

## Think Before You Vote: Connecting Some Dots on a Couple of Current Political Theories

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During my vacation, I did a lot of reading, some of it augmenting what I already had a pretty good feeling for. I had a lot of the dots, but some of my reading helped me connect them more cohesively.

Why do I feel the need to share these perspectives with you? Because we are in a political season in which we need to understand ideologically what's out there and where certain candidates are coming from in terms of worldviews. After reading several books and listening to some of the TV talking heads and their guests, smart as they are in many ways, I get the impression that many of them lack a coherent understanding of the "walls" that certain politicians are coming off of.

When we Christians go to the polls, we must make certain we are not duped by highly misleading terminology. Some of these political camps, if not openly hostile to historic Christianity, are by no means allies in our mission for Christ and the truth. So, what I'd like to do is remind you that the Christian should vote for the candidates whose *policies* are most compatible with a Christian worldview, and I will attempt to help you make that determination by filling you in on some of the pitfalls I see, politically speaking.

Let me talk about *libertarians* and *progressives* in particular. I am not saying that everyone who owns these labels exactly fits the following description, but I *am* saying that it accurately describes the intellectual leaders and diehards of those movements. I am also saying that the worldviews of those political philosophies are incompatible with biblical or historical apostolic Christianity. There are many "Christians" who are nominally Christian but not true Christians in terms of New Testament theology.

Now, for the definition of a *libertarian*: A dyed-in-the-wool libertarian believes in broad liberties for citizens and narrow powers for government, lest it restrain those liberties. Big freedom, small government is their mantra. What you may not realize is that many, maybe most, libertarians tend to be social liberals who are laissez-faire in moral matters. "Have it your way" would be their style. From issues like abortion to homosexuality, to same sex marriage, and to who knows how many other perversions, many libertarians would take a very permissive stance (you know, so long as your behaviors do not infringe on my liberties).

Their big concern is about economics, not morals. They get their back up mostly about governmental actions or regulations that are seen to handcuff the presumably virtuous dynamic of free-market forces. These impediments to growth they vigorously oppose in the name of economic prosperity.

Ironically, this movement is not, as some think, a right-wing species. It is more of a hybrid. While many (or maybe most of them) feel compatible with the political left wing (today known as *progressives*) on moral matters, they sharply part company in their economic philosophy. An uninhibited free market is

what they want. Let people alone. Don't encumber those trying to do business with a lot of burdensome taxes and gratuitous regulations that only drive up the costs of doing business and, in fact, put a big hurt on the little guys and drive many out of business, all in the name of protecting the public and "helping" the disadvantaged. They would insist, I take it, that unhampered free market forces have a sort of mind of their own, and if left alone by intrusive government and its vast bureaucracy, have a funny way of working things out for the good of all. That seems to be the theory anyway.

Underlying the political philosophy of the libertarian movement, as I understand it, is a fatal flaw in their presuppositions: Unlike conservatives, especially religious conservatives (most of whom would be classed as evangelical Christians), libertarians cling to an inordinately optimistic view of the inherent goodness of human nature. They appear to assume (like most other people) that human beings are good by nature. If people are bad, it is by unfortunate mis-nurture.

Hence libertarians, from a biblical standpoint, are entirely too trustful of ungoverned or unrestrained humanity to find the right path to general economic prosperity, social well-being, and presumably moral order. Their stance is like this: "Just leave us be. Trust us, those of you who want to govern us. Let running water seek its own level. All that is needed for good outcomes is a wide freedom of action and as little restraint as necessary."

If I am understanding the libertarian perspective correctly, then, their hands-off philosophy is incongruent with the historically established corruption and perennial violence of the human race. For when its dark impulses are unrestrained by the contravening authority of governments (which, in general, are more suspicious of the native good instincts of human beings when left to roam pretty much as they please economically, morally and ethically), things can go downhill pretty fast.

While history redundantly bears witness that human government (actuated by morally fallen humans) can be and often is tyrannically oppressive, bad government still is always superior to no government, for anarchy is the cruelest master possible.

Furthermore, biblical revelation testifies to the desperately evil heart of mankind (Jer. 17:9). So, it should be clear to any but the blindest and most biased that, for all the imperfections of human government and the burdens it imposes, human beings in all their activities, given their native individual and collective corruption, tend to stray from what is right, prudent and productive for the common good.

To believe that "unmolested" citizens can be trusted to seek life and liberty and pursue *their own happiness*, without infringing or interfering with the rights of others to do the same, is a theory dead on arrival. The Scriptures teach us that human government, for all its foibles and failures, functions as a servant of God to buffer us from that hailstorm of evils that would, in its absence, envelop human civilization. That was one great lesson behind the judgment of God in the time of Noah.

Thus, if my understanding of libertarianism is approximately on target, let none of us believers who hold a biblical or Christian worldview imagine that we have an ideologically compatible ally in this philosophy.

Basically, as I see it, libertarianism is a pretty secularized ideology that seems to define the public good in materialistic or economic outcomes. That criterion, every Christian should know, is a far cry from the biblical perspective that warns us that the good life does not consist in the abundance of things we possess.

On the other hand, what today is called a political *progressive* is a different and more dangerous “animal” in many respects. Progressives tend to champion Big Brother, looking to big (and bigger) government to set right all things perceived by progressives to be wrong—especially if they themselves are in charge and calling the shots.

Let us understand that progressivism in modern political parlance is a self-appropriated but very misleading term, so let’s deconstruct it. First, it is a self-serving label intended to suggest proudly that its adherents are the champions of change, which they equate with progress. So, the movement believes that it is the counterforce to all those conservative or traditional forces, movements or influences (you know, what they deem to be the-stuck-in-the-mud, don’t-change-anything types who always try to stymie the upward march of evolution and to keep everything the way it used to be) that are the devout enemies of *change* (and everything good).

The thought never occurs to them that in fact they, the so-called progressives, may be unwittingly the impetus of terrible regress and that those despised conservatives might be pointing the way to cultural human progress. Sometimes, the key to getting ahead is by going back to what made you great in the first place. Progressives seem incapable of grasping that.

For the sake of clarity, progressives are otherwise known as the left wing or radical left wing, if you prefer. I personally fail to see much difference, since to my mind the left-wing mentality (since its ideological inception way back in the French Revolution) has always been radically inclined. By that, I mean that this type is always more than ready to tear down what currently exists while reinventing our values in order to turn our “evil” capitalistic society into a presumably more equitable socialist one. Since progressives do not operate according to traditional moral principles (more about that missing link later), they believe that their ends justify their devious means (like disingenuously reinterpreting or outright revising the U.S. Constitution to suit the ideological need).

Having watched this political crowd in action since the 1960’s in its various iterations, I think it is fair to say that the serious progressive ideologue has few compunctions about curbing our constitutional freedoms in order to achieve the progressive ideal in which they purportedly envision a new society in which all citizens are equal partners and social justice prevails. This means an economic leveling and an abolishment of discrimination (by their definition). Already they are making dead-serious runs at limiting the freedom of religion and the freedom of speech, as those of you who read regularly and follow the news probably already know.

Now let me be clear. Admittedly I do not profess to own any credentials of a political pundit. I am just a guy who has a lot of history under my belt, who reads and thinks and tries to figure out where people are coming from, especially those folks whose worldviews and actions are incompatible with or hostile to our Christian faith and practice. *That* is my compelling interest.

As I have tried to sort it out the mindset of these progressives, here is my amateur (but I think pretty accurate) assessment of the radical mindset, influences and underpinnings (i.e., DNA) of progressives. Naturally, in every movement, some are just clueless followers who really don't know what drives their leaders, but they just like the noise and excitement and the sound of "progressive." So my critique, such as it is, has in view the philosophical leaders of the radical left, not necessarily the clueless cows who just follow the herd.

But, my limitations notwithstanding, I do know what the left wing is about. And I also know that coded in the progressive DNA is, first, a worrisome virus of **utopianism**. That virus does not bode well for our future if they are in charge, for historically, utopianism has always been an unqualified failure.

If to some Christians their idealism sounds virtuous, the devil is in the details—and more.

Let's clear the decks a bit. There is no biblical issue at stake in the small government/big government argument. That controversy belongs to the realm of political science, not theology.

The real quarrel we have with the progressive or left-wing party stems from the radical coding of its ideological DNA, which has other scary mutations beyond its utopianism. That coding impinges negatively on Christian faith and practice and, to my mind, absolutely guarantees bad government (if they are in charge). We are presently seeing the establishment of laws and administrative rules that are incongruent with our Christian work and worldview. We must not be blind to this, as I believe many naïve believers are, as evidenced in the political pitch lines and the candidates some fall for.

So let me try to pinpoint some other undesirable elements of its DNA, as I call it, its genetic coding that not only puts a target on the backs of orthodox (or apostolic) Christians but over time will also have a destructive influence on the whole society. In fact it already is. We Christians need to be aware of this stuff.

Next, the progressive DNA oozes **the spirit of secularism** (in case you have been wondering where the big surge has been coming from these last several decades).

A secularist very often shares with the atheist the same mindset and a fierce determination to root out Christianity and its influence and practices from the public square. Of course, they generally say, "religion," but we know the code. Really, they mean most especially the Judeo-Christian religion. Their dissimulation is pretty obvious when they go out of their way to be inclusive and make nice to Muslims, trying to accommodate their religion, their misogynistic ways, and their cultural separatism while, at the same time, bashing and trying to restrict and exclude traditional public expressions of our Christian faith and practice. The truth is, most of them don't give two hoots and a holler about *any* religion. In fact, this inconsistency reveals their true mentality, that is, "the enemy of my enemy is my friend." But we see through their hypocrisy.

The truth is, when it comes to government and the marketplace of ideas (such as the educational system), the secularist wants to get God (I mean the true one, the biblical one) and expressions of public

piety out of the room like an old, unattractive and useless piece of furniture that serves no good purpose.

Secularists believe that religion is irrelevant, period. And the atheists among them believe that God is nonexistent. Together, they feel that those of us who give our allegiance to Jesus Christ and take on our stand on the Scriptures regarding any matters to which they speak as the supreme authority for faith and morals are *worse than* irrelevant, yes, even flat-out public nuisances and obstacles to the kind of brave new (God-less, science-dependent) world they envision. Thus they would, if they could, cheerfully neutralize us, even going so far as to punish us economically or criminalize us for standing our ground or airing our Christian views on moral issues. If you have been asleep, realize that this thrust is already percolating. Anyone who believes otherwise has not been paying attention.

Therefore, believers must grasp that we cannot walk hand in hand with Christ and play footsie with the political left wing (progressives) because our respective causes are incompatible. What *they* stand for is sexual freedom (sex with whomever or whatever you please), which is really sexual anarchy. As we all know from recent events, they have already achieved major victories and are still trying to push matters to their absolute limits. Not only do they want us to roll over and capitulate, they are demanding that Christians get over it and concede outright that all this sexual adventurism should be embraced and approved by us as *the new normal*.

How can it be normal? Easy. Because, if *they* say it is, it is. Who would have known it was that easy? In case you missed it, hey, times have changed. Get over it! They will not for a minute be happy with us until we abjectly admit that what God calls evil is in fact good, and always has been, and what we once called good was really an unconscionable injustice to sexual deviants. They will not entertain the proposition that God has spoken and that He says otherwise, for they do not even acknowledge God.

Nevertheless, some professed Christian leaders and pastors are lamely bowing to that pressure (so says a recent Barna report) and trying to cover their cowardice by rationalizing it in the name of Christian love! (Got to protect their market share, you know. And the collection plate. Can't offend anybody but God. No bad PR, for heaven's sake.) How weak and naïve can we be and scandalize Christ by such moral surrenders?

I should add that progressives, who are presently feeling their oats as cultural and political arbiters of the way things should be, are today even more aggressive in pushing the buttons of government leverage. And why not? They feel they will be, in the near term, the ones dictating the action and calling the plays.

That is why, I believe, their arrogance is palpable as they tally their recent string of legal victories over the moral objections of conservatives (in the broader sense). They are champing at the bit to push their agenda even further. Some of them are determined to quash dissent by openly campaigning, for instance, to criminalize those voices who dare to question the validity of suspicious climate change studies! Can you imagine this blatant assault on freedom of speech?

For all their posturing as the camp of the compassionate, progressives are well-nigh oppressive on environmental issues, for instance. Their harsh, uncompromising spirit disguises, as some see it, their preference for socialism and their death wish for capitalism and corporations. Not a few of us see their “protectiveness” of the environment as morally disingenuous. For often, it appears to be driven more by their desire to demonize capitalistic enterprise and job creation than any sincere interest in saving the environment (a salamander, for crying out loud?) for future generations. In that case, what you have is just a dissembling hate tactic meant to frustrate business people, drive them up the wall (or out of business) on false pretexts using endless bureaucratic hassles and stall tactics. It is such a fraud.

I point out these other issues not because we as Christians have a direct vested interest in the way things turn out, but just to show that progressives are not shy about resorting to heavy-handed power plays and, like the bullies they are, rolling over others (including a lot of little people) in their ideological self-righteousness.

Ha! Right there is another ugly strand or two of the progressive genetic code we should note for the record.

Many observers have, with raised eyebrows, marveled at the moral **self-righteousness** of progressives, not to mention their groundless sense of **intellectual superiority** to those who disagree with them. That posture is ironic since, as I will demonstrate later, they have no basis, given their amoral intellectual premises, to stake out any high moral ground whatever, since there is no such thing (according to their presuppositions) as right or wrong, just choices.

Thus, if you live and breathe in a postmodern climate, as most of them do, there is neither truth nor morality to be attained. (I will amplify on this a bit later.) Hey, when you belong to the culturally elite class and your positions are held by a secure majority, who gives a rip about consistency and intellectual coherence? When you own a secure hold on the Big Microphone (the media, the universities, the courts and the entertainment industry), you can rally your troops, shout down the opposition, or run over them legally. You win by bullying, by legally outmaneuvering the minority, not by providing compelling facts and cool logic.

This brings into view another devilish strand of the progressive DNA. The prolific author and former intellectual leader of the radical movement in the 60's and 70's, David Horowitz, has observed that these left-wing people display a serious, even vicious **tyrannical streak** that, if left unfettered politically and legally, will stop at nothing to gain their ideological ends. This was widely demonstrated in those decades, and it is being resurrected today. It's the mob mentality. They are like sharks when they smell blood in the water.

Notice that antiwar movement of the 2000's, the burning of cities, the Occupy Movement, and the various uproars we are now seeing in some of our cities are all reminiscent of the mayhem of almost 50 years ago or so. Political intimidators and progressive demagogues are taking to the streets with malevolence and mayhem, using violence and their shrill voices to harass weak-kneed authorities (university presidents for example), while unlawfully commandeering and plundering property.

You will note, of course, that they are seldom held accountable, at least not in any way that might give them pause. Again, with them, their ends justify their evil means. Since the French Revolution, the tyranny of the mob remains a hallmark of the progressive mentality. For my money, they are scary.

Give them the keys to the government, and I predict you will see them take off the gloves, and by any means they can get away with, they will push their program as far as possible, even if that means discriminating against and incarcerating good people (you know, to teach them that you do not mess with the progressive mean machine). Actually, I think we are already getting a bitter taste of it.

A tyrannical personality is just one symptom of the pathology of their movement. Along with that is a **pronounced nihilistic tilt**. That word has more than one sense, but here I mean an appetite for tearing down or so overburdening existing authority, institutions and traditions in the secret hope of creating such a crisis that it affords the progressives a convenient opportunity to step into the chaos and “rebuild” America to their liking.

Progressives sometimes loudly profess that they love America. Do I believe them? It depends on what they mean. People sometimes see a gorgeous property and magnificent views that they just love, but they hate the house and the outbuildings on it. What they want to do is raze all that and rebuild and re-purpose the property. That is the thing with progressives. They might love the property called America, but the evidence suggests that the left-wing radical would like to raze the traditional culture and institutions, or at least seriously reshape them to suit their own tastes and visions.

Am I saying that the progressive brain trust is revolutionary and would not be terribly unhappy if our present system of government, like our economy in the Great Depression, crashed, forcing such a federal emergency that required the government to assume unprecedented powers to stabilize and rebuild the System on another model? Yes, frankly I am. Many of them would welcome such a calamity and might even give it an assist if they could. And given the present drift of things, what they want might indeed happen without a lot of assistance. However, those of their ilk are not long on political patience.

During the Great Recession of '07-'09, did I alone detect some not-so-secret glee as the government, Big Daddy, came to the rescue of many of our iconic financial institutions and corporate names, forging a new and dangerous partnership between Big Government and Big Business? That was a Pyrrhic victory for Big Business, for now it is forever indebted to play ball with Big Daddy and is obliged to do whatever it can to cooperate with the leftist agenda. Clearly they are on board, for one never knows when the next big crisis may come and they may need Big Daddy to rescue them again. I guess it does *really* pay when corporations become too big to fail—Big Daddy will make sure they are failsafe—for a political price, of course. Even the NFL seems to have learned and gotten in step with the prevailing ideological climate. Now, whether we like it or not, we really have Big Government with a capital “B.”

As concerning as this (progressive profile) is, what is most shocking about their DNA and what is least understood, I think, by many political commentators is that progressivism has evolved in recent decades into a scary intellectual mutation. Perhaps most of the leaders of the movement have **married up their**

**philosophy with postmodernism.** Rarely is this philosophical connection ever mentioned, but it ramifies all over the place.

What is postmodernism and what is so bad about it (on “Monday morning”)?

Admittedly, postmodernism, like existentialism, is not the easiest concept to neatly define, but when it comes to the progressive movement, all we need to know is that postmodernism (a reaction against rationalism) rejects the idea of objective truth. To the postmodernist, truth is a thoroughly subjective thing. Truth is whatever you want it to be. Your truth, his truth, her truth, whatever. One cannot say that this or that is the truth (of course, neither they nor anyone else can consistently live with that philosophy, but that is just a mere quibble, right?). For instance, your birth certificate, confirmed by your trusty mirror, may resoundingly testify that you are a male, but, hey, if you say that you think your sexual identity is female, that is what you are! And they will put anyone who openly disagrees with you about it in jail and throw away the keys. Your “truth” is that you are female, despite every objective indication otherwise. That is the way it is.

Think about that. Behind all this stuff is the assumption that there really is no personal God, at least no God in the Judeo-Christian sense. No God, no accountability, no lawgiver, no right and wrong, oops, almost forgot—no meaning, no significance, just make it up as you go along, like a good existentialist.

Can you imagine our government, our judiciary, our economy, and our schools under the sway of progressives, all drunk on the wine of a postmodern mentality? Well, you don’t have to wait. Many of them are our cultural elites occupying influential places in our society, and unless I’m guessing wrong, a lot more are in the political and academic pipeline.

For that reason, the progressives of this stripe (certainly the leaders, if not the followers as well) **lack any moral compass.** They deny even a basis for traditional morality. Their substitute is what we know as “political correctness.” That, in case you hadn’t figured it out already, is the New Morality of this culture. **It’s their secularized replacement for the revealed law of God in Scripture and for the natural law our Creator embedded in the human conscience from the beginning (Ro 1:18).**

So let’s ask this question: On “Monday morning,” in the political arena, how does all this philosophizing play out at the street level? Does it *really* make any practical difference? I will tell you what I know, and then you can decide for yourself.

Well, once postmodernists subjectivize truth, they can play language games (creatively twisting words to mean whatever) and overturn the obvious. Things no longer mean what we always *knew* them to mean. It’s more complicated than this, but for our purposes let’s just say, right and wrong are relative. No, not relative. Worse. Nonexistent. There are just choices born of subjective expediency.

Example: According to the progressives, all those morals and societal structures whose existence the rest of us just assumed were right and proper are actually nothing more than convenient “social constructs” (or language schemes) put in place by the Powers That Be to suppress and oppress powerless minorities. So, these language games must all be torn down to their raw essences, shorn of



their virtuous faces, and exposed as power tricks used by those in authority. That is their “truth” and they are sticking with it. How does one refute such subjectivity?

Of course, as the premise goes, these social constructs that the postmodernists have uncovered and deconstructed before our very eyes are bogus. The progressives insist that these constructs have no legitimate basis and therefore they, enlightened as they are, can now overthrow or toss them aside in the name of progress. Hence, what was good yesterday can be safely pronounced evil today and vice versa. It’s all relative.

Doesn’t it blow your Christian mind to realize that this philosophy is footloose and fancy free in your neighborhoods, your public schools, your colleges and universities, and in your government and its bureaucracies—big time. Doesn’t it split your britches to think of unaware parents stepping up and proudly paying heavy-duty money to send their young people to elite schools, only to have their children intellectually programmed by these progressives drunk on the wine of postmodernism with no concept of truth or morality in their teaching?

Do you see it? In the media, we hear terms like progressive or left wing bandied about, and the average Joe has little conception of what these labels actually mean and might have a difficult time believing just how devious these philosophies are. But it’s true.

But I’m not done yet. Progressives, as previously mentioned, are *champions of change*, driven by an evolutionary philosophy of society that contends that change is always helpful, never harmful, in its mutations. Right there, in that toxic stew, is where progressives started “dating” the atheistic scientific theory. Since there is no agreed upon or accessible standard of truth, and since human beings are all the products of accidental evolution and evolution is an irresistible force of blind nature, therefore change is inevitable. Furthermore, they groundlessly assume that social, moral and political “mutations” always work together for good (sort of like the Hegelian philosophical idea of thesis, antithesis, synthesis . . . repeating itself ad nauseam).

The progressives, in their worldview, **start with evolutionary premises** and **combine them with the philosophy of naturalism**, which says that only the world of the five senses is real. They extend the Darwinian theory that life originated from an accidental primordial “soup” to the historical and political realm. Therefore, history is the story of human evolution and the survival of the fittest in *every* dimension. It is thus a narrative of an ever-changing world of ideas (and here we thought there was nothing new, but just retreads of the same of tired human utopian ideas, tried and failed and tried again under new names!).

So, here’s their thinking on “Monday morning”: One should not be reactionary and try to restrain “progress” or deviations from the existing societal or political structure. Rather, we should regard these as the new normal and welcome them as friends of progress (and along the way, we should demonize and deconstruct old categories like sexual taboos, gender distinctions and marriage as defined between a man and a woman).

That is an example of how this crazy stuff is infiltrating the popular mind and twisting everything beyond recognition. And here is another.

Progressives want, if given the power, to neutralize or destroy those age-old, negative forces of society (Christians, conservatives, etc.) who represent the old, destructive structures that have been holding back “progress” for too long and frustrating social justice, however progressives in their new “morality,” known as political correctness, choose to define it. And those who frustrate change are deemed to be a “basket of deplorables” in the infamous opinion of one notable progressive politician.

The implication for the progressive mind leavened with postmodernism is that mankind is on a path of true self-determination, accountable to no one but ourselves, and because, to them, God is not there, has not spoken, and is not involved in our life here on earth, we cannot, with any certainty, speak of truth as something fixed and certain about what is right and wrong.

Well, there’s more depressing code in this progressive DNA that I could cover here, but as you can see, these ideas matter on “Monday morning.”

So, when you go to the ballot box as a Christian man or woman, you will not regularly have the option of voting for truly devout and competent fellow believers. Sometimes, as they say, it’s a crap shoot. We vote and hope for the best and sometimes we get the worst.

But however we vote, let’s have our lights on in the dark. As I said before, lend your support to the candidates whose policies are most compatible with a Christian worldview.