



Sufficiency of Scripture Series

Volume 1 • Issue 2 of 4

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Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary (MABTS) leadership was frequently approached during 2019 by concerned students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends regarding current trends. Their questions were about debates, decisions, terms, and biblical interpretations currently ongoing within American churches and the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC). The following document (2 of 4) is part of the MABTS Sufficiency of Scripture Series. The series is written and released by MABTS to provide clarity and a broader perspective to the Mid-America family regarding many of the key debates. Each document is intentionally condensed and is not meant to be an exhaustive resource. Included in each issue are references which will aid further study.

The goal of the series is threefold: Challenge Christians to utilize the Scriptures as their guide in any debate, encourage trust in God's Word for all areas of faith and practice, and strengthen the faith of the Mid-America family.

The four focus areas in the MABTS Sufficiency of Scripture Series are:

- (1) Understanding the key debates
- (2) Deepening knowledge of alternate views
- (3) Forming a biblically based opinion
- (4) Using Baptist distinctives to prepare believers for present and future debates (September 2020)

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Deepening the Knowledge of Alternate Views: Examining the Connections of Marxism, Social Justice, Critical Race Theory, and Intersectionality in Relation to Resolution 9 of the 2019 Annual Meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention

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Abstract: Currently the topics of Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality (CRT/I) are subjects of great interest in Southern Baptist circles. The Southern Baptist Convention passed Resolution 9 (“On Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality”) at the 2019 annual meeting in Birmingham, Alabama. Proponents and critics have debated whether Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality are analytical tools that can help Southern Baptists address issues related to race, ethnicity, culture, and gender. The purpose of this paper is to expand the perspectives of the first paper in the Sufficiency of Scripture Series presented to Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary’s students, staff, faculty, and friends. This will be accomplished by examining CRT/I’s connections to Marxism and Social Justice, contrasting and comparing an analytical tool with a worldview, presenting the perspective of those for Resolution 9, and presenting the perspectives of those for using Scripture alone as a guide for dealing with racism in society and within churches.

Introduction

Recent activity within the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), in particular the adoption of Resolution 9 during the 2019 annual meeting, highlights the importance of correctly understanding secular ideologies, theories, and analytical tools. This activity also necessitates a deeper search of the Scriptures for insight. In this paper, which is a follow-up to the first issue in the Sufficiency of Scripture Series (SOSS), *Understanding the Debate: An Examination of Critical Race Theory, Intersectionality, and Resolution 9 of the 2019 Southern Baptist Convention*, the topics of Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality (CRT/I), Resolution 9, and the sufficiency of Scripture debate will be further explored. This paper aims to expand the perspectives of Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary’s students, staff, faculty, and friends regarding the adoption of CRT/I as analytical tools for Southern Baptist churches and entities. A paper of only 11 pages will not consider every nuance related to these topics but will seek to provide a clear and truthful summary of the important ideas and opinions.

CRT/I's Connections with Social Justice and Marxism

The following section builds upon the knowledge of the first SOSS issue written by Dr. Matthew R. Akers which is referenced above. Therefore, a prior reading of that issue is highly recommended before continued reading here. This section moves beyond definitions and origins into CRT/I's connections with Marxism and Social Justice. Additionally, the definition of an analytical tool as compared to an ideology or worldview will be examined.

Most proponents of the CRT/I ideologies describe them in loose terms which can make CRT/I difficult to understand. Richard D. Delgado and Jean Stefancic provide the standard definition of Critical Race Theory: "The critical race theory (CRT) movement is a collection of activists and scholars engaged in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power."¹ Elsewhere, in the opening of their work, *Intersectionality*, Patricia Collins and Surma Bilge write about "intersectionality's vast terrain."² These ambiguous descriptions evidence the lack of clarity and warrant a deeper examination of the underlying ideologies of CRT/I in order for one to ascertain fully the usefulness of each.

Connections between CRT/I and Social Justice

CRT/I are components of the larger framework of social justice. *Social justice* takes on a variety of meanings depending upon who employs the term. The Oxford English Dictionary online defines social justice as, "Justice in terms of the distribution of wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society."³ The term was originally popularized in the early 1930s by a Catholic priest, Charles E. Coughlin, through his radio show. Over time, "his talks became increasingly antidemocratic and anti-Semitic, as did the journal he founded, *Social Justice*."⁴ While social justice was originally a religious concept, soon other ideologies began to expand upon it and change its meaning. In "The Origins of Social Justice," Thomas Patrick Burke points out this shift and the results of the ideological mixing: "Since the Second World War, however, 'social justice' has come to mean something very different. The socialist conception of it [social justice] won out over its rivals and gained solitary possession of the field. The term now stands for a very particular view of what is right and wrong in society."⁵

Because the socialist connotation of social justice has been the dominant one for decades, it will be used for the remainder of this paper when referring to the term social justice. The socialist version of social justice takes great pains to identify and examine the various plights of the disenfranchised, the marginalized, and the oppressed. Richard Dagger and Terrence Ball trace socialism's roots to Marxist philosophy and define socialism in the following terms:

¹ Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*, 3rd ed. (New York: New York University Press), 3.

² Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge, *Intersectionality* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2016), viii.

³ Lexico.com, "Social Justice" accessed April 10, 2020 https://www.lexico.com/definition/social_justice

⁴ Encyclopedia Britannica, "Fascism" accessed on April 5, 2020 <https://www.britannica.com/topic/fascism#ref742081>

⁵ Thomas Patrick Burke, "The Origins of Social Justice: Taparelli d'Azeglio," *Modern Age* 52, no. 2 (Spring 2010): 97.

Social and economic doctrine that calls for public rather than private ownership or control of property and natural resources. According to the socialist view, individuals do not live or work in isolation but live in cooperation with one another. Furthermore, everything that people produce is in some sense a social product, and everyone who contributes to the production of a good is entitled to a share in it. Society as a whole, therefore, should own or at least control property for the benefit of all its members.⁶

Emile Burns espouses the same interconnected view of socialism and Marxism. He explains Marxist theory as “the first to transform socialism from a Utopia into a science, to give this science a firm foundation and to indicate the path which must be trodden in order further to develop this science and to elaborate it in all its details.”⁷ In other words, Marxism is the scientific, logical outgrowth of socialism’s lofty ideals.

Connections between CRT/I and Marxism

CRT/I build upon the foundation of Marxism and seek to deal with the ills of society by classifying people into general categories. Marxism offers an economic lens through which adherents view the world, and Karl Marx understood oppression as an outgrowth of a person’s economic standing.⁸ This mentality is apparent in Marx’s writings. For example, he writes, “Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another.”⁹ The groups Marx mentions represent individuals on the varying ends of the societal spectrum lumped together into groups: oppressor and oppressed.

Proponents of Critical Race Theory demonstrate the same affinity for the oppressor and oppressed categorization. The only difference is in CRT/I the two groups are stratified by race while traditional Marxists use terms of economics. In *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings that Formed the Movement*, one group of CRT adherents express how they view the oppressor and oppressed dynamic as racial power. They describe the theory as “a movement of left scholars, most of them scholars of color, situated in law schools, whose work challenges the ways in which race and racial power are construed and represented in American legal culture and more generally, in American society as a whole.”¹⁰ Thus, race and racial power are the category lines for dividing and defining people between the groups of oppressor and oppressed.

Intersectionality takes the ideas of traditional Marxism and CRT a step further. It views the oppressor and oppressed dynamic as rising from a multiplicity of factors. Within intersectionality, economic status and race are contributors among many variables rather than isolated causes. Gender,

⁶ Richard Dagger and Terence Ball, “Socialism,” Encyclopedia Britannica, last modified January 16, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/socialism>.

⁷ Emile Burns, *A Handbook of Marxism* (New York: Haskell House Publisher, 1935), 571.

⁸ John Somerville, *The Philosophy of Marxism: An Exposition* (New York: Random House, 1967), 87-91.

⁹ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Communist Manifesto* (Socialist Labor Party of America, 2006), accessed on March 10, 2020, http://www.slp.org/pdf/marx/comm_manifesto.pdf.

¹⁰ Kimberlé Crenshaw, Neil Gotanda, Gary Peller, and Kendall Thomas, eds., *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings That Formed the Movement* (New York: New Press, 1995), xiii.

sexual orientation, religion, and disabilities are some examples of the variables Intersectionality may include. Collins and Bilge explain, “When it comes to social inequity, people’s lives and the organization of power in a given society are better understood as being shaped not by a single axis of social division, be it race or gender or class, but by many axes that work together and influence each other.”¹¹ Along with Critical Race Theory and Marxism, Intersectionality seeks to deconstruct the top-down power structure of modern, capitalistic society based on perceived or actual mistreatment of marginalized persons. It proposes instead to utilize a bottom-up structure to revolutionize society.

It is worth noting at this point that Marxism and ideologies derived from Marxism advocate a complete revolution or dramatic and often violent redistribution of power. Social justice proponents believe oppression is systemic, meaning the entire system has been contaminated beyond repair. The extent of this contamination leads social justice supporters to refute the idea that corrupt people can make just laws. Therefore, a top-down rectification of society’s ills is not possible through peaceful lawmaking and the democratic process. Those in power must be removed or overthrown, and the entire system must be destroyed. Advocates of the bottom-up process for change argue no justice will occur until the oppressed become the ones in power. This amount of social change cannot be made without social upheaval, and a revolution is often suggested as a necessary pathway.

While Marxism and CRT/I deploy different terminology, they share the same goal of identifying the marginalized. Each group employs different means or lenses for viewing individuals and groups. CRT/I proponents seek to understand who are the oppressed and who are the oppressors in a society or system. Often, the oppressor and oppressed dynamic is expressed with the terms *victimized* and *victimizer*. CRT/I proponents share an affinity for categorizing individuals based on their status as a victim.

Comparing and Contrasting Analytical Tool and Worldview

The framers of Resolution 9 took great care to qualify their use of CRT/I as analytical tools. According to Merriam-Webster, a tool is “something (such as an instrument or apparatus) used in performing an operation or necessary in the practice of a vocation or profession.”¹² The term analytical means “separating something into component parts or constituent elements.”¹³ In simplistic terms, an analytical tool is something used to separate a complex thing into smaller parts for the purpose of understanding, explanation, or analysis. In comparison, Merriam-Webster defines a worldview as “a comprehensive conception or apprehension of the world especially from a specific standpoint.”¹⁴ In other words, worldview is not just something used to understand a viewpoint or an idea, but it is the idea or the view itself being lived out in daily life whether knowingly or through subconscious habit and assumption. Working within these confines, an analytical tool as proposed by the SBC 2019 Committee

¹¹ Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge, *Intersectionality* (Cambridge, UK; Polity, 2016), 2.

¹² Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary, 11th ed., s.v. “tool,” accessed on March 11, 2020, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/tool>.

¹³ Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary, 11th ed., s.v. “analytic,” accessed on March 10, 2020, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/analytic>.

¹⁴ Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary, 11th ed., s.v. “worldview” on April 1, 2020, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/worldview>

on Resolutions is an instrument intended to facilitate the separation of complex societal interactions into component parts in order to address a complex situation competently.

Resolution 9 states, “That critical race theory and intersectionality should only be employed as analytical tools subordinate to Scripture—not as transcendent ideological framework,” but a few lines later states “that Southern Baptist churches and institutions repudiate the misuse of insights gained from critical race theory, intersectionality, and any unbiblical ideologies.”¹⁵ This wording in the resolution points to the difficulties in separating the worldview out of an ideology in order to make the remaining concept function as an analytical tool.

Given the strides taken by the members of the Committee on Resolutions to propose CRT/I as analytical tools, one wonders what dangers exist in adopting CRT/I and why the distinction was necessary. The Baptist Press asked the Resolutions Committee why they intentionally described CRT/I as analytical tools. Members replied, “We used analytical tools to distinguish between the worldview of CRT/I’s creators and the concepts that are used from these theories by some Christians.”¹⁶ Committee members continued, “In limited ways, insights from these theories may show us ‘what is’ when it comes to the social dynamics people experience.”¹⁷

Dr. Albert Mohler, president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, expounds upon the nuance differences between an analytical tool and a worldview when it comes to CRT/I:

Christians should understand as we do worldview analysis that we can deploy certain ideas or certain tools analytically, without adopting the entire worldview . . . But at the same time, we cannot possibly separate that from understanding that that very analysis is rooted in a worldview, the worldview of Marxism . . . And we also understand that Marxism emerged as a direct response, a refutation to the biblical worldview.¹⁸

Here Mohler highlights the inherent dangers of trying to separate a tool out of an ideological framework. The repackaging of an ideology as an analytical tool rather than a worldview does not necessarily mean the worldview has been removed from the tool. This fact highlights the importance of seeking a deeper understanding not only of Resolution 9 but also of the long-term implications and potential risks of adopting such a resolution throughout Southern Baptists churches and entities.

¹⁵ Southern Baptist Convention, “On Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality,” accessed April 2, 2020 <http://www.sbc.net/resolutions/2308/on-critical-race-theory-and-intersectionality>

¹⁶ “Q and A with the 2019 Resolutions Committee about Resolution 9,” Baptist Press, February 5, 2020, <http://bpnews.net/54275/qa-with-the-2019-resolutions-committee-about-resolution-9>.”

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Albert Mohler, “Ideas Have Consequences: Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality in the News from the Southern Baptist Convention,” The Briefing, June 14, 2019, <https://albertmohler.com/2019/06/14/briefing-6-14-19>.

Description of Resolution 9 and Its Supporters' Perspectives

Like other resolutions presented at the 2019 SBC annual meeting, Resolution 9 is a long list of inter-dependent statements of truth (the “Whereas” section) followed by a list of actions proposed for SBC churches to adopt (the “Resolved” section). A brief summary of Resolution 9 “On Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality” is that some churches and SBC entities are using aspects of CRT/I, and this is allowable as an analytical tool under the authority of Scripture. While Resolution 9 is a long document,¹⁹ the key ideas taken directly from the document in the order in which they appear are as follows:

WHEREAS, Evangelical scholars who affirm the authority and sufficiency of Scripture have employed selective insights from critical race theory and intersectionality to understand multifaceted social dynamics ... General revelation accounts for truthful insights found in human ideas that do not explicitly emerge from Scripture and reflects what some may term ‘common grace’ ... 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 ... RESOLVED, That critical race theory and intersectionality should only be employed as analytical tools subordinate to Scripture—not as transcendent ideological frameworks... That the gospel of Jesus Christ alone grants the power to change people and society... that Southern Baptists will carefully analyze how the information gleaned from these tools are employed to address social dynamics, ... deny any philosophy or theology that fundamentally defines individuals using categories identified as sinful in Scripture ... while we denounce the misuse of critical race theory and intersectionality, we do not deny that ethnic, gender, and cultural distinctions exist and are a gift from God that will give Him absolute glory.²⁰

By affirming Resolution 9, Southern Baptists affirmed that CRT/I should be used as tools in churches and other SBC entities under the authority of Scripture and not misused as a worldview or to define individuals in sinful terms.

The resolution “On Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality” demonstrates the awareness of convention leadership that brokenness exists in human relationships even among redeemed persons. These leaders also recognize the existence of secular thought related to this societal dysfunction and that select ideas from CRT/I are currently taught in certain SBC churches and entities. The committee further acknowledges the manifestation of human brokenness along the socially constructed lines of race and other factors.²¹ The setting forth of this resolution evidences an attempt to address the societal ills resulting from racism and the many manifestations of unbiblical prejudice that exist. The Resolutions Committee recommended CRT/I for adoption by the messengers of the Southern Baptist Convention for the purpose of using these tools to identify issues of racial prejudice and mistreatment.

¹⁹ Southern Baptist Convention “On Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality” accessed April 2, 2020 <http://www.sbc.net/resolutions/2308/on-critical-race-theory-and-intersectionality>

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ Ibid

CRT/I proponents aim to break down the complexities of societal oppression by focusing primarily on issues of race and other marginalizing factors.

The 2019 Committee on Resolutions Chairman, Dr. Curtis Woods explained the genesis of Resolution 9 when he notes the committee had no desire to deal with CRT/I but felt it necessary to do so when an SBC pastor, Stephen Feinstein, offered his initial resolution. Woods continues, “And so, we proposed a resolution that we hoped would reflect how the Christian church for 2000 years has applied the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture with ideas that emerge from sources outside the Bible.”²²

Even proponents of Resolution 9 are not entirely content with the wording of the resolution. Many think the resolution does not say enough about the ideologies behind CRT/I. Dr. Molher explained this line of thinking as follows: “I did not want the resolution to say less than it said. I wanted it to say more than it said. I wanted it to acknowledge more clearly the origins of critical race theory and intersectionality... to state more clearly that embedded in both of those analytical tools is a praxis, that is a political extension.”²³ In the above quote, Mohler does not argue for the careless usage of CRT/I but is advocating that the resolution should have come with further warnings of the dangers inherent in both the origin and current philosophies of CRT/I.

Many have ascribed negative intentions to the committee, but Woods assures, “We were seeking to help our convention address an issue some Southern Baptists were already concerned about.”²⁴ In a Question and Answer session with Baptist Press, members of the 2019 Committee on Resolutions describe their motives in putting forth Resolution 9:

The committee has been accused of bad motives. Some have compared the resolution to building a “Trojan horse” or letting liberalism into our Southern Baptist tent. This was not the goal of any member of the committee, and there is nothing about our work to indicate that it was our intention. We sought to provide clear biblical parameters to engage ongoing conversations about race in society.²⁵

In other words, the committee viewed CRT/I as helpful additions to Southern Baptist churches and entities as a way of understanding and engaging society.

Description of Scripture Alone and Its Supporters’ Perspectives

Amid what may be admirable desires, some view the actions taken in crafting Resolution 9 as questionable at best. Suspicion arose among some from the overt differences between the adopted resolution and the originally proposed resolution sent to the committee. Dr. Tom Nettles, a pastor,

²² “Q and A with the 2019 Resolutions Committee about Resolution 9,” Baptist Press, February 5, 2020, <http://bpnews.net/54275/qa-with-the-2019-resolutions-committee-about-resolution-9>.

²³ Albert Mohler, “Ideas Have Consequences: Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality in the News from the Southern Baptist Convention,” The Briefing, June 14, 2019, <https://albertmohler.com/2019/06/14/briefing-6-14-19>.

²⁴ “Q and A with the 2019 Resolutions Committee about Resolution 9,” Baptist Press, February 5, 2020, <http://bpnews.net/54275/qa-with-the-2019-resolutions-committee-about-resolution-9>.

²⁵ Ibid

professor, and author, reports that the “committee substantially altered the resolution as originally presented. Changing it from a heavy warning against CRT, the committee’s alterations gave it [CRT/I] an overall positive commendation.”²⁶ Stephen Feinstein, the pastor of Sovereign Way Church in California who submitted the original motion to the 2019 Committee on Resolutions, says he “immediately noticed the committee severely altered” his original submission.²⁷ Feinstein further explains, “The worldview behind CRT still needs to be denounced publicly...so that we could hold accountable those espousing it, especially within SBC institutions.”²⁸

While Resolution 9 references the sufficiency of Scripture and quotes the Baptist Faith and Message 2000’s statement on Scripture, many think the statement in the resolution is not enough. Dr. Nettles explains: “It [Resolution 9] seeks to affirm the recently re-established consent to inerrancy and the sole sufficiency of Scripture while at the same time advocating a highly sophisticated theory, ostensibly as a tool, to provide a framework of interpretation as if the Scripture were not, indeed, sufficient.”²⁹ If Scripture were indeed being supported in this situation as sufficient, there would be no additional need for analytical tools to assist Christians in understanding human nature or implementing biblical commands.

Sufficiency-alone supporters believe the message sent by Resolution 9 is confusing at best and duplicitous or dishonest at worst. These individuals promote the doctrine of sufficiency precludes the need for any other analytical tools in dealing with society. God’s special revelation is enough to inform and guide the church on matters of loving one’s neighbor and reaching the most marginalized in both the church and society. John Piper rephrased 2 Tim 3:15-17 when he provided the following definition for the sufficiency of Scripture: “The Scriptures are sufficient in the sense that they are the only (“*once for all*”) inspired and (therefore) inerrant words of God that we need, in order to know the way of salvation (“*make you wise unto salvation*”) and the way of obedience (“*equipped for every good work*”).”³⁰ John MacArthur points to the evidence in the Old Testament of the power and profitability of God’s Word when he says, “Psalm 19:7-14 is the most comprehensive statement regarding the sufficiency of Scripture. It is an inspired statement about Scripture as a qualified guide for every situation.”³¹

Those who support Resolution 9 claim that CRT/I can be used as facts under Scripture to help inform the church’s praxis. Sufficiency-alone supporters emphasize that CRT/I rely heavily on personal experience to inform the way present circumstances are viewed. This reliance on personal experience could be detrimental to church praxis, which should be based on the immutable, unchanging Word of God.

²⁶ Tom Nettles, “An Anti-Racist Intention: A Critical Analysis of Resolution 9 - Part 1” accessed on April 3, 2020 <https://founders.org/2019/12/20/an-anti-racist-intention-a-critical-analysis-of-resolution-9-part-1/>

²⁷ Rudy Gray, “SBC Resolution 9: Statement on Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality Point of Controversy and Disagreement,” The Baptist Courier, June 27, 2019, <https://baptistcourier.com/2019/06/sbc-resolution-9-statement-on-critical-race-theory-intersectionality-point-of-controversy-and-disagreement/>.

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ Tom Nettles “An Anti-Racist Intention: A Critical Analysis of Resolution 9 - Part 1” accessed on April 3, 2020 <https://founders.org/2019/12/20/an-anti-racist-intention-a-critical-analysis-of-resolution-9-part-1/>

³⁰ John Piper, “Thoughts on Scripture: What it Does and Doesn’t Mean.” Published Feb 9, 2005, accessed April 9, 2020. <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/thoughts-on-the-sufficiency-of-scripture>

³¹ John MacArthur, The Master’s Seminary Journal 15, no. 2 (Fall 2004): 165-174. Accessed April 8, 2020. <https://www.tms.edu/m/tmsj15g.pdf>

CRT/I are experiential, based on past and current human experiences. CRT/I elevate these experiences by letting them function as the guiding truth for social, societal, and church reform. However, one's personal experience does not equate to true, universal, and objective fact. The misapplication of CRT/I may endanger the concept of objective truth and potentially align believers with proponents of group identity and identity politics.

In an article on the sufficiency of Scripture, Piper acknowledges the need to be obedient to universal truths brought to humanity through God's general revelation, "The sufficiency of Scripture does not mean that the Scripture is all we need to live obediently. To be obedient in the sciences we need to read science and study nature... In other words, the Bible does not tell us all we need to know in order to be obedient stewards of this world."³² Sufficiency-alone Supporters believe science, when properly understood, points to truths that God has established (i.e., General Revelation), and that CRT/I are a collection of subjective experiences rather than scientific or empirical truth. Therefore, because these concepts are experience-based rather than fact-based, CRT/I do not demand obedience from Christians in order for them to obey God or be good stewards of the world and society.

Since CRT/I focus on the human experience, Sufficiency-alone Supporters advocate the human experience is an area in which Scripture requires no help from outside sources. As the Creator, God is the expert on human behavior, and He perfectly explains His creation through Scripture. Therefore, Scripture describes without error human behavior, motivation, desires, and needs even to the extent that humans themselves cannot know their own experiences. As the LORD spoke to the prophet Jeremiah, "The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; Who can understand it? I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind."³³ MacArthur states, "Scripture is surer than a human experience that one may look to."³⁴ Sufficiency-alone Supporters affirm the Bible speaks clearly against racism and promotes Christian unity. Christians can obey and apply these matters without additional guidelines or implication from secular theories such as CRT/I even when the theories are used as tools. In areas of not showing partiality³⁵ or in loving one's neighbor without prejudice the Bible speaks clearly, and Christians should obey the Bible rather than their own or anyone else's experience in these matters. This critical point cannot be overstated. For example, the Bible commands Christians to pray for their enemies and love those who curse them. These commands are contrary to what the human experience would teach as true or right.

Sufficiency-alone Supporters are also concerned that Resolution 9 will end up causing more problems than it will solve. Adam Robles, who leads a church in Vermont, voices concerns about the current trends of Christians, who in order to right one wrong "end up breaking the commands of God in other ways, showing partiality."³⁶ Nettles proposes, "A criticism of CRT does not imply a racist attitude.

³² John Piper, "Thoughts on Scripture: What it Does and Doesn't Mean." Published Feb 9, 2005, accessed April 9, 2020. <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/thoughts-on-the-sufficiency-of-scripture>

³³ Jer. 17: 9-10, New American Standard Version.

³⁴ John MacArthur, *The Master's Seminary Journal* 15, no. 2 (Fall 2004): 165-174. Accessed April 8, 2020. <https://www.tms.edu/m/tmsj15g.pdf>

³⁵ Dt. 1:17, Dt. 10:17, Acts 10:34, Rom. 2:11, Eph. 6:9, Col. 2:25, Js. 2:1, Js. 2:9, etc.

³⁶ Molly Worthen, *The New York Times*, "Can Black Evangelicals Save the Whole Movement?" Published April 20, 2019. Accessed April 2, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/20/opinion/sunday/black-evangelicals-diversity.html>

The fear is that CRT will establish even greater divisions and implement a new kind of racism antagonistic to the biblical principles of the gospel.”³⁷ The concerns that an attempt to solve one problem will lead to the creation of many more problems which could ultimately harm the ability of the SBC to work together for missions and evangelism is a primary driver in supporting a “Scripture alone” appeal.

This appeal in no way denies the existence or severity of the problem of racism. It promotes pursuing sanctification and discipleship through what Scripture has already clearly taught Christians about these topics. Pursuing Scripture is more sure, healthy, and unifying than trying to join tools to the Gospel. After all, as Resolution 9 itself states, “The gospel of Jesus Christ alone grants the power to change people and society.”³⁸ Sufficiency-alone Supporters would say if Jesus Christ alone has the power to change and has provided the instructions for how to accomplish the change, what do CRT/I have to add that Scripture has not already provided; therefore, is CRT/I even needed? Do the possible risks associated with using unbiblical, Marxists-derived ideologies not outweigh any potential benefits? The likelihood that millions of people will consistently and correctly implement such tools as recommended is low. Guiding Christians into such a murky, uneasily navigated situation may not be a wise or healthy leadership decision.

Finally, some are concerned the adoption of CRT/I will have the same results in the SBC as the integration of critical theory did in the early 20th Century. Critical theory, another ideological worldview which was promoted for use by Southern Baptist as an analytical tool only, led to the systematic erosion of beliefs in important truths like verbal inspiration and the virgin birth of Jesus Christ. In an article comparing the trajectory of Critical Theory and CRT/I, Nettles explains, “Given how much anti-supernatural bias was embedded in this analytical tool [critical theory] that focused, ostensibly, only on the viability of literary forms, it seems that Christians could have recognized that claims of neutrality for the tool were utterly false.”³⁹ In Nettles’ estimation, CRT/I could be more dangerous than critical theory due to its more open association with racial politics.⁴⁰

Conclusion

One of the SBC’s greatest strengths is the cooperation of its member churches to do more together than each church could do individually. The unity around the core beliefs outlined in the Baptist Faith and Message 2000 enables the more than 47,000 churches in the convention to give towards and focus on evangelizing the lost persons of North America and the world.⁴¹ Though the discussions surrounding Resolution 9 raise important questions in need of further examination, those on all sides of the discussion should take great care not to divert attention from the evangelistic emphasis of the convention and weaken the bonds that unite the group.

³⁷ Tom Nettles, “An Anti-Racist Intention: A Critical Analysis of Resolution 9 - Part 1.” Accessed on April 3, 2020 <https://founders.org/2019/12/20/an-anti-racist-intention-a-critical-analysis-of-resolution-9-part-1/>

³⁸ Southern Baptist Convention “On Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality.” Accessed April 2, 2020. <http://www.sbc.net/resolutions/2308/on-critical-race-theory-and-intersectionality>

³⁹ Tom Nettles, “An Anti-Racist Intention: A Critical Analysis of Resolution 9 - Part 1” accessed on April 3, 2020 <https://founders.org/2019/12/20/an-anti-racist-intention-a-critical-analysis-of-resolution-9-part-1/>

⁴⁰ Ibid

⁴¹ Dalia Fahmy, “7 Facts about Southern Baptists” published June 7, 2019. Accessed April 3, 2020. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/06/07/7-facts-about-southern-baptists/>

While the 2019 Committee on Resolutions may have had admirable desires to help believers, the ongoing debate around Resolution 9 remains. Some believe the experiential insights gained from Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality will assist SBC churches and entities in addressing racism. Others believe the special revelation of Scripture is enough to lead believers toward loving their neighbors as themselves and treating all as brothers and sisters in Christ. Of primary importance to the Christian should be applying and proclaiming the Gospel, and anything that seeks to dilute one's focus from such an important task should be abandoned. Racism is biblically wrong, and it should be opposed whenever and wherever it appears. The clear risks of utilizing Marxists-derived tools inconsistently across millions of believers and throughout over 47,000 churches may outweigh any perceived benefits. Issue Three in the Sufficiency of Scripture Series will address the debates raised in this paper and assist the reader in forming a biblically based opinion in response to this current debate.



Since its founding in 1972, Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary (MABTS) has been funded through the generous donations of like-minded believers. The seminary provides master and doctoral level theological training for effective service in church-related and missions vocations. Founded in 2018, The College at Mid-America is the undergraduate school of MABTS and provides associate and baccalaureate degree programs to prepare students to take their place as effective Christian and secular leaders. Both academic institutions guide students into a thorough understanding of the Bible and its relevance to everyday living. Mid-America students volunteer to evangelize and serve the community through the Witness One:Seven and GO! programs. Mid-America is located on an award-winning, 35-acre campus in Memphis, TN. For more information visit www.mabts.edu.

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