

# CAN THE CHURCH ACHIEVE SOCIAL JUSTICE?

## RACISM IS A REAL ISSUE

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- The rise in racial tensions in the US within the last few years demonstrates that the sin of racism is prevalent
- We must acknowledge that there are oppressed people groups in our society, that the sin of racism exists, and many in our country have been treated wrongly on the basis of skin color
- We must admit that many individuals have been hurt by prejudiced comments and actions
- Racism and oppression are real...and they are both sinful...and we must vehemently denounce them
- Racism is not a skin problem, but rather a sin problem

**Jeremiah 17:9** ~ The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?

**James 2:9** ~ But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

- Racism violates God's law of love

**Matthew 22:39** ~ The second is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.'

### The parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:30-37

**James 2:8** ~ If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF," you are doing well.

- Thus, it is entirely sinful to look down on and mistreat any person on the basis of the shade of their skin
- Christians not only must not be guilty of racism, they must also be loving, compassionate, and kind toward those who are oppressed, mistreated, or marginalized by society
- Due to the fall, there will be widows, fatherless, and oppressed people in society and, modeling the ministry of Christ, we should express compassion by mourning with those who mourn

**Romans 12:15** ~ Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.

- But how are we to best do this?

## WHAT IS SOCIAL JUSTICE?

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### Its Definition

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- "Social Justice as a concept arose in the early 19th century during the Industrial Revolution and subsequent civil revolutions throughout Europe, which aimed to create more egalitarian societies and remedy capitalistic exploitation of human labor. Because of the stark stratifications between wealthy and the poor during this time, early social justice advocates focused primarily on capital, property, and the distribution of wealth. By the mid-20th century, social justice had expanded from being primarily concerned with economics to include other spheres of social life to include the environment, race, gender, and other causes and manifestations of inequality."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.pachamama.org/social-justice/what-is-social-justice>

- “Social Justice – A socially just world meets everyone’s basic needs (food, housing, health care, education, job, social security) in a dignified way; treats people from every background with dignity and respect; supports the development of all people to their full potential; guarantees equitable distribution of resources; makes sure all people are physically and psychologically safe and secure; and ensures everyone has a voice in the decisions that affect them.”<sup>2</sup>
- Advocates of social justice maintain that there are always issues of power and oppression at play when there is diversity
- The aim of social justice proponents is to move towards a more just world with less oppression and more freedom and equality among people from different groups
- Usually, the primary causes of social injustice are related to differences in race, class, and gender

## **Its History and Premise**

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- Social justice is rooted in Marxism...but it is important to distinguish between classical Marxism and cultural Marxism
- “Marxism is a social, political, and economic philosophy named after Karl Marx, which examines the effect of capitalism on labor, productivity, and economic development and argues for a worker revolution to overturn capitalism in favor of communism. Marxism posits that the struggle between social classes, specifically between the bourgeoisie, or capitalists, and the proletariat, or workers, defines economic relations in a capitalist economy and will inevitably lead to revolutionary communism.”<sup>3</sup>
- Classical Marxism is an economic system and its goal was to produce the uprising of the masses to overthrow capitalism since, according to Marx, capitalism was responsible for oppressing the masses
- Its motto was, “From each according to his ability to each according to his need,” a principle that refers to free access to and distribution of goods, capital and services
- Marx (d. 1883) believed that he would eventually see the fall of capitalism because his view of history was one of struggle between classes
- Marx envisioned the workers of the world uniting and revolting against the capitalists, because it caused the exploitation of the masses
- However, the revolution never came
- In the early 1900’s, Antonio Gramsci, an Italian Marxist, along with others at the Frankfurt School tried to explain why the revolution didn’t happen (the Frankfurt School was a school of Marxist sociological and philosophical thought associated with the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt, Germany)
- Their views have resulted in what has been called “Cultural Marxism” or “Neo-Marxism” which also sees a class struggle (as classical Marxism does); however, rather than economics being the primary determiner of one’s identity (i.e. rich vs. poor), it is race, gender, and class that determines whether one belongs to an oppressor or oppressed group
- Majority groups are viewed as privileged or oppressive; minority groups are viewed as underprivileged and oppressed.
- This is due to what is known as the “cultural hegemony” (“to have dominance over”) which is “the domination of a culturally diverse society by the ruling class who manipulate the culture of that society — the beliefs and explanations, perceptions, values, and mores — so that the imposed, ruling-class worldview becomes the accepted cultural norm.”<sup>4</sup>
- Whoever comprises the cultural hegemony wields the power in a society and it is these cultural powers that explain why classical Marxism failed

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.act4socialjustice.com/social-justice-definitions/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/m/marxism.asp>

<sup>4</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural\\_hegemony](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_hegemony)

- “Why didn’t Classical Marxism take root everywhere? Because the situation is deeper than economics. Culture must be addressed. Gramsci would argue that Marx missed this part. The revolution that comes doesn’t need to be an armed revolution or a revolution by force. It needs to be a hegemonic revolution. In other words, we need to change the cultural hegemony. Gramsci argued that to change the cultural hegemony you must control the robes of society – judges, professors, pastors, and politicians. Leverage those positions to educate and mobilize the masses against the hegemonic power. Use the educational system, the political system, and the judicial system to overturn the cultural hegemony.”<sup>5</sup>
- This is how the oppressed groups gain power
- This product of the Frankfurt School was known as Critical Theory and its principles were imported to the US in 1935 when some of them came to New York and were affiliated with Columbia University
- The grandchild of Critical Theory is Critical Race Theory which places all people in one of two camps depending on their race, class, gender, and sexuality: oppressor or oppressed
- Those within the cultural hegemony are inherently oppressive while those who do not fit into those groups are the oppressed
- Today, according to CRT proponents, the cultural hegemony in the US is white, male, heterosexual, cis-gendered, able-bodied, and native-born
- Everyone who is part of that group is inherently oppressive; everyone who is not in that group is a victim of the cultural hegemony established by those individuals
- Thus, CRT views reality through the lens of power and it aims to overthrow majority groups and the structures which keep them in power
- If one is in the oppressor category, they must divest themselves of power and seek to liberate others
- If one is in the oppressed category, they must acquire power and liberate themselves by dismantling all structures and institutions that oppress
- CRT also embraces intersectionality which “is the theory that attends to the complexity of identity and experience as constructed by multiple, interlocking systems of power (such as racism, classism, sexism...) for the purpose of understanding and shifting those systems of power.”<sup>6</sup>
- Intersectionality says that certain oppressed people are more oppressed than others based on their various identities
- The more marginalized groups one identifies with the more powerless they are because of how their group identities intersect in their life
- Thus, a black man is less oppressed than a black woman, who is less oppressed than a black, female, lesbian
- Related to CRT and intersectionality is the idea of being woke – “Woke as a political term of African American origin refers to a perceived awareness of issues concerning social justice and racial justice. It is derived from the African-American Vernacular English expression ‘stay woke’, whose grammatical aspect refers to a continuing awareness of these issues.”<sup>7</sup>
- The work are those who have awakened to the need for social justice and who realize that the solution is to correct power imbalances by advancing the interests of disadvantaged people groups and freeing them from oppression
- At the core of the social justice agenda is the belief that “whiteness” is the cause of racial tensions
- All racism hinges on white privilege, white power, white advantage, and all things white

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<sup>5</sup> Voddie Baucham, “Cultural Marxism” in *By What Standard?*, edited by Jared Longshore, 24.


<sup>6</sup> <http://www.act4socialjustice.com/social-justice-definitions/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Woke>

TALKING ABOUT RACE | NMAAHC

## ASPECTS & ASSUMPTIONS OF WHITENESS & WHITE CULTURE IN THE UNITED STATES

White dominant culture, or **whiteness**, refers to the ways white people and their traditions, attitudes and ways of life have been normalized over time and are now considered standard practices in the United States. And since white people still hold most of the institutional power in America, we have all internalized some aspects of white culture — including people of color.




**Rugged Individualism**

- The individual is the primary unit
- Self-reliance
- Independence & autonomy highly valued + rewarded
- Individuals assumed to be in control of their environment, “You get what you deserve”

**Family Structure**

- The nuclear family: father, mother, 2.3 children is the ideal social unit
- Husband is breadwinner and head of household
- Wife is homemaker and subordinate to the husband
- Children should have own rooms, be independent




**Emphasis on Scientific Method**

- Objective, rational linear thinking
- Cause and effect relationships
- Quantitative emphasis

**History**

- Based on Northern European immigrants’ experience in the United States
- Heavy focus on the British Empire
- The primacy of Western (Greek, Roman) and Judeo-Christian tradition




**Protestant Work Ethic**

- Hard work is the key to success
- Work before play
- “If you didn’t meet your goals, you didn’t work hard enough”

**Religion**

- Christianity is the norm
- Anything other than Judeo – Christian tradition is foreign
- No tolerance for deviation from single god concept




**Status, Power & Authority**

- Wealth = worth
- Your job is who you are
- Respect authority
- Heavy value on ownership of goods, space, property

**Future Orientation**

- Plan for future
- Delayed gratification
- Progress is always best
- “Tomorrow will be better”



**Time**


- Follow rigid time schedules
- Time viewed as a commodity

**Aesthetics**

- Based on European culture
- Steak and potatoes; “bland is best”
- Woman’s beauty based on blonde, thin – “Barbie”
- Man’s attractiveness based on economic status, power, intellect

**Holidays**

- Based on Christian religions
- Based on white history & male leaders




**Justice**

- Based on English common law
- Protect property & entitlements
- Intent counts

**Competition**

- Be #1
- Win at all costs
- Winner/loser dichotomy
- Action Orientation
- Master and control nature
- Must always “do something” about a situation
- Aggressiveness and Extroversion
- Decision-Making
- Majority rules (when Whites have power)



**Communication**

- “The King’s English” rules
- Written tradition
- Avoid conflict, intimacy
- Don’t show emotion
- Don’t discuss personal life
- Be polite

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN HISTORY / CULTURE

- “White Privilege is perpetuated in the US by both individual and institutional racism that prevents non-white people from receiving equal access to all levels of society. It is a term to identify the privileges, opportunities, and advantages offered by the American society to anyone who is accepted as “white” (or white enough), and serves as an exemption in many particular cases from certain societal burdens or liabilities. It manifests itself in a number of ways, such as, better housing, education, economic opportunities, higher wages, etc.”<sup>8</sup>
- “White Supremacy is a historically based, institutionally perpetuated system of exploitation and oppression of continents, nations, and peoples of color by white peoples and nations of the European continent, for the purpose of maintaining and defending a system of wealth, power, and privilege.”<sup>9</sup>
- Implicit/Unconscious Bias - “Thoughts and feelings are ‘implicit’ if we are unaware of them or mistaken about their nature. We have a bias when, rather than being neutral, we have a preference for (or aversion to) a person or group of people. Thus, we use the term ‘implicit bias’ to describe when we have attitudes towards people or associate stereotypes with them without our conscious knowledge. A fairly commonplace example of this is seen in studies that show that white people will frequently associate criminality with black people without even realizing they’re doing it.”<sup>10</sup>
- Thus, only white people can be racist because, while blacks can be prejudiced, they can’t be racist since racism rests with those who control the institutions

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.act4socialjustice.com/social-justice-definitions/>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.act4socialjustice.com/social-justice-definitions/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://perception.org/research/implicit-bias/>

- As a result of CRT/CSJ, the definition of racism has been changed from “intentional acts of racial discrimination that result from looking down on others because of their skin color, nationality, ethnicity and viewing themselves as superior” to “racial discrimination caused by an automatic association with power structures inherent in a society”
- This is the premise of Robin DiAngelo in her book *White Fragility*...“The new definition of racism, according to DiAngelo is ‘When a racial group’s collective prejudice is backed by the power of legal authority and institutional control, it is transformed into racism, a far-reaching system that functions independently from the intentions or self-images of individual actors...Racism is a structure, not an event.’ By this definition only whites can be racist because while ‘people of color can also hold prejudices and discriminate against white people, they lack the social and institutional power that transforms their prejudice and discrimination into racism; the impact of their prejudice on whites is temporal and contextual.’ Therefore, ‘only white people are in the position to oppress people of color collectively and throughout the whole of society.’ Putting all the pieces together, the CRT definition of racism is ‘socialization engrained in Western whiteness in which white people have all the power, legally and institutionally, so that whiteness dominates every aspect of life in America. It has nothing to do with individual choices, prejudices, or acts of discrimination. ‘Racists’ is simply who and what white people are.’”<sup>11</sup>
- Thus, the aim of CRT is to eliminate privileges of the privileged...to reapportion power from the oppressor to the victimized

## A BIBLICAL EVALUATION OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

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### It is Based on Godless Ideologies

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- At the core of the social justice movement are secular and worldly philosophies
- Some within the church have stated that these are merely “analytical tools” to be used alongside biblical Christianity for the purpose of understanding cultural-sociological issues
- But these are more than simply tools that are subservient to biblical Christianity
- They emerge from a secular worldview (atheism, Marxism, etc.) and are rooted in ideologies that are incompatible with and hostile to Christianity because they establish human identity in ideas other than being created in the image of God and, for believers, being identified by our relationship in Christ
- “How can a theory derived from anti-Semites who were virulent racists hell-bent on abolishing the family and religion bring healing to the sin of racism? Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels saw Christianity as an impediment to their socialist ideology. How can a godless theory be used as an “analytical tool” to address issues needing a Godly solution?”<sup>12</sup>
- Marx said that “religion is the opium of the people” because he believed that religion had a similar effect of opium in a sick person, namely that it reduced people’s suffering
- He saw religion as harmful to the goal of a revolution as it prevents people from seeing the class structure and oppression around them
- “Marxism is history’s most successful killing mechanism. Nothing else has proven more adept at turning ordinary people into militant revolutionaries, and statesmen into scions of death. Marxism is not a helpful tool, a partially worthy system, or a Christianity-friendly worldview. Marxism is an intellectual kill-zone. It is bred, like the Orcs of Saruman, for a single purpose: to wipe out goodness in the world, to erase any trace of decency and dignity and civility and common humanity. Marxism is evil, pure evil.”<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Gary Gilley, “Defining Terms of Critical Race Theory,” in the Voice Magazine, May/June 2021, 11.

<sup>12</sup> [https://www.christianpost.com/news/critical-race-theory-its-a-cancer-not-a-cure.html?utm\\_source=dvr.it&utm\\_medium=facebook](https://www.christianpost.com/news/critical-race-theory-its-a-cancer-not-a-cure.html?utm_source=dvr.it&utm_medium=facebook)

<sup>13</sup> Owen Strachan, Twitter post

- Such theories have spread into the church with their agenda to name and control reality, demanding that we reorder our lives on the basis of this new supposed reality
- These unbiblical ideologies, if allowed to gain traction within the church, will only lead believers and churches away from allegiance to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the authority and sufficiency of His Word
- That's why believers are clearly warned against such hollow and deceptive philosophies in Scripture

**Colossians 2:8** ~ See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. 9 For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, 10 and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority;

- Notice:
  1. The goal of our enemies is to take us captive to do Satan's will (2 Tim 2:26)
  2. They do this through "philosophy and empty deception" – these are ideas and intellectual arguments that will lead people astray from the living God
  3. Such worldly philosophies are according to:
    - a. The tradition of men – not in keeping with what God has revealed
    - b. The elementary principles of the world – the basic elements of an idea or system
    - c. Things other than Christ – not compatible with the person and work of Christ
  4. The solution to such ungodly ideologies is a robust view of Christ (vv. 9-10)
- The problem with the social justice movement is that it is not anchored in a high view of Christ
- Rather, its origins lie in the unbelieving world which is antithetical to Biblical Christianity
- "As a result, when Christians uncritically embrace and promote today's social justice movement they are in danger of being taken captive by unbiblical ideologies and led away from Christ."<sup>14</sup>

## **It Redefines the Gospel**

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- The Bible says that our problem is sin and our resulting fallen nature, namely we are sinners alienated from a holy God and rightly under His wrath
- Each person individually is responsible for their own sin

**Ezekiel 18:20** ~ The person who sins will die. The son will not bear the punishment for the father's iniquity, nor will the father bear the punishment for the son's iniquity; the righteousness of the righteous will be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked will be upon himself.

- The Good News of the Gospel is that, because of the work of Christ on the cross, we can be forgiven, given His righteousness, and redeemed by His blood
- However, this is not the Gospel in social justice circles; identity politics are antithetical to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in that they redefine the sin that needs to be repented of and the means of salvation from sin
- CRT/I teaches that the oppressors are those whose primary "original sin" is racism and the bad news is that certain people have been oppressed by others
- This "sin" is expressed in two different ways:
  - 1) By Nature – oppressors are inherently racist due to whiteness which puts them in a category of privilege over non-white individuals. In other words, to be born white in America is to be automatically complicit in maintaining and promoting the ideology of white supremacy.

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<sup>14</sup> Tom Ascol, "Hollow and Deceptive Philosophies" in *By What Standard?*, edited by Jared Longshore, 9.



- 2) In Action – the idea of intersectionality assumes that a white heterosexual male is the greatest of sinners, thus making his actions most sinful
- Thus, under the CRT/I rubric, whiteness and the racist actions inherently associated with it are the sins requiring repentance
  - Accordingly, CRT/I teach a separate salvation for the oppressor and oppressed
    - 1) Salvation for the Oppressors – They need salvation from their sin of racism inherent in their whiteness, their white privilege, and the racist actions that spring from such a heart
    - 2) Salvation for the Oppressed – They need salvation-rescue from the sociological ills and oppression which they are victims of
  - As is obvious, “the CRT/I gospel becomes one, not of salvation from the wrath of God and the presence and power of sin, but from the oppression/oppressor categories. Consequently, CRT/I becomes a different gospel than that of the substitutionary atoning work of Jesus Christ (cf. Gal. 1:6-9).”<sup>15</sup>
  - CRT seeks to correct power imbalances by advancing the interests of disadvantaged peoples
  - It also sees as its utopian goal the forming of a just society and liberation from oppression
  - It is a Gospel of Liberation Theology: “According to liberation theology, the primary human problem is horizontal not vertical. It traces man’s problems to the fundamental lack of harmony within society, the oppression and exploitation of the powerless classes by the powerful. It is concerned with the conflicts between different racial or economic classes, the fact that the whole of society is so structured so as to deny certain of its members some of the necessities of life. Thus, salvation involves the removal of ruptures within humanity, the healing of personal and social relationships, and deliverance from oppression...The process of salvation is the search for a radical break with the status quo, to begin the formation of a new society that one day will have completely suppressed the existing class system. The message of social justice is that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ is for the total liberation of humanity from all kinds of spiritual and physical limitations, and that this liberation is a dynamic historical process in which humankind is given the promise, the possibility, and the power to overcome all perverted human conditions.”<sup>16</sup>
  - In CRT the greatest sin is oppression, and the greatest virtue is the pursuit of liberation
  - Furthermore, this is a hopeless gospel because salvation for those in the oppressor category is nearly impossible since no one can work themselves out of their whiteness
  - This gospel provides no substitute by which the stain of whiteness can be permanently cleansed (like what Christ does for believers in the true Gospel by granting them His righteousness and making them new creations in Him)

## How to Pursue Racial Justice & Unity CRITICAL RACE THEORY V. THE GOSPEL

	Critical Race Theory	The Gospel
<b>In a Nutshell:</b>	A view that examines society through the lens of power, dividing people into oppressed and oppressor groups	The good news that Jesus, through His death, burial, and resurrection, offers hope and life to lost sinners.
<b>Core Problem:</b>	Whiteness; systems that oppress people of color	Sin; man’s rejection of God’s good rule
<b>The Solution:</b>	Become woke, do the work, be anti-racist	Jesus, repent of sin, allow the Spirit to change us
<b>The Goal:</b>	Utopia, everything being equitable. (We can accomplish this by our own efforts.)	Unity with God and each other through Jesus. (Utopia comes when King Jesus reigns.)
<b>Our Identity:</b>	Either oppressed or oppressor based on skin color	God’s creation, loved by Him; as Christians, brothers & sisters in Christ
<b>Truth &amp; Morality:</b>	The claim or assertions of oppressed people should be accepted without question	God determines what is right, and His Word is the ultimate truth.
<b>Racism Is:</b>	Racial prejudice plus institutional power	The sin of partiality revealed as racial prejudice
<b>Who Can Be Racist:</b>	White people because only they have power	Anyone because sin can arise in all of our hearts
<b>Primary Emotions:</b>	Guilt, anger	Sorrow and repentance leading to love, joy, and peace
<b>The Path to Unity:</b>	Overturn unjust systems; build collective power	God makes us one with Him and unifies us to each other as we yield to His sanctifying work in our hearts.

<sup>15</sup> <https://thecripplegate.com/americas-newest-religion/>

<sup>16</sup> Alex Granados, “The Gospel of Liberation Theology,” in the Voice Magazine, May/June 2021, 15.

## It Confuses the Mission of the Church

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- It is argued by many today in the social justice camp that churches must take up the mantle of social justice by making it the corporate business of the church
- It is argued that racial reconciliation must be a formal focus of the church by getting involved corporately in political activism, protests, lobbying for new laws, etc.
- On the one hand, it is appropriate for Christians to do what they can to encourage the making and enforcing of laws which protect oppressed people groups (victims of abortion, racism, sex trafficking, etc.)
- On the other hand, we must not forget the core mission of the church as described in the New Testament:
  - 1) Exalt God
 

**Psalm 95:6** ~ Come, let us worship and bow down, Let us kneel before the LORD our Maker.
  - 2) Equip the Saints
 

**Ephesians 4:12** ~ for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ
  - 3) Edify One Another
 

**Romans 14:19** ~ So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.
  - 4) Evangelize the Lost
 

**Matthew 28:19** ~ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit
- These are the primary mandates of the church and the apostles recognized these priorities:
 

**Acts 6:4** ~ But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word
- Fighting oppression, abortion, racism, sex trafficking are not unimportant issues but they are secondary
- Adopting the social justice agenda causes the church to lose its focus and leads to mission drift
- “If social activism is rolled into the Great Commission, then the resulting mission of the church is a diluted, insipid, fragmented effort to improve political governments. While as citizens of this planet, we must be concerned about living conditions, injustice, and aiding the poor and marginalized, when we make such the function or purpose of the church, we change its very nature. The mission of CRT and social justice is not the God-mandated mission of the church.”<sup>17</sup>
- “Anybody, any group, can put new clothes on a man. Only the gospel can put a new man in clothes. As important as these matters are, we must make sure we keep the main thing the main thing – the gospel of grace and forgiveness through Jesus Christ, the authority of the Word of God, and the call for humble obedience – even in the face of ethnic and cultural differences and problems.”<sup>18</sup>
- Furthermore, because of Christian compassion, it is easy to drift from biblical reasons for alleviating human suffering to cultural reasons
- We may agree with the cultural that human suffering needs to end, but we can easily begin to take up the culture’s mantle of fighting oppression rather than staying firmly anchored in biblical reasons

<sup>17</sup> Gary Gilley, <https://tottministries.org/racism-and-critical-race-theory-part-3-biblical-investigation/>

<sup>18</sup> H.B. Charles, “The Biblical Strategy for Racial Unity” in *A Biblical Answer for Racial Unity*, 2017, 24.



## It Advances a Different Method of Biblical Interpretation

- Traditionally, literal-grammatical-historical hermeneutics has been concerned with attempting to understand the original meaning of the author (authorial intent) intended by the Holy Spirit as He guided them to write the Word of God
- This correct “interpretation” then leads to numerous “applications”
- However, CRT hermeneutical methods encourage reader-response approaches to interpreting Scripture
- In this approach, there is a rejection of the traditional method of interpretation, shunning it as nothing more than a white, male approach
- In seeking to rectify this supposed distortion of Christianity, CRT hermeneutics aim to allow other methods of interpretation to drive the understanding of the biblical text such as women hermeneutics, black hermeneutics, African hermeneutics, South American hermeneutics, etc.
- “The CRT approach, grounded in postmodern thinking, is to allow the text to be controlled by the reader, rather than the author. The text can take on a variety of meanings depending on the social condition, cultural background, ethnic identity, or gender of the reader. The Scriptures, interpreted with this methodology, no longer have a single meaning but have as many meanings as there are readers. Thus, in attempting to make the Bible less white, and Christianity less Western, the Bible has been deconstructed and rendered essentially meaningless. All interpretation lies in the eyes and mind of the readers, not in the Author and His intended meaning.”<sup>19</sup>

## THE BIBLICAL CURE FOR RACISM

### Believers Who Reject Vengeance Tactics

- Although, we are currently living in a hate culture in which a vengeance movement is gaining steam, vengeance is never a proper biblical response to injustices in society

**Romans 12:14, 17, 19-21** ~ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse... 17 Never pay back evil for evil to anyone... 19 Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, “VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY,” says the Lord. 20 “BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS ON HIS HEAD.” 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

### A Robust Proclamation of the Gospel Which Destroys the Racial Divide

- Jesus died to save people from every ethnic group

**Revelation 5:9** ~ And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

**Revelation 7:9** ~ After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes...

- As a result, Christ came to destroy all forms of the sin of racism

**Galatians 3:28** ~ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

**Ephesians 2:13-14** ~ But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14 For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall,

<sup>19</sup> Gary Gilley, <https://totministries.org/racism-and-critical-race-theory-part-3-biblical-investigation/>

**Colossians 3:10-11** ~ and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him – 11 a renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all.

## **Believers Who Live as Salt and Light**

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- Although, it is not wrong for believers to use the rights granted to them to promote morality and decency in the public arena, our greatest impact will not come by merely laboring for social change or behavior modification
- We must bring the light of the truth to bear in a world blinded by sin by living godly lives and sharing Christ

**Matthew 5:13-16** ~ You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. 14 You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; 15 nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

- Being “salt/light” is not a reference to political, social, or moral influence but of living the Word of God

## **A Willingness to Follow Christ’s Example in Suffering**

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- Those who are oppressed have the greatest opportunity for real Gospel witness when they respond to oppression by following the example given by Christ in His oppression

**1 Peter 2:21-23** ~ For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, 22 WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH; 23 and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously;

- In responding with forgiveness, kindness, and love, such oppressed people become attractive Gospel lights

## **An Anticipation of the Future Hope of Perfect Justice**

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- We should never expect to set up a utopian society, free from all injustices on this side of eternity
- Our ultimate hope is found in looking forward to the return of Christ and the establishment of His earthly kingdom since, only then, will this world know perfect justice

**Isaiah 9:7** ~ There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.

**Isaiah 16:5** ~ A throne will even be established in lovingkindness, And a judge will sit on it in faithfulness in the tent of David; Moreover, he will seek justice And be prompt in righteousness.

- “To point to the future hope of perfect justice is not a trite way of dismissing current issues. This is what the prophets did without fail, and yet they never minimized their own suffering (Lam 3). To admit that we ourselves cannot accomplish perfect justice by human means is not to excuse or ignore the sins that confront us in this fallen world. Rather, it is to increase our longing for *another* world. The Christian’s hope is a Messianic hope, an eschatological hope, a future hope (Rom 8:24-25).”<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> <https://thecripplegate.com/a-compassionate-counter-cultural-christian-response/>