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Political Theology Matters



THE ISSUE

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Learn more about PTM

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*Justice Meets Compassion at the Intersection of the
First Amendment and the Gospel of Jesus*

Who is Political Theology Matters



Political Theology Matters



The Power To Voice Truth

Political theology can be described as speaking about important faith matters in public space.



The Obligation To Influence

It is our responsibility to reach as wide an audience as possible for our faith-based political messages.



The Ability To Embrace

Understanding that the public square is not homogenous but rather made of people from differing backgrounds, nationalities and genders.



The Passion Behind Reason

The Gospel is inclusive and compassionate. Our faith demands we respect others especially when they differ from us or need our help.



The Means For Change

The foundation of a democracy is a free exchange of ideas; through it we can make a difference in the lives of those around us, thus changing our own.



The Right To Demand More

We have the right of free exercise, or practice, of our religion. We can speak freely in public.

“Not an organization but rather a movement!”

The Rev. Dr. Marcia Ledford, Esquire



The Rev. Dr. Marcia Ledford is a civil rights attorney representing society's most marginalized.

An Episcopal priest, she earned her Doctor of Ministry in political theology from Pacific School of Religion. Dr. Ledford founded Political Theology Matters, LLC, to help the faithful develop public theology mission for greater social justice.

Marcia writes, teaches, speaks, and preaches about political theology in varied forums.



Anti-Racism Books

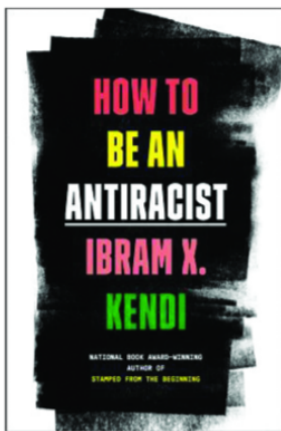


Anti-Racism Books

As protests against racial injustice and police brutality have spread across the U.S. and beyond after the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery, the demand for books about race and anti-racism internationally has soared. Many anti-racist educators and activists say that to truly be anti-racist, we have to commit ourselves to the ongoing fight against racism — and that includes examining our own implicit biases and the ways those of us who are white have benefited from white supremacy. To get started, we've compiled the following list of books suggested by anti-racist organizations, educators, and black-owned bookstores (which we recommend visiting in order to make any of these purchases.)

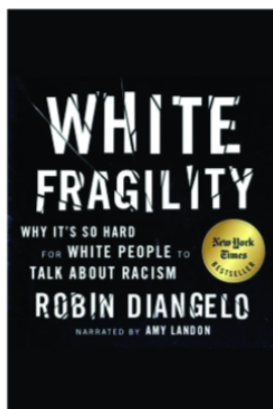


Anti-Racism Books



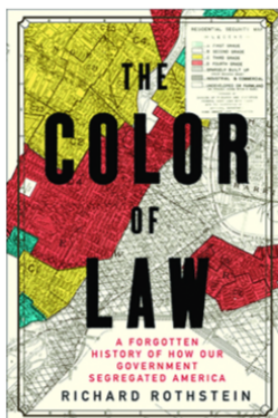
HOW TO BE AN ANTIRACIST

A primer for creating a more just and equitable society through identifying and opposing racism.



WHITE FRAGILITY

Historical and cultural analyses on what causes defensive moves by white people and how this inhibits cross-racial dialogue.

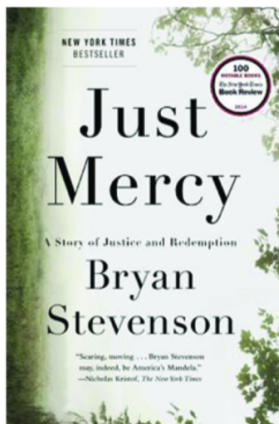


THE COLOR OF LAW

An examination of the ways in which the government caused residential segregation through racial zoning and other systemic practices.

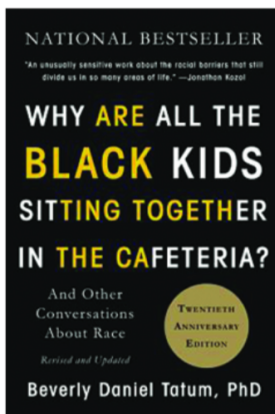


Anti-Racism Books



JUST MERCY

A law professor and MacArthur grant recipient's memoir of his decades of work to free innocent people condemned to death.



WHY ARE ALL THE BLACK KIDS SITTING TOGETHER IN THE CAFETERIA?

The president emerita of Spelman College examines whether self-segregation is a problem or a coping strategy.



I'M STILL HERE

A black woman who was given a white man's name by her parents shares her journey to finding her own worth and what stands in the way of racial justice.



Anti-Racism Books

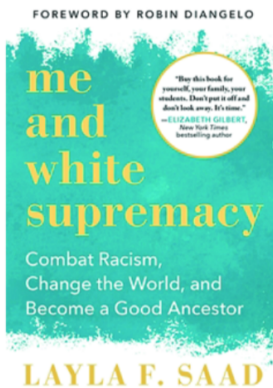


So you want to talk about race

Ijeoma Oluo

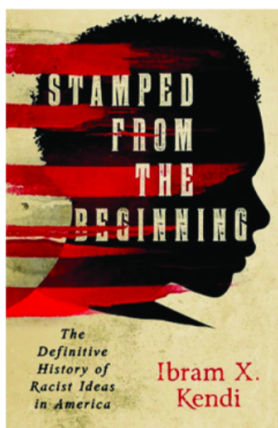
SO YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT RACE

A look at the contemporary racial landscape of the United States.




ME AND WHITE SUPREMACY

Ways to understand and possibly counteract white privilege.



STAMPED FROM THE BEGINNING

Winner of the 2016 National Book Award for nonfiction. A look at anti-Black racist ideas and their effect on the course of American history.



Diversify Your Child's Bookshelf: Anti-Oppressive Resources



Diversify Your Child's Bookshelf

All Are Welcome by Alexandra Penfold

Julian is a Mermaid by Jessica Love

The Boy Who Grew Flowers by Jen

Wojtowicz

The Paper Bag Princess by Robert Munsch

Say Something by Peter H. Reynolds

She Persisted by Chelsea Clinton

Skate for Your Life by Leo Baker

Continuum by Chella Man

Ada Twist Scientist by Andrea Beatty

Rosie Revere Engineer by Andrea Beatty

Sofia Valdez future Prez by Andrea Beatty

Hair Love by Matthew Cherry

I Believe I Can by Grace Byers

** The above are some great resources for all ages from Queen's University Faculty of Education

A person with their back to the camera, holding a large sign that reads "WE NEED A CHANGE". The person has their hair in a ponytail and is wearing a dark long-sleeved shirt. The background is a blurred crowd of people at what appears to be a protest or rally. The entire image has a purple tint.

**WE NEED
A CHANGE**

How to Begin Your Political Advocacy



How to Begin Your Political Advocacy

1. Pick 1-2 Areas of Focus

Many of us care about a wide range of issues—and it just feels like too much to tackle in a limited amount of time. Instead, identify the one to two issues you want to work on.

Ask yourself:

- What are my main “voting issues?”
- To what issues do I give my time (volunteering) or resources (charitable contributions)?
- What issues affect my community (or me, personally)?
- Is there a topic on which I have professional expertise?
- What issues do I feel are most urgent?



How to Begin Your Political Advocacy

1. Pick 1-2 Areas of Focus (continued)

The answer that pops up again and again is where you should start. Remember, you don't have to engage on behalf of every issue you care about. Choose one to get started building your advocacy muscle.

Don't feel guilty about unsubscribing to newsletters from organizations covering other subjects. If you're too busy and stressed to read them anyhow, clearing them out will make room for you to spend time on the things you care about most.



How to Begin Your Political Advocacy

2. Block Time in Your Calendar

If you're like me, if it's not in the calendar, it won't happen. Block off time for the issues you care about, just like you would for a meeting, a workout class, or drinks with friends. 30 minutes a week—or even per month if weekly seems overwhelming—is enough.

Unsure what to do with that time? Here are some action items:

- Educate yourself on current policy or bills in your interest area
- Call your rep's office to share your opinion. (You can use the All In Together Action Center to call, email, or set up meetings with your reps directly. Save your political officials' numbers and Twitter handles in your phone so you don't have to look them up every time!)
- Donate money to a relevant organization
- Volunteer your time



How to Begin Your Political Advocacy

3. Start Local

Many people are so focused on what's happening at the federal level (a.k.a., what the President and Congress is doing), that they can forget there are multiple levels of representation: federal, state, and local.

Do you know your State Senator? State Representative? City Council Member?

You may think of those representatives as minor league players, but they have mega influence and often mega budgets (for example, New York City's budget for Fiscal Year 2018 is \$84.86 billion —with a "b").

Use your 30 minutes of action this week to research who your state and local reps are, what they're focused on, and when they're up for election. Turnout at local elections is so horrendously low that many of the representatives run unopposed. For example: The turnout for 2014 midterm elections was the lowest voter turnout in the U.S. in 70 years. Let's change that!



How to Begin Your
Political Advocacy

4. Use Your Professional Skills

You don't need to learn how to be an advocate from scratch. You already have skills you use in the office that you can leverage for effective advocacy.

Event planners know how to pull together a powerful and flawless gathering; marketers and communications experts are fantastic at galvanizing people; and accountants can ensure everything stays on budget. The list goes on.



How to Begin Your Political Advocacy

4. Use Your Professional Skills (continued)

Identify how you can uniquely contribute to the cause by leveraging your specialized skill set. If there's an upcoming election in your community, reach out to a local campaign and offer up your skills as a volunteer (the same way you would a non-profit or charity).

Since your goal is to be politically active and keep your job, keep in mind that different companies have different policies. As you think about how political advocacy fits into your schedule, don't forget to pay attention to things like if you're allowed to engage in these activities from your desk. Regardless of what you decide to do—big or small—creating the time to do something will help you to feel like you're making a difference.



Lectio Divina



Lectio Divina

What is Lectio Divina?

Lectio Divina is a contemplative way of reading the Bible. It dates back to the early centuries of the Christian Church and was established as a monastic practice by Benedict in the 6th century. It is a way of praying the scriptures that leads us deeper into God's word. We slow down. We read a short passage more than once. We chew it over slowly and carefully. We savour it. Scripture begins to speak to us in a new way. It speaks to us personally, and it aids that union we have with God through Christ who is himself the Living Word.

[Thomas Cramner in his Homily on Scripture ended it with an exhortation to read it in this way:

"Let us ruminate, and, as it were, chew the cud, that we may have the sweet juice, spiritual effect, marrow, honey, kernel, taste, comfort and consolation of them."]



Lectio Divina

(Here is an example)

Luke 7:12-15 Jesus raises the Widow of
Nain's son from the dead

12 As he approached the gate of the town of Nain, a man who had died was being carried out. He was his mother's only son, and she was a widow; and with her was a large crowd from the town. 13 When the Lord saw her, he had compassion for her and said to her, "Do not weep." 14 Then he came forward and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, "Young man, I say to you, rise!" 15 The dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus[c] gave him to his mother.



Lectio Divina

Fr. Christopher Jamison, former Abbot of Worth Abbey in Sussex, England in his book *Finding Sanctuary* writes of three key features of lectio:

- The first is that “the text is seen as a gift to be received, not a problem to be dissected..... let the text come to you.”
- The second is that the lectio tradition “teaches us that in order to receive what the text has to offer we must read slowly.”
- The third is that lectio is “a way of prayer. Before reading pray that God will speak to you through the text. During reading, allow the reading to evolve into meditation and then into prayer and finally contemplation. When the reading is concluded, keep some phrase in mind and repeat it throughout the day so that prayerful reading becomes prayerful living.”



Lectio Divina

So, lectio is not Bible study or even an alternative to Bible study but something radically different.

- The practice understands Scripture as a meeting place for a personal encounter with the Living God.
- It is a practice we come to with the desire to be changed at all sorts of levels.
- It operates very much on the emotional rather than the purely cerebral level.
- It is perhaps hearty rather than heady.
- Through it we allow ourselves to be formed in the likeness of Christ; it is about formation rather than instruction.

When undertaken in a group setting lectio is about listening to the experience of others and how that might inform your experience. It is never about pushing a particular view and is certainly not competitive.



Lectio Divina

The Rev Lindsay Yates, Chaplin at Westcott House, Cambridge, England has found it useful to stress the following with people before attempting group lectio:

- It is an ancient method of Praying with Scripture.
- It is based on the belief that Christ is truly present in Scripture and that the reading of Scripture allows God to speak to us.
- It is a receptive way of praying.
- It is related to Biblical interpretation and Biblical scholarship can help us with it



Lectio Divina

When we engage in lectio we are not concerned primarily with ascertaining theological or doctrinal truths but listening to what God is saying to us through the text.

- It is not a discussion and no one comments on what another person shares.
- Group lectio involves an invitation to share but sharing is not compulsory.
- In group lectio we listen to what is shared in the belief that God communicates with us through what others might say.



How to Enter into Lectio Divina



Lectio Divina

How to enter into Lectio Divina

Make sure you are sitting comfortably.

Breathe slowly and deeply.

Ask God to speak to you through the passage that you are about to read.

This is a way of praying that starts with our silence.

We often make the mistake of thinking prayer is about what we say to God. It is actually the other way round. God wants to speak to us. God will do this through the Scriptures. So don't worry about what to say. Don't worry if nothing jumps out at you at first. God is patient. God will wait for the opportunity to get in. God will lead you in and will give you a word. The Maker will lead you to understand its meaning for you today.



Lectio Divina

First reading of the passage: Listen

As you read the passage listen for a word or phrase that attracts you. Allow it to arise from the passage as if it is God's word for you today. Sit in silence repeating the word or phrase in your head.

Then say the word or phrase aloud.



Lectio Divina

Second reading of the passage: Ponder

As you read the passage again ask how this word or phrase speaks to your life and why it has connected with you. Ponder it carefully. Don't worry if you get distracted – it may be part of your response to offer it to God. Sit in silence and then frame a single sentence that begins to say aloud what this word or phrase says to you.



Lectio Divina

Third reading of the passage: Pray

As you read the passage for the last time ask what Christ is calling from you. What is it that you need to do or consider or relinquish or take on as a result of what God is saying to you in this word or phrase? In the silence that follows the reading pray for the grace of the Spirit to plant this word in your heart.

If you are in a group talk for a few minutes and pray with each other.

If you are on your own speak your prayer to God either aloud or in the silence of your heart. If there is time, you may even want to read the passage a fourth time, and then end with the same silence before God with which you began.



Lectio Divina

For further insights into Lectio Divina see:

- Luke Dysinger OSB's booklet *Accepting the Embrace of God: the Ancient Art of Lectio Divina* which can be downloaded.
- Fr. Christopher Jamison, *Finding Sanctuary: Monastic Steps for Everyday Life*, Phoenix 2007
- From Christopher Jamison's book also see his lectio divina meditation

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