

*The Legacy of White Supremacy
in American Christianity*



WHITE
TOO LONG

Robert P. Jones

*Author of *The End of White Christian America**

“Compelling. . . . A damning moral indictment of the way white supremacy has infected the white church in the United States from its very beginnings.”

—Jim Wallis, founder and President of *Sojourners*

STUDY GUIDE

White Too Long: Study Guide

WHITE TOO LONG The Legacy of White Supremacy in American Christianity Study Guide

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MANUFACTURED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Chapter 1

Seeing: Our Current Moment

This first chapter of *White Too Long*, “Seeing,” focuses on awareness. The author lifts up white Christians’ and white churches’ inability to see their roles in the formative history of white supremacy in the American context.

In this chapter, you’ll explore concepts, information, and stories including:

- the historic splits in Protestant denominations between Northern and Southern churches over the issue of slavery;
- the use of biblical interpretation to justify slavery and how it influenced theological views;
- racial demographics shifts and changes in culture and politics as the country has shifted over the last decade from being a majority white Christian country to one that no longer has a single racial-religious majority group;
- unpacking the deeper and broader meaning white supremacy (or the supremacy of whites) to include the systems and social structures that shape our daily lives; and
- the role of white Christians as powerful players in systems and leadership that created and sustained racial inequality.

White Christian churches have not just been complacent; they have not only been complicit; rather, as the dominant cultural power in America, they have been responsible for constructing and sustaining a project to protect white supremacy and resist black equality. (p. 5)

The historical record of lived Christianity in America reveals that Christian theology and institutions have been the central cultural tent pole holding up the very idea of white supremacy. And the genetic imprint of this legacy remains present and measurable in contemporary white Christianity, not only among evangelicals in the South but also among mainline Protestants in the Midwest and Catholics in the Northeast. (p. 6)

Robert P. Jones, *White Too Long: The Legacy of White Supremacy in American Christianity* (Simon & Schuster, Kindle edition)

Discussion Starters

1. What was your emotional reaction to reading the James Baldwin quote that served as the epigraph of the book, which is the basis for the title *White Too Long*? Did you find yourself defensive? Surprised? Saddened?
2. Jones begins the book with a startling first line: “The Christian denomination in which I grew up was founded on the proposition that chattel slavery could flourish alongside the gospel of Jesus Christ.” And he notes that virtually every Christian denomination split over the issue of slavery in the 1800s. If you belong to a religious denomination or broader organization, do you know what the relationship was between its beginnings and stances on slavery? What about racial segregation? More recently, what about issues like the police shootings of unarmed African Americans?
3. Jones talks about the importance of understanding what Eddie Glaude Jr. has called “white supremacy without all the bluster.” And Jones argues that a narrow definition of white supremacy actually helps soothe white consciences. What is your relationship to the words white supremacy?
4. White church histories and congregations have often explicitly ignored the presence of African Americans in their larger communities. How has this myopia impacted the development of white Christian churches? How has this shaped the self-perceptions of white Christians?

Chapter 2

Remembering: Christianity as the Conductor of White Supremacy

In the chapter “Remembering,” the reader is called to look at specific events in history as a record of the active participation of white Christians in racial violence. This participation includes acting as communities, as civic and church leaders, and as individuals in the crowd.

In this chapter, you’ll explore concepts, information, and stories including:

- violent episodes in the Reconstruction-era South including the Colfax Massacre and the lynching of Samuel Thomas Wilkes;
- the white Church and the civil rights movement with the specific example of First Baptist Church, Jackson, Mississippi, and its influence in government, civic life, and the press;
- the conflict when national or even local church leadership is ahead of local congregations in racial integration of the community and of the worship space itself;
- more recent events related to white supremacy and racial justice in the Southern Baptist Convention and its institutions and
- statements from the National Council of Churches and the US Roman Catholic Church compared to actions taken at the local level by congregations.

White Christians and their institutions, especially at the local level, were not just passively complicit with but also broadly and actively resistant to black Americans’ claims of equality. This massive religious resistance was happening even as white Protestant mainline denominational offices and the American Catholic bishops, at the national level, were issuing statements calling for their constituents to support aspects of the civil rights movement. (p. 68)

What if the racist views of historical “titans of the faith” infected the entire theological project contemporary white Christians have inherited from top to bottom? If white supremacy was an unquestionable cultural assumption in America, what does it mean that Christian doctrines by necessity had to develop in ways that were compatible with that worldview? (p. 70)

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Discussion Starters

1. Chapter 2 opens with two appalling accounts of white mob violence and lynching. One of them was justified by a call to protect “our hereditary civilization and Christianity menaced by a stupid Africanization” and the other was attended by white citizens who literally left their Sunday morning church services to attend a lynching. Are there similar events in your community’s history?
2. Jones argues that white Christians have not just been complicit or complacent but rather, as the dominant religious institutions in American society, they served as the moral cornerstone for white supremacy, legitimizing a social order that valued the lives of whites over others. Do you find this argument persuasive? Why or why not?
3. When white Christians have attempted to address racial justice issues, Jones argues that they often engage in what he calls “the white Christian shuffle,” a two-steps-forward-one-step-back pattern of lamenting past sins, but then ultimately denying that their legacy requires reparative or costly actions in the present. Have you experienced this phenomenon when white Christians acknowledge racial injustice?
4. The examples of theological justifications for white supremacy among white evangelicals, who are heavily concentrated in the South, may be familiar. Were you surprised by the historical examples of support for white supremacy among white mainline Protestants and white Catholics in the Midwest and urban centers of the Northeast? How do these examples fit in your understanding of where you come from?
5. What do you make of the challenging question Jones raises in the conclusion to the chapter: “What if the racist views of historical ‘titans of the faith’ infected the entire theological project contemporary white Christians have inherited from top to bottom?”

Chapter 3

Believing: The Theology of White Supremacy

In the third chapter, “Believing,” Jones examines how the understanding of whiteness affects the way white Christian theology has developed and is lived out in congregations even today.

In this chapter, explore concepts, information, and stories including:

- motivations behind efforts to protect the purity or innocence of Christians, churches, and the faith, including institutions like the Museum of the Bible in Washington, DC;
- Rev. Basil Manly who with other Protestant leaders presented a theological and biblical defense of slavery (Lecture on Ants, Duties of Masters and Servants);
- Frederick Douglass’s *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave* including his assertion that Christianity made for harsher slave owners;
- the Religion of the Lost Cause and its affect on both Protestants and Catholics;
- the “cultural tool kits” of white Christianity, including the roles of free will, individualism, relationalism, and anti-structuralism as ideas that led to prioritizing personal salvation over recognizing social sins; and
- the Bible and claims to biblical inerrancy as tools for protecting the cultural status quo.

I think the fact that white churches produced such a strong sense of safety and security for those of us who were inside the institution is why it is so hard for white Christians to see the harm it did to those who were outside it, particularly African Americans, and the other kinds of damage it did to us, numbing our own moral sensibilities and limiting our religious development. . . . The problem was that it had developed in such a way that its main goal was protecting and improving white Christians’ lives within an unjust social status quo, which is to say a context of extreme racial inequality and injustice. (p. 75)

By the late nineteenth century, the Lost Cause generation began to adopt a premillennialist theology that held the opposite: the present world represents the work of a sinful and fallen humanity, it will continue to decline, and it will be redeemed only by the second coming of Christ. . . . The most significant outcome of this shift is that the logic of premillennial theology undercuts calls to social justice, since it proceeds from the presumption that the world is evil and in continual decline. The presence of injustice is the unsurprising outcome of a fallen world, not a call for action. (p. 94)

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Discussion Starters

1. Jones talks about his childhood church instilling in him a sense of protection and purity, while numbing his conscience to racial injustice all around him. Martin Luther King Jr. was also mystified by the inaction of white Christians in the civil rights movement, which he characterized in his famous “Letter from Birmingham Jail” as remaining “silent behind the anesthetizing security of stained glass windows.” Have you seen or experienced this paradox? How much does this description remain true of white churches today?
2. The Southern Baptist leader Basil Manly Sr. unapologetically argued that God’s plan for human society, based in the Bible, was a hierarchical one where white people of European descent were divinely ordained to rule over black and brown people. This widespread theological worldview was the basis for violence and genocide against Native Americans and for enslaving millions of Africans. How much has this theology actually been reformed? Where do we still see its presence?
3. Jones argues that one of the most powerful tools that has protected white supremacy is the theological conception of salvation through a personal relationship with Jesus. What does he argue is problematic about this concept?
4. 4. What is “Lost Cause Theology,” and how do we see resonances of this theological worldview at play in politics today?

Chapter 4

Marking: Monuments to White Supremacy

In this fourth chapter, “Marking,” the focus is on the very tangible monuments, rituals, and symbols that glorify the Lost Cause and the supremacy of whiteness.

In this chapter, you’ll explore events, concepts, information, and stories including:

- the 1907 celebration unveiling the statue of Jefferson Davis in Richmond, Virginia, and the resulting Monument Avenue and church relocation to the area;
- the United Daughters of the Confederacy, its mission, and lasting effects,
- Stone Mountain, Georgia, and other Confederate monuments: number, sponsorship, and time line;
- the Lost Cause and the mix of Christianity and the Confederacy depicted in worship space through stained glass and other decorations;
- the Confederate Battle Flag and its background; and
- the connections between Dylann Roof’s Christian identity and attraction to a white Jesus and his murder of nine African Americans at the Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina.

Clearly, Roof’s worldview was anchored in his self-understanding as a white Christian in relationship to a white Jesus. And although neither the press nor law enforcement described him this way, the most accurate term for him is a “white Christian terrorist.” . . . It’s vital, if we are to properly understand the problem, that we not flinch from the clear evidence that Roof’s Christianity wasn’t incidental to his motivations and his racist views. It was integral to his identity and helped fuel this horrific violence. He understood himself as a white Christian warrior who consciously launched this attack on sacred ground, targeting a historic black church in the hopes of encouraging his fellow white Christians to rise up and “become completely ruthless to the blacks.” (p. 140)

From Mitch Landrieu’s 2017 speech, “These monuments purposefully celebrate a fictional, sanitized Confederacy; ignoring the death, ignoring the enslavement, and the terror that it actually stood for. After the Civil War, these statues were a part of that terrorism as much as a burning cross on someone’s lawn; they were erected purposefully to send a strong message to all who walked in their shadows about who was still in charge in this city.” (p. 153)

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Discussion Starters

1. Look at Figure 4.1, “Installation of Confederate Monuments in Public Spaces, by Decade,” on page 121. Is it surprising to you that the peak of the Confederate monument building took place in the early twentieth century, with an additional uptick in the 1950s and 1960s? How does it change your perspective on the purpose of those monuments?
2. Compare the children’s catechism from The Methodist Episcopal Church and the United Daughters of the Confederacy on pages 123–125. How would participating in the UDC catechism class shape the worldview of white Christian children? How would it shape their interpretation of Christian teachings?
3. 3. If you attend a church that has stained glass, are all the biblical figures depicted as white? Are there portraits of a white Jesus up on the walls? What difference does it make in how the race of these figures and even God is perceived?
4. 4. Were you surprised to learn about mass murderer Dylann Roof’s close ties to Christianity? If we take this seriously, does the coexistence of Christian faith and white supremacy in his motivations indicate something inherently problematic within white Christianity? Would we answer the question the same way if he had committed violence in the name of another religion?
5. 5. What do you think it would take for white Christians to embrace the task of reanimating our own histories to confront an often violent and unflattering past?

Chapter 5

Mapping: The White Supremacy Gene in American Christianity

In this fifth chapter, “Mapping,” Jones examines the statistical trends and historical records that track white Christian belief, bias, and perception.

In this chapter, you’ll explore concepts, information, and stories including:

- the Racism Index;
- patterns in contemporary attitudes about race in states and counties based on their historic levels of slave ownership;
- stark differences between white Christians, white religiously unaffiliated, and African American Protestants around issues including Confederate monuments, police killings of African American men, structural racial injustice, immigrants, and “the American way of life”;
- how high scores on the Racism Index are independently and positively correlated with white Christian identity; and
- the surprising effect of church attendance and regionality have on the Racism Index.

This chapter demonstrates—with rigorous quantitative evidence—a disturbing fact: that Frederick Douglass’s nearly two-hundred-year-old observations about the positive correlation between white supremacy and Christianity continue to be supported by the contemporary evidence. Not only in the South but nationwide, higher levels of racism are associated with higher probabilities of identifying as a white Christian; and, conversely, adding Christianity to the average white person’s identity moves him or her toward more, not less, affinity for white supremacy. (pp. 186–187)

This research demonstrates that the deep racial prejudice that was created by a slaveholding society is still measurably present in the contemporary South, and that this relationship is not just correlational but causal. . . . As Acharya and his coauthors summarize the findings, “It’s not simply that more conservative people live in these areas—these are more conservative areas because of their past.” (p. 157)

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Discussion Starters

1. Were you surprised to learn that the levels of slave-owning in Southern counties in 1860 still impact the attitudes of whites who reside in those areas today, even when accounting for a range of other explanations? What are the three ways in which these attitudes remain?
2. Review Figure 5.3, “Distribution of Racism Index Scores among White Religious Subgroups,” on page 169. What do you make of the relatively similar patterns among each white Christian subgroup, specifically the lack of differences between white evangelical Protestants on the one hand and white mainline Protestants and white Catholics on the other?
3. Review the “Summary of Statistical Findings” on pages 183–184. What stands out to you as the most remarkable finding?
4. Jones sums up the implications of the statistical findings with this sentence (p. 185): “If you were recruiting for a white supremacist cause on a Sunday morning, you’d likely have more success hanging out in the parking lot of an average white Christian church—evangelical Protestant, mainline Protestant, or Catholic—than approaching whites sitting out services at the local coffee shop.” Why do you think whites who do not attend church are less likely than those who do to hold racist views?
5. If white supremacy has been built into the DNA of white Christianity, is it possible to change that inheritance?

Chapter 6

Telling: Stories of Change

In this sixth chapter, “Telling,” the focus is on places and people who are finding ways to share stories of truth and change in public and private arenas.

In this chapter, you’ll explore concepts, information, and stories including:

- the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum in Jackson, Mississippi,
- the National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Montgomery, Alabama;
- First Baptist Church of Christ and First Baptist Church on New Street in Macon, Georgia, and
- Clayton Jackson McGhie Memorial in Duluth, Minnesota.

From Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church, Montgomery: “We’ve got the Civil War and civil rights all together here in one place. All on top of one another.” My visit occurred days after a mass shooting in August 2019, in which a white man killed twenty people in an El Paso Walmart, citing as his motivation “the Hispanic invasion of Texas.” Clearly thinking of this event and the general rise of white supremacist violence, Wanda paused. With tears in her eyes, she added, “And they’re both still with us, ya’ll.”

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Inscribed at the National Memorial for Peace and Justice:

For the hanged and beaten.

For the shot, drowned, and burned.

For the tortured, tormented, and terrorized.

For those abandoned by the rule of law.

We will remember.

With hope because hopelessness is the enemy of justice.

With courage because peace requires bravery.

With persistence because justice is a constant struggle.

With faith because we shall overcome.

Discussion Starters

1. How do the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum and the National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Alabama signal a new era in telling the story of America? Are there models for this new era of telling close to your home? If not, what would that look like, and how do you think it would be received by your community?
2. What stands out most to you about the story of the two First Baptist churches in Macon, Georgia? Could this be a model for churches in your community to build bridges across lines of race?
3. How would you answer the questions posed by Mike Tusken after his visit to the National Memorial for Peace and Justice? “Leaving this memorial, I think everyone has to ask themselves, ‘What are you personally going to do to confront racism? To make sure that people have access and equality?’ . . . What are you going to do?”
4. Jones retells his family’s history from page 217 onward, noting “the ways in which white supremacy, like kudzu, has crept its way forward through the family tree.” If you are white and were to retell your family’s history in the US through a racial justice lens, how would that story be different from the commonly told one? What is your family’s relationship to Native American lands? To slavery? To segregation? To other ways that whites benefited at the expense of others?

Chapter 7

Reckoning: Toward Responsibility and Repair

In this final chapter, “Reckoning,” the book turns to the question of next steps and how white Christians grapple with an authentic look at history, our accountability, and how we can regain right relationships with our fellow citizens, with ourselves, and even with God.

In this chapter, you’ll explore concepts, information, and stories including:

- racism does not only reside in individuals—as a system and culture it can’t age out;
- reckoning as a full accounting of something, theologically understood as confession and repair;
- defense mechanisms employed by white Christians;
- the reinterpretation of the Mark of Cain story in the Bible;
- the “White Problem” described by James Baldwin; and
- racial justice versus racial reconciliation.

The Lord said, “What have you done? Listen! Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground. Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth.”

Genesis 4:10-12

We are Cain. It is white Christian souls that have been most disfigured by the myth of white supremacy. And it is we who are most in need of repentance and restoration, not just for the sake of the descendants of those whom our ancestors kidnapped, robbed, whipped, murdered, and oppressed; not just for those who today are unjustifiably shot by police, unfairly tried, wrongfully convicted, denied jobs, and poorly educated in failing schools; but for the sake of our children and our own future.

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Discussion Starters

1. Given that white supremacy has been in our culture and in our churches for hundreds of years, where do we go from here? How do we even get started expelling this insidious lie—that the lives of white people are more valuable than others—from our midst?
2. What are the two meanings of the word reckoning that Jones discusses on page 227? How might each of these help us understand what is required of white Christians in this moment of the nation's history?
3. What's the difference between working for racial reconciliation and working for racial justice?
4. What is your reaction to the James Baldwin quote on page 233? How is your reaction different, reading this quote in its full context and at the end of the book, compared with how it struck you reading it on the opening page of the book?
5. Jones concludes that white Christians “have far more at stake than our black fellow citizens in setting things right” (p. 236). What does he mean by that? Do you agree?
6. Finally, the most important question: what are you going to do to contribute to racial justice and healing in your local congregation and community?

Online Resources Featuring Robert P. Jones and *White Too Long*

Interviews with Robert P. Jones:

- **LISTEN:** Robert P. Jones, “American Christianity Must Reckon with Legacy of White Supremacy, Author Says,” interview by Terry Gross, “Fresh Air,” NPR, July 30, 2020, <https://www.npr.org/2020/07/30/896712611/american-christianity-must-reckon-with-legacy-of-white-supremacy-author-says>.
- **WATCH:** Robert P. Jones, “An Interview with Robert P. Jones on the Legacy of White Supremacy in American Christianity,” interview with Joy-Ann Reid, “What to Reid,” MSNBC, September 2, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MaAMD8R7F84&fbclid=IwAR3ERg_nuvnoD25Mkj0sJqpnuskFVh2qsfGtr3_OUqD1J1AjXvpEiAYwOlw.
- **WATCH:** Christians against Christian Nationalism/Baptist Joint Committee, “A National Conversation on White Supremacy and American Christianity, featuring Robert P. Jones and Adelle Banks,” June 26, 2020, <https://bjconline.org/luncheon/>.
- **READ:** Daniel Burke, “This Is a Moment of Reckoning on Race for White Christians, an Interview with Robert P. Jones,” CNN, June 19, 2020, <https://www.cnn.com/2020/06/19/us/white-christians-racism-robert-jones/index.html>.

Reviews of *White Too Long*:

- Jemar Tisby, “Is the White Church Inherently Racist?” *The New York Times*, August 18, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/18/books/review/white-too-long-robert-p-jones.html>.
- “The Mark of Cain: A Christian Pollster Argues that a Reckoning Is Due in America’s Churches,” *The Economist*, July 11, 2020, <https://www.economist.com/united-states/2020/07/11/the-mark-of-cain>.
- Michael Luo, “American Christianity’s White Supremacy Problem,” *The New Yorker*, September 2, 2020, <https://www.newyorker.com/books/under-review/american-christianitys-white-supremacy-problem>.
- Aaron Klink, “Robert P. Jones Says It’s Past Time to Reckon with Christianity’s Role in White Supremacy,” *The Christian Century*, December 14, 2020, <https://www.christiancentury.org/review/books/robert-p-jones-says-it-s-past-time-reckon-christianity-s-role-white-supremacy>.

Appendix

Assessment Activities and Actions for White Christian Churches

1. **Bricks and Mortar.** Take a deliberate walk through both the physical grounds of the church, looking for representations that overtly or subtly reinforce whiteness as the norm. Look both for what is there and for what is not there. Here are things to notice:
 - Depictions of Jesus. Are there portraits or stained glass representations of Jesus that depict him as white or of European descent?
 - Depictions of other major figures of the Bible. Are there portraits or stained glass representations of other major figures of the Bible (e.g., Adam and Eve, Abraham, Noah, Moses, David, Jesus' disciples, Paul) who are depicted as white or of European descent?
 - Depictions of the Nativity or other holiday displays. Is the baby Jesus or Mary and Joseph depicted as white while others such as the shepherds or the magi "from the East" depicted with darker skin?
 - What kinds of images and other content are on the bulletin boards in the church hallways and office walls?
 - Who is using the building, both in official and unofficial ways? Is there any significant presence of non-white groups or people using the building on a regular basis? If not, why not?
 - On a typical Sunday, if you look around the sanctuary, what kind of racial diversity do you see? In the congregation? In the Sunday school classes? In the choir? In the ministry staff?
2. **Website and social media.** Take a virtual tour of the church's website and social media feeds, looking for representations that overtly or subtly reinforce whiteness as the norm. Again, look both for what is there and for what is not there. Here are things to notice:
 - The website home page and "About Us" page. If you land on the home page and don't scroll at all, is there anything indicating a commitment to racial justice, equality, and inclusion?
 - The images. Are there any non-white people featured in prominent images on the website?
 - The "Our History" section. Is there an honest history of the church here? If the church was on the wrong side of slavery, Jim Crow, or segregation, is there a confession of this complicity and past support for white supremacy? Is there an explicit commitment to the work of repentance and repair?

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3. **Church History.** One of the biggest challenges for white Christians is telling a truer history of ourselves. Read the formal published or informal written history of the church, with the following questions in mind.
- Why is the church physically located where it is? If it is an older church, was the church built with slave labor, built in a racially segregated “white” part of town, or part of a racially restricted neighborhood covenant? If it is a newer church, did it follow white flight from cities to the suburbs following desegregation? If the church has relocated, what prompted the move? Is there more to this story than has been told that is related to segregation?
 - What did previous ministers have to say about slavery, segregation, and civil rights? Which side of these events was the church on? Did the church stay silent when there was violence against African Americans in the community? Did the church stay silent about or oppose civil rights? Did the church stay silent about or oppose the Black Lives Matter movement?
 - Has the church given a blessing to white supremacy by allowing prominent people (e.g., mayors and other elected officials, sheriffs, judges, business leaders) to have leadership roles in the church and remain members in good standing who were playing public roles in supporting white supremacy and opposing equal rights for African Americans?
 - Has the church ever had a formal or informal policy of prohibiting non-white members? Even today, if one of the church youth began dating someone African American and brought them to church, would this be accepted?
 - Does the church membership reflect the diversity of the neighborhood around it? If not, why not?
4. **Preaching, Teaching, and Worship.** With the help of clergy at your church, conduct an assessment of the content of preaching, teaching, and worship practices over the last three months.
- Have any of the sermons over the last quarter addressed the issue of racial justice? Has the phrase “Black Lives Matter” or issues like the mass incarceration of African American men ever been mentioned to the entire congregation as a subject of genuine Christian concern?
 - Do children’s Sunday school materials feature racially diverse images? Do they depict biblical characters as being white or of European descent?
 - Make a list of hymns that have been sung over the last quarter. Do any of these raise up the theme of racial justice? Do these use “whiteness” as a symbol of purity and “blackness” for sin? How many of these hymns were written by non-white people? Has the congregation ever sung “Lift Every Voice,” commonly known as the Black national anthem?
 - If you asked people in your community to describe your church, would it be known for its public witness on racial justice? Would African Americans in your community know your church as an ally? If not, why not?
 - Is your church in an ongoing relationship with a local African American or predominately non-white church?

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5. **Giving.** If you read your church's annual budget and other giving as a moral document, what testimony does it give about the priority of racial justice in your church?
- Does your church include in its annual budget support for any ministries or organizations that work explicitly to support the well-being of non-white people in your community?
 - Has your church directly supported a predominately African American church or nonprofit that is in financial need?
 - White churches have a history of supporting missionary efforts among non-white people in the global South, while largely ignoring racial disparities closer to home. If your church provides support for missions in developing countries, how does this compare to its support for communities of color in your local area? Why does it seem more comfortable to support non-white people overseas? What might be done to change this pattern?

Actions

After conducting these assessments, here are some ideas for putting them into action:

- Commission and publish a more confessional, truer church history.
- If there are prominent aspects of the sanctuary, such as depictions of Jesus and other biblical figures as white or of European descent, hold a thoughtful, deconsecration service to remove these images.
- During Lent or another appropriate time, hold a service focused on repentance of the sin of white supremacy and commitment to repair.
- Build relationships with an African American congregation in your community that goes beyond the occasional symbolic pulpit swaps. Create quarterly opportunities for fellowship for the congregations through events like potlucks and service activities. As this partner congregation, determine what services or causes your church could include in its church budget for ongoing support.
- Hold a year-long, quarterly series of conversations about repairing the damage white supremacy has caused in your community, including what financial implications this has for your church and members of your congregation.