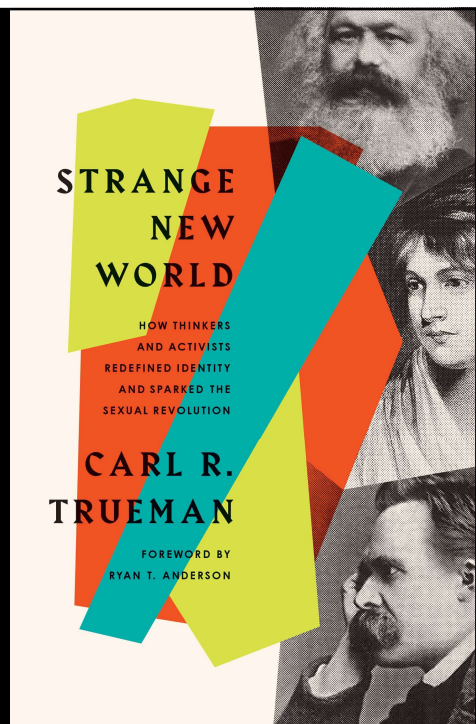


CHAPTER 1

Welcome to This Strange New World

Major Premise:

We now live in a culture and society in which “expressive individualism” has altered the fundamental ways we understand and express ourselves, particularly our sexuality.



1

Dr. Trueman will argue that one important key to understanding the world around us now is seeing how our culture has redefined “identity” and profoundly transformed what we mean when we talk about our “self”.

2

Key terms

- The “Self”



“There is something that helps us to unify the changes we are witnessing and to make them, if not entirely explicable, at least less random than we might be tempted to think. This is the notion of the self.”
(Trueman, p. 21)

3

Key terms

- The “Self”

Thought of psychologically, the self is the individual as the object of his or her own reflective awareness.

Thought of theologically, the self is identified with one’s “soul”; the enduring essence of who one truly is.

4

Key terms



- The “Self”

“When I use the term ‘self’ in this book, I am referring . . . to the deeper notion of where the ‘real me’ is to be found, how that shapes my view of life, and in what the fulfillment or happiness of that ‘real me’ consists.”
(see Trueman, p. 21-22)

5

Key terms

- “Expressive Individualism”

“Expressive individualism holds that each person has a unique core of feeling and intuition that should unfold or be expressed if individuality is to be realized” (Robert Bellah; see Trueman, p. 22).

Expressive individualism calls people to live “authentically” according to one’s true self, which is known only by inner feeling and desire.

6

Key terms

- Sexual Revolution

The sexual revolution is the cultural upheaval in the Western world focused on sexual codes and boundaries. This began in earnest in the early 1960s. It is not simply the loosening of sexual moral codes, but the “*repudiation of the very idea of such codes in their entirety*” (Trueman, p. 25). Sexual revolutionaries attack the very idea of sexual moral codes as outdated and oppressive.

7

Key terms

- “Social Imaginary”

“ . . . *the social imaginary is that common understanding which makes possible common practices, and a widely shared sense of legitimacy.*”

(Charles Taylor; see Trueman, p. 27)

8

Key terms

- “Social Imaginary”

“Human beings do not typically think about themselves and the world they inhabit in consistently self-conscious terms. Rather, we imagine it to be in certain ways—physically and indeed morally.” (Trueman, p. 27)

9

Key terms

- “Social Imaginary”

The social imaginary is a society’s collective frame of mind/imagination that forms the thought patterns, sensibilities, and ideas of community and national life. It is the way we mentally and emotionally “image” our world, materially, morally, and behaviorally.

10

Key terms

- “Social Imaginary”

Many aspects of a given society’s social imaginary are universal; some so ubiquitous we only notice them in their absence. A society may also be divided into sub-cultures that disagree about what is normal or accepted. The more some concept, mindset, or behavior reflects *moral* concerns, the more potential exists for cultural division about it.

11

Key terms

- “Social Imaginary”

The social imaginary changes over time, sometimes very slowly, sometimes more abruptly.



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Discussion Questions

1. How disconcerting do you find contemporary society, especially with respect to the so-called sexual revolution? Annoying? Troubling? Alarming? Panic inducing?
2. How have you been personally affected by transgenderism and transgender ideology or other aspects of the sexual revolution?
3. What factors and causes do you think have led to the rapid profound changes in our culture's beliefs and practices about sex?
4. Other than having a book study, what else do you think churches can or should do about these issues?

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Discussion Questions

5. How have your beliefs & opinions been shaped by the world around you?
6. What differences in attitudes and beliefs have you noticed between the generations in your family How have you addressed these?
7. What is expressive individualism? What are the problems with it? Is there anything positive about expressive individualism? Do you recognize it in yourself? In what ways?

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