

February 2022

## A Critique of an Antigospel Response to Race and Racism

By Dave Greear, DMin, BSEE

**B**ack in August of 2020, in the aftermath of the tragic death of George Floyd and the resulting race-related strife in our nation, I wrote an article for TASC entitled “A Creationist Response to Race and Racism.”<sup>1</sup> In that article, I emphasized the truth that there is only one race, the human race, and that the very concept of “race” is a cultural construct without merit Biblically or scientifically. However, I also emphasized that the sin of racism is alive and well and that racism is a legitimate cultural concern. In that article I was trying to find a Biblical balance between truth and grace. As Bible-believers we need to emphasize the Biblical truth of the creation of all men in the *Imago Dei*, or image of God, which negates the very idea of “races” while simultaneously having compassion and grace on those who have suffered from the evils of racism. I concluded the article with these thoughts:

How then should we respond as biblical creationists to the cultural crisis of racism .... First, if we personally have been guilty of racist thoughts, words, or actions, then we should repent of them. That being said, passages like Deuteronomy 24:16 and Ezekiel 18:20 clearly teach that children should not be punished for the sins of their fathers. In other words, we can't technically “repent” for the crimes of our ancestors, but we certainly can and should express regret and remorse.... Likewise, Christian victims of racist acts should repent of any responses to racism motivated by revenge or bitterness. A Christ-like response is one always willing and ready to forgive (Matthew 18:21–35).

Just a few years ago there would be nothing controversial about those words to most evangelical Christians. That is no longer the case. In our current culture, several ideas in my quote would be considered anathema (and even “racist”) by many. Why? It is because of the rise of a very different response to race and racism than the one I espoused in my original article. This response goes by different names. Some call it “The Social Justice Movement” or “Critical Social Justice.”<sup>2</sup> Others may refer to it as “Wokeness”<sup>3</sup> as opposed to “wokeness” with a small “w” that we might substitute the word “awareness” for in today’s context. White American Christians should be more aware/awake to the perspectives of people of color and how they have been impacted by racism<sup>4</sup>, but being “awake” is very different than being “Woke.”

Yet others would refer to this new system of thought as the “Critical Race Theory” or CRT, though technically the new worldview we are addressing is more of an application of the political/sociological theory known as CRT. Stated briefly, political CRT, is an offshoot of Karl Marx’s theory of class struggle that tweaks his theory away from an economic-based oppression to a power-based one that includes “race” in the long list of “oppressed minorities.” Under this system of thought any minority is, by definition, being “oppressed” by the majority who controls society. Historically, CRT is an outgrowth of “Critical Theory” which was originally espoused by the Frankfurt School<sup>5</sup>, a group of Marxist European scholars, many of whom moved to the United States around the Second World War. It is beyond the scope of this article to address in any further detail the origins of CRT,<sup>6</sup> its Marxist roots, or the political implications of the theory.<sup>7</sup> Rather we want

<sup>1</sup> Greear D (2020 Aug) A creationist response to race and racism, TASC Newsletter, <<https://www.tasc-creationscience.org/sites/default/files/2021-01/aug2020.pdf>> Accessed 16 Jan 2022.

<sup>2</sup> Baucham VT (2021) *Fault Lines: The Social Justice Movement and Evangelicalism's Looming Catastrophe*, Salem Books, Washington, DC

<sup>3</sup> Strachan O (2021) *Christianity and Wokeness*, Salem Books, Washington, DC

<sup>4</sup> See my original article, Greear D (2020 Aug), 4–5, concerning listening to the perspectives of people of color.

<sup>5</sup> Baucham VT, xiii

<sup>6</sup> See Baucham VT, xi–xvii, for a brief synopsis of CRT origins.

<sup>7</sup> See Rufo CF (2021) Critical Race Theory: What it is and how to fight it, *Imprimis* 50(3) for some of the political ramifications of the theory.

to address how CRT thinking has resulted in a new and “antigospel” response to race and racism.

Unfortunately, secular CRT thinking has even infiltrated the church resulting in a new “Christianized” version of CRT. Evidence of the infiltration of CRT thinking into the evangelical community includes recent popular books such as Daniel Hill’s *White Awake*,<sup>8</sup> Soong-Chan Rah’s *Prophetic Lament*,<sup>9</sup> Latahsa Morrison’s *Be the Bridge*,<sup>10</sup> and Jemar Tisby’s *The Color of Compromise*.<sup>11</sup> I am not suggesting that these works have no merit whatsoever, and I certainly cannot judge the hearts or motivations of the authors. To their credit, evangelical authors embracing CRT thinking typically draw attention to the fact that racism is still a societal evil, that Christians should be engaged in fighting it, and that the white church has often failed in addressing it, but it is their CRT-based assumptions and solutions that are the problem. Admittedly, works like these do not argue for a full-blown secular version of CRT (some going farther than others) just as theistic evolutionists do not argue for a full-blown secular version of Darwinism, but that doesn’t mean either is compatible with the gospel. Just as “death before sin” destroys the gospel message in the latter, so does “guilt after repentance” in the former!

Thus, it is my conviction that the gospel and CRT are mutually exclusive and that they result in two mutually exclusive responses to race and racism. Pastor John MacArthur, who had front-row seats in the debates over Biblical inerrancy and “easy-believism” stated that “this recent ... detour in quest of ‘social justice’ is, I believe, the most subtle and dangerous threat [to the gospel] so far.”<sup>12</sup> He added:

I deplore racism and all the cruelty and strife it breeds. I am convinced the only long-term solution to every brand of ethnic animus is *the gospel of Jesus Christ*. In Christ alone are the barriers and dividing walls between people groups broken down, the enmity abolished, and differing cultures and ethnic groups bound together in one new people (Ephesians 2:14–15). The black leaders with whom I ministered during the civil rights movement shared that conviction.<sup>12</sup>

### ***CRT is Antigospel in Its Assessment of Creation***

In the remainder of the article, I will focus on the CRT response to racism and see how it falls short of a gospel response. Let me begin with CRT’s assessment of creation. Biblically, to be a human is to be created in God’s image (Genesis 1:26–27), and if one has been born again, it means one’s identity is also that of a child of God. In contrast, in CRT thinking one’s identity revolves around being either “oppressed” or an “oppressor.” In other words, “our individual identity depends on whether we are part of a dominant, oppressor group or a subordinate, oppressed group with respect to a given identity marker like race, class, gender, physical ability, or age.”<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, the whole premise that having more power or authority than others makes one an “oppressor” is not Biblical, but Marxist. Quoting Strachan,

Men are not inherently abusers if they lead churches as pastors, exercising spiritual authority over the flock .... Police officers are not warped as a consequence of administering the law on the street. Scripture teaches us that all authority figures must guard against sin ... but it nowhere encourages us to conclude that wielding authority makes you corrupt. Instead, throughout Scripture, we see God expressly granting power and authority and influence to some and not to others.<sup>14</sup>

### ***CRT is Antigospel in Its Assessment of the Problem***

Simply put, CRT sees the root problem with racism as “whiteness,” a system that oppresses people of color, while the gospel sees the root problem of racism as the sinful human heart. Biblically, racism is the sin of partiality (James 2:1–4) manifested particularly as racial prejudice towards individuals with differing skin colors or other external features. This sin is individual in nature (not collective) and can be committed by anyone, even if in a “minority race.” However, the definition of “racism” in CRT thinking is very different. Robin DiAngelo, a leading voice in CRT thinking writes in her best-selling *White Fragility*,

[W]e have been taught that racists are mean people who intentionally dislike others because of their race, racists are immoral. Therefore, if I am saying that my

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<sup>8</sup> Hill D (2017) *White Awake: An Honest Look at What it Means to Be White*, IVP Books, Downers Grove, IL

<sup>9</sup> Rah S-C (2015) *Prophetic Lament: A Call for Justice in Troubled Times*, IVP Books, Downers Grove, IL

<sup>10</sup> Morrison L (2020) *Be the Bridge: Pursuing God’s Heart for Racial Reconciliation*, Waterbrook, Colorado Springs

<sup>11</sup> Tisby J (2019) *The Color of Compromise: The Truth about the American Church’s Complicity in Racism*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids

<sup>12</sup> MacArthur J (2018 Aug 13) Social injustice and the gospel. <<https://www.gty.org/library/blog/B180813>> Accessed 2022 Jan 11.

<sup>13</sup> Shenvi N (2021) Christianity and Critical Theory- Part 1. <<https://shenviapologetics.com/critical-theory-and-christianity-part-1/>> Accessed 2022 Jan 14.

<sup>14</sup> Strachan O (2021) 70

readers are racist or, even worse, that all white people are racists, .... I am questioning my readers' very moral character .... I am not using this definition of racism ....<sup>15</sup>

She goes on to explain why this antiquated definition is no longer appropriate and defines racism as "a far-reaching system that functions independently for the intentions of self-images of individual actors."<sup>16</sup> In other words, one's intentions are irrelevant, in contrast to Jesus' teaching about sin originating from the heart (Matthew 15:18–20). White people are racist oppressors even if there is no malice in their hearts towards people of color! Yet, Scripture is very clear in passages like Deuteronomy 24:16 and Ezekiel 18:20 that no individual should be judged for the sins of their ancestors or their society. Furthermore, what is the definition of "whiteness" and what people-groups are included in it if all "white people" are racists? What about mixed-race individuals? Also, how does one's nationality contribute? Is a "white" Israeli Jew, for instance, also inherently "oppressive" just like a "white American" even though his people have been clearly oppressed for centuries? The whole concept is both scientifically absurd and Biblically repugnant.<sup>17</sup> Owen Strachan comments,

But to convict all "white" people of such wrongdoing is wrong and unbiblical .... The CRT diagnosis is a radical reframing of man's chief problem. It changes our fundamental condition from one of individually willed sin to one of inherently racist "whiteness," which makes horizontal transgression against men of greater import than vertical transgression against God.<sup>18</sup>

### ***CRT is Antigospel in Its Assessment of the Solution***

Obviously, if CRT is wrong in its assessment of the problem, it will be wrong in its assessment of the solution. If sin is the root problem, then there is hope for permanent change even for the most adamant racist or white supremacist offered in the gospel! The "Good News" is that God offers freely, by grace, to replace our wicked hearts of stone with regenerated hearts of flesh (Jeremiah 17:9, Ezekiel 36:26) if we will but repent of sin and turn to Christ in faith (Ephesians 2:8–9, Acts 3:19, etc.). When this occurs, God changes us from the inside out (II Corinthians 5:17, II Corinthians 3:18), and the idea that *any* sin is too bad to be

covered by Christ's blood is biblically anathema (I Corinthians 6:9–11). Thus, for the regenerated believer, Romans 8:1 promises "no condemnation"! That is not to say that we are instantly delivered from previous temptations or that we will never have to grow in our faith or adjust our thinking as we grow, but guilt is instantly gone!

However, in CRT thinking, there is no gospel grace to offer hope, change, and freedom, but only the legalistic bondage of striving to be an antiracist. How is this done?" Ibram Kendi, likely the best-known popularizer of CRT-thinking today, explains:

No one becomes a racist or antiracist. We can only strive to be one or the other. We can unknowingly strive to be a racist. We can knowingly strive to be antiracist. Like fighting an addiction [My comment: Just like Alcoholics Anonymous teaches that one will *always* be an alcoholic], being an antiracist requires persistent self-awareness, constant self-criticism, and regular self-examination.<sup>19</sup>

Notice that in the CRT system one is never cured or forgiven of racism. One is always striving but never arriving just like every false religious system on the planet that is trying to merit favor with God, including liberal/modernistic forms of "Christianity." Speaking of which Kendi, in a video shot inside a church in 2019, admits what he really thinks about traditional evangelical theology and the gospel when he states:

Savior theology is a different type of theology.... And to me, antiracists fundamentally reject savior theology. That goes right in line with racist ideas and racist theology, in which they say, "You know what? Black people, other racial groups, the reason why they're struggling on earth is because of what they're doing behaviorally wrong. And it is my job as a pastor is [sic] to, sort of, save these wayward black people, or wayward poor people, or wayward queer people. That type of theology breeds bigotry. And so, to me, the type of theology of liberation theology breeds a common humanity, a common humanity against the structures of power that oppress us all."<sup>20</sup>

In other words, according to Kendi, sharing the gospel in an effort to win souls (i.e., "Savior Theology" as opposed to "Liberation Theology" that arose in the 1950s and 1960s, which Kendi embraces), is racist! Kendi rejects the

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<sup>15</sup> DiAngelo R (2018) *White Fragility: Why It's so Hard for White People to Talk About Racism*, Beacon Press, Boston, 13

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 20

<sup>17</sup> Greear D (2020 Aug) 2–3

<sup>18</sup> Strachan O (2021) 62

<sup>19</sup> Kendi IX (2019) *How to Be an Antiracist*, One Word, New York, 23

<sup>20</sup> Johnson B (2021 Mar 27) "Jesus was a political revolutionary": Ibram X. Kendi "rejects" orthodox Christianity. <<https://blog.acton.org/archives/119859-jesus-was-a-political-revolutionary-ibram-x-kendi-rejects-orthodox-christianity.html>> Accessed 2022 Jan 15.

idea that Jesus came to die for the sins of individuals, but rather, he believes that the real “gospel” is that Jesus came to liberate “oppressed” groups of people from their “oppressors” (the essence of “Liberation Theology”). This is, simply put, another “gospel” and Paul has something to say about that in Galatians 1:8–9. Clearly the Bible does have much to say about social issues, loving one’s neighbor as yourself, helping the poor and oppressed, etc., but that *is not* the “Good News,” as defined in I Corinthians 15:1–4. The idea that evangelism is racist because it implies that “wayward” black people actually need to be saved from their sins is absolute absurdity biblically because “wayward” white people do as well!

Admittedly, most self-described “evangelical” proponents of CRT thinking would not go as far as Kendi, to the logical extreme, and blatantly embrace “Liberation Theology,” yet Jemar Tisby, evangelical author of *The Color of Compromise*, has now joined forces with Kendi and is the assistant director of narrative and advocacy at Kendi’s Center for Antiracist Research.<sup>21</sup> Even for those CRT proponents embracing a biblical gospel, racism seems to be a wrong that the gospel alone cannot solve. Summarizing once again from Strachan,

In comparison to the good news of the Gospel, what bad news this is. We Christians who thought we were not condemned are in fact very much condemned. In woke theology, we are condemned for our complicity in “structural oppression.” Jesus died, it seems, and destroyed the power of every sin—except the sins of being “white” or benefitting “whiteness” .... Unlike in biblical salvation, we’ll never put our guilt behind us .... No, “woke Christianity” tells us we can only name our racism, oppose it by action, and continually lament until we die.<sup>22</sup>

### **CRT is Antigospel in Its Assessment of the Goals**

CRT thinking contradicts not only the gospel itself, but also some of the impacts or end-goals of the gospel. One of those impacts would be a willingness to forgive those who have hurt us. African-American and Columbia University professor John McWhorter, writing on the ironies of Woke ideology, states one irony as:

When black people say you have insulted them, apologize with profound sincerity and guilt. But don’t put black people in a position where you expect them to

forgive you. They have dealt with too much to be expected to.<sup>23</sup>

Matthew 18:21–35, Matthew 6:12–15, Ephesians 4:32, and other passages not only command forgiveness, but suggest an unwillingness to forgive evidences an unregenerate heart that has not, itself, been forgiven by God! African-American pastor Eric Mason, in a book arguing in favor of a “wokeness” with a small “w” (my assessment, not his words) states,

When you know you’re messed up, you can look a racist in the face differently. It’s got to be the loving God that shows me myself, that shows me my brokenness, and lets me know that I’ve been forgiven. And because I’ve been forgiven much, how in the world can I withhold forgiveness from somebody else?<sup>24</sup>

Another positive impact of the gospel that would be twisted as “inappropriate” by the practitioners of CRT thinking would be the goal of a practical “color-blindness” (not in contradiction to what I stated earlier about being aware/awake to the hurts and perspectives of people of color, but in the sense of acceptance as with Martin Luther King’s dream of not being judged by the color of one’s skin) in the church and society that America seemed to be moving towards before the rise of CRT thinking in recent years. Quoting Ibram Kendi again,

The most threatening racist movement is not the alt right’s unlikely drive for a White ethnostate but the regular American’s drive for a “race-neutral” one.<sup>25</sup>

On the surface, this statement seems to blatantly contradict his stated goal of antiracism. What does he mean by it? How is being “race-neutral” a bad thing? It is bad because in his mind the playing field is not yet level and this must be corrected. Thus, he states,

The only remedy to racist discrimination is antiracist discrimination. The only remedy to past discrimination is present discrimination. The only remedy to present discrimination is future discrimination.<sup>26</sup>

In other words, the ends justify the means for Kendi. Yet, the Bible clearly teaches that we are not to “repay evil for evil” (I Peter 3:9), but rather “overcome evil with good” (Romans 12:17–21). Biblically, unbiblical means are never justified, under any circumstances!

Space does not permit addressing other unbiblical issues with CRT such as its tendency to claim that the assertions

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<sup>21</sup> Strachan O (2021) 43

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 86

<sup>23</sup> McWhorter J (2021 Feb 08) The Neoracists, <<https://www.persuasion.community/p/john-mcwhorter-the-neoracists>> Accessed 2022 Jan 12.

<sup>24</sup> Mason E (2018) *Woke Church: An Urgent Call for Christians in America to Confront Racism and Injustice*, Moody Publishers, Chicago, 175

<sup>25</sup> Kendi IX (2019) 20

<sup>26</sup> Kendi IX (2019) 19

of “oppressed” people should be accepted without question rather than being subjected to the objective standard of truth, the Word of God (John 7:24). In contrast, anyone who would disagree with CRT thinking is, by definition, a racist<sup>27</sup> and is “canceled”/silenced rather than engaged in a meaningful dialogue or debate much like evolutionists today “cancel” creationists by defining creation as “religion” by definition.<sup>28</sup> This is all in contrast to a Biblical philosophy of conflict resolution that would involve open and honest dialogue with those with whom we disagree, “speaking the truth in love,” confrontation if necessary (Matthew 18:15–18), and always a willingness to confess one’s own wrongs/sins and forgive one’s opponent for theirs (Matthew 18:21–35). In other words, balls and strikes are called instead of dividing everyone up into all-or-nothing, unbiblical categories of “oppressors” and “oppressed.” To be fair, both sides of this debate have been guilty at times of *ad hominem* attacks and character assassination rather than honest biblical dialogue. Quoting Voddie Baucham,

To the anti-Critical Social Justice camp, those on the side of CSJ are all Cultural Marxists. Conversely, to the social justice camp, those who oppose their cause are all racists (even fellow black people like me who, according to their definition of racism, can’t be racists ...). The result is a standstill ... .<sup>29</sup>

Another example would be CRT’s unbiblical take on issues other than race, such as its position on God’s design for marriage. Again, from Strachan:

Wokeness is not friendly to biblical complementarity. Wokeness reads differences as discrimination, traditional sexual distinctiveness as a hostile reality, and hierarchy of any kind as evil abuse.<sup>30</sup>

Once again, space does not permit more detail or other examples, but CRT thinking is actually an over-arching worldview that includes much more than race and racism.

In conclusion, as a creationist I believe that the division at Babel recorded in Genesis 11 clearly played a major role in ultimately forming the so called “races,”<sup>31</sup> but was intended by God to be a temporary measure to prevent mankind from uniting in rebellion against their Creator. From Genesis to Revelation the Bible is clear that God’s ultimate desire was, and still is, to unite people from all places and people groups to proclaim His glory, and the New Testament gives ample evidence that God is already moving to reverse Babel (Acts 2:1–4, Ephesians 2:11–22) and that one glorious day that reversal will be complete. Revelation 7:9–12 gives us a glimpse of that day. Thus, it

seems obvious that believers in Christ should be striving to help reverse the racial and ethnic divisions and strife that followed the tower of Babel, not reinforce them! Yet today’s CRT response to race and racism is one that often emphasizes the unbiblical concept of “race” and reinforces racial divisions rather than seeking to eliminate them. All ground should be level at the cross (Galatians 3:28)! ☩

## COMING EVENTS

### TASC Zoom Meeting, February 10, 7:00 pm EST

It has long been known that harmony and melody both involve unchanging scientific and mathematical laws that have been written into the very fabric of the universe from the beginning of time. Now scientists have discovered that our brains are made for music (see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rnUSNbqtVJI> video *Power of Music on the Brain: Dementia & Parkinson’s*)—that a deep musical appreciation is a foundational to being human. Is musical harmony an accident and our appreciation for it the result of evolution? Why do we have this special relationship with music that apes and other large-brained ‘higher’ animals don’t share. In the next TASC meeting, Dr. Jeff Gift will review what the Bible and evolutionists propose about the origin and purpose of this uniquely human trait.

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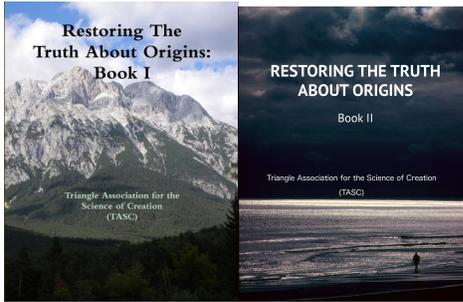
<sup>27</sup> Baucham VT (2021) 79

<sup>28</sup> Johnson PE (1995) *Reason in the Balance*, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL, 26

<sup>29</sup> Baucham VT (2021) 133

<sup>30</sup> Strachan O (2021) 73

<sup>31</sup> Greear D (2020 Aug) 3–4



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