

## ACTS Transformation Reading Groups Initiative

### BACKGROUND FOR “RACE MATTERS” BOOK CLUB

Cornell West: “My basic aim in life: to speak truth to power with love so that the quality of everyday life for ordinary people is enhanced and white supremacy is stripped of its authority and legitimacy.”

*Race Matters* [1993]

Erik Erikson: “Surely, when we wake up in the morning and think like members of a ruling class or as citizens of an imperialist country, we do not decide to do so with a conscious intent: we are part of a largely unconscious conspiracy of maintaining a collective image of reality composed pretty much in equal measure of clear facts, debatable opinions and outright delusions.” *In Search of Common Ground* [1973]

ACTS sponsored “Transformation Reading Groups” in Fall 2017 - Winter 2018

Books Read at various congregations: “America’s Original Sin - Racism, White Privilege & the Bridge to a New America” by Jim Wallis and/or “Waking Up White and finding myself in the story of race” by Debby Irving

Objective: White people to gain clarity about White Privilege and its role in Systemic Racism

Implicit Assumptions of White Privilege:

- White is normative and dominant in American culture
- Euro-American defines whiteness
- Whiteness is believed to be superior
- Superior attitude & behavior lead to White Privilege for white persons and in society
- White supremacy is political ideology based on white superiority and the need to defend it

Disclaimer - It is understood that not all white people are privileged in the sense of being members of the “privileged” socio-economic class of persons in our society. However, regardless of class position, all white persons can claim white privilege simply because of the color of their skin.

“Race Matters” Book Club is open discussion group that meets the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of the month @ 7 PM

- July 30, 2018 “Tears We Cannot Stop - A Sermon to White America” by Michael Eric Dyson
- August 27 “The Hate U Give” by Angie Thomas

- September 24 “Evicted - Poverty & Profit in the American City” by Matthew Desmond
- October 19 Film “The Hate U Give” released
- October 22 “Born a Crime - Stories from a South African Childhood” by Trevor Noah
- October 23 Matthew Desmond [Evicted] in Syracuse at Henninger High School
- November 26 “Sing, Unburied, Sing” by Jesmyn Ward
- Jan 27, 2019 Trevor Noah - speaker at SU MLK Jr. Dome Dinner
- January 28 “To Kill A Mockingbird” by Harper Lee
- February 25 “Our Kids - The American Dream in Crisis” by R.D. Putnam
- March 25 “White Fragility: Why It’s So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism” by R.DiAngelo
- April 22 “On the Other Side of Freedom: The Case for Hope” by DeRay McKesson
- May 20 [3<sup>rd</sup> Mon] “There Will Be No Miracles Here” by Casey Gerald