

Critical Theory and Racism Webinar– Dr. Glenn Sunshine

Notes intended for use in listening to the webinar - from Dick Pence

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Four Points:

- I. The Big Picture – an Intellectual Movement called Critical Theory – its origins and ideas coming out of it.
- II. Critical Race Theory – ideas from CT surrounding race
- III. Black Lives Matter – as a Movement
- IV. A Biblical Response – Thinking Clearly About What to Do

I. The Big Picture – CT is an Intellectual Movement called Critical Theory – we will look at its origins and ideas coming out of it.

- Antonio Gramsci was an Italian Marxist. He was imprisoned from 1926 to 1930 when he was released. While in prison, he wrote his [Prison Notebooks](#) – 30 notebooks, 3,000 pages. These were highly influential in the re-directing of Marxist thinking from *revolution* to *cultural indoctrination*. Gramsci believed everything moved on the bases of economics and it was a battle of the haves and have nots. Marx and Stalin thought progress would be made by **revolution**. But it did not happen. Gramsci believed everything moved on the basis of economics and it was a battle of the haves and have nots. Marx and Stalin thought progress would be made by **revolution**. But it did not happen.
 - Gramsci was working after WWI said, his ideology was that **everything is cultural** – everything happens by slow cultural change.
 - The ideology of the Elite classes would prevail. This he called the **cultural hegemony**. He saw this happening through the intellectuals connecting with the working class buying into their ideology.
 - This **hegemony** (leadership or dominance of one group over another) is maintained by the institutions – government, the schools, media etc.

- Capitalist society would be undermined from the inside and this would THEN set off the revolution. This is often called **Cultural Marxism**.
- Gramsci was an important influence on what we call the **Frankfurt School** – mostly Jews. They were in Germany in 1923 until Hitler expelled them. They then moved to Geneva and then to Columbia University in NYC.
- Rudi Dutschke (1967) talked about the [Long March Through the Institutions](#). Herbert Marcuse popularized this idea originally from communist China. This was the idea that Marxist thought would be introduced gradually by influencing the culture of government, corporations, schools etc.
- **The New Left** - The Progression: infiltrating three institutions. **Education, Media, Politics**. Primarily done by the universities. Their process is:
 - a. False Consciousness– following the Cultural Hegemony
 - b. Raising Consciousness – becoming aware of oppressions
 - c. Class Consciousness – Group Identity/Identity Politics
- This process was going on in the 60s and 70s then taken over by **Postmodernism**.

II. **New Left continues in Postmodernism** and this idea is that there is no truth or broadly accepted reality. This opened the door for the next phase - Critical Theory followed by Critical Race Theory that is based on “Experience” - emotion rather than reality.

- **Key Concepts and ideas:**
 - You can **create the conditions** necessary for a cultural revolution and the LEFT is doing that.
 - The world exists as a **Zero sum game** – for one person to advance, somebody else has to decrease. For one to win, someone has to lose.
 - **Power, or influence is limited** and is dependent upon class, race, gender etc. Economics is the easy example.
 - The poor are poor because the rich stole from them. If you get a big piece of pie, I get a little one. This is bad economics because you can open a bakery. You can create wealth.
 - **This principle is applied systematically to EVERYTHING**. Remember, this is basic Marxism = the haves and the have nots.

- If one group has power in society, they **have to get it by taking** it from another group. Men have power because they have taken it away from women, whites have power because they have taken it away from Blacks and so on. The West has power because it has taken it from other countries.
- **Cultural Relativism** – all cultures are fundamentally equal.
 - Morality has no input. Therefore, no culture has a right to DOMINATE another culture. For example, Christianity has no right to dominate in America or even speak.
 - There is no right or wrong or evil. It all depends upon what works.
- **Intersectionality** – all oppression is connected. Again, it's all about power – moral authority. The INTERSECTION is at the point of groups i.e., gender and color, a woman who is black gains power because of the intersection of race and gender compared to a white woman. A white Gay man gains influence and power at the intersection of gender identity and gender compared to a white heterosexual man. The intersection of race, gender and sexual identity gives a black, lesbian woman more moral authority (See at 22 minutes)
 - **Intersecting axes of privilege - domination vs. the oppressors: Note: This determines WHO you are, it is your identity.**
 - **Oppressors, the Dominators (Above the line) If you are:** male, white, European, young, able-bodied, attractive, heterosexual, educated, financially stable, Christian, non-Jew, and fertile – **you are a privileged**, and you are a dominating oppressor. CRT and intersectionality label you as evil - you are going to see your power disappear.
 - **Oppressed, the dominated: If you are** Jewish, dark skinned, female, homosexual, non-able-bodied, unattractive, working class poor, gender diverse, LGBT, non-European, uneducated or illiterate and old – **you are oppressed**, under-privileged, and dominated. You are in a position where **CRT will increase your power.**
 - Oppression = sin. In any area you were the oppressor, **you lose moral authority** to the one you were oppressing.
 - The more oppressed categories involved i.e., black, lesbian woman, the **more authority is exchanged.**

- In some version of CRT, you can never really escape your identity – you will always be a racist.
- Being WOKE means forsaking your privilege of being above the line of privilege and submitting to those who are below it.
- The Goal of Intersectionality is Creating Communities of Virtues (morally superior) Victimhood (see at 25 Min)
 - Women – victims of men, Blacks victims of whites etc.
 - These are the ones that have or are gaining moral authority.
 - **This is the dominate politics of the LEFT.**
 - The goal is to create a coalition of the oppressed

III. **Critical Theory and Race:** Rightly assumes that Race is a Social Construct.

- Race is not related to Biology – we are all the same color, its pigment differences that are relative. Race is in fact a social construct, we all of the race of Adam
- Historically, in the 17th and 18th century, race was used to define nationality, culture etc. i.e., the British race. Later it was defined as mongoloid, blacks, and whites.
- During the periods of colonialization, **Scientific Racism** came into vogue – some races were better than others. The superiors have the right to dominate the others. Interestingly, this was pushed by Darwin, the early Feminists, and people like Hitler and Margret Sanger.
- Putting these categories together created Racism.
- **Racism:**
 - **Old Definition** – a person’s value, ability, worth etc. were determined by race.
 - **New Definition** – you don’t think of superiority or inferiority but in terms of POWER. This definition relates to the structures within society, the Institution and even the ideology in society, that are set up in such a way that if favors one race over another. By this definition, you don’t have to even think about race to be a RACIST, you just are
 - We return to Gramsci’s terminology of a **Cultural Hegemony** (domination, control). CRT’s rhetoric claims that our world is dominated by White Supremacy and White Privilege.

- **White Supremacy** – Definition Categories - these are viewed as bad. (These ideas have been embraced by a large portion of the Black community and are now popular generally: (See at 32 minutes)
 - Perfectionism,
 - A Sense of Urgency,
 - Worship of the written word – literacy
 - Paternalism
 - Belief in only one right way
 - Individualism
 - **Belief in objectivity**
 - At 33 minutes Glenn shows a **pyramid of Overt and Covert White Supremacy** that covers a wide range of values and practices.
- In a Postmodern and CT world, objectivity is simply not acceptable. Truth is subjective and only personal.
- The measuring stick for determining truth is **Experience** and that is always emotion based.
- African American and Latino populations in particular have a **set of experiences** that convey the TRUTH of the situation. Any statistical or fact-based analysis is unacceptable. This is not accessible to whites; they don't have the same experiences.
- **This sets up The Narrative:**
 - The Narrative is “**The Authoritative Interpretive (Explanatory) Structure for Experience.**” Experience is not self-interpreting. **The Narrative gives you a framework for what those experiences mean.** The Narrative is supreme when it comes to CRT, it tells you what is true. i.e., Blacks are not employed because of race.
 - Data, statistics etc. that don't support the narrative are meaningless, the Narrative overrules what we would see as truth, facts.
 - Statistics buy into the **myth of objectivity**. Experience trumps statistical reality.
 - There is **no possibility of Shared Truth** – you are **locked into a world of your own experience**. Voddie Baucham calls this Ethnic Gnosticism = there is a kind of **Secret Knowledge** that is only available to certain Ethnic groups.

- I can never really understand the experience of a Black or Latinos.
- Any claim to the use of data or statistic is an example of White Supremacy
- **Institutional or Systemic Racism.** This is racism in social or political institutions. The INSTITUTIONS are fundamentally corrupt, fundamentally racist and they keep people of Color suppressed.
 - Criminal Justice – this is why so many Blacks are in prison
 - Housing, Education, Employment, Healthcare – all systems of oppression.
 - This **same logic** would suggest that there is Institutional Sexism because more men are in prison.
 - There is a certain amount of system racism built into the culture just because of our past AND, also because of the behavior of Blacks.
 - CT is not the reason, but there is a reason why they see it.
- **White Privilege** - you don't have to think of White as being a race. Everything in society is built around whiteness. (see list of categories at 42:21 minutes)
 - There are remnants of White Privilege today – we still must realize that in some ways the Black community is still “catching up.” Unfortunately, much of that is because Black leadership has advocated for CRT and encouraged Blacks to advancing themselves – i.e., being educated, ambitious etc. was being a Whitey.
- **Black Lives Matter** – Specific example of Critical Race Theory (Some of this has been erased from the BLM web page.)
 - A Marxist organization in their origins
 - Deeply rooted in CT and Intersectionality
 - Rejects the Patriarchal Nuclear Family – no real place for the father, very attached to the Feminist movement.
 - The Village raises the children
 - Strong supporter of all things LGBT
 - Pro-abortion – a major killer of Black babies
 - Anti-Semitic
 - What they omit – Fatherlessness is a major predictor of poverty, criminology, drug abuse

- The argument is that all cultures are equal. Obviously, what we see in much of the Black culture (this is not a skin color issue) is lack of flourishing.
- But their argument is that this is all caused by Black Suppression.
- Do the lives of Black businesses matter or Black policeman?
- What matters is their ideology – going back to CT and Gramsci.
- To be truly Black, you must support the **Narrative**. (see above)
- **CRT and White Guilt** – comes out of the Narrative about White Supremacy.
 - Usually used as a weapon – you are suppressors, and you should be ashamed, even of what your forefathers did.
 - To whites – “You have no voice in this conversation, no right to speak, you need to set down and shut up.”
 - “**Struggle sessions**” (like a [Mao-est](#) session in China) this is a Marxist tactic from China – whites repenting on their knees for their racist sins even of their ancestors. This is literally happening in Billings.
 - But you can never really escape from your sin – your Whiteness.
 - Does nothing to solve the problem but supports Black Power.
 - This will cause a backlash from those not sympathetic to the narrative.
 - **EVIL** - Tragically, sinfully, it **denies agency to persons of color**– they are helpless victims of whites and can never escape that situation. This also absolves them of any guilt because their entire situation is a product of racism.

IV. A Biblical Perspective on Truth about Race. Because the church helped cause the division of race, it needs to be part of the future solution.

- We must insist on a foundation of **Objective Truth**.
- **Revelation and Reason** are sources of truth.
 - **Experience** is not the final word on what is true and it is not self-interpretative.
 - We must **reject Cultural Relativism** –all cultures are morally equal. The Aztecs murdered their babies. Black fatherlessness is destroying the Black community.
 - We must **reject Moral Relativism** – look at Marxism, look at Hitler.

- We need to **reject the lie that All Family Structures are equal.**
The best results come from the marriage of a biological male and female – the original parents. The further you get from that model, the more disfunction you introduce.
- **Biblical Principles:**
 - **Individual - Foundation of Human Value: We are created in the Image of God.** When you attack a person, it is the equivalent of attacking Him. Here, **Intersectionality is problematic** because any time you take one of these categories and mess with them, you devalue the so-called competing person.
 - When you give more **power or moral authority** to a woman over a man, a Black over a White, Gay over straight etc. You have **denied that God created us spiritually and morally equal.**
 - You have messed with their VALUE and WORTH. This violating the image of God.
 - **Intersectionality is Idolatry!**
 - This same principle is violated in abortion – most of the advocates of CT and CRT are Pro-Abortion.
 - **Biblical Principles Corporate:** Sin also deeply embeds itself in the institutions and the culture.
 - When Wall-Mart, Target, and other corporations support abortion activists, they are violating these principles
 - When churches become advocates for LGBT causes, they involve themselves in sin and if you support them, you are complicit.
 - I would add that when churches are silent about these moral issues, they enter into sin.
 - There are places where nations have repented for their corporate sin.

V. Rethinking Race:

- Race is not an objective biological reality – we all belong to the race of Adam. We are all the same color, just different shades.
- Race is not a category the way we refer to it in scripture.

- Race is a reality in our culture, but it is artificial, it has been constructed.
- We need to think about how cultural change happens informed by scripture. You can't get to biblical solutions using non biblical solutions.
- **Reasons that modern problems in Black communities can't automatically be blamed on racism:** (Dr. Wilfred Reilly at Kentucky State University Political Science Professor in a Tweet – a Black man)
 - #1. Many didn't exist when racism was much worse – i.e., Fatherlessness.
 - #2. Few of these modern problems exist for Black immigrants – from other countries.
 - #3. All of these issues exist to the same extent for poor Whites – i.e., the family structures destroyed by the LEFTS Great Society.
- Rethinking White Privilege. Race isn't a Biblical category, but **Class and Culture** are.
 - Who is more privileged – Malia Obama, a 21-year-old Black woman or a 21-year-old white laborer?
 - The highest earning ethnicity is Indian Americans (from India).
- Thinking about **African American Disadvantage** – a healthier way forward:
 - Two ways of dealing with advantage – **take it away** from people who have it or **GIVE it** to people who don't. Of those two, the second is far better.
 - In the Civil Rights movement of the 60's, MLK's way was ending segregation. A huge positive step in eliminating disadvantage in schools, bussing etc. He spread privilege rather than eliminating it
 - Assumption – the way whites are treated should be the norm for everyone.

Rap up – (min. 117) the fundamental issue we have in the church is a misunderstanding of the Kingdom of God. When we talk about that, what does it mean for discipleship, for relationships in our own community or to the oppressed or disadvantaged?

- The church almost never teaches on the Kingdom of God or being made in the Image of God.
- We do Missiology Poorly – the best people to reach a culture are the people within that culture or a similar culture.

- The **Church Growth Movement** picked up on this and created groups JUST LIKE THEM. White, suburban, upper-class people.
- Result? **The mega church** that broke up the smaller community churches that tended to be ethnic, or groups of similar people or those who have been attracted to each other. These churches could not compete with a well-paid communicator who was pleasant to listen to and practices the seeker friendly principle and never spoke about negative things.