

## White Too Long - Chapter 5

### Mapping: The White Supremacy Gene in American Christianity

This chapter seeks to answer three central questions:

- 1) “How prevalent are racist and white supremacist attitudes among white Christians today?”
- 2) “To the extent that they exist, are these attitudes merely incidental to, or have they come to be, over time, actually constitutive of white Christian identity?”
- 3) “Is this relationship limited the white evangelicals or white Christians in the South, or do these attitudes also persist among white mainline and white Catholic Christians outside that region?”

The ongoing legacy of slaveholding among white Americans: when people think about the contemporary effects of slavery, they tend to think of the external effects such as continuing economic and social inequalities between black and white Americans. However, research has also demonstrated the remarkably enduring impact of slavery on how contemporary white people think, feel, and act today.

Distinctive racial attitudes of white Christians: the conclusions of sociological research suggest that Christian affiliation remains a powerful force among whites on their attitudes to racism, with white Christians being more likely to hold racist viewpoints than unaffiliated whites by 20 to nearly 40 percentage points.

“In every case, it is religiously unaffiliated whites who stand closer than white Christians do to their African American Christian brothers and sisters.” In addition, we find similar negative attitudinal patterns related to immigrants.

The Racism Index median scores: white evangelical Protestants (0.78); white Catholics (0.72); white mainline Protestants (0.69); general population (0.57); white religiously unaffiliated Americans (0.42); black Protestants (0.24)

Disturbing conclusion: “Not only in the South but nationwide, higher levels of racism are associated with higher probabilities of identifying as a white Christian; and conversely, adding Christianity to the average white person’s identity moves him or her toward more, not less, affinity for white supremacy. White supremacy lives on today not just in explicitly and consciously held attitudes among white Christians; it has become deeply integrated into the DNA of white Christianity itself.”