**Truth Currents** **10-23-20**

**Critical Race Theory**. What is it and why are you just now hearing about it? Critical Race Theory is 40 years old. It is an esoteric academic theory that was originally designed as a framework for ivory-towered discussions about race issues. Over the course of the last forty-years it has moved out of the academic world and begun to infiltrate the culture wars. In fact, it seems like this idea that you’ve probably never heard of, has now seemingly conquered every American institution and done so in under a year’s time.

What can we learn about CRT? Sometimes it’s called “***Wokeness***.” Well first of all, CRT believes that racism is present in every aspect of life, in every relationship, in every interaction within society. This is where we get the phrase “Systemic Racism.” It’s the idea that racism is so foundationally built into the system itself that you can be a participant in racism without even being conscious of it. You are an unknowing participant in a conspiracy to oppress people who are different from you.

CRT argues that all motives for action are contaminated by what they call “***Interest Convergence.***” In other words, if you say, “*I want to help race relations in America. I want to go out and employ in my company people from a low-income part of town. I want to go add people of color who are maybe in a lower socio-economic level of society. I want to employ them, train them. I want them to be a part of my company*.” Now traditionally that would be an admirable action to further race relations in America. But CRT argues that what you’re doing is you are giving black people or people of color opportunities and freedoms only because it also aligns with your own selfish interest. In other words, no action to improve race relations can ever be fully trusted.

CRT is an irrefutable theory because no evidence can ever really be accepted as authentic. Humans never act except out of a set of selfish interests. It’s a very Darwinian idea. We don’t make choices. We don’t understand our own motivations. We simply act instinctually within a system that by definition is designed to oppress people.

CRT believes that a free society is evil and it must be replaced by governmental structures that are controlled only by progressive advocates. Only the proponents of Critical Race Theory are morally pure enough to rule other human beings. CRT rejects all potential alternatives such as a “**Color-blind society**.” In other words, for all the talk about black lives matter and other cover stories for Critical Race Theory, the reality is Martin Luther King, Jr. is not a hero of this movement. MKL wanted a color-blind society. He said his dream was “*people would judge his children, not by the color of their skin but by the content of their character*.” That’s exactly the opposite of Critical Race Theory. It doesn’t matter about the content of your character. Your character is fatally flawed, specifically because of the color of your skin. You are either righteous or unrighteous based on your skin color.

Critical Race Theory believes that opponents are by definition racists or white supremacists. And what’s fascinating about that is, they believe opponents of Critical Race Theory are racists even when those opponents are black conservatives. This is a recipe for totalitarianism. These are just some examples. Schools and colleges are dumping SAT exams so that they can engineer racial equity and abolish the whole idea of merit. The Smithsonian backed the idea that working hard, showing up on time, and perfecting a task are functions of “***whiteness***.” They’re not inherently good. They’re just part of a system that oppresses.

In California right now there’s a ballot initiative to legalize government discrimination on the basis of race. You heard me right, to legalize discrimination on the basis of race. There’s a new mandate in California that company boards add members to their board from underrepresented communities. Corporations who haven’t publically signed on to the full “woke” agenda are being pressured by their employees and their stockholders into doing this. This means that hiring and firing is now done, not with race as a consideration, but entirely on the basis of race. Employees that don’t go along are forced into what are called “*Re-education sessions*.”

The NBA, for Pete’s sake, is little more today than a festival of *wokeness*, despite the fact that their viewership has tanked. The crowning achievement is this. Polls now tell us that 27%, more than one in four, of students in Ivy League universities now say they approve of violence as a method of prohibiting speech on campus with which they disagree. Think about that. They are approving of the option of violence to shut down conversation by people whose ideas are different from theirs.

So why does CRT seem to be winning the culture wars? You look at universities and museums, corporate America, Hollywood, liberal churches. You look at professional sports and especially the mainstream media. Why does it seem that CRT is all the rage? Well, let me explain that.

First of all, it has an element of what I call ***Emotional Empathy***. There is a wildly propagated narrative that is not true. It says that “*active police brutality is taking place in America and that police are hunting down black men and executing them in our streets*.” There is no statistical evidence. There is no research. There is no proof whatsoever that that is true. But we have a few highly publicized interactions that produced fatal results. And those specific scenarios have been extrapolated into this narrative that police are out of control and are hunting black men. Nobody wants that. There’s a natural empathy, an emotional draw to that that produces an outrage. That’s precisely why singular events are taken and strung together and made to appear like there’s an epidemic of black assassinations in America. It’s not true but it’s an effective emotional connection.

Not just emotional empathy but also there has been an ***intellectual hijacking*** of every issue in America today with a simple angle that everything is either racist or non-racist. In other words, in Critical Race Theory there is no allowance made for nuance. There’s no recognition that issues have complexity. Nothing like that is allowed in any discussion. It’s a super easy approach to life because frankly everything that just like me is non-racist they say. And everything that is different from me, everything that disagrees with me is inherently racist by definition. It is a reduction of the complexity of human life for a generation that just wants bumper-sticker answers to complicated problems.

There’s also the ***human lust for power***. CRT presents itself as the defender of the little guy, the attacker of the bad guy. The bad guy in this definition is anybody that doesn’t cower in agreement with the leaders of this movement. You’ve seen the videos of protestors of Black Lives Matter, Antifa, and other *woke* organizations. You’ve seen them literally screaming in the faces of people sitting in sidewalk cafes in the major cities of our country just trying to have lunch, just minding their own business and they hear this assault. This attack is designed to bring them into submission, to force them to raise a fist of solidarity, to admit that everything about them screams privilege. They must deny who they are so that this movement can now take control of everything in our country. It’s nothing more than the sinful desire of humans to dominate other humans. That’s why it includes censorship and cancel culture as their primary weapons.

But finally there’s this. I sincerely believe this is the key. Critical Race Theory ***substitutes the religious impulse that is in the human heart***. It puts itself in the place of satisfying that natural human yearning to be a part of something greater than themselves. The culture has rejected the idea of God, so Critical Race Theory has replaced it with this appeal to a utopia where all human beings can be fulfilled and have everything they want. They say, “*You can be a part of a great movement that will change the world if you come and buy into Critical Race Theory.”*

This is a generation that has disconnected themselves from the idea of transcendence. They’ve lost meaning. They have no recognized purpose in life. They are now, to use church language, they are now being born-again into a movement that claims to fill that spiritual void. It produces the answer to those doubts that humans have about their own righteousness. CRT assures you that if you’re a part of the movement that you are by definition righteous. Your sins have been atoned for. In fact, it is a religion without atonement because it’s not your individual sins that have to be atoned for. CRT argues that the sins belong to society at large and so society must be purged of those sins. The atonement is made by the sacrifice that you in CRT force on all of those other people that are involved in the conspiracy to oppress. It is a faith without atonement, a faith without forgiveness. What they don’t understand is that it will never alleviate personal guilt. It will never satisfy the yearning for meaning. It will never bring them in connection to the God who has already made a way for relationship. They attempt to atone for society’s sins by the sacrifices of others. Others meaning the enemies of the movement.

So, what’s our response? Well, like everything else, the Bible speaks to this. Let me share some verses that you can spend some time with and meditate on. In **Colossians 3:11** the apostle Paul says this.

“In Christ there is not Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all.”

In other words, you and I as a Biblical response to Critical Race Theory can begin by rejecting intentional segregation and the assumption that racial separation is necessary for societal success. It’s crazy that all of the advances that have been made in the last two generations toward bringing the races together are now being thrown overboard. We’re told now that segregation, that separation into separate camps is the way forward. NO! Can’t you see that that is the very approach that is ultimately designed to destroy a nation? You can’t separate a nation into separate camps. That’s what’s produced genocide in Rwanda. That’s what’s produced ethnic cleansing in Eastern Europe. That is a recipe for national disaster. A nation cannot survive with that strategy. The Church is the solution because we push this idea that Paul gives us in **Colossians 3** that in Christ all of our differences are brought into a commonality that comes from our shared relationship with God through Jesus. Don’t accept this intentional segregation as the way forward.

Also, as a Biblical response, we need to reject the suggestion that sinners repent, not only for their own sins, but also for the sins of others and for the sins of prior generations. Part of this movement has people on their knees pledging repentance and asking forgiveness for the sins of slave owners two hundred years ago. Folks, that’s not the way atonement and forgiveness works. We can refuse to replace individual salvation with collective salvation. The way forward is not some illusionary salvation of society. It is the change in individual human hearts that plays out in practical benefits to society as a whole. In other words, we need to keep our theology of salvation sound and Biblical.

Finally, we need to remember that “*wokeness*” is about correcting perceived power imbalances not by redistributing power equally among different groups. Rather, they want to correct what they perceive to be power imbalances by moving toward equity. That is, by determining certain outcomes and then rigging the game so that those outcomes take place. This does not require transformation. But it requires forceful subjugation of anybody outside of the movement. Listen, when they say, “*We want to win the election. We want to take over. And we’re going to send Christians to re-education camps*.” Don’t think that that’s hyperbole. That’s exactly what they intend to do.

Let me give you another couple of verses. In **Acts 4**, Peter and John find themselves facing religious authorities and being instructed that they can no longer speak the name of Jesus. In **Acts 4:19-20** it says this.

But Peter and John answered them, "Whether it's right in the sight of God *for us* to listen to you rather than to God, you decide; for we are unable to stop speaking about what we have seen and heard."

In other words, they are going to tell us that Christianity is fatality flawed, that it’s a part of the problem and that we need to keep our beliefs to ourselves. We need to leave the public square. We can do what we want to behind the closed doors of our churches but we need to stay out of the culture wars, stay separate from the conversations of our society. Push back against that. We will not be herded off into Christian ghettos. We will not be locked away behind the doors of our churches. We are salt and light. And we will bring light to the darkness. We will apply salt to the decay. We must stay engaged.

Peter and John said, “You do whatever is right for you, but as for us, we can’t stop doing what we do. It’s who we are. It’s who God has made us in Christ.”

There’s one other verse I want you to read and this might be the most important verse I give you today. It appears this direction that our culture is taking is winning the day and that everything else is in retreat. Let me give you this verse. In **John 16:33**, this is Jesus talking. You’ll find this in the red letters of the Gospel of John.

I have told you these things so that in Me you may have peace. You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world."

What’s that mean for us? It means that Jesus traveled to Samaria against Jewish traditions and reached out to another race. It means the Church in Acts offered salvation to Gentiles even though the Jews didn’t allow it. It means that churches in Europe protected Jews during World War 2. It means churches in America motivated the abolitionist movement to end slavery. It means that the Church is the answer to problems of society and Jesus promises ultimate victory because He has conquered the world. Don’t lose who you are. We are the people of Jesus Christ.

This is Truth Currents.