from the Old Testament law has been fulfilled by Jesus, and it is now new in that we abide in Christ and He in us, and His love in us for one another should be evident to the world, as something not naturally of the world. Again, this has nothing to do with listening to, or learning from, or lamenting about human “thoughts, desires and experiences”.

5. On page 4 of the GCJR Discipleship Resource in the section called “Pastors and the Word of God” it says, “According to God’s design, pastors in the church instruct members in the church in what they should believe and do according to God’s Word.”<sup>93</sup> [Acts 20:25-32].

- In Acts 20:17-38 Paul is in Miletus and he sends a message to have all the Elders from the church in Ephesus come to Miletus to meet with him. Then, before he set sail for Jerusalem, never to see them again, he gives the assembled Elders a final pep talk about the duties and responsibilities of Elders to shepherd the flock, highlighted by a warning to keep doctrine pure and to watch out for false teaching. This is obviously a call to faithful expository preaching and teaching – what does the Word of God *say*, and what does it *mean*.

- This passage of scripture specifically addresses Elders, and we know that the New Testament uses the terms fairly interchangeably that we translate Elder, Pastor, Overseer, etc.; but why do we limit this responsibility in our Discipleship Resource to those with the title of “Pastor” at MBC? Shouldn’t this, at the very least, include the actual Elders [1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9], and probably all who are called to teach the Word of God in the church? It just seems odd that this should be the sole responsibility of those with the specific title of “Pastor” at MBC.

6. On page 5 of the GCJR Discipleship Resource in the introduction to the section on Justice it says, “for us to do justice means for us to do that which is right for all people.”<sup>105</sup> [Jer 22:3; Ez 18:5-9; Micah 6:8; Eph 5:1].

- The introduction to the Justice section uses the phrase “for all people” over and over again. It seems a curious phrase that is out of place. We cannot find the phrase in any of the references and it does not seem to make sense in the context of the given scriptures as an application to the average person in the pew at McLean Bible Church, who is not in any way interacting with “all people”.
- This is our working definition of the Biblical doctrine of Justice: Conformity to God’s moral standard as revealed in the Ten Commandments and the Royal Law: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”
- It is vital that we adhere to the long-standing, classical understanding of justice that has been a core feature of Christian theology and Western civilization (e.g. Cicero and Justinian) for millennia, that is to render to each person what is due to him. Specifically, we must clearly identify the duty that a person owes to another person and uphold due process, including appropriate evidence to support one’s claim regarding the grant or denial of a claim of justice.
- Jeremiah 22:1-12 is a message from the Lord to the king of Judah, his servants and his people. Which makes sense because Israel, and later Judah, were a theocracy directly ruled by God in the civil realm with a human representative – first the Judges and then the Kings. In Deuteronomy 29:10-15 all the people of Israel, the whole body politic, had made a direct covenant with God; and for Israel there was no separation of church and state, but the two were both under Jehovah. There is absolutely no analogy to that in the New Testament. The church is not Israel, and neither is some combination of the American church and the American government equivalent in any way to Israel, so we must be extremely careful about applying what the Lord commanded in a specific time and place to the absolutely unique case of the nation of Israel, to any other time, place and situation.
- Ezekiel 18:5-9 is a summary of a man following God’s law in his everyday life and being declared righteous for obeying God’s law. This has no application to the phrase “for all people”. The application is to act righteously toward 1) God and 2) the people he actually interacts with in his life and business.
- Micah 6:8 is a summary of the law. Jesus’s own summary of the law in Luke 10:25-37 is superior, and its emphasis is on love and mercy, one individual at a time, rather than a compulsion to do certain tasks.

- Ephesians 5:1-5 tells us to walk in love and not to do a list of wicked things. We do not see any application to “doing justice ... for all people.”
- “No imputation of another’s sin can be granted, except on the supposition of some peculiar connection of the one with the other” (*Elenctic Theology*, Francis Turretin, Vol I, Topic IX, ix,11). He goes on to argue this union may be threefold: (1) natural, as between a father and his children, (2) moral and political, as between a king and his subjects, and (3) voluntary, as between the guilty person and a substitute who consents to be punished for the sake of another. These distinctions make sense of the imputation of Adam’s sin to us (natural and moral), the imputation of our sin to Christ (moral and voluntary), and the other examples of corporate responsibility and punishment in the Bible (King and subjects of Israel). But none of those conditions apply to 21<sup>st</sup> century America and the sin of partiality based on skin shade.

7. On page 5 of the GCJR Discipleship Resource in the section called, “Injustice according to God’s Word,” it says, “As a result of our rebellion against God, injustice—that which is not right for all people as exemplified in God’s character and expressed in God’s Word—abounds among men and women made in God’s image.<sup>115</sup> We lie, murder, oppress, abuse, exploit, cheat, bribe, steal, slander, and enslave.<sup>116</sup> We take advantage of others to benefit ourselves.<sup>117</sup> We hoard our resources for ourselves.<sup>118</sup> We assert ourselves as superior over others.<sup>119</sup> We plunder and ignore the poor, the weak, the widow, the orphan, and the sojourner.”<sup>120</sup> [Ecc 3:16-17; 4:1-3; Rom. 1:28-32; 1 Cor 6:9-10; Lev 25:17; Prov 28:2-26; Luke 12:13-21; Jam. 4:1-10; Jam. 5:1-6].

- We believe this is a much too broad definition of justice/injustice. One could just as well say that as a result of mankind’s rebellion against God, sin happens. If every single sin is listed as “injustice” then the Biblical concept of Justice loses its meaning – one might as well just say, “don’t sin” and be done with it. We believe that an overly broad definition of justice brings with it a risk of legalism penetrating the church.
- This is our working definition of the Biblical doctrine of Justice: Conformity to God’s moral standard as revealed in the Ten Commandments and the Royal Law: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”
- It is vital that we adhere to the long-standing, classical understanding of justice that has been a core feature of Christian theology and Western civilization (e.g. Cicero and Justinian) for millennia, that is to render to each person what is due to him. Specifically, we must clearly identify the duty that a person owes to another person and uphold due process, including appropriate evidence to support one's claim regarding the grant or denial of a claim of justice.
- The book of Ecclesiastes offers the Christian an opportunity to understand the emptiness and despair that those who do not know God grapple with. Those who do not have a saving faith in Christ are faced with a life that will ultimately end and become irrelevant. If there is no salvation, and no God, then not only is there no point to life, but no purpose or direction to it, either. The world “under the sun,” apart from God, is frustrating, cruel, unfair, brief, and “utterly meaningless.” But with Christ, life is but a shadow of the glories to come in a heaven that is only accessible through Him. That is the context for the two passages Ecclesiastes 3:16-17; 4:1-3. For those outside of Christ, sitting in a pew at MBC,

it gives motivations to find meaning in Christ, for those in Christ, sitting in a pew at MBC, it is a motivation to share Christ with those who are hopeless without Him. We do not see the application for the Biblical doctrine of Justice.

- Romans 1:18-32 is a list of all the consequences of unbelief. We do not see the application to the specific Biblical doctrine of Justice, apart from the dubious notion of labeling all sin “injustice”.
- 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 gives a list of wicked behavior to make the point that unbelievers will not go to heaven. We do not see the application to the specific Biblical doctrine of Justice, apart from the dubious notion of labeling all sin “injustice”.
- Leviticus 25:8-17 is a description of the Year of Jubilee and the regulations for the nation of Israel pertaining to Jubilee with an admonition at the end to obey the rules. This is a strange one to include, and we do not see the application to the specific Biblical doctrine of Justice.
- Proverbs 28:2-26 supplies wisdom on almost every possible topic, including justice, but that is certainly not the focus of most of it.
- Luke 12:13-21 is a parable Jesus told to warn against the sin of covetousness. There is no application here for the Biblical doctrine of Justice.
- James 4:1-10 warns against a number of sins and sinful attitudes including: lust, envy, murder, quarrelsomeness, friendship with the world, pride, and double-mindedness. There is no application here to the Biblical doctrine of Justice.
- James 5:1-6 describes the misuse of riches and gives specific examples of injustice. This is a perfect passage to describe Biblical Justice/Injustice. One man doing unjust acts toward distinct others who had a right to their wages, or the right to a fair judgement in court.

8. On page 5 of the GCJR Discipleship Resource in the section called, “Injustice according to God’s Word,” it says, “Such injustice is not limited to individual lives; it permeates the systems and structures people create and maintain.<sup>121</sup> This reality is evident throughout the Bible. The Tower of Babel was a literal structure of rebellion against God that led to strife and division among people.<sup>122</sup> The Egyptians organized their laws and economy to enslave and oppress the Israelites.”<sup>123</sup> [Josh 7; 2 Sam. 21; Dan. 9; Gen. 11:1-9; Ex 1:8-14].

- Joshua 7 describes the incident with Achan and his family disobeying God and stealing things. In Deuteronomy 29:10-15 all the people of Israel, the whole body politic, had made a direct covenant with God and for Israel there was no separation of church and state, but the two were both under Jehovah. After Moses, Joshua was the representative relaying God’s commands, but in this case, Joshua failed to inquire of the Lord *before* he sent troops against the City of Ai. He only whined about the loss of the battle to God afterwards, and then found out that he had also failed to ensure God’s previous command had been carried out, not to steal the booty. If Joshua had enquired of the Lord before, He certainly would have revealed the issue. In this chapter Almighty God, who sees perfectly and judges perfectly the hearts of people, sentenced to death 36 soldiers whom He judged one-by-one, and an unknown number of people in Achan’s household whom He judged one-by-one. There are no “systems and structures” here, only individual guilty people who were judged directly by a Holy God.

- In 2 Samuel 21, King David was God's anointed to carry out God's instructions. Everyone who died in 2 Samuel 21 was judged one-by-one by an Omniscient God who sees the hearts of all people and judges rightly. There were no "systems and structures" here, only individual guilty people who were judged directly by God.
- When the people made that covenant in Deuteronomy 29:10-15, God promised that if they disobeyed Him, he would send them into exile. They disobeyed Him, so He sent them into exile as He said He would. That is why Daniel finds himself in Babylon, and in Daniel chapter 9, praying for the people who have broken the covenant with God. This is another one where it is extremely important to remember that the church is not the nation of Israel, and that this particular covenant between God and Israel was a unique thing in history, for which there is no modern parallel. There is no application here for the guy in the pew at MBC for "doing justice" in 2020 America, except to understand that God keeps His promises – both pleasant and unpleasant for people.
- "No imputation of another's sin can be granted, except on the supposition of some peculiar connection of the one with the other" (*Elenctic Theology*, Francis Turretin, Vol I, Topic IX, ix,11). He goes on to argue this union may be threefold: (1) natural, as between a father and his children, (2) moral and political, as between a king and his subjects, and (3) voluntary, as between the guilty person and a substitute who consents to be punished for the sake of another. These distinctions make sense of the imputation of Adam's sin to us (natural and moral), the imputation of our sin to Christ (moral and voluntary), and the other examples of corporate responsibility and punishment in the Bible (King and subjects of Israel). But none of those conditions apply to 21<sup>st</sup> century America and the sin of partiality based on skin shade.
- The historical account of the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11:1-9 has nothing to do with systems and structure and is merely another example of God's vertical judgement, which was very mild in this case. In Genesis 9:1 God commanded Noah and his sons to spread out and fill the Earth. They deliberately and flagrantly disobeyed that command by clumping together and refusing to spread out. Each person obviously had a choice in this, and they all chose to disobey. They built a city and a tower, and in Genesis 11:4 the Bible tells us that they did this for the purpose of disobeying God's command to spread out. So, God confused their languages and forced them to spread out. There is absolutely no way to read unjust "systems and structures" into this account, unless one believes that they baked "injustice" into their bricks to make the tower.
- The story of the exodus from Egypt is not a story about unjust systems and structures. It is the story of an unjust man, Pharaoh, doing unjust things, with God hardening his heart for His purposes [Ex 7:3, 9:12, Rom. 9:15-18]. Moses and Aaron did not go and give speeches in the public square urging social change on Egypt. They went to one man, Pharaoh, and delivered God's Word, *verbatim* to him – "Let my people go" [Ex 5:1; 7:16; 8:1, 8, 20-21; 9:1, 13, 17; 10:3-4]. This is really a conversation between God and Pharaoh, and God is not the least interested in "systems and structures". Romans 9:15-18 is the definitive analysis of the interaction between God and Pharaoh in the Exodus account, and it is clear that God was not focused on systems and structures.

9. On page 6 of the GCJR Discipleship Resource in the section called, “Injustice In and Around the World,” it says, “Injustice like we see in Scripture is evident in and around us today. We are personally tempted by the desires of our flesh to do injustice.”<sup>134</sup> [Gal 5:16-20].

- Galatians 5:13-21 is a passage about our freedom **in Christ** to follow the royal law to love our neighbor as ourselves, and as we saw before this is focused on the individual, not groups, and involves love and mercy, not justice. Then there is a warning not to engage in a long laundry list of sins. It ends with another warning that unbelievers will not go to heaven. None of this has to do with the Biblical doctrine of Justice, unless we simply replace the term “sin” with “injustice” in every case, and then Justice/Injustice really has no meaning.
- This is our working definition of the Biblical doctrine of Justice: Conformity to God’s moral standard as revealed in the Ten Commandments and the Royal Law: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”
- It is vital that we adhere to the long-standing, classical understanding of justice that has been a core feature of Christian theology and Western civilization (e.g. Cicero and Justinian) for millennia, that is to render to each person what is due to him. Specifically, we must clearly identify the duty that a person owes to another person and uphold due process, including appropriate evidence to support one's claim regarding the grant or denial of a claim of justice.

10. On page 6 of the GCJR Discipleship Resource in the section called, “Justified to Do Justice,” it says, “we realize that our justification before God inevitably leads to works that glorify God, including efforts to do justice.”<sup>144</sup> [Jam 2:14-26].

- We would not put any of the examples in James 2:14-26 in the category of Biblical Justice. The example in vs 14-17 is clearly mercy and not justice, as the poor man has no “right” to your stuff as if he could just wander into your house and take it. You give to him out of charity (love) and mercy because of gratitude for what the Lord has done for you, and love for him as your brother in Christ. This is grace, love and mercy, not burdensome law and obligation.
- The example in vs 21-23 is in a category all by itself. Abraham obeyed an extremely unusual command of God to sacrifice his son. Abraham’s actions definitely don’t fit in the category of Biblical Justice, but really are simply the best human example by anyone (other than Jesus) of obeying the greatest commandment to Love God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength. And, of course, it was done as a foreshadowing and a type of God sacrificing His son.
- The example in vs 25 is clearly an example of mercy, not justice. The spies had no “right” to Rahab’s help, she gave them help as an act of mercy. There is clearly a significant issue here with conflating the two different Biblical doctrines of Justice and Mercy.
- This is our working definition of the Biblical doctrine of Justice: Conformity to God’s moral standard as revealed in the Ten Commandments and the Royal Law: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”

- It is vital that we adhere to the long-standing, classical understanding of justice that has been a core feature of Christian theology and Western civilization (e.g. Cicero and Justinian) for millennia, that is to render to each person what is due to him. Specifically, we must clearly identify the duty that a person owes to another person and uphold due process, including appropriate evidence to support one's claim regarding the grant or denial of a claim of justice.

11. On page 6 of the GCJR Discipleship Resource in the section called, “Justified to Do Justice,” it says, “As men and women justified by God’s grace, we are **compelled** and commanded to do justice for God’s glory—to do that which is right for people as exemplified in His character and expressed in His Word.”<sup>145</sup> [Jer 22:3; Micah 6:8].

- Jeremiah 22:1-12 is a message from the Lord to the king of Judah, his servants and his people. Which makes sense because Israel, and later Judah, were a theocracy directly ruled by God in the civil realm with a human representative – first the Judges and then the Kings. In Deuteronomy 29:10-15 all the people of Israel, the whole body politic, had made a direct covenant with God and for Israel there was no separation of church and state, but the two were both under Jehovah. There is absolutely no analogy to that in the New Testament. The church is not Israel, and neither is some combination of the American church and the American government equivalent in any way to Israel, so we must be extremely careful about applying what the Lord commanded in a specific time and place to the absolutely unique case of the nation of Israel, to any other time, place and situation.
- This is our working definition of the Biblical doctrine of Justice: Conformity to God’s moral standard as revealed in the Ten Commandments and the Royal Law: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”
- It is vital that we adhere to the long-standing, classical understanding of justice that has been a core feature of Christian theology and Western civilization (e.g. Cicero and Justinian) for millennia, that is to render to each person what is due to him. Specifically, we must clearly identify the duty that a person owes to another person and uphold due process, including appropriate evidence to support one's claim regarding the grant or denial of a claim of justice.
- We looked up all the instances of the word “compel” or “compelled” in the Bible (NASB) and they seem to have a starkly negative connotation. The meaning of the word ‘compel’ - "force or oblige (someone) to do something; bring about (something) by the use of force or pressure; synonyms: force · coerce into · pressure · impel · press · push · browbeat into · bully into · bludgeon into · intimidate into". Then Micah 6:8 is simply a summary of the law. So, to say that our salvation **compels** the law is an odd way of thinking about salvation, and seems like an opening for legalism to creep in. Jesus said, “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” [Matt 11:28-30] What we have in our Discipleship Resource seems like a heavy burden to heap upon the followers of Christ. Jesus’s own summary of the law in Luke 10:25-37 is superior, and its emphasis

is on love and mercy, one individual at a time, rather than a compulsion to do certain tasks.

12. On page 7 of the GCJR Discipleship Resource in the section called, “Proclaiming Justice in Jesus to All,” it says, “we do not limit doing justice only to proclaiming the gospel, for the Great Commission compels us to obey and teach all that Christ has commanded us.”<sup>150</sup> [Matt 28:18-20].

- The Great Commission is not a passage about the Biblical doctrine of Justice. We make disciples, baptize and teach them out of love for Christ and obedience to Him and an overflow of His love for others, but the people we are serving do not have a “right” to our service. Instead we do it out of love and mercy, because Jesus has shown us love and mercy. This is another example of conflating the two distinct doctrines of Biblical Justice and Biblical Mercy. Here is an example – the woman at the well did not have a “right” to Jesus attention, but He gave her His attention anyway. This is an example of love and mercy, not justice.
- This is our working definition of the Biblical doctrine of Justice: Conformity to God’s moral standard as revealed in the Ten Commandments and the Royal Law: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”
- It is vital that we adhere to the long-standing, classical understanding of justice that has been a core feature of Christian theology and Western civilization (e.g. Cicero and Justinian) for millennia, that is to render to each person what is due to him. Specifically, we must clearly identify the duty that a person owes to another person and uphold due process, including appropriate evidence to support one's claim regarding the grant or denial of a claim of justice.

13. On page 7 of the GCJR Discipleship Resource in the section called, “Justice in Our Systems and Structures,” it says, “Beyond our individual lives, we seek and work for justice in the systems and structures around us. We see throughout Scripture that individuals affect structures and structures affect individuals, so we emphasize both personal and corporate responsibility in matters of justice.”<sup>177</sup> [Ex 1-12; Num. 13-14].

- The story of the exodus from Egypt is not a story about unjust systems and structures. It is the story of an unjust man, Pharaoh, doing unjust things, with God hardening his heart for His purposes [Ex 7:3, 9:12, Rom. 9:15-18]. Moses and Aaron did not go and give speeches in the public square urging social change on Egypt. They went to one man, Pharaoh, and delivered God’s Word, *verbatim* to him – “Let my people go” [Ex 5:1; 7:16; 8:1, 8, 20-21; 9:1, 13, 17; 10:3-4]. This is really a conversation between God and Pharaoh and God is not the least interested in “systems and structures”. Romans 9:15-18 is the definitive analysis of the interaction between God and Pharaoh in the Exodus account, and it is clear that God was not focused on systems and structures.
- Numbers 13-14 is the story of the spies that go into the promised land and 10 of them bring back a bad report, while Joshua and Caleb bring back a good report. The people

believe the bad report and grumble against Moses. We have no idea what that has to do with systems and structures.

- In Egypt of long ago, or America today the “systems and structures” are not the problem. Sinners like us in the system are the problem. When we fight all sin and offer God’s grace, mercy, and forgiveness, we fight injustice. Thus, when the church’s primary focus is on sound evangelism and seeking authentic revival, all systems improve. For a Christian perspective on the idea of “doing justice”, we need to look to Jesus, who lived in one of history’s most corrupt societies. Rather than attempt to change governments and institutions, which are made up of people, Jesus came to change people’s hearts and point them to God’s Kingdom. He preached the saving power of the gospel and the transforming work of the Holy Spirit.

14. In footnote <sup>182</sup> at the bottom of page 17 and the top of page 18 there are five assertions, “(1) The context of 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 is actually encouragement for the Thessalonian Christians to get a job in order to contribute to society around them, so it is connected with working hard amidst the systems and structures of society; (2) We must not underestimate the challenge that Jesus presented to the Roman empire from his birth (Matthew 2) and throughout his ministry, in addition to the ministry of John the Baptist, all of which eventually led to the central proclamation of his disciples that “Jesus is Lord,” a statement that was a direct affront to a Roman empire that claimed Caesar was Lord, and a statement that would eventually lead to persecution, imprisonment, and death for Christians in the Roman empire; (3) We must not underestimate the outworking of the gospel in the lives of Jesus’ disciples, including revolutionary teaching that men and women, bondservants and masters are all equal members of the body of Christ; (4) When we read Romans 13:1-4, we realize that, by God’s grace for those of us who live in the United States (a representative democracy), we have a voice in what our government does and does not do, which means we are not just the governed, but in a very real sense the governing, which puts us in a very different position than First Century followers of Jesus in the Roman empire (and Twenty-First Century followers of Jesus in countries like North Korea, as well); and (5) Most every follower of Jesus rightly believes that on issues like abortion, we should not just ignore laws that make abortion permissible, but also work to save children’s lives in the womb. In the end, on both biblical and practical levels, we are compelled to work so that systems and structures are just for all individuals and groups of people, particularly in light of the opportunity God has given us in a representative democracy to affect those systems and structures in a way that reflects His justice for the good of others whom we love as ourselves.”

- We have read the entire chapter of 1 Thessalonians 4 several times now and see no application about working to promote justice in systems and structures.
- If being born and going about his ministry counts as Jesus working to promote justice in systems and structures, then the definition is so broad as to encompass anything, making the whole concept meaningless. Jesus specifically said, “My kingdom is not of this world,” and refused to be drawn into politics. That should be a lesson for us. His disciples conquered the Roman empire one disciple, and one martyr, at a time.
- We agree that we should vote, evaluating each political issue through a Biblical Worldview.

- Every follower of Christ has a God-given ministry [Eph 2:10], which will include *something*, but will definitely not include *everything*, so it certainly *could* be focused in the area of justice (abortion), or it could be focused in the areas of love and mercy (helping the poor). We believe it is exceedingly dangerous for fallen, fallible leaders of a church to try to **compel** *everyone* to do *everything* that is a possible area of ministry. We are all servants of Christ, and Jesus will decide each of our unique areas of service.

15. On page 9 of the GCJR Discipleship Resource in the section called, “The World: A Proudful Perversion of Race,” it says, “**we** are prone to prejudice against certain people.<sup>239</sup> **We** pervert a biblical concept of race by classifying groups of people into different races based on arbitrary characteristics so that **we** might assign different values and distinct advantages to some groups over others. These arbitrary characteristics vary from skin tone, hair texture, and facial features to class, caste, geography, ancestry, and language.”<sup>240</sup> [Mal 2:9; Jam. 2:4, 9].

- Who is “we” in this section of the Discipleship Resource? The world does this based on a lie of Satan about “races”, but there is no excuse for this to happen in the church. If we are properly teaching the true history of mankind in Genesis 1-11 to every follower of Christ, especially new believers before they are dry from the baptismal, there should be no one in the church classifying others by superficial appearance categories, and there should be no one in the church *self-identifying* by these superficial appearance categories either. One should never hear phrases like, “As a ‘black’ man/woman ... or as a ‘white’ man/woman ...” uttered in the church. These kinds of fake secular categories should not be used in the church. We should stand out as totally different from the world, and not use their categories or terminology. And if a person in the church is doing this, that person should be addressed individually and presented with proof, rather than broad, vague group accusations without evidence.
- The document has been substantially cleaned up in this regard; however, the actual teaching in the class used quite a bit of secular terminology, which was extremely alarming, and should be avoided in teaching the class as well as in the written document.
- “No imputation of another’s sin can be granted, except on the supposition of some peculiar connection of the one with the other” (*Elenctic Theology*, Francis Turretin, Vol I, Topic IX, ix,11). He goes on to argue this union may be threefold: (1) natural, as between a father and his children, (2) moral and political, as between a king and his subjects, and (3) voluntary, as between the guilty person and a substitute who consents to be punished for the sake of another. These distinctions make sense of the imputation of Adam’s sin to us (natural and moral), the imputation of our sin to Christ (moral and voluntary), and the other examples of corporate responsibility and punishment in the Bible (King and subjects of Israel). But none of those conditions apply to 21<sup>st</sup> century America and the sin of partiality based on skin shade.

16. On page 10 of the GCJR Discipleship Resource in the section called, “Racism and its Expressions in the World,” it says, “In the process of denying our shared roots in the human race by devising a

hierarchy of different races, **we** commit the sin of racism: valuing one race over another in our thoughts, feelings, words, and actions, or devaluing one race beneath another in our thoughts, feelings, words, and actions. Expressions of racism include thoughts, feelings, words, actions, expectations, relationships, laws, policies, procedures, systems, and structures that value or devalue one race over or beneath another.”<sup>241</sup> [No scripture for this section].

- Once again, who is “we” in this section of the Discipleship Resource? No one with a Biblical Worldview does this. The secular world does this based on a lie of Satan about “races”, but there is no excuse for this to happen in the church. If we are properly teaching the true history of mankind in Genesis 1-11 to every follower of Christ, especially new believers before they are dry from the baptismal, there should be no one in the church classifying others by the fake category of “race”, and there should be no one in the church *self-identifying* by the fake category of race either. One should never hear phrases like, “As a ‘black’ man/woman ... or as a ‘white’ man/woman ...” uttered in the church. These kinds of fake secular categories should not be used in the church. We should stand out as totally different from the world, and not use their categories or terminology.
- While expressions of partiality (racism) in laws, policies, and procedures are possible, they should not be assumed or alleged without real proof. And by proof, we mean either something overtly discriminatory, like Jim Crow laws, or an actual linkage between cause and effect, not mere differences in outcome, or emotional personal stories.
- Unfortunately, in the teaching of the class the fake secular category of “race” was used over and over again as if it was real.
- “No imputation of another’s sin can be granted, except on the supposition of some peculiar connection of the one with the other” (*Elenctic Theology*, Francis Turretin, Vol I, Topic IX, ix,11). He goes on to argue this union may be threefold: (1) natural, as between a father and his children, (2) moral and political, as between a king and his subjects, and (3) voluntary, as between the guilty person and a substitute who consents to be punished for the sake of another. These distinctions make sense of the imputation of Adam’s sin to us (natural and moral), the imputation of our sin to Christ (moral and voluntary), and the other examples of corporate responsibility and punishment in the Bible (King and subjects of Israel). But none of those conditions apply to 21<sup>st</sup> century America and the sin of partiality based on skin shade.

17. On page 10 of the GCJR Discipleship Resource in the section called, “Racism and its Expressions in the World,” it says, “The horrors of racism permeate the history of humanity. Sadly, the history of the United States is not immune to these horrors, evident in examples that include (but are not limited to) the massacres of Native American peoples, the internment of Japanese citizens, discrimination against Irish immigrants, the enslavement of Africans, and the enforcement of Jim Crow laws.” [No scripture for this section].

- The history of the secular world is a story of hatred and violence. **Not** particularly of “racial” hatred and violence. Cain killed Abel and there is no evidence this was based on

skin shade. James Chapter 2 covers any and all situations of partiality. Most of the slavery in history had nothing to do with “race” or skin shade.

- The history of any country, including the U.S., should be presented in a balanced way – including the good and the bad. Unfortunately, that did not happen in the GCJR class. There was a particularly biased and one-sided overview of American history given during the class, that served to undercut the credibility of the teacher.
- “No imputation of another’s sin can be granted, except on the supposition of some peculiar connection of the one with the other” (*Elenctic Theology*, Francis Turretin, Vol I, Topic IX, ix,11). He goes on to argue this union may be threefold: (1) natural, as between a father and his children, (2) moral and political, as between a king and his subjects, and (3) voluntary, as between the guilty person and a substitute who consents to be punished for the sake of another. These distinctions make sense of the imputation of Adam’s sin to us (natural and moral), the imputation of our sin to Christ (moral and voluntary), and the other examples of corporate responsibility and punishment in the Bible (King and subjects of Israel). But none of those conditions apply to 21<sup>st</sup> century America and the sin of partiality based on skin shade.

18. On page 10 of the GCJR Discipleship Resource in the section called, “Racism and its Expressions in Our Hearts,” it says, “we still inhabit a world where systems and structures created and maintained by sinful men and women can continually enshrine benefits and burdens for certain races,<sup>247</sup> and we do not underestimate the effects such systems and structures can have upon our hearts in subtle, significant, or unseen ways.”<sup>248</sup> [Ex 3:7-9; 2 Kings 13:1-9; Acts 6:1-2; Rom 12:2; 1 Cor 10:1-13; 1 Tim 4:16; Jam. 2:1-13].

- The story of the exodus from Egypt is not a story about unjust systems and structures. It is the story of an unjust man, Pharaoh, doing unjust things, with God hardening his heart for His purposes [Ex 7:3, 9:12, Rom. 9:15-18]. Moses and Aaron did not go and give speeches in the public square urging social change on Egypt. They went to one man, Pharaoh, and delivered God’s Word, *verbatim* to him – “Let my people go” [Ex 5:1; 7:16; 8:1, 8, 20-21; 9:1, 13, 17; 10:3-4]. This is really a conversation between God and Pharaoh and God is not the least interested in “systems and structures”. Romans 9:15-18 is the definitive analysis of the interaction between God and Pharaoh in the Exodus account, and it is clear that God was not focused on systems and structures.
- 2 Kings 13:1-9 is the account of King Jehoahaz of Judah who “did evil in the sight of the Lord” and the mass of people in Judah followed their king in doing evil. This has nothing to do with systems and structures, it is simply sinful people doing sinful things. Blaming their sinful behavior on “systems and structures” would be a mistake.
- The Palestinian or Hebraic Jews prided themselves on the fact that they had always lived in the land of the patriarchs and that they used the language that their fathers spoke. They were near the temple and regularly worshiped there. On the other hand, the Hellenistic Jews from other parts of the world were jealous of the first group and made to feel like outsiders. Sadly, the strife between the two groups was not automatically eliminated by their conversion to Christianity, as the complaints concerning food distribution to widows of the two groups show. However, in a wonderful example of godly wisdom and

Christian unity, the early church worked through the dispute, and the office of deacon was formed (Acts 6:2–6). This is a good example of people within the church engaging in pride, prejudice and jealousy, and of the structure of the church being fixed, once for all time, 2000 years ago with the institution of the office of deacon.

- To believe in the secular idea that “systems and structures” are to blame for people’s behavior IS to “be conformed to this world” in accordance with Rom. 12:2.
- 1 Cor. 10:1-13 is a summary of various periods and incidents of the unfaithfulness of Israel to God during the time of Moses. It is in the form of a warning that unfaithfulness is punished by God. This passage has nothing to do with “systems and structures”.
- 1 Timothy 4:13-16 says this: “<sup>13</sup> Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching. <sup>14</sup> Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery. <sup>15</sup> Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress will be evident to all. <sup>16</sup> Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.” This is an exhortation from Paul to Timothy about preaching and has nothing to do with “systems and structures”.
- James 2:1-13 is a warning against the sin of partiality and it does not mention anything about “systems and structures”.
- “No imputation of another’s sin can be granted, except on the supposition of some peculiar connection of the one with the other” (*Elenctic Theology*, Francis Turretin, Vol I, Topic IX, ix,11). He goes on to argue this union may be threefold: (1) natural, as between a father and his children, (2) moral and political, as between a king and his subjects, and (3) voluntary, as between the guilty person and a substitute who consents to be punished for the sake of another. These distinctions make sense of the imputation of Adam’s sin to us (natural and moral), the imputation of our sin to Christ (moral and voluntary), and the other examples of corporate responsibility and punishment in the Bible (King and subjects of Israel). But none of those conditions apply to 21<sup>st</sup> century America and the sin of partiality based on skin shade.

19. On page 10 of the GCJR Discipleship Resource in the section called, “Our Commitment to Resist Racism,” it says, “Based upon the Bible, we reject any and all semblance of a **hierarchy of different races**, and we work to repel any and every inclination in us to **exalt or devalue any race** over or beneath another.”<sup>250</sup> [Acts 17:24-31].

- A comprehensive Biblical Worldview, based on all of Scripture goes farther than this statement. THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS ‘RACES’ of people. This is one of our deepest and most fundamental disagreements with the way the GCJR class was taught, and it shows up in the Discipleship Resource as well. Over and over, we keep using the secular terminology of ‘race’ as if it really exists. We reject not just the hierarchy, but the very existence of ‘race’. Using the term as if it is something that actually exists IS “being conformed to this world.” Acts 17:26 is one of many New Testament confirmations of the historical facts about Biblical Anthropology contained in Genesis 1-11.

20. On page 11 of the GCJR Discipleship Resource in the section called, “Our Commitment to True Multi-Ethnic Community,” it says, “We believe that every **ethnic group** possesses equal value and portrays evident beauty, and we do not believe the answer to racism is ignoring our differences or pretending like they do not exist.”<sup>259</sup> [Gen. 1:26-28; 10:1-32].

- It was not clear in the class and it is not clear in the document what is the definition of the term “ethnic group”. If by “ethnic group” we mean People Group based on language and culture, and nothing to do with skin shade, then we are in complete agreement. Most of us at the church, then, belong to the American ethnic group (or People Group), who speak American English and are part of American culture, regardless of skin shade (for example, Mike Kelsey and David Platt are from the same American ethnic group). There are other ethnic groups in the church from other countries with different languages and cultures, as well, but once again that has nothing to do with skin shade.
- However, if the term “ethnic group” is a means to smuggle in the unbiblical concept of “race” based on skin shade, then we utterly reject that line of thinking as being “conformed to this world”, and therefore a dangerous mistake. Pretending that “races” based on skin shade actually exist is not the way to bring unity to the church.
- Gal. 3:26-28 says: “<sup>26</sup> For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. <sup>27</sup> For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. <sup>28</sup> There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” The Bible de-emphasizes things like ethnic and gender diversity within the body of Christ, but celebrates *spiritual gift* diversity. See 1 Cor. 12 and Eph 4:11-12.

21. On page 11 of the GCJR Discipleship Resource in the section called, “Our Commitment to True Multi-Ethnic Community,” it says, “to the extent that we are part of a larger group of people guilty of racism, we appropriately confess corporate sins of racism and take appropriate steps of repentance.”<sup>268</sup> [Gen. 1:26-28; 10:1-32].

- “No imputation of another’s sin can be granted, except on the supposition of some peculiar connection of the one with the other” (*Elenctic Theology*, Francis Turretin, Vol I, Topic IX, ix,11). He goes on to argue this union may be threefold: (1) natural, as between a father and his children, (2) moral and political, as between a king and his subjects, and (3) voluntary, as between the guilty person and a substitute who consents to be punished for the sake of another. These distinctions make sense of the imputation of Adam’s sin to us (natural and moral), the imputation of our sin to Christ (moral and voluntary), and the other examples of corporate responsibility and punishment in the Bible (King and subjects of Israel). But none of those conditions apply to 21<sup>st</sup> century America and the sin of partiality based on skin shade.
- Genesis chapters 1-11 explains how we are all created in the image of God and members of one race human race descended from Adam. And that we are divided into People

Groups by language and culture, but nowhere in the Bible does it talk about “a larger group of people guilty of ‘racism’”.

22. On page 11 of the GCJR Discipleship Resource in the section called, “Racial Justice in Our Lives,” it says, “We honestly examine any advantages we may have because of our race, and we steward any such advantages for the sake of people who are disadvantaged because of their race.<sup>278</sup> We work to understand the needs and defend the rights of anyone whose poverty is in any way due to race.<sup>279</sup> We resolve to correct oppression of any race.”<sup>280</sup>

- First, we must start with the Biblical and scientific fact that there is no such thing as “races” of people. While the Discipleship Resource, laudably, does not use the term *White Privilege*, this section is clearly using that concept from Critical Race Theory. And in the teaching of the class, the term ‘White Privilege’ was used. However, especially within the American People Group, skin shade is absolutely continuous from very light brown to very dark brown with no place to draw a line. Therefore, there are no such thing as “white” people, and there is no practical way that advantages and disadvantages, wealth and poverty, or oppression could be apportioned by skin shade in 21<sup>st</sup> century America.
- The footnote at the beginning of this section says, “In the following paragraphs, we take biblical exhortations to “do justice” that we have already identified and apply them to doing justice for all people regardless of race, and to working against racial injustice. To be clear, we are not saying that all (or even most) of the Scriptures below represent issues of justice applied to race.”
- This is our working definition of the Biblical doctrine of Justice: Conformity to God’s moral standard as revealed in the Ten Commandments and the Royal Law: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”
- It is vital that we adhere to the long-standing, classical understanding of justice that has been a core feature of Christian theology and Western civilization (e.g. Cicero and Justinian) for millennia, that is to render to each person what is due to him. Specifically, we must clearly identify the duty that a person owes to another person and uphold due process, including appropriate evidence to support one’s claim regarding the grant or denial of a claim of justice.

23. On page 11-12 of the GCJR Discipleship Resource in the section called, “Racial Justice in Our Systems and Structures,” it says, “To the extent that we are able and have opportunity, we also want to work so that systems and structures in the world<sup>283</sup> do not promote racial injustice.” [Ex. 1-12; Rom. 13:1-5]

- The story of the exodus from Egypt is not a story about unjust systems and structures. It is the story of an unjust man, Pharaoh, doing unjust things, with God hardening his heart for His purposes [Ex 7:3, 9:12, Rom. 9:15-18]. Moses and Aaron did not go and give speeches in the public square urging social change on Egypt. They went to one man, Pharaoh, and delivered God’s Word, *verbatim* to him – “Let my people go” [Ex 5:1; 7:16;

8:1, 8, 20-21; 9:1, 13, 17; 10:3-4]. This is really a conversation between God and Pharaoh and God is not the least interested in “systems and structures”. Romans 9:15-18 is the definitive analysis of the interaction between God and Pharaoh in the Exodus account, and it is clear that God was not focused on systems and structures.

- Romans 13:1-10 is an admonition to “be in subjection to the governing authorities.” The passage then goes on to explain how that only applies where the civil government stays within the scope of its God-given authority (see also Jesus in Mark 12:17). The passage concludes in a magnificent way in vs 10: “Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.”
- This is our working definition of the Biblical doctrine of Justice: Conformity to God’s moral standard as revealed in the Ten Commandments and the Royal Law: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”
- It is vital that we adhere to the long-standing, classical understanding of justice that has been a core feature of Christian theology and Western civilization (e.g. Cicero and Justinian) for millennia, that is to render to each person what is due to him. Specifically, we must clearly identify the duty that a person owes to another person and uphold due process, including appropriate evidence to support one’s claim regarding the grant or denial of a claim of justice.

24. On page 12 of the GCJR Discipleship Resource in the section called, “Racial Justice in Our Systems and Structures,” it says, “We work so that people who have been wronged because of race are rightly and appropriately restored.”<sup>293</sup> [Ex. 21:33-22:15; Luke 19:1-10]

- Ex. 21:33-22:15 is a listing of part of the civil law of the nation of Israel with numerous examples of an individual doing something illegal according to the civil law, causing harm to another individual, and having to recompense the individual victim of his crime. According to Deuteronomy 19:15, “on the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed.” So, as with all of the civil law of Israel, evidence and proof is necessary, and it involves very specific individuals, not vague groups.
- The story of Zaccheus in Luke 19 is exactly the same as above, except there was no need for proof or witnesses because Zaccheus admitted his crime. This is also an example of the Biblical doctrine of Mercy, because Zaccheus voluntarily gives even more than the required restitution to each of the individuals that he has individually wronged.
- What is to be the standard of proof and who is to bear the burden of proof that an individual has been “wronged because of ‘race’”, and who is the individual to be held responsible for the individual crime in each individual case? And who gets to be the judge of each individual case? Without clear, Biblical answers to these questions, this portends absolute disaster for the church. The demonic, secular idea of “reparations” with its roots in the worldview assumptions of Cultural Marxism is trying to push its way into the church. We must not allow it a toe hold in any way, shape, or form.
- This is our working definition of the Biblical doctrine of Justice: Conformity to God’s moral standard as revealed in the Ten Commandments and the Royal Law: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”

- It is vital that we adhere to the long-standing, classical understanding of justice that has been a core feature of Christian theology and Western civilization (e.g. Cicero and Justinian) for millennia, that is to render to each person what is due to him. Specifically, we must clearly identify the duty that a person owes to another person and uphold due process, including appropriate evidence to support one's claim regarding the grant or denial of a claim of justice.

## *Feedback on the Teaching in the GCJR Classes*

*GCJR Class #1*

**June 21, 2020**

From the initial GCJR class, we disagree with the apparent acquiescence in using the worldly categories of “race”. A straight forward reading of Genesis chapters 1-11 tells us that there is no such thing as “races” of people. That whole concept of dividing people into groups based on skin shade is a lie of Satan *designed* to divide people. Just because the entire secular world has bought Satan’s lie, is no excuse for the church to follow the world’s example. Christian unity cannot be built on a foundation of Satan’s lie.

We also believe there was an over-emphasis on Standpoint Epistemology. In other words, the idea that we can’t really understand truth unless we look at it from someone else’s point of view. This usually involves giving the viewpoints of certain individuals or groups more “weight”, and inevitably creates division. There is only one point of view that matters, and that is God’s point of view. The primary force that is tearing our society apart right now is Identity Politics, which is the inevitable outgrowth of CRT, Intersectionality and Cultural Marxism. The biggest single threat to unity in the church right now is that these ideas will creep into the church, because the effect of these ideas will be to divide people against one another.

In the MBC draft statement distributed after the first GCJR class this struck us as odd - “According to God’s design, pastors in the church instruct members in the church in how they should think and what they should do according to God’s Word.” The scripture reference is Acts 20:25-32, which we think does not say that pastors should tell church members “how they should think and what they should do.”

Expository preaching is the most important role of the pastor of a church – what does the Word of God *say* and what does it *mean*. Application is important, but is much more dependent on the Holy Spirit in each individual believer, because each individual believer has a unique calling and a unique mission, “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, **which God prepared beforehand** so that we would walk in them” [Eph 2:10]. Each one of us is a servant of Jesus, and no pastor can possibly know what each one of us is called to do, so we think it is a mistake for any pastor to assume the authority to tell individual followers of Christ “how they should think and what they should do.” We believe that is the Holy Spirit’s role after the preacher has done the exposition.

There is also a paragraph in the MBC draft statement that comes straight from TGC’s model of *listening, learning, lamenting* and *loving*, which seems to us to substitute man’s feelings and experiences for God’s truth found in the Word. This whole concept lends itself to Standpoint Epistemology and to destructive Identity Politics and Cultural Marxism, which has taken over the entire secular world. The church should be different, set apart, not imitating the world.

After the second class of GCJR, we were troubled by the phrase, "As men and women justified by God's grace, we are compelled ... to do justice". The phrase "compelled to do justice" was in both the first and the second class during the presentations. It bothered us, so we looked up the meaning of the word '*compel*' - **"force or oblige (someone) to do something; bring about (something) by the use of force or pressure; synonyms: force · coerce into · pressure · impel · press · push · browbeat into · bully into · bludgeon into · intimidate into"**. I think this is not the way the Bible portrays the Gospel or the relationship between the Law and the Gospel. Jesus said, "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." [Matt 11:28-30] What we have in our Discipleship Resource seems like a heavy burden to heap upon the followers of Christ. And then, as the definition of "do justice" was being explained, it kept going on and on and on. There were dozens and dozens of things that we are "compelled" to do "for all people". There is a cognitive dissonance between this and the Gospel. We believe it would lead to a frazzled and burned out congregation.

Piling up Old Testament verses about God's justice, taking them out of their context in relation to God's redemptive purpose in the Old Testament nation of Israel, and repurposing them as compulsions on the New Testament church is not hermeneutically sound in our judgement.

We were also troubled by all the references to "systems" and "structures" because the explanations and their underlying hermeneutics were unconvincing. For example, the story of the Exodus has nothing to do with societal structures, as claimed in the class. Moses and Aaron did not go and give speeches in the public square urging social change on Egypt. They went to one man, Pharaoh, and delivered God's Word, *verbatim* to him – "Let my people go". And Egypt continued to practice slavery for many centuries after the Exodus, just like most societies all over the Earth for most of recorded history. So, if the goal was to change Egyptian social structure, then it failed.

In Egypt of long ago, or America today the "system" is not the problem. Sinners like us in the system are the problem. Where sinners exist, injustice exists on all sides. When we fight all sin and offer God's grace, mercy, and forgiveness, we fight injustice. Thus, when the church's primary focus is on sound evangelism and seeking authentic revival, history proves all systems improve. For example, the Great Awakening of the 1730s and 1740s laid the foundation for, and directly led to, the United States being established on solid Biblical principles in the 1770s and 1780s. [See *The Christian Life and Character of the Civil Institutions of the United States* by Benjamin Franklin Morris, written in 1864]. But when the church's focus is on human philosophies of relative "social justice", the systems degenerate. Fewer born-again people in the system means a degenerating system. If we want to help all people, we should preach the Word, the blood, the cross, and the resurrection of our Lord. The country does not need better humanistic institutions, it needs more redeemed people in these institutions.

**For a Christian perspective on the idea of "doing justice", we need to look to Jesus, who lived in one of history's most corrupt societies. Jesus never issued any call for political change, not even by peaceful means. He did not come to the Earth to be a political or social reformer. The gospel**

**Jesus preached did not have to do with social reform or “social justice” or political change. Rather than attempt to change governments and institutions, which are made up of people, Jesus came to change people’s hearts and point them to God’s Kingdom. He preached the saving power of the gospel and the transforming work of the Holy Spirit.**

**The apostles, Paul, Peter, James and John, who wrote the canonical letters directly to the New Testament churches, also neglected to include any indication that the church’s priority should be social or political change in the Roman Empire of their day.**

Ultimately, it is not our job to save the world. It is our job to help save people out of this world. Ultimately it is not our job to bring justice to a chronically corrupt and sinful world. In fact, the *last* thing a sin-soaked world needs is God’s Justice – they need His Mercy and Grace, through Jesus Christ to rescue them *from* God’s Justice. It is our job to help prepare people for the world to come through regeneration in Jesus Christ. It is our job to recruit members for that ultimate kingdom to come. Jesus said His Kingdom was not of this world.

### ***GCJR Class #3***

**July 12, 2020**

The class started with a review that perpetuated many of the errors in previous classes. The first error was to say that becoming more like Jesus means “doing justice”. Doing justice was not Jesus’ focus during his earthly ministry. His focus was on obeying God’s will for his life, which was going to the cross. To follow Jesus’ example is to obey God’s will for each of our individual lives in accordance with Ephesians 2:10, “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.” So, I am not “saved to do justice”, I am saved to do God’s specific will for my specific life. God’s will for Jesus’ life was for him to go to the cross, God’s will for my life is NOT for me to go to the cross, but some other specific set of works.

Once again, the review stated that the Gospel “compels” certain activity. This is still wrong no matter how many times it is repeated.

At the beginning of the class, David said that, Biblically, there is no such thing as “races” of people, which is correct. He even warned against creating unbiblical categories based on physical characteristics, but after that he went back to using the secular terminology of “race” as if he had never said it. He also made a scientifically false statement that dark skin is a genetically “dominant” trait. Skin shade is determined by a complex interaction of at least three different genes, producing a wide array of possibilities, none of which is “dominant”.

The MBC Discipleship Resource mostly ignores the Biblical concept of People Groups (not necessarily having anything to do with skin shade) in favor of the secular notion of Ethnic Groups (focused primarily on skin shade). Yes, we understand that there is a Biblical word that provides for the etymology of the term “ethnic”, but that does not account for the modern secular notion that this should focus on skin shade or any other physical characteristic. Where does the Bible say that the People Groups resulting from the division at Babel had anything to do with skin shade or any other physical characteristic? The primary difference was LANGUAGE.

One of the largest and most important People Groups in the world today is the American People Group. These are the people who were born and raised in the United States of America, who speak American English as a first language, as opposed to British English, or Australian English, or French, or Italian or Spanish. The American People Group has a shared culture and history, conducts barbecues on Memorial Day, Independence Day, and Labor Day, and thinks Baseball and Football are way better sports than Soccer. And none of that has anything to do with skin shade or any other physical characteristic. A member of the American People Group with a darker skin shade has WAY more in common with a member of the American People Group with a lighter skin shade, than he does with a random person in Africa with an identical skin shade. Of course, we do have people from other People Groups who decide to leave their previous country and move to the United States and become part of the American People Group, as many of our ancestors did when they came here one, two, three, or ten generations ago. Of course, that process may take a generation or two, but there is no doubt about the final outcome of shifting from one People Group to another. Why was this simple fact not emphasized in the class? Instead there was an emphasis on “ethnic groups”, which seemed to be a way of smuggling in the worldly concept of “race”.

The history of the secular world is a story of hatred and violence. [Period] **Not** particularly of “racial” hatred and violence. Cain killed Abel and there is no evidence this was based on skin shade. James Chapter 2 covers any and all situations of partiality. In the class David made the statement that “we” are prone to prejudice against “certain people” and that “we” classify people into groups by skin tone. Who is “we”? No one who has a Biblical Worldview does this. There is no reason for the church to acquiesce in the worldly grouping of people by skin shade or any other physical characteristic, even if we use the euphemism “ethnic groups”. We believe this is a dangerous trap that the church may fall into.

Once again, in this class as in previous ones, David used talk of “systems and structures” which we believe is an unbiblical way to view sin, with a big list of “expressions of racism” in those “systems and structures”, some of which we think were questionable at best.

That brings us to the sin of slander, which seems to be much more common in today’s church than the sin of partiality (“racism”). Slander is the sin of accusing another person of a sin (like partiality or “racism”) without proof. It seems that many evangelical leaders today are doing this over and over and over again. In GCJR class #3 there was the gratuitous slander of American churches in general, painting with an incredibly broad brush without providing proof or evidence of any kind that any particular action of any particular church was motivated by the sin of partiality (“racism”). If we are to avoid the sin of slander, we **MUST** name names and give proof and evidence. This lumping everyone together into one big group and slandering the group is unbiblical and dangerous. It is guaranteed to promote division in the church. For an outstanding explanation of the sin of slander as it applies to accusations of “racism” see <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/seeing-the-world-in-black-and-white>.

This method of dividing people into groups and charging the entire group with thought crimes without evidence is classic Cultural Marxism. Note that we are not accusing David of being a Cultural Marxist, just noting that we are using classical Cultural Marxist terminology and methodology in the MBC class. We continue to use the unbiblical terminology of “race” over and over in the class. Neither our

skin shade nor any other physical characteristic is “who we are”, even when using the euphemism of “ethnic group”. To suggest that it is, or to encourage people in the church to think that way is unbiblical and divisive. “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.” [Romans 12:2]

The whole section of the class on the Old Testament practice of corporate grieving over someone else’s sin and corporate praying for someone else’s sin was hermeneutically unsound and fraught with the danger of committing the sin of slander by publicly accusing a brother or sister, or a group of brothers and sisters, of sin without offering proof. First the hermeneutics – Israel is not the church and the church is not Israel, and they have different purposes in God’s plan of redemption as it unfolded throughout history. The corporate animal sacrificial system, for example, was unique to Israel in history and not required of the New Testament church. This principle that Israel is not the church and the church is not Israel, is why the class did not contain any New Testament examples of corporate grieving over someone else’s sin or corporate prayers for someone else’s sin. As Jesus hung on the cross, the Temple veil to the Holy of Holies was torn from top to bottom. From the cross to today, each person enters the Holy of Holies, not corporately through a human High Priest, but individually, one-by-one because of the finished work of Christ. There is no evidence that the New Testament church prayed in the third person plural for the sins of the Roman empire, and neither should we pray in the third person plural for the sins of America, as if we were committing them. In addition, there is no evidence that the church in Corinth prayed in the third person plural for the sins committed by people in the church in Ephesus, as if they were committing them.

“No imputation of another’s sin can be granted, except on the supposition of some peculiar connection of the one with the other” (*Elenctic Theology*, Francis Turretin, Vol I, Topic IX, ix,11). He goes on to argue this union may be threefold: (1) natural, as between a father and his children, (2) moral and political, as between a king and his subjects, and (3) voluntary, as between the guilty person and a substitute who consents to be punished for the sake of another. These distinctions make sense of the imputation of Adam’s sin to us (natural and moral), the imputation of our sin to Christ (moral and voluntary), and the other examples of corporate responsibility and punishment in the Bible (King and subjects of Israel). But none of those conditions apply to 21st century America and the sin of partiality based on skin shade.

Finally, the myth of “white privilege” is a pernicious lie that is guaranteed to divide the body of Christ. Each individual is absolutely unique, not only as a created human being, but also in everything about his life experiences after birth. First, artificially grouping people into a category like “white” based on a physical characteristic like skin shade is unbiblical and we should never be “conforming to the world” in this way. Second, the concept of “privilege” is a deliberately vague Cultural Marxist term used to force people into artificial groups of “oppressed” and “oppressors” in order to foment political revolution. MBC should avoid this satanic system like the plague. The term “systemic racism” is of exactly the same type and for exactly the same purposes.

Mike Kelsey taught the bulk of this class with a few others also involved, including Gustavo Pacheco and Ashley Kelsey with a closing segment by Todd Peters.

There was a definition of “ethnicity” given and it was vague and confusing. For example, it was not clear if “ethnicity” included “culture” or was separate from “culture”. There was a statement made that “all ethnicities are equally valuable”. If that is true, then it is very important whether the definition of “ethnicity” encompasses “culture” because all cultures are definitely NOT equally valuable. As an extreme example that proves the point, some cultures practice and celebrate cannibalism. A culture, like the American culture, is more or less virtuous, good, and valuable based on the degree to which each culture has its roots in Biblical principles. So, does “ethnicity” include culture, or not? If it does not, then what is it? We expect that it is a way to smuggle the unbiblical categories of “race” back into the conversation. Why are we not using the term “People Groups”, which are primarily differentiated by language and culture, but do not necessarily have anything to do with skin shade or any other physical characteristic. The American People Group contains every skin shade from the very lightest brown to the darkest brown, and almost every possible physical characteristic. Why are we seeking to artificially and unbiblically divide the American People Group?

Then there was a flagrantly unbiblical statement about “ethnic sin”. This is a false concept. All sin is committed by individuals, and there is a large body of scripture that plainly teaches that God judges people individually (and not by groups based on skin shade or any other physical characteristic) - DEUT 24:16, EZEK 18:20, MATT 12:36-37, ROMANS 2:5-6, ROMANS 14:12, 2 COR 5:10, 1 PETER 4:5, REV 20:11-15, REV 22:12. So, there is no such thing as “ethnic sin”. [See excerpts from Kevin DeYoung below] Also, during this segment Mike Kelsey seemed to use the terms “ethnic” and “race” interchangeably, which was very telling. It shows that the term “ethnic” is just a codeword for “race”, which we have established is an unbiblical way to divide people.

Next there was a statement made that started with, “if you meet someone with a different background than you ...” Well, everyone has a different background from everyone else. Each one of us is an individual, not a nameless, faceless part of some “racial” or “ethnic” group. From the beginning of time God has not made another person like you, and until the end of time he will not make another like you. We have powerful corroboration of this Biblical fact from the modern science of genetics. So, every single person has a different “background” from every other person.

Then there was a statement about the importance of actively pursuing “multi-ethnic community”. This is also unbiblical, as the church is told to move away from divisions and categories, not emphasize them – “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” [Gal 3:28]. Notice that we *are* one in Christ Jesus, not that we need to take some action to *become* one.

Then, once again the false statement was made that “we” classify people by skin shade or “race”. We addressed this in the previous section above. It is clear that even some in the church *leadership* buy into the secular categories of “race”.

The next section was a cartoonishly one-sided and biased survey of American history (and American church history), viewed entirely through the unbiblical lens of “race”. The data points were cherry picked to reach a predetermined conclusion and facts counter to the chosen narrative ignored. There were also incidents of historically inaccurate statements, as well as uninformed speculation. We will give examples of each. First, an historically inaccurate statement by Mike Kelsey that the early European settlers of North America did not believe that the Indians had souls. The Mayflower Compact was the first governing document of Plymouth Colony, signed November 11, 1620 and explicitly stated that the purpose of the colony was “for the Glory of God, and Advancement of the Christian Faith.” The Pilgrims were very excited from the very beginning to share Christ with the Indians and had excellent relations with Chief Massasoit (1580–1661), and his Wampanoag tribe. See *The Light and the Glory: 1492 - 1793* by Peter Marshall and David Manuel for a true history of the exploration and settling of America from a Biblical perspective <https://www.christianbook.com/light-glory-revised-expanded-edition-1793/peter-marshall/9780800732714/pd/732714> .

The uninformed speculation was about why people choose a particular church. We, and everyone else that we know personally, **first** reads the “Statement of Faith” or “What We Believe” or “What We Teach” before anything else. There is nothing that could even begin to approach *sound teaching of Biblical doctrine* as the most important factor in choosing a church. This applies to, literally, every true follower of Christ that we have known in our many decades as Christ-followers. What is Mike Kelsey’s *proof* that “racism” or any other kind of “preference” drives people to choose a church? He provided no proof, and his conclusions run counter to our own observations.

Then there was an extremely flawed definition of “racism” (which is really the sin of partiality). The definition once again included “systems and structures”, an idea which we have dealt with in the sections above, but which kept coming up in this class over and over.

There was a strong reliance in this section on CRT, Intersectionality, and Cultural Marxist terminology, ideas and tactics. Especially the re-writing of history based on grouping people into artificial categories of “oppressed” and “oppressors”, then viewing all events in history through that lens. If a historical event does not fit the pre-determined narrative it is ignored, as if it never happened. The other major Cultural Marxist tactic is using the extrapolation from anecdotes as “proof”. Many stories that begin, “... as a ‘black’ man in America ... , or as a ‘black’ woman in America” are meant to make an emotional appeal that then *proves* “systemic oppression”. That line of thinking is fatally flawed because people are individuals, not merely representatives of an artificial category. And since Cultural Marxism was specifically designed to foment divisions among people, when that kind of thinking creeps into the church it is certain to cause division in the church as well.

The final section of the GCJR class was the most disturbing of all. Mike Kelsey said the following (and we listened to the recording many times to make sure we got every word exactly as he said it):

“White people throughout American history created and continued to benefit from ideologies, practices, policies and structures that degrade and disadvantage people of color.”

This sentence is classical Cultural Marxism, and almost every word of it is wrong, and dangerously so. First, there are no such thing as “white people”. Every single person that walks the Earth now, or who has ever walked the Earth, is brown. Some people are lighter brown and some people are darker brown, but no one is “white” and no one is “black”. This is extremely important, especially because skin shades are absolutely continuous from very light brown to very dark brown. There is no break or discontinuity, especially in the American People Group, so the very terminology is complete nonsense. The same thing applies to the final phrase “people of color”. Everyone is a “person of color” because everyone is brown. Brown is a color. The phrase “people of color” is a Cultural Marxist dog whistle, and it is nonsense. Furthermore, following the Cultural Marxist playbook of dividing people into artificial categories and then assigning each of them the arbitrary and vague status of “oppressed” and “oppressor” is guaranteed to produce division, as it was designed to do.

Every person is an individual and cannot be pressed into a convenient category to fit the Cultural Marxist narrative. Paul warns us about things like this in the book of Romans: “I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them. For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive.” [Rom 16:17-18]. We are talking about the people and ideas from outside the church and the danger of bringing them into the church, not accusing anyone inside the church. We believe Mike Kelsey is bringing these ideas into the church unwittingly. However, we believe the ideas are so dangerous and divisive that they need to be addressed.

The middle part of the sentence demonstrates an extremely warped view of American history. The founders of the United States of America were very consciously motivated by the Bible from the very beginning, as the Great Awakening of the 1730s and 1740s laid the foundation for, and directly led to, the United States being established on solid Biblical principles in the 1770s and 1780s. [See *The Christian Life and Character of the Civil Institutions of the United States* by Benjamin Franklin Morris, written in 1864]. Before 1776, of course, there was no such thing as the United States, there were only British Colonies. So where did slavery in America come from? It was the law of the British Empire. In 1773 the colonial legislatures of several New England colonies passed laws prohibiting slavery, but King George III, through his appointed colonial Governors, promptly vetoed those laws. So, despite widespread opposition to slavery in the colonies, when the United States was born in 1776, it inherited slavery from the British Empire. The Revolutionary War lasted from 1775-1783, then there was a long struggle to establish a government from 1783-1787. But by 1804 all of the New England states as well as New York, and New Jersey had either completely abolished slavery or enacted positive laws for the gradual abolition of it. [See more details in the link to Kevin DeYoung below, especially his addendum at the end] This was four years before the Federal Constitution ended the slave trade, and almost three decades before England voted to follow suit and abolish slavery. The American wave of emancipation constituted the largest group of people who had voluntarily freed their slaves up to that point in modern history. And then a few decades later, hundreds of thousands of Americans, mostly of lighter brown skin shades, were willing to fight and die in a massive Civil War, one of the primary effects of which, was once and for all ending slavery in America. Of course the sin of “slavery” is really the Biblical sin of man-stealing, and the origin point of the North American slave

trade was African tribes with a dark brown skin shade kidnapping (man-stealing) members of other African tribes with a dark brown skin shade and selling them to slave traders with light brown skin shade. But none of those historical facts fit the Cultural Marxist narrative of neatly slotting people into groups of “oppressed” and “oppressor” by skin shade.

<https://media.thegospelcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/02151317/KDY-Racial-Tensions-series.pdf>

## ***GCJR Class #5***

**July 26, 2020**

Mike Kelsey coordinated this class with several others also involved, including James Park, Wade Burnett, Alison Cuevas, Nate Reed, and David Platt.

In the first section Mike Kelsey went back to a theme from his co-sermon with David Platt a few months ago, which was that some people do not “feel” welcome at the church. In reality either people *are* welcome, or they are *not* welcome. Basing what we do in church on people’s “feelings” or their perception of reality is dangerous. Whose “feelings” take precedence – my feelings, your feelings, a market survey of feelings? The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever. The purpose of the gathering of the local church on the Lord’s Day is to worship Him who sits on the throne. It has nothing to do with our “feelings”. If we come to church and we are focused on our “feelings”, we have already missed the point.

Then, James Park gave some examples of what he called “cross-cultural engagement”, and we would call “talking to people”. One of our members, talks to his wife every day and they are from two vastly different cultures – one born and raised in the U.S. and the other born and raised in Japan. In spite of cultural differences, people are ultimately individuals, and the only way to get to know a person, is to talk to *that* person, who will not necessarily be a cookie cutter representative of a certain culture. It is simply not very hard, or complicated, to walk up and talk to a person – as long as the person is not spring-loaded and eager to be offended by everything and everyone around them.

Both James Park and Wade Burnett mentioned teaching our children about race and justice. We agree, but not in the way that James and Wade seem to mean. One of our members was still four years old when his mother taught him to read, and he started reading the Bible. His father conducted Biblical training for the family around the dinner table every day of his life from as far back as he can remember. Only after he and his brothers had a thorough Biblical Worldview (viewing everything in life through the lens of God’s truth in His Word), would they be introduced to any specific secular topic. So, before they knew what the fake secular term “race” meant, their minds were already saturated with the Word of God; before they knew of any political issue, their minds were already saturated with the Word of God. We believe it is unwise to expose a child to any secular political issue like this until we are certain the child has a firm grasp of Biblical teaching from Genesis to Revelation; who God is, who man is, and the arc of God’s redemptive plan through history from Adam and Eve to the New Heavens and the New Earth.

Wade mentioned taking his 13-year-old son to a BLM protest. We think this was imprudent and is not a good example for the congregation to follow, especially given that 1) many of these “peaceful”

protests have degenerated into horrific mob violence, and 2) often when we see a video clip of one of these BLM protests it is attended by extreme profanity, even by those who remain peaceful. Wade told his son that he should go and just listen. We believe it is better for a 13-year-old to listen to the Bible, than to listen to a secular mob with an avowed Marxist agenda. We are concerned about the “Next Gen Ministry to support parents” that Wade mentioned, especially if these five classes with all their reliance on CRT, Intersectionality and Cultural Marxism, are an example of what will be taught to the kids.

The next section was taught by Alison Cuevas, and she focused on how to talk to unbelievers. She started by saying that we need to show unbelievers that the Bible is sufficient to address race and justice issues, which we agree with wholeheartedly, ... **IF** she means what the Bible actually says, and not the Critical Race Theory/Cultural Marxist/social gospel/social justice errors being taught in these classes. Alison peppered her talk with “social justice” language including “white supremacy” nonsense from the secular sociology book, the “people of color” Cultural Marxist dog whistle, and a quote from John Perkins about “social justice” being a “gospel issue”.

We have gone over this in sections above, but the gospel is contained in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, “For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that **Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures**, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.” That is the gospel. And then Romans 10:9, says, “that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” That is the proper response to the gospel. None of that has anything to do with the “social gospel” and “social justice” concepts being imported from secular ideology into the church.

The next section was a Christian’s duty in politics and it was taught by Nate Reed. He immediately launched into the concept of “systems and structures” from Critical Race Theory, which we have showed in previous sections above to be a misunderstanding and/or a misapplication of the Biblical concept of justice. He also mentioned, once again, the concept of the gospel “compelling” a believer to “do justice”. We have already covered this concept in the sections above. The term “compel” should never be married to the gospel, and we previously showed that the definition we are using for “do justice” in this class is a misunderstanding and/or a misapplication of the Biblical concept of justice. This whole section was jarring to us because it highlighted how intent church leadership seems to be on politicizing McLean Bible Church.

The next section was taught by David Platt in the form of answering a question that David has gotten from many people in the church. “How can a member of MBC support a Democratic party candidate who supports abortion?” He started off with an assertion that the issue is complicated and a proclamation that he is writing a book on the subject. Then he said that there are always “competing injustices” and that Christians should weigh their options at the ballot box using two factors – Biblical clarity and practical consequences. He did this by putting a few examples in a two-by-two diagram. His essential argument was one of moral equivalencies. For example, he drew a moral equivalency between 1) the good of the government protecting the life of the unborn, and 2) the “good” of the

government taking money at the point of a gun from someone who earned it, filtering it through a government bureaucracy, and then giving what is left over to someone who did not earn it, as an “entitlement”. What he called “helping the poor”.

The second thing that we have described above is as far from the Biblical concepts of either charity or justice as any idea could possibly be. We believe this is a consequence of McLean Bible Church losing our focus on the gospel and wading into secular, political ideologies of “social justice” that are profoundly different from the Biblical concept of justice.

In the next section both Wade Burnett and David Platt gave some practical advice on what congregants and pastors could and couldn’t, should and shouldn’t, do in a political campaign, and especially when commenting on social media. The “five choices” that Wade talked about were uncontroversial and the ten recommendations by David about communications were solid. David closed this section by repeating “social justice” claims and appeals to Standpoint Epistemology that we have already addressed in the previous sections above.

The final section was done by Mike Kelsey and was cause for great concern. He said that these five classes and the Discipleship Resource developed from it will have the following three effects on MBC.

- 1) Provide greater clarity about what the Bible teaches about race and justice.
- 2) Facilitate greater unity in our church.
- 3) Compel us toward greater intentionality as a church to pursue racial reconciliation and racial justice in our:
  - Preaching and teaching
  - Discipleship and training
  - Corporate worship
  - How we raise up leaders
  - Initiatives and ministries that serve the oppressed

The impression we got from this section, is that this is now the core of who we are as McLean Bible Church. We believe using what has been done in these five classes to completely re-make MBC into a “social justice” organization would be a major disaster. First, 1) and 2) above are simply not true. These classes and the Discipleship Resource will do neither of those things. Then, 3) above, if implemented would uproot the church from its foundation in the gospel, and reorient it toward the secular ideology of “social justice” to our great harm.

## *Conclusion*

All three secular ideas behind much of the GCJR content (Critical Race Theory, Cultural Marxism, and Intersectionality) are designed to divide people into artificial groups of “oppressed” and “oppressors” or sometimes “privileged” and “marginalized”, based on superficial, unbiblical categories, in order to pit people against one another. These secular ideas have already torn our society apart and now the terminology and assumptions of Critical Race Theory, Cultural Marxism and Intersectionality have begun to penetrate even the church.

For a Christian perspective on the idea of “doing justice”, we need to look to Jesus, who lived in one of history’s most corrupt societies. Jesus never issued any call for political change, not even by peaceful means. He did not come to the Earth to be a political or social reformer. The gospel Jesus preached did not have to do with social reform or “social justice” or political change. Rather than attempt to change governments and institutions, which are made up of people, Jesus came to change people’s hearts and point them to God’s Kingdom. He preached the saving power of the gospel and the transforming work of the Holy Spirit. The apostles, Paul, Peter, James and John, who wrote the canonical letters directly to the New Testament churches, also neglected to include any indication that the church’s priority should be social or political change in the Roman Empire of their day.

As we indicated at the outset, we are not questioning individual motivations nor intentions; however, the father of lies wants to steal, kill and destroy, cause division not unity. Because we believe we have approached this issue improperly, he is succeeding. Syncretism has led the evangelical church to replace theology with victimology, swap pastors for sociologists, and trade theologians for political activists. Preaching/teaching that is based on the wrong assumptions, leads to wrong conclusions, resulting in wrong solutions.

We cannot affix identity politics to the all-sufficient Scriptures and still assert to be champions of sufficiency. God’s Word must stand-alone. Like a powerful lion walking the African plains - Scripture needs no assistance to diagnose and address the societal ills of a fallen, depraved society, as we eagerly await our Savior, Christ Jesus.