

Joining God's Heart for Racial Justice

Series: Cracks – Navigating Our Divided Times

Brad Bailey – March 6, 2022

Note: The following notes are more extensive than the time allowed to be fully stated. However, they do provide the full set of points and additional footnotes that were made which I hope may be helpful to others.

Intro

For those like myself... that have only known America primarily from the unique nature of living at the very western edge of the nation... you may not be as familiar with the Southern Baptist Convention. It is the largest Christian Protestant denomination...or affiliation in America.

It has had nearly 48,000 congregations with over 15 million people.

And it is facing major division. At the center is how they have responded to racial injustice

Two weeks ago...at their national convention, President Ed Litton said in order to fulfill their sacred mission, they must first address the stain of racism.

It's helpful to understand that the SBC was founded to safeguard the institution of slavery. In the 1800s, **the north would not allow slaveholders to be missionaries** .. and the SBC was created to allow slaveholding for the south. They have long sought to denounce their past and set things right.

Ed Litton, President of the SBC

“Repudiating slavery is not enough. We must repent and seek to confront and remove every stain of racism that remains and seek with all our strength to be the kind of churches of which Jesus would be proud – the kind of churches that will look like the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.... We lack empathy and compassion for one another. When we genuinely care we engage with help, comfort and the truth of the Gospel.

The danger we face is that of being Pharisees. The Pharisees started as a conservative resurgence, but they ended up in a bad place where Jesus called them out as hypocrites. They looked very religious, but Jesus said they neglected the weightier matters of the law like justice, mercy and faithfulness.” [1]

Why was this call so important at this time?

Because they have been dividing over their responses to the current concerns for racial injustice.

Last Sunday... was the last Sunday of Black History Month... and the Sunday that the SBC sets apart as Racial Reconciliation Sunday... a tradition it began in 1965.... a part of the concerted effort to break ties with the racism bound up in its founding.

The responses by several church leaders.... was very dismissive...some saying it was not God-centered...some said the Bible is all we need. [2]

We're continuing in our focus on navigating our divided times... looking at some of the cracks that have emerged within Christian culture... identifying where the foundations may need some strengthening. We want to allow God to speak into the divide... to hear how we can stay aligned with His heart.

This example helps us to understand that...

The divides we're engaging are significant and unfolding.

Not since the abolition of slavery has the church in America been so divided regarding racial justice.

The divides we're engaging are between those who claim to follow Christ.

This is why we are engaging these issues. I wish it were as simple as assuming that we stick to Jesus. The challenge is that the great divisions that have come...are between lives who both believe that they are just being faithful.

The divides we're engaging includes our relationship to racial justice.

This is a call we have engaged through the years...and will keep reaffirming. And more specifically... today...as part of this series... it's about how to be united in God's heart for racial justice amidst the recent divisions ...most notably those that have followed the death of George Floyd.

Much of what has ensued has been reaction and counter-reaction. [3]
We see a man die. At some level nearly everyone found it hard to watch... disturbing. Protest rose... and into those protests... at the core was a sense that we have to make a change... to collectively affirm that black lives matter....but then we see looting... freedom to steal and destroy property... and some begin to resent this movement...and the organization ... and so the reactions begin...and the focus became one of reacting to reactions.

There are two specific elements from which reactions have been a source of division... **the Black Lives Matter movement**...and particularly the BLM organization.... and **the teaching of Critical Race Theory**.

Since these are the focus of reactions that have caused in Christian culture... we will engage them briefly... but perhaps the most important truth for us today... is that **these are secondary issues**. We **may need** to engage these elements as we move forward... it may **even be important**...and **help clarify** the way forward....but our calling is to move forward in racial equality.

So let's briefly engage these two issues...and then how God keeps our calling clear.

Black Lives Matter (BLM) Organization – represents the co-opting of a righteous cause and expression by an organization with a larger and lesser known agenda.

The expression that “Black Lives Matter” had become a growing declaration over the course of a few years... with most only vaguely aware that the expression itself was also an organized movement. Following the death of George Floyd... which became a cultural moment... in part because the world could focus amidst the pandemic shutdowns... the expression became the affirmation waiting to be joined. Within weeks that expression was defining...but awareness of the organization who claimed to represent it... also grew more controversial. The BLM organization that enjoyed the sentimental and financial support has a social agenda far beyond black lives mattering. The organizations founders and some of their stated beliefs... are loaded with specific social beliefs and policies.

The three friends who took hold of the phrase...and eventually created an organization... are actually very open about their pursuit of more Marxist styled changes to the whole of culture. They speak of disrupting the Western-prescribed nuclear-family-structure ... defunding police ...redistributing wealth... and far more. A lot of it is really stunning...but for the sake of our purpose and precious time...I will leave that in the footnotes I will post.

For the vast majority it was a banner...but behind it was also an organization and set of beliefs. For the majority of people...it was a maxim or a graphic to be posted online. Those who marched under the Black Lives Matter banner didn't consciously support nearly most of what the BLM organization actually believed.

The point is that an organization co-opted a general affirmation with an agenda of meaning ...and that has created a reaction that divides lives. It created a conflict around the nature of what it means to support the Black Live Matter movement. [4]

I believe that Black lives matter... and if I find it frustrating that I have to clarify my support of an organization... but I won't let that steal the truth. The BLM organization is now faced with serious problems... with an estimated \$60 millions dollars unaccounted for from 2020 alone... and being refused to continue to fundraise in some states. And yet....Black lives still matter... to God... and should matter equally to the whole of humanity. [5]

The other dynamic that has created divided reactions, is Critical Race Theory.

Critical Race Theory (CRT) - represents the challenge of separating the potential value of understanding the nature of “dominant” culture ... with what are arguably false ideas of how to fix the problem.

For a lot of people... you may have never heard of Critical Race Theory ... or like heard of it...but never really understood what it's about.

As one reporter described...Critical Race Theory or “CRT” for short... “is a term that seemed to appear in statehouses and at political rallies almost from nowhere. Over the past year, it's become an issue that has turned school board meetings into battlefields. And entire denominations are battling and dividing over it.

So what is CRT? Well... trying to answer that is part of the problem. A lot of people may have a sense of how they are supposed to feel about it....but may have a hard time really defining it.

For one thing...it's not new. It's a very general academic framework that encompasses decades of scholarship. And that may be the challenge...because some are defining it by the general principles...and others by particular applications that have emerged from those ideas.

Again...for the sake of our precious time and focus... I will only offer the briefest comments ...simply to help us understand why CRT has been dividing Christian culture.

Critical Race Theory recognizes that race - as it has been defined historically and legally—is a social construct and not a concept legitimately rooted in human nature or human biology. This is something that nearly all agree is both a vital truth and one which we should reaffirm.

What may be most helpful to understand, is that Critical Race Theory grew out of a recognition that racial inequity did not end the decades following the successes of the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 established LEGAL prohibition of racial discriminationbut inequalities were still experienced. The “Whites Only” signs came down...but there were forces that resisted change. It was time to explore the fact that despite the new legal recognition...inequality could and did continue to be at work in the social system... a system that effects economic opportunity...the means to secure housing... the justice system... and more. [6]

And this is exactly what the Bible captures...that laws alone cannot change the heart... or create justice.

This leads to the belief that it is vital to listen to the lived experiences of individuals in the systems to understand how discriminating barriers are at work.

So broadly speaking, CRT explores how racial inequality can continue to be at work in the social systems... particularly when those systems are formed by the dominant culture.

Those broad tenants would seem aligned with a Biblical view. Notably, the Southern Baptist Convention included a resolution in 2019 that stated in part ...

“Critical race theory and intersectionality alone are insufficient to diagnose and redress the root causes of the social ills that they identify, which result from sin, yet these analytical tools can aid in evaluating a variety of human experiences.” – SBC, Resolution 9, 2019

But the contention grows based on where those tenants can and have led many proponents of CRT. [7]

Some have deemed these principle are inherently rooted in Marxist based Critical Theory... something from an earlier time... and should be understood as a Marxist oriented worldview which frames all of human ill on class domination for which the solution is that of a socialist system. [8]

Such an ideology can reduce equity to simply a matter of equal outcome rather than equal opportunity. And attributing different outcomes in health and wealth solely on systemic racism has a lot of problems. It ignores all the other factors involved with such outcomes.... such as genetic dispositions and personal choices. [9]

It's poor social science...because social science should always be looking at all contributing factors. More importantly... this reduces the problem simply to that of dominance. It dismisses the nature of sin... as personal.

Some suggest that domination is rooted in the dominant race ... and even deny that white lives can be trusted to participate in the process because of their inherently dominant position. And as such, it doesn't call for repentance and reconciliation... but for revolution of the structures.

From all I have read... there are committed Christians who are scholars in the social sciences that view it's general ideas as helpful... and some committed Christians who see it as a powerful threat to a Christian worldview. [10]

What I encourage us not to miss... is that the reactions to both BLM and CRT can easily become sources of distraction and division.

The BLM organization and CRT theory are both fitting of contention but not diversion.

Our calling is be those who can express and embody the heart of God for racial justice.

If we deem something to be misguided... then it should be a source of clarity...not just criticism.

What is being raised in these current times... is a call to recognize that our nation's story of racial justice is not finished.

The particular focus has been on black Americans... and the way that injustice can transcend legal status.

And I want to stop and recognize that there are many who live with a sense of ethnic prejudice.

There has been a dominant focus of the relationships of black and white culture... and many from other ethnic backgrounds may be sitting on the sides wondering if they should stay out of the way.

So I want to acknowledge **so many from other various ethnicities**... native American... various Asian Americans... various parts of the Hispanic community. You are equally a part of what is involved as we join with God as those who bear his image. So ultimately, we seek justice together.

So...

What can unite us in joining God's heart for racial justice?

I believe that the most powerful force in transforming is the power of God's Word and Spirit.

The church in America has had some horrible acceptance of racism... even elements which were resistance to ending segregation and establishing full human rights.

However... the church has also been arguably...the MOST POWERFUL force in transforming racial injustice...from slavery to the unseen convictions in individual hearts.

And the difference...was the power of God's Word.

If one takes a good look into the abolitionist movements...they discover that it was the Bible which held the power to speak into who we really are...and are meant to be. Many tried to misuse the Bible to justify their discrimination....but the Bible is so penetratingly clear that all lives were created equal and the ultimate direction is the realization that every tongue tribe and nation... will be united in God.

I believe the Scriptures provide some vital clarity...some principles that can serve as boundaries for truthand guidelines for how we walk out our calling for racial justice.

Racism both denies and destroys what God has done.

From the very very beginning...as described in the first Book of the Bible...God created one human race. ...which God described as a good beginning. God created and bestowed upon mankind...humankind... a unique element of His image ... His spiritual nature.

Acts 17:26 (NKJV)

And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth.

One race and diversity in our ethnicity.

Humankind developed diverse characteristics by way of location and culture... but each portion of the human race has been endowed with the same sacred image of God.

But then... as the Scriptures describe...once humankind sought to rule themselves... apart from God... comes the tragic evil in which one of God's children strikes down the other... and then of one group after another seeking power over another. What becomes so tragically clear... is that...

When humankind does not live in right relationship with God...we will not live in right relationship with one another. When we do not see ourselves as centered and united in God...we will operate from insecurity...we will try to get our own sense of power and the resources of power. We will use others to serve our own insecurity. We will exploit our differences to gain power and control... and that includes distorting the differences in ethnicity... and of creating structures of caste and class and race.

God is very clear about the reality of injustice...and prejudice as in our nature and systems.

Racism is that which, consciously or unconsciously, forms a false sense of ethnic and cultural superiority that serves to protect and perpetuate the vanity of pride, position and power.

It's helpful to understand that what is at work is "formed"...that is... it is a social and psychological construct... because the separation it that it creates does not actually exist.

The Bible affirms that there is one race... and so when we speak of racial injustice...we are speaking of how one human race... rooted in the same human nature... that FORMS ideas about ethnic and cultural differences to define and divide us.

We were recently looking at the life of Joseph... which ends with this Israelite being raised up by the Egyptian king or Pharaoh... and in the very next chapter... the first chapter of Exodus... it tells us how a new king arose who didn't have that relationship.

Exodus 1:6-11

Now Joseph and all his brothers and all that generation died,⁷ but the Israelites were fruitful and multiplied greatly and became exceedingly numerous, so that the land was filled with them.⁸ Then a new king, who did not know about Joseph, came to power in Egypt.⁹ "Look," he said to his people, "the Israelites have become much too numerous for us.¹⁰ Come, we must deal shrewdly with them or they will become even more numerous and, if war breaks out, will join our enemies, fight against us and leave the country."¹¹ So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labor, and they built Pithom and Rameses as store cities for Pharaoh.

Generations of brutal enslavement...

What was it rooted in?

Fear of losing power...of being dominant.

How did they gain control? They formed a system.

¹¹ So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labor, and they built Pithom and Rameses as store cities for Pharaoh.

"They put"... things in place...the created roles that would oppress... and "they built"... built a system that would require an underclass of labor to fulfill the Egyptian identity.

How did it begin? What made it possible?

⁸ Then a new king, who did not know about Joseph, came to power in Egypt.⁹ "Look," he said to his people, "the Israelites

> The lack of relationship. When circumstances brought an Israelite into the house the Egyptian Potipher... he was a slave in the household... and no doubt there was likely racial elements of prejudice...but there was

space in the system for relationship... an ability to see that Joseph was indeed equal in his human capacity... where respect and trust could develop. But then... another came into power...and the Bible explains that **the great atrocity that arose came when there was no relationship...combined with unrighteous fear... fear that equality could threaten their vain hold of power and prosperity. [11]**

The Jewish people... had been vulnerable... living far from their roots... so the system wanted to keep them there...and it could. Because Egyptian was the dominant culture.
What would happen if the Jewish people were to be in the position of dominance?
This racial prejudice would soon weave it's way into themselves.
Not only did they look down on Gentiles... they deemed that God did.

The Biblical Book of Acts teaches us how the work of Christ spread from Jerusalem to Rome and from its Jewish roots to the (non-Jewish) Gentiles. The book records both stories of success and struggle and how the church dealt with them. And in Acts chapter 6.... there is a great example for us.
In those days the number of believers was growing. And there was an ethnic dynamic that arose.
The "**native Hebrews**" were those who were born and raised in the land of Israel. They took great pride in this. As a rule, they would have spoken Aramaic (probably not Hebrew, the language in which the Old Testament was written) and perhaps some Greek (as a commercial language). The "Hellenistic Jews" would be those Jews whose ancestors had been dispersed from the land of Israel... raised speaking Greek...and now had returned... as culturally and linguistically Greek.

Acts 6:1-7 (NIRV)

In those days the number of believers was growing. The Greek Jews complained about the non-Greek Jews. They said that the widows of the Greek Jews were not being taken care of. They weren't getting their fair share of food each day. ² So the 12 apostles gathered all the believers together. They said, "It wouldn't be right for us to give up teaching God's word. And we'd have to stop teaching to wait on tables. ³ Brothers and sisters, choose seven of your men. They must be known as men who are wise and full of the Holy Spirit. We will turn this important work over to them. ⁴ Then we can give our attention to prayer and to teaching God's word."

Acts 6:1-7 (NIRV)

⁵ This plan pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen. He was full of faith and of the Holy Spirit. Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon and Parmenas were chosen too. The group also chose Nicolas from Antioch. He had accepted the Jewish faith. ⁶ The group brought them to the apostles. Then the apostles prayed and placed their hands on them.

⁷ So God's word spread. The number of believers in Jerusalem grew quickly. Also, a large number of priests began to obey Jesus' teachings.

Here we have a great picture of conflict that arose that is related to what we might refer to as racial injustice...or as we should qualify... an **ethnic cultural based injustice**.
There were Greeks and Hebrews... and the Greeks were experiencing discrimination.

The Hebrews...who had once been slaves...once been the dominated... were now in the dominating position.
And this brings home that...

Racism is not rooted in any particular ethnicity... but rather in our sinful nature by which any dominant ethnicity and culture is most vulnerable to forming a system of separation and superiority.

Racism is not inherent to any race...but to our vain attempt to hold onto our pride, position, and power.
The sinful nature of racism is not inherently rooted in whiteness. I believe I bear a VERY significant responsibility for serving racial equality...but it is not simply innate to melanin. In fact...I can't be responsible for that. There is no shame in the color of my skin... or your skin.

If the problem wasn't inherent to their ethnicity... then what was the challenge?
I think it's safe to say... they were the dominant culture.

And the system had some bias.

Racism can influence any social system.

As Americans, we are so enamored with being individuals... but the Bible sees how a collective culture can become embedded with pride as well.

So they brought this before the apostles...the spiritual authority of the community. And what did the apostles do?

They didn't defend...they didn't say "there can't be a problem because we are all united in Christ"...." or "well... there's less bias than other spheres"... or claim that this was a matter of counter-racism.

They didn't identify the individual racist... because they knew that it was likely part of the whole cultural bias. It was systemic.

What did they do?

They brought the change in a communal way. They saw the value of involving the Greeks to help resolve the bias. When people say they are experiencing discrimination... you listen.

We should seek the involvement of those who experience the problems.

They put the solution in the hands of the people themselves to discern together who was called to leadership from their midst. They gave them some guidelines about the kind of people to be appointed: They needed to be full of the Spirit and of wisdom and of good character in the community. The solution had to come from the people themselves who are led by the power of God's Spirit.

They affirmed equality by giving the people power to identify those who would oversee this process...and by affirming that such lives existed among the Greeks who were indeed full of wisdom and the Spirit.

And it could sound like they didn't think this was important because they spoke of their need to maintain their responsibility...but in fact... they stopped and created a full process to deal with this. Their point about their responsibility for teaching and prayer wasn't simply more important...but rather it was the priority that they needed to maintain. And in fact... their teaching and prayer would come involve affirming that God was indeed affirming that Jews and Gentiles were equal.

In the Biblical Book of Acts...chapter 10... the whole question of whether Gentiles ...non-Jewish people...can be included in God's family. A Gentile Cornelius has a dream...Peter has three dreams...and the Holy Spirit then comes upon the Gentiles. That is God breaking down the barriers of racial separation and superiority.

Acts 10:28

He said to them: "You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with a Gentile or visit him. But God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean."

Racism is overcome by allowing God to confront both personal prejudices and formal or informal means which perpetuate a cultural dominance of power and position.

God showed him... that became the beginning of transformation...and we shouldn't miss that fact that it came with ongoing conflicts to work through...and remains a process to this day.

This is the church being set into motion...and mission. The intent of one ethnic people to bless others... needed to be restored from the pride and prejudice that had developed.

There is bias and prejudice that becomes a part of the cultural mind.

God spoke to Israel as a whole about prejudice.

The Bible is clear that discrimination exists and that Christians must resist it. [12]

CLOSING:

How can we move forward from division to serve God's heart?

Again...We do well to look at the Abolitionists.

If one studies the movement... it becomes striking how long and hard it was.

The United Kingdom abolished slavery throughout its empire with the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833. The American movement just began at that same time. And it would last until after the civil war...around 1870.... 40 years of contending for the end of slavery. And now our nation is facing not the end of slavery...but the effects of slavery.... and every form of informal inequity.

Three things they bring home to us.

1. They joined together in the endeavor...

The abolitionists reflected the coming together of slaves...and these highly educated white lives...many of whom were lawyers. It couldn't have been easy...or comfortable... to trsu one another. But they listened and learned. The Bible tells us we should..."mourn with those who mourn." (Romans 12:15) We need to embrace that we are in this together.

2. They trusted in the power of God's Word. They knew that the Scriptures had the power to prevail. Many would try to misuse the Scriptures to justify their prejudice... but the Scripture would prevail in telling us who we are and who we should be.

3. The allowed the Spirit to sift their own hearts.

Joining God's heart... begins with our hearts.

There is plenty of space for conversation with others about racial justice... but the conversation that we need to value most...is the one between God and ourselves.

PRAYER

For Further Reading:

Racism In America - Thinking Biblically; Thinking Clearly; Good Questions Have Groups Talking -

<https://www.mybiblestudylessons.com/racism>

Critical Race Theory: What Christians Need to Know: Let's talk about the issue tearing the American church and country apart. Morgan Lee, July 2, 2021 - [here](#)

Christians and Critical Race Theory: A webinar about the facts, falsehoods, and theological implications of critical race theory—and the way forward for the church. OCTOBER 4, 2021- [here](#)

The CRT Debate Distracts from God's Justice – Christianity Today, Esau McCaulley, July 28, 2021 - [here](#).

Esau McCaulley is an assistant professor of New Testament at Wheaton College and the author of [Reading While Black: African American Biblical Interpretation as an Exercise in Hope](#).

D. A. Horton four-part series on Ed Stetzer's blog, The Exchange, about CRT and Christian missions. - [here](#)

Is There A Theological Fault Line Beneath Our Noses? 3/31/2021 - [here](#)

Voddie Baucham. [Fault Lines: The Social Justice Movement and Evangelicalism's Looming Catastrophe](#).

Washington: Salem Books, 2021

Book Review: "Faultlines" by Voddie Baucham - Bob Stevenson on July 29, 2021

<https://mereorthodoxy.com/book-review-faultlines-by-voddie-baucham/>

The Wounds of a Friend: A Short Review of Baucham's Fault Lines

<https://shenviapologetics.com/the-wounds-of-a-friend-a-short-review-of-bauchams-fault-lines/>

White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism - June 26, 2018 by Dr. Robin DiAngelo

Notes:

1. Ed Litton Stresses 'Removing Stains' of the SBC in Executive Committee Address By Timothy Cokes, February 22, 2022 - [here](#)

2. SBC's 'Racial Reconciliation Sunday' Condemned By Conservative Baptist Network, Other Prominent SBC Leaders By Dale Chamberlain, February 28, 2022 - [here](#)

For more about the SBC challenges regarding racial issues:

Potlucks and Priesthoods: A Baptistical Reproof of the SBCs Fear of Critical Race Theory

Paul Morrison, June 14, 2021 - [here](#)

Pastor calls on Black pastors to leave Southern Baptist Convention.

Feb 5, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y6SVDQjiTCQ>

- Theron Williams (Indiana)... at a critical time in our national conversation....the SBC has opted out. America's largest evangelical denomination is at war with itself

Why the Southern Baptist Convention is in turmoil — and why you should care.

By Zack Beauchamp Jun 18, 2021 - <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/22538281/southern-baptist-convention-ed-litton-sex-abuse-critical-race-theory>

How Race Is Dividing The Nation's Largest Protestant Denomination

By Terri Langford, June 15, 2021 - <https://www.texasstandard.org/stories/how-race-is-dividing-the-nations-largest-protestant-denomination/>

Why Black Pastors Still Stay Southern Baptist - Even with disputes over Trump and critical race theory pushing some minority leaders out, others stand by the missional advantage in the country's largest Protestant body.- David Roach, April 7, 2021 - [here](#)

A 'wake-up call'? Bible teacher Beth Moore, Black pastors cut ties with Southern Baptists, Holly Meyer, Nashville Tennessean, March 11 2021 - [here](#)

In a Nov. 30, 2021 statement, the six presidents said they stood against all forms of racism, but declared critical race theory to be incompatible with Southern Baptist beliefs. Critical race theory teaches that racism is ingrained in U.S. institutions and white people benefit from it.

One Black pastor responded: "I'm done with the Southern Baptist Convention! It took them 150 years to condemn chattel slavery, but only 1 year to condemn Critical Race Theory. It has no credibility on the issue of racism! None!!!"

3. The Racial Justice Debate Needs Civil Discourse, Not Straw Men. That is what has been rising... a political sides find a label to define and demonize the others side.

One of those is "Woke." Woke has become a weapon of war.

Woke became a way of expressing the process of becoming more awake and aware of various social dynamics they perceive they had been naive about. As many elements associated with the awareness became questionable at best... it has been used to speak of the whole movement to towards everything liberal... from socialism to sexuality.

Regardless of what ideas some may connect to that one does not agree with... it's will never serve our maturity of thought or relationships to simply create a label that we can use to dismiss what others are saying.

"When I was growing up in the Black community, *woke* simply meant a person who became more aware of our history and more socially conscious as a result. This social consciousness led us to encourage pride in Black achievement and to spur our youth on to greater success. We even had a habit of chiding people who got "super woke" and became too preachy.

That term has now been largely rendered toxic—a holding place for all left-leaning ideas, no matter how extreme. In other words, "woke" has come to be defined as everything the political Right does not like about the Left.

Of course, there are people who speak about race, racism, and injustice in ways that give me pause. But those individuals do not all travel under a simple banner that's easily identified and dismissed. Mature thought requires more work than that." - Esau Mccaulley

The Racial Justice Debate Needs Civil Discourse, Not Straw Men - Esau Mccaulley, August 10, 2021, Christianity Today - [here](#)

4. Pattrisse Cullors, one of the co-founders of the BLM organization, first tweeted the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter, after George Zimmerman was acquitted of murdering Trayvon Martin in Florida. About a year later, she and her two friends felt that the term was being co-opted by others who did not share their ideas. At first, she says, "we didn't feel like owners of it. We didn't call ourselves co-founders of BLM until like a year later. "The only reason we started to call ourselves co-founders is because it started to be co-opted. It

started to be Black men using BLM as a way to tell their message, which was largely anti-woman or often anti-queer and trans. Or devoid of the conversation of feminism. And we were like: 'We've gotta intervene.'" Guardian Feb. 2022 interview [here](#)

5. BLM activists have made no secret of their views. "When we started Black Lives Matter, it wasn't solely about police brutality and extrajudicial killing," one of BLM's three co-founders, Opal Tometi, confessed to *The New Yorker*. The issue was just "a spark point" to begin "calling for the defunding of police, a moratorium on rent, a moratorium on mortgages and utilities" and issuing "demands" relating to "housing and education and health-care systems." (Explainer: What does 'Black Lives Matter' believe? (by the Action Institute), By Rev. Ben Johnson, June 19, 2020 - [here](#))

The Black Lives Matter website proclaims: "We disrupt the Western-prescribed nuclear-family-structure requirement by supporting each other as extended families and 'villages' that collectively care for one another."

The BLM founding leaders are Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors and Opal Tometi. In a revealing 2015 interview, Cullors said, "Myself and Alicia in particular are trained organizers. We are trained Marxists." That same year, Tometi was hobnobbing with Venezuela's Marxist dictator Nicolás Maduro, of whose regime she wrote: "In these last 17 years, we have witnessed the Bolivarian Revolution champion participatory democracy and construct a fair, transparent election system recognized as among the best in the world." (From - The Agenda of Black Lives Matter Is Far Different From the Slogan - [here](#))

In a part of the BLM website, they addressed what they deem to be misconceptions, including that "The black church has no role to play." They explain: "Many know that the black church was central to the civil rights movement, as many black male preachers became prominent civil rights leaders. This current movement has a very different relationship to the church than movements past. Black churches and black preachers in Ferguson have been on the ground helping since the early days after Michael Brown's death. But protesters patently reject any conservative theology about keeping the peace, praying copiously, or turning the other cheek. Such calls are viewed as a return to passive respectability politics. But local preachers and pastors like Rev. Traci Blackmon, Rev. Starsky Wilson, and Rev. Osagyefo Sekou have emerged as what I call "Movement Pastors." With their radical theologies of inclusion and investment in preaching a revolutionary Jesus (a focus on the parts of scripture where Jesus challenges the Roman power structure rather than the parts about loving one's enemies) and their willingness to think of church beyond the bounds of a physical structure or traditional worship, they are reimagining what notions of faith and church look like, and radically transforming the idea of what the 21st-century black church should be." (Now found at: 11 Major Misconceptions About the Black Lives Matter Movement, by Brittney Cooper, SEP 8, 2015, [here](#))

As the difference between the public sentiment and the organization's intentions began to be heard, brands like Airbnb promised direct donations while others like Nike and Netflix channeled their donations elsewhere, like the NAACP and other organizations that have led the struggle for civil rights for decades.

As of this writing, BLM is now appearing to have a major lack of financial transparency and integrity issues. See: BLM's millions unaccounted for after leaders quietly jumped ship by Andrew Kerr, January 27, 2022 - [here](#)

Other reviews include:

Why Black Lives Matter are so dangerous; 16 July, 2020, By Nick Buckley [here](#)

The case against BLM (The Stanford Daily), Opinion by Lucy Kross Wallace, Nov. 15, 2020 - [here](#)

Black Lives Matter is a political, moral and policy disaster, Mar 1, 2022, [here](#)

6. Camara Jones has defined how racism operates at three different levels: 1) *institutional and structural racism* that differentially influences access to the goods, services, and opportunities of society by race; 2) *personally mediated racism* between individuals, which includes intentional and unintentional prejudice (differential assumptions about the abilities, motives, and worth of others by race) and discrimination

(differential actions toward others by race); and 3) *internalized racism* or the acceptance of negative messages by members of a stigmatized race about their worth, deservedness, or abilities.

Jones CP. Invited commentary: "Race," racism, and the practice of epidemiology. *American Journal of Epidemiology*. 2001;154(4):299-304, cited [here](#).

7. It has since become an ongoing major controversy by many who deem this to not denounce it more completely. (See [Atheist James Lindsay Calls on SBC to Remove Leaders Who Don't Repudiate CRT](#) and [Dwight McKissic: Why I Will Leave the SBC If They Rescind Resolution 9, Affirming Limited Beneficial Aspects of Critical Race Theory](#))

8. Others emphasize that Derrick Bell, who is considered the father of Critical Race Theory, was clear in separating his ideas from either Marxism or these aspects of the older Critical Theory. They take issue with those who want to entirely dismiss that which can help with understanding racial inequality. They take issue with discussions about systemic racism that deem it inherently divisive.

9. For a good challenge to the problem of presuming unequal outcomes are racist, see: Thinking Biblically About Systemic Injustice, Thaddeus Williams — April 19, 2021, [here](#)
Adapted from Thaddeus Williams' *Confronting Injustice without Compromising Truth: 12 Questions Christians Should Ask About Social Justice* (Zondervan 2020), foreword by John Perkins.

10. See: Is there an uncontroversial way to teach America's racist history? By Sean Illing, June 11, 2021 [here](#)

11. In the Biblical passage, John 4:5ff, Jesus meets the Samaritan woman at Jacobs well... Jacob was father to Jews and Samaritans...so he met her on common ground. He is willing as a Jew... to drink from her cup. She recognized he is a Jew...likely by obvious appearance and accent... which means he didn't give up who he was in racial and cultural identity to reach her.

God is not calling any of us to give up how he made us... but he has called us to submit that to his purposes....and to seek relationship.

11b. The Hellenistic Jews...those who had come from the outside culture... were likely those identified in chapter two as "devout lives from every nation" ...who had come to the city for the holiday... been at the temple with the locals...when the Holy Spirit came upon them all... and they began to speak in other language... as symbol of unity. One can very well imagine that while these two groups shared their Jewish lineage and faith in common, as well as the rituals of temple worship, they had many differences which kept them apart.

12. This issue of racial / ethnic equality was a dominant and defining issue for the church. We find this in Galatians 3:7-9, 27-28

"Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham." ⁸ The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you." ⁹ So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith....²⁷ for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

What is he addressing? He is addressing the problem of superiority based on ethnicity... about presuming that faith relates to ethnicity rather than belief. Their lineage did not make them superior.

As John Piper notes, "... the divide was racial. This was a bloodline going back to Jacob, not Esau, and Isaac, not Ishmael, and Abraham, not any other father. So the divide here was as big, or bigger, than any divide that we face today among Anglo-, African-, Latino-, Asian-, or Native-American." — John Piper, *Bloodlines: Race, Cross, and the Christian* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 126.

And he concludes by applying this same basis of unity to gender and socio-economic positions. The point for us today...is that he is speaking to collective mindsets... for which terms like social or systemic justice would seem fitting.

For God shows no partiality.For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. - Romans 2:11; 10:12

Further THOUGHTS & QUOTES:

We shouldn't dismiss this moment by claiming that the Bible simply says we are already equal. A theological truth is a truth we are to live into... and live out. It is a truth that we must allow to align with...not hide behind. It's an aspiration to speak into our hearts... and transform us.

I believe that when we are finally transformed into the likeness of God's kingdom and nature...there will be no greed or lust... but to claim power of greed and lust are not relevant because God has said they should be... or deny our potential contempt because we have laws against murder...is foolish. Jesus was quite clear about how the kingdom of God is to be growing in the human heart... and it is not simply a matter of not committing adultery...but of lust...not just a matter of not committing murder but of becoming free of contempt. And in the same way, the Kingdom is not a matter of having legal status...but of being truly reconciled and united in our hearts for one another.

Similarly, in the conflict over racial issues, saying we should "just preach the gospel" misunderstands the gospel. Racial justice is not the Gospel...but it is a part of what demonstrates the Gospel... that demonstrates the Kingdom of God the Gospel proclaims... the new community we are to embody.

When marriages are struggling, we don't just "preach the gospel" to couples. We give them practical tools to love one another better. As all of Paul's letters make clear, Christian discipleship is about showing how the implications of the gospel spread out in a thousand directions."

We must embrace the freedom to admit our wrong... and to grow. As Esau Mccauley says, "The history of this country has been an ongoing attempt to take the rubble of our repeated failures and build out of them a better place for all to lay their heads. Despite our past and present failures, the church can still play a role in leading our nation toward this future, not as partisans acting as apologists for the Right or the Left but as penitents confessing our sins to one another and the world. We can admit all the ways we have failed. Why? Because we believe in a God who forgives sins.

We also believe in a God who says there is something on the other side of confession. We live in an age when politicians and political parties are loath to admit mistakes. They shift blame to the other side because they believe that vulnerability is weakness. In their minds, it's always better to dehumanize and destroy the other side.

I am a father. I wish that meant that I always parented well, that every word spoken to my children was good, beautiful, and true. But I am human. I fail them, and the hardest thing for me to do is look my kids in the eye and say, "Dad was wrong." But I have to so that they have permission to be wrong, permission to repent, and permission to start again. They know that our family is not made up of saints (the parents) correcting sinners (the children). Instead, their mom and dad have been given something to steward while all of us journey together in life with God." - Esau Mccauley

The CRT Debate Distracts from God's Justice – Christianity Today, Esau Mccauley, July 28, 2021 - [here](#). Esau McCauley is an assistant professor of New Testament at Wheaton College and the author of [Reading While Black: African American Biblical Interpretation as an Exercise in Hope](#).

"When I look at the claim that race is a social construct, that it is manmade, that is very true because, in all the times of antiquity, we do not see the racial structures or caste system that we have seen throughout the colonization of the indigenous Americas. Spain and Portugal created the caste system first in the Caribbean and Mexico and South America, and then Protestants did the same thing in the United States. None of that is endorsed in Scripture; however, it is a reality, and it is something that shows in the documents of the United States.

However, what has God given? He's given ethnicity. And we see this in Acts 17:26 and Genesis 3:20.

Ethnicity is a gift from God. And when I look at Revelation chapters 21 and 22, I see that ethnicity is present in the eternal state. So, Christians do not need to be ashamed or feel guilty for their ethnicity.

"We, as believers, have to understand that this is also a discipleship issue. Jesus has given the Great Commission and included is language which means "to every ethnicity." So we are to be making disciples of every ethnicity in America. We are blessed because God has allowed the neighborhoods to be inhabited by

the nations, so we're without excuse. And that's where I think the work of being diligent to diversify our dinner tables, to diversify our inner circles of friendships and discipleship rhythms is important. It should reflect the reality of the community that God has chosen for us to live in.

I think our local churches should not see the reality of Great Commission fulfillment as affirmative action or a secular perspective. No, this is the reality of what Christ is commissioned every Christian to do. We all have the same job description as the Great Commission.

And in the eternal state, what we recognize is that the ethnicities are present, we are worshiping God. We even see that products of cultural grace are going to be brought in by leaders of the various ethnicities into the city of God. So, we can appreciate the cultural expressions that we have, and we can even see them redeemed for the glory of God."

Critical Race Theory: What Christians Need to Know: Let's talk about the issue tearing the American church and country apart. Morgan Lee, July 2, 2021 - [here](#)

Another part of the academic framework connected to CRT is "*intersectionality*"... *which is actually a very basic recognition that there are multiple elements of our social life which can bear injustice and discrimination... such as ethnicity, gender, and socio-economic status.* Oxford Dictionary defines intersectionality as, "The theory that various forms of discrimination centered on race, gender, class, disability, sexuality, and other forms of identity, do not work independently but interact to produce particularized forms of social oppression."

As one describes well, this is seen in Scripture.

"...what I'm doing is identifying a modern word that describes something that we already see in the Bible. One of the classic examples I give is John 4. Jesus spoke to the woman at the well. She was identified by her ethnicity as being a Samaritan. She was a woman. You can even argue that the reason that she was drawing water from that well at that time of the day was that she was socially ostracized, so she was marginalized. Those are three identifying realities for her. Another example is in Galatians 3:28; in addition to identifying ethnicity, he [Paul] also identifies gender, and he identifies the reality in social class. All three of those concepts are right there in Scripture. So by saying the concept of intersectionality is in Scripture, does that mean I am forsaking Christ as the only means of salvation? Absolutely not. What I'm saying is that there are multiple facets to the reality that we embody in a fallen world." Critical Race Theory: What Christians Need to Know: Let's talk about the issue tearing the American church and country apart. Morgan Lee, July 2, 2021 - [here](#)