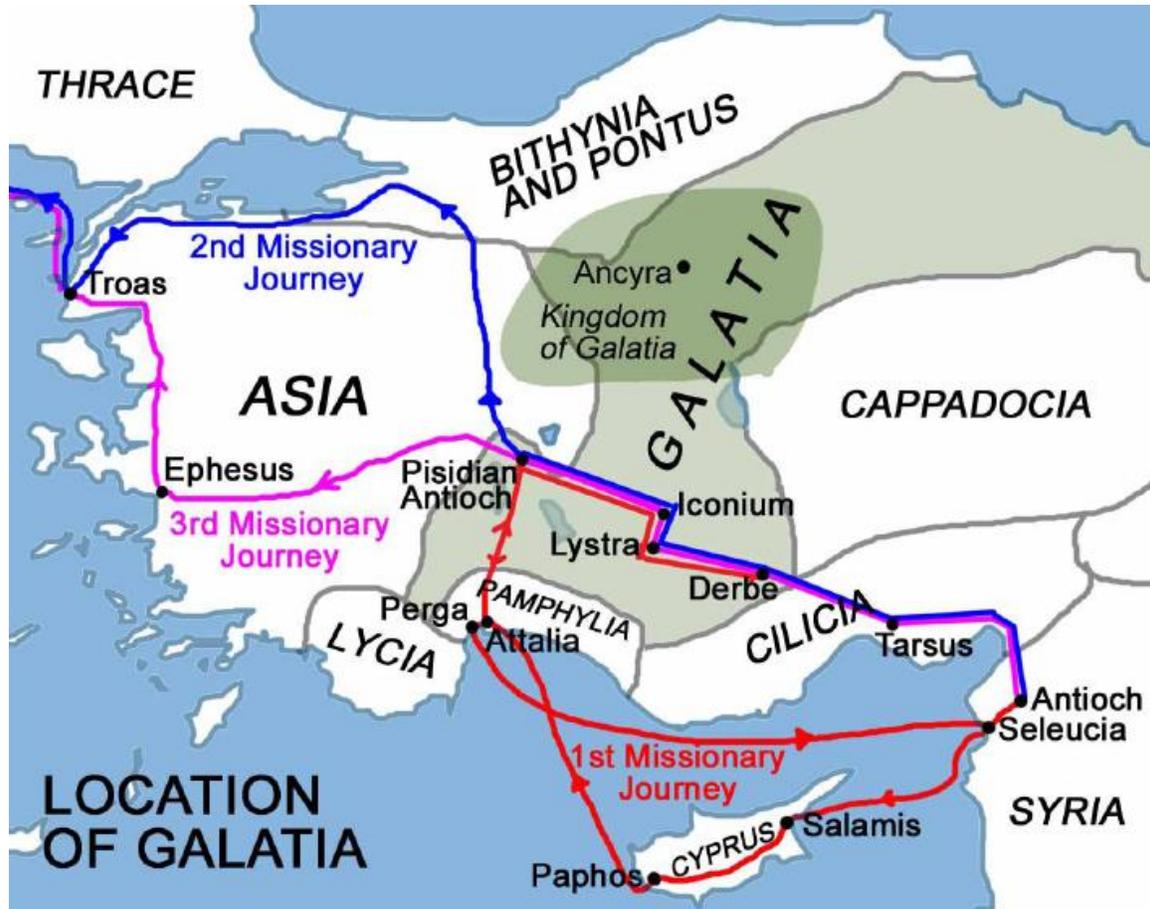


## SCTERacism Week 4 What does it mean to be white?

Sacred Scripture: Galatians 3:28-29 The Message

*In Christ's family there can be no division into Jew and non-Jew, slave and free, male and female. Among us you are all equal. That is we are all in common relationship with Jesus Christ.*



### Sacred Lesson

Galatians 3:28 provides an egalitarian entry point for Christians to have more courageous and sacred conversations across ethnic, cultural, gender, socioeconomic, sexual orientation, and prescribed racial categories. In *True to Our Native Land: An African American New Testament Commentary*, contributor Brad R. Braxton provides important insights to understanding the social boundaries of Christian community:

*Paul employs a confession used in baptismal service: "There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither slave nor free; there is neither male and female." This baptismal confession possibly indicated that "through Christ the old racial schisms and cultural divisions had been healed." [Richard N. Longenecker, Galatians (Dallas: Word, 1990) 156.*

Dr. Braxton focuses primarily on the ethnic implications of Paul's statement in 3:28. However, this passage should include the intersections of economic status and gender relationships, (sexual orientation, national origin, faith tradition, ableism, and ability).

*In order to understand Galatians 3:28, we must correct the misconception that Christian unity entails the absence of social distinctions. If advocated for the erasure of social distinction, he would have undercut his own argument. Paul designed his evangelistic campaign to bring Gentiles into the church as Gentiles, thereby ensuring ethnic diversity in the church. Why, then would he erase the very ethnic diversity for which he had toiled? In 3:28, Paul pleads for the eradication of dominance, not the erasure of difference.*

*When people enter the Christian community through belief in Christ and baptism, they do not lose the social distinctions that have characterized their lives. Even in Christ, there are human differences. Yet Christ abolishes the dominance of one over the other based on differences.*

*Christians should foster harmonious relationships and respect for social differences. Genuine unity will require deliberate, consistent, and ruggedly honest dialogue and fellowship among distinct groups. [Brad R. Braxton, Galatians (Minneapolis: (2007).]*

Galatians 3:28 reiterates Jesus's teachings to eradicate dominance. God created distinctively diverse people groups and called them very good. What does it mean to make an idol out of one's self-image like Caesar the Roman emperor? What does it mean to call oneself superior and perpetuate your culture as dominant over nonwhite cultures? White supremacy is a false narrative. How did we get this narrative and what does it mean to be white?

#### PowerPoint Presentation:

What Does it Mean to Be White: Overcoming White Skin Privilege in a Diverse World  
Di Angelo, Robin, *What Does It Mean To Be White? Developing White Racial Literacy*,  
(Peter Lang Publishing, 2012).

#### **Sacred Lesson:**

White is an artificial construct because the definition of white changes due to time and geography.

- Irish, Jews, and Italians for example were not considered white upon their arrival into America as they were processed through Ellis Island. Each group of immigrants went through a process of becoming white. The process was assimilation. Assimilation required certain cultural losses in order to gain access to privilege and power. Assimilation became the key to access within institutions, structures, and systems acknowledging that one gained a sense of superiority and supremacy over people of color groups. Everyone is impacted and the world recognizes white skin as the standard of what it means to be human globally.

**Read and incorporate into your group processing.** (See attachment at the end of the document)

- This Thing Called White: The Construction of Race and Racism



### **Sacred Conversation Group Processing**

Many questions will come up for the group regarding the Power Point Presentation and This Thing Called White. Use your journals to capture notes and discuss what you have seen, heard, and felt.

- How does this information make you feel in your soul and heart?
- What does it mean to be white?
- What does being white mean for people who are not white?
- What must be done to dismantle the construction of whiteness and the intersections it holds:
  - Economic power
  - Gender (white male) power
  - Political and policy making power
  - Privileges due to white skin
- Create space in your group to release your feelings about this topic
  - Grief
  - Pain
  - Joy
  - Relief
  - Sorrow
  - Fear

Capture your emotions as you continue to process during the week. Remember to use “I” statements during group processing.

### **Sacred Prayer and Song**

Sweet Honey in the Rock: Ella’s Song <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U6Uus--gFrc>

### **Additional Resources for the Journey to View and Read:**

1. White Fragility by Dr. Robin di Angelo  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ktVaZVVgJyc>
2. What Does it Means to be White? [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uviA\\_FGLcyE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uviA_FGLcyE)
3. Putting Racism on the Table: White Privilege <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dv-pkNXcKsw>
4. Racial Equity Online Sites
5. <http://occupywallstreet.net/story/explaining-white-privilege-broke-white-person>
6. In the White Man’s Image Documentary
7. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WpkIsyc0YRU>

8. The White Man's Burden
9. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ie8su5UmkIY>