

OpenTheo

#191 Donald Trump, gay cakes and white privilege (Replay)

October 26, 2023



Ask NT Wright Anything - Premier

Tom answers listener questions on the upcoming US election, religious freedom in the case of Christian cake makers, and the concept of 'white privilege' in current debates on racial justice. For Tom's full talk on 'Undermining Racism':

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gwohWajHOp0> For Esau McCaulley's book 'Reading While Black': <https://esaumccaulley.com/reading-while-black/> • Subscribe to the Ask NT Wright Anything podcast: <https://pod.link/1441656192> • More shows, free eBook, newsletter, and sign up to ask Tom your questions: <https://premierunbelievable.com> • For live events: <http://www.unbelievable.live> • For online learning: <https://www.premierunbelievable.com/training> • Support us in the USA: <http://www.premierinsight.org/unbelievableshow> • Support us in the rest of the world: <https://www.premierunbelievable.com/donate>

Transcript

Before we get into today's episode, I want to let you know about a special e-book that's yours to download free today. It's called Five Ways to Connect with God, Ancient Practices for Modern Times. I believe it's safe to say that in today's fast-paced culture, we're all seeking more rest and less chaos.

Only then can we find true connection with our creator. Five Ways to Connect with God offers five unique spiritual principles to Christians who may be feeling dry when it comes to their prayer life or spiritual fervor. These include practices such as choosing a word for the year, the power of one phrase prayers, the importance of cultivating thankfulness, and more.

Some of these principles are hundreds of years old, yet they offer us fresh ways to connect with the Living God today. Download your copy of Five Ways to Connect to God by visiting premierinsight.org forward slash resources. That's premierinsight.org forward slash resources.

And now it's time for today's podcast. Welcome to this replay of Ask Enthi Right Anything, where we go back into the archives to bring you the best of the thought and theology of Tom Wright, answering questions submitted by you, the listener. You can find more episodes, as well as many more resources for exploring faith at premierunbelievable.com, and registering there will unlock access through the newsletter to updates, free bonus videos, and e-books.

That's premierunbelievable.com. And now for today's replay of Ask Enthi Right Anything. Well, welcome back to the show, Tom. It's great to see you, even though we're not together, as we have been on many an occasion in the past, in the flesh it were.

You've been doing this for an awful long time now, haven't you? These music on Zoom? I'm sure they take their toll though, don't they? Yes, I mean, we've had six months plus of it now, haven't we? And even during my summer holiday when we were up in Scotland, because I had pre-recorded some episodes, which were going out on a big seminar, I had to be present for the Q&A at the end of each lecture, even though I pre-recorded myself. And so I was sitting there and a little Scottish should tell hunched over a computer and a camera. And I'm just thinking, really, it's time for a break from this? But at the moment, that's not likely.

It is at least able to have me and other people in places where we actually, even without this, we wouldn't have been flying around the world to do these various things. So I suppose that's a good thing, but it is very tarry. The people who are doing it a lot continue to report that Zoom fatigue is a real thing.

And I've suffered it a few occasions when I've come out reeling from a session. I can imagine, because you haven't concentrated so hard on when you do these sorts of things. It's the blessing in the curse of technology.

You can do anything from anywhere, but it also means you can do anything from anywhere. I used to enjoy it getting on planes and saying, nobody can email me because it was wonderful. And now they've introduced it so that you can spend the entire journey on that.

Exactly. You can't escape it on the flights anymore either. It's one of those things.

Well, I can't provide the coffee and the tea and the bananas and croissons, but I see you've managed to sort yourself out with some coffee yourself and I've got mine here as well. I have to confess, before we get into today's questions, which are on sort of current affairs, cultural issues, politics and so on, one of the things I enjoyed seeing during the lockdown particularly was the bookcase credibility, Twitter accounts, which has been tweeting all kinds of people because they're all appearing in their studies and offices with bookcases behind them. And you featured, you were, you know, this great honor of being featured on the bookcase credibility Twitter thread.

And this was the this was the comment because it's a very tug-and-cheek account and sort of makes, gives, gives the idea of what the psychology is of the person based on their bookshelves. This says, Tom Wright, a cavernous amount of credibility here. The books are like perhaps roosting on the walls of Tom's mind, a few flutter about behind him like stray thoughts, the lamps one on and one off.

Tell us that we must choose areas to illuminate our minds work best when focused, which I thought was quite a good description actually in some ways. That's quite nice. I mean, one of the reasons that Maggie and I moved to this house nearly a year ago was that when we look around and discovered it had a study with significant bookshelves already in place.

That was a kind of a sigh of relief because wherever I go, you know, I did, we got rid of maybe, I don't know, three or four thousand books before we left Scotland. And there's still some actually up in Scotland waiting for us to do something else with. But this room has most of my academic ones to do with biblical studies, Judaic and classics, and some as the reference books.

The rest, the philosophy of the history of the culture, et cetera, is all in my study in Wycliffe, which is about the same size. So multiply this by two and you've got my current book. Yes, we're just seeing a small selection of them on your webcam at the moment.

Speaking of which, actually, when we did that lovely live stream with you a few months back, Tom, someone asked, I'd love an episode of the show where Tom just takes us through his bookshelves. Now that could be a very long episode, but perhaps we could do something, we could do a highlights. It could.

My younger son, who is training for the Ministry at Wycliffe Hall now, came and gave me two or three hours of slave labor reorganizing the section on St. Paul, which is back there, and getting all the general books on Paul into alphabetical order and getting all the commentaries in the canonical order with the Romans ones in alphabetical order of warfare. And I found myself doing exactly that with him saying, oh, there's so and so. I remember meeting him at a conference and he said this.

Because so many of those books particularly have quite powerful memories from my earlier life when I was doing my doctorate and that kind of thing. Yes, well, journeys through my bookshelves coming from Tom right soon. But let's add some of these questions that have come in.

We're recording today's show sort of in the run up to the US election. Obviously, that is filling our news feeds along with all the coronavirus stuff as well. And the latest that we know at this point of recording, Tom, is that President Trump has returned, apparently healthy, to the White House having had this bout of COVID-19.

Obviously, there's still about a month or so before the election itself. So why did we start with a question on this front? I mean, before we have this question actually from Michelle in Washington, any thoughts generally on these news events, this election which comes at such an interesting time, obviously. It's a fascinating thing.

I felt more or less every American election for the last 20, 30 years that what happens here will affect the whole geopolitical globe. And this is hugely serious whether you live in Korea or Germany or South Africa or Latin America or the Amazon rainforest. Whoever gets to win in Washington, that will have a knock on effect for the rest of the world.

That's simply the fact of the case. But then it strikes me as rather odd and amusing that only Americans vote in this election because the rest of us are going to be affected by it, but we don't have a say. And this goes back, of course, to the 18th century when one of the great cries of the American colonists against the British was no taxation without representation.

And so there's a kind of oddity about this. And I think we have to address that globally. And this is of course what the United Nations was supposed to do, which is why many in America don't like the United Nations, because they want to be able to do what they want to do and not have somebody else, some strange person from another country telling them how it should be.

And I think we need to be able to talk about these issues. I know it's not easy. And we British, when we had a navy that ruled the world we didn't want anyone else telling us what to do.

Thank you very much. But we live in a dangerous global village. And we need to be clear that we can all actually, if not support directly, nevertheless be comfortable with the people who are making decisions that affect the rest of us.

And that that's a very important consideration seems. Well, here's the question from Michelle in Washington who says, is it wrong to not vote? I can't in good conscience put my name behind either Republican or Democratic candidate in the upcoming US election, because both of them stand for things I disagree with. But my evangelical upbringing has taught me that it is my duty as a Christian and a woman to vote.

I'd love to hear your thoughts. And Michelle adds hashtag right, Briley for president 2020. Well, I'm not sure we're in the running for this year's, but who knows, four years time, we may be on the ticket where it's not for our British.

I think as we all know from Trump's attacks on Obama, you actually have to be born in the state. You can be qualified. So very happily, I'm ruled out for myself.

Thank you. I'm very happy about that. Yes.

Yeah, I think the idea of it being a Christian duty to vote, that's a kind of a, I see it as a second order Christian duty. I mean, yes, if you can, and if it's possible, but I don't think very large conversation to be had about how from the 18th century onwards with the rise of modern Western democracies, it's been assumed that now that you've got the vote, and of course, time was when women didn't and time was when other people didn't, then you really have a duty to use it. And I would broadly support that.

I'm not sure it's a specifically Christian duty. The New Testament is written to people, many of whom didn't have any sort of voting rights at all. And I think people would have said, if you have that chance to influence the way the world is going, then of course, you should use it.

But I think here's the problem. When we vote for somebody, we are not saying that we agree with them about everything, and we support them in everything that we think they want to do. We are simply, it's a much lower grade thing than that.

It's simply saying, I think at this moment in our country's history, we need the kind of leadership which broadly this person or this party might produce. And if one looks at two, or possibly as in the case of Britain, three or four parties, and you look at them all and you say, well, I think they're all going in the wrong direction, then it might well be a Christian duty to spoil the ballot paper or to write none of the above or something like that. And maybe there are times when that's what one has to do.

That's a fairly ineffective protest, because that vote then just goes in the bin, doesn't actually do anything. But maybe if somebody believes strongly enough that that is the case, they need to join together with other people who believe that and find some other way forward. This is a very difficult, creaky process because a binary vote is a very, very, very blunt instrument.

And the chances of finding two candidates, one of whom you absolutely agree with and the other one of whom you absolutely don't agree with is fairly minimal. But I think this emerges from the ideology of the 18th century, which was basically we'll get rid of kings and we'll get rid of bishops and we'll get rid of all these high ups telling us what to do and we that people will decide and then utopia will arrive, won't it? Because that was the sort of sense that once we stop these people with power and money squashing us all into shape and let people be themselves, then it'll all work out fine. And so then it's sort of assumed that there must be one candidate or one party who is basically just two or three steps from that utopia which we know we all want.

We, Britain, have actually never really believed that more hardly ever. We have tended to think we are voting for the least worst. And once you say we're voting for the least worst, then I think, ah, there's a kind of a sigh of relief.

Okay, I do not have to scrutinize every bit of this person's voting record or whatever. I

simply have to assess what the options are and what will be best for the world and for my country in the current state of affairs. I mean, if I may follow up with a follow up question, I'm erring on my own unbelievable show, my other podcast this coming weekend, a debate between David French, who's a Christian commentator in the US and a never Trump, though he is an evangelical fellow conservative.

And Eric Metaxas, who's become rather well known recently for his his very pro Trump positions. And essentially the debate that they had, which we'll be airing is David Trump, sorry, David French saying a person, a person of Donald Trump's moral character, Christians would never have dreamed, you know, 20 years ago of supporting this person as someone fit for the White House. Metaxas point essentially was he's getting things done and he's giving a lot of even he's keeping his promises to a lot of the evangelical Christians who put him in power.

What's your view on that? It does to what extent are we voting people in on their moral character to what extent are we voting them in as people who get things done, whether they do it in the way we like necessarily or not? It's very difficult because of course I only know what I know about Donald Trump through what comes across in the media, which is as we all know, heavily selected, both one way and another. I know Eric Metaxas a bit, I don't know your other correspondent, but Eric and I have had little bits of this conversation in the past. So it's very difficult for me at a distance, never having sat down with Donald Trump or whatever, to say very much.

However, I have friends, people I've known for years, who have worked in Washington for years, including some staunch Republicans, who have said very clearly this man, it's not a matter of his moral character, it's a matter of his mental capacity, here's a man who deals with television news, headlines and Twitter feeds and seems to lash out in all directions and this is other people saying this not me, but they're people who know the situation well, that he's a bit like a rogue elephant and if he's put this way he'll swing that way and if he hears an alarm go off, he'll rush in that direction and this is not a happy position to be in. And the question of whether he supports evangelical agendas or not, well he doesn't, he doesn't is the answer to that and there is a quite different question about the way in which many bits of what calls itself evangelicalism in America have gone with particular cultural tides without necessarily realizing that and this is something we might come on to later in another podcast when we're talking about the whole Black Lives Matter business and about how the fact is that these are broadly speaking white evangelicals and I should say white conservative Roman Catholics as well who have seen Trump as the kind of the person who will guarantee certain moral policies, I mean I think of the abortion issue in terms of evangelicals, I think of attitudes to the present state of Israel and I know there are many Jewish people in America and in the state of Israel who are horrified at what Trump has been doing in that regard equally well there are others who say at last he has a president who gets the point because America needs to support the situation. That was certainly in this upcoming debate that

I'll be airing, Eric Metaxas very much sees Trump as having been a champion of Israel and also of religious freedom and indeed he believes he's taking a sensible approach to what again Metaxas is a sort of left-wing cultural Marxism of the sort of Black Lives Matter movement and so on.

Now we've got questions on these actually that it kind of segues into, hopefully, Kellyanne Colorado USA wants to ask about if Christians or Christian owned businesses should be denying services to people that don't agree with their Christian beliefs. I'm thinking of some high profile cases in the US where businesses refuse to make wedding cakes for gay couples, I understand that people and businesses want to be set apart from the surrounding culture but isn't business simply business. Can't imagine Paul denying someone attempt because of their beliefs.

I'd love to hear your input on this very complex topic in America and yes so this touches on this issue of religious freedom and some of these cases have gone to the Supreme Court and we get our own versions of them here in the UK as well. What's your feeling on where the lines are drawn on these cases? Yes I mean there's several different issues bundled up in there and as with all contemporary hot button issues it's very dangerous simply to lurch one way and say I'm going to check all the boxes down this side or all the boxes down that side. We have to take things case by case and the one that I remember from the UK was a couple in Northern Ireland I think it was who a gay couple who rather ostentiously were trying to put a cake manufacturer on the spot with with the similar request and they were clearly pushing to make it a co-salevara and knowing what the response would be and then being able to say that this shock was guilty of whether hate speech was.

This was the Asha's Bakery case. The specific cake that they were being asked to make was in support of gay marriage being legalized in Northern Ireland which had not happened to that point and they eventually yes the business declined the request and this went all the way to yes the highest courts. Yes and of course I mean it would have been perfectly easy for the people concerned to go to some other cake company that wouldn't have cared anything about that and they clearly were targeting people who they knew would find this really difficult in order to put them on the spot and and this goes on and on and on because both sides can play this game putting people in a position where they are forced to declare their hand this way or that on key issues and this is this is deeply unhealthy but I suppose every generation every century there are key issues that the majority of the population really believe this absolutely matters.

I mean 150 years ago my right of 180 years ago maybe you wouldn't have been able to be a fellow of an Oxford College or indeed an undergraduate in Oxford College unless you would give your assent to the 39 articles of the Church of England so that if you were a Methodist you couldn't if you were a Catholic you couldn't certainly if you were a Jew you couldn't et cetera et cetera and we forget how quickly that has totally changed

but every generation has certain things which it sees as necessary for the preservation of the health of the society and for many generations giving your assent to the 39 articles for the Church of England was seen as necessary for the health of society and if you can't do that well sorry you can't you're not welcome at these these august institutions and now of course that's totally blown away and you'd have the reverse really that if somebody was holding to a very strong Christian line oh well maybe that's hate speech because you disapprove of this or you don't like that or whatever but it's as though it's very difficult to get to a sort of equilibrium where we all really believe in total freedom of speech for everyone you know I don't want or expect to get people marching up and down the street outside my room here shouting anti-Semitic slogans or for instance now if they were simply making some sort of a protest about something going on in the state of Israel persecution of Palestinians in the occupied territories or whatever I would understand that but I would say we're in very dodgy territory here because there is a history of anti-Semitism in Britain and it is actually quite alive and well in certain quarters and I would want to ban anything that was going to be stirring that up and I would hope that the police would intervene and that the courts would take action but then when you apply this out beyond that you know academic freedom I've seen this debated in terms of when you to keep with the same sort of area when you get Holocaust deniers people who say that only a few Jews were killed and they were all elderly anyway or whatever and one wants to say no sorry here's the evidence there are libraries full of the evidence and there are photographs there's everything etc etc but the answer to somebody who is talking nonsense is not we will ban them but let us have the debate I'm speaking in the middle of a great university that's what a university is for not to protect people from ideas that they feel threatening but to say let's have the discussion let's look at the evidence let's marshally arguments and see where we come out that has always been my view and god willing you always will be in other words I remember my old teacher George cared who quoted at me more than once I totally disagree with what you say but I will defend to the death your right to say it that's the position that we would all like to be in there are times times of war times of real trouble where you can't hold on to that position because it's actually too dangerous for too many people and those are judgment calls but in general in western society we have aimed at that freedom of speech which is a precious and rather a delicate flower and we should not be trampling on it and wandering off topic well but I was going to bring this back to Kelly's specific question in that sense that obviously in this case rather like the one in northern island there was a there was someone's if you like rights of conscience you know they didn't feel in good conscience that they could put a particular message onto a cake as they were a Christian and Kelly is saying but isn't a business a business you know is pulled a business is a business but I mean selling newspapers is a business newspapers used to have quite a strong commitment to fact checking and to truth telling and that has slid away in many cases quite a long way and newspapers will now host advertisements for all sorts of bizarre things because they advertise as pay money etc etc at what point does a Christian in the newspaper business say I really believe in truth

and we want to have these facts checked and if somebody says oh but this is a great story well never mind you can't so there are always going to be points of tension and I can think of many other things where where business is business but if somebody sells you a car that actually they know has got something wrong with it which is going to give out in 50 miles time then I would say they as a Christian have a responsibility to say no I'm not going to do that so the lines are going to be drawn in different I mean my personal feeling on this is that I don't think in either of these cases the Christian proprietors of these businesses were refusing to serve the people on the basis of their sexuality it was rather the message that was being they were being put on the cake and and likewise Paul was approached by a Roman to make a tent I'm sure we'd have no problem with that but if the Roman asked them to emblazon it with Caesar as lord he might say no I don't think that's the kind of message I want to put on my tent that's a very interesting very interesting suggestion because many of the tents that would be made and sold by people like Paul would be for units of the army does that mean to the poor approved of the Roman army well no he probably didn't though he probably did think that having a strong justice system was better than wild vigilante out of control militias roaming around which is often has often historically been the alternative so there are many many different things and I think then it is a matter of conscience it is a matter of Christian teaching and Paul is very good on not trampling on people's consciences in 1 Corinthians 8, 9 and 10 yes you're free to eat any meat that's for sale in the market but if somebody says hey that was offered to an idol then their conscience is at risk here and you shouldn't be trampling on that yes I mean again I don't want would dwell too long in it but when I've I've had discussions online with some of my my atheist friends on this I said well I I personally would hold the right of a Christian couple not to have to put messages on that they disagreed with as I was equally say an atheist printer has no can refuse a young earth creation sort of banner that is really their being asked to produce you know they might not particularly want their business to be used for that and I think we have to see it from from different perspective this podcast is an outreach of premiere insight and it's only made possible by the gifts of listeners like you that's why we're eager to thank you for your gift to support today by sending you a copy of supernatural encounters should I believe this brand new ebook from premiere insight unpacks different viewpoints of supernatural experiences such as angelic encounters and what we can draw from them we dive into questions like do near-death experiences give credible support to the possibility that there is life after death or can they be explained away as mere physical phenomena and what is the evidence of the existence of angels again this ebook is our thanks for your gift to help even more Christians grow in wisdom and truth to get your copy of supernatural encounters should I believe simply go to premiere insight dot org slash nt right that's premiere insight dot org forward slash nt right thank you for your support let's move on there there is another very important issue that we've got in among the questions for this episode before we finish and and it's returning to the issue of Black Lives Matter some of the issues around race that have obviously been dominating our headlines recently let's start with Kirsten and John in

Liverpool who say is checking your privilege a biblical concept I'd love to hear Tom comment on the Black Lives Matter movement versus the Grey Sun people using all lives matter and is there a better theological language you can we can use in this idea of privilege yes I need to be brought up to speed with what people now are meaning by checking your privilege because I think checking there um doesn't there isn't that referring isn't that an Americanism where when you go into a restaurant you check your coat at the door you give your coat isn't that what's going on there it could well be yes yes I think I think it could refer to either in a sense you need to or you need to be aware of your privilege when you come into a conversation like this right right but but I was I was thinking of it more in terms you know like people say well when you go into church you have to check your brain in at the door or whatever right yes it could be I wouldn't know to be honest exactly which one it refers to but they have a similar sort of connotation I think yeah I did a lecture written lecture an article um the time of the George Floyd crisis which is on the Wickler for website which says a lot of what I would want to say about this in much more detail than I can say it here but I've been reflecting on it since and in discussion with friends and indeed one two family members who are very concerned about all this there's a couple of points I really want to stress one is that right from the start the Christian movement as in Antioch in Syria when Paul and Barnabas were teaching there in the in the um in the forties of the first century Christianity was a social experiment in multicultural multi-ethnic um quasi familial living together people Jew Gentile slave free male female and in the ancient Mediterranean world color was not an issue because people of all shades of pigmentation would be moving around through the Middle Eastern world and so at no point in the very much a modern thing that's a second point I'll come on to but this vision of the church and think of the book of Revelation a great multitude of every nation and kindred and tribe and tongue everybody all together all singing in praise of God and the Lamb and acting as and thinking as and praying as a single multiple family that's been the vision of Christianity from the beginning how come we forgot that and I think partly it's because in the Middle Ages the church was either the great Orthodox church in the east or the great Catholic church in the west and it became a European phenomenon um living to itself with not many tentacles going out into the world where you'd find people of significantly different cultural color um and then particularly the tragedy of the 16th century when people said we want the Bible and the liturgy in our own language which absolutely I want the Bible and the litany of my own language but that resulted in the setting up of churches from the 16th century onwards which were German churches Polish churches Portuguese churches etc etc so that in London in the 17th century you would have these different churches French churches whatever where people of that nationality would meet to worship in their own language but I think that kind of tacitly gave permission to say we will have different churches according to who your parents were and which country you came from and that then has produced doctrinal divergences of various sorts and then we need to know the history because it's so important here and then with the rise in the 18th and 19th century of social Darwinism the idea of the evolution of

species and guess what different human species and one of the reasons behind evolutionism not evolution but evolutionism was an implicit desire by people in western europe and north america to discover by spirits means of course that they were the kind of elite race and that other peoples well they might be sort of human but they were a second order or third or fourth order race and that's the stuff that's at the heart of it and if the church had been true to its founding charter i.e. the new testament i.e. Galatians and Romans and and Matthew 8 where Jesus says many will come from east and west and revelation we would have seen this one coming a mile off and we would have said right from the start we cannot do that because we are a single family across all these boundaries the church has not done that and when the church doesn't do part of its core mission we shouldn't be surprised if other people come along and say we're going to fill in the gaps and so when people grumble about Black Lives Matter or Antifa or their Marxist or their anti-family or whatever well yes we have left a vacuum there and if other people are filling it with their ideologies shame on us we should have been first in the field so that's the more brief with the second thing that's the first thing yeah the second thing is i actually checked recently in the big Oxford English dictionary which i have down there with magnifying glass and so on the use of the word white to describe people who whatever they are they aren't white the only actually white people are dead people because most of us are brown or pink or something or other and we change color according to moods and health and so on as has again to the 17th and 18th century where explorers finding particularly in Africa people of very very dark skin started to use this as a binary black white and to import into that all kinds of evaluative comment and we need to get underneath that historically and instead of just checking your privilege see where this came from to understand it and then to be able and i don't think we can do this easily i think we can only do it if the church as a whole gets behind it and says our charter from the beginning was a single family of every nation and language and tribe and tongue what we've seen in the modern multicultural movements is the attempt to get the results of the gospel without allegiance to Jesus himself it can't be done and it produces a backlash and that's where we are right now yes indeed and and i suppose the problem is and perhaps this is what Kirsten and John are hinting at is that some of the attempts to help and to bring people together and to overcome some of the inherent racism that does exist in culture and so on is by making people aware of the privileges that may come with that particular skin tone with the culture that they're part of and have grown up in and so on and this is the idea behind this you know white privileges is a phrase that has you know been in common parlance recently but is that a biblical so are you saying that isn't a biblical concept or that it is a concept but that there's a better way of understanding it no the idea of being privileged socially culturally whatever no doubt that has happened in many cultures and you could say that Paul actually trades on the fact that he's a Roman citizen at certain points in order to make particular points although he's very much aware of the irony and the ambiguity of doing that but Paul came from the Jewish people who themselves believed with good biblical basis that they were the people of the creator god the people who existed for the sake of the rest of the

world and so this this has always been around as kind of a possibility and one of the great moves that's made in the new testament is to take that idea and say now it is Jesus who sums that up and the crucifixion of Jesus actually dethrones and demolishes the idea of privilege and says no if anyone wants to be great they must be the servant if anyone wants to be privileged they must be the slave of all and so what we see in the new testament is the demolition of that and of course because the church and I fear particularly both the evangelicals and Catholics by focusing on the idea being how do our souls get to heaven we have ignored what we're supposed to be doing here and now how we're supposed to be living as a family here and now and but it's absolutely central to the new testament vision and so I think the trouble then is as with some other things in society at the moment if you simply say oh this is privilege thing and we are aware of that this is all preaching moralism it's preaching the law in the old theological sense and actually when you do that you also to show here is how you repent and here is how you can amend your life but very often people who preach this rather heavy moralism they don't have any sort of amendment it's like certain movements in post-modern morality where just certain people are inherently guilty some feminists by name means all of basically say all men are guilty and then if you're a male there's nothing to do about that you're just guilty that's how it is there's no redemption there's no redemption exactly so the church somehow urgently needs to find ways of articulating and living living as a family which redeems this very dangerous culture because otherwise the church can easily collapse into separate groups of the like-minded which often means the same skin colors and that is a denial of something which is central not peripheral but central in the new testament we're slightly over time but I did there is one more question I just want to ask because I know that you've recently endorsed a book by Esau McCauley it's called I believe Reading While Black and he was one of your PhD students but this could simply ask answer Christie in Tennessee's question who says with the current racial injustice debate in the United States I'm reminded that I need to add diverse voices to my readings does Tom recommend any books by black theologians yes and certainly Esau's book which is just I think it's just out now is one I strongly recommend Esau grew up in the south he's he's an African American from an old African American Christian family and suffered all the things that African Americans in the south have traditionally suffered the smears and all the rubbish and they're being pulled over while driving and all this sort of stuff which we so-called white people basically haven't had to suffer and Esau somehow has come through with a lovely Christian testimony and a first-class intellect I mean his work on Galatians and on the Zionism and all that it's very very interesting stuff I have learned a lot from him as one does from one's PhD students he's now teaching at the moment at Wheaton College in Illinois and we can lucky to have him so I would strongly recommend Esau as a good place to start and from there you could move out because there are many different shades of opinion of course within African American writers at the moment. Well there's one recommendation at least and I'll make sure there's a link to that book and indeed to the article you referenced that's on the Wycliffe website I believe you've written on racial justice but I hope that gives you some

starting points Christy and thanks to all the others who've been in touch on similar issues that's all for today's show thank you very much Tom it's always a delight to be with you glad to be back even though we're only doing this over zoom as usual but thanks for being with us and we'll we'll see you next time. Yes indeed.