



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Christianity and Wokeness: How the Social Justice Movement is Hijacking the Gospel– Part 1

Guest(s): Dr. Owen Strachan

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Dr. James Dobson: You're listening to Family Talk, the radio broadcasting division of the James Dobson Family Institute. I am that James Dobson, and I'm so pleased that you've joined us today.

Roger Marsh: Well, welcome to Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh and if you haven't heard the news yet, I want to announce that we have just added the brand new Dobson Culture Center to the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, and our guest today here on the broadcast is the new senior director of the DCC, Dr. Owen Strachan. Today's program was recorded just a few years ago as Dr. James Dobson sat down with Dr. Strachan to talk about a book that he had written about wokeness and how some of the church might be misled to follow this ideology.

Wokeness and critical race theory, what exactly do they mean anyway? Well, on today's program we're going to shed some light and truth on these topics. Dr. Owen Strachan is an author, theologian and scholar, and today he'll be sharing more about his book entitled *Christianity and Wokeness: How the Social Justice Movement is Hijacking the Gospel and the Way to Stop It*. And be listening at the end of today's broadcast, as well as I'll have more information on how you can sign up to start receiving the brand new weekly report from the Dobson Culture Center edited by Dr. Owen Strachan called "Lighting Up Culture." But first, let's get into today's conversation. Here now are Dr. James Dobson and Dr. Owen Strachan, right here on Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: This is an extremely important book. It's a must read for anyone who wants to understand the culture and particularly the church of Jesus Christ. Both are undergoing dangerous changes that could affect you and your family and certainly your faith. The introduction to this book was written by Pastor John McCarthy, a very good friend of mine. You know that because I quote him often. He's a fellow warrior for the faith and he likes this book and because he does, I do, I have had an opportunity to scroll through it and I am really extremely excited about it. Dr. Strachan, I am so honored to have you with us today because I really appreciate this book. Welcome to the program.

Dr. Owen Strachan: Thank you so much, Dr. Dobson. It's a real honor to be with you and I thank you for having me on.

Dr. James Dobson: The first thing I noticed when I opened the book was that you have 35 endorsements from religious leaders in this book, and I don't usually take the time to read information like that because it tends to bore people, but I think it's important to understand how Christian leaders feel about this book. Dr. Wayne Grudem, who is a distinguished research Professor of Theology and Biblical Studies at Phoenix Seminary and also a great friend of mine wrote, "This is an alarming and remarkably insightful book. It shows how wokeness is a deeply anti-Christian movement that even today is increasing racial divisiveness, anger, resentment, and hostility because it wrongly evaluates people based on the color of their skin rather than who they are as unique, individual members of the worldwide human race."

Dr. Stephen Lawson wrote, "Wherever the church faces a major threat to the purity of sound doctrine and a biblical worldview, God raises up a strong voice to confront that destructive error, and that's what we have in this book." He goes on to talk about it at length. Tony Perkins, great friend of mine and colleague said, "Moved by concern for the church. This author has provided a valuable and insightful resource on critical race theory." So it's not only about woke, it's about CRT critical race theory. Dr. Strachan, these endorsements tell us that evangelicals, leaders especially are very alarmed by the cultural revolution that's swirling around us and we've already identified that it's called wokeness: how is it that so many Christians who are hearing those words seem to have no idea about what they mean?

Dr. Owen Strachan: Yeah, I think it's because our culture has co-opted a lot of the terminology that surrounds this discussion. So wokeness uses terms like justice and fairness and equity and related terms, but it co-ops them. It gives them their own meaning, wokeness's own meaning. So for example, when woke voices are talking about justice, they don't mean biblical justice. They don't mean retributive justice, they don't mean God-centered justice where sinners are held to account and all receive their just due from the Lord. They mean social justice, which is really a leftist distributive system where society is leveled, where if there are rich people there are pulled down by their shoestrings. If you are a member of an LGBT group for example, you're called a sexual minority according to social justice, and that means that you have been unfairly discriminated against by complementarians like you and me. And so, what needs to happen is people like us need to be thrown into the dustbin, and sexual minorities, so-called, need to be elevated to a place of social prominence.

So there's a lot of confusion, Dr. Dobson, because this godless ideology use terms that we all use and a lot of Christians even are hoodwinked into thinking that for example, because wokeness is supposedly against racism, then it must join up with a biblical worldview. But in truth, when you examine critical race theory, wokeness, intersectionality and related movements and then hold it up to the light of the word of God, you see these are totally different systems: they're not at all the same. But sadly, many people are hoodwinked today. So, our woke peers tell us that racism now is hidden, white people are basically white supremacists, and they're constantly promoting this racial power dynamic

where whiteness is centered, whiteness is normative, and people of color are left out of the mainstream.

Wokeness says it's baked into the very fabric of America. It's not so much that people are putting burning crosses in people's yards. It's that your average white person is a white supremacist and they don't even know it, and that's the kind of ideology as your listeners are already going to be picking up. That is actually not against racism, that's not anti-racism. Truthfully, that is neo-racism: that is racism, not against people of color, but against so-called white people, and we need to stand against that and not think that wokeness is the answer to racism. It's actually the way to make it much worse.

Dr. James Dobson: What worries me is what's going on in the public schools where children are taught to hate their country and to hate each other. It doesn't bring people together. It drives them apart, doesn't it?

Dr. Owen Strachan: It certainly does. That's an absolutely important element of this ideology. Basically, wokeness and critical race theory and intersectionality train you to despise this country. Wokeness is really a rejection at all turns of what we call as Christians common grace. We don't think that America is perfect, we certainly don't think that the American past is perfect, but we do recognize that God fills countries and nations and states and communities with common grace. Now, there's of course a spectrum there, but when you look at America, you recognize, for example, Christianity has had a lot of influence here, and that means that God has showed us a lot of kindness as a country. There are certainly elements of our past that we lament, but there are tons of elements of our past that we're thankful for and that's how we want to raise our kids as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ today. We want our children to be thankful for the good elements of America and to preserve what we can of this public order.

But wokeness says, "Mm-mm, no. Pick up a Molotov cocktail and throw it through a shop glass window and burn America down." They did so a year ago in the streets of one city after another in this country, Black Lives Matter, Antifa-related movements, and they're doing so in the classroom. They're taking a Molotov cocktail to American history and training our children, as you said, to despise this country. And honestly, Dr. Dobson, I believe it's evil. I believe it's satanic, an attack that we should reject.

Dr. James Dobson: What's the origin of the word woke? What does that really mean, and how did it come out of what seems like nowhere? It really didn't. They've been about this for a long, long time, but all of a sudden it's here in our faces. Put a ribbon on that for us.

Dr. Owen Strachan: Yeah, woke has been around in the African-American community as a term for a good long while, and it's had different usages. What it basically means today is it means that you are awakened to the reality that America is a comprehensively racist and unequal public order. So if you go woke, you wake up and you see, "Oh wait, this isn't a fair place, this isn't a good nation." Wokeness says, "This

place is unequal, it's racist, it's filled with white supremacy, minority groups are deprived, and so what we need to do basically is we need to go to war against the old America." So when you're woke, you really become an activist against America, against white people, in many respects, against the church of the Lord Jesus Christ as I make clear in my book *Christianity and Wokeness*.

Dr. James Dobson: And against the Constitution.

Dr. Owen Strachan: Yeah, the Constitution, because it was written in days when there was slavery, the woke argue that that is actually a tainted document, so where men like you and me would point to our founding documents and say, "Okay, we didn't always practice this the way we should as a country, of course not, but nonetheless, these are sound public documents. There's a lot of wisdom here, there's a lot of goodness, and we would want to affirm that and pass it on." Our woke peers tell us that basically, those founding documents are bankrupt and they don't really hold weight, and the Constitution is a living document anyway, and we can interpret it as we see fit. Of course, the hilarious thing is woke voices want their own ideas and principles to be interpreted according to what they mean by them, but when it comes to the Constitution or the Word of God or conservative speech, they're very happy to play fast and loose with that.

Dr. James Dobson: They really want to tear down the very foundation of this country and replace it with what?

Dr. Owen Strachan: They want to use their toxified version of history, and they want to employ that in order to dynamite the existing public order, and then they want to remake it in a leftist way. They want to unseat white people, they want to minimize the voice of the church. They don't really want a free society where different views are shared and we hash things out in the public square. All of that is stuff of the past that deserves to be thrown into the recycling bin. What we want is an order where the right people speak, and big tech is only very happy to help all this. Our social media overlords are very glad to continue their campaign to silence and even censor voices who dare to critique them. Suffice it to say that this is a generational challenge to America and this is a generational challenge certainly to the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, your book really makes the case that the wokeness ideology is antithetical to biblical teachings in the Scripture. Spell that out for us. Where is that found?

Dr. Owen Strachan: Yeah, I think it is at odds with Scripture in a lot of different places. I think fundamentally, wokeness denies the image of God, it denies that every person has dignity and worth before the Lord as made in the image of God, Genesis 1:26 to 28. It teaches us that basically, white people have an extra layer of guilt. So in the fall, maybe woke Christians would affirm that we've fallen in Adam, but wokeness really trains its guns on white people, and so white people end up by virtue just of being white as white supremacists, and that then means that the gospel is monkeyed with as well by woke ideology such that the gospel,

maybe it saves you in a woke Christian framework, but it doesn't really address structural racism and systemic inequality.

What you need to address that is really the Marxist tool of the oppressor and the oppressed. You need to understand that there are racial power dynamics in the West, in America that are at play, and so white people need to see themselves as the power group, and that means they need to step back as the oppressor such that people of color can step forward as the oppressed. All of this represents major changes to Christian theology and to gospel convictions. I spelled this out at length in chapter three of *Christianity and Wokeness*. There's much more to say, suffice it to say that wokeness altogether corrupts and co-opts biblical Christian teaching, and the church needs to be very aware of that.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, how come they're not? Why are so many conservative pastors adopting this apostasy?

Dr. Owen Strachan: I think it's because we have grown up believing that everything's going to go well for us, and what we have done perhaps unwittingly in some cases is we have embraced a palatable, nice-ified understanding of the Christian faith where we think it's our job to be liked by people. We think we should take stances that elite leftists will applaud or at least approve of, and I'm so thankful when I look at a ministry like yours over the years, for example, your stance to stand behind biblical manhood and womanhood and God's vision for the family. You saw that American culture and society was changing and you saw that there was a profound need to stand against the wisdom of the age, but a lot of pastors and a lot of younger Christians in particular today, fear being called a fundamentalist or an extremist by non-Christian voices. And so, they contort themselves to be approved of by cultural gatekeepers.

And here's what I would just say to many younger Christians today and to many pastors: be liberated, be loosed from this desire to be liked. Where does Scripture call us to be liked by godless people? Of course we should reach out and love to an unbelieving world and we should do good to all men, but fundamentally standing for Christ crucified and Christ resurrected means that Matthew 5:10 and 11, we're going to be hated and persecuted for righteousness' sake. We cannot fall prey to a niceified, palatable Christianity such that we give away our birthright.

Dr. James Dobson: That is so powerful. How is it linked to LGBT, and the transgender movement, and all that goes on in today's public schools?

Dr. Owen Strachan: Yeah, it's a good question. I think they're connected because they are collectively an assault on creation order on God's making of the world. If you go back to Karl Marx and you look at Karl Marx's Communist Manifesto with Engels, you see that Marx and Engels hated God, and then hated the natural order that God had made, they despised the family, they wanted to detonate creation order. This is 150 years ago.

If you fast-forward many decades to now, basically I think the leftist movement we're discussing, I think woke people hate creation order. Many of them I think hate God and they don't like the world as God made it and they don't want to receive the world that God has made, and what they want to do is they want to re-educate American youth in a leftist Marxist woke kind of way, and if they can do that, then their victory will be complete. We may take many hits in the public square. We may lose in the political arena, but we will stubbornly fight on against principalities and powers nonetheless, and we will not give our children to the devil and to those who would educate them in an unbiblical way.

Dr. James Dobson: That is encouraging to hear. What is discouraging to me is the progress that's been made, if you call it that in changing the way children think. They own many classrooms, many school districts, and that has the potential for essentially undermining and destroying an entire generation of children. Parents listen carefully to what's being said here. Do you really want your children raised or being taught in a Marxist environment with the kinds of things that we've just been describing, that's taking place in schools all across this country? Not all of them, but I'm telling you something's happened here that alarms me deeply.

Dr. Owen Strachan: Mm-hmm. Yes, me too. I think there has been a sea change, and when you couple that with what has happened at our colleges and universities where they have become incubators for a generation of Marxists, you recognize that those young people who were setting fire to American cities a year ago and even now are advancing wokeness every chance they can get. You recognize that is because of radicalized education, they are the product of the system they're coming out of because this movement is advancing with great momentum.

And fathers and mothers no longer can think, "Well, I just send my kids to the local public school and then I send them to a state school, and I assume everything's going to be fine. We crack the Bible once a week, once a month as a family, and I think this is all going to work out." Maybe things used to be a little more benign in this country, but this is absolute war for our children and this is a conflict between God and the devil really at the ultimate level, and we need to get invested in this struggle.

Dr. James Dobson: I said in my introduction that it has invaded every dimension of culture: is that an overstatement or are you seeing that?

Dr. Owen Strachan: No, I see it for sure: it's in Hollywood, it's in our schools as we've been talking about little children being separated by race in one classroom in Canada and taught that the white kids have all sorts of advantages that the kids of color don't have, Robin D'Angelo's teaching, for example, has become very popular in the corporate world. If you have a woke corporation that wants to virtue signal that it is against racism, then it might well invite Robin D'Angelo for a \$30,000 lecture who will tell the white people in the room per her best-selling book that they have a condition called white fragility, which basically means that you're damned if you do, and you're damned if you don't. If you embrace that you have white fragility and that you're a white supremacist, well, then you just

admitted that you're this horrible person in need of major change because you're a racist, and if you deny that you are showing white fragility when these lies are spoken in your direction, then of course you're only showing that you are a racist: you're denying the condition, so they really have you from every angle.

These kinds of sessions proliferate across America. There was a famous LinkedIn training session that Coca-Cola used some months ago, white people, the PowerPoint said, should try to be less white. Now, we all can recognize that we're all going to have our own background or whatever, but that is a totally nonsensical formulation. There's this construct of whiteness that woke people use. It's not based in reality, but it is then foisted upon white people and they are then demanded that they stop being white. How do you try to be less white? This ideology is nonsensical. It is hot, sociological garbage, but somehow it is advancing all through our society.

Dr. James Dobson: I think this is one of the most important radio programs I've ever been part of because it threatens the entire culture. It threatens our country, but most of all, it threatens our children. It threatens our military and their ability to focus on defending this country. It gets at the heart of everything that matters-

Dr. Owen Strachan: Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: ... and we've just begun the conversation today, but we're out of time. We've been talking to Dr. Owen Strachan a senior fellow of the Family Research Council, that brings it pretty close to home for us. He has an earned Ph.D. in Theology from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, he's the author of 20 books, but the book that we've been talking about here today is *Christianity and Wokeness, How the Social Justice Movement is Hijacking the Gospel*, meaning the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and the *Way to Stop It*. We need to talk more about that and let's do that next time. Dr. Strachan, thank you for being with us today, and if you'll allow, we will continue this conversation next time.

Dr. Owen Strachan: Thank you so much, Dr. Dobson, great to be with you. Appreciated the conversation.

Dr. James Dobson: It's my pleasure.

Roger Marsh: Well, it's no secret. Our children certainly are being threatened by the woke agenda and issues like Critical Race theory, and that's why today's program was so important here on Family Talk. As you heard, our own Dr. James Dobson and the first part of his conversation with Dr. Owen Strachan, Dr. Strachan, of course, is the author of the book called *Christianity and Wokeness: How the Social Justice Movement is Hijacking the Gospel and the Way to Stop It*, and we have more information about that book up at drjamesdobson.org. Dr. Strachan is also the brand new senior director of the Dobson Culture Center, and if you would like to glean more of his insights about culture and how it is impacting

the body of Christ in America, you want to sign up to receive the Lighting Up Culture weekly report from the Dobson Culture Center. You can do so online at drjamesdobson.org, and then follow the prompts to the Lighting Up Culture weekly report from the Dobson Culture Center, edited by our senior director of the Dobson Culture Center, Dr. Owen Strachan.

Last week as a country, we celebrated Independence Day. I hope you had a chance to spend some time with family and friends, of course, just enjoying the holiday. At the same time though, did you take a moment to reflect upon the greatness of our nation and specifically the great men who organized this United States experiment that is still continuing 248 years later. Freedom is not free, and that's why I encourage you to sign up for a brand new five day email series called "Faith of the Founders." Each day's entry will focus on a different American who helped form our nation. We know that you'll be inspired and encouraged by the lives of some of these great men, and that their stories will challenge you to carry on the values that make America great.

To receive the free five-day email series called "Faith of the Founders," simply go to drjamesdobson.org/familytalk, and then click the link on the bottom of today's broadcast page. Well, I'm Roger Marsh and you've been listening to Family Talk. Be sure to join us again next time when Dr. James Dobson continues this conversation with Dr. Owen Strachan, the new senior director of the Dobson Culture Center. They'll be talking about Christianity and wokeness next time on Family Talk.

Announcer:

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