

McKissic cuts ties with SBTC, potentially with SBC

January 15, 2021

Pastor Dwight McKissic of Cornerstone Baptist Church in Arlington—a vocal critic of racism in Southern Baptist life—announced he plans to “get off the bus” of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention—and potentially the national Southern Baptist Convention, as well.

In a Jan. 15 blog, “[We are Getting Off the Bus](#),” posted both on Twitter and Facebook, McKissic outlined a history of differences of opinion with SBTC leaders. But he pointed to support for the recent statement by SBC seminary presidents declaring [critical race theory incompatible](#) with the 2000 Baptist Faith & Message as the breaking point.

“There are certain aspects of [critical race theory] I also disagree with. For instance, if it is an accurate representation of CRT teachings that only whites can be racists, I totally disagree with that premise. Racism is a sin. And there is not one sin a Black person is incapable of committing, including racism,” McKissic wrote.

“However, there are beneficial aspects of CRT that cannot be denied. And because the SBTC, and it appears the SBC, are poised to deny any beneficial aspects of CRT, in a most dishonest fashion, I have decided to get off the bus.”

Reasons to leave

In his 2,000-word essay, McKissic lists reasons he believes the seminary presidents’ statement on critical race theory—and the likelihood messengers to the 2021 SBC annual meeting could adopt a similar

resolution—would affect Cornerstone Baptist and other African American churches in the SBC.

- “Any professor, pastor, preacher or Sunday school teacher” who addresses critical race theory in a favorable fashion could be judged as preaching or teaching in a way that is incompatible with the 2000 Baptist Faith & Message. “This could be used as grounds to disfellowship that church from the SBC or dismiss professors from their teaching assignments,” he wrote.
- Many will perceive African American churches are subject to the Council of Seminary Presidents and the SBC regarding what they teach about race and how they incorporate any insights from critical race theory.
- The seminary presidents adopted their statement on critical race theory without consulting any African American Christians, and the statement “fails to acknowledge that there are beneficial aspects to CRT.”
- “Given the SBC’s history on race, it is preposterous to ask African American churches to blindly trust their interpretations regarding CRT—and by extension, ‘race,’” he wrote.
- Requiring the affirmation of something not directly addressed in the Bible or demanding condemnation of something not addressed in it contradicts the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture.
- The SBC is “openly rejecting the collective wisdom” of Black Baptist pastors when it dismisses claims that critical race theory has beneficial aspects.

“For these reasons, we are pulling out of SBTC; and if the [Council of Seminary Presidents]/SBC policy is ratified in June [at the SBC annual meeting], we are discontinuing our affiliation with the SBC also,” McKissic wrote. “We are ‘getting off the bus!’”

Strained relationships

McKissic added his church is “maintaining and strengthening” its relationship with the Baptist General Convention of Texas and the National Baptist Convention.

In 2001, McKissic resigned from the BGCT Executive Board when that body [tabled a motion he presented](#) affirming the inerrancy of Scripture. Cornerstone Baptist Church subsequently affiliated uniquely with the SBTC.

On Jan. 15, Cornerstone Baptist Church in Arlington still was identified “uniquely affiliated” with the SBTC on the convention’s [website directory](#) of churches, but Texas Baptists’ website also included Cornerstone in its [online directory](#) of BGCT-affiliated congregations.

As McKissic noted in his blog, his relationship with SBTC leaders became strained within a few years. In August 2006, McKissic preached in chapel at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary on “The Baptism and Filling of the Holy Spirit.” In his sermon, he challenged the SBC International Mission Board to rescind its policy that restricted missionaries from privately speaking in tongues.

McKissic quoted Jim Richards, then executive director of SBTC, as saying at the time, “If you have a private prayer language, you may ride the bus at SBTC, but you will not be able to drive the bus.”

In his blog, McKissic said he met privately with Richards to let him know Cornerstone planned to withdraw from the SBTC.

“However, I remained a member from then until today, simply not to break fellowship over a tertiary issue,” he wrote. “I decided to stay on the bus from 2006 until January 2021. But, today, I have decided it is time to ‘get

off the bus.' I no longer want to ride, and I certainly do not want to drive!"