

# Critical Race Theory

## Class Outline

### Where Did It Originate, What Is CRT, and How Does Holy Scripture Speak Concerning the Theory?

Purpose of this class: First, to give a brief, but sufficient, overview of CRT that present the danger to our culture and faith may be seen. Secondly, address the tenets of CRT with truth from Holy Scripture.

### Where and How did Critical Theory Originate:

1. Marxist intellectuals viewed history through the lens of the "stage theory"
  - a. Feudalism
  - b. Mercantilism
  - c. Capitalism
  - d. Communism
2. Critical Race Theory has its origin in Frankfurt, Germany<sup>1</sup>
  - a. Founded in 1923 as an adjunct organization at Goethe University of Frankfurt, as the first Marxist research center at a German university and funded through the philanthropy of Felix Weil.
  - b. In the Frankfurt School critical investigation was based on Freudian, Marxist and Hegelian ideas of "idealist philosophy"
  - c. Scholars were especially impacted by the Communist's failed German Revolution of 1918-19, which Marx had predicted, particularly in light of the revolution in Russia.

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<sup>1</sup> Wikipedia, *Frankfurt School*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frankfurt\\_School](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frankfurt_School)

- d. Carl Grunberg, a Marxist law professor was the first dean and proponent of "Critical Theory" based on economics
- e. 1930 Max Horkheimer, a philosopher, became the dean. He defined critical race theory as a social critique meant to bring about social change and intellectual emancipation. To Horkheimer critical theory where the researchers understanding of social experience if filtered by the biases in the mind of the researcher.
- f. In 1936 Critical theory became the name of the process
- g. Future Deans and leaders would include such notables as Theodor W. Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, Friedrich Pollock, Eric Fromm, Otto Kirchheimer, Leo Lowenthal, Franz Leopold Neuman, Henryk Grossman, and Jurgen Habermas.
- h. During the Nazi years the school fled Germany in 1935 for New York, NY and returned after the end of the war.
- i. During the time in New York the Frankfurt School was aligned with Columbia University.
- j. In 1953 The Institute for Social Research, the evolution of the was formally re-established in Frankfurt, West Germany. Horkheimer, Adorno and Pollock returned to Germany leaving Marcuse, Lowenthal, and Kirchheimer to remain in US academia
- k. The leaders of the Frankfurt School realized in order to facilitate a communist style revolution in the West, you had to first undermine Western culture from within.
- l. Antonio Gramsci believed that Western culture had a hegemonic power, or dominance where the culture accepted that the status quo was how we organized society.
- m. Gramsci identified five pillars of Western culture:
  - i. Family

- ii. Religion
- iii. Education
- iv. Media
- v. Law

These would be the targets necessary to create a communist revolution in the West.

3. Critical Race Theory is an idealistic vision of society or a communist vision of society needed to bring about the fourth stage.
4. According to the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy it has three components:
  - a. Idealistic vision for society.
  - b. It must then inform the society currently lived in how it does or does not fit the vision.
  - c. It must inspire social activism on behalf of the stated vision.
5. Herbert Marcuse wrote in his 1964 book, *One Dimensional Man* a critique of today's consumerism society that people are not thinking in their own interests, but in terms of heteronomous, or the society's power structure interests.
6. Under the guidance of Rudi Dutschke in the 1960's the "long march through the institutions" began on academic campuses
7. In 1953 Dr. Bella Dodd, a defected member of the Communist Party USA testified before the House Committee on Un-American Activities, testified as early as the 1920's the wedge issue that would tear America apart was race.
8. 1960's Angela Davis brings black feminism and Marcuse's radical theories to awaken people from their false consciousness concerning race.
9. Davis would inspire Kimberly Crenshaw, who with Derrick Bell, both at Harvard Law and the originator of the name Critical Race Theory, was inspired by Angela Davis.

## **What Is Critical Race Theory?**

1. It describes itself as a "movement" of scholars and activists.
2. CRT uses as a basis the postmodern assumption that race is a social construct.
3. Rejects norms for society derived from the Scottish Enlightenment: equality, theory, legal reasoning, enlightenment rationalism, and the neutral principles of constitutional law.
4. In the textbook on the subject, *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction* we are told "unlike traditional approaches to civil rights which favor incrementalism and step-by-step progress, Critical Race Theory calls into question the very foundations of the liberal order."
5. Dr. Voddie Bauchum describes the four tenets of the worldview of CRT as:
  - a. Racism as normative (systematic)... it's normal, everywhere and unavoidable.
  - b. Interest convergence (White people are unable to take righteous actions against racism unless it is in their individual interests)
  - c. Anti-objectivity
  - d. The social construction of knowledge.<sup>2</sup>
  - e. "CRT teaches the only way to know truth, is to elevate black, marginalized voices and listen to their stories. People and their feelings become arbiters of truth, and anyone who disagrees with those feelings is either racist or has internalized racism."<sup>3</sup>
  - f. Scholar Khiara Bridges outlines the tenets of CRT in this manner:
    - i. Recognition that race is not biologically real but is socially constructed and socially significant. It recognizes that science (as demonstrated in the Human Genome Project) refutes the idea of

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<sup>2</sup>Martin, Stephanie, <http://churchleaders.com/pastors/pastors-articles/394150-voddie-baucham-critical-race-theory.html>, page 3.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

biological racial differences. According to scholars Richard Delgado and Jean Stefaniec, race is a product of social thought and is not connected to biological reality.

- ii. Acknowledgment that racism is a normal feature of social thought and is embedded within systems and institutions, like the legal system, that replicate racial inequality. This dismisses the idea that racist incidents are aberrations but instead are manifestations of structural and systematic racism.
  - iii. Rejection of popular understandings about racism, such as arguments that confine racism to a few "bad apples." CRT recognizes that racism is codified in law, embedded in structures, and woven into public policy. CRT rejects claims of meritocracy or "colorblindness." CRT recognizes that it is the systematic nature of racism that bears primary responsibility for reproducing racial inequality.
  - iv. Recognition of the relevance of people's everyday lives to scholarship. This includes embracing the lived experiences of people of color, including those preserved through storytelling, and rejecting deficit-informed research that excludes the epistemologies of people of color.<sup>4</sup>
- g. Terms are redefined, history is rewritten (1619 Project),  
Narratives are more important than objective truth.

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<sup>4</sup> George, Janet, *A Lesson on Critical Race Theory*, Human Right, January 11, 2021

- h. CRT also recognizes that race intersects with other identities, including sexuality, gender identity and others.<sup>5</sup>

### **Where is CRT being utilized today?**

1. Government/Military
  - a. Border crisis is about the narrative of the immigrants and not law
  - b. Military is utilizing this as training
  - c. Justice system the reduction or elimination of bail, failure to prosecute
2. Business
  - a. Companies are using this for "sensitivity training" and responding in advertising and promotion
3. Schools - reference school board issues and how narratives are being utilized in how subjects such as math
4. Church -
  - a. Voddie Baucham points to terms such as "Christian hegemony" or Christianity being normative but CRT thinks in terms of the oppressor and the oppressed. CRT defines Christianity as a form of imperialism and oppressive. Proponents of CRT say that people need to put both their white privilege and their Christian privilege in check.<sup>6</sup>
  - b. CRT advocate Ibram X. Kendi, criticize white Savior theology, which maintains that people need to be saved from their sins. Instead Kendi touts Black liberation theology, which maintains that people need to be delivered from oppression.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> Martin, Stephanie, <http://churchleaders.com/pastors/pastors-articles/394150-voddie-baucham-critical-race->

<sup>7</sup> Ibid

