

**Countering Cancel Culture
Identifying the Foundations and Principles
of Critical Theory
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Introduction

2020: What a year!: Covid, George Floyd, Civil Unrest. Wildfires. Elections.

Phrases Emerged: Social Justice Black Lives Matter. And re-emerged: Equality

On the face of it, nearly everyone would agree they are for *social justice*.
But what does that term actually mean? Whose definition prevails?

Nearly everyone would agree that lives of *black people matter*.
But what does the organization Black Lives Matter stand for? What are their goals?

We all say we want *equality*.

But does that mean equality before just laws evenly applied? Is it equality of opportunity? Or is it the utopian dream of equality of outcomes that is trying to be arranged? Do we have to all end up with everything we want for there to be equality? No matter our effort, skills, integrity or gifts?

Over these concepts, polarization and hostility seem to be rising. We are all shocked at rudeness, ugliness and lack of respect or civility/

Even a year ago, former President Obama addressed “call out culture,” being “woke” and “cancelling” people and urged young people to move past it.¹ Obama noted that real life is messy and ambiguous.

Last May, from the early days of national lament over brutality, when the burden of being black in America was exposed, something else has risen. It feels like a particular way of addressing racism. An agenda. In fact, the hostility in sections of the social justice movement has turned literally violent.

\$2 billion in damage and rising. People’s businesses and homes.
Violence against police, justified as retribution. We feel de-stabilized, de-coherent.

Is there a particular ideology that drives this passion? Is it connected to what Obama called “cancel culture?” Is there some coherent world view that gives resiliency to what we call “political correctness” or “cultural Marxism”?

Yes! Prevalent in our universities, high schools and corporate diversity training seminars is a view of social interactions known by its adherents as **Critical Theory**. That’s a fairly nebulous term that could mean anything. The word ‘critical’ is used in the sense of analyzing social structures in order to “*see through and undo the web that the culture you were born into has wound around you*”²

Why do this? In order to “deconstruct” the structures of the dominant which oppress people without our even knowing it. The idea is to “unweave” cultural certainties that have protected the dominant social group in Western culture for centuries at the expense of minorities.

Marxist thought underpins Critical Theory. This fact is not at all hidden.

Marx, following Hegel, took a dialectical view of history. Competing forces clash until something new emerges. Marx and Engel viewed all of life in the world as a class battle between the economically rich and the struggling proletariat. The communist mottoes succinctly express this world view. 1) *Workers of the world unite!* Let’s throw off the oppressors so we can build a new world in which 2) *From each according to his ability, to each according to his need.* A John Lennon Utopia. Violent revolution was sanctioned, knowing that the rich do not readily share the wealth, and control must be seized temporarily for the greater good.

The colossal failure of enforced communism was stunningly apparent in the Soviet Union, Cambodia, Cuba (and more recently Venezuela). Again, slogans provide great summaries. From Orwell’s *Animal Farm*, we remember “*All animals are created equal, but some animals are more equal than others.*” And the Who sang their classic line, “*Meet the new boss, same as the old boss.*” The idealizing of human nature led to the absolute worst of human nature coming out. Tens of millions killed, bleak architecture, suppressed thought, poverty, climate of fear, surveillance and misery.

Marxist views of oppression and liberation reinvented themselves as they began to be worked out not in terms of economics but in terms of social groups. Laclau and Mouffe in 1985 published *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* which became a foundational text, asking,

“To what extent has it become necessary to *modify the notion of class struggle*, in order to be able to deal with the new political subject—women, national, racial and sexual minorities, anti-nuclear and anti-institutional movements—of a *clearly anti-capitalist character*, but whose identity is not constructed around specific ‘class interest’?”³

The idea was to bring all these liberation movements under the umbrella of socialist thought:

Their enemy is defined not by its function of exploitation, but by wielding a certain power. And this power...is the outcome of the form of social organization characteristic of the present society.⁴

A marriage was imagined: between socialist/Marxist views of class war and the interests of minority groups seeking liberation.

This remains foundational to Critical Theory and those who define Social Justice activity under the influence of Critical Theory:

The goal is to throw off domination. How?

Deconstruct the present society. Dismantle power. Re-create social structures to include the previously marginalized. Swap power.

Delegitimize the *Hegemony*. Hegemony is a key term pejoratively used by Critical Theorists for those who wield the most power and perpetuate it for their group. The motive for life becomes the fight for liberation. Those in the hegemony, with power and “privilege” are the enemy. They must be disrupted, discredited, and cancelled so that those without power now can flourish.

In fact, **power** is the center driving force in the worldview of Critical Theory. All motivations, especially in the dominant, are considered to be about power.

Another foundational idea for Critical Theorists was from Columbia professor Kimberle Crenshaw in 1989: ***Intersectionality***.⁵ Defined as:

Intersectionality is a framework for conceptualizing a person, group of people, or social problem as affected by a number of discriminations and disadvantages. It takes into account people’s overlapping identities and experiences in order to understand the complexity of prejudices they face.

In other words, intersectional theory asserts that people are often disadvantaged by multiple sources of oppression: their race, class, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, and other identity markers.⁶

Of course, on one level, the idea is so obvious as to be a truism: many forces shape us. On another level, when taken into the struggle for power and the drive to overthrow the hegemony, intersectionality becomes a means to identify the wicked oppressors and the virtuous oppressed.

That leads us to skip forward a couple decades to Robin DiAngelo's bestseller *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk about Racism*. And a book she wrote with Ozlem Sensoy, *Is Everyone Really Equal?*

Her books draw together clearly many of the strands of Critical Theory. They include a number of terms we hear today:

White Privilege: "From a critical social justice perspective, **privilege is defined as systemically conferred dominance** and the institutional processes by which the beliefs and values of the dominant group are 'made normal' and universal."

"Because dominant groups occupy the positions of power, their members receive social and institutional advantages; **thus one automatically receives privilege by being a member of a dominant group** (e.g. cis-men, Whites, heterosexuals, the able-bodied, Christians, upper classes)." ⁷

White Supremacy: Critical scholars define *racism* as a systemic relationship of unequal power between White people and peoples of Color. **Whiteness refers to the specific dimensions of racism that elevates White people over all peoples of Color...** White power and privilege is termed *White supremacy*. When we use the term *white supremacy*, we do not mean it in its lay usage to indicate extreme hate groups such as the Ku Klux Klan or the dozens of others like it. Rather, we use the term to capture **the pervasiveness, magnitude, and normalcy of White privilege, dominance, and assumed superiority.**⁸

White people raised in Western society are conditioned into a white supremacist worldview because it is the bedrock of our society and its institutions.⁹

White Fragility:

"The simplistic idea that racism is limited to individual intentional acts committed by unkind people is at the root of virtually all white defensiveness on this topic.... For those of us who work to raise the racial consciousness of whites, simply

getting whites to acknowledge that our race gives us advantages is a major effort. The defensiveness, denial, and resistance are deep.”¹⁰

Now, let’s bring some of these ideas together from a chart in Sensoy and DiAngelo’s book:

64 Is Everyone Really Equal?

Figure 5.1. Group Identities Across Relations of Power

Minoritized/Target Group	Oppression	Dominant/Agent Group
Peoples of Color	Racism	White
Poor		
Working Class	Classism	Owning Class
Middle Class		
Women; Transgender; Genderqueer	Sexism	(cis)Men
Gays; Lesbians; Bisexuals; Two Spirit	Heterosexism	Heterosexuals
Muslims; Buddhists; Jews; Hindus; and other non-Christian groups	Religious Oppression Anti-Semitism	Christians
People with Disabilities	Ableism	Able-bodied
Immigrants (perceived)	Nationalism	Citizens (perceived)
Indigenous Peoples	Colonialism	White Settlers

Do you see who is the Hegemony, the dominators?
 And who are the oppressed who must be liberated from our supremacy and privilege?

Can you see, given the Marxist liberation/warfare propulsion, how Critical Theory feels like an attack on so many things “whites” seem to hold dear?
 Can you see white people are called to repent, apologize and stand down?

How does the move to defund, replace the police connect to Critical Theory?
 Police express and enforce the Hegemony, and therefore are the point of the spear of oppression.

Let’s look at some other hallmarks of Critical Theory

Knowledge/Language Not Objective:

All knowledge is taught from a particular perspective; the power of dominant knowledge depends in large part on its **presentation as neutral and universal** (Kincheloe, 2008). In order to understand the concept of knowledge as never purely objective, neutral, and outside of human interests, it is important to distinguish between discoverable laws of the natural world (such as the law of gravity), and knowledge, which is socially constructed. By *socially constructed*, we mean that **all knowledge understood by humans is framed by the ideologies, language, beliefs, and customs of human societies. Even the field of science is subjective**¹¹

Even language is not neutral. Language is constructed by the dominant group in order to control and maintain privilege. This means that an appeal to facts, statistics, or rational argument may be countered in Critical Theory not by opposing facts or arguments but simply by the narrative of lived-experience of those identified as oppressed.

Social Group Identity:

Supersedes Individual Concerns and Necessarily Binary: Opposites

For every social group, there is an opposite group... the primary groups that we name here are: race, class, gender, sexuality, ability status/exceptionality, religion, and nationality”

“although we *are* individuals, we *are also* -and **perhaps fundamentally**- members of social groups. These group memberships shape us as profoundly, **if not more so**, than any unique characteristic we may claim to possess.”¹²

Critical Theory *maps* the location of the dominant and oppressed in society by assigning power levels to groups based on race, biological sex, sexual preference, religion and gender identity. Curiously, economic wealth is not, as far as I have seen, been labeled as a marker for power/oppression.

Tim Keller notes that in Critical Theory “all unequal outcomes” are “never due to individual actions or to differences in cultures or to differences in human abilities, but only and strictly due to unjust social structures and systems. The only way to fix unequal outcomes for the downtrodden is through social policy, never by asking anyone to change their behavior or culture.”¹³

Dominant Group Blind to Oppression

Critical Theory asserts that the dominant group is unable to realize its racist, sexist, phobic oppression.

The most power belongs to white, male, heterosexual Christians. Therefore, this group is the most oppressive of others. The “norms, values and expectations” of white society as a whole relegates other groups to subordinate positions.

*This oppression happens whether or not an individual from the dominant group practices any overt discrimination or not!*¹⁴

Sight in the Oppressed. By contrast, oppressed groups “have special access to truth because of their ‘lived experience’ of oppression. Any attempt by the dominant group to answer the assertions of the oppressed groups must be dismissed without discussion as merely a bid for “continued institutional power.”¹⁵

You can’t know what you can’t know.

You may not think you are being offensive, but you can’t know if you’re in the dominant group, so if I perceive that you are being racist, sexist, homophobic, you are.

Voddie Baucham calls this Ethnic Gnosticism. You can’t know. Only the oppressed can tell you how you are being as a dominator.

Change Needed: Awakening of the Oppressed and Oppressors. Divestment from the Powerful. Liberation of Oppressed=Utopia.

What is required is for members of the dominant group to be “awakened” to these realities and in response to concede power to the oppressed groups.

So, is Critical Theory a *worldview*? That is, does Critical Theory address fundamental issues of human purpose, human problems and the solutions?

Evaluation

Critical Theory offers voice to those who feel their voices have not been heard. It provides a framework of explanation and a pathway to change for those who experience marginalization by majority groups. Those who do not feel they have been treated with equity and opportunity find a remedy offered through the project of awakening offered by Critical Theory.

Critical Theory inspires passion and offers purpose. Join the revolution. Awaken the sleeping. Challenge the dominate. Liberate the oppressed.

These are the very phrases I would pull from Scripture to inspire Christians!
Wake up O sleeper and rise from the dead and Christ will give you life.

Followers of movements underpinned by Critical Theory act with zeal and fervor. There is both moral outrage and a moral imperative upon them. There are standards of virtue and righteousness. There is both self-policing of these views and significant social pressure to enact these virtues. Followers strive after righteousness and believe our best society will come after their success.

However! A very big However!

Critical Theory offers a shallow view of history, a seriously truncated view of human identity, an inaccurately adversarial view of human relationships. It is founded on the one hand, with a fallaciously optimistic view of human nature (we can create utopia) and, on the other, a tediously narrow view of human motivation (we all live for power).

Historically speaking, Critical Theory fails to account for the immigrant experience of America. It fails to understand the motivation for many of the people groups that flooded our shores in our first centuries. People seeking religious freedom. People seeking economic opportunity. People seeking political freedom.

Example: My underfed, Cro-Magnon Frisian ancestors.

Example: per capita income of non-white people groups in America.

Identity. Defining people primarily by their placement in identity groups defined by race, sexual desire, internal gender desire or even biological sex and placing these identity markers in conflict with others seriously diminishes the richness of our shared humanity. Scripture defines our common humanity as created by God, accountable to God, and purposed for his glory.

Sideroad: Where Did These Christian Views Come From?

Are they “white” views?

Do I hold “middle-class Caucasian” morality constructed out of my demographic’s desire to maintain power?

Actually, my values came from a middle eastern Semitic people freed after four centuries of slavery. In a tiny region of the Middle East, this people group expressed a way of viewing the world, ordering society and enacting justice that has influenced the entire world throughout 3500 years. Yet, this people group had no significant world political power for hundreds of years after captivity.

My specific Christian worldview arose 2000 years ago. Acts 2: 9-10 names 13 different ethnicities and languages who embraced this story, none of them Caucasian. The influencers in my worldview, before this faith ever reached the British or Germanic people groups, included Jews, Egyptians, Algerians, Ethiopians, Turks, Syrians, Romans and Gauls. The Scriptures that underlie my worldview were completed centuries before the people in my ethnic background read them.

In 2010, of the 2.2 billion Christians in the world, only about 37% live in countries considered “white” or “European” dominated.¹⁶

In 2014, 79% of black Americans identified as Christians.¹⁷

The point: it is irresponsible to identify my Christian worldview with my “whiteness.” It is nonsensical to deny that Christianity offers a significant bridge in American race relations between blacks and whites.

Human Nature: The absence of reference to a higher power, to God, is significant. The whole project is predicated on human ability to enact these goals. Descriptions of the future are notably thin and undeveloped. The struggle is the main focus. And there is an underlying assumption that if we could just be “awakened” to oppression and dismantle it, all would be well with us. Naïve. And counter to Jesus’ own evaluation of the human heart and that apart from him we can do nothing. Critical Theory inherits the Marxist disdain for God.

Again, historically shallow. Left alone, without checks and balances, historically and consistently, we do not govern ourselves peacefully or justly. Witness the tens of millions of deaths under Marxist rule in the 20th century. Compare to the checks and balances of American government, which were based on a bedrock awareness of human depravity held in balance with high view of human worth.

Motivation of Power: Douglas Murray: “These thinkers absorbed their idea of society not as an infinitely complex system of trust and traditions that have evolved over time, but always in the unforgiving light cast when everything is viewed solely through the prism of ‘power.’ Viewing all human interactions in this light distorts, rather than clarifies, presenting a dishonest interpretation of our lives. Of course power exists as a force in the world, but so do charity, forgiveness and love”¹⁸

Privilege. Notion of privilege as **unearned** fails to account for the tremendous effort required to maintain privilege through responsibility. Fails to account for the monumental contributions that wealth creators make to the good of our commonwealth. Fails to recognize that privilege is constantly created by accumulation of influence, power, achievement. Envy. Resentment.

Source for Notions of Justice. There is no transcendent source for defining justice and why morally it is wrong for some to have more than others. The motive for naming inequity as unjust appears to be the misery of the dominated majority and the urge to gain a share the wealth. What’s to change that when dominators switch?

Critical Theory Fragility: Refusal to engage. Intolerance of Opposition. Shouting and swearing at opposition. “I can’t hear you!”
The Spanish Inquisition: Not Just for Churches Anymore.
The Madness of Crowds thoroughly documents incidences of “cancelling.”
The move to destroy enemies. Fire faculty, boycott businesses.
Evidence of religious zeal.

Rational Argument Dismissed: you can’t know what you can’t know. Either admit I am right or show evidence of white fragility. Our lived experience trumps any facts. To argue facts is to be oppressive.

Divisive: identity groups are defined by their opposition. The language of war, suspicion of motive, the need to upset and destroy. Runs on anger not joy.
Contradictory forces: women’s sports and transgender women.

Performance Driven: You always have to be “woker”.

No means of Forgiveness or Atonement.

The focus on social groups and group dynamics **removes responsibility from individuals.** A contradiction at the heart of Critical Theory is the assigning of

moral *evil* to the dominant group and virtue to the dominated groups, while yet maintaining that individual humans can be good enough and virtuous enough to create a just society: if the dominators could just be thrown off. No individual guilt or accountability (unless you are a dominator).

Shame. Adherents of Critical Theory have fostered a Shift from a Truth/Error and Right/Wrong culture to an Honor/Shame culture. The rise of shaming as a tool of social enforcement.

One of the influences of postmodernism and critical theory is the weaponizing of shame and the devaluing of rational knowledge and received morality.

Externally supporting diversity, Critical Theory adherents would build a world of dreary sameness, devoid of humor and fresh ideas.

Theologian Voddie Baucham notes that the endgame in Critical Theory is a complete overthrow of the dominant group, to be replaced in power and privilege with the previously oppressed. This is sought under cover of a *utopian* vision of a world of total equality and freedom.¹⁹

Black Lives Matter organization is deeply entrenched in Critical Theory. It's a great slogan, but a destructive organization. We've seen that in violence and the push to defund police, to dismantle society. Just read their beliefs. It's not hidden.

The focus on police brutality as *the* major issue is demeaning to black people, making them victims, using them in a power game.

Not addressing black on black violence, fatherlessness, drug addiction.

Performative: you must work harder. Exhausting. You can't be woke enough. No method for forgiveness. A harsh, Puritanical religion.

The Spanish Inquisition: It's not just for churches anymore!

Questions

How did it come to be that the oppressed allowed themselves to be dominated?

Where do your values of what is just and equitable come from?

How do you know that those who gain power through an awakening revolution will wield it any better than the last group?

What do you do with your feelings of guilt? Are you prone to projecting guilt outwards on others? If you fail, how do you get right?

Why haven't the wealthy, educated, white leaders in your movement given up their positions and wealth so they can "see" better and be in solidarity?

Would you like to come help me build a Habitat House in 2021 as we work with a family to create home ownership?

Would you like to be part of mentoring children in our city?

Which Lives Matter?

Mapping Police Violence, a crowdsourced database that includes deaths by vehicle, taser, or beating in addition to shootings, estimates **25 police killings** of unarmed Black men in 2019.²⁰

(According to statistics reported to the FBI, **89 law enforcement officers** were killed in line-of-duty incidents in 2019. Of these, 48 officers died as a result of felonious acts, and 41 officers died in accidents. Comprehensive data tables about these incidents and brief narratives describing the fatal attacks are included in *Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted, 2019*, released today. Of these 48, **40** officers were white.²¹)

In the first eight months of 2020, **315** blacks were killed by violence in Chicago.²²

In 2015, **2400** blacks were killed by other blacks.²³

In 2017, **241,449** black women had abortions.²⁴

In 2018, 65% of black children (6,166,000) lived in a single parent home.²⁵

These issues are not addressed by Black Lives Matter. Read!

Black Lives Matter What We Believe www.blacklivesmatter.com

We disrupt the Western-prescribed nuclear family structure requirement by supporting each other as extended families and “villages” that collectively care for one another, especially our children, to the degree that mothers, parents, and children are comfortable. We foster a queer-affirming network. When we gather, we do so with the intention of freeing ourselves from the tight grip of heteronormative thinking, or rather, the belief that all in the world are heterosexual (unless s/he or they disclose otherwise). We cultivate an intergenerational and communal network free from ageism. We believe that all people, regardless of age, show up with the capacity to lead and learn. We embody and practice justice, liberation, and peace in our engagements with one another.

Endnotes to this Workshop:

- ¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/31/us/politics/obama-woke-cancel-culture.html>
- ² Douglas Murray, *The Madness of Crowds: Gender, Race and Identity* (London: Bloomsbury, 2019), 53.
- ³ As quoted in Murray, *Madness of Crowds*, 56.
- ⁴ Laclau and Mouffe as quoted in Murray, 57.
- ⁵ <https://www.vox.com/the-highlight/2019/5/20/18542843/intersectionality-conservatism-law-race-gender-discrimination>
- ⁶ <https://www.ywboston.org/2017/03/what-is-intersectionality-and-what-does-it-have-to-do-with-me/>
- ⁷ Robin DiAngelo and Ozlem Sensoy, *Is Everyone Really Equal: An Introduction to Key Concepts in Social Justice Education* (NY: Teachers College Press, 2017), 80-81.
- ⁸ Ibid. 142-143.
- ⁹ Robin DiAngelo, *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk about Racism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2018).
- ¹⁰ Ibid.
- ¹¹ Sensoy and DiAngelo, *Is Everyone Really Equal*, 15.
- ¹² Ibid. 44,46.
- ¹³ Timothy Keller, "Biblical Critique of Secular Justice and Critical Theory"
<https://quarterly.gospelinlife.com/a-biblical-critique-of-secular-justice-and-critical-theory/>
- ¹⁴ Sensoy and DiAngelo, "Is Everyone Really Equal?"
- ¹⁵ Neil Shenvi, "The Incompatibility of Critical Theory and Christianity,"
<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/incompatibility-critical-theory-christianity/>
- ¹⁶ <https://www.pewforum.org/2012/12/18/global-religious-landscape-christians/>
- ¹⁷ <https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/compare/christians/by/racial-and-ethnic-composition/>
- ¹⁸ Murray, 53.
- ¹⁹ Voddie Baucham "Exposing and Opposing Social Justice Theology"
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MK4TT_6QDA8
- ²⁰ <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/factcheck/2020/06/23/fact-check-how-many-unarmed-black-men-did-police-kill-2019/5322455002/>
- ²¹ <https://www.fbi.gov/news/pressrel/press-releases/fbi-releases-2019-statistics-on-law-enforcement-officers-killed-in-the-line-of-duty>
- ²² <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/breaking/ct-chicago-homicides-data-tracker-htmstory.html>
- ²³ <https://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2016-09-29/race-and-homicide-in-america-by-the-numbers>
- ²⁴ https://www.gutmacher.org/fact-sheet/induced-abortion-united-states?gclid=Cj0KCQjwqfz6BRD8ARIsAIXQCf3mbC1qHnnY6ZDJtHx2vd-9sTbK8TDtbSrp0gth6GkY2EHxruVerHlaAmhtEALw_wcB
- ²⁵ <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/107-children-in-single-parent-families-by-race#detailed/1/any/false/37,871,870,573,869,36,868,867,133,38/10,11,9,12,1,185,13/432,431>

What Makes a Life Matter? Pt. 1 Christianity

That is a *worldview* question. Every worldview expresses an understanding of human purpose and flourishing and how it can overcome obstacle to be reached.

1) Realizing I am **Created** Intentionally by the Triune God who is Love.

God gave me a real life.
God confers worth.

“You formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you for I am fearfully and wonderfully made” (Ps. 139: 13-14)

2) Embracing Being **Redeemed** by Jesus Christ.

Jesus saves me. I agree to that by submitting to the reality that I cannot save myself death, and loneliness. I have transgressed against the will of God and cannot effect atonement/reconciliation by my effort or works.

Jesus atoned for my sins to make me right with God and, in giving his life for me, Jesus claimed me for himself. I am not my own. Yet, I become more “me” by being more “his.”

“But when the goodness and lovingkindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us, but according to his own mercy (Titus 3 4-5).

3) Living as One **Sent to Love**

I am accountable to God.
God has work for me to do.
Whatever I may do for a living or as a calling, the deeper purpose is not my self-fulfillment but the glory and mission of God.
He sends me to share his love and gospel in word and deed.

“You are the light of the world...let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven” (Mt. 5: 14-5)

“What matters is faith working through love.” Gal. 5:9, CSB).

4) Rejoicing in **Hope** for God’s Renewal of All Things

Worshipping, giving thanks and living with joy
Affirming the world and its people even as I tell a different story.

*“Behold, I make all things new” (Rev. 21: 5).
“that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (I Peter 2:9).*

5) Pursuing **Reconciliation** Based on God’s Love in Christ.

Building Bridges.
Listening, loving, sharing, encouraging. Seeking peace.

For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility...that he might create in himself one new man...and reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility” (Eph. 2: 14-16).

For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3: 27-28).

What Makes a Life Matter? Critical Theory Answers

1) Life is Struggle. Humanity arose by evolution in a struggle for survival against a hostile environment. Struggle for dominance is basic to human life.

Everyone is part of a **Social Identity Group**: gender, race, ability, religion, desire. One’s group matters more than an individual. Each group strives to flourish in free expression of its identity.

2) While Inevitable, Dominance is Unjust. Inevitably, those people who gain power over others, as expressed in having more food, wealth, and technology seek to keep that power through oppression of the less powerful. Wealth and power is also maintained through exploitation of those without power. This inequity is enforced through social structures which maintain people in their given place.

Vast inequities in resources, wealth, education, opportunity, legal justice arose through the domination of one social group over another. This domination, while the expected outcome of an evolutionary process that includes “natural selection” and “survival of the fittest” is nevertheless considered to be *unjust*.

3) Awaken: To see that Power is the Motive, the Engine and the Prize. The basic human drive is for power. The quest for power runs deeper than love, art, or faith. Power wielders maintain their position at the continuing expense of those without power. Woke people have been redeemed from ignorance and participation in systemic injustice by recognizing and expressing these power dynamics.

4) The Driving Purpose of the Awakened is to expose unjust structures, seek their dismantling through “waking” others and redistributing power. “Woke” liberators come alongside the oppressed to take up their cause. When all dominance ends, a just flourishing community will emerge. Exposing injustice involves “Truth” being spoken to “power.” Language must be controlled. Behavior controlled. Discordant voices are morally inferior and therefore may justly be silenced.

5) Utopia. New people will hold power as the state, and the state will benevolently insure equality of outcomes for each and all regardless of evaluation, skill, morality or effort.

Critical Theory Resources from a Christian Perspective

1) Neil Shenvi

Website: [Shenviapologetics.com](http://shenviapologetics.com)

Article:

“The Incompatibility of Critical Theory and Christianity”

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/incompatibility-critical-theory-christianity/>

Videos:

“Social Justice, Critical Theory and Christianity: Are They Compatible?”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E33aunwGQQ4>.

Interview On Allie Beth: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kie9r89naF0>

2) Tim Keller “Biblical Critique of Secular Justice and Critical Theory”

<https://quarterly.gospelinlife.com/a-biblical-critique-of-secular-justice-and-critical-theory/>

3) Voddie Baucham

Website: voddiebaucham.org

Videos:

“Exposing and Opposing Social Justice Theology”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MK4TT_6QDA8

“Ethnic Gnosticism” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ip3nV6S_fYU

[Voddiebaucham.org](http://voddiebaucham.org)

On Black Lives Matter: <https://disrn.com/news/dean-at-african-christian-university-denounces-black-lives-matter-we-have-to-separate-this-movement-from-the-issues>