

The “Intersectionality” of Christianity, Nationalism, White Supremacy

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What is White Supremacy?

- “...white supremacy is not merely the work of hotheaded demagogues, or a matter of false consciousness, but a force so fundamental to America that it is difficult to imagine the country without it.”
- (Ta-Nehisi Coates, 2017, p. 202)

WHITE SUPREMACY

- White supremacy is the institutionalization of the White Dominate culture in ALL of our American institutions – a system that benefits whites (but not necessarily all whites).
- It has shaped Western political thought for hundreds of years – it's the unnamed political system that has made the modern world what it is today.
- It's an economic system that has been structured around the racial exploitation of others.

What is Intersectionality? Where did it come from?

The concept came originally from The Combahee River Collective.

What is the Combahee River Collective?

Founded in the 1970's. By Barbara Smith, Beverly Smith, and Demita Frazier.

The Combahee River Collective Statement published in 1977 introduced the terms “interlocking oppression” and “identity politics.”



“Intersectionality”

First introduced by critical race theorist Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw in 1989. She states that cultural patterns of oppression are not only interrelated, but are bound together and influenced by the **intersectional** systems of society. Examples of this include race, gender, class, ability, and ethnicity.

She expands it in a 1991 article “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color.” (*Stanford Law Review*)

What does it mean to be Christian in the U.S. today?

Slaveholder Religion: began in the early 1800's preachers paid to preach white supremacy. Sermons eerily similar to the messages today by white conservative evangelicals.

Redemption Movement: after the Civil War, as a matter of faith for white Southerners Washington was seen as being a den of corruption, and we need to redeem the country and take our country back.

Lynchings between 1880 – 1940 white Christians lynched over 5,000 black men and women.

Make America Great Again is from Redeemer Movement: it's about no money for public education (especially for Blacks); low taxes; and attacks organized labor and progressive ideas.

The Most Segregated Hour: the fact that the Christian Church remains the most segregated institution in America suggests that Slaveholder Religion and the Redemption Movement still hold more sway than most of us want to believe.




The Intersection of Christianity and Nationalism

The Doctrine of Discovery

Pope Alexander VI on May 4, 1493, issued a Papal Bull: “the Catholic faith and the Christian religion be exalted and be everywhere increased and spread, that the health of souls be cared for and that barbarous nations be overthrown and brought to the faith.”

Made colonizing a matter of faith.

Used in Colonizing and in our Western Expansion.

A portrait of Floyd Westerman, a Lakota First Nation man, with long white hair and a traditional beaded necklace. He is wearing a white shirt and a dark vest. The background is dark.

“I would like to quote a very prejudicial doctrine that was handed down by the Supreme Court in 1823. It said that the Indian Nations do not have title to their lands because they weren't Christians. That the first Christian Nations to discover an area of heathen lands has the absolute title. This doctrine should be withdrawn and renounced to establish a new basis for relationship between indigenous peoples and other peoples of the world.”

~Floyd Westerman (Lakota First Nation)

Manifest Destiny

Is the belief that the US has a special role in the unfolding of God's global plan: people of color, even if Christian (and especially if they are not), are seen as fundamentally flawed.

It's derived from the Christian binary of good and evil; the racist division of people into categories of white and non-white perpetuates long-standing divisions between Christians and others.



The Slave Market and the Three-Fifths Dehumanization

- The uniqueness of American slavery: not like slavery in other places. Chattel Slavery.
- “It was determined by Europeans that black Africans were fitted by a natural act of God to the position of bondage. It was this regulation to lesser humanity that allowed the institution of chattel slavery to be intrinsically linked with the violence, and it was through violence, aggression, and dehumanization that the institution of slavery was enacted, legislated, and perpetuated by Europeans.” (DeGruy, p.35)
- “Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole Number of free Persons, including those bound to Service for a Term of Years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other Persons.”

(Article I, Section 2 of The Constitution of the United States of America)



Representation of the slave market: the Peace & Justice Memorial in Montgomery Alabama

Christian Patriotism that Leads to Nationalism

Country was not designed to accommodate the liberty and freedoms of its nonwhite people.

U.S. is a colonial state. Colonial powers are always violent and racist.

U.S. military is not a protector of peace – it is an enforcer of colonialism.

Many People of Color have fought and died in U.S. wars; but Black patriotism is usually seen as protest.

Flag and National Anthem are symbols of White Supremacy and the freedom of White people.



Our National Anthem

- Francis Scott Key – major slaveholder
- America to be slaveholder republic for free white men only
- Third verse – death to African Americans seeking freedom with British.



Verse 3 Our National Anthem

And where is that band who so vauntingly swore
That the havoc of war and the battle's confusion,
A home and a country, should leave us no more?
Their blood has washed out their foul footsteps'
pollution.

No refuge could save the hireling and slave
From the terror of flight, or the gloom of the grave:
And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave,
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.



Other Signs of Intersection Between Christianity, Nationalism, and White Supremacy?



What other examples of National Christian Identity can you name?

- Christian Holidays dominate: Christmas, Easter, Halloween, etc.
- Sayings printed on our money: *Novus Ordo Seclorum* = the new order of the ages. (American Christian Exceptionalism). *Annuit Coeptis* = providence has favored our undertakings.
- Andrew Jackson on our \$20 bill – the most racist president ever.
- Christopher Columbus as a Saint.

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“Christmas in Georgia”



CHRISTMAS IN GEORGIA A. D., 1916

In *The Crisis*, December, 1916.
The NAACP's magazine, edited
by W.E.B. DuBois.

“The Crucifixion in Omaha”

This picture appeared in the December, 1919 issue of *The Crisis*.



Will Brown, burned by a White mob in Omaha on September 28, 1919.