

# YOUTH IN THE CHURCH

*Growing in Faith & Service*

Fall 2020

## READINGS AND PRAYERS

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Stories, a bit of history, and prayers



# Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?

## TWELVE RULES FOR LIVING WITH AND LOVING OUR NEIGHBOR AS OURSELF

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1. Get out of the house more often, cross boundaries
2. Start by doing something, what we do is more important than what we say
3. Throw away the old labels. It is values that matter
4. Change the culture not just the government
5. Listen to poor people, trust those closest to the problem
6. Find new allies and search for common ground
7. You cannot do it alone, you must build community
8. Get to the heart of the problem
9. It is not easy, but always worth it. Find a balance
10. Changing the world is a spiritual task. Fun!
11. You can do it too. Moses was not a super-hero
12. Practice justice and heal your soul



*Jim Wallis, author and organizer of Sojourners, sojo.net*

Gracious God, remind us not of our differences, but of our commonalities, and show us not ways in which we might act as individual, but rather the ways in which we might work together to bring about your perfect Will. And, when all is finished, Almighty God, make us one in each other and one in you, through the Christ whom you have shown to us. *Douglas R. Briggs*

## LEARN ABOUT PEOPLE WHO ARE DIFFERENT THAN YOU

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Read or watch some balanced news reports about immigration – if you have friends whose parents immigrated to this country ask them what that was like. Maybe you have friends who are immigrants. Maybe you are from somewhere else. What is that like?

I know we get all kinds of advice of how to handle people begging on the streets. No matter what you choose to do or not do – look at them and wish them well.

Sometimes I think most of Jesus's miracles were as simple as his looking at those who were marginalized, disregarded, tossed aside in his world. Look at people.

You know about clicks – learn about caste. It's not just in India, but that is the most developed system of ranking people based upon arbitrary decisions about birth and worth. Listen to Isabel Wilkerson's discussion of her book, *Caste* and how it relates to American society and social unrest.

<https://www.npr.org/2020/08/04/898981897/isabel-wilkerson-on-americas-caste-system>

When we can be together again, let's get permission to attend a Jewish service and a Muslim service. Maybe you've already done this. If so, reflect on what you learned about another faith, another understanding of God.

Make sandwiches for our 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday Food Pantry. Karen Franklin will give you the details, [forpop247@gmail.com](mailto:forpop247@gmail.com)



Father God, we are grateful for the gift of another day. You gave us another chance to serve you. You have given us another chance to be your children. Give us rest now, Lord. Keep us safe through the night, and we will honor you in the morning. *Amen.* The Book of Uncommon Prayer.

I am love



the episcopal church  
welcomes you.



# Will you strive for Justice and Peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?

## What We Don't Know About Race Matters

### TEN THINGS EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT RACE

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Our eyes tell us that people look different. No one has trouble distinguishing a Czech from a Chinese, but what do those differences mean? Are they biological? Has race always been with us? How does race affect people today? There's less – and more – to race than meets the eye:

**Race is a modern idea.** Ancient societies, like the Greeks, did not divide people according to physical distinctions, but according to religion, status, class, even language. The English language didn't even have the word 'race' until it turns up in 1508 in a poem by William Dunbar referring to a line of kings.

**Race has no genetic basis.** Not one characteristic, trait or even one gene distinguishes all the members of one so-called race from all the members of another so-called race.

**Human subspecies don't exist.** Unlike many animals, modern humans simply haven't been around long enough or isolated enough to evolve into separate subspecies or races. Despite surface appearances, we are one of the most similar of all species.

**Skin color really is only skin deep.** Most traits are inherited independently from one another. The genes influencing skin color have nothing to do with the genes influencing hair form, eye shape, blood type, musical talent, athletic ability or forms of intelligence. Knowing someone's skin color doesn't necessarily tell you anything else about him or her.

**Most variation is within, not between, "races."** Of the small amount of total human variation, 85% exists within any local population, be they Italians, Kurds, Koreans or Cherokees. About 94% can be found within any continent. That means two random Koreans may be as genetically different as a Korean and an Italian.

**Slavery predates race.** Throughout much of human history, societies have enslaved others, often as a result of conquest or war, even debt, but not because of physical characteristics or a belief in natural inferiority. Due to a unique set of historical circumstances, ours was the first slave system where all the slaves shared similar physical characteristics.

**Race and freedom evolved together.** The U.S. was founded on the radical new principle that "All men are created equal." But our early economy was based largely on slavery. How could this anomaly be rationalized? The new idea of race helped explain why some people could be denied the rights and freedoms that others took for granted.

**Race justified social inequalities as natural.** As the race idea evolved, white superiority became "common sense" in America. It justified not only slavery but also the extermination of Indians, exclusion of Asian immigrants, and the taking of Mexican lands by a nation that professed a belief in democracy. Racial practices were institutionalized within American government, laws, and society.

**Race isn't biological, but racism is still real.** Race is a powerful social idea that gives people different access to opportunities and resources. Our government and social institutions have created advantages that disproportionately channel wealth, power, and resources to white people. This affects everyone, whether we are aware of it or not.

**Colorblindness will not end racism.** Pretending race doesn't exist is not the same as creating equality. Race is more than stereotypes and individual prejudice. To combat racism, we need to identify and remedy social policies and institutional practices that advantage some groups at the expense of others.

From *Race, The Power of Illusion*, Copyright (c) California Newsreel, 2003

I am so weary, Father, of using myself as the measure of everything and everybody. Just for this one day, I beg you, help me to find release from the old pattern of seeing the different-from-me as either less-than or more-than me. Grant instead that, for just this one day at least, I may see everything and everybody I meet in terms of how I want you to see me at this day's end.

*Phyllis Tickle*

Dear Heavenly Father, Everyone goes through a racial thing at least once. So, I hope that you show all of us that we are all a human race. I pray that one day we will all be able to live together as one. I know this will be up in heaven. I hope it comes down to earth. Thank you, Father for listening and answering my prayers. In Jesus's name I pray. Amen. *Tatyania, age 16, Central Juvenile Hall, East Los Angeles*



## IT IS NOT A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD – NEVER WAS – WHITE ADVANTAGE

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Many middle-class white people like to think that we got to where we are today by virtue of our merit - hard work, intelligence, pluck, and maybe a little luck. And while we may be sympathetic to the plight of others, we close down when we hear the words "affirmative action" or "racial preferences." We worked hard, we made it on our own, the thinking goes, why don't 'they'? After all, the Civil Rights Act was enacted almost 40 years ago.

What we don't readily acknowledge is that racial preferences have a long, institutional history in this country - a white history. Here are a few ways in which government programs and practices have channeled wealth and opportunities to white people at the expense of others.

When slavery ended, its legacy lived on not only in the impoverished condition of Black people but in the wealth and prosperity that accrued to white slaveowners and their descendants. Economists who try to place a dollar value on how much white Americans have profited from 200 years of unpaid slave labor, including interest, begin their estimates at \$1 trillion.

Jim Crow laws, instituted in the late 19th and early 20th century and not overturned in many states until the 1960s, reserved the best jobs, neighborhoods, schools and hospitals for white people.

### **The Advantages Grow, Generation to Generation**

Less known are more recent government racial preferences, first enacted during the New Deal, that directed wealth to white families and continue to shape life opportunities and chances.

The landmark Social Security Act of 1935 provided a safety net for millions of workers, guaranteeing them an income after retirement. But the act specifically excluded two occupations: agricultural workers and domestic servants, who were predominately African American, Mexican, and Asian. As low-income workers, they also had the least opportunity to save for their retirement. They couldn't pass wealth on to their children. Just the opposite. Their children had to support them. Like Social Security, the 1935 Wagner Act helped establish an important new right for white people. By granting unions the power of collective bargaining, it helped millions of white workers gain entry into the middle class over the next 30 years. But the Wagner Act permitted unions to exclude non-whites and deny them access to better paid jobs and union protections and benefits such as health care, job security, and pensions. Many craft unions remained nearly all-white well into the 1970s. In 1972, for example, every single one of the 3,000 members of Los Angeles Steam Fitters Local #250 was still white.

But it was another racialized New Deal program, the Federal Housing Administration, that helped generate much of the wealth that so many white families enjoy today. These revolutionary programs made it possible for millions of average white Americans - but not others - to own a home for the first time. The government set up a national neighborhood appraisal system, explicitly tying mortgage eligibility to race. Integrated communities were ipso facto deemed a financial risk and made ineligible for home loans, a policy known today as "redlining." Between 1934 and 1962, the federal government backed \$120 billion of home loans. More than 98% went to whites. Of the 350,000 new homes built with federal support in northern California between 1946 and 1960, fewer than 100 went to African Americans.

These government programs made possible the new segregated white suburbs that sprang up around the country after World War II. Government subsidies for municipal services helped develop and enhance these suburbs further, in turn fueling commercial investments. Freeways tied the new suburbs to central business districts, but they often cut through and destroyed the vitality of non-white neighborhoods in the central city.

Today, Black and Latino mortgage applicants are still 60% more likely than whites to be turned down for a loan, even after controlling for employment, financial, and neighborhood factors. According to the Census, whites are more likely to be segregated than any other group. As recently as 1993, 86% of suburban whites still lived in neighborhoods with a black population of less than 1%.

### **Reaping the Rewards of Racial Preference**

One result of the generations of preferential treatment for whites is that a typical white family today has on average eight times the assets, or net worth, of a typical African American family, according to economist Edward Wolff. Even when families of the same income are compared, white families have more than twice the wealth of Black families. Much of that wealth difference can be attributed to the value of one's home, and how much one inherited from parents. But a family's net worth is not simply the finish line, it's also the starting point for the next generation. Those with wealth pass their assets on to their children - by financing a college education, lending a hand during hard times, or assisting with the down payment for a home. Some economists estimate that up to 80 percent of lifetime wealth accumulation depends on these intergenerational transfers. White advantage is passed down, from parent to child to grandchild. As a result, the racial wealth gap - and the head start enjoyed by whites - appears to have grown since the civil rights days. In 1865, just after Emancipation, it is not surprising that African Americans owned 0.5 percent of the total worth of the United States. But by 1990, a full 135 years after the abolition of slavery, Black Americans still possessed only a meager 1 percent of national wealth.

Rather than recognize how "racial preferences" have tilted the playing field and given us a head start in life, many whites continue to believe that race does not



affect our lives. Instead, we chastise others for not achieving what we have; we even invert the situation and accuse non-whites of using "the race card" to advance themselves.

Or we suggest that differential outcomes may simply result from differences in "natural" ability or motivation. However, sociologist Dalton Conley's research shows that when we compare the performance of families across racial lines who make not just the same income, but also hold similar net worth, a very interesting thing happens: many of the racial disparities in education, graduation rates, welfare usage and other outcomes disappear. The "performance gap" between whites and nonwhites is a product not of nature, but unequal circumstances.

Colorblind policies that treat everyone the same, no exceptions for minorities, are often counter-posed against affirmative action. But colorblindness today merely bolsters the unfair advantages that color-coded practices have enabled white Americans to long accumulate.

It's a little late in the game to say that race shouldn't matter.

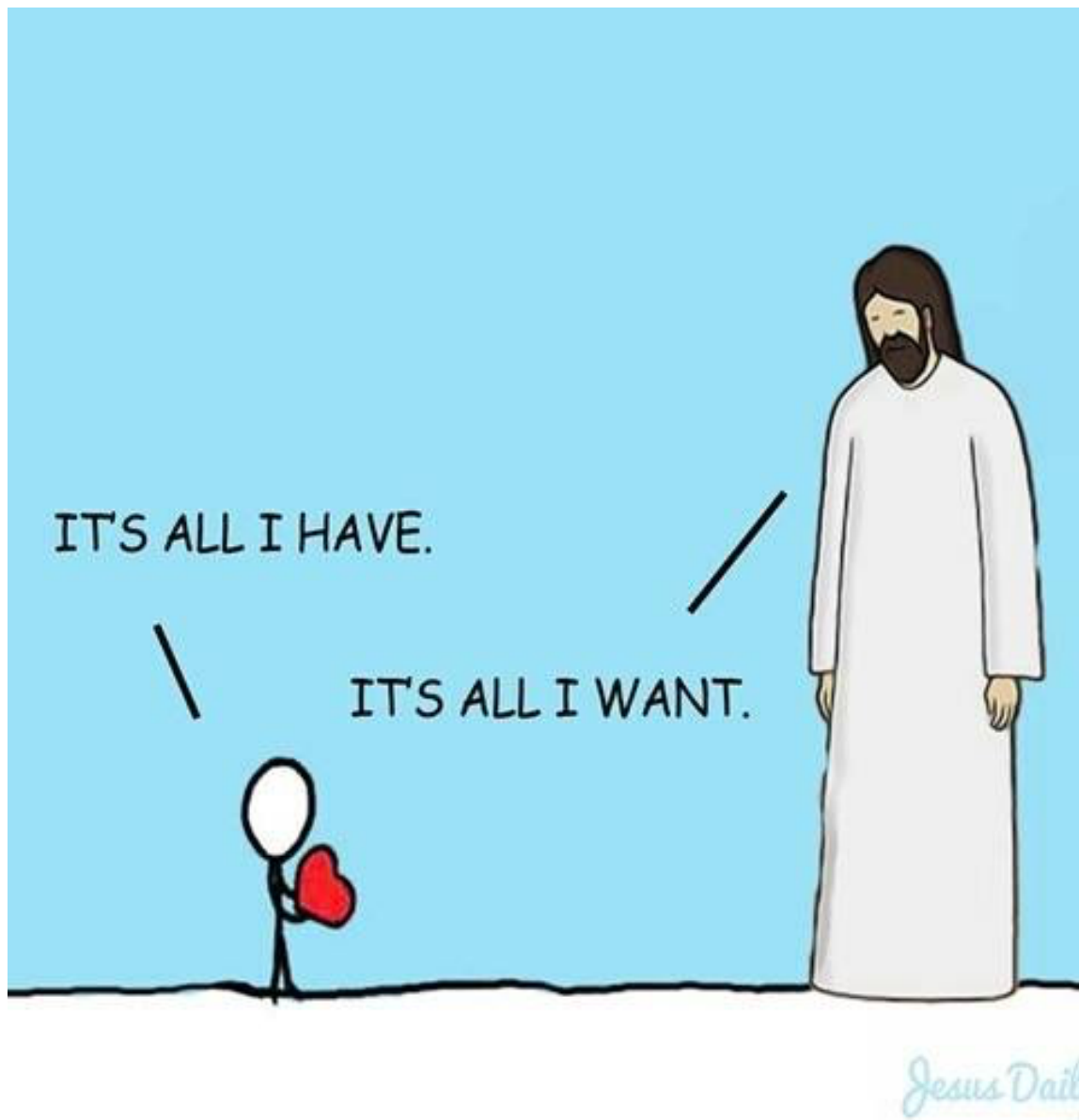
From *Race, The Power of Illusion*, Copyright (c) California Newsreel, 2003

### **Prayer to End Racial Profiling**

God of infinite compassion,  
We live in times of turmoil.  
Out of our fear we seek to target and to  
blame the innocent.  
Out of our ignorance we tolerate racist  
systems that oppress and demean or  
brothers and sisters.  
God of justice, help us to resist all forms of  
racial profiling.  
Confront our prejudices.  
Expand our understanding.  
Strengthen our resistance.  
Help us to resist the urge to protect  
ourselves at the expense of others.  
Remind us that all people are ultimately  
yours.  
This we pray, in the name of the Christ.  
Amen.

*Sheryl Kujawa-Holbrook*





God our Father, you see us growing up in an unsteady and confusing world: Show me that your ways give more life than the ways of the world, and that following you is better than chasing after selfish goals. Help me to take failure, not as a measure of my worth, but as a chance for a new start. Give me strength to hold my faith in you and to keep alive my joy in your creation; through Jesus Christ our loved. *Amen.* Adapted from the BCP, page 829

You tell us to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, care for the sick, and visit the imprisoned. Bless all who provide comfort to those in need. Keep our own eyes open to the opportunities in which we can minister to others. For in the eyes of others, we shall see you. *Amen* J. Gamber