

INTRODUCTION: SACRED CONVERSATIONS TO END RACISM (SC2ER)

W.E.B. Du Bois, American sociologist, historian, and civil rights activists accurately named the racial crisis of the twentieth century which continues to be a more urgent crisis in the twenty-first century, “the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color-line.” Du Bois engages the questions of race, racial domination and racial exploitation in his 1903 classic book, *The Souls of Black Folks*. Du Bois identified racism as a national problem, but also recognized that categorizing humans based on race was a global bio-social construction and category.

Racism and white supremacy remains a threat to people of color, especially African descended people, legal and undocumented immigrants, Muslims, and Jews. Hate groups feel empowered and bolder instilling fear, and initiating violence towards people of color, immigrants, Jews, Muslims, and the LGBTQ community. Their boldness was ignited during the Trump campaign in 2016. Trump’s campaign slogan, “*Make America Great Again*” has led to the increase in racism and violent protests around the country.

While love of neighbor remains a command and teaching of Jesus, white skin privilege in America holds love hostage to whiteness as a symbol of power. As a result of the symbolism of what whiteness represents, racial discrimination and xenophobia remain a threat to people of color. The nation witnesses the resurgence of an increasingly violent militarized police state, and representatives of the U.S. government turning a blind eye to acts of white supremacy and nationalism.

A Growing Threat to Human and Civil Rights

In a report from [Mapping Police Violence](#), black people are three times more likely to be killed by police than an average white citizen. Overt violence against black bodies by police is so rampant that data is collected when police shootings result in deaths across the country.

News articles, social media, and television commentaries reference racism and white supremacy daily by addressing the point that not since the 60’s has America witnessed such a rise in verbal assaults and physical hate crimes against mainly people of color. Xenophobia, an intense or irrational dislike, fear or distrust of people from other countries has also risen in forms of hate speech hurled at Arabs, Muslims, and Jews. Mexicans, Central and South Americans look to faith communities for shelter as threats by the

Racism is a philosophy based on contempt for life. It is the arrogant assertion that one race is the center of value and object of devotion, before which other races must kneel in submission.

— The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.