

The Ugly but Hopeful Truth

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Racial Justice Initiative

We live in a time of rising white supremacy and racial violence, fueled by a subgroup within our political system that spreads disinformation and fear about “white erasure,” and embraces white supremacy groups as their base. This group oppresses and vilifies minorities, effectively tapping into our white fragility as a nation. They want to squash the truth of our nation’s history (Critical Race Theory), banning books and whitewashing our children’s education. How sad and pathetic it is to think that we, as a nation, are so fragile, that we can’t handle the full truth of our history. This political subgroup wants you to believe that the truth will scar our White children, with no acknowledgement of the deep scars, pain, and suffering our nation and its policies have inflicted on the indigenous peoples and our Black and Brown siblings for hundreds of years. If we can’t handle the truth, we can’t heal, and will keep repeating the violence. This is exactly what white supremacy and some politicians want. These people only care about gaining power at whatever cost, to carry out a white supremacist agenda, with no regard to who is harmed, or even killed, along the way. The tools of propaganda, misinformation, and insurrection, have all of the markings and strategies deployed by Hitler and the Nazi movement.

While we live in our White bubbles, our Black, Brown, and Yellow siblings live in fear every day. Will it be my community that is targeted by the next mass shooter? Will my Black teenager be killed for jogging or driving while Black? Will my American-Asian daughter be beaten or bullied because of the false associations to “the China virus”.

As a nation, what have we become?

As a church, what are we doing to combat the current atrocities being played out in the minds of our citizenry, and in our schools, supermarkets, in places of worship, and in our streets?

It is not enough to say, “I am not a racist,” and think personal responsibility and accountability ends with that. We have to take responsibility for educating ourselves and one another on the structure and harm of formal and informal racists policies. We need to become antiracists: lives literally depend upon it! Our silence as a church community IS complicity with systemic racism and racists,

white supremacist structures and culture. Christ calls us to accountability, especially concerning those who have been relegated to the margins of our society.

Here are a few suggestions to promote hope and healing.

- Teach the whole truth of our nation's history in church – whether it be during worship, in Sunday School or vacation bible school. We need to know the truth, even the ugly truth, in order to heal and transform into new ways of being in the world.
- Have sacred images that are not White.
- Do your own racism recovery work. No matter how embracing we are of People of Color, we live in a white supremacist culture, and have inherent prejudices that we need to be aware of and consciously work to undo.
- Join Racial Justice book studies offered throughout the year.
- Actively promote exposure and engagement with communities of Color while respecting their boundaries.
- Invite congregants to examine their discipleship. Is their identity as Christ's disciple primary, or do they put politics above faith? Christian nationalism seeks to merge Christian and American identities, distorting both our faith and our democracy. We are bound to Christ not by citizenship, but by our faith. When we conflate our secular American identity with our identity as Christians, the resulting dangerous political ideology provides cover for white supremacy and racial subjugation.
- Be an antiracist congregation by working to dismantle systemic racism.

If you or your congregation needs help in getting started, please reach out to the Racial Justice Team and visit our webpage on the PSEC website. Members of the Zachariah Walker Racial Justice Initiative welcome the opportunity to speak at association meetings in the Fall. Please, it is a matter of life and death.