

*The Official Position of The Timberlake Baptist Church Elders  
on the issues of Social Justice, Critical Race Theory, and Wokeness*

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## SERIES PREFACE

According to 1 Tim. 3:15, the church is to be “a pillar and buttress of truth.” As such, it is primarily the role and responsibility *of the church* to promote and protect the truth of the Gospel before a watching world. It behooves the church to proclaim sound doctrine and to identify, expose, and rebuke error which would threaten it. As Elders, therefore, we bear a responsibility to respond to any movement, ideology, or teaching which would have the potential of influencing the members of this local church away from biblical fidelity.

This series of papers exists in order to assist the members of this church in thinking critically and clearly about specific doctrinal matters which the Elders have identified as a subject of growing confusion and/or a threat to the health, unity, or purity of this body. Our desire is that these papers will encourage believers to rest with even greater confidence on the sufficiency of God’s Word and will assist believers to think with even greater doctrinal clarity.

## INTRODUCTION

In recent years there has been an upsurge in discussion about race, racism, oppression, and justice. Words such as diversity, inclusion, and equity dominate every arena of society. We are told that racism is systemic. White people are chided for their privilege. The founding of America and the basic tenants of Western society are deemed inherently racist. Police brutality and the killing of unarmed black men constitute irrefutable evidence of the racist systems of justice at work in our society. White people are commanded to repent from the sin of slavery committed by white people of previous generations and for the inherited privilege which was gained through such injustice. It is said that a Gospel which does not include the social liberation of people from oppression is a deficient Gospel. Black Lives Matter has become the rallying cry of all who truly care about “injustice.” We are told that lived experience of oppression is the only real way for a person to understand and identify oppression. And the only way forward for us as a society and as a church is to reorganize ourselves around the basic tenants of Critical Race Theory and to pursue equal social outcomes for all people.

How Christians think about and respond to statements such as these is of paramount significance. While on the surface, some of these claims may seem to have credibility, it is imperative for believers more than anybody to think critically and to be aware of the *worldview* giving birth to these assertions. What is at stake is not merely political policy; it is not the preservation of the traditional Western way of life; it is not even the rise of socialism in our society. All of these things may be true at some level. But more important than all of these, the truth of the Gospel and the purity of the church are being threatened by such teachings. We are up against a humanistic worldview which is contrary to the biblical worldview. These issues are ultimately theological in nature and, therefore, stand opposed to fundamental biblical doctrines.

In this paper, we will attempt to succinctly explain the basic definitions, ideas, and presuppositions behind these current movements and ideologies in our society. It will be impossible to explain their origins, developments and philosophical underpinnings in all their details and implications. But we will attempt to provide a basic sketch of what they teach and why they are problematic. We also desire to use this as an opportunity to explain injustice, racism, and oppression as the Bible would define it. We want to be explicit about what the Bible makes explicit and call for repentance over those things which the Bible would demand repentance.

## DEFINITIONS

### Social Justice

Social Justice refers to a specific movement of social activism, whose ultimate goal is an egalitarian society<sup>1</sup> achieved through *redistributive* justice. Thus, Social Justice does not refer to *retributive* justice, which seeks equal retribution for acts of individual merit or demerit under law.

Explanation: Social Justice assumes an established worldview and set of convictions about society, knowledge, and power (see CRT-I below). Social Justice aims at dismantling systems of “oppression” through means of social activism. Social Justice divides up society into groups of either oppressed or oppressor based on its own definitions. It identifies social groups of oppressed people (usually organized around issues such as race, gender, sexual preference, economic status, or religion), and then it seeks to reorganize and realign society in such a way that these oppressed groups would achieve equal social outcomes. Therefore, Social Justice makes its own presupposed problems and solutions the only legitimate path forward to a “just society,” such that to oppose the Social Justice movement is to make oneself an opponent of a “just society.”

### Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality (CRT-I)

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is an analytical tool used to detect racism and hidden biases in all social interactions and institutions. CRT presupposes that racism is normative (inescapable and always present). According to CRT, racism is something which has been socially constructed by dominant groups (primarily by white people) in order to maintain dominance over people of color. As such, racism does not refer merely to individual acts of prejudice but to a system which is deeply ingrained in the values, norms, institutions, and beliefs of society, which work to advantage white people and disadvantage people of color<sup>2</sup>. CRT, therefore, aims at making these hidden biases visible. Given its presupposition, CRT regards the presence of any social disparity (economic

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<sup>1</sup> By “egalitarian society” we mean a society in which all experience equal outcomes regardless of individual merit, ability, or achievement. Social Justice aims at achieving such a society by tearing down hierarchies and hegemonies (established narratives which govern a society by defining values and standards) of society in order to construct a new society in which those with oppressed identities may receive equal social outcomes and privileges with non-oppressed identity groups.

<sup>2</sup> “Racism is a system that encompasses economic, political, social, and cultural structures, actions, and beliefs that institutionalize and perpetuate an unequal distribution of privileges, resources and power between White people and people of Color. This system is historic, normalized, taken for granted, deeply embedded, and works to the benefit of whites and to the disadvantage of people of color” (DiAngelo 2016). Hellen Pluckrose and James Lindsay also explain, “When [advocates of CRT] speak of “racism,” for example, they are not referring to prejudice on the grounds of race, but rather to, as they define it, a racialized system that permeates all interactions in society yet is largely invisible except to those who experience it or who have been trained in the proper “critical” methods that train them to see it.” Helen Pluckrose and James Lindsay, *Cynical Theories: How Activist Scholarship Made Everything About Race, Gender, and Identity—and Why This Harms Everybody*, (Durham, North Carolina: Pitchstone Publishing, 2020), 15.

status, police brutality, educational inequalities, etc.) as evidence of the reality of systemic racism.<sup>3</sup> The ultimate aim of CRT is the tearing down (“deconstruction”) of these social norms and reconstruction of a new society built upon the presuppositions of CRT.

While Critical Race Theory is a tool of *deconstruction*, Intersectionality is a tool of *construction*. Intersectionality seeks to re-construct social hierarchies based upon oppressed identities. Intersectionality is the understanding that oppression is experienced within intersections of oppressed identities. The further one gets from being a dominant member of society (a white, heterosexual, Christian, male), the more oppression that person will experience. For example, a white woman may experience oppression, whereas a black woman experiences greater oppression, while a black lesbian woman will experience even more oppression still. Thus, the more intersections one has with oppressed identity groups, the more knowledge that person will have access to and, thus, more credibility in identifying oppression at work and more credibility in proposing solutions. Society and social privilege, then, are to be constructed around social location and status of oppression.

Explanation: Critical Race Theory (CRT) is an outgrowth of Critical Legal Theory,<sup>4</sup> which itself was an outgrowth of postmodern thought and philosophy coupled with Marxist principles of oppression and revolution.<sup>5</sup>

Critical Race Theory assumes that knowledge and ways of talking about knowledge are produced within one’s “social location.” It assumes that objective knowledge is unattainable. Rather, social location (organized around things like race, gender, sexual preference, etc.) gives a person unique access to “knowledge,” which can neither be critiqued nor analyzed by those from without. Knowledge cannot be obtained through an objective source or produced through universal rules (i.e., the Scientific Method or principles of logic and reason), but it is primarily obtained through one’s own experience and life situatedness.

Critical Race Theory assumes that society is made up of systems of power and privilege, which are obtained and perpetuated through controlling what can be known and how “truth” (or that which is called “truth” by any dominant group) can be communicated. Dominant groups use their systems of knowledge for the purpose of excluding or

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<sup>3</sup> The Encyclopedia Britannica defines Critical Race Theory as “[An] intellectual movement and loosely organized framework of legal analysis based on the premise that race is not a natural, biologically grounded feature of physically distinct subgroups of human beings but a socially constructed (culturally invented) category that is used to oppress and exploit people of colour. Critical race theorists hold that the law and legal institutions in the United States are inherently racist insofar as they function to create and maintain social, economic, and political inequalities between whites and nonwhites, especially African Americans.” *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, s.v. “Critical race theory,” <https://www.britannica.com/topic/critical-race-theory> (accessed August 24, 2021).

<sup>4</sup> Helen Pluckrose and James Lindsay, *Cynical Theories: How Activist Scholarship Made Everything About Race, Gender, and Identity—and Why This Harms Everybody*, (Durham, North Carolina: Pitchstone Publishing, 2020), 115.

<sup>5</sup> This is often referred to as “conflict theory.”

oppressing minority groups.<sup>6</sup> CRT labels white people (in particular white, heterosexual, men, who are also often Christians) as the dominant group of western society, who have established their own knowledge, values, and norms in society in order to maintain dominance, otherwise known as “white privilege.”

Critical Race Theory, therefore, does not aim at discovering whether racism was active or present in any given social interaction or structure. It presupposes that it is. Its aim, then, is to identify all the ways in which racism is necessarily working its way out in any given social interaction. It especially examines language and forms of communication to identify elements of racism or cultural supremacy present therein; these are often termed as forms of hate speech or microaggressions. The aim is to make racism visible in order to break down and dismantle the power structures at play.

Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality, therefore, function as the philosophic base for Social Justice activism.

## Wokeness

“Woke” is a popular-level word which is used to describe a person or group of people who have been *awakened* to the reality of systemic racism.<sup>7</sup> Those who are woke are those who have begun to view and interpret life and society through a new lens; they are those who have adopted the presupposition that racism is normative and systemic.<sup>8</sup> These presuppositions then lead a person to interpret society and all social interactions in new ways. Beginning with the belief that racism is normative, the “woke” individual then identifies every instance of disparity

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<sup>6</sup> For example, the scientific method and rules of logic to establish truth claims or to validate credible evidence are often reckoned by CRT to be “white,” “western,” or “colonial” ways of obtaining knowledge. People of color, on the other hand, according to CRT often come to knowledge through less-rigid means, such as story-telling; these ways to knowledge are just as legitimate as the former, and should they pose a contradiction then it is their “knowledge” which should be established as credible in order to level the power dynamics. Pluckrose and Lindsay explain this postmodern mindset as one which says, “The West has constructed the idea that rationality and science are good in order to perpetuate its own power and marginalize nonrational, nonscientific forms of knowledge production from elsewhere” (76). For examples of ways this works its way out in popular culture, see Voddie T. Baucham Jr., *Fault Lines*, (Washington, D.C.: Salem Books, 2021), 93-111.

<sup>7</sup> Owen Strachan defines wokeness as: “The state of being consciously aware of and ‘awake’ to the hidden, race-based injustices that pervade all of American society; this term has also been expanded to refer to the state of being ‘awake’ to injustices that are gender-based, class-based, etc.” Owen Strachan, *Christianity and Wokeness* (Washington, D.C.: Salem Books, 2021), 213.

<sup>8</sup> Eric Mason writes, “Woke is a word commonly used by those in the black community as a term for being socially aware of issues that have systemic impact. This social awareness doesn’t come from just watching the news or reading history through a traditional lens. Being woke has to do with seeing all of the issues and being able to connect cultural, socio-economic, philosophical, historical, and ethical dots. A similar term is *conscious*.” Eric Mason, *Woke Church* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2018), 337, Kindle.

among minorities (e.g., economic inequality) or violence (e.g., police brutality) as evidence of systemic racism.

Those who are woke, moreover, have also concluded that oppressed identity groups possess a greater ability (and therefore more credibility) to interpret society and social interactions than those from non-oppressed groups; the lenses which come from lived experience are *more authoritative* in defining the problems with and solutions for society than those without such lived experience. Therefore, racism cannot ultimately be identified or disputed by those from non-oppressed groups but only by those from within an oppressed group. This requires that persons of non-oppressed identities simply listen and learn from the oppressed; they should not seek to defend themselves from accusations, propose alternative considerations, or assist in developing solutions.

Finally, one who is truly woke cannot remain silent. Having come to embrace these presuppositions and interpretations about society, a woke person's duty is then to educate others and to promote "justice." Justice, however, is only achieved by adopting the solutions which have been set forth from this worldview.<sup>9</sup>

These are the definitions which will be used and assumed throughout this paper when referring to Social Justice, CRT-I, or Wokeness.

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<sup>9</sup> It is interesting to note how the "woke" movement mirrors salvation conversion in Christianity in several key ways. First, being "woke" involves being awakened to the original sin of racism. Second, one must respond with confession and acknowledgment of his/her own guilt, not merely for individual acts of racism, but for participation within a system of racism, albeit unconscious and unintentional involvement. Third, being "woke" demands that atonement be made in the form of social activism and overturning "racist" social structures. This work is often referred to as the work of "anti-racism." This work of "anti-racism" is an on-going work and cannot be fully realized until the deconstruction of society and revolution have taken place. For a helpful treatment of this phenomenon see Eric Davis, "America's Newest Religion," The Cripplegate Blog, entry posted 5 June, 2020, <https://thecripplegate.com/americas-newest-religion/> (accessed August 24, 2021).

**(1) Social Justice analyzes problems in society through a faulty presuppositional grid.**

As explained above, Social Justice interprets the world and the fundamental problems with society through a presuppositional grid and worldview, which are contrary to Scripture. It wrongly identifies and defines the problem and, therefore, it also proposes wrong solutions. Social Justice, Critical Race Theory, and Woke-ism all begin with the presupposition that racism is a normative part of society and that the desire to maintain dominance and power is so “baked into” white people that they cannot avoid manipulating minorities in order to maintain their privilege. This is the basic presupposition of CRT— the most fundamental belief of the system upon which everything else is built. Once this presupposition is in place and life is viewed assuming these realities, instances of racism are identifiable everywhere, regardless of the intentions or motivations of those deemed as perpetrators. It then moves on to propose solutions to these identified problems—the deconstruction of society and forced social outcomes.

As believers, our most fundamental presupposition and ultimate authority upon which we rely to make sense out of life and explain reality is the inerrant and inspired Word of God. It is our starting point; it is what we assume to be true and through which we interpret all of life. As Christians, therefore, we must be careful lest we make our own perceptions of reality the starting point to which we require the Scriptures to respond. We must not force the Scriptures to give an answer to the problems and issues we (or the culture) have defined on our own. Rather, we must begin with the Scriptures’ own presuppositions about the nature of man, the essence of sin, and the fundamental problems within society. Scripture not only provides answers for many things in this life; it first gives us the correct interpretation of reality and of the problems we will encounter in this life as God defines them. Going about things in this order will ensure that we accurately identify the problems around us and also propose solutions which are both pleasing to God and good for people. The Bible not only has the answers for all issues in this life; it also rightly interprets and defines what those issues are.<sup>10</sup>

**(2) Social Justice ideology threatens several key Biblical doctrines or teachings.**

***The doctrine of the image of God and the identity of human beings***

Our basic identity as human beings is our identity as those who bear the image of God (irrespective of race, culture, ethnicity, socio-economic status, or any other identity marker) (Gen. 1:26-27; 9:6). There are two essential aspects of what it means to bear

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<sup>10</sup> Kevin DeYoung helpfully writes, “I fear that we are going about our business in the wrong order. We start with racial issues we don’t agree on and then try to sort out our theology accordingly, when we should start with our theology and then see how racial issues map onto the doctrines we hold in common. Good theology won’t clear up every issue, but we might be surprised to see some thorny issues look less complicated and more hopeful.” Kevin DeYoung, “Faith Seeking Understanding: Thinking Theologically About Racial Tensions,” The Gospel Coalition, 2020, <https://media.thegospelcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/02151317/KDY-Racial-Tensions-series.pdf> (accessed August 24, 2021).

God's image. First, as image bearers we were created to *reflect* God's person and character. Mankind was created to image God's character of holiness, love, and goodness in His creation. This aspect of the image of God includes those capacities which distinguish humanity from the animal world (rationality, verbal communication, conscious sense of morality, etc.). But these capacities were endowed to mankind in order that through them he might image the communicable attributes of God in His creation. As new creations in Christ, transformation into the image of Christ is the goal of our lives now (Rom. 8:29) and is that for which we wait to be completed at the return of Christ (1 John 3:2). Second, as image bearers we were created to *represent* God to His creation. Having been created with the capacity to know, love, and reflect the person and character of God, mankind was created in order to mediate God's rule to His creation (Gen. 1:28). As image bearers, therefore, all of humanity possesses the same essential nature and the same essential purpose.

There are two significant implications which follow from this:

(1) **Humanity possesses unique and extraordinary worth and purpose.** Therefore, every person ought to be treated with great dignity and respect. Racism is evil not simply because of what it does to other people but because it is ultimately an assault on God, in whose image we all were created. Contrary to CRT, one's value and dignity are not enhanced or diminished by one's race, gender, or social group. CRT assigns varying levels of value to social groups and identities based on their ability to associate with oppression and have unique access to knowledge. As such, it inevitably assigns more worth to one group as opposed to another. Such teaching also seeks to give humanity significance apart from God; it places everything on the "horizontal" plane, thereby defying God and declaring autonomy from God.<sup>11</sup>

(2) **Human beings are more like one another than they are different.**<sup>12</sup> This is not to deny that there are differences (cultural, ethnic, economic, religious, etc.). But it is meant to highlight the truth that humanity is metaphysically (in his being and fundamental nature) the same. Secular ideologies like CRT, however, wrongly reduce humanity's identity down to either "oppressor" or "oppressed;" it identifies oppression as the fundamental reality which defines all persons; it

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<sup>11</sup> Dr. Neil Shenvi and Dr. Pat Sawyer, "Engaging Critical Theory and the Social Justice Movement," Ratio Christi, <https://ratiochristi.org/engaging-critical-theory-and-the-social-justice-movement/> (accessed August 24, 2021), 17.

<sup>12</sup> Owen Strachan writes, "We are not fundamentally disunited, then, but united by our common theistic formation...Humanity is not fundamentally different, but fundamentally alike. CRT leaves little room for this commitment, and for meaningful promotion of it across people groups, backgrounds, and experiences. The formative note in CRT is not of fundamental anthropological unity, but fundamental anthropological difference." Owen Strachan, "Critical Race Theory: Four Problems with CRT (Part 3)," Patheos Blog, entry posted January 28, 2020, <https://www.patheos.com/blogs/thoughtlife/2020/01/critical-race-theory-four-problems-with-crt-part-3/> (accessed August 24, 2021). Kevin DeYoung also writes, "When you meet someone of a different race, you should look at that man or woman as someone more like you than different—someone who, deep down, has the same sorts of fears, sins, needs, and aspirations...And although he may have experiences, for better or worse, that I have not had, I am face to face with someone who has been made in the same image as I." (DeYoung, 2020).

denies universal unifiers of humanity. According to CRT, a person is defined not according to God's created intentions but according to his social identity group. A person from an "oppressed" group, therefore, has little in common with a person from an "oppressor" group; both have inescapable identities which inevitably influence one's knowing, speaking, and acting. Such teaching is not only at odds with the Bible, but it is destructive to society and to human flourishing. Christians, however, must begin with the universal identity of man as an image bearer and, so, must treat all persons fundamentally in the same manner, despite many surface-level differences. This means that the basic problems, needs, and purposes for all people are likewise the same. It means that prejudice is always sinful regardless of one's social group, as opposed to the belief that only one social group is capable of prejudice or oppression.

### ***The doctrine of the fall***

While all mankind shares in a common identity as persons created in the image of God with equal value, ability, and purpose, this image has nevertheless been greatly marred because of the fall (Gen. 3:1-15; Rom. 5:12). All persons regardless of race have been equally impaired by the fall. This means that the fundamental problems with mankind are likewise the same. CRT labels certain groups as more predisposed to sins of oppression and injustice than are others. The Bible, however, declares that all are equally sinful, equally capable of committing the worst of sins, and equally responsible for their sins.

One's understanding of the fundamental problems with humanity are inseparably linked to corresponding solutions. The solutions of CRT and Social Justice are greatly flawed because they are built in part on this presuppositional base concerning the condition of mankind. Moreover, the solutions of CRT and Social Justice offer neither hope nor redemption; they do not and cannot offer solutions which can change a person's nature or accomplish true reconciliation. The only solutions which Social Justice proposes are those which deal with artificial and external factors and the rearrangement of social hierarchies.

A biblical understanding of the fall and its universal impacts on humanity is foundational for the good news of the Gospel, which addresses our real problems as fallen human beings and which is able both to transform our natures and reconcile all believers together through the common bond of their new relationship to God and to each other in Christ.

### ***The doctrine of the source of knowledge and the assurance that it can be objectivity known.***

As stated above, CRT and "woke-ism" presupposes a postmodern epistemology (the theory about how knowledge is obtained). It denies that absolute knowledge could ever be obtained with certainty. Knowledge is not objectively fixed outside of us for us to discover and know. Instead, knowledge is determined, discovered, and shaped by one's

experiences, background, and social location. This is often referred to as *standpoint epistemology*.<sup>13</sup>

What, therefore, blinds to true knowledge is not sin but power and privilege.<sup>14</sup> “Oppressed” persons have a better ability to understand, identify, and define oppression and then to propose solutions than “non-oppressed” people. Since such knowledge can only be accessed by some people, it can also neither be denied nor challenged by those of another social category.

This understanding of knowledge is also making inroads into evangelicalism, especially in the field of hermeneutics. The text of Scripture is no longer considered to contain a single objective meaning rooted in the original authorial intent of the passage. It is denied that any could ever escape the presuppositions they bring to a passage in order to clearly hear the voice of God as originally intended from the text. Discovering the meaning of any biblical text, therefore, rests more on the interpreter and his/her perspectives and personal experiences than it does on a fixed meaning which may be discovered through careful exegesis and acknowledgment of one’s presuppositions. One way this worked itself out in the previous decade was in the Emergent Church movement, which disparaged preaching and encouraged dialogue and giving everybody’s opinion equal standing. It is working its way out in this decade in the form of interpretation based on race or oppression status; those who belong to an oppressed race have more access to meanings in the texts than those who are not from an oppressed race.

Such presuppositions about knowledge and how knowledge is obtained are thoroughly unbiblical. While it is certainly true that everybody possesses certain presuppositions or unique personal experiences which may influence his/her interpretation of a text of Scripture, it is nevertheless an unbiblical presupposition which states that none of us are able to get beyond our personal presuppositions and experiences in order to clearly hear the voice of God in Scripture. Every time Jesus asked, “Have you not (never) read?” (Matt. 12:3, 5; 19:4; 21:16, 42; 22:31; Mark 2:25; 12:10, 26; Luke 6:3), He was implying that the God-intended meaning of the text was not only clear but that His hearers possessed both the ability and responsibility of correctly understanding it, even when speaking with Pharisees who brought such presuppositions and experiences of power and privilege with them to the text.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Pluckrose and Lindsay write, “[S]tandpoint theory—roughly, the idea that one’s identity and position in society influence how one come to knowledge” (117). “Positionality—the idea that one’s position within society, as determined by group identity, dictates how one understands the world and will be understood in it. This idea is central to critical race Theory” (118).

<sup>14</sup> Sehvi, 10.

<sup>15</sup> For a helpful treatment on this issue, see the message presented by Jon Anderson at Courageous Churchmen Conference, 2019, entitled “Dangers of Theological Interpretation - Seeing an Infallible Word Through a Fallible Lens,” <https://churchmen.org/media/2019-conference/> (accessed August 24, 2021). The points made above are indebted to insights gained from this message.

Moreover, contrary to the claims of postmodernism, objective truth not only exists but it may be known with certainty. On his own, mankind is unable to attain complete and absolute knowledge about ultimate realities owing to his limited and finite nature (Job 28:12-22; Prov. 30:2-4). On top of this, mankind's depravity also causes him to suppress the knowledge which God has made evident in creation (Rom. 1:18-20). Nevertheless, God possesses comprehensive knowledge of all things and so possesses the ability to declare absolute truth to mankind (Job 28:23-24; Prov. 2:6; 30:4). God also possesses absolute sovereign power whereby He sustains and guarantees that what He declares will always prove true (Job 28:25-28; Job 38:1-41:34; Prov. 30:4). And God has made this knowledge available in His authoritative, sufficient, clear, and infallible revelation—the Scriptures (Deut. 30:11-14; Ps. 19:7-11; Prov. 30:5-6) and finally through His Son, Jesus Christ (John 1:14; 3:11-13; Heb. 1:1-2). It is through His revelation that we may know ultimate realities (about God, creation, man, sin, and redemption) objectively and with certainty. And it is through His revelation that we must interpret all of life and through which we must examine and evaluate any theory of man.

### **(3) Social Justice severely perverts biblical justice.**

#### ***A survey of biblical justice***

##### **(1) Biblical justice is demanded from all of God's people.**

Even a cursory read through the pages of Scripture will reveal that justice is a serious issue in the Bible. The doing of "righteousness and justice" was a fundamental element in God's design for His covenant people (Gen. 18:19). "Righteousness" is that which is in line with God's revealed will; to be righteous is to be in conformity with God's law (Deut. 6:25; Ezek. 18:9). "Justice" is a subset and an essential element of "righteousness." Therefore, (1) true righteous living always works its way out in "just" or fair dealings with other people in all spheres of life (Prov. 1:3), and (2) biblical justice is always in accord with God's revealed will.

The doing of righteousness and justice have always been the design and expectation of God for His covenant people, whether in the Old or in the New Covenant. God's rule is characterized by "righteousness and justice" (Ps. 89:14). And His character and rule were to be mediated both by Israel as a whole (Deut. 16:20; Prov. 21:3; Ezek. 18:5-9; Amos 5:24; Micah 6:6) and the Davidic King (1 Kings 10:9). Israel was eventually taken into captivity under God's judgment owing in part to their failure in maintaining justice (Isa. 1:21-25). Righteous living is likewise demanded of New Covenant believers (1 Tim. 6:11; 1 Pet. 2:24; 1 John 3:7-12), which includes proper and loving treatment of all people (Gal. 6:10).

##### **(2) Biblical justice consists of the following essential elements.**

Fundamental to Biblical justice are the principles of impartiality and fair treatment of others irrespective of their economic, social, or ethnic status.

Biblical justice forbids a person from advantaging himself on the vulnerability of the weak in society (the sojourner, widow, orphan, or poor) through extortion, bribery, partiality, or bearing false witness (see Ex. 22:21-23:9). Biblical justice demands righteous and loving treatment of all people, even one's enemy (Ex. 23:4). Biblical justice, therefore, involves truthfulness, impartiality, kind treatment to all persons, and refusal of things such as bribery or extortion.

Biblical justice forbids impartiality of any kind. Partiality toward the rich of society in order to benefit self (through receiving a bribe or because of the favor a rich person can give) are clearly forbidden (Deut. 16:19). Partiality toward the poor, weak, or abused of society is likewise forbidden. Ex. 23:3 and Lev. 19:15 both forbid treating a poor person with any more distinction than one would treat a rich person. Biblical justice demands impartial treatment of both poor and rich alike.

Finally, Biblical justice offers retribution based on the merits and demerits of individual actions and choices. Ex. 21:24-25 requires "eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe." In other words, justice offers retribution according to individual actions and in proportion to their damage. It does not demand a person's life for "a tooth," nor does it demand retribution from individuals who did not commit the crime.

Judgment in the Bible is always according to *individual* works (Prov. 24:12; Lam. 3:64; Rom. 2:6; Rev. 2:23). Believers will ultimately be judged according to their works; these works serve not as the basis of their salvation but as evidence of the reality of salvation, genuine faith, and the presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives (Rom. 2:7, 10, 29); believers will also receive reward or suffer loss based on their individual actions and motivations (1 Cor. 3:12-15; 4:5; 2 Cor. 5:9-10). Unbelievers will likewise be judged according to their works and receive perfect retribution of judgment for their individual sins (Rom. 2:8-9; Rev. 20:11-12).

***Social Justice expands the definitions of justice and injustice.***

Social Justice downplays the significance of the individual or individual actions by emphasizing group identity. According to Social Justice, one's group identity and life situatedness condition people such that their individual actions are simply the byproduct of their more fundamental group identity. Retribution according to individual merit, therefore, is "unjust." Some groups have environmental factors which make succeeding in life easier than others. Some groups possess privilege while others do not. Some groups have the dominant morals and values of society on their side and so have a better chance of success, while other groups with different morals or values are held down. While all of these factors may be real to some extent, biblical justice never excuses wrong actions or dismisses right actions based on a person's group identity. To do so would be an act of blatant partiality and injustice (Ex. 23:3; Lev. 19:15).

Therefore, Social Justice does not allow a person to distinguish him/herself from their group stereotype through individual actions. For instance, a poor, abused white person and a rich, influential black person are still to be identified with the characteristics of their group, irrespective of individual experiences. Social Justice involves rewarding people without regard to individual merit and punishing people who have committed no act of demerit. Proverbs 17:15 explains this very system at work: “He who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous are both alike an abomination to the LORD.”

Social Justice, therefore, does not involve retribution to individuals for individual acts of merit or demerit but of redistribution of “privilege” and the leveling of group hierarchies. This involves the forced redistribution of wealth and the deconstruction of structures, values, and systems in society which are *presupposed* to have been constructed by the dominant group in society to maintain dominance over other groups. It is a thorough reinterpretation of law such that law is made into a tool of securing equal outcomes in society rather than a tool of retribution for actions against an objective standard of morality (Rom. 13:3-4).<sup>16</sup>

Social Justice not only expands the definitions of justice, but it also expands the definitions of injustice. Injustice does not involve actions and categories biblically defined (such as bribery, extortion, bearing false witness, or partiality). Rather, injustice involves the enjoyment of power and privilege over oppressed groups. Injustice involves the failure to deconstruct systems of privilege and power (as defined by Social Justice).

### ***Social justice excuses sin through victimization***

Social Justice encourages people to see themselves primarily as victims. It encourages people to find some category of oppression for themselves. It encourages people to focus primarily on the mistreatment coming to them from other people. The more one possesses victim status, the more rights and authority he/she possesses in society. Likewise, those who are labeled as victims of oppression are incapable of committing certain sins (such as racism or bigotry).<sup>17</sup>

According to Scripture, however, while all people experience the effects of their environment, background, or family history, each person stands responsible for his/her own sins. While evils might have been committed against us, no person is excused thereby from the responsibility for their individual actions. According to Romans 5, we all experience the effects of Adam’s sin by receiving a sin nature, yet no one is punished or

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<sup>16</sup> Owen Strachan writes, “[T]he fundamental concern of the law [according to CRT] is not to apply justice proportionate to human actions, but to enact justice based on cultural considerations. *This is a thoroughgoing revision of the law*” (emphasis ours).” Owen Strachan, “Critical Race Theory: Four Problems with CRT (Part 3),” Patheos Blog, entry posted January 28, 2020, <https://www.patheos.com/blogs/thoughtlife/2020/01/critical-race-theory-four-problems-with-crt-part-3/> (accessed August 24, 2021).

<sup>17</sup> John MacArthur, “Social Justice and the Gospel Part 3,” Grace to You Web site, <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/81-23/social-justice-and-the-gospel-part-3> (accessed August 24, 2021).

judged for Adam's sin; rather, "the soul who sins shall die" (Ezek. 18:4). God does not punish a son for the sins of a father, nor does God excuse the sins of a son because of the sins of a father (Ezek. 18:10-29).<sup>18</sup>

### ***Social justice assigns false guilt through an unbiblical method***

Social Justice holds that present day generations of certain social groups share in the guilt of the sins of previous generations (the guilt for the evils attached to American slavery, for instance) because of the common bond of skin color ("whiteness") or cultural heritage. These people ought not only to acknowledge that the sins of the previous generation were evil and wrong but ought also to acknowledge that they themselves possess guilt, especially for passively enjoying privilege which has been secured through this sin. Therefore, confession and repentance ought to be made for their inherited corporate guilt and enjoyment of privilege.

Often, passages such as Daniel 9 are used in order to demonstrate the Bible's affirmation of corporate guilt and the need to confess the sins of previous generations. Such a comparison, however, is inappropriate for two reasons. First, Daniel is linked to the guilty party for whom he makes confession through his participation in the Mosaic Covenant, his personal experience of the exile as part of God's judgment, and his identification with the sins of Israel since his personal sins also contributed to the covenant violations (Dan. 9:5-6 "We have sinned...we have not listened to your servants the prophets."). Second, the sins which Daniel identifies as participating in and for which he makes confession are very general. He is not confessing specific sins of a previous generation of Israelites (the atrocities from the time of Judges, for instance); he is confessing violation of God's covenant which Israel had done in many ways, of which he was also a part.

Social Justice also presupposes and establishes its own solidarity markers with which it links certain people to specific sins of previous generations. It presupposes non-biblical categories of race ("whiteness") or sexual preference to be markers which inextricably link all people of the same category together. Those who buy into the demands of corporate confession are also buying into these unbiblical presuppositions about how humanity is to be grouped together and the solidarity which exists within these man-made, artificial, and unbiblical linkers.

Social Justice also ignores the Bible's teaching that a father's guilt is not assigned to a son. There cannot be any closer relationship or any stronger solidarity marker than that of father and son. Yet, even within this relationship, the son is never to be held accountable for the sins of the father (Ezek. 18:19-20). God never punishes or reckons one generation guilty for the sins of a previous generation. Should that generation not participate in or follow the course of the previous evil generation, that generation is to be reckoned righteous (Ezek. 18:14-18). While cultures, nations, and families can and do commit

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<sup>18</sup> John MacArthur, "Social Justice and the Gospel Part 1," Grace to You Web site, <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/81-21> (accessed August 24, 2021).

egregious sins against God and humanity, an individual or a subsequent generation is not guilty for such sins unless he participates in, approves of, or seeks to justify such sins.<sup>19</sup>

Social Justice is going beyond the text of Scripture when it declares that a person who experiences privilege (whether consciously or unconsciously) which was secured through past injustices or evils in society is guilty of injustice. It is going beyond the text of Scripture when it demands confession and repentance from this “privilege.” Nowhere does the Bible call “privilege” (regardless of how it was achieved) a sin from which people must repent. In fact, one encounters just the opposite. Paul, a Roman citizen, never once laments his Roman privilege or his identity with an oppressive power; rather, he at times uses his Roman privilege to his own advantage and the spread of the Gospel (Acts 16:37-38; 22:26-29). John the Baptist calls Roman soldiers to repentance, not from their identity with an oppressive power or their social privilege, but from individual acts of extortion, threats, or false accusations (Luke 3:14). Jesus Himself was a male within a “patriarchal” society and enjoyed “privilege” as a man, yet Jesus never once sinned or experienced any guilt from His own person or identity (John 8:46; Heb. 4:15).<sup>20</sup> The Bible does declare, however, that “Each person [should] lead the life the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him...Each one should remain in the condition in which he was called, whether slave or free” (1 Cor. 7:17-24). Paul assumes that the individual lives of believers take on massive significance and purpose, regardless of the worldly condition associated with each. To become preoccupied with this life or one’s position in society betrays the sad reality that such a person has foolishly forgotten the passing nature of this age and the soon to be present glories of the age to come (1 Cor. 7:29-31). To focus mainly on one’s placement in society will inevitably result in neglecting the unique purposes of God for each person *in* their assigned place in society.

### ***Collective judgments and corporate solidarity in the Bible***

The concept of corporate solidarity is taught in the Scripture. Adam is the corporate representative head of humanity. All, therefore, are in Adam. And all share in the sin of Adam by participation in the same rebellious nature and actions of Adam (Rom. 5:12-21). All in Adam, therefore, also share in Adam’s condemnation.

Other examples of corporate solidarity and guilt by association exist in the Bible. Jesus charges the Pharisees with guilt for “all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the

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<sup>19</sup> “Although families, groups, and nations can sin collectively, and cultures can be predisposed to particular sins, subsequent generation share the collective guilt of their ancestors only if they approve and embrace (or attempt to justify) those sins. Before God each person must repent and confess his or her own sins in order to receive forgiveness. We further deny that one’s ethnicity establishes any necessary connection to any past sin.” “The Statement on Social Justice and the Gospel,” September 4, 2018, <https://statementonsocialjustice.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/SSJG-FINAL.pdf> (accessed August 24, 2021).

<sup>20</sup> Shenvi, 19.

blood of innocent Abel to the blood of Zachariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar” (Matt. 23:35). The Pharisees are guilty and will bear the punishment (“on you may come”) for all the righteous blood shed on earth. The blood of Abel to the blood of Zachariah encompasses the span of the Old Testament. The Pharisees were not directly involved in the murder of any of these. Yet, by their actions of rejection, persecution, and murder of the prophets sent to them and ultimately of Jesus Christ, they evidence that they are of the same spiritual nature as their forefathers (“you are sons of those who murdered the prophets” [Matt. 23:31]). Therefore, they bear the same guilt as their forefathers by their association with them in their actions and spiritual nature. In other words, had they lived in the times of their forefathers, they would have done the same things. Thus, guilt by association and corporate solidarity in this instance is established by the link of the same spiritual nature and the approval of and/or participation in the same sins.<sup>21</sup>

One final example may be found in the book of Acts. Peter indicts the Jews of Jerusalem with the guilt of the crucifixion and murder of Jesus Christ, although they were not directly involved in the actual killing. “This Jesus...you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men” (2:23). And “Let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified...” (Acts 4:10). It is to be assumed that many of these had participated in the cries to have Jesus crucified (Matt. 27:22; Mark 15:13; Luke 23:21; John 19:6). Paul’s preaching to the Jews in Antioch, however, lays the blame at the feet of the Jews in Jerusalem not all Jews, despite their common identity. Paul says, “For those who live in Jerusalem...asked Pilate to have him executed” (Acts 13:27-29). Paul does not assume that ethnic, racial, or cultural unifiers automatically communicate guilt to all in that group.<sup>22</sup>

In all of these cases, guilt is assigned to those who either share in the same sins, approve of the past sins committed, or seek to justify the sins of previous generations. What links together are not artificial markers as defined by Social Justice but likeness in spiritual nature and action.

#### **(4) Social Justice severely damages and weakens the Gospel message.**

##### ***By emphasizing victimization***

As stated above, the Social Justice movement encourages people to be victims or to attach to themselves victim status of any kind because only those who possess some category of victimization have the moral authority to contribute to the conversation of Social Justice and because the possession of victim status divests a person of accountability for individual actions. The biblical category for this quest for victim status

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<sup>21</sup> DeYoung, 2020.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

is that of blame shifting.<sup>23</sup> People do not want to be held responsible for their own choices and actions and so look for some way to place the focus and blame on another. This goes all the way back to the Garden of Eden in which the woman not only blames the serpent, and Adam not only blames the woman but he also ultimately blames God who created the woman, “The woman whom *you* gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree” (Gen. 3:12). Blame-shifting is the default reaction of fallen humanity to the reality and guilt of their sin. The quest for victim status in our culture is simply a new version of an old trick.

None of this is to say that there are not real victims in our world, some who are legitimate victims of horrible wrongs and injustices. Ultimately, we are all victims of Adam’s sin (Rom. 5:12ff) and the sinful influences we have experienced whether directly or indirectly (cf. Ex. 20:5). Nevertheless, regardless of what evils have been perpetrated against us, according to the Bible we still are responsible to respond with absolute obedience to God. Biblically speaking persons are not fundamentally victims but perpetrators who have failed and violated God’s law.

Emphasizing victimization and blame shifting undercuts the entire Gospel message because there can be no good news of atonement, forgiveness, and justification for victims, only for perpetrators. So long as people are allowed to view themselves primarily as those who have *been* wronged as opposed to those who *are* wrong, so long will they be unfit for the good news of the Gospel. The Gospel is for the “ungodly” (Rom. 4:5; 5:6) and for those who recognize their guilt and culpability for their sin.

***By expanding the scope of the Gospel, which inevitably leads to a dismissal of the nature of the Gospel altogether***

When the nature and content of the Gospel is expanded to include both the presuppositions of Social Justice and the responsibility to engage in social transformation and activism, then the very heart of the Gospel is threatened. The Gospel certainly transforms people and changes their very natures such that the doing of biblical justice, care for human suffering, and love of others becomes natural and desirable. But this transformation, while an essential *result* of the Gospel at work, is not in itself the Gospel.

The Gospel is a message of news about what Jesus Christ accomplished in His sinless life, substitutionary death, and victorious resurrection, through which a person by faith and repentance may have new life, forgiveness of sins, the Holy Spirit, reconciliation with God, and hope of the coming resurrection.

When the *message* of the Gospel is expanded to include the call to participate in combatting social injustices (whether these be injustices biblically defined or not), the Gospel has been altered and diluted. And when the *goal* of the Gospel ceases to be the reconciliation of people to God and the transformation of people into holy living but is

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<sup>23</sup> John MacArthur, “Social Justice and the Gospel Part 1.”

expanded to be the transformation of society and social structures, the main purpose of the Gospel has been minimized and purposes of little eternal significance have taken center stage.<sup>24</sup>

***By distorting the other-worldly nature and focus of the Gospel***

Social Justice demands that the Gospel must be expanded to include a call to social activism and transformation of social structures. This distorts the Gospel by making it mainly about this world and the transformation of society by means other than repentance from sin and faith in Christ. It makes Christ into a revolutionary leader for liberation from earthly oppression.

The true Gospel, however, rejects this kind of Christ. Jesus Himself refused to be this kind of king (John 6:14-15). The message of the Gospel is not concerned with social transformation or liberation from earthly oppression. The message of the Gospel is a message about the atoning work of Christ, through whose death believers might have eternal life (John 5:24), deliverance from the wrath of God (John 3:18), a new heart by the Holy Spirit (John 7:39), fellowship with the Triune God (John 17:3), and the hope of the resurrection and the coming new creation (John 5:28-29).

While believers still live in this world, their primary focus is on the world to come and the return of Christ. Believers belong to the age to come, although they are still living in this present age which is already in the process of passing away (1 Cor. 7:31). To become overly concerned with issues of this life—whether it be one’s social location, earthly oppression, or political corruption—reveals that one has been deceived into thinking that the realities of this life are either ultimate or hold sway in God’s economy. While believers are not to neglect their physical lives and are to live righteously in this life, they are also to be on guard against living in such a way that ignores the passing nature of this life and the irrelevance of earthly status, possessions, or position (1 Cor. 7:29-31).<sup>25</sup>

The Gospel calls believers to live righteously within their God ordained spheres and to do so knowing that their earthly status is of little significance. Believers are not called to lead a social revolution but to live godly lives in whatever place God has called them (1 Cor. 7:22-24). One’s location in society, even one’s experience of genuine oppression in that

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<sup>24</sup> J. Gresham Machen in his classic work *Christianity and Liberalism* exposes the errors of the social gospel in the modern liberalism of his day with the following observation: “For if one thing is plain it is that Christianity refuses to be regarded as a mere means to a higher end...Christianity will indeed accomplish many useful things in this world, but if it is accepted in order to accomplish those useful things it is not Christianity.” J. Gresham Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1923), 151-152.

<sup>25</sup> Thomas Schreiner writes, “The radical reevaluation of persons in Christ is easy for us to overlook because we wonder why Paul did not lead a social revolution. Paul’s conception of social standing is itself revolutionary. Whether one is slave or free is a secondary matter to him. Those who concentrate exclusively on such issues reveal that they are still caught up with the life of this present world.” Thomas Schreiner, *Paul: An Apostle of God’s Glory in Christ*, (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 432-434.

location, provides a unique opportunity to shine the truths and values of the Gospel to the watching world. To become overly concerned with injustices being committed against one's self causes that person to miss the unique Gospel opportunities present in that circumstance.

Believers know that this world is unalterably corrupted by sin and under the curse (Ecc. 4:1; 7:13). And while believers strive to live godly lives and to influence others with the Gospel in this life, their ultimate hope is fixed on the coming day of judgment (Ecc. 12:13-14) and the return of Christ (Rom. 8:23; Heb. 9:28), who will establish a kingdom of true righteousness and justice (Rev. 20:1-6).

***By impairing the power and purpose of the Gospel to unify and create one new man in Christ.***

Social Justice assumes that the Gospel message by itself is incapable of producing genuine unity and reconciliation between all persons regardless of race, gender, or life experience, unless it be expanded to include both the presuppositions and applications of the Social Justice framework. Only then, it is said, will the Gospel have the ability to achieve racial harmony and racial equity; those who have embraced a Gospel lacking these presuppositions and applications of Social Justice not only have a deficient Gospel, but they have also failed to be engaged in the work of promoting racial harmony and justice.

The great irony is that the assumptions and methods of Social Justice actually create divisions and stir up disunity.<sup>26</sup> These ideologies reconstruct dividing walls within the body of Christ by establishing identities which take on more weight than the identity of every believer as someone "in Christ" (Gal. 2:20; 3:28).<sup>27</sup>

These ideologies (and Christians who buy into them) provide no real solutions to the hate and prejudice in the human heart. Social structures can be changed, privileges distributed along the lines of oppressed identities, and history reinterpreted through the experiential lenses of minorities; but the human heart will have been left untouched, and the fundamental cause of real racial hatred will go unchanged. It is only as people experience the forgiveness of sins in the Gospel and are transformed into forgiving people (Eph. 4:31-5:2) that real racial reconciliation can take place.

Through the Gospel God is in the process of creating one new man made up of Jews and Gentiles in which both have equal standing and with one another and equal access to God and His promises (Eph. 2:11-22). The Gospel is able to unify and reconcile even those who at one time were the severest of enemies. Therefore, those who have been faithfully proclaiming the true Gospel message and have been faithfully functioning as

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<sup>26</sup> Neil Shenvi writes, "[C]ritical theory's vision of identity will bring the world's enmity into the church. Because contemporary critical theory insists that our status as individuals is inseparable from our group membership, the Church can no longer be seen as a single body united under the lordship of Christ. Instead, it will have to fracture along lines of race, class, and gender. We will have to approach each other not strictly as brothers and sisters in Christ, but as oppressed Christians and oppressor Christians" (17).

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

members in healthy local churches have actually been doing the work of racial reconciliation all along and in a manner far superior to and more powerful than anything Social Justice could demand or create.

**(5) Social Justice diverts the church from its mission.**

The church's mission and activities have been clearly detailed and prescribed in the New Testament Scriptures. These include (1) the regular assembly for corporate worship in which the Word is preached, the ordinances are observed, church discipline is exercised, and the saints minister to one another; (2) the shepherding, overseeing, and equipping of God's flock by qualified shepherds and teachers who teach sound doctrine and refute those who contradict it; and (3) the evangelization of the lost and the establishment of healthy local churches in all nations.

True believers ought to desire the well-being of those around them and may seek various ways of doing them good, alleviating suffering, or promoting a just society. Believers may also use their unique gifts and abilities to seek to influence the society around them for good and to effect just laws and good government. These things, however, are neither a responsibility nor an integral activity of *the church*.

Social Justice, however, demands that the church's mission should include the righting of social ills by means of political and social activism. Not only does Social Justice place extra-biblical demands on the church, but it also requires the church to promote justice according to its (un-biblical) methods. Since Social Justice is not about equality before law but redistributive equity ensuring equal outcomes, therefore, it demands (in this case) that a church must promote justice by means of distribution of privilege among racial (and sexual) minorities. This looks like distributing church leadership to include equal numbers of minorities and diversifying church music, church doctrine, resources, and literature to include both the styles and the viewpoints of racial (and sexual) minorities.

Such methods, however, make false assumptions about how truth is attained; they fail to recognize that the Lord is the sovereign builder and arranger of each local congregation according to His own wisdom and purposes (1 Cor. 11:18); they encourage the making of prejudiced distinctions between members of the body (James 2:1-4); and they force a kind of artificial unity upon the church.

**(6) Social Justice nurtures a culture of disunity and distrust and makes charitable reason and discussion impossible.**

Critical Theory and Social Justice make assumptions about how knowledge is attained and communicated primarily in the forms of language and discourse. In the case of those in the oppressor category, his words cannot be taken at face value without detecting in them instances of racism or privilege. In the case of those in the oppressed category, his words cannot be questioned or corrected on the basis of universal laws of reason, values, or morals. From this grows a culture of evil suspicion and distrust, whereas biblical love demands we "believe all

things” (1 Cor. 13:7); it also shuts down reason and discussion, whereas biblical wisdom is “open to reason...impartial and sincere” (James 3:17).

## ANALYSIS OF RACISM THROUGH A BIBLICAL FRAMEWORK

It is important to emphasize that none of what has been written above has been with the intentions of excusing or dismissing the reality of racism any way. Racism is a sin, which ought to be condemned and from which people ought to be called to repent. Racism, however, must be defined by the Bible, not the culture.<sup>28</sup> Racism may be largely described with three categories of sin in the Bible.<sup>29</sup>

### **(1) The sin of cursing others made in the image of God (James 3:9).**

Racism reduces the inherent worth of an individual bearing God's image based upon superficial and insignificant external factors such as skin color. It is a sin to curse any image bearer for any reason; racism does so in response to uncontrollable physical features, such as skin color.

### **(2) The sin of hate.**

Hate—the opposite of biblical love—desires the injury or harm of another person. Hate is often the byproduct of bitterness, unforgiveness, revenge, or envy. According to Titus 3:3, hating others and being hated by others is what characterizes fallen humanity. Such hate is unacceptable for any believer. Believers are commanded by the Lord to love not only their neighbor but also their enemy (Matt. 5:43). Believers are to be characterized by the same love as the love they received from Christ (1 John 4:19). Hate of others (for any reason) is a sin from which people must repent.

### **(3) The sin of partiality.**

Racism is the sin of showing partiality and unfair treatment to persons on the basis of skin color. Partiality is a perversion of biblical justice (Exod. 23:3; Lev. 19:15; Deut. 16:19). Believers are commanded to show no partiality, which when they do are guilty of sin and are convicted by the Law as transgressors (James 2:1, 9). Partiality shows favor to certain individuals while disparaging or denying fair treatment to others. Partiality is often motivated by the benefits which can be gained and reciprocated from some persons more than others. Partiality is usually organized around categories such as socio-economic status, culture, or skin color. As such, it is a violation of God's law and a contradiction to God's character (Rom. 2:11).

Racism, moreover, is not just a sin of one race, nor is any one race more predisposed to racism than others. "No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man" (1 Cor. 10:12). These sins of partiality, hate, and cursing others are common to all humanity, and all persons ought to be called to repent from such sins if they are present in their lives. Only believers in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit are ultimately able to put such sins to death (Eph. 4:31).

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<sup>28</sup> See CRT's definition of racism above under DEFINITIONS, Critical Race Theory.

<sup>29</sup> CRT/Wokeness errs in that it assigns false guilt of racism to white people, and it errs in that it says that a racial minority is incapable of racism. These errors are due to its faulty and un-biblical definition of racism.

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