

## **Christians and Race in the United States**

### **Part 1: "Why the United States Is Not a Post-Racial Society."**

This is a discussion about racism in the United States and what Christians can do about it. The topic for today will be "Why the United States Is Not a Post-Racial Society." By the way, we all need to thank Professor Maurice Page for her brilliant and compassionate essay last Sunday, for she saved you, my audience, from a fate worse than death. Before listening to Professor Page, I had planned to try to cover all the introductory concepts I teach to my undergraduates to enable them to understand racism and discrimination. It takes 24 hours of lecturing. Professor Page brought me back down to earth with the realization that I only have two hours, and 24 does not fit comfortably into two, no matter how enthusiastic I feel or how fast I can read. So we're going to cover the heart of the matter and leave the rest of the organism for further exploration.

Even before the election of Barack Obama as president of the United States, some of our citizens have been exploring the proposition that the gains in civil rights achieved over the past 60 years have transformed the United States of America into a post-racial society. This is an especially attractive proposition for those who believe that the United States is a society characterized by the orderly assimilation of various groups of people, even black people, into the mainstream of American life. It is true that a great deal of assimilation goes on in the United States, but most of that assimilation is of various ethnic groups who are able to take on the designation white, which is shorthand for the culture that has dominated America since its beginnings—what social scientists call Anglo-Saxon core culture. So immigrants and their descendants from such regions as Ireland, Italy, Poland, Lithuania, Russia, and Ukraine, just to give a few examples, have arrived to these shores and assimilated into the mainstream population of Americans, sooner or later, and now the world has learned to call them white people. But assimilation into this group, no matter how attractive it seems, is not an option for those we shall call people of color. For these people, socially

endorsed violence and conflict interfere with any orderly process of social adaptation such as assimilation.

It is no wonder that so many of the European immigrants to America have wanted to assimilate into Anglo-Saxon core culture and be perceived as white. White Anglo-Saxon core culture is the culture of the dominant group of America, and all other groups are subordinate to that culture.

The United States is not a post-racial society today despite aspirations predictions and appearances primarily because nothing has fundamentally changed in the relations between America’s dominant group—whites--and its subordinated groups—blacks and other people of color. As Louis Armstrong used to quip when people who knew him well asked how things were going, “White folks still in the lead.” Despite the undeniable progress that has been made in race relations since the end of the Second World War, all indicators confirm Louis’ observations—from health to wealth, from housing to working, from education to incarceration, from cradle to grave—the resources, privileges, benefits and protections, the assets and the acquisitions, are all disproportionately distributed throughout the society to the benefit of those who make up America’s dominant group.

To understand why the United States is not a post-racial society we need to begin by understanding how social scientists and social psychologists define and use various terms, especially race, racial group, and racism.

Let’s begin with the term “race.” Until quite recently in human history, race referred to the human race and everybody belonged. But race began to be used as a way of dividing human beings. These divisions are based on how the people in the defining group saw themselves and how they related to the other

peoples of the world with whom they came into contact. The primary way the defining people saw themselves especially as they related to others is hierarchically, that is a ladder of categories with the definers on top, or in a superior position, and all others in lower categories, that is, in inferior positions.

The eminent sociologist, Joe Feagin, describes the way we use race today in this way:

The present pejorative meaning comes from late eighteenth and early nineteenth century usage as the idea of a set number of genetic groups with distinctive physical characteristics, together with the idea that these characteristics made for a hierarchy of groups.

There are two essential features to the hierarchy as it developed in the United States. The first feature is that the hierarchy is predominantly color-coded with white being superior to all other skin tones with the value of other skin tones decreasing as the color darkens. We all know how this hierarchy goes because we've been immersed in it since birth and have no expectation to escape it until death. From the top to the bottom it's white, yellow, red, brown, and black. The darkest color, black, is the most inferior in this color-coded hierarchy and has been so since the origins of the hierarchy.

The second essential feature of this hierarchy as it developed in the United States is related to the problem Christians encountered of needing some justification for enslaving others who also were Christians. Various forms of slavery have existed throughout recorded history, but in modern slavery, that is the slavery practiced by Europeans during and after their colonial exploits in the Modern Age, from the Renaissance to the present, if the person we enslaved became a Christian, then we were obligated to release them from bondage, for it

was anathema for a Christian to enslave another Christian. But slavery in the United States had a predominantly economic feature to it: slaves were property, property was wealth, and this wealth-laden property—slaves—produced astronomically greater wealth for owners of slaves. Now, unfortunately, although these wealthy slave owners were Christian, there was not enough Jesus in their lives to persuade them to release their slaves, even though these slaves readily converted to Christianity. But the slavers’ dilemma did not go away, because the whole world could see that white Christians, however nominal their beliefs and convictions were enslaving black Christians. To resolve this dilemma, white Christians used their ingenuity to invent a novel idea: “We can keep our black slaves because they are not human beings. Human beings are at the top of the ladder of races—the white people are the Homo sapiens; they are the human beings. All the rest of the people, whom we have delegated to lower rungs on our hierarchical ladder, are literally beasts or brutes at best, and, if we are forced to admit that they have some semblance of humanity, they can never rise above being children, clowns, or demons and because of their intellectual and moral inferiority they are unworthy of freedom or equality. These are the essential justifications Christians used to enslave other Christians and hold onto their wealth and wealth producers. These justifications are the source of many of the stereotypes currently blinding us to the humanity of black people. These stereotypes remain part of our legacy coming from Christian slaveholders in the United States.

It turns out that American history and world opinion notwithstanding, the notion of race as it developed in the United State is not primarily biological, as it had long been reputed to be, but race is rather what social scientists such as Joe Feagin call a social construction:

A racial group is not something which is naturally generated as part of the self-evident order of the universe, but is a social group which persons inside or outside the group have decided is important to single out as inferior or superior, typically on the basis of real or alleged physical characteristics subjectively selected.

In short, race is a racist concept. To understand fully what that means let us now take a look at what is racism. Feagin defines it thusly: Racism is "an ideology which considers a group's unchangeable physical characteristics to be linked in a direct, causal way to psychological or intellectual characteristics, and which on this basis distinguishes between superior and inferior racial groups."

The most important word in the definition, the word that informs and assures us that we are not in a post-racial society, is the term, ideology. To say that racism is an ideology is to say that racism is an organized, involved, complex system of ideas, concepts, judgments, syllogisms, enthymemes and myriad other forms of reasoning, imagining and fantasizing. If we are to rid ourselves of our racism, we must first identify every detail and iota of this systemic ideology and then find a way to purge ourselves from it. And that would be easy in comparison to this:

To say that racism is an ideology is also to say that racism is an organized, involved, complex system of feelings, emotions, attitudes, commitments, affective tunings and adjustments, including motor and sensory behavior that runs the gamut from gesture to gesticulation. In a post-racial society we would have had to have become aware of everything that we have ever felt or done, not to speak of what we have said, that reflects the fact that we have been immersed in the ideology of racism since birth, and then we would have had to have purged ourselves of all that mess.

And if you think that's difficult then listen to this: Many sociologists agree that the concept of "racism" refers to not only an ideology but also to the control of power relationships in order to structure political, economic, and social conditions within a society on the basis of race. Examples of the inextricable relationship between racism and power can be observed in the anti-Semitism of fascist Germany, the apartheid of South Africa, and white supremacy of the United States. From this perspective, racism can only be practiced by the dominant group, by definition, because the dominant group structures and controls the social order. Members of the subordinate groups cannot, by definition, be racists, even though some of them may possess prejudicial attitudes or engage in unfair behavior towards members of the dominant group, unless they are cooperating with members of the dominant group in exploiting or oppressing members of subordinate groups. In the United States the only way that a black person could be a racist is to cooperate with white supremacy. Indeed, the attempt to equate subordinate prejudicial attitudes or unfair behavior with racism is part of the ideology of racism. Such equations obfuscate the power and control practiced by the dominant group by either overlooking the differences that distinguish dominant and subordinate groups; or by assuming or asserting that such differences are irrelevant; or by arguing that if both groups equally practice a social evil, then either it is not such an evil or if it is, then the two evils cancel each other out. Therefore, the argument that the subordinate group is also racist is a defense designed to both protect dominant group racism from criticism and to maintain the status quo.

With power that controls the social order and the willingness to resort to conflict and violence, the dominant group has shaped every institution and industry of American life to reflect the ideology of racism. Indeed, shaping the institutions thusly is part of the ideology of racism. The most segregated hour of the day is the time for Sunday morning worship. With regards to housing Chicago is the

fourth most segregated major city in the United States in 2014, behind Detroit, Milwaukee, and New York. As go religion and housing, so go employment, education, health care, and the criminal justice system, as well as every other institution in America.

In short, to achieve a post-racial society we must purge ourselves of all the concepts and judgments that form the ideology of racism. We must also purge ourselves of all the feelings and behavior that reinforce the ideology of racism. We must then redistribute the power, privileges, and perks that have been the perquisite of the dominant group. And finally we must transform all of our institutions, industries, corporations, including our legal structures involving politics, law, law enforcement, and criminal justice, as well as the military/industrial complex, in order to bring about a truly post-racial society.

What further complicates this formidable challenge is the development of more current forms of racism, one of which we shall discuss in more detail: aversive racism. Ever since blacks began migrating in large numbers from the South to the North in the early twentieth century, we have been reporting among ourselves that we are now encountering a new form of racism and discrimination that is different from the open, hostile, hate-ridden, violent racism of the South. And this new racism we have found to be more difficult to combat. We coined the phrase, Up South, to capture our experience of what it was like to live in the North under this new regime. Yes, we found plenty of old-fashioned racism in the North and still do, but increasingly over the years, especially after the post-World-War-II civil rights movement, this new racism has frustrated our plans and determined the day. Currently, social psychologists tell us, because of changing attitudes about race and racism, 10%-15% of whites currently express "the old-fashioned, overt form of bigotry." On the other hand,

. . . many of the people who are part of the 85%-90% of the white population who say and probably believe that they are not prejudiced may nonetheless be practicing a modern, subtle form of bias.

We believe that the existence of this subtle form of bias helps to account, in part, for the persistence of racism in our society.

It is called aversive racism because those who practice it are averse to black folk, but they are also averse to admitting that they are prejudiced. They are usually unaware and unintentional with regards to both aversions. Aversive racism is found primarily among liberal and progressive white people. They have been indoctrinated in the classic racism that we all are immersed in, yet they also possess egalitarian beliefs resulting from their education, training, and cultural indoctrination. So while they realize that racism is oppressive and therefore no longer wish to identify with or practice it, yet they also experience negative feelings towards black folk. They believe themselves to be free of racism yet unknowingly and unintentionally feel and behave like racists. “Aversive racists also possess negative racial feelings and beliefs of which they are unaware or that they try to dissociate from their nonprejudiced self-images.” In many ways aversive racists are the most serious problem challenging efforts to bring racism to an end because they are ignorant, unaware, and self-righteously justifying their discriminatory and prejudicial behavior. (Dovidio and Gaertner, “On the Nature of Contemporary Prejudice”)

Social psychologists identify aversive racists by their responses to “racial issues and interracial situations.” First, those who are aversively racist “endorse fair and just treatment of all groups.” Second, they “harbor negative feelings towards blacks, and thus try to avoid interracial interaction. Third, when interracial interaction is unavoidable,” they “experience anxiety and discomfort, and consequently . . . try to disengage . . . as quickly as possible.” Fourth,



discomforted by their concern for not behaving inappropriately and not appearing to be prejudiced, they "strictly adhere to established rules and codes of behavior in the interracial situations that they cannot avoid." Fifth, aversive racists "frequently assert that they are color-blind." And sixth, they find "subtle, rationalizable ways" to express their negative feelings "that may ultimately disadvantage minorities or unfairly benefit the majority group." (Dovidio and Gaertner, "On the Nature of Contemporary Prejudice")

Social psychologists have verified four behaviors of aversive racists. First, they express bias more subtly than old-fashioned racists. Second, although they consciously attempt to they are unable to purge themselves of their negative feelings towards blacks. Third, they "express more bias toward higher-status than toward lower-status minorities." And fourth, they "oppose programs designed to improve the status of black, but ostensibly on the basis of factors other than race." (Dovidio and Gaertner, "On the Nature of Contemporary Prejudice")

To live in a truly post-racial society we must find ways to dissipate or neutralize both classic or old-fashioned racism and the forms of racism that have developed in the recent past, such as aversive racism. I believe that we can live in a world where no form of racism dominates our lives any longer. Next week, we shall discuss how to bring about such a world in Part 2, "The Role of Christians in a Racially Oppressive Society."

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Celebration House II  
St. Charles, Illinois  
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### Sources

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### **Christians and Race in the United States**

#### Part 2: "The Role of Christians in a Racially Oppressive Society."

Let's start out this morning facing reality. I have had the pleasure of performing and recording with John Betsch, a friend and a world-class jazz drummer and bandleader who now lives in Paris, France. Recently, John sent me this note:

When everybody on earth was dead and waiting to enter Heaven, God appeared and said, "I want the men to make two lines: One line for the men who were true heads of their household, and the other line for the men who were dominated by their women.

"I want all the women to report to St. Peter."

Soon, the women were gone, and there were two lines of men.

The line of the men who were dominated by their wives was 100 miles long and in the line of men who truly were heads of their household, there was only one man.

God said to the long line, "You men should be ashamed of yourselves; I created you to be the head of your household!"

"You have been disobedient and have not fulfilled your purpose!"

"Of all of you, only one obeyed. Learn from him."

God turned to the one man, "How did you manage to be the only one in this line?"

The man replied, "This is where my wife told me to stand."

E-mail Correspondence: John Betsch to Philip  
M. Royster, 29 January 2015.

The question today is what is the role of Christians in a racially oppressive society. The answer is simple: Christians should bring about the end of racism in the United States. Complex difficulties and challenges arise when we consider how to do this. But before we pursue an understanding of how to get about our Christian business, please allow me to follow up on several questions and comments from our first discussion last week.

We discussed the question of what black people want to be called, and of course, we agreed that the answer varies dependent upon the speaker and the audience and the situation. I affirmed that I wish to be called "black," as do many other people of my persuasion, because this designation not only identifies the group I belong to but also points to the color hierarchy that discriminates against black people. There are others, including myself, who accept the term "African American," and indeed, some of us prefer that term rather than the term "black." Asking is a good way to negotiate this situation if you are not certain.

The reality is that I identify with being black primarily for two reasons: the first is historical. In the United States it came to be that no matter what color your skin, if you had an identifiable forbearer of African ancestry or mixed with African ancestry, then you were legally, socially and culturally black. We use a metaphor to capture this social convention, “the almighty drop,” which refers to blood as a metaphor of this fictively biological determinant for race. This definition of blackness benefitted the dominant group because it meant that no progeny of sexual relations between black people and white people could be designated white or included in the group designated to be white, no matter how white that progeny might appear to be. The exclusivity of whiteness, along with the inclusivity of blackness, have resulted in the situation that there have been and still are many black people in the United States who can pass for white. Some of them did and some still do, most often for reasons of personal convenience, but indeed at other times for more altruistic purposes. For example, Walter White, who in 1931 succeeded James Weldon Johnson as executive secretary of the NAACP, gained international acclaim for work in the campaign against mob violence and lynching, incidents of which he personally investigated and even witnessed by visiting the sites of the violence while passing as a white man. So, historically I’m a black man because I have black ancestors who became black because of the way people of African descent were classified in the United States.

Socially, I call myself black because I was born of two black parents and grew up in a black family based on two black extended families—one paternal, the other maternal—both situated in black communities. Absorbing and identifying with black culture has established the foundation of my identity. No matter how light my skin may have appeared to my relatives, they recognized me as black and treated me thusly, and I have never wished for it to be any other way. Moreover, as I have matured, the more I have learned of black culture, the more proud and

satisfied I am to have been born and bred black and to have identified with all the other people in the world who were born so and who designate themselves or are designated so. I must also say that even though some black people exhibit maladjusted behavior related to their blackness and status as a subordinate group, most of them are like me in that they also take great pride in being black.

Another important issue that is relevant to this discussion of black identity is the issue of the prevalence of diversity among black people. This concern is often approached from the point of view of challenging the mistaken assumption that black people form a monolithic group in the United States. To the contrary, black Americans have extremely diverse ethnic, cultural, social, class, and regional backgrounds. Essentially, the group reflects all the diversity that one might find among any other group composed of almost 39 million people as of the 2010 census. We don't all think alike, we don't all agree on anything, not even on the fact that we are racially exploited, oppressed, and discriminated against. We're not all liberals, not all progressives, and not all radicals. We're not all socially conservative. We're not all democrats. Some of us can't dance, can't sing, and don't dress nattily. Among ourselves, we're as diversely differentiated, as are the members of any other group, including the dominant group.

One of us asked about religious denominations that split over slavery. A PBS series informed us, “[s]lavery and race proved to be a divisive factor leading to the formation of numerous Protestant denominations in the United States.” (“Abolition and the Splintering of the Church,” in *This Far By Faith*. “1776-1865: from Bondage to Holy War.” PBS Series). In 1838 Presbyterians splintered over various issues including the question of slavery, and would become four churches by 1861. In the 1840s the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church split into two conferences. Out of this general problem some anti-slavery clergy formed the Wesleyan Methodist Church in America. Pro-

slavery clergy formed the Methodist Episcopal Church (South). The Baptists split over the question of slavery, forming the pro-slavery Southern Baptist Convention in 1845. Lutherans split during the Civil War.

You will notice that I use the terms dominant group and subordinate group where others would be prone to use majority group and minority group. I do so because the latter terms are euphemisms that use the size of the groups to mask the issue of power. Whites don't enjoy the roles they play in America because they are in the majority. They enjoy their dominant position in the social order because they have used violence and conflict to exert power over the lives of members of America's subordinate groups. The differences between how whites as a group and blacks as a group view such current issues as police action in black communities, exemplified by Ferguson, Missouri, is directly related to the fact that whites belong to the dominant group, that the dominant group has a long history of using violence and conflict to keep subordinate group members in place, and that police departments have a long history rooted in slave patrols and similar organizations designed to protect the interests and property of the dominant group. Another approach to seeing the inadequacy of the terms majority and minority is to look at the racially-charged situation in apartheid South Africa where the dominant group was a distinct minority in relation to the largest of South Africa's subordinate groups. Black South Africans knew that their majority status had little effect on and provided no relief from their subordinate status.

It is also true that achievements of segments within an oppressed group do not relieve that group of its ascribed status as subordinate. Blacks in the United States have found that their subordinate status has not ended despite achieving middle-class professions, occupations, and trades, higher education, inter-marriage, financial stability, or political power, including achieving the most

powerful political office in the country. My colleague and friend, Professor and Rabbi Robert Gluck from the University at Albany has written:

Other historically subordinate groups, for example European Jews during the Middle Ages and early Modernity, have sought, in a variety of ways, to achieve safety and security in hostile environments. For a thousand years prior to the Holocaust, a small elite group of influential Jews periodically drew upon the limited occupational domains allowed their people, among these administration, trading, and finance, to exert influence that they hoped might result in protection and enhanced social status. While at times achieving limited, short-term success, their ultimate goal was illusory because of their collective status as a subordinate group in each of the societies they peopled (E-mail Correspondence: Robert Gluck to Philip M. Royster, 28 January 2015).

None of these pursuits and achievements has resulted in freedom from racism and discrimination, or freedom from the status of being a member of a subordinate group. Why not? The answer is that these pursuits don't challenge the pervasively systemic nature of racism that has penetrated and proliferated throughout every institution of the social order and throughout every cell of our hearts.

One of our congregation questioned whether racial discrimination was the result of instinctual choices, which, of course, implies to some that there is no way to rid our society of racism. Today's social psychologists do agree that negative, racist feelings “toward blacks are rooted in three types of normal, often adaptive, psychological processes”: (1) placing people into categories that distinguish one's own group from other groups and feeling a bias for those in one's group and against those in other groups (classification); (2) resisting the progress of

competing groups, motivated by the desire to satisfy basic needs; and (3) internalizing social values and beliefs. The primary answer to this argument is to admit the truth that these three processes at the root of discrimination can be used in adaptive ways, but we also must distinguish that they also can be used in maladaptive ways. For example, categorizing classification, though at times helpful, can be a problem, such as when one confuses a superficial trait such as skin color with a fundamental reality such as whether one is a human being. Competition between groups is unnecessary if not also harmful when the commodity in question is not in short supply, say a commodity such as respect for human dignity and worth by those responsible for public safety. Not all social values and beliefs are beneficial, humane, or true. For example, the still widely held conviction that the most trustworthy public speaker is a white male wearing a suit, white shirt, and a conservatively patterned tie has led many individuals and groups to disastrous consequences. In like manner, the widely held conviction that the most dangerous person on the street is a black man wearing a hoodie has also led to tragic and gratuitous consequences. So our psychological processes, though natural, must be regulated, trained, educated, and harnessed by the reins of such traits as awareness, discernment, discretion, foresight, and compassion, morality and ethics. Moreover, the same must be said for every human capacity, trait, or ability.

And my final concern from last week's dialogue is related to the proposal that since oppressive relationships have existed throughout known history, if not before so, we may never be able to eliminate racism in America. By the way, this proposition that racism is indestructible is one of the tenets of the ideology of racism, as is the proposition that racism is natural. It is not unusual for dominant ideologies to include self-protective tenets such as this oppressive relationship is ordained by God; it has been around forever; it is part of human nature; or the victims are too weak or too stupid or too slow or too backward to ever overturn



their oppressors. But the Nuremburg trials and the surrender of Japan and Nelson Mandela's rise to the presidency of South Africa argue to the contrary. The anti-Semitic Nordic myths of Nazi Aryanism did not prevail over D-Day. The emperor-based ideology of Japan did not insulate it from the super weapons that brought such a devastating conclusion to World War II. The Christian arrogance of apartheid was unable to keep Mandela imprisoned on Robben Island. So we know beyond a doubt that racism is an extremely vulnerable target.

For about 400 years, indeed, we've tried everything from civil war and armed resistance to racial intermarriage to undermine the racist hierarchy of white supremacy in what has become these United States. The result is a stunning paradox: while everything has worked yet nothing has succeeded. Black people and other people of color enjoy more rights and privileges today than we ever have in the past, and yet the racial hierarchy stands rigidly in place fundamentally unchanged. For example, although blacks and other people of color have torn down the walls that segregated them into ghettoized communities and neighborhoods, yet the United States remains a heavily segregated society in which whites and blacks live separate and unequal lives during which they know little and appreciate less of each other. In like manner, when racial issues arise, polls of public opinion record the polarity of black/white racial separation and alienation. Members of the dominant group feel entitled to ignore or discount the narratives of complaint coming from members of subordinate groups. Members of subordinate groups resist their exploitation but not without anger and resentment because their boots don't have straps and their straps don't have boots.

The real deal is that we have to continue to disempower racism, and this is how we do it.

The most effective way to dissipate racism is simply to learn for ourselves and to teach others what it is and how it works—in ourselves and in the world we all share. Once we understand what it is, in all its complexity, the way social scientists, social psychologists, and legal scholars understand it, then no one has to tell us what to do next. We will realize that as racists we harbor within what is destroying us. This is one of God’s greatest gifts to us, and it comes by way of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth as it is revealed to us in our day-to-day lives. When we see beyond a doubt that something or someone will destroy us, without hesitation and forethought, we do what we need to do escape that destruction. And believe me, our racism curdles our hearts and destroys our compassion for our fellow human beings. But the Holy Spirit breathes His breath of life into our very lungs and stirs compassion in our very bowels until we see in the image of the other the face of ourselves. And as we continue we recognize that we are gazing into the face of the Lord.

Only the cynical and the depraved can knowingly embrace racism. Aversive racism flourishes because otherwise good people refuse to become intimate with themselves, with their own thoughts and feelings, attitudes and beliefs, judgments, and conclusions. Aversive racism flourishes because otherwise good people refuse to care about the perpetration of injustice on others. Aversive racism flourishes because otherwise good people ignore those who they have victimized as they pursue their professions, callings, occupations, pastimes, and other interests. Aversive racism flourishes because otherwise good people turn away from prayer and the promptings of the Spirit. In short, racism flourishes because otherwise good people turn away from God.

There are some principles to remember and practices to initiate that will enable us to destroy racism and white supremacy:

1. Practice prayer, self-reflection, self-examination, and self-awareness. Don't try to change what you find. Allow the truth of what you discover to change you, and be assured that sooner than later it will. Remember not to squander your inheritance by betraying the truths and insights you discover. Finally put into practice the results of your self-inquiries and seek support and reinforcement, along with critical assessment, from your carefully and prayerfully selected circle of family and friends, those who have the competency to become your counselors.
2. Make your home a safe place for family and friends, especially your children and the friends of your children, to discuss race and racism. Encourage each participant to share losses and promote successes. Create campaigns designed with tactics, strategies, and outcomes. Protect, comfort, and reinforce each other, and do not be intimidated by the opposition and its strategies of censoring and punishments.
3. Create safe public spaces in your community to discuss race and racism with your neighbors and acquaintances. Schools and churches are two of the most significant institutions of our communities with regards to understanding and disempowering racism.
4. Create campaigns that challenge the effects of racism within your own ethnic community. White people need to do a lot of work among themselves to uproot and overthrow their own racism and white supremacy. Black people have much work to do also because many of us have internalized the ideology of white supremacy while others of us have become casualties of white supremacy.
5. Find and cultivate the bridge-builders among our families and communities.

- These saints are recognizable because they display a sophisticated sensitivity to moral and ethical values, and they are sensitive to and concerned about both sides when there is partisan opposition. They display statesmanship and diplomacy rather than partisanship and sectarianism. Provide them education, training, and support to encourage them to help us as we make our way to the Promised Land.
6. Find work and careers that are fulfilling and satisfying. From within, undermine the racism that afflicts the institutions you are involved in and committed to. It is much easier to transform institutions from within than from standing outside.
  7. Search diligently for the means to disempower white supremacy. It would not be unusual to find that our personal fears and prejudices towards each other outlast the dominance of white supremacy. There are plenty of fascists still left in Germany, for example, but the nation-state remains vigilant that such racists are kept from systematically exerting power over others. Support the development of African-American leadership, as well as leadership by other peoples of color, in all institutions and corporations across the country. Convince yourself that “institutional change toward diversity is inevitable; that behavioral change leads to attitude change; that contact among diverse groups will reduce conflict; and that reducing fears people have about other groups will reduce prejudice and discrimination” (*Confronting Racism*, p. 293).
  8. Some American institutions (higher education, the legal professions, corporations and industries, political parties, the health care professions) are in the midst of transforming themselves from conveyors of systemic racism and white supremacy to agents of liberating equality and social

- justice. Study the work accomplished in these institutions so far, and invite their agents of change to come to our church and discuss their challenges, successes, predictions, and advice.
9. There is a revived movement of grass roots organizing challenging white supremacy sweeping across the country, along with a cadre of retired organizers from earlier generations. Study both these sets of individuals, their literatures, and their movements. Invite them to share panels on our platforms so that we may observe and learn from their dialogue and debate.
  10. Immerse yourself in an oppressed culture to increase your understanding and compassion for the suffering and maladaptive behavior and the inimical environment of those who are oppressed. For example, watch relevant news programs, listen to radio programs, read magazines, visit institutions, and make friends with individuals. The ideal is to know the other better than you know yourself.
  11. Immerse yourself in the dominant culture to increase your understanding and compassion for the license and entitlement as well as the aversive character of white supremacy. Again, the ideal is the extreme: know the other better than you know yourself. Such an ideal will keep you studying long after racism is dead.
  12. Commit your life to helping to achieve equality for all, for each of us, not some of us, is born in possession of an inalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.
  13. Plan to be in it for the long run. Be encouraged that every act of

righteousness done in the pursuit of holiness, no matter how small or inconsequential it may seem bends the world toward salvation.

In short, I am proposing an alternative form of Christian missionary work for the remainder of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We need to do missionary work among ourselves and with each other. As did the subject of the biography my wife and I are finishing, the Rev. Dr. Marcus H. Morgan, Sr., I am admonishing the Church to become the headlight, not the taillight, of the movement that will bring white supremacy to its knees. We must commit to struggle until we disrobe white supremacy’s racist ideology and dismantle its discriminatory and perverse power. We should do this, as Dr. Morgan, a world-renowned Church leader, affirmed, because all Christians are sisters and brothers of Jesus, and we all are daughters and sons of the Father. Through the grace of redemption, Christians are bequeathed a ministry of reconciliation. I believe that it is our Christian obligation to reconcile the races in America. In doing so we shall provide an irresistible model to other societies suffering from racial and ethnic conflict throughout the world, especially in Europe. It is thus that we will accomplish what the Lord requires of us: to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God. And through it all we thank God for this one more chance to do His will.

Philip M. Royster  
Celebration House II  
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