

HOPES, VISIONS AND DREAMS

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Bill Morehouse
Men's Bible Study

Critical Theories



OVERVIEW

1. What's our problem?
2. Possible solutions
3. How shall we then live?

WHAT'S OUR PROBLEM?

- Human yearning
- Stages of life
- Critical Theories

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WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT, ALFIE?

What's it all about Alfie?

Is it just for the moment we live?

What's it all about

When you sort it out, Alfie?

Are we meant to take more than we give

Or are we meant to be kind?

And if, if only fools are kind, Alfie,

Then I guess it is wise to be cruel.

And if life belongs only to the strong, Alfie,

What will you lend on an old golden rule?

As sure as I believe there's a heaven above,
Alfie, I know there's something much more,
Something even non-believers can believe in.

I believe in love, Alfie.

Without true love we just exist, Alfie.

Until you find the love you've missed

You're nothing, Alfie.

When you walk, let your heart lead the way

And you'll find love any day Alfie, Alfie..

OUR WORLD



REALLY?

THE BAD NEWS

The frank reality is that we're a bunch of mixed up people who live in an amazing world that has a lot of problems – behavioral, economic, moral, personal, psychological, social, spiritual, and systemic.

WE REALLY HAVE GOD-SIZED PROBLEMS

“

When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child.

When I became a man, I gave up childish ways.

Paul in 1 Corinthians 13:11



And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.

Joel 2:28 and Acts 2:17



3 STAGES OF MATURITY

CHILDHOOD HOPES

Just trying to fit into a world that they don't understand yet. Naïve thinking about good and evil, righteousness and sin. Self-focused.

YOUNG ADULTHOOD VISIONS

Start to see things in a wider perspective and have visions and make plans for the future accordingly. Seek for vocations, family.

OLDER ADULTHOOD DREAMS

Develop a much broader view beyond their personal lives, hopes, and visions for the future. Yearn for the generations.

THEORIES OF KNOWLEDGE

- ▶ **Traditional:** Seeks to understand the world around us and how it works for the sole sake of gaining greater knowledge about reality.
- ▶ **Critical:** Seeks to understand how the political and social spheres operate and effect the lives of human beings with the goal of improving society.

CRITICAL THEORY DEFINITION

- ▶ **Max Horkheimer** of the Frankfurt School of Western European Marxists first defined critical theory in his 1937 essay "Traditional and Critical Theory" as a social theory oriented toward critiquing and changing society as a whole, in contrast to standard traditional theory which is oriented only toward understanding or explaining it.
- ▶ According to Frankfurt School theorists, a theory is critical to the extent that it seeks human "emancipation from slavery", acts as a "liberating... influence", and works "to create a world which satisfies the needs and powers of" human beings.

CRITICAL THEORY SUMMARY

- ▶ **Critical** because it focuses on and seeks to find actionable faults in the functioning of society that can be corrected with direct action (praxis).
- ▶ **Theory** because it develops and enlarges upon a theoretical framework within which it analyzes given political and social spheres.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- Realms of knowledge
- Critical theory varieties
- True and false gospels

2

REALMS OF KNOWLEDGE/REALITY

- ▶ **Material:** Physical, visible, temporal, measurable, subject to laws of nature...
- ▶ **Psychosocial:** Human, mortal, mental and emotional, motivational, interpersonal, educational, political...
- ▶ **Spiritual:** Influential, insightful, inspirational, source of dreams, religious, potentially eternal...

VARIETIES OF THEORIES

- ▶ **Scientific:** Science and education will ultimately solve all of mankind's problems...
- ▶ **Political:** Mankind's problems are all rooted in systemic issues that require radical solutions...
- ▶ **Religious:** Forces beyond mankind are behind our problems and must be reckoned with...

WOKE MARXIST CRITICAL THEORIES

- ▶ **Class:** Classical Marxism theorizes that poor workers (the proletariat) are oppressed by rich owners of the means of production and need to liberate themselves through revolution.
- ▶ **Gender:** Theorizes that women and those of alternative gender or sexual orientation are oppressed by heteronormative men and must work together to liberate themselves.
- ▶ **Race:** Theorizes that Blacks and POC must deconstruct and break free from systemic oppression by White people.



AWAKENED BIBLICAL CRITICAL THEORY

- ▶ The Bible clearly outlines a comprehensive theory of how the world is organized and functions, an entire worldview or ideology, that includes all the problems human beings face and how to solve them using divine insights about every issue that's been raised by secular critical theories.
- ▶ **A thought project:** Make a chart that compares how a Biblical worldview compares with other ideologies.

“ You see things; and you say “Why?” But I dream things that never were; and I say “Why not?”

George “Bernard” Shaw
(also quoted by John and Robert Kennedy)

WHO'S A DREAMER?

Not everyone who dreams dreams does so under the influence of the Holy Spirit. George “Bernard” Shaw was a self-proclaimed atheistic mystic, promoted gradually adopted radical socialism and one world government, admired Stalin and Hitler, advocated for eugenics and alphabet reform, and opposed vaccination and organized religion. His sexuality has been questioned, but he was intimate with an older women on and off for 8 years in his 30s.

OTHER DREAMERS

Noah	Abraham	Isaac	Jacob/Israel
Joseph	Moses	Confucius	Buddha
Zoroaster	Caesar	Jesus	Caiaphas
Muhammed	Luther	Jefferson	Karl Marx
Hitler	Stalin	MLK, Jr.	Malcolm X
Trump	Biden	AOC	You and me?

How pure are they/we in God's eyes? How close do their/our dreams come to God's vision and dream for His Kingdom on this earth?

I HAVE A DREAM





“

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

HOW SHALL WE THEN LIVE?

- 3 political approaches
- A 4th approach
- The Gospel

3

3 POLITICAL APPROACHES

LEFT REVOLUTION

Confront and overturn all defective power structures and replace them with entirely new and superior ones.

Demand change.

CENTER REFORMATION

Leave system as it is and try to change how it operates through modification of the means it employs.

Improve things.

RIGHT CONFORMATION

Establish solid laws and enforce them consistently to ensure an orderly, peaceful, and stable society.

Preserve society.



A 4TH APPROACH

IN YOUR MIDST TRANSFORMATION

Allow one's entire operating system with its objectives and means to be changed from within through prayer, spiritual rebirth, and discipleship. Share the good news of God's redeeming love with others. Pray for a critical mass of dedicated believers to be awakened, grow, develop, and emerge. Seek positive changes at home and in the broader community in keeping with a dream of God's Kingdom on this earth while anticipating Heaven.

Alive in Christ. "Not by might nor by power but by my Spirit."

THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

- ▶ The Gospel is the “Good News” about Jesus and the Kingdom of God.
- ▶ To understand what the Gospel is all about, we first need to grasp and understand what the “bad news” is.
- ▶ Jesus came as Savior to redeem us from the power of sin and as Lord to restore the Kingdom of God.

“

Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you... Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God... I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Jesus

“

I am the door... Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

Jesus

AN OUTED SINNER



IN THE HANDS
OF A MERCIFUL KING

**OUT WITH
SINNERS**



**NOT HERE
NOT IN MY KINGDOM**

?

PRO BLACK
PRO BROWN
PRO TRANS
PRO QUEER
PRO SEXWORK
PRO IMMIGRANT
PRO LOVE



NOT HERE
NOT IN MY KINGDOM

SMILE!

What a Wonderful World!

**LOUIS
ARMSTRONG
IN 1967**

THANKS!

Any questions?

You can reach me at (585) 314-1144

▶ or wmorehouse@gmail.com

