

Brave Church/Hard Topics, 4/19/2023: Antiracism, Part 2

This is the chat log of the discussion. Names and identifiable information have been removed for privacy. References to slides for this session can be found in the *Antiracism Part II – 04-19-23.pdf* document linked [Brave Church-Hard Topics web page](#).

Additional information added after the discussion are identified with “NOTE:”

The Caste System (slides 6-10)

Discussion Qs1 (slide 11):

Think about white privilege as the highest level of the caste system. Those who identify as white are the highest level, with the most affluent at the top of the level. Does this change your perceptions of the term ‘white privilege?’

Feel more comfortable with 'privileged' class rather than 'ruling class'

Make the pyramid (Slide 10) more 3-D: overlay with economic class. Makes lines less stark. What's more important is that everyone knows where they rank in a caste system.

If you see people lower than you rising above you economically/other variables, tend to get scared, angry, act out. A lot of anger that manifests against lower caste is fear of loss of own status.

Find it curious that Asians are placed where they are in the system.

Within these levels are sublevels. Everyone wants to feel superior to someone. Even among whites, there are definite castes (socioeconomic, where you live, etc).

Comments on Slide 11 (Characteristics of White Supremacy Culture)

What does sense of urgency mean?

Example: "My idea is most important... hate to cut you off, but this is more important"

Is that like "Type A" personality?

Going over that list - a lot of it looks like it describes a narcissist.

Wonder if that means those of us with privilege are caught up in our own self-importance.

Have a tendency not to listen to other people's opinions.

It changes my perception: paraphrasing George Orwell - "All whites are privileged. Some are more privileged than others."

Reparations (slides 12-16)

Comments on "America is an old house"

House divided can't stand.

Resource: *Jesus and John Wayne* by Kristin Kobes du Mez

NOTE: Here's the author's page for the book: <https://kristindumez.com/books/jesus-and-john-wayne/>

We're born into this, don't realize the situation we're in. We're programmed as whites that we have to be in the right place, because this is the US. That poisons the young American mind.

People do need to go back to the feelings in the first paragraph [Slide 12]. Yes, we have to deal with it now, even though there are people here whose ancestors have nothing to do with it. Also have many African immigrants who came after slavery. Hard at times to think out these things given diverse background in this country.

Growing up in coal country, in a family that immigrated to the US between the World Wars and toiled in the mines, I heard "our family wasn't here when slavery happened" a lot. However, I've also realized that, even if my family didn't materially profit directly from slavery per se, we still had advantages as white people that my black friends didn't (and still don't) have. I didn't come from an upper income status, but I also didn't have the barrier of skin color to get in my way. It's taken me a while to recognize that.

One reparation ever paid for slavery in US - a free slave falsely returned from Cincinnati to TX

Comments on the Video:

NOTE: Here's the link to the video: [Is It Time For Reparations In America?](#)

The video made an excellent point that reparations don't have to be in money. She listed a bunch of them.

Our founding fathers were considered secondary citizens by the caste system of Great Britain.

We have health care program for Native Americans, but not aware of anything for Black Americans.

Given the current push to roll back affirmative action in this country, the prospects for reparations are probably not promising.

It's not just slavery. Destruction of Black Wall St in Tulsa OK in 1920s. No generational wealth moves on in the Black community.

It's a matter of how the societal power structure is using it to release frustration of the majority. It was one way to identify scapegoats to release society frustrations.

Comment on the slide 'common challenges' [Slide 16] - notice how often 'fair' is used. That's a judgment call. What is fair?

How can you make any body, any people whole? You can't do it. If you give monetary reparations to a generation, what about the previous generations or the generations that come after.

Next to last bullet [Slide 16]: Although the problem is extremely large, many lawsuits for reparations for people who have been resolved.

In response to the question of "what can we do?": I like that reparations isn't necessarily money, but a lot of other mechanisms, such as investing in communities, providing scholarships, etc, that helps people get on better footing, rather than being marginalized.

Discussion Qs2 (slide 17)

Should the United States offer reparations to people of color in this country?

What types of reparations would work for those wronged in this country?

Who is responsible for providing reparations?

There's a huge difference between black and white net worth. That could be resolved, could trickle down. I don't see the political support to do that.

Here's a concept that seems easy to do: When a church buys sheet music to perform, composers get royalties. However, spirituals are in public domain. Some churches have decided to make contributions to music endeavor for children of color/disadvantaged children for songs in public domain. With some creative thought, little things like this could make a statement.

An organization called **Sing! The Center for Congressional Song**...has on their website info on their Reparations Royalty Program, a pilot program to offer help to faith communities to find a way to pay reparations for music in the public domain that likely came from enslaved peoples by way of oral histories.

NOTE: Here's a link to [Sing! The Center for Congressional Song](#)

And here's a link to their [REPARATIONS ROYALTY PILOT PROGRAM](#)

One place to start - educational systems. Public systems on the whole are going down as more (predominantly white) people are moving their kids to private schools.

As long as you teach them the truths.

I can't get my head wrapped around 'to whom' and 'for what' in terms of reparations. It's much broader.

Does that mean we shouldn't try?

No, I'm all for studying how to make it fair, but not just of the sake of doing that. Want to make sure it's attainable and has a positive result.

One of the bullet points: we're still paying pensions to heirs of Civil War widows. We've done it before.

I'm struck by slide that talked about a component of reparation being apology. Heartened that Confederate statues have been taken down. Teaching the truth. Those are apologetic. We still have a way to go. Admitting you're wrong about something and letting the 'lost cause' die instead of perpetuating it is important.

There are initiatives to remove rights to vote - we're going the wrong way in some things.

If we're going to do reparations in social services, there's a push to keep cutting taxes. Where are we going to get the money?

Comments on microaggressions and unconscious biases (Slides 18-24)

Discussion Qs3 (slide 25)

The first step to addressing our unconscious biases is to acknowledge that everyone has them. Let's take a moment to reflect on our actions and decisions and think about what motivated them. Did your actions benefit a particular group of people in an unfair way?

Responding in disbelief when people of color share experiences of color share experiences of racism with you.

The 1st bullet [in Slide 21] played out in the TN legislature [accusing the 2 black legislators of being loud/aggressive]

My African American friend says she never walks out without a receipt because of suspicion. Constant flow of microaggressions I don't experience but they do.

Heard a lot of people say, 'Black preachers really know how to talk in public.'

Jimmy Kimmel asked Morgan Freeman how he learned to talk so well.

And Hakeem Jeffries!! Another Black articulate politician.

Unconscious bias creeps in because my brain has been programmed. Such as thinking a black athlete sounds 'articulate'. Wouldn't think that about a white athlete. Acknowledging these biases exist and trying to overcome it is something I have to continue to work on.

Realizing it is a microaggression and squelching it is something we need to do.

A lot of us are unconscious of what we're doing. We can't do better unless we know.

Is it always a microaggression to appreciate something that is cultural or ethnic?

As a woman, some of these resonates as well. "You play pretty good...for a girl."

While it may look like it's a compliment, if the compliment is because of race (i.e., it's not something you would say to someone else of your race), people of color are going to react to it.

A lot of it has to do with intent. You can appreciate someone's well-crafted response. But to say something with a sense of disbelief that they could say that.

It can be the difference comes in whether the comments are affirming and lifting up or express surprise and disbelief.

The Hamilton Broadway show broke things open by having people of color play the parts of 'old white people'

heard story on NPR about adultification of Black children, who are perceived as being much older than they are. Example: the boy who showed up at the wrong house to pick up siblings and was shot.

As a cultural historian, I'm afraid a lot of not having Blacks in romantic movements tied to thought that Blacks were perceived as more sexual than Whites. Emancipation freed slaves but left them with no place to live or work. Nobody wanted to take them on.

Resources: ***Bury my heart at Wounded Knee*** by Dee Brown

NOTE: This book was first published in 1970. Dee Brown passed away in 2002. There's no author's page (that I know of), but you can find the book through your local library or online bookstores.

They were her property by Stephanie E. Jones-Rogers

NOTE: Here's a link to the author's page: <https://www.stephaniejonesrogers.com/book>