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Natasha Crain: When Culture Hates You

March 1, 2025



Knight & Rose Show - Wintery Knight and Desert Rose

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose welcome Natasha Crain to discuss her new book "When Culture Hates You". We discuss the shift from a culturally accepted faith to one increasingly at odds with societal norms. What is driving the church's tendency to conform to cultural pressures? We explore how Christians can respond to societal hostility with grace and conviction.

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Transcript

Welcome to the Knight and Rose Show, where we discuss practical ways of living out an authentic Christian worldview. I'm Wintery Knight. And I'm Desert Rose.

All right, welcome, Rose. So today we're delighted to welcome a guest onto the show, Natasha Crain. Natasha Crain is a speaker, blogger, podcaster, and author of five books who equips

Christians to think more clearly about holding to a biblical worldview in an increasingly challenging secular culture.

Her podcast is the Natasha Crain Podcast. Her articles have been featured in outlets such as Focus on the Family Magazine and The Christian Research Journal. She has been featured on radio and TV shows across the U.S. and Canada.

She holds the MBA in marketing and statistics from UCLA, a BA in economics from USC, and a certificate in Christian apologetics from Biola University. I love a STEM background. She was a marketing executive and adjunct marketing professor before transitioning to the Ministry of Writing and Speaking.

Welcome to the Knight and Rose Show, Natasha. Hey, thank you so much. Glad to talk with you guys.

So today we wanted to talk to you about your newest book, which is called When the Culture Hates You. Yeah. And I just want to say from the beginning, I love this title.

As you point out in chapter one, Jesus taught us to expect persecution. I think we've been a bit spoiled in America for some time now. And I think a lot of Christians have started to think that there must be something wrong if the culture doesn't love us and approve of all of our beliefs.

But Jesus said, you know, the world will hate us because it first hated him. I think when Christians think that we're supposed to be celebrated, we're supposed to be approved of in every way. They start thinking, well, we must be doing something wrong if the world isn't loving us.

So maybe we just need to be nicer. Maybe we need to stop talking about difficult subjects and just only share the good news of the gospel. Others will talk about, hey, you need to change your tone.

You know, that might cause barriers and things like that. But I mean, I think this is exactly what Jesus said would happen. Do you have any thoughts on that? Yeah, you're exactly right.

You know, it's funny that you say that you love the title because I love the title. And a lot of people, it definitely resonates with a lot of people when they say, Oh, what are you working on these days? And I tell them, Oh, I have this book that just came out and you know, you tell it and they say, what's the title? And you tell them and like a lot of people who are aware of what's going on in the world immediately go, Oh, that's good. And then sometimes you get the responses from people and I've even seen them in some reviews, like, you know, just get past the title.

You know, the title sounds too provocative, but if you just get past the title, then, you know, the book is great. So it's kind of funny because it's in your face a little bit, but there shouldn't be anything too controversial about it, really. Because like you're saying, this is exactly what Jesus

told his disciples to expect.

You know, Jesus said specifically, if the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own, but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. So this is a really important little passage from Jesus because he didn't just say, Hey, the world might hate you and I'll let you figure out why he actually gives an explanation.

He specifically says that if you were of the world, the world would love you as its own. So what does it mean to be of the world? Well, the Bible speaks to being of the world as being under the governing rule of Satan. It is basically wanting to go your own way because you are a slave to sin.

People are either under that rule or they're under the rule of God. They are children of God who are slaves to righteousness, as the Bible puts it. So of course, when those who are children of God are shining light on the deeds of darkness, when you're exposing what's going on, then of course people are going to hate you for it.

I mean, ultimately it's God that they hate. It is God and his definition of righteousness, his standards that they hate, and we're kind of the messengers of that, right? So of course the culture is going to hate us if they hate God. So yes, absolutely.

Christianity is not about being nice. And I think that's one of the biggest, most harmful misconceptions that a lot of Christians have today that we just need to be liked. And if we're liked, then someone's going to give us a hearing to hear the gospel.

But that's not what Jesus told us to expect. There's nowhere where it says, make sure people like you, make sure you're super nice and kind of, you know, just kind of sitting back until someone comes and asks you, no, that underlying the gospel, there are all kinds of truths that you have to understand in order to even get to the gospel in the first place. And then there are so many truths that flow from it.

And it's going to be offensive because at the end of the day, as I talk about in Faithfully Different, my last book, it's all about the authority of self for culture versus the authority of God. And if you're telling people, hey, you're not the authority, you're not the boss of your life, it's actually God, they're going to be offended by that. And so the culture is going to hate you for making that clear.

Yeah, definitely. I'm seeing this a lot with Christians around me, Christians I work with, they seem to be very anxious. I hear things like just love everybody and, and so on.

So, so Christians will sometimes claim that Jesus and his disciples, at least the perception is that Jesus and his disciples didn't spend a lot of time advocating for moral values and policy changes in the public square. And so by extension, Christians shouldn't be doing that either. How would you respond to that? Let's say it's a really shallow understanding of what Christians are called to

do to only look to what Jesus specifically did in his time while he was here.

Because for example, I think the vast majority of us would look back and say, it's a really great thing that Christians work to abolish slavery in the 1800s, right? We all can, we all should be able to agree on that. And yet Jesus didn't spend his time advocating for getting rid of slavery as some kind of institution at the time, right? So we can't just look and say, okay, what specifically did Jesus do in his three years of ministry? And we're just going to replicate that because first of all, we're not Jesus. So there are things like atoning for sin that we're not capable of doing.

And on the other hand, there are things that Jesus wasn't doing because of a matter of priority at the time or that it just wasn't applicable at the time very specifically. And so we have to have a broader view of scripture to understand everything that we are actually called to do. And the rest of the Bible absolutely speaks to God's heart for the healthy moral functioning of society.

You know, a lot of times when people say, well, Jesus didn't say this or that, they kind of forget, well, Jesus is God. And we can look at the Old Testament to see what God said about these things because the Old Testament says a whole lot about what God thought about poorly functioning societies. There were a whole bunch of times when God was calling out nations and not just Israel.

That's important to understand the pagan nations as well. You know, Daniel, as a prophet, he's over in Babylon and he's telling King Nebuchadnezzar, a pagan king, hey, you need to break off your sins by practicing righteousness and showing mercy. There were expectations, moral expectations that God had for societies.

So we see that pattern throughout the Bible. Yes, God cares about our individual salvation. Of course, that is of primary importance, but he also cares about the righteous functioning of societies.

And then you can go on in the New Testament and you can read in Romans 13, one through seven about God's purpose for government as well. So these aren't Jesus' specific words, but we shouldn't be red letter Christians who only look at, you know, exactly what Jesus said, and we ignore the rest of scripture, which is all inspired by God, which is all authoritative. And in the book of Romans, it talks about the fact that all authority comes from God.

And so government as an institution is actually a good thing that God gives us. That doesn't mean everything government does is good, but the role, the function itself is. And the role of government is to promote what's good and restrain what's evil.

That's Romans 13. So the Bible absolutely speaks to the need to have healthy functioning societies and for people to advocate for what's right in society. We have to look beyond just what Jesus specifically accomplished and did while he was here.

Yeah. And as you've mentioned before, you know, Jesus didn't live in a constitutional republic

and he had a very specific focus while he was on earth. And yet his early followers actually did have a huge impact on the culture and on policy, things like ending the entertainment of, you know, humans slaughtering each other in the Colosseum in Rome and things like that.

They had an impact on the sexual ethics, you know, right sexual ethics of the Roman Empire. Yeah, exactly. So I'm glad that you mentioned government because what I found is I think Christians sometimes struggle to advocate for moral issues because they're quoting Bible verses and that can be difficult if you're working, you know, in a company where there's a lot of Hindus and Muslims and your only reason for believing something is the Bible.

So with respect to, you know, promoting Christian values in policy and achieving Christian goals, I sometimes like to study policy in order to be able to bring evidence to the table. So like consider the example of Canada's healthcare system. So that healthcare system is not very good for Christians because it has mandatory funding of baby ending.

It has mandatory funding of sex changes. So if I live there, I would advocate against it. They also have terrible outcomes such as families paying \$18,000 a year, you know, to support this, which is a lot of money and the average wait time for treatment is 30 weeks.

So if I were having a discussion about that, in the back of my mind, I'd be thinking I don't want the secular left to control healthcare because it will force Christians to do things they don't want to do. It's going to require abortion, all these reasons. And so when I talk to someone, I'm going to give evidence about why it doesn't work.

What do you think about taking that approach and maybe broadening out the number of policies that we talk about like that? Absolutely. I mean, there are many ways that you can make a compelling case to someone. So maybe tackling it from the worldview perspective doesn't immediately resonate with them because they're not a Christian.

But at the same time, if Christianity is true, then you're going to see that the worldview is going to lead to the right positions. And when you get into talking about policy, there are going to be outcomes of those positions that are actually negative in a lot of cases that even a secular world can appreciate. So I think a really good example of this is with some of the laws that impact, you know, ideas about transgenderism.

So for example, you have plenty of people who aren't Christians who are now speaking out more and more about, wait a second, this is actually really harmful to kids. Now these kids are growing up, they're detransitioning, they have some permanent medical issues because of what they went through, or they see, you know, this big, huge guy, a biological male on volleyball court who just completely clobbers a girl because he's playing there as a supposed female. And people just kind of intuitively go, okay, that's not right.

We need to protect sports. Well, plenty of people are saying we need to protect sports from that without being Christians, without holding the worldview that would tell you, Hey, God has

a design for gender and sexuality. And therefore if he does, then he's going to be right about, you know, human flourishing and therefore, you know, you can build out that whole case.

But they're looking at it just on a strictly pragmatic level of, of saying like this, you know, this just doesn't, this is hurting people medically. This is problematic. And they're looking at different types of evidence for that.

And so when we see that, we absolutely should be promoting some of those pieces of evidence that come from the world around us as to why this is problematic. Because sometimes that's going to resonate with people who are not Christians before some of the worldview issues are. Of course, over time, we hope to make the case from a worldview perspective and we should continue to do that.

But I absolutely agree that you have to tackle things from, from multiple sides. And just to add onto that, I think another example of that is, you know, with abortion, because it's amazing to me how many people are just appalled when you say, Oh, you know, some, somebody supports late term abortion, but they're only appalled because it's late term. Like if you ask them, well, should you be able to get an abortion at 10 weeks? I'll be like, that's fine.

Just don't do it when it's a fully formed baby. Well, from a Christian perspective, that's the same baby that is the same human. That is the same baby that we need to be protecting.

And yet there's something that you can appeal to and people's in their moral understanding that they've suppressed that we, it is wrong over here. So even, you know, I absolutely believe in, in tackling as much as we can at a time. So even in that, speaking to people about, yes, okay, let's, let's get rid of this.

Let's keep pushing it back until we can have more of those conversations about, about, you know, getting rid of abortion completely. And even with something like the healthcare issues that Wintery mentioned, I mean, we can make a case to non-Christians that there is not unlimited money. There are limited funds.

And when you, just because you want something or you, you want to declare to human right, doesn't mean that all of a sudden it's ubiquitously available and that we can just offer it for free to everyone. We can make the case that look, whenever this has been tried, this, you know, single payer system, there are compromises in quality of care. There is a tremendous cost to it and they're going to rise over time.

The costs are going to rise. There's going to be a waiting, a very long waiting time. That's going to be increasing over time.

So if you want the government to be in charge of your healthcare because it feels good right now, just be aware, you know, that, that over time you can expect to be waiting a very long time, paying a lot of money and seeing a decrease in the quality of your care, or at least some combination of those and appeal, appeal to people that way. So I've been, I've been reading a

lot of Andrew Walker lately and natural law ethics and things like that. And I love this, this concept of appealing to the conscience, appealing to the rational mind from a practical perspective for the sake of everyone's flourishing.

It's not, it's not just, as you pointed out, for the sake of Christian flourishing, it's really for everyone's flourishing, whether they recognize it at the time. And we have the best case because we have truth on our side. In chapter four, you address five common objections that people often give to Christians who are seeking to influence public policy.

And one of them is that Christians shouldn't impose their view on others. I hear this all the time. Christians should not impose their view on others.

So how do you respond to the objection that Christians shouldn't impose their view on others? Well, usually when somebody says this, they're talking about it in terms of policies, like, you know, well, just because Christians don't believe that, you know, you should be able to get an abortion, it doesn't mean that we should be able to tell everyone else, hey, you can't get an abortion, right? That's usually the context in which this is used. But this is just really fundamentally a misunderstanding of the nature of public policy because in any kind of public policy, you're going to have one group's view imposed on someone else. I mean, even if it's something as simple as a speed limit, if you're if you're making a speed limit, you're going to impose the view that this is the right speed limit on those who don't think there should be a speed limit or there should be a different speed limit, right? I mean, even with something that overwhelmingly society agrees on something like murder, you're still imposing the view that murder is wrong and should be outlawed on those who think you should be able to do whatever you want.

So this is this is just the nature of policy. It's not Christians who are doing anything strange or weird or improper because we're advocating according to our views in the public square. We live in a constitutional republic.

That is our form of government. That means that everyone, regardless of whatever their motivation is or their rationale for it is, whether it's religiously motivated or anything else, everyone has the right to bring their views to bear on how they're going to vote and advocate in this society. That's what we get the right to do given the form of government that we live in as Christians in America.

So it's just it's meaningless to say, oh, well, Christians shouldn't be advocating. Now, maybe we theoretically we could live under a form of government that allows that, but the Bible prohibits it. That would be a logical possibility, but that's not what we see in the Bible.

We don't say anything that says, you know, whatever you do, stay out of government, don't influence society. I mean, we see the opposite. I gave examples of that earlier.

So the Bible clearly doesn't prohibit it. It clearly tells us what the role of government is. And if

the role of government is to promote what's good according to God's standards and restrain what's evil again, according to God's standards, then who's going to be there doing that? If not Christians, who's going to promote what's actually good and prevent what's actually evil when we know that the world around us is going to call evil good and good evil.

So, of course, we need to be out there doing that. And there's no civic barrier when people actually understand that, you know, there's not this separation of church and state in the sense that, oh, you can't bring religious views to bear separation of church and state is not even something that is part of the Constitution. People just get this confused all the time.

What the First Amendment says, it makes it clear that you cannot establish a state church and you can't people, you can't force people to practice a specific religion. There's no official religion of the United States. That's completely different than saying, hey, you're a Christian.

Don't bring your religious views into how you advocate in society. We're here. We get to vote.

We get to advocate just like anybody else. Yeah. And those two examples you gave were so good because I really feel like we're winning on those two issues, baby ending and transgenderism because we're, you know, appealing to arguments and evidence and being persuasive.

So I was just thinking about like, I had my plumber come out recently and do my water tank change maintenance. And I was just thinking how funny it would be if I said to him, no, don't tell me that I need to do anything. Don't impose, you know, your views on me.

You know, when we have somebody who is trained and educated to do a job and solve a problem, you know, typically we don't see them articulating their view as offensive in any way. In fact, we're happy to get their expertise. Do you think that there is like room for Christians to grow in our ability to speak about the issues that you describe in your book in that way that we're seen as problem solvers rather than imposing our view? That's an interesting question.

You know, I think that on individual issues, absolutely. Like, I think that there is absolutely an opportunity for Christians to be much, much better educated and equipped to answer things on the abortion issue, for example, or to, you know, answer pragmatically about why same sex marriage is not as good for society as traditional marriage. You know, Frank Torek's book, correct and not politically correct.

He kind of goes along those lines of argumentation. So if Christians knew how to better articulate a case for a biblical view on a lot of these things, citing evidence, citing in a lot of case science and the medical evidence that people are ready to accept, not so much as the world view issues, but some of this from natural law, from the world around us, then yes, I think we have that opportunity. I don't think that anyone, when it comes to the actual morality of it, I don't think anyone's going to get to a point of saying that, you know, oh, well, Christians are the experts on morality, because that goes back to the first question, which is that we already know

that the world hates God's morality.

We already know that the world is going to hate us because we're not of the world. And so therefore, righteousness is going to be despised by a world. And so when it comes to those moral issues, when they don't happen to align with the popular consensus of the day, we're going to be hated for that.

So I don't think anyone will see us as experts in morality for that reason, for biblical reasons. But I do think that there is such a need for Christians to better be able to articulate the rationale for the biblical positions we have using, like we were talking about earlier, the evidence from the world around us. And even just, you know, I see, I hate to say it, but I see Christians making some really uneducated statements a lot of times when it comes to transgender issues, you know, like they they'll bring up intersex, for example, which is disorders of sex development.

Well, that has nothing to do with another gender, but else, you know, but people throw these things out and, and it just, they're not understanding all the issues. And so it actually takes away from our credibility when we're not equipped to be able to talk about these things well. So I do hope in my book, that is one of my biggest prayers for the book is that it would better equip people to talk about the specific issues.

It definitely does. It has a lot of tactics and tips to do that. By the way, we had Frank Turoquan to discuss that book just for the purpose of making people stronger on those issues, because I really feel like if you if you're seen as as informed, then it's a completely different conversation and you could be a lot bolder.

Absolutely. Yeah. And I love that you bring up several specific issues in the second part of the book that are hot topics of our day.

And one of them, of course, is Christian nationalism. And we are hearing this a lot that that Christians who express ideas, beliefs, convictions, evidence, even in the public square are called Christian nationalists. What does this even mean? And how should Christians maybe respond to these types of accusations when they express their convictions or opinions? So in part two of the book, I basically taken each of those chapters and five chapters, five different issues where I believe that we have the greatest urgency today of having better clarity.

And at the same time, we are hated or disdained by culture in some way. And so that chapter on Christian nationalism is called dangerous Christian nationalists, the view from mainstream media. And that's really how mainstream media promotes this idea of so-called Christian nationalism, that that there is this dangerous movement, that it's theocratic and that it's anti-democratic, that it's pervasive.

It's this big, bad, scary thing. Now, here's the deal. People use the term Christian nationalism in all kinds of ways.

And I don't think that there's one definition you can point to as like, now, objectively, here's

what it is, because it's just been thrown out there like spaghetti on the wall. Everyone's just kind of run with different definitions of it. And so I'm not defending or promoting or criticizing a specific type of definition.

I am saying, here's what the media typically means when they say it. And here's how we should view it. So I just want to be clear about what I'm talking about in the book, because people can mean so many different things.

A lot of Christians now will say like, oh, I'm a Christian nationalist. And they have their own idea in mind. I'm thinking you have no idea what people are thinking you're saying right now.

So in the media, basically what I did was I surveyed hundreds of pieces of content online, video and article types of content to see, okay, if they're talking about Christian nationalism, they're not setting out to define it. Most of the time, what you have to do is actually look at what it is they're talking about to see, well, okay, this must be what they're talking about. And when you do that, what you find is that in the vast majority of cases, when they are talking about Christian nationalism, they're just talking about Christians who are advocating for unpopular conservative positions that align with their biblical worldview.

That's what it means. For example, and I cite articles in the chapter where it's talking about how there's this dangerous Christian nationalism coming to all 50 states. And when you actually look at the articles where they're talking about this, you'll see that really what they're talking about is that Christians are advocating for pro-life positions that, you know, we're promoting, quote unquote, anti-trans bills, which are actually bills for the good of trans people, according to God's standards and the good of everyone else, but they call them anti-trans from their worldview perspective.

And so you see that these are the examples that they're giving of Christian nationalism. So you can back into what they think Christian nationalism is. When you back into that, you can see that it's bringing your religious views into the public square and trying to, quote unquote, impose your values on others, which we talked about earlier, isn't even a problem.

That's generally what Christian nationalism is to the media. And, you know, they use a lot of fancy rhetoric. They'll say, for example, it's theocratic, like I mentioned, but a theocracy by definition is a form of government where you're recognizing officially a deity as the supreme ruler over the country.

Okay. This is not what the articles are even talking about. And yet they're calling it a theocracy because we're using some kind of religious value to come into the public square.

So it's just, it really is just rhetoric. It's also anti, it's not anti-democratic. We're using our so-called democracy in exactly the way it's intended to be used.

Right. We're not going around our form of government that would be anti-democratic. That's not what Christians are trying to do.

So there are theological circles on X that, you know, talk about other kinds of things about, you know, hypothetically, what would it look like to have a different form of government? What would it look like to have Christianity be in some kind of, you know, have more of an official status that, but ironically, that's not even what the media is targeting. You would think if they're going to target anything, they're going to target that and say, Hey, look over here. We found these people in the corner of the internet and this is what they're advocating for.

They're coming for us. They want to make this official religion. Like they're not even doing that.

So they're, they're missing the boat on the things that you would think that they're actually concerned about or should be concerned about. So it's very fascinating. The last thing that I'll say on that though, is that a lot of times what they do, and I talk about this in the chapter, is they'll, they'll use an image that people would say is obviously problematic.

Like something that has some kind of, you know, just a cringe worthy statement on it that, you know, conflates love for country with love for God and, you know, saying that, you know, a particular political candidate is their savior. They'll find something just ridiculous to put as the picture. And then they go on to have an article about, you know, just basic Christian conservatism.

And so they, when they bundle that together though, it forms a powerful image in people's minds. And it's even convinced a lot of Christians like, Oh yeah, there's this, you know, crazy movement of people who put their love for their country above their love for God. And they've, they've just created this storyline in the media and they've convinced us that we should stay out of things.

But obviously we shouldn't for reasons that we've been talking about. So it's interesting how much the media has manipulated Christians. Absolutely.

When I look at people like William Wilberforce, who is a very strong Christian, who advocated against slavery in the UK at the time when they were getting rid of it. I'm just wondering what these people would say, you know, to him, Oh, we don't want you imposing your views on us and, and so on. And then what about Christians like Rose mentioned in the, in the, in the Roman empire, you know, advocating against predatory sexual practices, against the slaves and, and so on.

I mean, I think people are assuming that society is going to be a lot more moral than they think without the influence of Christianity. And I'm not sure that's the case. Yeah.

And it's, it's definitely a double standard because in the examples that you mentioned, they would say, Oh yeah, that's great. You know, you're not saying anything about that. You're not called a Christian nationalist.

If you mix your progressive Christianity with politics, like no one looks at that and says, Oh wow. You know, they're a Christian nationalist because they are advocating for a pro-choice

view from a Christian perspective. No, no one says it's just a pejorative term that they're using against Christians who hold unpopular moral positions.

Yeah, exactly. Exactly. And then Christians kind of pick up on that and then go around calling other Christians, Christian nationalists because they, yeah, it's yeah.

Yeah. I think that's a, that was really important point that you made just then about how it really is just a pejorative statement a lot of the time against conservative Christian policies. So you also mentioned the transgender issue and those who have been paying attention have noticed that in the last several years, maybe 10 years or so, the, the number of trans identifying people has absolutely skyrocketed.

So what the heck is going on? Can you give us some insight there? Yeah, in 2013, the incidents that was estimated of people who identify as transgender was about on average one in 10,000 males and one in 40,000 females. And today a full 2% of adults ages 18 to 29 identifies trans that's 200 per 10,000. So, you know, what's, what's going on? Well, I go into a lot of depth in that chapter.

I'll try to hit just a couple of the high points, but it starts, I believe it starts with the fact that the American psychiatric association, the APA has over time changed how they define any kind of transgenderism from it being a mental disorder to it being an identity. So I track in the chapter through the different generations of what's called the, the DSM, the diagnostic and statistical manual for mental illness or mental disorders. I might be getting the title wrong there, but it's called the DSM and the DSM in 1980, the third edition of it, the DSM three, when it came out, it was the first time that it had actually had anything related to a gender diagnosis.

And at the time it said that the incidence was rare. It was called in, in the DSM three, it was called transsexualism. And, and you see that this was just, you know, something that clearly they needed to, that if you had this issue where you wanted, you had this pervasive feeling of wanting to be somebody else in terms of your gender, then that was something that needed to be fixed.

It was a mental illness. Well, after it was included in the DSM three, there were some activists, transgender activists who started saying, Ooh, we don't, we don't like that. This is actually in the DSM.

Because if you're in the DSM, if this is their transgenderism, then that implies that it is a mental illness of some kind and certain activists were saying, no, this is an identity. This is not a mental illness. It's not a disorder of some kind.

And so those conversations started to be had, you know, is this something that needs to be fixed or is it just an identity? So fast forward through a lot of details. Like I said, I cover a lot more of this in the chapter, but when you get to the DSM five in 2013, what you see is that the diagnosis has completely changed to something called gender dysphoria. And by this time,

gender dysphoria now is only considered to be a problem if you feel distress about the fact that you believe yourself to be another gender than what corresponds with your biological sex.

Get the, you make sure you don't miss the distinction there, that it's no longer in and of itself a problem if you are believing that you are a different gender than your biological sex. Like that's not considered a disorder. It's not considered a mental illness.

It's not considered any kind of problem anymore. It's only if you feel distressed about it, then you can get some kind of treatment for it to manage the distress. But the, the feelings of gender incongruence themselves are not considered to be a problem.

And furthermore, if you look at the manuals and some of the publications that are put out by the American Psychiatric Association, they, they basically come right out and say that it's really the stress that people feel the gender dysphoria usually comes from society not accepting you for who you are. So they're actually placing the stress that people are feeling on the, they're blaming it on culture for not accepting you. It's just really remarkable.

So that's a huge change that has happened from 1980 to 2013 in terms of having this sort of, as I call it, an expert witness to anyone who wants to claim it's an identity and not a mental illness because you have the premier organization around these issues, the American Psychiatric Association and the DSM is kind of the gold standard on all of these types of topics. And so they're basically saying, yeah, it's not a mental illness anymore. Now it's just, you know, it's just who you are and it doesn't have, it doesn't have to be treated unless you feel that there's distress.

So that is one big factor, but we have to look at it in concurrence with the fact that social justice, according to Neo Marx, the standards and critical theory came along around the same time, several years back, started gaining in popularity where now the social binary is what determines whether or not you're an oppressor or you're the oppressed. And now people who have a quote unquote marginalized identity, who would be transgender people, transgender identifying people would be included in that. Now we need to lift them up and we need to celebrate that you're actually this identity.

So think about how these things go together over time that they, it was kind of a perfect storm between the American Psychiatric Association changing over time to it being an identity rather than it being a disorder of some kind. And then you have the social justice thinking that is being picked up according to Neo Marx's standards and saying, we want to celebrate you because this is, you know, you're an oppressed identity. So now you pull these things together.

And as I say in the book, it was that change to the identity definition that broke the dam, but it was the social justice thinking that brought the flood. And now you see this explosion of numbers, because if anyone wants to take on a more marginalized status or if they want to feel like they're, you know, part of this bigger movement, well, it's okay now because society is like, well, that's okay because this is, you know, it's just an identity. It's just who you are.

So there's so much more that could be said about it, but that's kind of the basics. And, and I just want to point out a lot of Christians talking about this issue, they focus very specifically on what's been called rapid onset gender dysphoria, which is the social contagion of adolescent girls that was documented, minted by Dr. Lisa Lippmann a few years ago. That actually absolutely is a disproportionate number in terms of, you know, the number of people increasing who are identifying as transgender, but it's not just that.

And I really, as I was digging into the research on this, I realized that we're really missing the bigger picture as Christians. If we're only talking about the social contagion aspect of it, because what you can see is that every single group, every age group, every demographic group, every geographic group, everyone, like all those groups have been rising in terms of the numbers of people who are identifying as transgender. And so we have to understand it's a much bigger movement.

It's not like if we can just convince adolescent girls, like, Hey, this is a really bad thing, which by the way we should be, but it's not that that's going to make it all go away because the social justice thinking that led to this and they changed the identity view over a disorder that's still with us. So anyone who's uncomfortable with their own bodies, parents who are aware of all this, who see their kids and, you know, assume that it's gender related, that, you know, in our schools, all of the gender education that kids are getting, and I say that loosely, quote unquote, education that they're getting is convincing them that they might be another gender. I mean, it's much more pervasive.

This is not just a problem with adolescent girls. It's something we need to be aware aware of on a much bigger scale because these big forces have pushed it forward. It's not just one thing in your research.

Did you find any studies about other countries that are more LGBT affirming and whether the people who were making that choice to go into that were experiencing more or less complications like mental illness complications? I don't know the answer to that off the top of my head. I mean, most of what we're hearing about is actually countries who have reversed course, right? You know, in England, we know that they've reversed course in Scandinavian countries. So you hear more about that.

I'm not sure I've heard anything specifically about countries who have been promoting this even longer. Are you aware of any research like that? Have you guys come across anything like that? I blogged on one study. I can't, I can't do a web search right now, but yeah, there was a study from one of those Scandinavian countries that said, hey, this is a really affirming, you know, country for LGBT.

And yet even so, they're not getting the outcomes that they were expecting. It was worse than the non LGBT people. I'm just, I'm just thinking that it seems like the point of view of the secular left on these issues is nothing is really more or less risky, more or less harmful.

It's like that quote from Hamlet, you know, nothing is good or bad, but thinking makes it so. And what they really want is they're just thinking if we could just get everybody to celebrate this and affirm this, then there won't be any bad consequences. So it might be a good place for somebody to do some, you know, some, some research there and just get that as a piece of evidence.

I'm, I'm coveting using that in, in a debate, you know. So one of the most shocking parts of the book for me was reading about the marketing strategy for changing the way culture thinks about gay people. You wrote about Hunter Madsen and Marshall Kirk's 1987 article, *The Overhauling of Straight America*, in which they detailed six strategic steps for desensitizing the public to homosexuality.

And I'd love to, to just take a second to read those, because they're, they're really fascinating. So the first way that the first strategy they listed for changing the way people think about gays and homosexuality is to talk about gays and gayness as loudly and as often as possible. The second one is portray gays as victims, not as aggressive challengers.

That, which is fascinating, especially in light of the critical theory and queer theory stuff. Number three, give protectors a just cause. In other words, make people, make people feel like they are fighting for justice when they defend the homosexual lifestyle.

The next one is make gays look good. We've seen that in throughout the media, entertainment and all of that. Then make the victimizers look bad.

In other words, anyone who opposes this lifestyle needs to be condemned and called out and shown to be an oppressor and then finally solicit funds. So why do you think this campaign was so successful, first of all? Well, all of those things together, really, I mean, it is when you read it and I, when I read it the first time too, I was like, wow, this is, this is incredible how strategic and it was because when you look back over the last several years since, you know, this came out, you realize like, well, this is exactly what has taken place. You know, it was literally a marketing strategy.

And so my background professionally isn't marketing. So I was just fascinated when I came across this because it's a very, very effective campaign. You know, why was it so successful? I think that I think they, it was successful because the strategy is spot on.

If this was your objective and they executed it, you know, it was successful because they actually executed all these things. And I think honestly, if I had to pick one thing that, that especially helped, it was give protectors a just cause, right? Because even with the increase in the number of people who are identifying as somewhere in the LGBTQ community, even with that increase, you're still looking at a small minority of people in the United States. So I think that they were very brilliant and realizing like, Hey, we're not going to get anywhere if we're, if we don't get a lot of other people on board with us, because we're still going to be this minority voice.

Uh, but because they were able to give protestors a just cause, meaning like, Hey, come along with us and you're fighting for justice. You're fighting for what's right. Well, with fewer and fewer people identifying as Christians and being biblically faithful Christians, at least what you're going to see is that people still, because they have this innate sense of right and wrong, even though it's warped, they're still going to think justice is important, right? That's, that's something that every single person in our country would probably agree on is like, yes, justice matters.

We want to make wrong things. Right. The problem is that justice requires a standard.

So if you're talking about making wrong things, right, that means you have to first identify what's right and what's wrong. And you're going to get those things wrong. If you're using any standard other than God.

So culture is going to say justice is important and they're going to be passionate about it, but they're going to get it wrong because they're using the wrong standards. So this point is so brilliant to say, give them a just cause because they realize that people want to fight for what's right. And if you say, Hey, we're being victimized, we are oppressed, goes along with critical theory and all of that language, again, the neo Marxist standards and movement that we have seen has impacted so much, including this, because that's why people started thinking in these ways about having a just cause for the oppressed according to secular culture's definitions.

So if you have a just cause to fight for, you're going to come along and you're going to say like, Hey, this is what's right. And I want to do this. And now it's not just a tiny minority fighting for what they believe is right, but now they have a whole community around them.

So I think personally, that's probably been the most impactful thing that they decided to do. Absolutely. Let me just jump in quickly and say I did search on my blog and I did have an article about this called our suicide rates lower for sexual minorities in LGBT affirming countries.

And I've got studies there from Denmark, Iceland, and Sweden, where they look at rates of suicide ideation attempts and other self harm. And I don't know if people want to check that out. Yeah, that'd be great to see.

I'd be very interested to read that. Yeah. So you also wrote that the goal for a subset of LGBTQ activists, not all of them, but a subset of activists is to free children from the sexual restrictions placed on them by society's norms, values, and expectations.

So what do parents and I guess all Christians really need to know about this? Yeah. So this was actually the focus of that chapter where I started by talking about the, you know, the marketing plan that we were just discussing, but I really was only using that as a jumping off point to talk about this very specific issue because I was saying, I think we can look back and say, well, the marketing campaign was quite successful for getting a broad societal acceptance of LGBTQ issues. What a lot of parents don't realize, and what I focus on in this chapter is that there is a

subset, a subset of activists who are actively working not just to introduce these ideas to children, to gain some kind of, you know, acceptance at an earlier age, but who actually want to free children from any kind of sexual restraints.

They want children to be engaging in sexual behavior themselves. And so I, I track through and I, and I've been given some long answers, so I'm not going to give a super long one on this one, but I track through this whole history in that chapter showing how really it's all led to this time starting with Freud, you know, going back in the early 1900s. So this isn't sudden, it feels sudden, but the movements have all been in place for a century.

And now you just get to a place today where we've arrived at the time where the fruits of all that are really taking place. And especially important is queer theory for all this, which is part of the critical theory families. And unlike the name sounds probably to most people, it's not about being gay per se.

Queer theory is about rejecting all norms, all norms of gender and sexuality. So if you want to get rid of all norms and you think that all of these things are just a social construct of figment of our collective imaginations, basically with no basis in reality, you're also going to start seeing age as a social construct in terms of childhood innocence and wanting to protect children from, from sexual influence. So that's what, you know, I recommend go online and Google childhood innocence and queer theory.

And what you will see is plenty of writings around this where people actually think it's harmful to continue to perpetuate this idea that there's any kind of childhood innocence that has an objective basis in reality, that we don't need to protect children because fundamentally they are sexual beings, just like adults, which goes back to Freud. And because they're sexual beings at any age, then we're actually harming them by not allowing them to practice their own sexuality from an early time. So that chapter is particularly dark.

It's particularly difficult to read and it was to write as well. But I think it's really important that we talk about what's going on, because as crazy as it sounds still to most people today, even the just protectors of the LGBTQ cause, it's coming and these things will change fast because when you have no objective basis for your views, then people are going to start to accept more and more that this is actually okay. That, you know, oh, the, the children should be able to engage in these things.

Yeah. Yeah. Absolutely.

One of the things I love about your book is the practical recommendations for how to converse with people who disagree with us in a way that helps get at the heart of the issue and reframes it in a way that's, I would say, definitely fair and accurate, but you also expose the problems with the other side. So in part two, when you're writing about specific issues, you share at the end of each chapter, some of the most common challenges we as Christians should expect to encounter when we offer evidence and, and thoughts on these matters. And you offer specific

ideas on how to respond.

So do you mind if we just go through like, I don't know, two or three of those, and I'll, I'll tell you the common objection. You maybe give us just a few thoughts on how to respond because I want to give people a taste of what you offer in this book. And I think that is really one of the most powerful and beneficial aspects of it.

Yeah. They're very practical. Yeah, absolutely.

Okay. Great. The social, one of the social justice chapter objections is that Christians who reject CRT ignore systemic racial oppression.

So how might we respond to that? Yeah. So for each of these, my goal was to try to do it in, you know, three sentences. I wanted people to have something succinct to, to get to.

So I could, I could give an answer to you and I'd probably blabber on longer. So I'm just going to read you the exact response from the book to give you an idea of that, that Christians who reject CRT ignore systemic racial oppression. So here's what I said.

Christians who reject CRT do believe that systemic racial oppression can be a reality and has been a reality. Slavery is an obvious example. However, CRT prescribes a specific way of evaluating systemic racism through the lens of the social binary.

Christians who reject CRT are rejecting CRT's method of defining, identifying, and ending systemic racism, not rejecting that systemic racism can exist or that Christians should work to abolish such racism when accurately identified according to God's standards. Yeah, that's great. That's great.

Excellent. Yeah. And you, you give lots of questions as well that we can ask, which are great.

I highly encourage people to look at. So when it comes to discussing CRT, I often hear that the main concerns of the race, racial activists are, I don't like the way that policing is done. And I also don't like that there are wealth distribution.

You mean wealth differences. Yeah. And so I'm coming, I, everybody knows this about me.

I come from a West Indian background and looking at colored minorities in the US, there are actually a ton of us of different ethnic groups that are doing really well when it comes to education and wealth generation. So the, you can look at the US census data and you'll see East Indians and Asians at the top of the, of the median household income. And I'm just wondering, have you ever, do you have anything about that in the, in the book I'm trying to remember, but do you think that that's a good piece of evidence to use with people who are saying that, you know, racial discrimination by whites is holding colored people back? I don't have anything specifically about that in the book, but you're absolutely right that, you know, it's, it's problematic to begin with that.

They're just throwing everyone into a bucket based on skin color, right? It's like if you're white, you're an oppressor. And if you're anything but white, then you fall into this bucket of the oppressed, you know, and that's, and that's just the simplicity of this lens of CRT. So there are many problems with it.

And you're pointing out some really good ones. And you know, anytime this comes up, people just kind of sweep it under the carpet, right? They don't want to look at the, the evidence against it, but I think it's absolutely reasonable and relevant. It's kind of like the other things we've been talking about in this episode about bringing, bringing forth some good data and interesting data to get people thinking about why these things fail.

Because I think people can intuitively look at that and say, well, yeah, I know that there are some, some groups that, that that doesn't apply so much for. And so I think that's a good way to peak people's curiosity. It is probably not going to solve everything in terms of getting them to see the problems of critical theory.

You're going to have to discuss more things, but I think that it's a good way of throwing something out and saying, well, what do you think about people of color who would fall into the pressed bucket according to their skin color? What do you think about how some groups are actually doing extremely well? And just see what, see what they say. Yeah. Some like the, it seems to me like one of the reasons why they may not like these groups is because they might not like to speak about them is because it's behaviors that are making these groups successful, specifically behaviors about things like marriage and timing of, of having children and prioritizing education in the home, you know, monitoring the homework and things like that.

Like, I know I was raised in this kind of tiger Asian culture, you know, tiger mom culture. So, you know, I think that, that I find that freeing because what it means is, is the people who are claiming to be oppressed could just make some changes in their decisions. And they may find that they get these outcomes that guys coming from, you know, backgrounds like mine, you know, are already enjoying and seeing.

Yeah. One of the things that's so frustrating about critical theory is that basically everybody is powerless. Everybody is just kind of stuck where they are.

If you're white, you're an oppressor, the end, you will always be an oppressor. And if you are a person of color, you're just a victim. You have basically no agency.

You can't make any changes. You have to wait for a white person to come along and free you and lift you up and give you whatever money they earned. And that's, those lies are just so racist and harmful, unjust, really, really harmful.

So on the sexuality objection, one of them is that Christians are harming LGBTQ people by not accepting them for who they are. So how might you respond to that? So in the book, here's, here's a response that I gave. No one accepts everything about everyone.

For example, you don't accept that Christians reject the morality of certain sexual behaviors, but I don't see that as a harmful rejection of who I am as a person. You simply disagree with my beliefs, just as I disagree with certain LGBTQ beliefs based on what the Bible teaches about God's design for gender and sexuality. Yeah.

Awesome. Excellent. Great.

Great. And again, excellent questions there and for people to check out as well. One of the ways that I like to handle this, a lot of people have come up to me and, you know, with varying degrees of anger and hostility and said, Hey, you're a Christian, aren't you? So you hate LGBTQ people and, or you're harming them or you, why don't you accept them the way you are and that sort of thing.

And I often tell them that if there's a designer of the universe, then the designer not only knows how we can best live within his world, but he also has the authority to say how we ought to live in his world. Just like I have the freedom to lay down the rules in my own house, right? That I own. So I tell people that I'm happy to discuss sexuality with them, but first I want them to discuss the evidence for personal intelligent designer with me, because if he exists, then he has the authority and he has the knowledge to share with us what is best for human flourishing.

Yeah. I love that. I often go to also just comparing worldviews because it will put people in a more neutral place sometimes where they don't get as defensive because they're probably not going to be willing to say, not willing, but they're probably not going to be prepared to explore evidence.

But if you use exactly what you just said, where you're, I would go to this, you know, if there is a designer of the universe who has designed people in this specific way, would you agree that if that were true, and I understand you don't believe that, but if that were true, would you agree with me that only that designer would have the ability and authority to say what is true about human beings and how they would flourish? Would you agree with that? And then you can go forward to say, you know, because I would agree that if there is no designer behind the universe, if there is no intelligent agent, and we're all just a bunch of molecules in motion, we're just physical stuff, I would agree with you that, well, then we can just be whatever we think we are. I would challenge whether or not we have the free will to think about that. But I would say that, you know, even if it's the illusion of free will that you would be, you know, there's no constraint on who you think you are.

So I tried it. That's kind of my related tactic that I've taken with people is just to compare that because everyone wants to hear something you agree with. So I can always agree, well, here are the implications of your worldview that I understand why you would hold that.

Can you understand why? I would believe this if there were this intelligent designer. Excellent. So what actions would you like to see people take who read this book or who have listened to this show today? Well, I hope that they take an action.

You know, that's kind of, that's kind of the goal with the book is to explain where the cultural hostility is coming from. Not just so we have better understanding. That's important.

But once we have better understanding, I hope that we're going to utilize that understanding to engage well with culture on these things and to take action for the common good, to actually get out there and do things. And for each of the issues that I talk about in the second half of the book, I have seven action ideas for the common good, where I give people examples of what you can do. You know, what are things like getting out there and being active in your school board and keeping track of what's going on in school organizations.

You can donate your time to donate your money to that. You can pray for, you know, some people aren't able to even leave the house due to health issues. Well, there are many, many ways that you can help by volunteering online or by, like I said, praying and donating.

So I recognize not everyone's going to be out there doing, you know, constitutional law, for example, but we don't have to see it as this big overwhelming thing. There are so many actions that we can take for the common good. So my favorite comment from any review that I've gotten on the book so far is somebody who characterized it as something between a pep talk and a kick in the pants.

And I love that because that's exactly what I hope that people will take from the book is that, you know, we shouldn't be discouraged by the hostility. We should understand it and know to expect it. And so know that what you're doing is what God calls you to.

That's the pep talk part, right? But it's also kicking the pants and saying, so go do something, right? Right. Do something for the common good and understand it's your role too. And Christianity is not just a private faith where we sit in our living room.

We're not exposing anything by sitting in our living room. We are called to take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but expose them as Ephesians five 11 says. Amen.

Absolutely. And you give lots of practical ideas for what to do. And so I love that if people are thinking, well, great, I'll, I want to do something, but I don't know what.

Well, get the book when culture hates you by Natasha crane. It's when culture hates you. And the subtitle is persevering for the common good as Christians and a hostile public square.

That's the long subtitle, but you can just remember when culture hates you. Yes. Where can we find your work online again? I have a website, Natasha crane.com and it's C R A I N. And then of course you can get the book and or any of my prior books through Amazon Christian book, any of the retailers where you normally go.

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