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## 'No White Man Is Innocent'



[March 23, 2015 Issue](#) | [Nathan Schneider](#)

COLUM

One night William Stringfellow dreamed that he was stabbed with a knife on 125th Street in Harlem, at the hands of a black man who had asked him for a light. Stringfellow then lived in Harlem not far from there. He was a white man who graduated from Harvard Law School and, in 1956, promptly put his training to use in the streets. He was doing his part. Yet it was clear to him in the dream, he later wrote, that “the murder was retribution.” Further: “No white man is innocent.”

The re-emergence during the past year of outrage over racial injustice has prompted many white people to wonder what they might do. What policies might one propose and advocate to combat economic inequality along the lines of skin color? What condolence might one offer to the victims of mass incarceration?

A leader in the Black Lives Matter protests, Alicia Garza, has said, “We need you defecting from white supremacy and changing the narrative of white supremacy by breaking white silence.” But well-meaning speaking-out can have its hazard. Another activist’s exasperated blog post, titled “Dear White Protestors,” repeats as a refrain, “This is

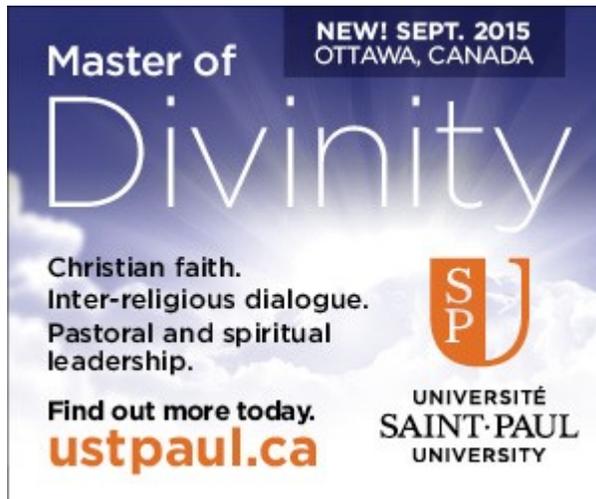


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writings, [Essential Writings](#), is now available from Orbis Press.) Stringfellow wrote from the ech Harlem, the North’s subtler but no less cruel counterpart to the Jim Crow South. Harlem taught theology of the demonic principalities—institutions, ideologies, idolatries—that lure us into the domin death. Racism, as a principality, is not an aberration of a few cross-burning racists but a conditio manifests itself most pervasively among those who pretend to be innocent of it. Again, “No white r innocent.”



“If you want to do something,” Stringfellow to audience of concerned members of the clergy in 196; most practical thing I can tell you is: weep.”

This was both a reprimand and a policy proposa challenge before white people was not more ingenu eloquence but, as he wrote in *My People Is the E*; “they must surrender their prerogative of decision. for the people who know injustice best, by having su it, to choose the path of liberation and lead the way for white people to follow and to relinquish the priv of supremacy. “The preface to reconciliation continued, is when white people begin “risking thei

and the future of this society in the hands of the Negroes.”

Though I have no statistics on the matter, the bylines and photographs that tend to appear in this ma; suggest that its readership is far more white than the actual makeup of the Catholic population country today. I wonder if to such an audience Stringfellow’s words ring as scandalously today as they the early 1960s. They ring at least as true.

Partly in anticipation of the coming papal encyclical on the environment, I have been meeting with a that seeks to support those on the front lines of the climate crisis, who are disproportionately people of We shared a supper recently with a group of organizers in the Black Lives Matter movement. This s heaps on our communities the waste it can’t put anywhere else, they reminded us. Yet in the dominated environmental movement, their voices remain on the margins.

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White people have managed not only to reap the profits from climate change, and to predominate amc

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William Stringfellow had a tragic tenor to his white ally-ship, but he also sought to be a Christian in it (he was an Episcopalian, to be precise.) He affirmed the gospel of life as much as he railed against the kingdom of death. And he believed them to be integrally related.

“My hope,” he wrote, “begins in the truth that America is Babylon.” Only when we recognize our fallenness there the possibility of redemption. “The good news is relative to the veracity of the bad news.”

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## COMMENTS

*new*

**E.Patrick Mosman** | 3/14/2015 - 7:32am

"So another non-scientist, Pope Francis, jumps on climate change, which by the way the earth has been experiencing climate change for hundreds of millions it not billions of years, by declaring that "the science is settled" even as the recent head of the IPCC declared that there has been no warming for 18+ years despite a slight increase in CO2. Climate change, nee global warming, is supported by government employees at NASA, NOAA, GISS, the UK's CRU and government funded academics at the forefront of AGW alarmism. The Climategate emails and files exposed the efforts of their efforts to "hide the decline" in global warming, to destroy correspondence to avoid complying with FOIA Requests, the inability to reproduce the charts and graphs used to support the AGW theory, the confirmation that not only controlled the papers that would be considered by the IPCC committees, but also, controlled which peer reviewed papers would be published in scientific publications to the point that they were able to have an editor fire a publishing paper that challenged the AGW consensus. There is no scientific integrity but a classic example of what Professor Richard Feynman described as "Cargo Cult Science", the practice of failing to provide all available results, the good and the bad, for consideration all concerned."

[reply](#)

*new*

**E.Patrick Mosman** | 3/14/2015 - 7:17am

Had the white powers to be heeded the advice of noted black leaders of the 19th century the idea that whites must suffer some universal guilt today for alleged inherent racism, white privilege and supremacy and that whites, are "in delusions of superiority and privilege." would not be a topics of discussion and featured articles. "Asked by whites in 1865 what to do for freed blacks, Frederick Douglass responded: "I have had but one answer: the beginning. Do nothing with us! . . . If the apples will not remain on the tree of their own strength . . . let them fall. And if the Negro cannot stand on his own legs, let him fall also. All I ask is, give him a chance to stand on his own."

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IMPRIMIS

Race Relations and Law Enforcement

Jason L. Riley

Editorial Board Member, Wall Street Journal

[imprimis.hillsdale.edu/current](http://imprimis.hillsdale.edu/current)

A second required reading is

"The Negro Family: The Case For National Action (the 1965 Moynihan Report) was written by Assistant Secretary Labor[1] Daniel Patrick Moynihan, a sociologist and later U.S. Senator. It focused on the deep roots of black pove America and concluded controversially that the relative absence of nuclear families (those having both a father ar mother present) would greatly hinder further progress toward economic and political equality.

The Great Society programs and the myriad of follow-up social programs simply exacerbated the nuclear black fa problem rather than improving it. The law of "unintended consequences" was either not considered or ignored in formulating the legislation and like all government programs once started they will continue whether they produ intended results or not.

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*new*

**Tom Fields** | 3/13/2015 - 8:09pm

The "analysis" above is destructive. For decades---policies have brought about a solid Black Middle Class---despit history of Southern Democrat hate and racism. However, years of liberal Democrat policies have destroyed inner-Black communities. Six years of a Black President--a Black Attorney General--4 years of a liberal Congress and a sycophantic press corps have left millions in ruin. In 48 States out of 50, Black students have the highest HS drop rate. 72% of African-American children are born out-of-wedlock.. Among Black males, murder is the main cause of death. 90% of those deaths are caused by other Blacks. 98% are NOT caused by cops. A police officer is 6 times more likely to be killed by a Black man than vice versa. Read---"Please Stop Helping Us: How Liberals Make it Harder for Blacks to Succeed" by Black author Jason Riley. Read anything by Ben Carson. Liberal policies--buying votes and liberal press---have destroyed our inner cities. Injustice----YES-"injustice" brought about by generations of liberal policies--creating a permanent, dependent, under-class.

May God help us.

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**Henry George** | 3/13/2015 - 8:00pm

Why is anyone in America Magazine referred to by the tincture of their skin ?

We are all humans.

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Most "White People " do not force anyone to have children they cannot afford,  
Most "White People" do not encourage anyone to take drugs.  
Most "White People" do not control the economy or the government.

All of the above goes for most Americans.

The elite that control this country and who are pushing more and more people into poverty are to blame.

Please write about them and stop blaming the vast majority of "White People" who are not guilty of any racial prejudice whatsoever.

[reply](#)

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*new*

**Tom Fields** | 3/13/2015 - 8:16pm

You are correct. Nathan Schneider is a "fellow traveler" continuing the ideological narrative of "white guilt". The horror is that it hurts the very people it purports to help.

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**America Magazine**

21 mins

Black lives matter. What does that mean for white Americans?



'No white man is innocent'

The re-emergence during the past year of outrage

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