

Part 3

# Debating, Discussing, Voting



# Political cultures in American Christianity



# Culture #1 – White Evangelicals

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- Became a conservative, Republican constituency
- Largely suburban, middle + upper middle class
- Historically disengaged on matters of race
- Keystone issue: Abortion





# Culture #2 – Black Church

## Characteristics

- Became a traditionally Democratic constituency after Civil Rights movement



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- Keystone issue: Racial Justice



# Culture #3 – New Urbanized Christianity

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- Rode “return to cities”
- Largely Gen-X + Millennials
- Theologically kin to evangelicalism
- More culturally + politically diverse than White evangelicalism





# Culture #3 – New Urbanized Christianity

“Since its inception in ancient times the city has been a meeting place of widely different people and groups, and thus a meeting place of discrepant worlds. By its very structure the city pushes its inhabitants to be ‘urbane’ with regard to strangers and ‘sophisticated’ about different approaches to reality. Modernity in any society has meant the gigantic growth of cities. This urbanization has not only been a matter of the physical growth of certain communities and the development of specifically urban institutions; urbanization is also a process on the level of consciousness, and as such it has not been limited to those communities that can properly be designated as cities...



# Culture #3 – New Urbanized Christianity

This urbanization of consciousness has been brought about especially through the modern media of mass communication...To be linked to these media is to be involved in the continuing urbanization of consciousness. Plurality is intrinsic to this process. The individual, wherever he may be, is bombarded with a multiplicity of information and communication. In terms of information, this process proverbially 'broadens the mind.' By the same token, however, it weakens the integrity and plausibility of his 'home world.'

Peter Berger, *The Homeless Mind: Modernization & Consciousness*



# 2014 – 2020: The Great Disruption

Culture #1 – White Evangelicalism

Culture #2 – Black Church

Culture #3 – New Urban Christianity



# 2014 – 2020: The Great Disruption

Culture

Culture

Culture



gicalism

h

Christianity



**Result: Political and cultural tension  
inside the Church**



Debating and discussing politics...

in an era of political and cultural  
tension inside the Church



**ROMANS 14:1-19** – As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions.<sup>2</sup> One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables.<sup>3</sup> Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him.<sup>4</sup> Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

<sup>5</sup> One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind.<sup>6</sup> The one who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord. The one who eats, eats in honor of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God, while the one who abstains, abstains in honor of the Lord and gives thanks to God...



<sup>7</sup> For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. <sup>8</sup> For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. <sup>9</sup> For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

<sup>10</sup> Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God; <sup>11</sup> for it is written,

“As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.”

<sup>12</sup> So then each of us will give an account of himself to God...





<sup>13</sup> Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother. <sup>14</sup> I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself, but it is unclean for anyone who thinks it unclean. <sup>15</sup> For if your brother is grieved by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love. By what you eat, do not destroy the one for whom Christ died. <sup>16</sup> So do not let what you regard as good be spoken of as evil. <sup>17</sup> For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. <sup>18</sup> Whoever thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men. <sup>19</sup> So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding...



<sup>20</sup> Do not, for the sake of food, destroy the work of God. Everything is indeed clean, but it is wrong for anyone to make another stumble by what he eats. <sup>21</sup> It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that causes your brother to stumble. <sup>22</sup> The faith that you have, keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who has no reason to pass judgment on himself for what he approves. <sup>23</sup> But whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats, because the eating is not from faith. For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.



# Principles from Romans 14

Respect and welcome differences of conscience.

“Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind” – v5

“So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God” –  
v12



# Principles from Romans 14

Recognize motive, not just logic or position.

“The one who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord. The one who eats, eats in honor of the Lord...” – v6



# Principles from Romans 14

Discussion is allowed. Quarreling and despising is not.

“...welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions” – v1

“Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him.” – v3

“Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or why do you despise your brother?” – v10



# Principles from Romans 14

Be judicious. It's OK not to engage.

“The faith that you have, keep between yourself and God.” – v22



# Principles from Romans 14

Recognize what's at stake: each other's faith.

“By what you eat, do not destroy the one for whom Christ died.”  
– v15

“So then let us pursue what makes for peace and mutual  
upbuilding.” – v19

“Do not, for the sake of food, destroy the work of God”  
– v20



# Rules of Engagement



Adapted from “Gospel Polemics”  
by Tim Keller in *Center Church*,  
p. 372-3





# Rules of Engagement

Never attribute to someone an opinion they themselves do not own

“Even if you believe that Mr. A’s belief X could lead others who hold belief X to hold belief Y, do not accuse Mr. A of holding belief Y if he disowns it.”



# Rules of Engagement

**Take someone's view in its entirety, not selectively**

“We should not isolate certain statements by Mr. A while overlooking or even concealing explanations, qualifications, or balancing statements he may have made elsewhere.”



# Rules of Engagement

Represent their position in its strongest form, not in a weak “straw man” form

“Do the work necessary to articulate the views of your opponent with such strength and clarity that he or she could say, ‘I couldn’t have said it better myself.’”



# Rules of Engagement

**Seek to persuade, not antagonize – but watch your motives!**

“It is possible to seek to be winsome and persuasive out of self-centeredness - a desire to be popular...It is just as possible to be bold and strongly polemical out of self-centeredness rather than God-centeredness. And therefore, looking closely at our motives, we must take care that our polemics do not unnecessarily harden or antagonize...”



# Rules of Engagement

Recognize legitimate critiques and weaknesses of your own position.

Don't dismiss them with "what about \_\_\_\_\_?"



# Voting your conscience



**MATTHEW 22:15-22** – Then the Pharisees went and plotted how to entangle him in his words. <sup>16</sup> And they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, “Teacher, we know that you are true and teach the way of God truthfully, and you do not care about anyone’s opinion, for you are not swayed by appearances. <sup>17</sup> Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?” <sup>18</sup> But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, “Why put me to the test, you hypocrites? <sup>19</sup> Show me the coin for the tax.” And they brought him a denarius. <sup>20</sup> And Jesus said to them, “Whose likeness and inscription is this?” <sup>21</sup> They said, “Caesar’s.” Then he said to them, “Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” <sup>22</sup> When they heard it, they marveled. And they left him and went away.



# Voting Your Conscience – Matthew 22

## Principles

- It is right and reasonable to vote





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- It is right and reasonable to vote
- You are voting in a fallen system



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- But your vote should not represent your total allegiance



# Voting Your Conscience – Matthew 22

## Principles

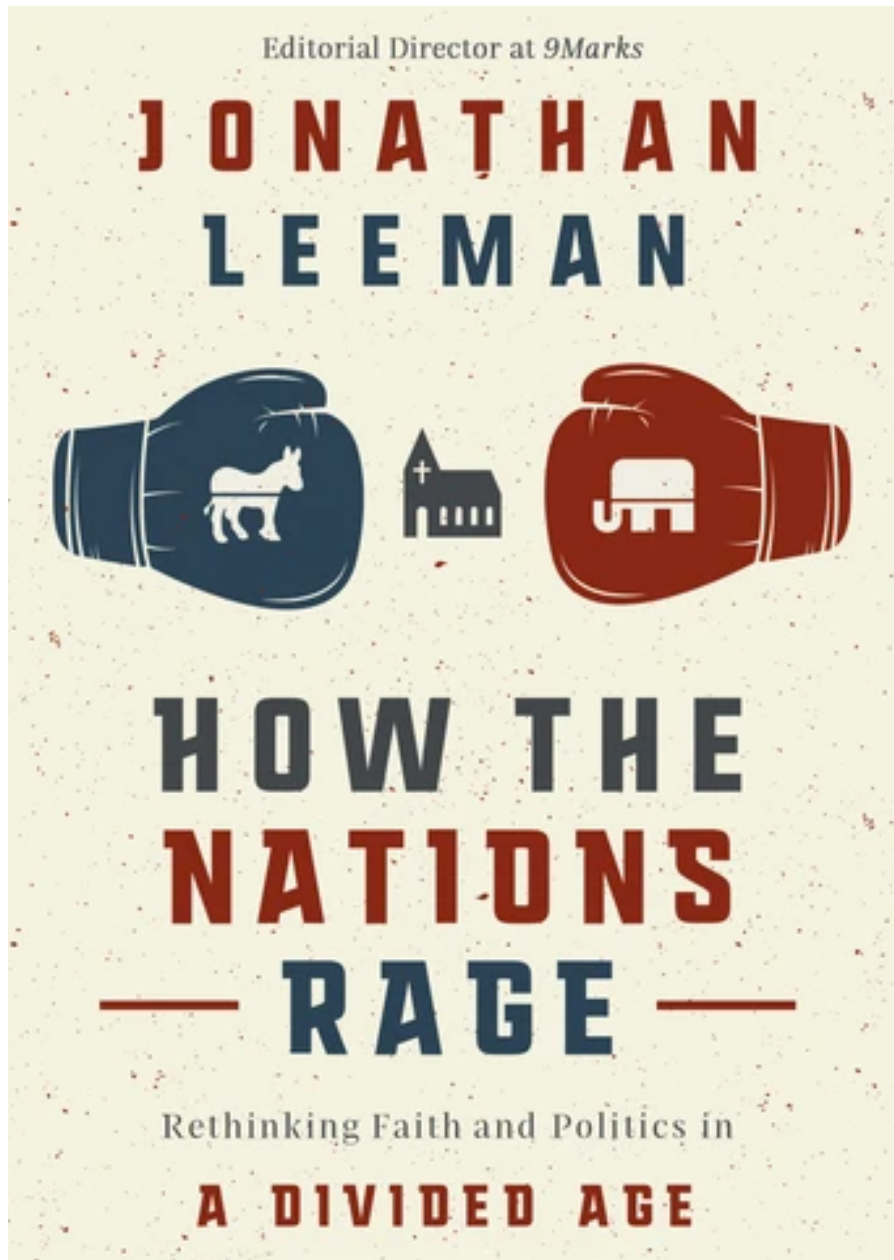
- It is right and reasonable to vote
- You are voting in a fallen system
- Your vote should represent your best judgment
- But your vote should not represent your total allegiance
- Politics is more than voting



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*How the Nations Rage: Rethinking  
Faith and Politics in a Divided Age*

by Jonathan Leeman



Q3 2020 : Gospel-Changed Minds

# Justice in the Bible

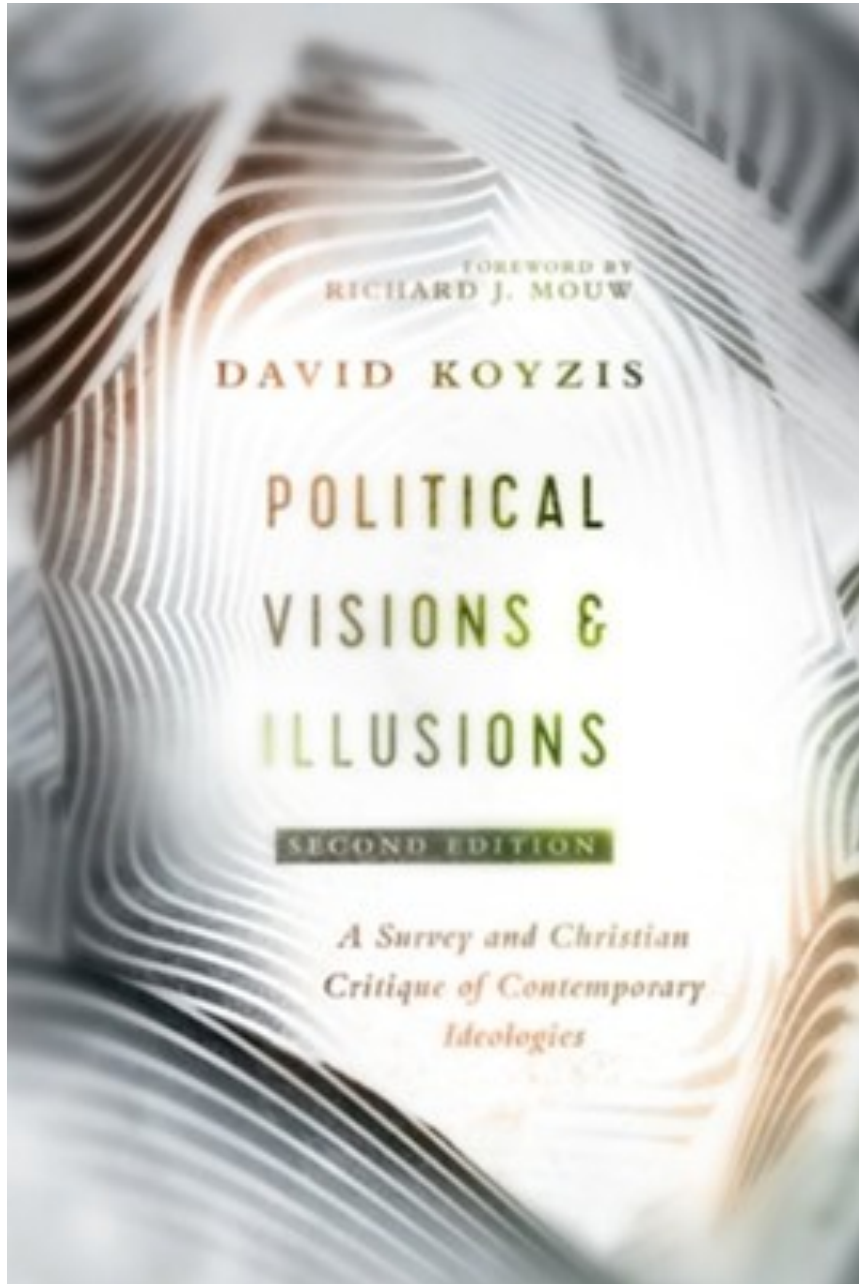
By Timothy Keller

*This is the fourth and final article in the series on justice and race by Dr. Timothy Keller that includes: “The Bible and Race” (March 2020), “The Sin of Racism” (June 2020), and “A Biblical Critique of Secular Justice and Critical Theory” (August 2020).*

“Justice in the Bible”  
by Timothy Keller

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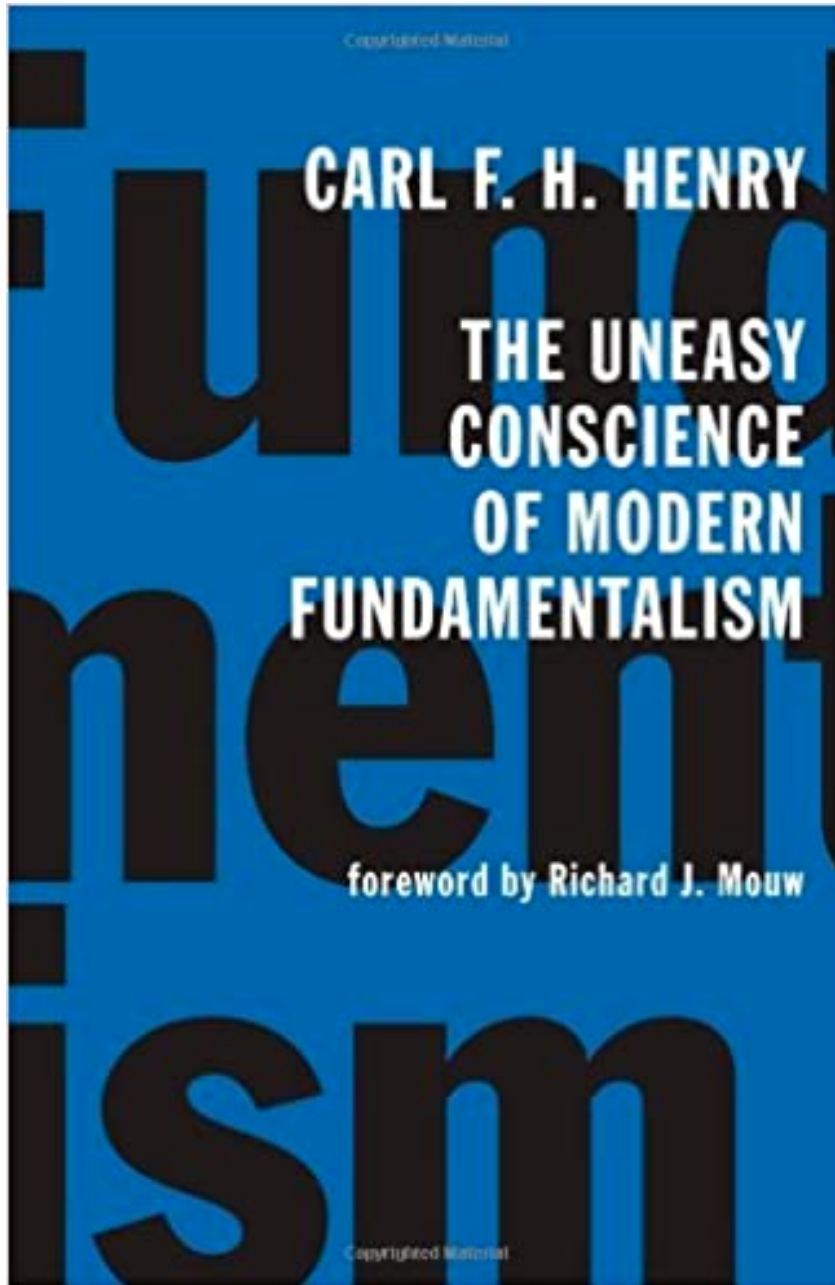


# *Political Visions & Illusions: A Survey and Christian Critique of Contemporary Ideologies*

by David Koyzis



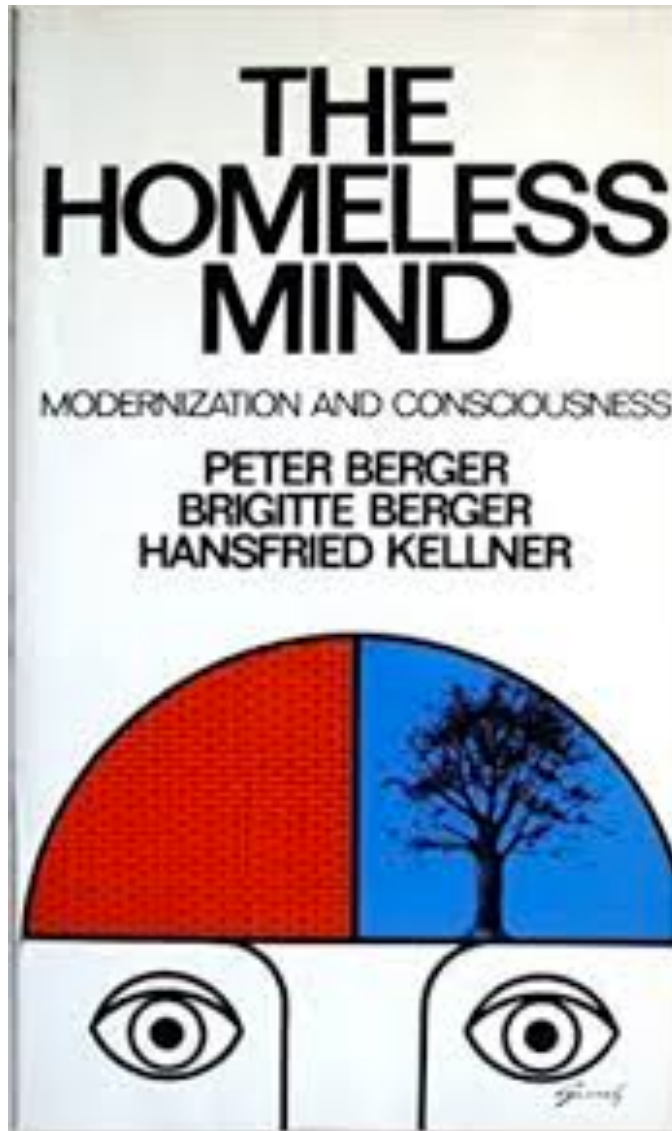




# *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*

by Carl F. H. Henry





*The Homeless Mind:  
Modernization & Consciousness*

by Peter Berger

