

A Review of Megan Basham's *Shepherds for Sale*

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Introduction

American evangelicals in the early 21st century are truly a sight to behold, as compromises one after another flare up within her. One is shocked to find professing Evangelicals promoting immorality such as LGBTQ, as David French does.¹ One is puzzled as to how American evangelicals can tolerate such people, who in earlier centuries would be immediately excommunicated by orthodox churches, and even heretical groups as well. The flood of sewage coming out of American Evangelicalism is shocking to evangelical Christians around the world looking in, but 'Murica being focused on itself, they could not care less about what the world thinks.

Megan Basham in her book seeks to peel away the secrecy behind the shift in American Evangelicalism. In her book, Basham applies her skills as an investigative journalist to expose the links and money trails behind how leftist groups have infiltrated Evangelical organizations and promoted positions at variance with what many American Evangelicals believe. The book is split into 8 chapters, dealing with the issues of climate change, illegal immigration, the pro-life movement, money trails, COVID 19, Critical Race theory, #MeToo, and the LGBTQ agenda.

As we investigate what Basham is arguing for, it must be noted that many of these issues are not dealt with in Scripture, and seems to be focused on right-wing talking points instead of Scripture. Yet, before making a hasty judgment, one first has to read what Basham is actually saying, which requires an actual reading of the book.

Summary of the book

At the beginning, Basham states the main points of her book are as follows: (1) There is a concerted effort by secular progressives to co-opt the church into their leftist agenda, (2) Many influential Christian leaders are promoting leftist causes, (3) This is being done through "shallow religious manipulation and a demand for consensus that Scripture does not require" (p. xxiii), and under the basket mantra of "love your neighbor" (p. xxiii), (4) Christians can have serious disagreements about many issues, but the issues should be argued for and "in good faith" (*ibid.*). This here shows that Basham asserts that she is not arguing for any controversial position in this book of hers, something which will be put to the test in the subsequent chapters that follow.

In chapter 1 dealing with climate change, Basham's main thesis is that secular elites have funded various organizations that aim to change American Evangelicals' view on

¹ See my post on this at <https://purtanreformed.blogspot.com/2022/10/the-american-idolatry-of-freedom-and.html> (Oct 3, 2022). Accessed 16 Sept 2024.

the issue of climate change, like the Evangelical Climate Initiative (ECI) (p. 9). She then documents the many evangelicals who have been pushing climate change alarmism, noting that they do not however interact with scientists who disagree with the political consensus on the issue, scientists such as those in the Cornwall Alliance headed by Calvin Beisner. (pp. 12-13). She ends the chapter by stating the following:

These are complex topics. It is not wrong for pastors and Christian leaders to weigh them and debate them. But it is wrong for them to make agreement on environmental policies a test of biblical faithfulness. It is wrong to make climate change activism a measure of one's commitment to the Gospel. And it is wrong to bind consciences with a blithe and unthinking "Love your neighbor." (p. 30)

Chapter 2 sees Basham show forth how leftists have once again funded the promotion of illegal immigration to evangelicals through organizations like the Evangelical Immigration Table (EIT). On this issue, Basham points out the victims of violent criminals brought about by illegal immigrants (pp. 31-33), and states that using the Bible's view of welcoming strangers to promote illegal immigration "cheapens its meaning" (p. 50) and "cheapens the mission of the Church" (*Ibid.*). Chapter 3 deals with how left-leaning pastors are trying to broaden the term "pro-life" to include socialist policies, and to attack evangelicals who voted for Donal Trump, while chapter 4 deals with the money trail of organizations like *Christianity Today* who are funded by leftists to promote leftist talking points.

Chapter 5 deals with the issue of COVID 19, specifically the American response to the pandemic and the deceptions use during the crisis. Basham did not at any time deal with the validity or efficacy of the COVID vaccines, but rather dealt with how pastors and theologians are using their authority to tell people what medical decision to make, and even seek to bind their consciences on the matter. She also pointed out the Great Barrington Declaration was written by dissenting scientists on the issue of lockdowns, and how the scientific issues raised by the Declaration were never discussed by supposed evangelicals like Francis Collins. Rather, the statement and its proponents were politically smeared and dismissed (p. 96-9). She stated that one of the main opponents of lockdowns, Stanford Professor Dr. Jay Battacharya, believes that Francis Collins had "abused his position as a public health official and as a trusted Christian voice" (p. 99). As for evangelical pastors, Basham asks rhetorically whether it is a "clergy's job to tell church members to 'trust the science,'" or "to slyly insult other pastors" (p. 105) She then exposed the anti-Christian and immoral things that Collins have done (pp. 106-115), thus showing he is no Christian witness but has done really wicked things. She spent the rest of the chapter exposing the manipulations and accusations some evangelicals heap on others on the issue of lockdowns and vaccines.

In Chapter 6, Basham moves to the issue of Critical Race Theory (CRT), and documents the embrace and infiltration of Critical Race Theory into many parts of American Evangelicalism, along with evangelical elites accusing those who disagree with them on CRT of racism. She agrees that racism is real and ugly, and states that

the appeal of white supremacists like Nick Fuentes and Richard Spencer is “a legitimate crisis” (p. 150), but points out that CRT is actually pro-racism. Chapter 7 deals with the issue of #MeToo, a secular movement against abuse of women that metastasized into multiple accusations of rape by many women who were taken to be true without substantial evidence. The movement spread into the church, and Basham points out how standards of evidence have to be honored, something she claims are not present in these accusations that look like wild witch hunts more than actual cries for justice (pp. 162-3). She ends that chapter with discussing issues in the Southern Baptist Convention and the mess created by ignoring standards of justice in favor of just ‘hearing the victims.’ Chapter 8 deals with the issue of the LGBTQ+ agenda, and how various influential evangelicals are pushing to validate sexual sin in the church. On this, Basham covers Andy Stanley, the “Reformation Project” and Revoice along with the “Side A” (LGBT is not sin), and “Side B” (LGBT is sin but same-sex attraction and identification is not) errors.

Preliminary evaluation of the main themes of the book

It is noted here that Basham writes the book from a right-wing perspective. What about the issues raised in the book? On the issue of climate change, it must be stated that Basham is correct in pointing out that church leaders have no right to take positions on what are essentially scientific matters, especially when the science of climate change has been coopted for political purposes. Many evangelical pastors and theologians are generally not scientifically trained, so why do they think they can pontificate on the matter and make it binding on the consciences of others? Even those that are scientifically trained, like this reviewer, should acknowledge that we are not knowledgeable enough about the topic to discuss it at length. If, like this reviewer, we read up on some of the science, we know enough to tell you that the issue is complicated and we should not take any position at all about the issue of climate change. What everyone can say, however, is that climate change **alarmism** is in error, because God preserves the earth (Gen. 9:12-17, Jer. 33:20, 25). The earth will not be destroyed before its time, but mankind will destroy itself first before the planet perishes. The only thing we should be worried about is not destroying the planet, but rather to preserve the use of creation (which includes both biodiversity and human flourishing).

On this particular issue therefore, Basham is correct to point out that pastors and Christian leaders should take no position on the issue of climate change. If there is a desire to help believers think through the topics, they should present both sides and tell believers to do their own thinking and research on the topic if they are interested in it.

Basham’s second topic deals with illegal immigration, and here one can claim a right-wing angle ONLY if one thinks that obeying the law is a right-wing issue. There is honestly nothing more to say to those who think violating the law is what Christians should be promoting or what Jesus would have done. After all, which part of the word

“illegal” is hard to understand? On chapter 3, that is a uniquely American issue where there is a strong pro-life movement, and understandably it is a concern when others are trying to co-opt and thus destroy the movement. This is not to say that saving babies is a uniquely American issue and therefore we should ask why evangelicals in the rest of the world are fine with abortion. That however is a false inference, because we are not fine with abortion! Rather, evangelicals in America have the luxury to lobby and work for policies to save baby lives. Evangelicals in many of the rest of the world however do not have the time, freedom or resources to attempt to do so.

As we look at Chapter 4, I must state that Basham’s work here and in the other chapters is excellently referenced. Whether one agrees with some of her interpretations is another thing of course, but on the factual issues, there does not seem to be any problems. The money trail is especially alarming since Scripture clearly warns us about the love of money (1 Tim. 6:10).

Chapter 5 deals with some really controversial issues. It is appreciated that Basham deals with the manipulations and accusations over lockdowns and mandates. Of course, here, Basham takes the right-wing position, but the main point is not whether Basham’s position on lockdowns is valid, but that the church should not be acting as health or government officials. That is a point that might be unfortunately missed by those who may disagree with Basham’s view concerning the response to the pandemic. Whatever one’s views on COVID 19, pastors should not be taking a position on it. The only thing pastors should take a position on is the need to physically meet and worship together as soon as possible (Heb. 10:24-25), and it should be physical since humans are both body and soul, not just spirit! Furthermore, as stated earlier on the issue of climate change, the church should not take any position on scientific issues, and definitely not on the Great Barrington Declaration. As for Francis Collins, the only question is whether his immoral behavior was done knowingly, as the morality of promoting LGBT for example is not up for debate.

On the issue of Critical Race Theory, Basham is correct here. One can assert that this is a right-wing position, but the issue of racism is a moral issue, not a political issue. This is true also for the issue of the LGBTQ+ agenda, where those who embrace what God has specifically decried are on the road to apostasy, if not already there.

Lastly, on the issue of abuse in the church, Basham points out the very important point that one needs to have proper standards of evidence. At the same time, this is mostly an American issue so it is not too relevant outside America. That said, from a non-American perspective, the whole issue is sad as it shows how much in captivity the American church is, following whatever trend the hostile unbelieving culture sets.

On the issue of supposed right-wing politics

As mentioned, since Basham takes the right-wing position as the default, certainly there will be accusations that the book is all about right-wing politics. This however is

a misrepresentation of the book, since Basham did not truly argue for her right-wing positions except to say that right-wing options are available and therefore it is politics to only promote leftist positions. As Basham notes in her introduction,

Again and again in these pages, you will note the manipulation of Church leaders who claim that to stand where the Bible stands is “political,” yet not accepting their view on some issue where biblical application is disputable is somehow—even when they’re pressing you to lobby for legislative remedies—paradoxically *not* political. (p. xxv)

In other words, one can take the exact opposite positions to Basham on the debatable topics (climate change, COVID19) and still one should agree with her that these topics should not be addressed by pastors. Those who accuse Basham’s book of just promoting right-wing beliefs are misrepresenting her work.

The second issue is that moral issues are not right-wing or left-wing. Where Scripture is clear is not a matter of politics. Now, politics can take a stand for or against a biblical position, such that what the Bible says becomes a “left-wing” or “right-wing” position. Therefore, just because some things are considered “right-wing” is not cause for dismissal of its proponents as being promoters of “right-wing” politics. The Bible is clear that LGBTQ+ are sexual sins and those who unrepentantly engage in them do not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9-10). THAT is not a matter of politics but morality. Those who are arguing that Basham’s stance against illegal immigration, or Critical Race Theory, or LGBTQ+ makes the work political are taking their moral stances from the world and not from Scripture. There is nothing to say to them except to repeat what the Scripture clearly teach and call them to repentance for their wickedness and sin.

Lastly, the only time Donald Trump is mentioned as a subject is only as it deals with how voting for Donald Trump is not sin. Anyone who thinks that is an apology for Donald Trump shows that they have either not actually read the book, and/or are probably suffering from Trump Derangement Syndrome.²

Engaging the critics: Gavin Ortlund

Gavin Ortlund is a pastor and an internet apologist whose video was referenced by Megan Basham as an example of a pastor who promotes climate change. In her book, Basham critiqued Ortlund’s video on his YouTube channel *Truth Unites*.³ According to Basham, Ortlund does the following in his video:

- 1) Calling the common tenets of the climate change movement “settled science.”

² Trump Derangement Syndrome (TDS) is the mental condition where a person irrationally sees Donald Trump everywhere as a malevolent actor, and is thus wholly incapable of evaluating anything that has any association with Trump, however remote, objectively.

³ Truth Unites, “Climate Change, Why Christians Should Engage,” YouTube video, March 2, 2022, <https://youtu.be/XRDkxHUXNd0?si=dmoWxol5N9N0LOIM>. Accessed September 17, 2024.

- 2) Promoting the apocalyptic consequences of climate change.
- 3) Stating that not to accept the “scientific consensus” is to buy into “conspiracy and hoax,” and a failure to “take a responsible posture” as a Christian.
- 4) Stating that those who hold views that differ from his can be doing so only because they are motivated by politics or haven’t “hit the books.”

(p. 25-7)

Ortlund did not take this lying down, and made a video basically accusing Basham of misrepresenting him.⁴ So did Basham misrepresent Ortlund, or is Ortlund misrepresenting Basham?

The videos, and the book, are all publicly available, so one can check the evidence for himself. Firstly, we compare what Basham said to the video she is responding to. It is clear that theses 1 and 2 are true, as Ortlund deals with the issue of climate change according to the political climate consensus. Ortlund did not ever in his first video ever mention dissenting scientists or the Cornwall Alliance. Therefore, theses 1 and 2 are undisputable.

Theses 3 and 4 are inferences from what Ortlund has said. Ortlund did not actually say that these, yet it is hard to claim these are illegitimate inferences. Ortlund did say that the climate change science is settled, it is a conspiracy to claim that the scientists who push all these are wrong, and people who disagree with him should hit the books and do the actual reading. In other words, according to Ortlund, if you actually follow the science and read the books, you will come to the same conclusion as he does. That is an inescapable conclusion from what he says in the video. It is a small inference from there to Basham’s third and fourth theses, an inference to be sure but not necessarily an illegitimate one.

A key clarification question should be posed to Ortlund then: (1) Does he agree that one can be a scientist, read all the books, and reject the climate change “consensus”? If he answers no, then Basham’s theses 3 and 4 are necessarily true.

In his response video, Ortlund claims the following:

- 1) Basham misrepresents him because he merely says he wants a conversation about the topic of climate change and he did not make climate change a test of Gospel orthodoxy
- 2) Basham misrepresents him because he did not propose any policy recommendation.
- 3) He claims he is fine with people having a different opinion about the topic.
- 4) Basham is the one making climate change a test of biblical faithfulness.

⁴ Truth Unites, “Megan Basham’s Shepherds for Sale: Problems with the Book,” Aug 1, 2024, <https://youtu.be/-3CIEkfP8pM?si=xVxAeKncx7QgpFFM>. Accessed Sept 17, 2024.

- 5) Basham misrepresents his take on ‘taking a responsible posture’ from studying the topic to not buying into climate change.
- 6) He does not take any position on climate change.
- 7) Basham is calling for open civil war against pastors who disagree on these non-Gospel issues
- 8) Basham’s book is shaped by American society and politics rather than Christian orthodoxy.

Having examined Basham’s arguments in her book and Ortlund’s original video, what can we say about Ortlund’s counter charges? We should immediately dismiss statement two because that is a misrepresentation of Basham. Statements 1,3 and 6 are a backtrack from his claims in his original video, where he makes it clear he treats climate change orthodoxy as truth. While he did say he wanted a discussion on climate change, in his original video it is clear that is not just what he wanted. It is a legitimate inference from the original video that Ortlund believes that climate change “orthodoxy” is the only legitimate position one can take if one takes the “science” seriously, and Ortlund is misleading others when he claims he just wants dialogue on the topic. Ortlund is pushing climate change orthodoxy as truth in his original video, and any discussion that he merely wants dialogue is not a proper representation of the original video. If Ortlund believes that it is possible that one can do the reading, follow the science, and still rejects the climate change orthodoxy, then let him say so now, explicitly.

Statement 4 is likewise a misrepresentation of Basham. Ortlund it seems did not actually read the book well, misrepresenting Basham’s main thesis. This is evident in statement 7, another misrepresentation of Basham’s book. Basham is claiming that it is the leftists that are waging war against the church by pushing leftist messaging, and for Ortlund to misrepresent this by making Basham the aggressor is truly amazing.

Statement 8 is true in a sense. The issues discussed by Basham are indeed shaped by American society and politics, but again, this misrepresents what the book is about. The book is about exposing how leftists are pushing their agenda in American evangelical churches, not about putting forward a vision of Christian orthodoxy. This is evident in how Ortlund is puzzled over why Basham did not put forward her position on climate change. This shows how Ortlund fails to understand what the book is, which is not about pushing right-wing politics but a pushback against leftist attempts to push their messaging in evangelical churches.

Statement 5 is the most plausible claim, and that is because Basham makes inferences without clear demarcation between facts and inferences. Thus, this one point can be given to Ortlund as a criticism of Basham, with all others being misrepresentations of her position.

Engaging the critics: Jordan Steffaniak

Jordan Steffaniak of *The London Lyceum* wrote an article in his ministry website, wherein he attacked Basham and states that her book should be ignored because it “fails to reliably tell the whole truth which moral courage and proper moral judgment require,” and that it engages in “what I can only surmise is intentional deceit.”⁵ So what crime did Basham commit?

Steffaniak gave two examples of what he says were major distortions of fact. In a conference at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (SEBTS) in 2021 entitled the *Goodness of Creation and Human Responsibility*, Steffaniak quotes Basham as saying that “all six speakers took the position that climate change is a problem of catastrophic proportions and that Christians have a duty to take up the issue.”⁶ He points out what he says are errors. First, Danny Akin did not organize the conference, which he admits is a small error. Second, there were nine speakers, not six. Third, the conference was not dedicated to climate change activism. Lastly, Alister McGrath did not actually argue that “believers who do not view climate change as an existential crisis possess less love for God’s creation.”

What can be said in response? First, the facts that Danny Akin did not organize the conference or that there were nine speakers, are minor errors. Steffaniak claims that Basham admitted the errors, but I was unable to find the source for that admission. It must be noted here that Steffaniak gave the wrong page number on Basham’s book that mentions the conference, referencing page xxiii, whereas the proper page number is page 16.

As for whether the conference was truly dedicated to climate change activism, this is debatable. On the archived website,⁷ we read that the conference was advertised with the following: “speakers aimed to show the integral link between creation and redemption, explore how evangelicals can recover important biblical themes concerning the goodness of creation, examine our responsibility in creation, and present practical takeaways.” Well, what can we say about Steffaniak’s third and fourth charges? It is perhaps true that Steffaniak, as an additional speaker, was there giving a talk defending gender essentialism. It is perhaps also true that McGrath did not actually say those very words as they are reported by Basham (noting Basham’s penchant for mixing fact and inference). But Steffaniak did not disprove that the theme of the other speakers was about the environment and climate change. In fact, he acknowledges the fact as follows:

⁵ Jordan Steffaniak, “Plunder the Mercenaries: On knowing what Time it is,” *The London Lyceum* (Aug 16, 2024), <https://thelondonlyceum.com/plundering-the-mercenaries-on-knowing-what-time-it-is>. Accessed September 17, 2024

⁶ See Basham, 16

⁷ Katherin Hayhoe, “Katharine Hayhoe: Climate Change — Facts, Fictions, and our Faith,” *SEBTS Center for Faith and Culture* (April 5, 2024), <https://web.archive.org/web/20240613082828/https://cfc.sebts.edu/faith-and-science/katharine-hayhoe-climate-change-facts-fictions-faith/>. Accessed Sept 17, 2024

Yes, she is right that some mention the climate, and some did so in an “alarmist” type way. But to suggest the entire conference was dedicated to this is not merely a factual error. It is a dishonest retelling of events, whether intentional or not.

Was the whole conference dedicated to the climate? Well, the archived page for the conference suggest that seemed to be the main theme of the conference. On the specific charge of climate change **activism**, that is Steffaniak’s word against the word of Basham’s. And unfortunately, since Steffaniak has not shown himself to be a man of character, blocking this reviewer on Twitter after I wrote a respectful response to Steffaniak’s assault against *Sola Scriptura*,⁸ I will not take Steffaniak’s word on the topic to be necessarily true.

Steffaniak’s charge of dishonesty is thus itself a dishonest spin on Basham’s retelling of the events. While it might be true that climate change alarmism is not the main focus of the conference, that a sizable portion of the speakers does it qualify the conference for its use as an example in Basham’s book.

If that was not bad enough, Steffaniak follows this up with a charge that Basham asserts that SEBTS is a temple that has fallen prey to moneychangers. This is a misrepresentation of what Basham says. Basham say that the EXAMPLE of Jonathan Moo’s lecture **shows** how “even the best-planned temples can fall prey to moneychangers” (p. 17). Evidently, Steffaniak does not understand metaphor. One can fault Basham for hyperbole perhaps, but nowhere did Basham state that SEBTS was an actual temple fallen prey to moneychangers!

Steffaniak’s second example deals with the issue of investigations of abuse in the SBC. That is an issue of debate for Southern Baptists, and this reviewer has no idea who is right or wrong in the matter. Nevertheless, look at Basham’s main point, which is that we need to follow standards of evidence even for abuse investigations. Surely everyone should agree that accusations must be backed up by credible evidence? Steffaniak as a Southern Baptist has a vested interest in this issue, and as a biased participant, his opinions on the matter have clearly made him miss the forest for the trees, and misrepresents Basham’s main point on the topic.

Moving through the section attacking Basham’s book, we can read Steffaniak’s main bone of contention, which is expressed as follows:

If we suggest a Christian is for sale, corrupt, or apostate, it should be related to matters of creedal orthodoxy—not matters of political activism which are matters of Christian liberty and prudence.

This seems to be true on the surface. But is Steffaniak suggesting that matters of creedal orthodoxy would not result in a Christian being “for sale, corrupt, or apostate”? Can a Christian claim Nicene Orthodoxy and go around promoting abortion and

⁸ Daniel H. Chew, “We have the Prophetic Word made more sure: Natural Theology, Hermeneutics, and *Sola Scriptura*,” *Reformed Energies* (2023), https://puritanreformed.net/theology/Steffaniak_Response.pdf. Accessed Sept 17, 2024

LGBTQ, and still be a good Christian? While creedal orthodoxy is primary, Steffaniak's claim here smacks of antinomianism. And just to make it clear for the reading comprehension challenged, this reviewer did not say that Steffaniak promotes antinomianism, but to say that this sentiment alone logically leads to antinomianism.

Secondly, Steffaniak's accusation of political activism smacks of the whole idea that when leftist policies are being promoted, it is not politics, but right-wing policies are politics. If Steffaniak truly wants to not have political activism, then he should agree that promoting climate change is politics and should not be done in the church. Let him go ahead and say that SEBTS should not have organized a conference dealing with environmentalism, unless the Cornwall Alliance is also invited to do a presentation on the matter.

Concluding this response to Steffaniak's criticisms, Steffaniak has not shown any of his accusations against Basham to be valid. He misrepresents Basham, and shows no cognizance of his own social political biases.

An assessment of the book in its entirety and what we can learn from it

All of this been said, it must be stated that Basham's book does have some problems, as critics have pointed out. We have pointed out earlier in the interaction with Gavin Ortlund that Basham does not make it clear where fact ends and interpretations begins, thus leaving her open to charges of misrepresentation, *even when* the inferences are legitimate. As Neil Shenvi has pointed out,⁹ there are a few factual errors in Basham's book as well, although some of those supposed errors he claims (like the one on Tim Keller and Trump voters) are not factual errors but differences in interpretation. Basham's book can clearly be improved by making it clear where facts end and interpretation begins.

That said, it is clear that, despite its detractors, Basham's central theses hold true. As summarized earlier, they are:

- 1) There is a concerted effort by secular progressives to co-opt the church into their leftist agenda,
- (2) Many influential Christian leaders are promoting leftist causes,
- (3) This is being done through "shallow religious manipulation and a demand for consensus that Scripture does not require", and under the basket mantra of "love your neighbor",
- (4) Christians can have serious disagreements about many issues, but the issues should be argued for and "in good faith"

What should we learn about this? Most certainly, it is clear that the church should be apolitical, as Christ's kingdom is not of this world (Jn. 18:36). The political left, as well

⁹ Neil Shenvi, "Battle Lines: A Long Review of Basham's Shepherds for Sale," Neil Shenvi – Apologetics, <https://shenviapologetics.com/battle-lines-a-long-review-of-bashams-shepherds-for-sale/>. Accessed Sept 17, 2024.

as the political right, are not to be promoted in the Church. Basham's research showing the politicization of the church into leftist causes is alarming and should be rejected.

Secondly, the church is to be apolitical. That said, it is also true that the church and especially its leaders are not to be politically ignorant. Being apolitical is a "political" decision, because it means that one knows when one is being partisan or is being manipulated into being political. Ironically, pastors and Christian leaders have to know something about politics, so as not to become manipulated into promoting leftist causes as Bashan documents. As an example, Ortlund is clearly someone who is ignorant of the politics of climate change science, and clearly someone who should actually "hit the books" instead of pontificating about a subject he admits he knows only in part in his YouTube channel. If pastors and Christian leaders truly want to be apolitical, they need to understand what politics is, and then steer away from these topics.

Thirdly, the church needs to clearly differentiate between moral issues and moral issues that just happen to be politicized. The Church must take a biblical stand on moral issues regardless of whether or not they are deemed political issues. The idea that the Church is to be apolitical does not mean that the Church does not denounce for example LGBTQ+ immorality, regardless of what wing or color it is dressed up in.

Fourthly, clearly differentiating between moral and political issues means that moral issues must be treated as moral issues. One is not allowed to give a free pass on moral sin just because it happens to be "political." Any politician for example who claims to be "personally" against LGBT but promotes LGBT in public is sinning, and this is not politics. For those who disagree, try substituting LGBT for "pro-genocide" and see whether you agree that it is perfectly acceptable for someone to be "personally" against genocide yet promote it in public. To put it in more concrete terms, for the German Christian who is "personally" against genocide but who obeyed Hitler's orders to kill the Jews, is he in sin?

Conclusion

Basham's book asserts that leftist influence is infiltrating evangelical churches, and most certainly there is proof of that. Her research on facts is well supported, though her interpretations need to be made clearer. As a book dealing with issues of American Christianity in general and the Southern Baptist Convention in particular, such would be very helpful.

For those of us outside these social contexts, what it shows is how politics can infiltrate churches, and the warning about those of us who think we know what being "apolitical" means. We also need to take heed, because ultimately leftist ideologies are not external forces within but come from the corrupt hearts of men. Apart from Christ and the sanctifying power of the Spirit, there is nothing inherently good about its opposite, "conservatism," that would prevent it from becoming or creating a movement just as

wicked and corrupt as the leftism denounced in the book. Right-wing politics are more biblical at the moment, but that could change in the future. The ultimate authority for all of life is Scripture, and we have to keep watch over our lives and not be political even if one side is currently in the right.

We should read Basham's book to understand the American church, read it to know the current enemies of the church, but do not read it as a rally for right-wing politics or positions, which to be clear Basham did not do so either. Christian politicians can do politics, but for the Institutional Church and her ministers, we should reject all political alliances no matter how helpful they may be for the moment.

Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, ... But my kingdom is not from the world. (Jn. 18: 36)