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**WOKE THEOLOGY:
IS THE SOCIAL JUSTICE MOVEMENT
HIJACKING THE GOSPEL?**

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Introduction

- We frequently hear the term “woke” in current discussions.
- Campuses, corporations, and even churches are described as being woke.
- What does the term mean?
- How are these ideas influencing society?
- Is there any connection to ESG mandates and stakeholder capitalism?
- How should Christians respond to wokeness in society?

What Woke Is Not

- Wanting societal harmony across backgrounds does not make you woke.
- Seeing massive failings in American and Western history, sustained patterns of racist thought, does not make you woke.
- Doing everything you can and know to do to build bonds with people different from you in various ways does not make you woke.
- Praying for greater diversity in your church through saving of fellow sinners does not make you woke.
- Wanting greater justice in the world doesn't make you woke.

What Woke Is

- Wokeness is a mindset and a perspective of our society.
- The term means that one is “awake” to the true nature of the world when so many in society are asleep.
- In the academic world, wokeness occurs when one embraces the basic principles found in critical race theory (CRT).
- Woke theology surfaces in the non-Christian world as a substitute religion.
- Woke theology surfaces in churches concerned about injustice and wanting to be relevant to the cultural dialogue.

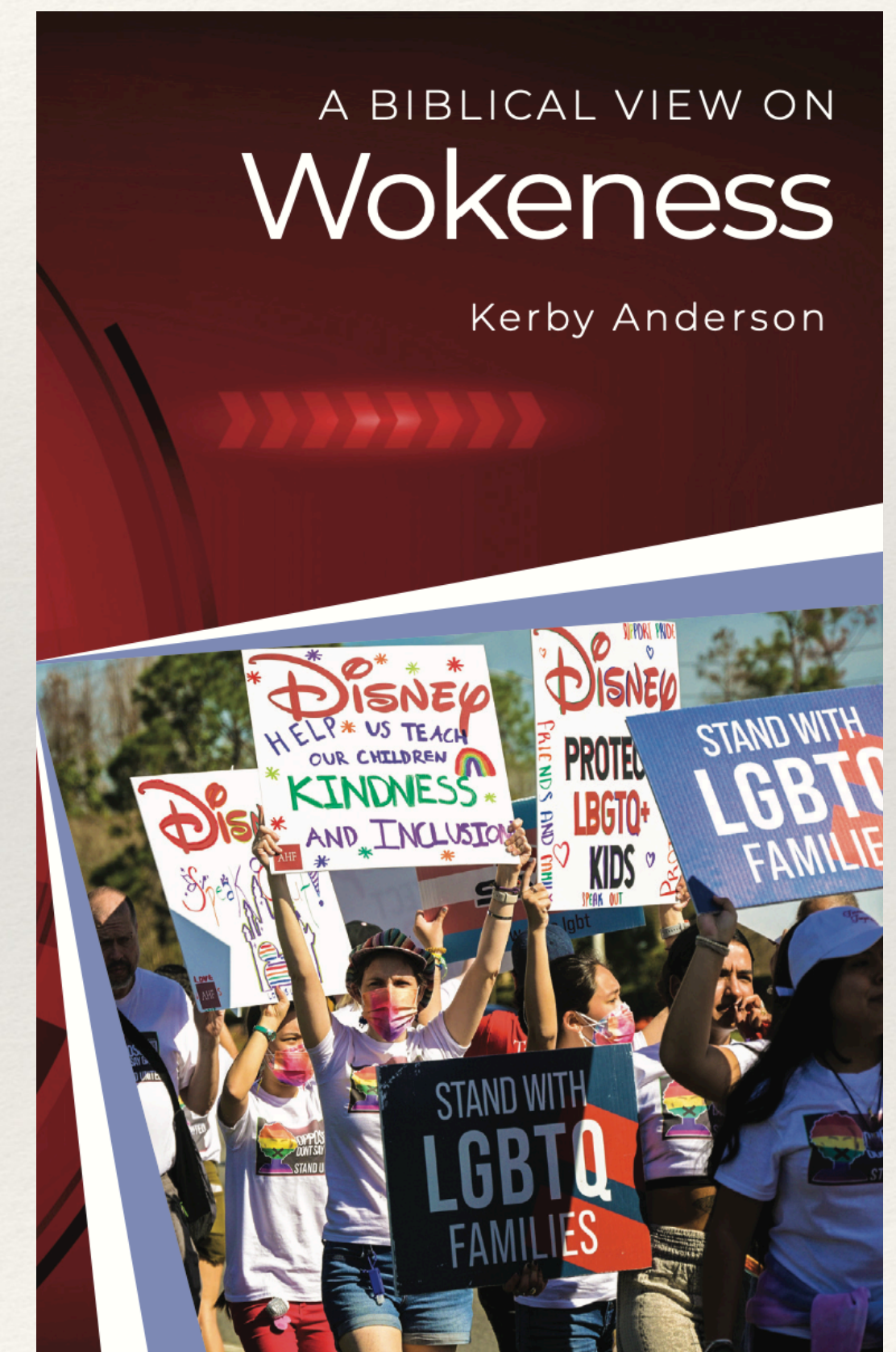
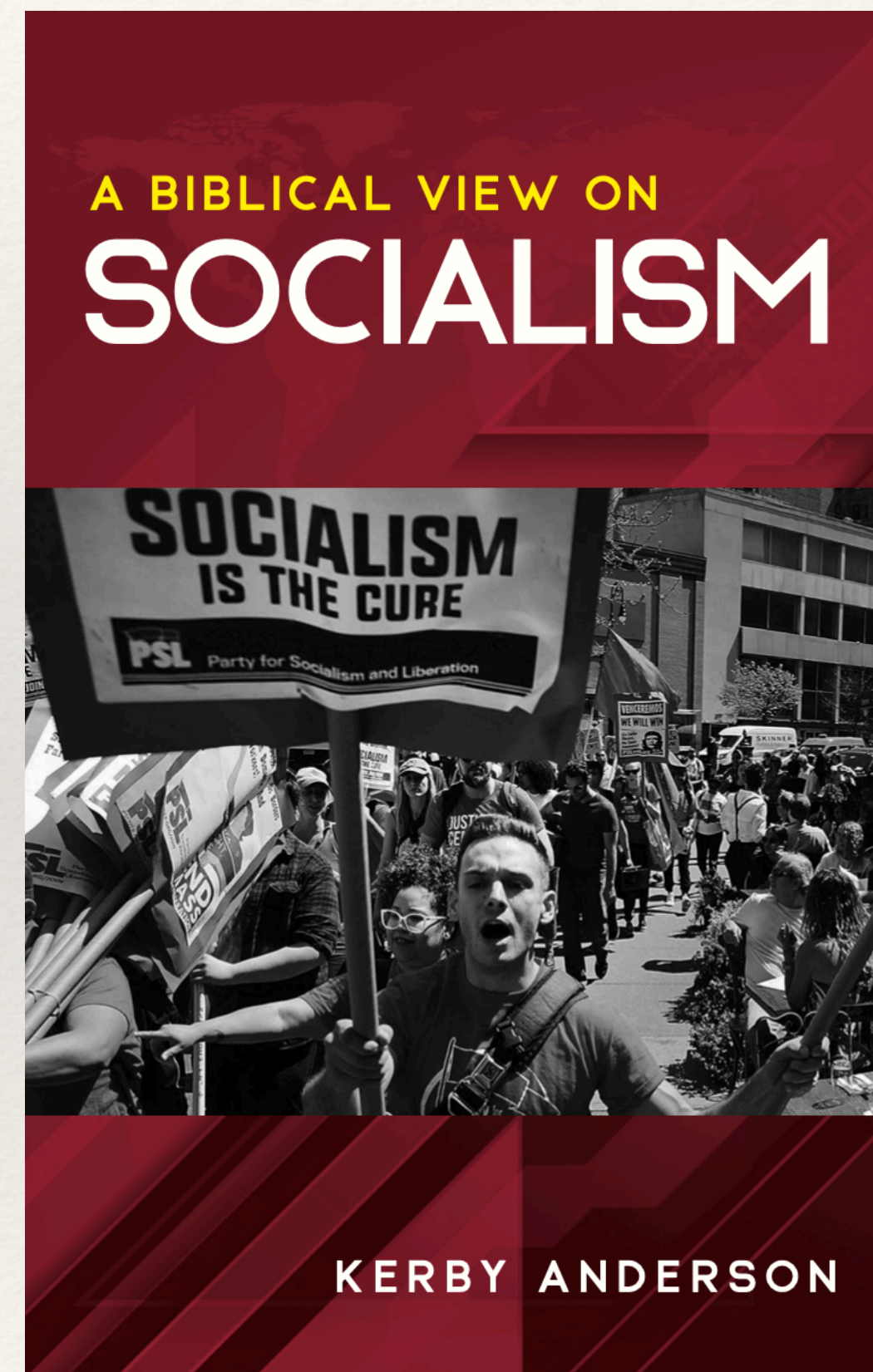
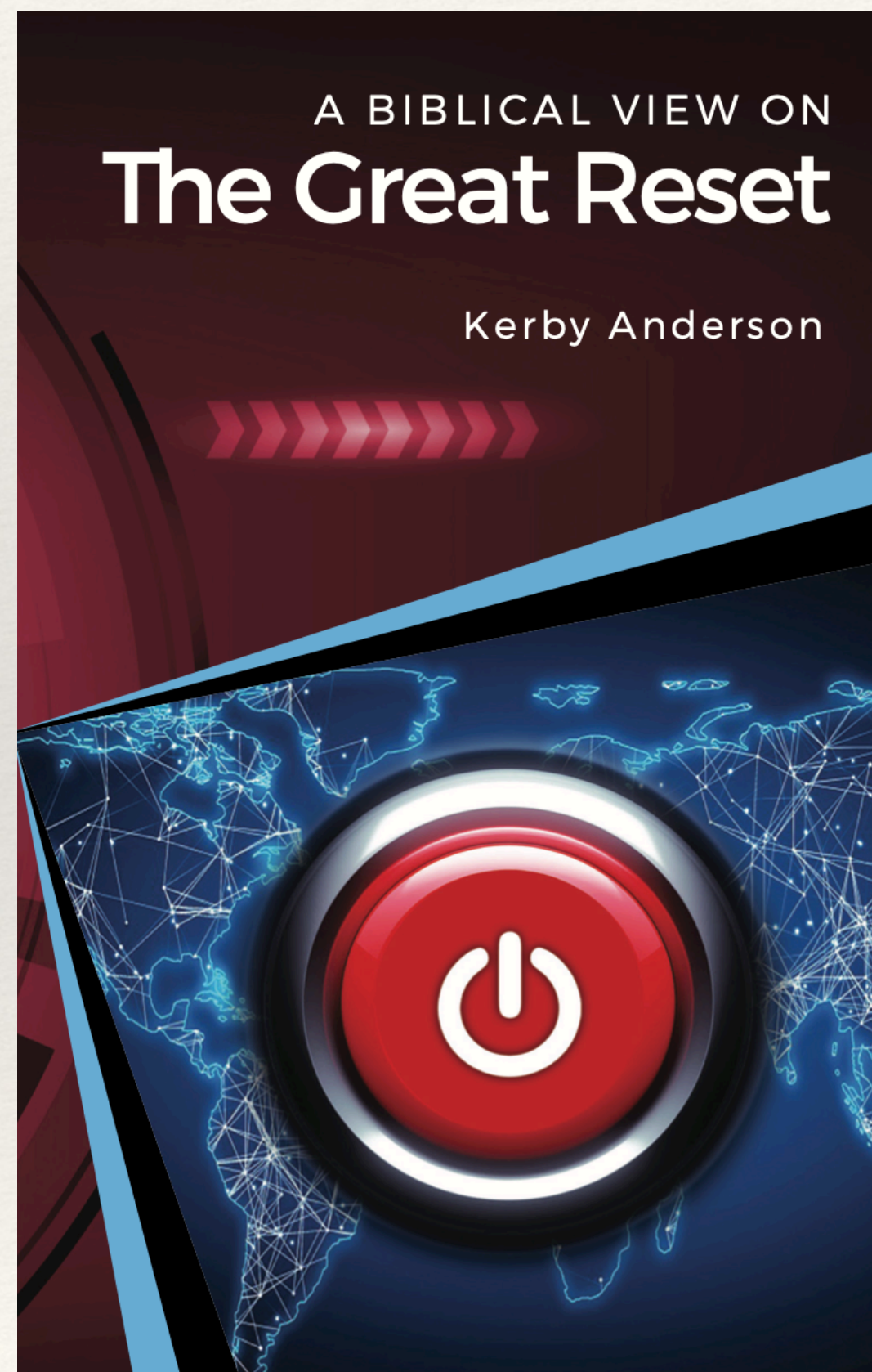
Woke Corporations

- When the Georgia legislature debated and then passed voter integrity laws, the CEOs of several corporations took to the media to express their displeasure.
- The CEO of Coca-Cola complained the voting law was oppressive, which then brought attention to the fact that the company was doing business in China with oppressive human rights violations.
- The CEO of Delta Airlines complained about voter IDs as other critics were reminding them that you couldn't get on a Delta flight without showing a form of ID.

Woke Corporations and ESG

- E - stands for environmental concerns. What is the company doing to address the threat of climate change by lowering carbon emissions?
- S - stands for social and looks at the company's relationship with stakeholders (often called stakeholder capitalism). Does the company donate to the local community or does the company encourage employees to perform volunteer work?
- G - stands for governance and desires diversity on the board of directors and corporate transparency.

Resources



Hegemonic power

Racism oppression microaggressions

Heteronormativity Patriarchy Cisgender

Intersectionality privilege

Critical theory

LGBTQ+ White privilege

Gender Sexism Social Justice

identity centering Cultural supremacy

Critical Theory

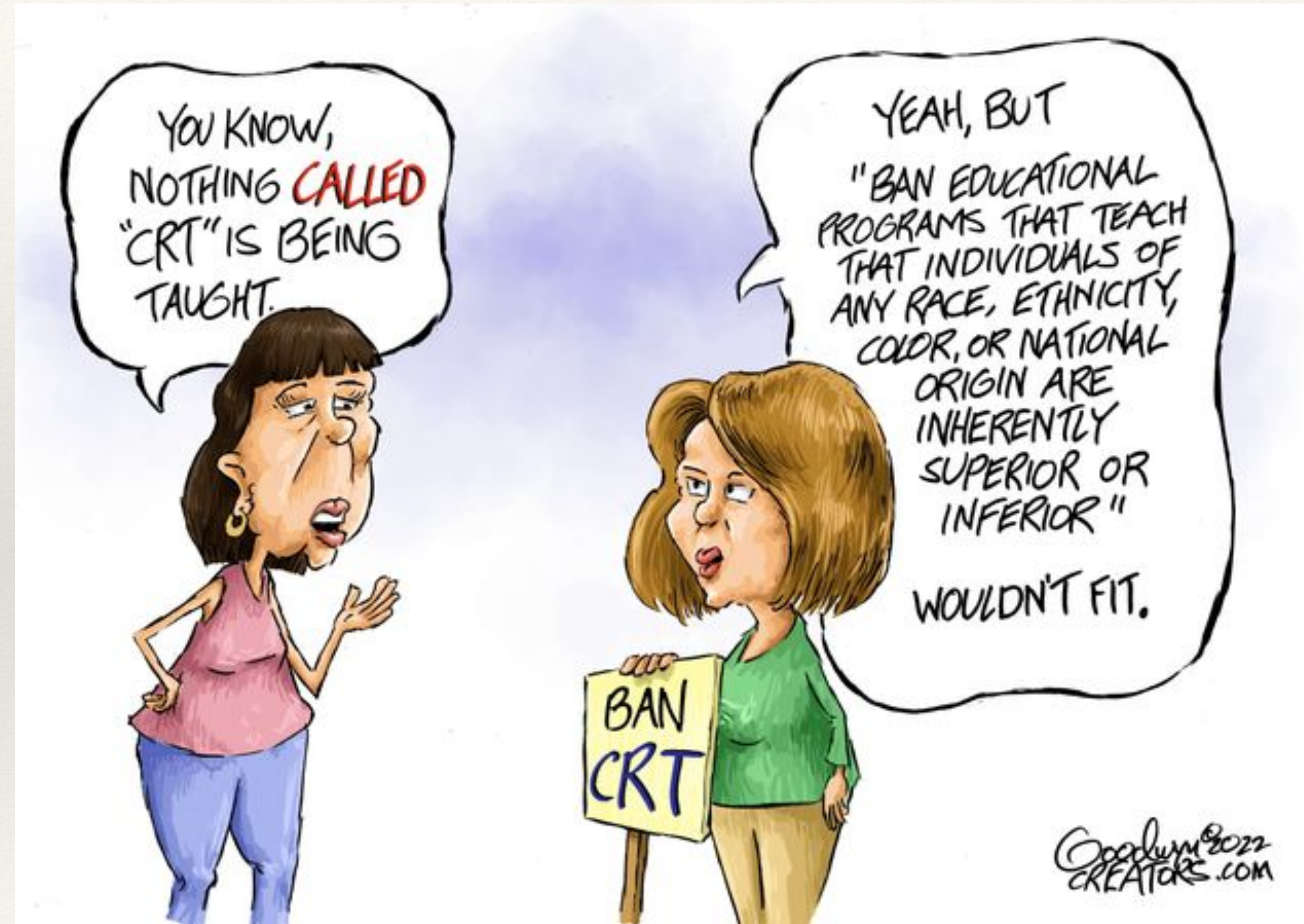
- Critical theory began at the University of Frankfurt's Institute for Social Research, that came to be known as the "Frankfurt School."
- The Frankfurt scholars fled to Columbia University's Teachers College in New York in 1934 to escape the Nazis.
- Critical theory traces all social injustice to inequities in power that are based on class, race, gender, or sexual orientation.
- In classical Marxism, the focus was on class, with the assumption that the working class would rise up against the capitalist oppressors.

Critical Theory

- Professor Derrick Bell taught critical theory at Harvard Law School before he became the Dean of the University of Oregon Law School.
- Critical race theory traces all social injustice to inequities of power, which are unfairly based on class, race, gender, and sexual orientation. Everyone must get “woke” to this fact for progress to be made.
- It is a form of cultural Marxism that seeks a radical transformation of society by uprooting present social authorities. Cultural Marxism retains basic Marxist assumptions but advocated a “long march through the institutions,” to quote a leading thinker, Antonio Gramsci.

CRT - Euphemisms

- Many euphemisms are used:
 - equity
 - social justice
 - diversity and inclusion
 - culturally responsive teaching

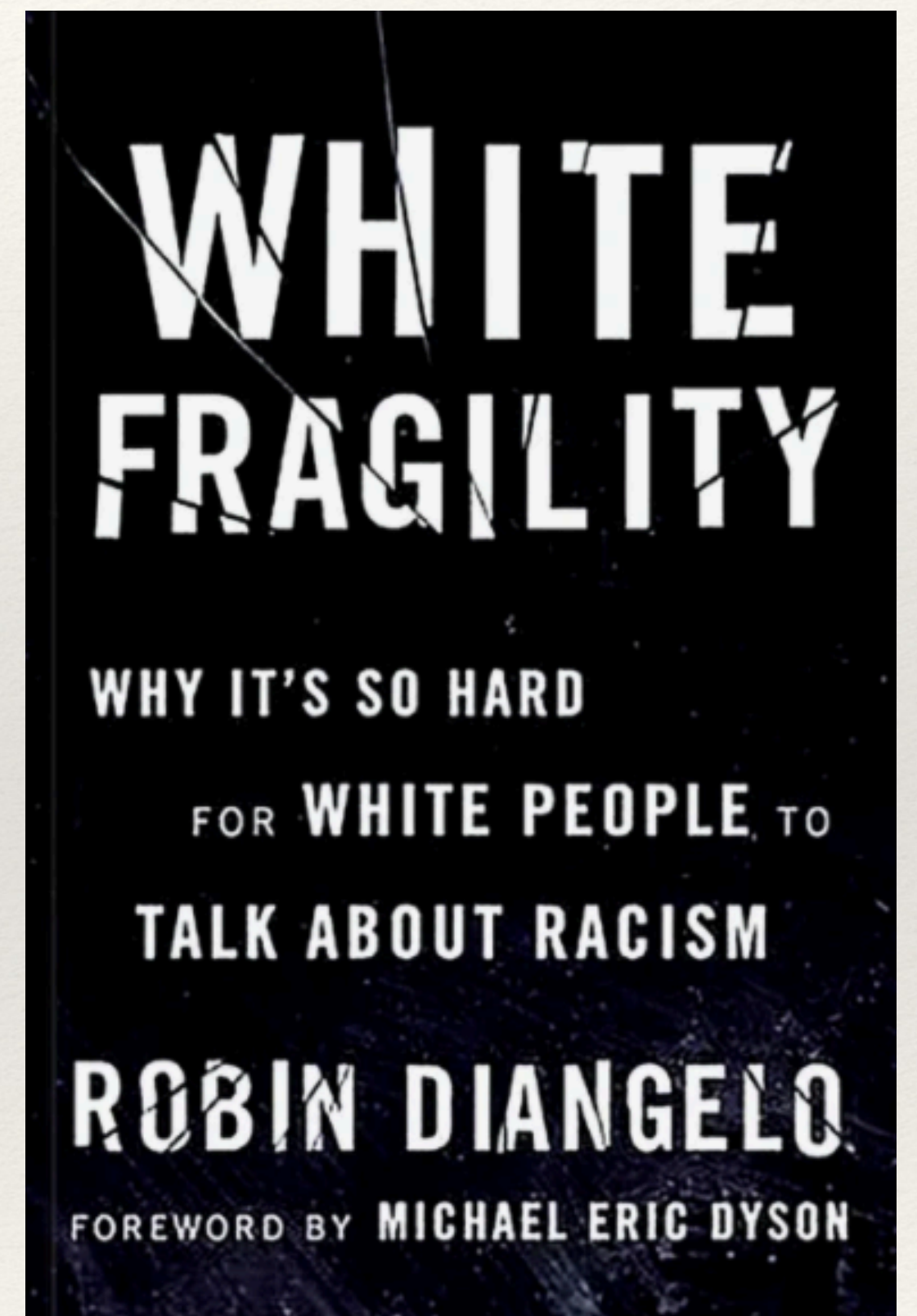


CRT - Power

- You are either in power or out of power.
 - If you are in power, you are automatically discredited.
 - If you are underprivileged, you are immune from criticism.
- The underprivileged can make demands, but they need not make arguments, since the whole system, including basic rationality, is rigged against them.
- This also means that the claims of critical race theory are unfalsifiable.

White Fragility

- The term, “white fragility” comes from the book written by Robin DiAngelo about race relations
- She describes white fragility to be a defensive response by a white person when their whiteness is mentioned.
- We shouldn’t be defensive when questioned about race or improper attitudes towards different races.
- But we should also be aware of “the Kafka trap.”

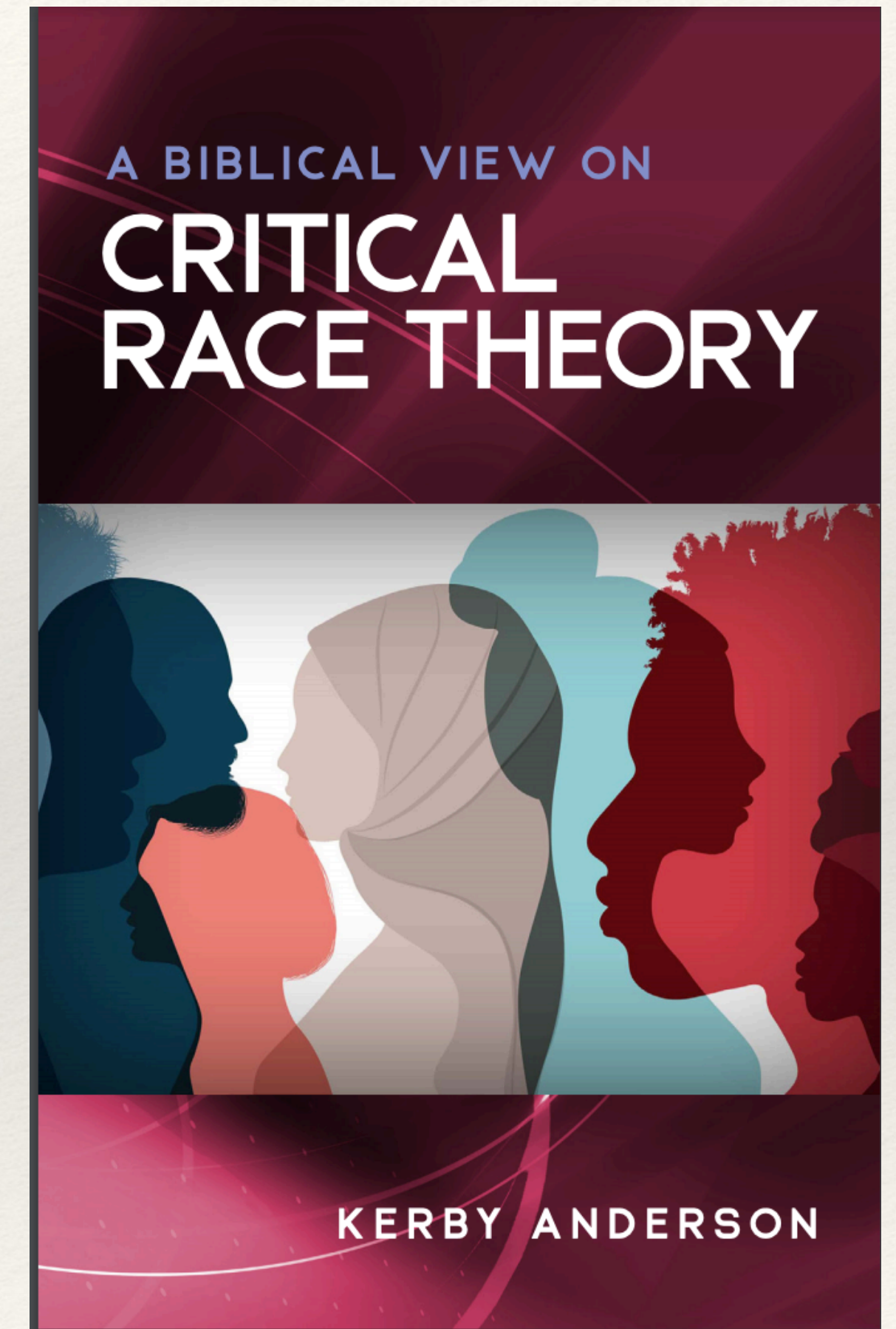


Kafka Trap

- One of the key debate techniques for people promoting wokeness is what might be considered linguistic arm-twisting.
- A social justice warrior might say, “If you say you’re not a racist, that just proves you are a racist.” This is the Kafka trap.
- In his novel, *The Trial*, Kafka presents a totalitarian world in which a man is arrested and accused of a crime.
- When he protests that he is not guilty of a crime, the state argues that his claims to innocence shows he is guilty.

Kafka Trap

- You can probably see the verbal sleight-of-hand.
 - If you admit to being a racist, then you are a racist.
 - If you deny you're a racist, then you are also a racist.
- The “you're a racist either way” is a classic example of the Kafka trap. The thought police in our society today have rigged the system.
- It's a “heads I win” and “tails you lose” technique.



CRT - Contradictions?

- Woke advocates seem to have a problem with the word “binary.”
- On the one hand, they reject the idea that gender is binary (only male and female). Many introduce themselves as non-binary.
- On the other hand, they insist that racism is binary (either you are a victim or you are an oppressor).
- They also lump everyone in a particular race together yet reject racial stereotypes. You can never say that “all black people are . . .” but you must accept the stereotype that “all white people are . . .”

CRT - Impractical

- James Lindsay asks you to imagine you own a small tailor shop where you have to assist each customer individually.
- Two people enter your store: one is white, and the other is black.
- If you choose to serve the black person first.
- If you choose to serve the white person first.



*How Should We Address Race
and Work for Racial Reconciliation?*

Race - Genetic Differences

- Research on the human genome project show us that such racial characteristics (such a skin color) are insignificant genetically.
- People of every race can interbreed and produce fertile offspring.
- One study of human genetic material of different races concluded that the DNA of any two people in the world would differ by just 2 / 10ths of one percent. And of this, only six percent can be linked to racial categories.
- These “racial differences” are trivial when you consider there are 3 billion base pairs of human DNA.

Race - Biological Diversity



- Tiger Woods is 1 / 4 Thai, 1 / 4 Chinese, 1 / 4 white, 1 / 8 Black and 1 / 8 Native American.

✓ Asian-American

✓ Anglo-American

✓ African-American

✓ Native-American

Race - Biblical Definition

- First, the Bible only talks of one race: the human race.
- Superficial differences in skin color, hair color, hair texture, or eye shape may provide physiological differences between people groups, but the Bible does not provide any justification for treating people differently simply because of these physical differences.
- The Bible teaches that God has made “from one blood every nation of men” (Acts 17:26). Here Paul taught the Athenians that they came from the same source in the creation as everyone else.

Racial Issues in America

- A recent Pew Research Center poll found wide differences between black and white adults on key questions.
- More than seven in ten (71%) of blacks believe that race relations in the US are generally bad, while only 56 percent of whites agree with that statement.
- More than three fourths (78%) of blacks believe the country hasn't gone far enough in giving blacks equal rights with whites compared with about a third (37%) of whites. And half of all blacks are convinced that black people will never have equal rights.

Racial Issues in America

- Barna Research finds similar disparities.
- For example, more than eight in ten (84%) of blacks believe that “people of color are often put at a social disadvantage because of their race” while a bare majority of evangelicals (56%) agree with that statement.
- A similar difference can also be found with regard to reverse racism (providing advantages to blacks). Large majorities (71%) of whites complain about reverse racism, but less than a majority (46%) of blacks see it.

Racial Stereotypes

- Racial stereotypes also surface in the workplace.
- One study found that people with “black-sounding names” had to send out 50 percent more job applications than people with “white-sounding names” just to get a return call.
- Black college graduates are twice as likely as whites to be unemployed.



Case Study: Food Deserts

- Certain zip codes in Dallas are food deserts. How can we change that?
- Convince Krogers, Albertsons, WalMart to open a supermarket. The cost would be as much at \$15 million, with a profit margin around 1% to 2%.
 - CRT moral objections (white owners, hurt local convenience stores).
 - CRT political objections (criminal justice and District Attorney).
 - CRT educational objectives (nutritional programs)
- Faith-based solutions provide an answer (Urban Alternative, Voice of Hope).

What About White Privilege?

White Privilege

- Peggy McIntosh at Wellesley college, first coined the term in a 1988 paper:
- “White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences Through Work in Women’s Studies.”
- She argued men don’t recognize male privilege, and that same phenomenon occurs in whites who don’t recognize white privilege.



Examples of White Privilege

- No. 5: "I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely represented."
- No. 8: "If I want to, I can be pretty sure of finding a publisher for this piece on white privilege."
- No. 22: "I can take a job with an affirmative action employer without having co-workers on the job suspect that I got it because of race."
- No 26: "I can choose blemish cover or bandages in "flesh" color and have them more or less match my skin."



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PragerU

How To End White Privilege



Brandon Tatum | Jan 20, 2020 | 2.4m

Other Types of Privilege

- Born in America privilege - billions of people on this planet would gladly trade places with you, average income makes you the 1% in the world.
- Clean water privilege - my daughter is drilling wells in Tanzania.
- Born to two parents privilege - this gives you an incredible head start.
- Access to advanced medicine privilege - my grandfather was a doctor.
- High school diploma privilege - my mother never finished high school.
- Technology privilege - access to massive amounts of data and entertainment.

Secular Perspective

- A foundational assumption is the philosophical concept of “thrownness.”
- This idea articulated by existentialists, is that we are “thrown” into a specific family and “thrown” into a particular culture at the given moment in history.
- The Doors - “Riders on the Storm” - “Into this house, we're born / Into this world, we're thrown / Like a dog without a bone.”
- This isn't the biblical view of God's sovereignty and God's calling.
- Esther 4:14 – “Who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”

Three Possible Responses

- Confess your privilege, and feel guilty about it.
- Accept your privilege, and develop a “superiority attitude.”
- Acknowledge your privilege and opportunity given to you by God.
 - Use your gifts and abilities for God (1 Corinthians 12:4-5).
 - “To whom much was given, of him much will be required” (Luke 12:48).
 - “In humility count others more significant than yourselves” (Philippians 2:3).

Gratitude

- 1 Chronicles 16:34 - “give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; for His steadfast love endures forever.”
- Romans 1:21 - “they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him.”
- 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 - “Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.”
- Philippians 4:6 - “do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.”

What Is the Biblical View on
Truth, Guilt, and Race?

Biblical Perspective - Truth

- The Bible teaches that truth exists and can be discerned (Proverbs 30:5, John 8:32, 2 Timothy 3:16). Racial bias may be a problem, but the real impediment to proper biblical interpretation is our sin (John 3:19-20).
- Proponents of the woke agenda reject rational arguments and censor contrary ideas about race and society. Christians are to love God with their minds (Mark 12:30).
- We are to “destroy arguments and every proud obstacle raised up against the knowledge of God” because we are to “take every thought captive to obey Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:4-5).

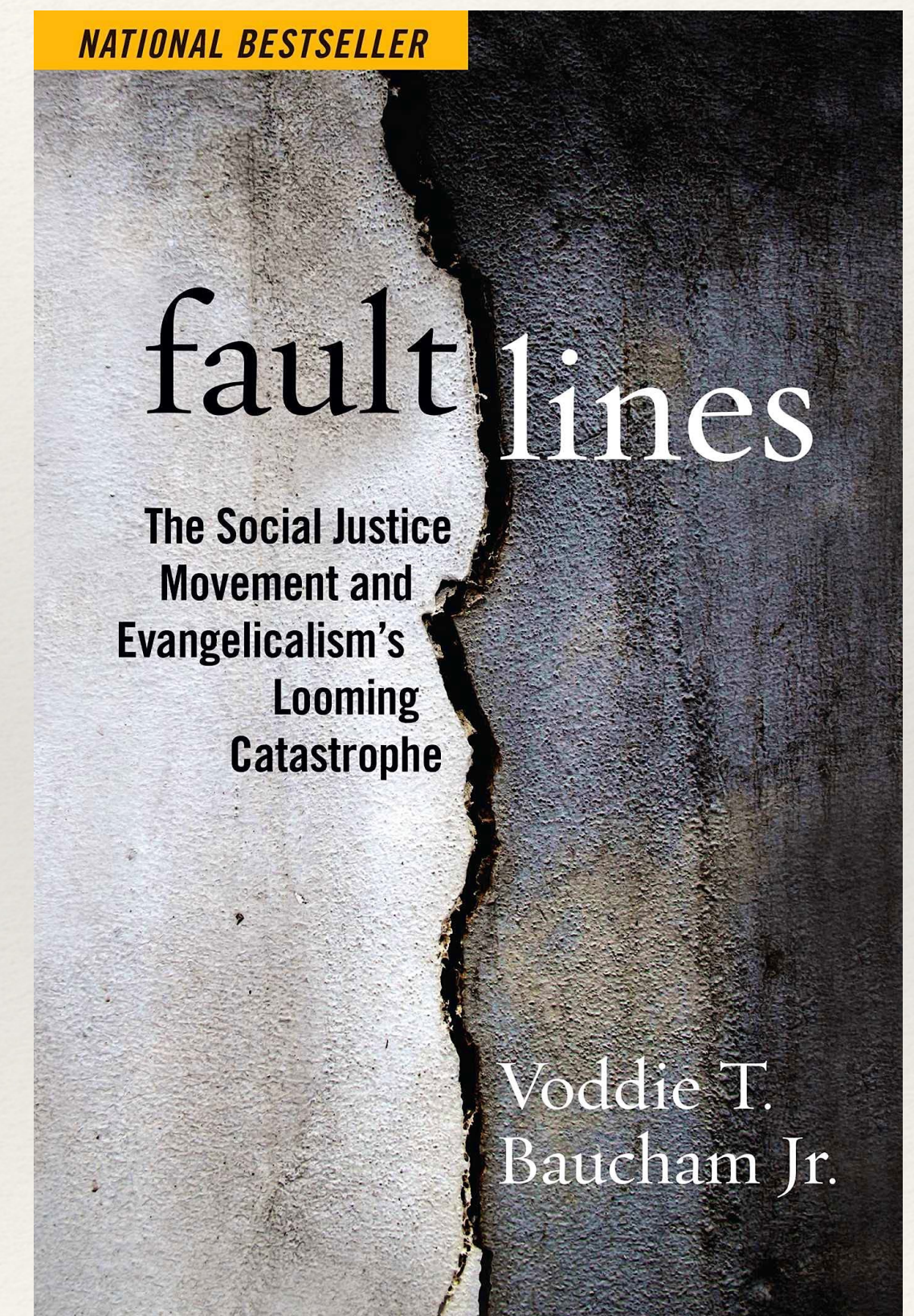
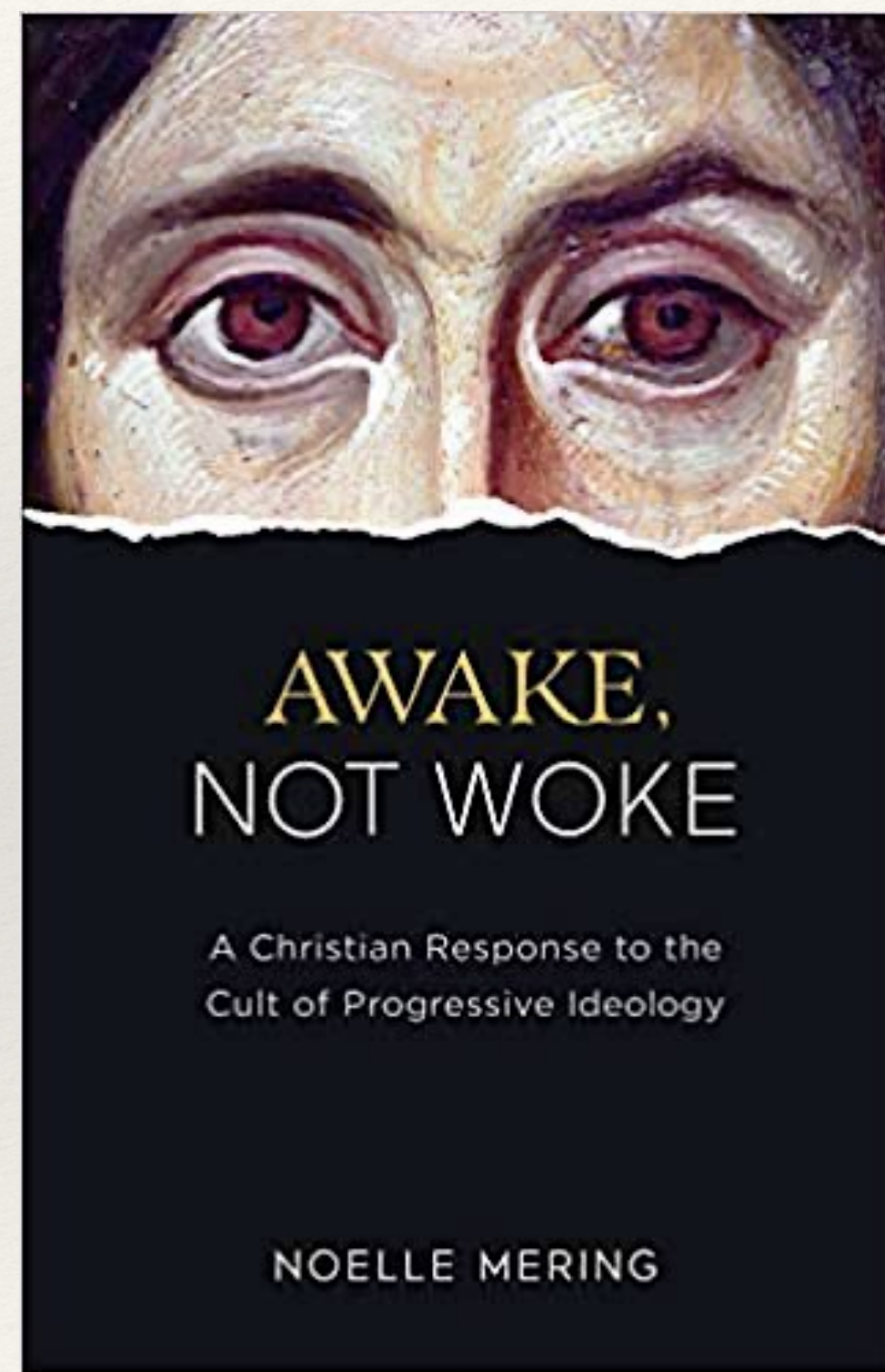
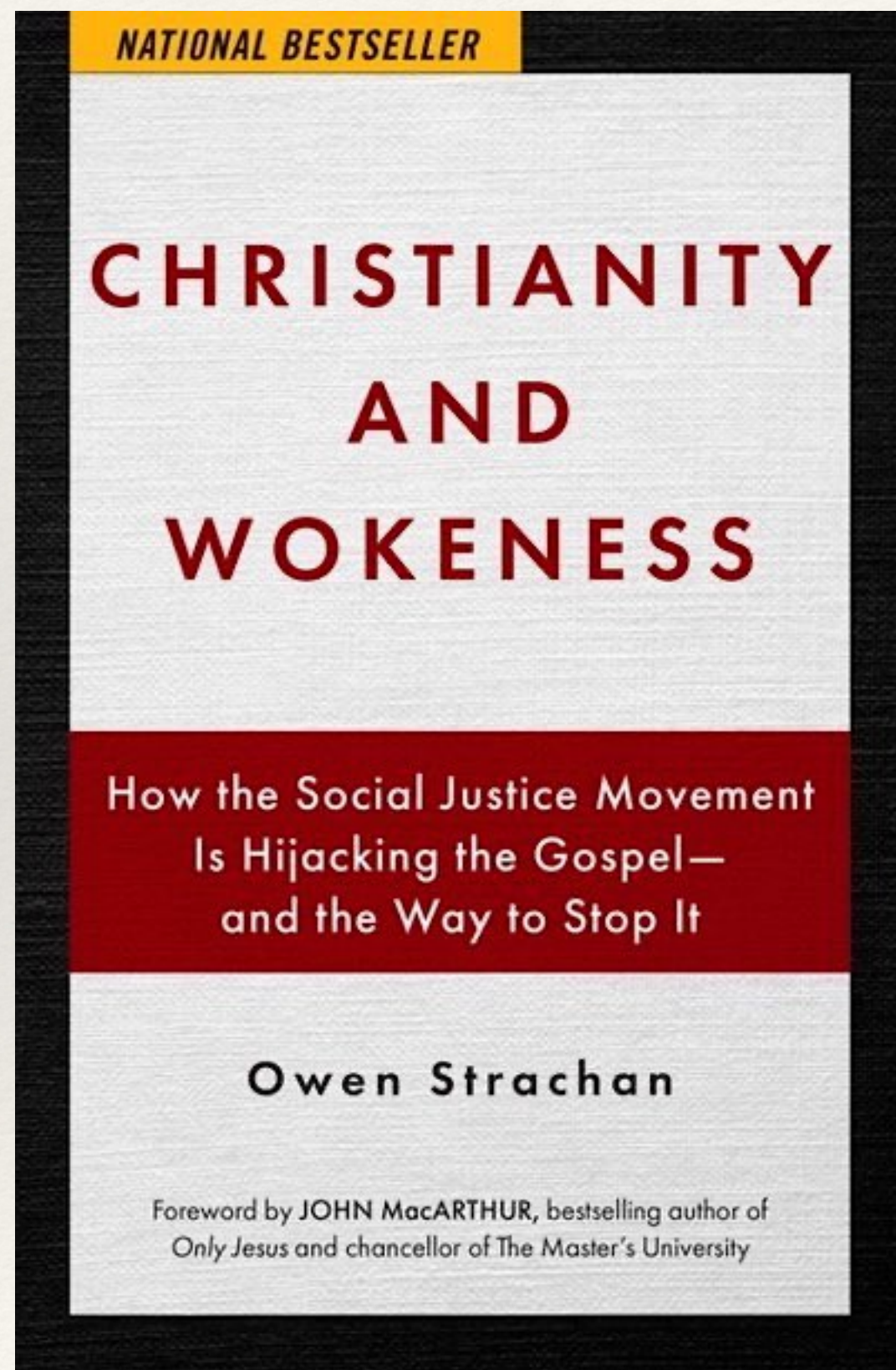
Biblical Perspective - Grace

- Members of this “oppressor” race will never really be forgiven because they will always be part of that race.
- By contrast, the Bible teaches that we are guilty because we are sinful (Romans 3:23, 6:23) not because of our racial status.
- We cannot earn salvation by good works because salvation is a gift of grace (Ephesians 2:8-9).
- We are redeemed through Jesus Christ (Romans 3:22-24).

Biblical Perspective - Race

- Critical race theory creates division between races contrary to Scripture.
- Christ pulled down the division between Jews and Gentiles (Ephesians 2:14).
- Paul also taught that there is “neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28).
- Proponents of critical race theory also propose a type of “guilt” on anyone who is identified as an oppressor merely because of their racial background.

Resources



Resources

