

Us or Them? Identity Politics and the *Imago Dei*  
PCRT Grand Rapids Breakout Session | March 12, 2022  
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*Thesis: Identity Politics is a pervasive and powerful secular religion, founded on a “gospel” of self-expression. A recovery of the Bible’s teaching on what it means to be made in God’s image is needed to combat this popular ideology, and offer those who are ensnared by it true gospel hope.*

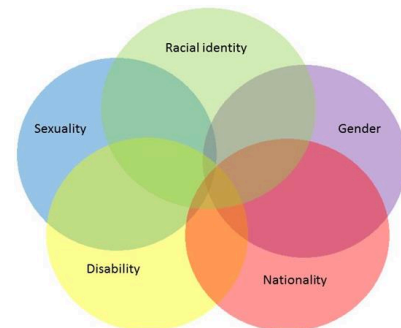
I. The Supreme Court, Sports, and Sweets: Tracing the Pervasiveness of Identity Politics

II. What Is Identity Politics?

- Getting beyond the term “politics” — this is a *religious movement*. - “Surveys may indicate that Americans have lost or are losing their religion; however, the fever of identity politics that now sweeps that nation suggest these surveys are looking in the wrong place and asking the wrong questions. Americans have not lost their religion. Americans have relocated their religion.”<sup>1</sup>

- It’s effects: In 2021, .8% of Traditionalists (born before 1946) identify as LGBT, compared to 2.6% of Baby Boomers, 4.2% of Generation Xers, 10.5% of Millennials, and 20.8% of Generation Zers (those born between 1997-2003).<sup>2</sup> That figure is up from around 5% in the previous year— where 15.9% of millennials identified as LGBTQ+.<sup>3</sup>

- “Intersectionality”: how aspects of ones self-expression, social and political identities merge to create dynamics of privilege or discrimination.



III. Why Is Identity Politics?

- A. Made for worship—Romans 1 and the irrepressible need to worship.
- B. Made for community—made in the image of a tri-personal God.
- C. “The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self”

IV. The Danger and Deficiency of Identity Politics

- A. A Culture of Fear
- B. A Lack of Forgiveness

<sup>1</sup> Joshua Mitchell, *American Awakening*, xx.

<sup>2</sup> <https://news.gallup.com/poll/389792/lgbt-identification-ticks-up.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> <https://news.gallup.com/poll/329708/lgbt-identification-rises-latest-estimate.aspx>

## V. Returning to the Image

- A. The *imago Dei* establishes equal value to all people.
  
- B. The *imago Dei* promises a fulfilled purpose in life.
  
- C. The *imago Dei* allows us to address the real problems of the world.
  
- D. The *imago Dei* offers us actual hope out of our confusion, distress, division, and sin.
  1. 2 Corinthians 3:18
  2. Colossians 3:9–11
  3. Ephesians 4:22–24
  4. Romans 8:29
  5. 1 John 3:2

### **Further Reading**

Allen, Scott David. *Why Social Justice Is Not Biblical Justice: An Urgent Appeal to Fellow Christians in a Time of Social Crisis*. Grand Rapids, MI: Credo, 2020.

Baucham Jr., Voddie T. *Fault Lines: The Social Justice Movement and Evangelicalism's Looming Catastrophe*. Washington, DC: Salem Books, 2021.

Burton, Tara Isabella. *Strange Rites: New Religions for a Godless World*. New York: Hatchette, 2020.

Cruse, Jonathan Landry. *The Christian's True Identity: What It Means to Be in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2019.

Eberstadt, Mary. *Primal Screams: How the Sexual Revolution Created Identity Politics*. West Conshohocken, PA: Templeton Press, 2019.

Hansen, Collin, ed. *Our Secular Age*. Deerfield, IL: The Gospel Coalition, 2017.

Horton, Michael. *Recovering Our Sanity: How the Fear of God Conquers the Fears that Divide Us*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2022.

Lints, Richard. *Identity and Idolatry: The Image of God and Its Inversion*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2015.

Mason, Liliana. *Uncivil Agreement: How Politics Became Our Identity*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2018.

Mitchell, Joshua. *American Awakening: Identity Politics and Other Afflictions of Our Time*. New York: Encounter Books, 2020.

Pluckrose, Helen and James Lindsay. *Cynical Theories: How Activist Scholarship Made Everything about Race, Gender, and Identity—and Why This Harms Everybody*. Durham, NC: Pitchstone, 2020.

Strachan, Owen. *Christianity and Wokeness: How the Social Justice Movement Is Hijacking the Gospel—and the Way to Stop It*. Washington, DC: Salem Books, 2021.

Trueman, Carl. *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020.

Williams, Thaddeus J. *Confronting Injustice without Compromising Truth: 12 Questions Christians Should Ask about Social Justice*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2020.