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with Dr. Frank Turek **PODCAST**

Is the Christian Left Hijacking the Church?

(June 18, 2021)

Ladies and gentlemen, should the church get involved in politics? Should it get involved in the state? That's the question that's most often asked. But I'd like to pose another question and that is this: Should the state get involved in the church because it seems like that might be happening a little bit more than we want it to? Is the church transforming the state or is the state transforming the church? And for this discussion today, I want to have my friend Lucas Miles on. He's written a brand new excellent book called, *The Christian Left: How Liberal Thought Has Hijacked the Church*. And we're going to get into what the left gets wrong, but also what the right gets wrong.

And Lucas is a pastor just outside of South Bend, Indiana. South Bend you probably heard of. That's where Notre Dame is. He has a degree in philosophy from Indiana University. This is his third book that he's written and it's excellent. So, it's great having Lucas. Lucas, how are you? Hey, I'm doing well. It's good to see Frank. Yeah, Lucas and I, we did a few columns a number of months ago on the stream, Lucas, just before your book came out. And the book is very provocative, and it gets into some really great questions, and you have some great answers in there. So, let me just start out by asking: Why did you write it? Why did you decide to write a book called, *The Christian Left*? And by the way, you wrote this long before the election. This has nothing to do with the election. So, how did this come about? Why did you write it?

Lucas:

So, I actually, originally, was going to write a book about influence. Our church is called Influence Church. I was all set, I had an outline ready to go, and we were actually on our way down...my wife and I took our first cruise about two years ago, and we were with some friends, and I brought my laptop and I thought, I just want to wake up in the morning and sit on the balcony and kind of, you know, maybe craft a few words. And I read an article on the way down, and it just really struck me, about the departure from Christian orthodoxy. And by the end of the cruise, I just knew that, you know, the topic was changing. And I wrote about two, three chapters, you know, really first three chapters of the book on the ship. And, you know, I have my headphones in, and everybody's down there dancing and doing their stuff on the cruise now on the top deck, just, you know, cranking out content.

And it was about two years before, you know, before the election, really, that I started this. I thought it was timely. And I felt like God was up to something, but I didn't really understand

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exactly how timely it was going to be, quite honestly, until it started getting closer to the election. And now we have what the New York Times has described as this ascendant liberal Christianity. And of course, you know, it's being championed more and more by a leftist state today, that the left, you know, as much as they talk about separation of church and state, they really don't want that. They want a church that's subservient to the state. We're seeing that, not just here, but in places like Canada as well.

And, you know, as a pastor...this is my 17th year at the same church. I've been doing ministry for 20 plus years. Started preaching at 17 years old. Super young. You know, I have just seen the church move further and further left. I'm in a red state, but a blue county. You know, our former mayor here, Mayor Pete Buttigieg, was, you know, Democratic candidate for President, openly gay candidate. And, you know, he's a poster child for the Christian left. He went on the campaign trail, you know, talking theology, you know, exegeting passages, and really trying to bring this new understanding of this progressive, you know, Christianity to the forefront. And in many ways, he's been very successful in doing so. And so, I felt like there needed to be a counter argument that wasn't rooted just fundamentalism or bigotry, but something that was really, you know, a balance of grace and truth, but still, you know, stood by the scriptures. And I just, you know, as I started writing, this is what came out.

Frank:

So, what is the main thesis? I know, you're covering a lot of ground in here, but if you had to say, here's my thesis in one sentence, for the book...again, the book is called, *The Christian Left: How Liberal Thought Has Hijacked the Church*. What's the thesis?

Lucas:

Okay, so the thesis is really this, that there is this growing constituency of left leaning believers and, at times, believers by name only, who have abandoned biblical orthodoxy and have begun to subscribe to things like liberation theology, critical race theory, that they've, you know, they've embraced every, sort of, in vogue moral depravity that the state has offered today. And the church, if we are to succeed...you know, just because God wins in the end, and we believe, you know, we're Kingdom people, we believe that the Lord redeems his church, that he wins in the end. But that doesn't necessarily mean that the church in America is always going to thrive. And so, this book is really about calling believers back to Biblical orthodoxy and helping the church find its way back to, I think, a biblical worldview in this time of moral crisis that we find ourselves in.

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Frank:

There are so many great lines in this book. You talk about a LGBTQ pastor, or a pastor that is very friendly in allowing that in his church, and you say this. "One pastor I know personally established this ideology among his left leaning, largely millennial church, by saying, as long as I'm the pastor, this has to be a place where anybody who identifies as L or G or B or T or Q will not be disqualified from any level of belonging, serving, or leadership on the sole basis of that identity". And then you say this...this is your take on it. You say, "like so many, he mistakenly confused the church's role as the hospital for the sick, by inviting patients who should be cared for in a spiritual ICU, to become its doctors". I love that analogy there, Lucas. That is so true. How does this happen? How do people go from saying, I want to minister to people, to saying, these people what they're doing, even though the Bible claims to be sin...how do they go from that to saying, these people, it's not only not sin, they should serve in leadership? How does that happen?

Lucas:

You know, I really think that, you know, it's a sad state of affairs. I mean, honestly...and it's so difficult because we, as believers, you know, with biblical worldviews, you know, we just want to go, well look at this verse, and look at this verse, and look at this verse. But the problem is that, you know, left leaning Christians like this are no longer using the Bible as their guide. So, they're looking to experience, they're looking to, you know, new, you know, academic arguments, and, you know, this sort of, illogical definition that they have of love in order to define the course. And these, I mean, just as there's been this attempt to redefine the constitution and reshape history of America, we're seeing that, you know, just as much, if not more so, if people tried to redefine scripture or redefine, you know, Christian history.

The church is a very established institution. We have 2000 years of church history, we have, you know, a giant guidebook called scripture that we, as believers believe, is inerrant and infallible. And, you know, it's sad, because this individual, I've known him for years, you know, we, in some ways grew up together. And I watched this progression through hurts in his life, through pain in his life, through abuse, through different things, and slowly kind of, you know, erode this, you know, foundational faith that he possessed at one time, and has arrived at this destination. I think that people think that they're acting in love, but they're really failing to see that the Bible says that Jesus came in grace and truth. And we have to make sure that, if we're going to walk out a biblical worldview, that we hold both of those things, you know, in place and don't just abandon, you know, the truth aspect in favor, of say, acceptance.

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Frank:

Well, the left seems to think that love requires approval. Why is that not the case? Why does love not require approval, necessarily, Lucas?

Lucas:

You know, look, the only one that I'm interested in getting approval from is the Lord, you know, but he has been very clear about what truth is, and so he is the embodiment of truth. We see that throughout the scriptures. And so, this whole pursuit of agreement or approval, in order to find, you know, acceptance or value...if somebody truly loves me, they're willing to speak the truth to me, and that's when I know that they love me. But that has really, you know, evaded the left, I think, and their approach to looking at, say, a definition of love.

Frank:

Yeah, love always rejoices in the truth, says Paul, and love always protects. And you can't protect people, friends, if you don't tell them the truth. If you're going to affirm what they want to do, and what they want to do is going to hurt them or others or go against what the Lord wants them to do, you're not helping them, you're hurting them. So, love does not require approval, it both requires grace and truth. And unfortunately, it seems like the left is just saying no, love is all about approval, it's all about saying, yeah, yippee, whatever you want to do is fine. It's not the case.

Frank:

We're talking to my friend, Lucas Miles. His great new book is called, *The Christian Left: How Liberal Thought Has Hijacked the Church*. We're going to look at what the left gets wrong, and also what the right gets wrong in this program, so don't go anywhere. You're listening to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist with Frank Turek on the American Family Radio Network. And the podcast is called I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist. Back in two.

Welcome back to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist with Frank Turek on the American Family Radio Network. Our website is CrossExamined.org and we also have a podcast. If you're listening to this on radio, it's called I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist, so you can listen to it later. My guest today is Lucas Miles. His brand new book is called, *The Christian Left: How Liberal Thought Has Hijacked the Church*. And Lucas, let's do a little lightning round here. You have a bunch of statements in the book that are lines from the Christian left. We can't cover these in depth, but I'm gonna throw the line out and then you give us a couple of sentences on why you think this line is not the right line to take, or why their interpretation is wrong. You ready?

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Lucas:

I haven't had lunch yet, but hopefully I got the brainpower to do this. Let's go.

Frank:

Okay, bro, you can do it. Here we go. Here's it. Here's a line from the Christian left. Jesus accepts everyone.

Lucas:

Look, we hear that all the time. Jesus, certainly on the cross, he, you know, he gave his life for the sins of the entire world. But you know, salvation is by grace through faith, so just because God loves you doesn't mean that you're automatically saved. And so, we cannot discount the entire nature of salvation just to teach, you know, an alternative gospel.

Frank:

How about, Jesus would never get in the way of the love between two people.

Lucas:

You know, this, this is a hard one, I think, for a lot of people to argue. I mean, look, we have to come back to that God has given us a standard, that marriage is between a man and a woman, that there are, you know, two genders, male and female, that God has made us. And so, you know, we, as you hear today, follow the science, right. So, we have to, first of all, right, if we're gonna do this we're gonna follow the science. But I would say, you know, even more so as believers, we're gonna follow the Word of God. And so, the Word of God is gonna hate that truth. And I think that, there again, there's this distortion of love that's, you know...can somebody use the same argument if a 40 year old guy wants to marry, you know, a nine year old girl, and they love each other? You know, who's going to get in the way of that? Look, there's all sorts of distortions of love that are out there, but there's only one standard of truth, and that is the Lord's.

Frank:

How about, Jesus was a refugee.

Lucas:

You know, this has been very popular, the pro-Palestine movement. It's really just a way of, I think, being, you know, against Israel and casting shade on them, and, you know, really increasing just the hatred for the nation of Israel. And so, I think it's very important that we recognize that, as believers, first of all, that God never, you know, speaks out against or gives

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permission to break the rule of law. And so, this attempt to kind of promote illegal immigration, as well as, you know, an anti-Israel movement, it's something that there's so much propaganda around this, but don't take the bait.

Frank:

Notice all these have some sort of standard they're appealing to, as you well know.

Lucas:

Yeah. GK Chesterton said that, you know, that there's truth in every bit of heresy. Nobody wakes up and says, I want to be a heretic, you know. I mean, there's always an element of truth to kind of bait people in and then, you know, it's followed by this, sort of, you know, web of lies that's on the other side of it.

Frank:

Yeah, Satan masquerades as an angel of light, said Paul. Okay, here's another one related to that one about, Jesus was a refugee. Jesus accepts foreigners and strangers, and he doesn't create walls to prevent people from coming to him.

Lucas:

Yeah, I mean first, Revelation describes the, you know, essentially the boundaries and the walls of the kingdom of heaven. And so, you know, this really falls apart. I mean, if you look at this whole idea of this globalist mindset of no borders and everything else, you know, I mean, let's see these elitist lefts do the same thing with their own houses, and take down their walls in Hollywood, and you know, just leave their doors open and unlocked all the time and let everybody come in when they want. I mean, it's a completely academic idea that has no practical value in the real world. And here we have one more time where Jesus is becoming, sort of, this propaganda to be able to, you know, give approval to this globalist socialist Marxist, you know, concept.

Frank:

I've noticed there's a wall around the White House, or at least a fence and now there's a fence around the Capitol, too. And these are the same people that are waiting for people just walk across the border, you know.

Lucas:

Biden, Biden expanded the wall around the White House.

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Frank: Yeah, that's right. He did. How about this? People need to live their truth, Lucas. Come on. Their truth.

Lucas:

Look, you know, we hear this, you be you, you know, all this sort of mindset. Look, there is one truth, it's the Lord's truth. And, you know, my truth? I mean, I have no truth in me except for that which I hold to that is the Lord's. And so, the moment we start thinking that we have something of ourselves, we're actually discounting the whole, you know, the whole nature of, you know, humanity. That is that, you know, we're deprived. That the gospel teaches that as humans, we are deprived. I mean, some Christians, you know, even hold that you don't have the ability to, you know, to get saved if you want to, that God's got to do all the work to start with, right. And so, I mean, there's varying views on that within orthodoxy, but the bottom line is, I have no truth in and of myself that does not first belong to the Lord and originate from him. And so, I can't just choose my own adventure and call this truth or call this Christianity.

Frank:

It dawned on me the other day, we were talking about this issue, Lucas, that if all truth comes from inside us, that everyone has to live their own truth, why would any of us go to school?

Lucas:

Right.

Frank:

I mean, why would any of us read a book? Why would any of us listen to a podcast? Why would we do any of this if all truth comes from inside us? You know.

Lucas:

So, there's a really interesting argument that Augustine gives in an early book on, I think it's called, *On Christian Doctrine*, and people were criticizing him for writing all these Christian, you know, books and teachings and these things, basically saying that, you know, you should only rely on, basically, the Holy Spirit to teach you. And, you know, he would say, you know, in kind of, your own personal study, and they were criticizing him for this. And he said, well, you know, who taught you to read the word to start with? Like, you had to have a teacher to even teach you how to read the word. Like, if all truth is in you, then why do you have to go to, you know, why'd you have to go to school? Why did you have to learn how to read? So, that argument has been made and it's amazing how people don't connect those dots sometimes.

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Frank:

That's right. There is no, YOUR truth, there's just THE truth. Now, that doesn't mean that there might be things about you that are just true of you. Like, you might like chocolate, I like vanilla. Those are preferences. But it's still objectively true that you like chocolate and I like vanilla. But \this idea that everything is your truth, first of all, that truth claim is an objective truth claim claiming that all truth is subjective. To say that people need to live their truth, that claim itself is not a subject of truth, it's an object of truth, so it sort of defeats itself. How about this one? They're not saying this one as much anymore, Lucas, but here it is. Some people are just born gay or transgender.

Lucas:

I comment on this in the book. The LGBT community has been distancing themselves from this sort of born, you know, gay mindset, or mantra, because they want to, you know, really promote the idea that you can choose, you know, and that you have the dominion to choose whatever, you know, sexual preference that you want to and it's not just about birth. Because there have been so many arguments, you know, people like yourself have been destroying that whole concept for a long time. And that I think they've had to switch their argument around a little bit to be able to give, you know, some other nuances to it to try to support it. But the reality is, I mean, here's the good news, in the kingdom of God you can be born again, right. And so, you know, I don't, as a Christian, make a fight or contention if somebody is born a certain way. I think that, although I would lean to say, no, they're not, okay, let's agree. I mean, but you know, sin is innate. Everybody's depraved. But that doesn't mean that we continue in it. And so, you know, even if I were born in sin, if I'm going to just give into their argument and kind of take that devil's advocate position for them, um, you know, the reality is that we are all born into sin. And so, I'm still going to pursue righteousness and seek to be born again and really, you know, choose the Lord's truth over my own.

Frank:

A final one here in the lightning round. And this is, again, from the book called, *The Christian Left*, by my guest, Lucas Miles. Lucas, the left says, a real Christian accepts everyone. Unpack that one for us. What does that mean?

Lucas:

I mean, it's amazing how much we are seeing the left, kind of, use Jesus. I mean, I don't know if you saw the case here that the pastor was just arrested up in Canada here, I think, this week, and the police officer actually said the line, render unto Caesar. Like, you know, it was like he was using Jesus's words to justify why he was arresting a pastor, because basically, the

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government told him to and that's why it's okay to do that. And, you know, I don't know all the situations around that, but we are seeing the left and this you know, for sure, the Christian left as well as the leftist state really go out of their way to try to pigeonhole Christians to force them into certain positions. And basically, they're gonna use that argument of love against us, because they know that we're called to love. And so, therefore, if you don't love the way I want you to, then you must not be a very good Christian. And, you know, we just, again, we need to not take the bait. We need to follow the Lord, we need to follow the word, we can walk in grace and truth. Of course, we love everyone, but we love them enough to be willing to speak the truth in love, in order to, you know, really win people over for the sake of the kingdom.

Frank:

Do they live by that same adage, the leftist Christians? Does the leftist Christian accept everyone? Because it seems to me that they actually don't accept conservative Christians or Christians that believe what the Bible says.

Lucas:

Yeah, you could follow your own truth, unless your truth is conservative, you know...

Frank:

That's right.

Lucas:

...you know, biblical centric, you know, all this sort of thing. And so, yeah, no, of course not, that only applies in one direction, it only applies for one thing, and if you try to make an argument then you're a bigot, and you're, you know, you're a fundamentalist, you know, whatever. And I think that there is such a deception that's there. And, again, if people saw the hypocrisy in this, I think they would, you know, really take a moment to recognize that, I think it would start to show us maybe what side truth is on.

Frank:

Would you say, Lucas, that the folks who are on the left now and claim to be Christians, would you say that they most of them lean to the idea that men are inherently good rather than we're inherently depraved?

Lucas:

100%. And I've actually been tracing this on some other things I'm working on right now, is that, you know, this is really sort of an updated version of Gnosticism. Gnosticism, you know,

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specifically things like the Manicheans, or just, you know, kind of Gnostics in general, the basic belief was that the spirit of man is good, but he has this light that is trapped in this, sort of, corrupt system. And this is exactly the thing that we hear from critical race theory, from liberation theology, from Marxism, and it's this idea that, you know, man is good, but the world is bad, the system is bad, the system is corrupt. And so therefore, I can blame all of my, you know, sin and shortcoming on the system and I never have to address my own problems or my own issues. In fact, you know, a Christian who is a leftist that believes in liberation theology, they would even go so far to say that if you start addressing issues in society, like say fatherlessness, they would say, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. You can't even address individual issues like that until the system is fixed, and so, the only sin is to fail to recognize the sin of the system. And so, it's actually, you know, wrong of you to try to point to individual sins, because those people can't be responsible until the system's fix. It's a great way to not take responsibility.

Frank:

Yeah. But if men are inherently good, why are there evil systems, because men create the systems? How does that work?

Lucas:

Well, and this is why I think this is recycled Gnosticism. In Gnosticism there's this teaching of multiple deities, and that basically, that there was this good God, but he wasn't all powerful and he didn't have the ability to do everything. So, man got, you know, sort of encased in this corrupt system formed by these, sort of, demon creatures. Now, of course, Christian leftists don't believe it that way but it's still this passing down of this Gnostic [unintelligible because of music].

Frank:

All right, we're gonna talk more with Lucas Miles. His book, *The Christian Left: How Liberal Thought Has Hijacked the Church*. And when we come back, we're going to talk about: Why is the church leaning left right now? Where did this come from? And you're listening to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist with Frank Turek on American Family Radio Network and the I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist podcast. We're back in two.

The Christian Left: How Liberal Thought Has Hijacked the Church. That's the name of the book by my guest, Lucas Miles. Lucas, why don't we deal with a question that you deal with in the book in an entire chapter. The title of the chapter is: Why the Church Leans Left. Give us an overview of that. Why is the church leaning left?

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Lucas:

Yeah, I think as a whole, that the left has realized that, in order to win elections, that they have to win a portion of the religious vote. So, the shifting the church is happening from two angles. There's some internal reasons that are, you know, causing that, which I can mention. And then there's this external reason. The external reason is, there's a ton of pressure from the leftist state and the Democratic Party in order to come in and really divide the church. They need religious votes in order to win elections. In the past, they were maybe content to be the godless party. Now, they recognize that, if they want to win elections, they have to really win over, you know, some of the religious vote in America, because it's such a huge, you know, constituency of people.

Internally, I think the church has leaned left for a couple reasons. One of those I address in the book is really, you know, out of the, sort of, this megachurch seeker sensitive movement. Although there were a lot of converts, there were very few disciples made. And, you know, when you had the birth of, kind of, the emergent church with figures like Rob Bell, etc., and they really, you know, kind of, I don't necessarily mean this in a, you know, a villainous way, but they sort of preyed on these megachurch, you know, converts that had very little biblical worldview to them, and they just began you know, bombarding them. If you think back to Rob Bell's Nooma videos, it was all about just all these questions he was going to hit you with. What if this is that? What if this is now? What if Gods like this? Never giving any answers, never establishing any doctrine.

I always say they, basically, we're tearing down the temple and they forgot to rebuild it, you know. Jesus would come and tear down the temple and then rebuild it in three days. They only did half of the equation. They tore down everybody's theology, but they never reconstructed it in any way. So, this deconstructionism has, sort of, you know, flourished within the church. We've seen it with, you know, Christian recording artists, major Christian figures, and even some, you know, individuals, I think, in major denominations. We're seeing all this stuff going on in the SBC. And there's some power players in the SBC that have been there for years, that have really, you know, gone on a journey of deconstructing their faith. And it's, you know, tearing apart, you know, a traditionally very strong denomination right now. And so, this push, it just created this perfect soil for the left to, kind of, plant confusion and this push towards what we're seeing now is progressive, you know, Christianity.

Frank:

And you write a little bit about the fact that some of the implications of Calvinism might have something to do with this. Can you explain that?

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Lucas:

Yeah, absolutely. I'm certainly a freewill guy, although I will say this, that I believe that Orthodoxy is big enough to embrace both a Calvinistic and an Armenian, you know, mindset. And so, this is not...

Frank:

Or a Molinist, right in the middle. Yeah, yeah.

Lucas:

Exactly. Exactly. So, I think there's room for that. I could argue any one of these things, Biblically speaking. I did find a unique correlation, though, that much of the early Christian socialists in America (most people don't realize there was a socialist party in America, before there was ever USSR, you know). And so, this is something that's been, you know, as early as late 1800s, early 1900s, that we saw this developing. And so, most of the early Christian socialists did come from a very strong Calvinist reformed background. So, there's some interesting ties in there that I bring into the book. I won't go through all of that now. But there seems to be, I think, this connection to almost an apathetic mindset that God's already done this. You know, Calvin taught that it was only, you know, only a Christian could do a work that, you know, it was that nobody else could really offer anything.

And the left is sort of embraced, they have almost like, you know, twisted some of these views to come up with this mindset that really only a leftist can actually do anything good, you know. I mean, there was nothing Donald Trump could have said...I mean, he could have cured cancer and the left is still gonna attack him, right. And so, there's sort of these leftover beliefs that have come in that have been twisted even further. And I think this push towards apathy...and it has really created an opportunity for Christians who have this view of God that, you know, they can sit back on the couch and God's gonna take care of it all...that those same Christians seem to not get, you know, too, you know, riled up if the state comes through and does the same perceived thing of, hey, don't worry, guys. Sit there. We're gonna send you a check. We're going to take care of it. And so, it's kind of the same system that these Christians have been part of, I think, for a long time. And so, I saw this trend in some of the research I was doing for Christians that would be, what I would call radical Calvinists, to find an easier embrace of Christian socialism, than say, somebody who had a strong belief in personal responsibility and freewill.

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Frank:

So, the idea that personal responsibility is out the window, because God does everything. God has made me this way and so there's nothing I can do to change. And these people that have these different sexual orientations, there's nothing they can do. God has made them this way. They don't have personal responsibility we just need to accept them.

Lucas:

Exactly.

Frank:

So, it comes out of that idea, perhaps, is what you're saying.

Lucas:

Yeah. And it's not that Calvinism equals socialism, by any means.

Frank:

Right.

Lucas:

But there is an evolution of drawing off of some of those ideas and then, of course, it's layered on of progressive, you know, nonsense that I think is arrived people to this place, in some cases.

Frank:

You also write this in the book, page 89, you say, "There was a day, when man was proud of being orthodox, was proud of being right. But that now, the word heresy not only means no longer being wrong, it practically means being clear headed and courageous." How does happen that questions are better than answers, they say. The progressive Christians do, right, Lucas?

Lucas:

So, I'd love to take credit for that. That's actually the GK Chesterton quote...

Frank:

Is it?

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Lucas:

...so I gotta be careful. But yeah, but I mean, brilliant thinker. That's why it was so good, because it was Chesterton. But, you know, look, that that's the case. I mean, you know, I said nobody wants to wake up and be a heretic, but I think we're seeing that's. I mean, I just read an article the other day by somebody saying that, you know, sometimes the best answers and the best, you know, progress has been made by the heretics, you know, in the States. And so, you know, we're seeing people really celebrate that dissension, that, you know, anti-ideology to, you know, to what's perceived as the system and the man and everything else. And it's really scary when we get to that state where people just reject truth because it's the standard.

Frank:

Right. Yeah.

Lucas:

And they want to find some other way to do it themselves.

Frank:

Of course, what they don't seem to realize is, when they reject all doctrine, that's a doctrine itself. They have their own doctrines, right.

Lucas: 100%

Like, for example, LGBTQ is in and anybody that says they're not is out. That's a doctrine. So, here's the quote from Chesterton you have in the book. "A heresy is always a half-truth turned into a whole falsehood." I like that.

Lucas:

Yeah, you know, and he's so good at nailing those things. If people haven't read his trilogy on doctrine and heresy, it's phenomenal.

Frank:

Why do you think the church, Lucas...you write about this too. You write about the fact that there's a 4,000% increase in the UK in recent years. Anyway, I think this comes out of the UK. Yeah, a 4,000% increase in so-called gender dysphoria in the past several years. 4,000%. Obviously, this can't be some sort of biological thing. It has to be from social media or something like that. And the question then is asked: Why isn't the church addressing this instead of treating it like it will go away if it's not acknowledged?

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Lucas:

So, there's a cycle that I talk about in the book. I describe and this is an issue kind of within the church within the right. And I call it worry, anger, apathy. And what we see is that Christians have a tendency to go through these three stages. And basically, when they see something they worry about, you know, maybe it's a friend that's, you know, leaning left, or somebody that they love is, you know, has, you know, come out that they're, you know, dealing with, you know, kind of these transgender, you know, thoughts or something, they begin to worry. And so, they start, you know, tugging on the person and trying to, you know, convince them and manipulate them and all these sorts of things, you know, they get in all sorts of, you know, wrong methodologies to try to change their mind.

When it doesn't work, they have a tendency to get mad. And then it's mad at culture, and mad Hollywood, and mad at, you know, everybody. And then when that doesn't work, they throw their hands up in the air, and they go, I'm just done with it all. I'm gonna stop trying. Why bother? You can't change them.

And then they go in this final phase, which I believe the most dangerous is apathy. I think that that has caused many in the church to not even be aware of what's happening. Nickelodeon, you know, Blue's Clues is now pumping out, you know, transgender content, you know, for four year olds to sit at home while they're watching Nickelodeon, and, you know, kind of infect their brains with this. I mean, blatant, some of the most, you know, blatant, you know, transgenderism stuff that you're seeing. And, you know, I think a lot of Christians just don't even know. And they're parenting by tablets, and just letting their kids watch whatever they want, and they've become so apathetic that they've just given up. And I think as Christians, we really have to push through that, and we have to see that there's a better way than worry, anger and apathy, that we can be consistent in the Lord, that we can stand for the truth without losing our peace, and that we can really operate in the love of God in this way that gives us, you know...Paul said it was God's love that compels him. You know, when we can be compelled by love to be aware, to be alert, to be, you know, really advocates for truth, you know, in this world.

Frank:

Jesus excoriated the false teachers of the Pharisees and Paul went after false teachers as well. Why do we not recognize that, Lucas? And why do we think that the definition of a Christian is to be nice all the time? Why do we think it's about niceness?

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Lucas:

I can't tell you how many people have, you know, told me like, first off, thank you for addressing some specific names in this book that you're seeing that are leading the charge for this progressive Christianity. And you know, I'll be honest, I wrote this book and I left out the chapter on the Christian cabal, where I really addressed some of these names. And I gave it to a few friends and that I really do trust in the industry and everything, they read through it and they said, Lucas, this is exactly what the church needs. But like, you need another chapter, which, you know, I didn't want to hear that. I felt like I was done. I'm good to go. You have to be able to call some of these people out. You have to say because nobody knows.

And look, you're right, when you look at Paul's writings, I mean, he was very firm. You know, stay away from Alexander the metal worker...

Frank:

Right.

Lucas:

And, you know, look out for this guy and everything else. And so, you know, we as believers, we have an obligation to, you know, we're not just talking about doctrinal disagreements. You know, you and I, we're gonna find things we agree on mostly and we're gonna have a few issues we might see differently, you know, but we can still love and fellowship. These are things that are outside of Orthodoxy that people were trying to peddle as still being Christian. And every single time in church history when that happens, church leaders, strong church leaders stood up, called it out, they called it heresy, they pushed it back in order to keep the integrity of the church. And there is a real fear in doing that today that that is, you know, not like Jesus or something. But Jesus and Paul, they lead the charge in this way, and I think that we can follow in their footsteps in it and still do it in love.

Frank: Yeah, maybe it's because in America anyway, Christianity has been in the majority for so long and we didn't really have to fight for the faith and convince people what the truth is. Now in the past, say, 60-80 years, we've had to do that and in the past, we didn't. So, maybe that's part of it. I don't know. What do you think?

I think that that is probably a factor. I mean, look how much it's even accelerated the last, you know, six years or so.

Frank:

Well, social media will do that.

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Lucas:

Yeah. Yeah. And it's just been this explosion. And so, my hope is that as Christians become, you know, to some degree...I use this term lightly, because, you know, you and I both have friends I'm sure in places like China or Vietnam, or, you know, places in Africa where they're truly experiencing persecution. But as Christians in America experience, to some degree, more persecution, my hope is that we begin to get stronger.

Frank:

And how can we stand stronger? What can we do right now to speak the truth in love with grace and truth? That's what we're going to talk about right after the break. You're listening to Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist with Frank Turek. My guest is Lucas Miles. His book is, *The Christian Left: How Liberal Thought Has Hijacked the Church*. We're back in just two minutes. Don't go anywhere.

Much of what we've been talking about today, and in previous podcasts, you can learn in an academic way, but a practical way at Southern Evangelical Seminary (SES.edu). That's where I got my degree. If you're interested in taking courses or maybe even getting a degree on apologetics, philosophy, theology, cultural apologetics, you need to go to SES.edu. And I think if you go to SES.edu/Frank, you'll get a discount on your first course anyway. So, check all that out SES.edu.

My guest is Lucas Miles. His book is called, *The Christian Left: How Liberal Thought Has Hijacked the Church*. We're going to, in a minute, talk about what you can do about this. But Lucas, I want to ask you about the right, because you actually have a chapter, or you have some data in here, about the right. Who is the right in the US and particularly related to the church? They're not a monolithic group. And what did they get wrong?

Lucas:

Yeah, that's a great question. And so, when I talk about the right in the book, I'm really talking about more of the political right, you know, where in many cases where I'm talking about the left, I'm talking about the Christian left. And you know, I've had people say, well, that's not fair. You know, how can there be a Christian left but no Christian right? There is a political right, and they've gotten a whole bunch of things wrong. And you know, you could find a, you know, somebody with a fundamentalist sort of fair circle sort of mindset. If you want to call them the Christian right, we certainly can. But the reality is, the gospel as it's being portrayed right now by media, they're saying, here's the Christian left, here's progressive Christianity and here's this Christian right.

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And you know, really that's not a good definition. Somebody who holds to Biblical Orthodoxy is just called a Christian. And so, I think that as Christians we need to not get so riled up that we give into some of what I will call the godless right has been participating in. And so, we've seen, certainly, insult culture and meme wars, and, you know, Twitter wars, and all these sorts of things. We've had all sorts of, you know, crazy incidences, obviously, that the left has tried really hard to paint January 6th on evangelicals, and on, you know, Christians. That, of course, has been, you know, proven false multiple times. But we could say that there were some issues on the right that day. I think that that is, you know, fair. And so, there are issues on the right, and we have to make sure that, you know,

I personally believe that if persecution ever really breaks out on a major scale in the US towards Christians, it's going to be as the result of overzealous Christians that begin to try to take matters in their own hands and end up you know, creating a movement against Christians even greater than it is today of a backlash against their actions. And I think that we need to not have anything to do with that. You know, scripture gives us a roadmap. We see in the early church how to respond in times of persecution and everything else. So, has the right messed up? Yeah. We put a lot of ungodly candidates into office too. You know, just because somebody is a Republican or part of the GOP doesn't mean that they're following God's principles any more than somebody on the left is. And so, you know, we need to get involved in local politics and we need to make sure that the candidates that we're putting out there, you know, have a biblical worldview. That should be some of our first questions.

Frank:

Yeah, we talked about this before the election, even before the 2016 election. In the primaries, you vote for the candidate that most aligns with your Christian values and is going to be best for the country. But by the time you get to the general election, and you just got a Republican against the Democrat, you just need to look at the platforms and go with the platform that has the most Christian policy. Now, unfortunately for Donald Trump, he didn't have the most Christian demeanor, quite obviously. He had some really good policies, but his demeanor in many cases was bad. I mean, his personality was a problem and that's part of the reason, either he lost, or he didn't win by as much as he should have won by. It depends on how you look at the election stuff now that's even coming out now. They're finding more irregularities. But that's a whole other topic.

So, the point here is, is that Christians have to be involved. If you don't think you ought to be involved politically, just go to North Korea and see how you like living there, because the difference between North Korea and South Korea is politics. Would you rather live in North

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Korea or South Korea? You'd rather live in South Korea. Why? It has political freedom. That's why. So, we have to be involved. But as you point out, Lucas, in the book, the Christian left has been pulling many in the church much more to the left, because people are more interested in satisfying the crowd than satisfying the Lord. And the question now is: What can we do about it? I mean, you have some questions you can ask yourself in this book that will help you? You have some suggestions? Give us some questions or some suggestions that we can put in place right now?

Lucas:

Absolutely. So, first of all, we have to know what our church believes. And I think that we have to know, you know, a lot of churches have, you know, doctrinal statements on their website that they haven't updated in 10 years. You probably want to go beyond that and actually talk to the pastor about what do they believe about certain issues, you know, if this is not something that you're sure about. So many churches are embracing what is known as liberation theology and that's basically the Christianized version of critical theory or critical race theory. And so, I think these are things that we need to ask our pastors about. I call these the canary in the cage. You know, we need to see what the Church teaches about gender and sexuality, about, you know, abortion, or, you know, pro-choice/pro-life issues. When we see what the Church teaches about, you know, marriage. We need to see what the Church teaches about the authority of the Bible.

There's a Pew Forum study that came out that said that only 24% of church going Christians believe in the infallibility of Scripture. 24%. That means that, you know, we have, you know, what, 76% of the church no longer believes that the Bible is this inerrant Word of God. That's disturbing. So, we need to ask the tough questions about our church, really see what they believe, before we decide. You know, don't pick a church just because they have a slide for your kids to go down, you know. Pick a church based upon what they teach, and really, you know, establish yourself in that first and foremost, because that's what's gonna pay dividends in your kid's lives in the long run, not just the playground they get to play on during service.

Frank:

Lucas, how do we communicate to people, both in the church and outside the church, that when we're following biblical orthodoxy, or let's just say natural law theology from where our country came...leave the Bible out of it for a minute, right. Just say, we hold these truths to be self-evident. When we're trying in the church, and in the public square, to put forth laws or policies that agree with natural law and agree with the Bible, how do we communicate to people that we're not just doing this because God says so? We're doing it because we know

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that's the best way to have human beings flourish? That's the best way. How do we communicate that?

Lucas:

It is a challenge today and not because it's not convincing. I mean, I think anybody who approaches logically, even just the issue, like you said, of natural law, you would be hard pressed to come up with anything other than what we see in our founding documents, what we see, you know, through you know, various philosophers over the ages who have really, you know, proposed the ideas of natural law. The problem is that I think the left is playing with a different set of logical tools today, if we can call them that. There is a strong push for what is known as the historic Jesus. The historic Jesus is a term that is used by progressives, basically to describe a portrait of Jesus that is extracted from Scripture, after you cut away everything that seems illogical, or unbelievable or miraculous. And so, the virgin birth and miracles and all this sort, they just kind of toss all that stuff aside and they've kind of just fabricated this person they also call Jesus, but who lives by a totally different set of standards than what we see in Scripture. They've just, kind of, pulled out this essence of him and that has become this champion for progressive ideology.

I wish I could tell you some simple answer...if you just said this, you'll convince everybody who's a progressive. The bottom line is, you know, Jesus himself says, he who has ears to hear, let him hear you know. And there's going to be people that don't want to hear this, that their lives live opposed to the truth. And it doesn't matter what we say, without a revelation from the Lord, it's gonna be very difficult. That doesn't mean we stop speaking, it doesn't mean we stop trying, but we have to realize that just because somebody doesn't receive the truth when we share it doesn't mean that we didn't do our part in that. And so, we have to carry out our part, regardless of the response. And sometimes success looks like the road to carrying your cross. And I think that, you know, we as Christians have to make sure that we are fulfilling our duty as believers to be ambassadors, to be ministers of reconciliation, you know, to this world rather than getting caught up in just trying to maybe, you know, convince those that will never be convinced,

Frank:

You know, actually, when it comes to politics, you don't need to convince anybody outside the church to do what's right. If you just convince everybody inside the church to do what's right, problem solved.

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Lucas:

That's where our work is. You're totally right. I mean, look, as long as we have the republic here in America, and we have a majority right now, among Christians, I think that look, we could change the whole world if we really saw Christians acting on this. And this is why it's so important that, you know...Irenaeus, one of the early church fathers, he wrote this book against heresies. He said that one of the reasons why the early church was not able to refute Gnosticism is because they did not fully understand it. And I'm proposing that really the same thing is happening today, that most people don't understand progressive Christianity well enough to actually be able to refute it. They don't know that they believe in a different Jesus than what we're teaching. They're specifically saying, it's not the same Jesus that has been taught in church history. And we have individuals that are, you know, have been very clear about this.

And so, if we want to be able to refute progressive Christianity, we have to understand it. And because only then can we construct, you know, arguments and logic to be able to work against it. And so, that's one of the major reasons I wrote this book is to really equip the church to be able to have the tools to actually understand what progressive Christianity is so that they could actually, you know, really be able to provide a convincing, you know, argument, if they will, for the truth and protect their own heart from drifting out into these divergent dark waters.

Frank:

I love the fact that you quote Ronald Reagan in here, who says, "we ought not look left to right, we ought to look up." Where are we getting our standard from? That's a question you can ask progressive Christians, ladies and gentlemen. You can say: Where is your standard? Where are you coming up with these moral commands that you think everybody needs to obey? And you might want to ask them this question, well, two of them. If Christianity were true would you become a Christian? See what they say. And secondly: If God was just for sex between a man and a woman inside of marriage, would you agree with Him? Would you be for it too or are you going to disagree with God? Lucas, we're running out of time here, but I gotta ask you: Where can people get the book?

Lucas:

The book is available wherever books are sold. It was a number one bestseller on Amazon its first month in three different categories, including church leadership. But if they want to get an autographed copy, I invite them to come over to LucasMiles.org. Grab it there and check out some of my other resources and sign up for the mailing list and see where I'm going to be speaking throughout the summer.

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Frank:

Excellent. The book again is called, *The Christian Left: How Liberal Thought Has Hijacked the Church*. He also talks a little bit about the right in there too. So, you will get a fully formed look at what's going on inside the church and outside the church. Lucas, it's great having you on. Thanks for being with me.

Lucas:

Hey, thanks for having me.

Frank:

That's Lucas Miles, ladies and gentlemen. Check him out at LucasMiles.org. And our website, as you know, is CrossExamined.org. And Lord willing we will be back next week. God bless and see you then.

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