

Becoming Antiracist

May 2022: The Myth of Race

Scripture: 1 John 2:9 Whoever says, "I am in the light", while hating a brother or sister, is still in the darkness.

"Another thing we must do is to get rid of the notion once and for all that there are superior and inferior races. Now we know that this view still lags around in spite of the fact that many great anthropologists, Margaret Mead and Ruth Benedict and Melville Herskovits have pointed out and made it clear through scientific evidence that there are no superior races and there are no inferior races. There may be intellectually superior individuals within all races. In spite of all this evidence, however, the view still gets around somehow that there are superior and inferior races. The whole concept of white supremacy rests on this fallacy." - from Martin Luther King Jr.'s Commencement Address at Lincoln University June 6, 1961

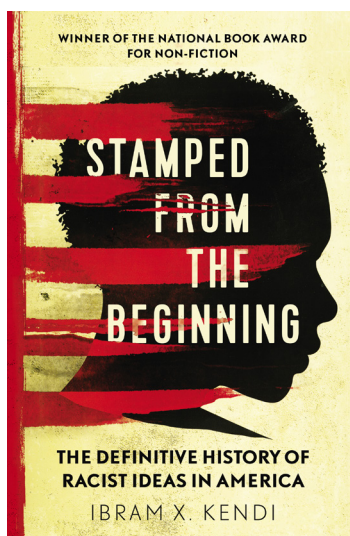
History: "The concept of race is a relatively recent development. Only in the past few centuries, owing largely to European imperialism, have the world's people been classified along racial lines. Here, in America, the idea of race emerged as a means of reconciling chattel slavery-as well as the extermination of American Indians-with the ideas of freedom preached by whites in the new colonies." - from *The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander, 2012



Michelle Alexander

"Racism has run like poison through the blood of American society since Europeans first landed on these shores. And, since that beginning, America and Americans have invested much in denying it. America's and Americans' denial of their blatant racism and the attending atrocities committed throughout the nation's history has become pathological. Such denial has allowed this illness to fester for almost 400 years. It is what keeps this country sick with this issue of race. At the root of this sickness is the unchallenged belief that there are physical differences between people that account for the intellectual attributes and abilities of those people. Since before Aristotle's time, people have been using the idea of racial difference to justify the subjugation and enslavement of those different and less powerful than themselves. Race has no scientific merit outside of sociological classifications. There are no significant genetic variations within the human species to justify the division of races". - from *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome* by Dr. Joy Degruy, 2017

"Many of us have been taught to believe that there are distinct biological differences between races. This biology accounts for visual differences such as skin color, hair texture, and eye shape, and traits that we believe we see such as sexuality, athleticism, or mathematical ability. The idea of race as a biological construct makes it easy to believe that many of the divisions we see in society are natural. But race, like gender, IS socially constructed. The differences we see are superficial and emerged as adaptations to geography. Under the skin, there is no true biological race. The external characteristics that we use to define race are unreliable indicators of genetic variations between any two people.



Whiteness rests upon a foundational premise: the definition of whites as the norm or standard for human, and people of color as a deviation from that norm. Whiteness is not acknowledged by white people, and the white reference point is assumed to be universal and is imposed on everyone. People of color, including W.E.B. Du Bois and James Baldwin, have been writing about whiteness for decades, if not centuries. These writers urged white people to turn their attention onto themselves to explore what it means to be white in a society that is so divided by race. For example, in 1946, a French reporter asked expatriate writer Richard Wright his thoughts on the 'Negro problem' in the United States. Wright replied, 'There isn't any Negro problem, there is only a white problem.'" - from *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo, 2018

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For further reading: *Stamped From The Beginning*, by Ibram X. Kendi, 2017

Video: [Jane Elliot: Race, Education and Racism](#)



Reflection/Prayer:

Holy One, You call us beloved. We belong to you. You created us in your image; through your very breath you formed us.

Through your Son Jesus, our Teacher, You taught us to call one another beloved, because in belonging to you, we belong to each other.

You told us to see your image in the faces of the forgotten and the oppressed.

Through you we became one family; through your Spirit, we breathe the same breath.

Free us from that which keeps us from perfect love of our neighbors, because loving our neighbors is the same as loving you. Help us to recognize your image in the faces of others. We unite our commitments with those working for racial justice across the country, that we may work together to participate with you in building your Kingdom here on earth.

Strengthen all of us, that through the power of your Spirit, we might have the courage to love you, others, and ourselves, with all of our hearts, minds, and strength. Amen.
