

Introduction

I'd like to begin by telling you about a policy that the Human Rights Commission of Maine proposed in April of 2010. It caused quite a stir. The Commission stated that schools forcing a student into a particular room or group because of his or her gender amounts to discrimination. It proposed therefore to ban schools from enforcing any gender divisions in sports teams, school organizations, locker rooms, and even bathrooms. It did put the proposal on hold because of extensive public criticism, but is considering future action to institute it.

What's going on in the State of Maine? I'll tell you. It's political correctness. Political correctness is a movement that's attempting to capture the minds and hearts of Americans. But it hasn't captured mine. I saw a young man wearing a t-shirt that said "**Politically incorrect and proud of it.**" The first half of his slogan pretty well sums up my point of view about the subject. I'm politically incorrect. You might disagree with me about that, but let me explain what I mean before you make any judgments. Let's examine the text we just read, 2 Corinthians 10:1-6.

Speculations

The Corinthian Church had a host of problems and Paul was going to go to Corinth in an attempt to correct them. He communicates in verses 1-2 the principle of love he was going to follow in doing so: correct them gently if he could but severely if he had to. He then communicates in verses 3-6 what he was going to do, destroy "**speculations,**" and how He was going to do it, through divine power. In a nutshell, that's what the text is about. Let's determine now how verses 3-6 apply to us.

Paul uses a favorite metaphor of his. It's that followers of Jesus are at war. We know from Ephesians 6 that it's a spiritual war and verse 5 reveals one of the nuances or aspects of it. It's the conflict between "**speculations**" and "**the knowledge of God.**"

The Greek word translated "**speculations**" refers to the beliefs,

convictions, or opinions of people. That word is paired with the words **“lofty thing.”** Those two words, in the Greek, connote what is relentless and clever. So, what Paul’s writing about here are beliefs, convictions, or opinions of people that are relentlessly and cleverly communicated (set forth) to persuade others.

Every culture of every age has its speculations including ours. One of ours is political correctness. Most people equate political correctness with language and the use of words. But it’s about far more than that. It’s also an aggressively promoted worldview that has three main parts, each of which I’m going to identify and briefly explain.

One part is feminism. Feminism’s most basic tenet is equality without distinctions. It teaches that there are no significant differences between males and females either biologically or psychologically. Any differences we observe are either environmentally or socially caused. Males and females are naturally the same. That point of view explains what the Human Rights Commission in Maine proposed. Why should there be a boy’s basketball team and a girl’s or even a boy’s bathroom and a girl’s if there is equality without distinctions.

That perspective has several logical consequences. Homosexuality, for instance, must be a legitimate alternative lifestyle. If there are no real differences between the genders, it’s illogical to condemn homosexuality or even homosexual marriage. Or women must have the right to abortion. Men have the opportunity to be sexually free without bearing children. Women, to achieve equality, must have the same opportunity and abortion gives them just that.

A second main part of the political correctness worldview is socialism. Socialism has two fundamental convictions. First, people’s problems are caused by unjust social structures. And second, unjust social structures are caused by the unequal distribution of wealth. You can see where those two convictions ultimately lead, the redistribution of wealth. That is precisely what socialism proposes. The second tenet of Karl Marx’s Communist Manifesto, for instance, is a graduated tax system. Why? It’s because that is the best way to redistribute wealth. It enables

government to take it from one person and give it to another.

If you're read at all, you know that the redistribution of wealth is a hot political and economic topic in America today. Last year, a Gallup poll found this. 47% of Americans think that the government should impose heavy taxes on the rich in order to redistribute wealth. 49% think that it should not. Those who think it should are consistent with the second part of the political correctness worldview.

The third main part of that worldview is naturalism. Notice I didn't say humanism. Humanism is quickly losing ground to naturalism. Humanism says that man is the center of the universe. Naturalism says that nature is. It contends that nature is supreme.

Naturalism has a logical implication. All aspects of nature are equal. Animals, plants, and even mountains and streams are as equally important as human beings are. Ingrid Newkirk, the highly respected president of PETA, said this: **"There's no rational basis for saying that a human being has special rights. A rat is a pig is a dog is a boy. They're all animals."** David Brower, former executive director of the Sierra Club, went even further. He wrote this: **"While the death of young men in war is unfortunate, it is no more serious than the touching of mountains and wilderness areas by humankind."** Human beings, in other words, are no more important than any other aspect of nature is. Abortion, euthanasia, and the booby trapping of logging camps are a few of the acts to which this naturalism leads.

Those then are three main parts of the political correctness worldview: feminism, socialism, and naturalism.

The Knowledge of God

Over and against that we have the **"the knowledge of God"** in verse 5. Bible commentator Charles Hodge pointed out that **"the knowledge of God"** is synonymous with **"the truth of God,"** and he was right. It's the truth that God reveals through the Bible. Let's look at that truth when it comes to gender, property, and nature.

I start with gender. The Bible doesn't teach that men are superior to women. What it does teach is equality with distinctions. Men and women are in the image of God. They are, therefore, equal. At the same time, however, they aren't identical. They're complementary. They have fundamental differences that together express God's true image. Men, for instance, tend to be stronger (physically) and women more nurturing (emotionally). Those differences are complementary and together express God's true image. He's powerful and loving.

The differences between men and women manifest themselves in distinctive ways they think, feel, and act. Women, for instance, are generally far more patriotic or fervent about family and home than men are. Suppose you need to register a complaint about one of my grandsons. You'd do well to recognize that difference and register it with me instead of my wife. When it comes to men and women, the Bible teaches equality with distinctions. We need to recognize and act consistently with both, the equality and the distinctions, in our societal and individual lives.

Now let's consider the truth about property. The Bible doesn't endorse one economic system over another. Neither capitalism nor socialism are divinely ordained systems. Both have their flaws. But the Bible does reveal a theology of property. Its foundational principle is this. Property rights and human rights are bound together. They're bound together so tightly in fact that they can't be separated. Property rights aren't inferior to human rights. To violate people's property rights is to violate their human rights. To touch their property is to touch them.

Socialism violates that foundational principle. By its nature, it takes property rights, and thus human rights, lightly. That's historically true. Eminent historian and economist Herbert Schlossberg explained it this way: **"There are no societies that are cavalier toward property rights but which safeguard human rights. The state that lays its hand on your purse will lay its hand on your person. Both are acts of a government that despises transcendent law."**

Transcendent law, God's law, gives human beings the right to own private property that is theirs alone. Our government and we must respect that right and act accordingly. Human rights depend on it.

That brings us finally to the truth about nature. The Bible teaches that God made everything that exists. Consequently, everything that exists has inherent value. But human beings, as I preached about in detail three weeks ago, are special and unique. Remember what I said. They have what nothing else in creation does. It's God's stamp of value, which is His image in them. That stamp of value demands that human life, whether it's a profoundly retarded child or a fetus, be taken infinitely seriously – more seriously than anything else in the universe is.

The Destruction of Fortresses

So there you have it – speculations on the one hand and the knowledge of God on the other. Now notice what our call is in verse 5. It's to destroy all speculations that are contrary to the knowledge of God, which include many tents of the political correctness worldview. But how do we do that? Paul tells us in verses 5 and 6.

According to verse 6, we **"punish all disobedience."** Paul's saying that we must contend with and oppose people who espouse speculations that are contrary to the knowledge of God. He's referring specifically to speculations in the church, but the principle applies outside the church as well - in society generally and our spheres of influence particularly. We "contend with" and "oppose" lovingly but firmly.

Let's stop for a moment and think about some of the institutions and arenas of societal life: politics, public education, the university system, the press, the motion picture industry, business, law, medicine, and government. Well, followers of Jesus need to enter into careers in those institutions and arenas and bring God's truth to them when they do.

But while engaging society in that way is vital, it isn't enough. Paul contends in verses 3-4 that we can't destroy speculations in **"the flesh"** (in our own power). The word **"fortresses"** reveals why. It implies that

we're fighting against supernatural forces and we are. Satan and his demons are behind feminism, socialism, and naturalism, as I defined them. They are the real enemies we face. We cannot, therefore, win the political correctness battle in our own human power. We need divine power instead and God gives it – if we do what Paul commands in verse 5, take **“every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.”**

Francis Schaeffer articulated what doing that involves in his book *No Little People*. He explained that the Christian life must be comprised of three concentric circles. Concentric circles are circles inside each other. The outer circle is what he called **“correct theological position.”** It's knowing Biblical truth. The middle circle is what he called **“intellectual training.”** It's comprehending our own generation. We do that by reading about and observing our cultural context. And finally, the innermost circle is what Schaeffer called **“devotional attitude toward God.”** It's routinely and intently engaging God, which I've explained many times before, in detail, how to do. It's keeping an ongoing and deep relationship with the God who is here, Yahweh.

So that's how we, in practical terms, take every thought captive to the obedience of Jesus. We properly establish, properly emphasize, and properly relate, in our lives, the realities those three circles represent.

When we do that, God empowers us supernaturally in the lives we live and in the battles we fight. Schaeffer said it this way: **“When each of these three circles is established in its proper place, there will be tongues of fire and the power of the Holy Spirit.”**

Conclusion

He was right. So, let's commit ourselves to properly establishing, emphasizing, and relating three things: Biblical truth, the comprehension of our culture, and most of all ongoing and deep relationship with God. We'll have tongues of fire and the power of the Holy Spirit if we do. And if we have that, we'll be able to destroy speculations raised against the knowledge of God – including political correctness.