

## Race, Theology and Religion

Martin Luther King, Jr., 'Letter from a Birmingham City Jail'  
[https://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles\\_Gen/Letter\\_Birmingham.html](https://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html)

### Biblical Studies

Nyasha Junior, *Reimagining Hagar: Blackness and Bible* (Oxford, 2019).

Stephen R. Haynes, *Noah's Curse: The Biblical Justification of American Slavery* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

R.S. Sugirtharajah, *The Bible and Empire: Postcolonial Explorations* (Cambridge, 2005).

Benjamin H. Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton, 2004).

Love Sechrest, *A Former Jew: Paul and the Dialectics of Race* (T&T Clark, 2010).

Esau McCaulley, *Reading While Black: African American Biblical Interpretation as an Exercise in Hope* (IVP Academic, forthcoming 2020).

Karin Neutel, *A Cosmopolitan Ideal: Paul's Declaration 'Neither Jew nor Greek, Neither Slave nor Free, nor Male and Female' in the Context of First Century Thought* (T&T Clark, 2015).

Smith, Mitzi J., and Yung Suk Kim. *Toward Decentering the New Testament: A Reintroduction* (Cascade Books, 2018).

Susannah Heschel, *The Aryan Jesus: Christian Theologians and the Bible in Nazi Germany* (Princeton University Press, 2014)

Musa W. Dube, ed. *Other Ways of Reading: African Women and the Bible* (SBL, 2001).

James Albert Harrill, *Slaves in the New Testament: Literary, Social, and Moral Dimensions* (Fortress, 2007).

Nyasha Junior, *An Introduction to Womanist Biblical Interpretation* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2015).

Gay L. Byron and Vanessa Lovelace, *Womanist Interpretations of the Bible: Expanding the Discourse* (SBL, 2016).

### Christian Theology

J. Cameron Carter, *Race: A Theological Account* (Oxford, 2008).

A powerful analysis and is much more explicit about engaging with classical sources than was the case with Cone.

Willie James Jennings, *The Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origins of Race* (Yale, 2010).

Dwight N. Hopkins and Edward P. Antonio (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Black Theology* (Cambridge, 2012).

James H. Cone, *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* (Orbis Books, 2011).

James H. Cone, *God of the Oppressed* (Orbis Books, 1997 [1975]).

James H. Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power* (Orbis Books, 2019 [1969]).

James H. Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation* (Orbis Books, 2010 [1970]).

A classic of Black Theology, originally from 1970. Cone was one of the foremost, radical thinkers of Black Theology in the USA. This book is an application of liberation theology to the situation of those oppressed by racial discrimination.

Jacquelyn Grant, *White Women's Christ and Black Women's Jesus: Feminist Christology and Womanist Response* (Scholars Press, 1989).

Gayraud Wilmore *Black Religion and Black Radicalism* (Orbis Books, 1972).

Brian Bantum, *Redeeming Mulatto: A Theology of Race and Christian Hybridity* (Baylor, 2010).

Robert Beckford, *Jesus is Dread: Black Theology and Black Culture in Britain* (Darton, Longman and Todd, 1998).

A British Black theology, written by a Jamaican Pentecostal. Beckford aimed to overcome the spiritualisation and pacification of theology in the Caribbean 'neocolony' of Great Britain, which meant to contextualise the gospel in the experience of racism among the post-Windrush generation.

Amos Yong, et al (eds.), *Can White People Be Saved? Triangulating Race, Theology and Mission* (IVP Academic, 2018).

Jonathon Kahn and Vincent Lloyd (eds.), *Race and Secularism in America* (Columbia, 2016).

Vincent Lloyd, *Religion of the Field Negro: On Black Secularism and Black Theology* (Fordham, 2017).

Vincent Lloyd and Andrew Prevot (eds.), *Anti-Blackness and Christian Ethics* (Orbis, 2017).

Vincent Lloyd (ed.), *Race and Political Theology* (Stanford, 2012).

Kelly Brown Douglas, *Stand Your Ground: Black Bodies and the Justice of God* (Orbis, 2015).

Monica Coleman, *Making a Way out of No Way: Innovations in African American Religious Thought* (Fortress, 2008).

Ashon Crawley, *Black Pentecostal Breath* (Fordham, 2016).

Emilie Townes, *In a Blaze of Glory: Womanist Spirituality as Social Witness* (Abingdon Press, 1995).

Emilie Townes, *Womanist Ethics and the Cultural Production of Evil* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

Estrela Alexander, 'Presidential Address 2010: When Liberation Becomes Survival', *Pneuma* 32 (2010): 337-353.

An impassioned plea by the then President of the Society of Pentecostal Studies to rediscover the liberating and political nature of Pentecostal beliefs and practice in the area of race relations, gender equality, and sexual equality. Alexander is a foremost researcher in these areas with regard to American Pentecostalism, I highly recommend her history of African-American Pentecostalism: *Black Fire* (2011).

### Church History

David Brakke, 'Ethiopian Demons: Male Sexuality, the Black-Skinned Other, and the Monastic Self', *Journal of the History of Sexuality* Vol. 10 (2001): 501–535.

David M. Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham: Race and Slavery in Early Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Princeton University Press, 2005).

Cord J. Whitaker, *Black Metaphors. How Modern Racism Emerged from Medieval Race Thinking* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019).

Charles March, *God's Long Summer: Stories of Faith and Civil Rights* (Princeton, 2008).

Denise Buell, *Why This New Race: Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity* (Columbia, 2005).

Weisenfeld, Judith, *New World A-Coming: Black Religion and Racial Identity during the Great Migration* (NYU Press, 2017).

Ian MacRobert, *The Black Roots and White Racism of Early Pentecostalism in the USA* (St Martin's Press, 1988).

A somewhat dated, but still useful introduction into the problem of race in American Pentecostalism (and by extension the origin of the movement). It provides a good overview over how a movement that was way ahead of its time in believing that the Holy Spirit had 'washed away the colour line' nonetheless ended up in segregation itself.

Allan H. Anderson, *Spreading Fires. The Missionary Nature of Early Pentecostalism* (SCM Press, 2007).

Anderson presents a vivid account of early Pentecostal missionaries and their various struggles and failures to adapt to local cultures. At the same time, he also shows how Pentecostalism became a catalyst for the contextualisation of Christianity where taken on (and taken over) by local evangelists.

Lindsay Kaplan, *Figuring Racism in Medieval Christianity* (Oxford University Press, 2018).

### Hinduism

Timothy Dobe, *Hindu Christian Faqir: Modern Monks, Global Christianity, and Indian Sainthood* (Oxford, 2015).

Michael J. Altman, *Heathen, Hindoo, Hindu: American Representations of India, 1721–1893* (Oxford, 2017).

Richard King, *Orientalism and Religion: Post-colonial Theory, India and the Mystic East* (Routledge, 1999).

### Islam

Michael Curtis, *Orientalism and Islam: European Thinkers on Oriental Despotism in the Middle East and India* (Cambridge, 2009).

The following four works look at African-American Islam

Edward E. Curtis IV, *Islam in Black America: Identity, liberation, and difference in African-American Islamic Thought* (State University of New York Press, 2002).

Sherman A. Jackson, *Islam and the Blackamerican: Looking Toward the Third Resurrection* (Oxford University Press, 2005).

Malcolm X., *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (Ishi Press, 2015).

Khabeer, Su'ad Abdul, *Muslim Cool: Race, Religion, and Hip Hop in the United States*. (NYU Press, 2016).

The following four works examine Islamophobia and the racialization of religion

Megan Goodwin, 'Unmasking Islamophobia: Anti-Muslim Hostility and/as White Supremacy', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 88 (2020): 354-386.

Rana, Junaid. 'Anthropology and the Riddle of White Supremacy', *American Anthropologist* 122 (2020): 99-111.

Naomi Davidson, *Only Muslim: Embodying Islam in Twentieth Century France* (Cornell University Press, 2012).

Eric Fassin, 'Sexual Democracy and the New Racialization of Europe', *Journal of Civil Society: Changing the Debate on European Social Space*, 8 (2012): 285-88.

Sherman A. Jackson, *Islam and the Problem of Black Suffering* (Oxford University press, 2009)

Jonathan Brown, *Slavery and Islam* (Oneworld Publication, 2019).

### Judaism

Eric Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity* (Princeton University Press, 2006).

Marc Dollinger, *Black Power, Jewish Politics: Reinventing the Alliance in the 1960s* (University Press of New England, 2018).

Hoffmann, Christhard, 'Ancient Jewry—Modern Questions: German Historians of Antiquity on the Jewish Diaspora', *Illinois Classical Studies* 20 (1995): 191–207.

### Philosophy of Religion

Patrice Haynes, 'Toward decolonising philosophy of religion', *Journal for Cultural and Religious Theory* 18 (2019): 400–414.

Oludamini Ogunnaike, 'African Philosophy Reconsidered: Africa, Religion, Race, and Philosophy', *Journal of Africana Religions* 5 (2017): 181–216.

Mary-Jane Rubenstein, *Pantheologies: Gods, Worlds, Monsters* (Columbia, 2018).

George Yancey, 'Black Embodied Wounds and the Traumatic Impact of the White Imaginary', in Boyton and Capretto (eds.), *Trauma and Transcendence* (Fordham, 2018), pp. 142–62.

Purushottama Bilimoria and Andrew Irvine (eds), *Postcolonial Philosophy of Religion* (Springer, 2009).

An Yountae and Eleanor Craig (ed.), *In the Image of Man: Race, Coloniality, and Philosophy of Religion* (Duke, forthcoming).

Marcia C. Robinson: "Cornel West, Kierkegaard and the Construction of a 'Blues Philosophy'." *Kierkegaard Research: Sources, Reception and Resources*, ed. Jon Stewart, Volume 14 (Routledge, 2011), pp. 231-56.

Analyses the influence of Kierkegaard's thought on Cornel West. Argues that Kierkegaard's writings presented West with a model for philosophy as religious culture criticism and provided him with concepts to theorize black experience as modern experience.

Marcia C. Robinson, 'Søren Kierkegaard,' in *Beyond the Pale. Reading Theology from the Margins*. Ed. by Miguel A. De La Torre, Stacey M. Floyd-Thomas (Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 115–24.

Discusses the challenges in appropriating Kierkegaard's thought (the seemingly missing concepts of collective sin and social justice; the idea of the contemporaneity with Christ hindering the "blackness" of Jesus to come forth; the kenotic understanding of faith idealizing suffering and being offensive particularly to black women).

### World Christianities, Colonialism and Christian Mission

This study area is the most important contribution of World Christianity to understanding race relations today. Missions and 'Christian civilising' were a corner stone of colonialism, and there is no decolonising race without a thorough reckoning with this era of World Christianity.

Jean & John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*. 2 vols (University of Chicago Press, 1991–1997).

The standard textbook to understanding the intricate history of Christian missions, colonialism, and race. Focusing on non-conformist missionaries in South Africa, the books allow a deep insight into the colonial construction of difference and race. Perhaps even read it alongside an original source the books draw from – it is always sobering to read 19<sup>th</sup> century views of Africa in the original. For this I'd recommend Robert Moffat, *Missionary Labours and Scenes in Southern Africa*. London: John Snow, 1842. (available on archive.org)

Jehu Hanciles, 'Back to Africa: White Abolitionists and Black Missionaries' in *African Christianity: An African Story* ed. by Ogbu Kalu (Africa World Press, 2007), pp. 167-188.

This book chapter offers a quick overview over the complicated history of anti-slavery, colonialism, and race. I also recommend the whole collection as well as Hanciles' *Euthanasia of a Mission* (2002).

Dana L. Robert (ed.), *African Christian Biography: Stories, Lives, and Challenges* (Cluster Publications, 2018).

A helpful introduction into the challenges we still face when reconstructing African Christian history centred on African agency and not overly reliant on colonial sources.

### Theory with Relevance to Theology

Nasar Meer, *Racialization and Religion: Race, Culture, and Difference in the Study of Antisemitism and Islamophobia* (Routledge, 2012).

Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (Routledge, 1994).

Bhabha is especially well-known for his notions of hybridity and mimicry. I especially recommend chapter 6, 'Signs Taken for Wonders: Questions of Ambivalence and Authority Under a Tree Outside Delhi, May 1817'. It is a delightful analysis of what happens when the Bible leaves missionary hands.

Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton University Press, 2000).

This book has changed how I think about history and historiography, and it provides a great insight into how we can construct history against the dominant colonial archive: provincialise the dominant historical narrative and highlight what it struggles to encompass.

Kathryn Yusoff: *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None* (University of Minnesota Press, 2019).

Excavates the fundamental links between slavery and the industrial processes that geologists claim will be found in future earth sediments; discusses the racial implications of the history of geology as a discipline.

