

A Call to White Americans

By Jennifer Passmore

Today's white American faces a frightening and uncertain future. As his race falls from majority to minority status, he often fears losing his place in the world. All around him, persons of other races raise the flags of their mother nations, adorn themselves with traditional costumes, and celebrate ancient and invented holidays as expressions of their ethnicity: generally, he has no one flag to raise except the Stars and Stripes.

In the great melting pot, before the salad bowl conception, his ancestors put aside their ethnic differences and intermarried: Irish and Italian, English and French, Polish, Dutch, Swedish or German, all mingled over the generations to produce the white American. He lost his ethnicity, and retained only his race. During his father's generation, that was enough: his father had a strong identity as an American. His father had an American history, an American mythology, an American set of values. He celebrated American holidays and ate American foods. Above all, he knew what it was to be American: the American identity needed no definition. Now, in the salad bowl era, the American identity has no definition. America has no one history, no one value system, and in the current conception should not. The American nationality has been reduced to mere citizenship, the common fabric of American life unraveled to a single thread. And so the white American drifts, his group identity reduced to nothing but a passport and a color – a lack of color. Blanc, Blank.

On that blank white page of his withered identity, many people write their stories. The white American child learns he is the son of rapists and enslavers, murderers and thieves, liars and hypocrites. The accomplishments of his ancestors and brothers, he is told, belong to the entire world: the guilt of any white criminal belongs to him and him alone. Among all the races, ethnicities, and other variously defined demographic groups, the white American alone cannot feel pride in, defend, or even define his racial identity without arousing suspicion and outright hatred. He cannot form a Congressional White Caucus. He cannot hang the works of white artists on a gallery wall and identify them as such. He has no month, no week, not even a day set aside to teach his children, his neighbors, and his countrymen about the origins of the white race, ancient and modern white history, the accomplishments of white individuals and the issues facing modern white people. Deprived of his true history and a healthy sense of himself, the white American can turn to either of two extremes. He can fall in with his own slanderers, giving himself over to self-flagellation, with guilt for his tradition and a hairshirt for his ethnic costume; or, he can follow the slanderers of others, substituting hatred of others for love of himself, clad forever in battle gear, paranoid and joyless. Neither path leads to a better future: the responsible white American must blaze a new trail.

If we want to live, white Americans must begin today to lay the foundations for our future and our children's future. An individual without a strong group identity, a racial, ethnic, religious or national identity, will be lost like a lone snowflake among glaciers in the near future: we white Americans must rebuild our ruined sense of self. We must raise a fortress to defend ourselves against slanderous attacks: we must create a school in which to teach our children, our neighbors and our countrymen about ourselves. We must clear a festival ground on which to celebrate our achievements: we must plant a quiet grove in which to contemplate the errors of our past. We must remember to leave a door and leave it open to mutually respectful relations with all other people and peoples. Perhaps most important of all, we must erect a freewheeling marketplace where ideas and stories, histories and traditions from all the white world come together, complex and wonderful, diverse and still unified, showing that we are not the white of untinted paint but the white of sunlight, formed by the perfect balance of a whole spectrum of vibrant colors.

Start today, fellow white Americans. Look at the faces around you: find the faces like yours, and see them as your brothers and sisters. Find the fair-skinned babies, and see them as your children. Think about your great-grandparents and love them as they were. Think about your history, American history, European history, world history, from the weavers of Xinjiang to the poets of Ireland, from the horsemen of the Caucasus to the seafarers of Scandinavia – all of them your brothers! And if the papers insult you today, if a stranger or your neighbor eyes you with suspicion or hostility because of your whiteness, resist the urge to respond in kind. Defend yourself—love yourself—but rise above savage tribal struggle. You are better than that. Tonight, talk openly about being white with anyone. Do it again tomorrow, and the next day, and the next. Form groups to discuss issues, trade ideas, and educate one another; however, don't forget to have picnics, play games, and enjoy yourself.

This is how we must begin: proceed with joy.

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