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6-21-2020

June 21, 2020: Is Every White Person a Racist?

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Repository Citation

Ledewitz, B. (2020). June 21, 2020: Is Every White Person a Racist?. Retrieved from <https://dsc.duq.edu/ledewitz-hallowedsecularism/1315>

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Title: Is Every White Person a Racist?

Date: 2020-06-21T11:17:00.001-04:00

6/21/2020--KeepAll3 responded to my column in the Pennsylvania Capital-Star, below, as follows: "If @BLedewitz feels guilty because he used to be a racist, that's fine. But please don't project onto the rest of us. Thank you kindly." Just to be clear as to what I mean by racist, let me repeat: "For white racism is simply the feeling that this is my country. The feeling that the normal American is white. And, you can add, in the appropriate circumstances, straight and male. That is the sort of person most white people expect to see, hire, interact with, listen to and treat as an equal. This feeling is embedded in most of us. Overcoming it is hard work. Fortunately, among the young, you can tell it is less present." So, the first thing I have to admit is that it isn't that I "used to be a racist." I say in the column that white racism is like any other addiction--it does not disappear. You fight it every day. Second, I suppose there are white people my age who do not feel this way. That is why I use the word, "most." But I admit it is hard for me to believe. No one ever taught me to be racist in this sense. I was very, very close to a black woman growing up, Gertrude Falls, whom I loved deeply. Nevertheless, I thought of white people as the norm and I still would if I did not consciously think about it. So, I don't really understand why other white people would feel differently. But if they do, great. I am happy to apologize to KeepAll3 right here and now. And I know many young people feel differently. In fact, that is a large part of my hope for America's future.