

**BOOK REVIEW**

**Fault Lines:  
The Social Justice Movement and  
Evangelicalism's Looming Catastrophe**

By Voddie T. Baucham, Jr.

Washington, D.C.: Salem Books, 2021, 251 pages

Protest and racial division continue to mark the political and cultural climate in the United States in 2021. In response to current and past injustices regarding race and other social inequalities, evangelical leaders are currently embracing aspects of Critical Race Theory and Critical Social Justice. In *Fault Lines*, Baucham employs narrative, research, and critical analysis to understand issues of race and broader social justice and help evangelicals in the United States maintain a biblical understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ. This book provides an interdisciplinary bridge combining sociology and theology, helping the Christian church navigate race and the conflicting worldviews surrounding the gospel and the Social Justice Movement.

In the preface, Baucham provides an overview of key sociological, historical, and philosophical thought patterns which have resulted in the inclusion of Marxism in the prevailing cultural worldview. The thought development identifies Karl Marx's conflict theory and Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony as essential to the development of Critical Theory. Critical Theory, built on a socially constructed worldview and promoting Marxist perspectives, is the predecessor to Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Critical Social Justice (CRJ).

In chapters one and two, Baucham provides a personal narrative of his experience and struggle with race relations as a child, a man coming of age, and a short-lived rising star among Southern Baptist evangelicals. As a child, Baucham experienced segregation, desegregation, and both indirect and direct racism. However, Baucham looks to his mother and other family members whose guidance and caretaking helped him form a strong identity. In college, Baucham surrendered his life to Jesus Christ, however in his early years of following Jesus, he recalls that "I was most certainly more black than Christian" (26). As an influential voice in the Southern Baptist Convention, Baucham continued challenging the status quo and eventually lost his influential position.

In chapter three, Baucham builds a case differentiating true justice from the Social Justice movement, warning against false narratives. Because God condemns injustice, falsehoods, and lies, Baucham argues that "our pursuit of justice must also be characterized by a pursuit of truth" (44). Baucham then uses anecdotes often highlighted by Critical Race

adherents and contrasts false narratives with quantitative research warning against assumptions based on misleading univariate analyses.

Chapters four through six explore the worldview assumptions stemming from CRT and the antiracism movement as social religion. The worldview tenets associated with antiracism include a cosmology of CRT, the sin of racism, the gospel of racial reconciliation, atonement through racial reparations, martyrs killed through racial violence, and new life through “wokeness” and adhering to CSJ/CRT. According to Baucham, antiracism views institutions through the lens of CRT, defining all institutions as racist and the concept of race as being created by white people to allow and ensure racial inequality. Concepts including white privilege, white supremacy, white complicity, white equilibrium, and white fragility are diagnosed, exposing the antiracism worldview's circular logic. Although Baucham notes that racism is the “new unpardonable sin” (80), he also points out that “white people can only respond appropriately to an accusation of racism by acknowledging, admitting, repenting of, and working to undo the racism” (79). While Baucham contends that Christians are to engage in pursuing justice, he argues against adopting the worldview assumptions and language of CRT, CSJ, and antiracism.

In chapter eight, Baucham discusses the current social and cultural effects of addressing race issues through the worldview lens of CRT, CSJ, and antiracism which view “power, oppression, and hegemony to be the basis for all human relations” (152). Social issues are analyzed, ranging from churches and education to crime, policing, and punishment. In each instance, the racially divisive views of CRT and CSJ weigh against anecdotal, historical, and statistical evidence to the contrary. Baucham also takes on abortion, noting the eugenic roots of Planned Parenthood and the disparity that “though black women make up less than 13 percent of the population, they account for 35 percent of all abortions” (174).

Baucham’s argumentative style and structure provide a clear and understandable approach to grappling with the conflicting worldviews of CSJ and biblical Christianity. However, chapter nine comprises a weakness of Baucham’s argumentative style. Baucham illustrates divergences from evangelical Christianity by co-mingling a biblical worldview and a worldview based on Marxist perspectives. Baucham confronts many evangelical leaders openly. While confronting evangelical leaders for adopting perspectives that abandon a biblical gospel, Baucham claims the goal of warning, exposing, and correcting. However, Baucham appears to treat those he exposes with a similar univariate analysis which he decries the use of by proponents of CRT and CSJ. For example, Baucham aligns David Platt, an evangelical leader, with the social justice movement, citing two sermons. Baucham’s use of counterpoint suggests the reader view David Platt as though he is promoting the Social Justice movement. However, Baucham’s analysis does not include Platt’s thought on the Social Justice movement or any analysis of his life and work in relation to CRT or CSJ.

The strength of Baucham's argument is in exposing a false and distorted gospel with clear logic and strong analysis. Baucham notes that gospel distortions occur when "our guilt and shame over America's past, our love for our brethren, and our good and godly desire for reconciliation" (204) allow us to adopt the worldview assumptions of CRT based on Marxist perspectives rather than biblical revelation. Before providing a biblical roadmap of forgiveness for moving forward in racial discussions, Baucham identifies the fallacy of a gospel distorted by the antiracism worldview. "One of the biggest problems with antiracism is the fact that it is law-based...it holds out no hope of salvation, restoration, or reconciliation" (215).

Baucham's solution for racism is a biblical understanding of the gospel. The problem of racism is a problem within the individual human heart. Therefore, the problem with CRT and CSJ is the promotion of a non-biblical worldview that is attractive to evangelical Christians desiring the Matthew 5 kingdom of God. The Marxist foundation of CRT and CSJ purportedly distorts the gospel, re-targeting the responsibility of sin from the individual to the systemic structures of society, thereby negating the need of a savior. Church leaders desiring to understand the philosophical and sociological thoughts driving current racial division and the Social Justice Movement, and to engage social justice issues from what Baucham argues is the biblical perspective may benefit greatly from *Fault Lines*.

James Strecker  
Omega Graduate School