Unnatural Causes:
Is Inequality Making Us Sick?

David R. Williams, PhD, MPH
Florence & Laura Norman Professor of Public Health
Professor of African & African American Studies and of Sociology
Harvard University
Patterns of America’s Health

What are the Problems?
We Are Not the Healthiest

• U.S. ranks near the bottom of industrialized countries on health, and we are losing ground

• 1980 = 11th on Life Expectancy

• 2014 = 35th on Life Expectancy

• U.S. Ranked behind South Korea, Greece, Cyprus, Cuba and Lebanon

• And it is not just the minorities doing badly!

• In 2014, White America would be = 34th

• In 2014, Black America would be 96th
A Larger Context for Disparities

There are large racial, socioeconomic, and geographic disparities in health but they should be understood within the context of the larger national disparity.

All Americans are far less healthy than we could, and should be.
Socioeconomic Status (SES) is a central determinant of the distribution of valuable resources in society.
SAT = Scholastic Aptitude Test
OR

Student Affluence Test?
SAT SCORE by Family Income

SAT Score (Math, Reading & Writing)

Annual Household Income: Dollars

Fair Test, College Board, Wall Street Journal, Oct 7th, 2014
Patterns of America’s Health

There are Large Socioeconomic Inequities in Health in the U.S.
Relative Risks of All-Cause Mortality by Household Income Level: U.S. Panel Study of Income Dynamics

Household Income (Converted to 2013$)

- <25,000: 3.03
- 33,000: 2.49
- 50,000: 2
- 82,000: 1.45
- 115,000: 1.36
- >115,000: 1

P. McDonough, Duncan, Williams, & House, AJPH, 1997
There are Large Racial Inequities in SES in the U.S.
Patterns of America’s Health

There are Large Racial Inequities in Health in the U.S.
Infant Mortality in the U.S., 2012

- White: 5
- Black: 11.2
- American Indian: 8.4
- Hispanic: 5.1
- Asian/Pl: 4.1

Health United States, NCHS, 2014,
A Global Phenomenon

In race-conscious societies, such as,

- Australia
- Brazil
- New Zealand
- South Africa
- the U.K.
- Canada
- United States,

non-dominant racial groups have worse health than the dominant racial group.
Infant Mortality by Ethnicity in England and Wales, 2011

All-Cause Infant Mortality *

- White, British: 3.7
- White, Other: 3.1
- African, Black: 6.8
- Caribbean, Black: 7.4
- Pakistani: 8.5
- Indian: 4.1
- Bangladeshi: 4.4

* Deaths per 1,000 live births, known gestational age

Added Burden of Race
Life Expectancy at Age 25 Based on Level of Education

5-year gap overall

6.4-year gap

5.3-year gap

Murphy, NVSS 2000; Braveman et al. AJPH; 2010, NLMS 1988-1998
Blacks with a college degree have a lower life expectancy than Whites with only a high school degree.

Murphy, NVSS 2000; Braveman et al. AJPH; 2010, NLMS 1988-1998
Why Does Race Still Matter?

Could *racism* be a critical missing piece of the puzzle to understand the patterning of racial disparities in health?
The House that Racism Built

Racism
- Ideology of inferiority
- Institutional
- Cultural

Social Forces
- Political
- Legal
- Economic
- Religious
- Cultural
- Historical Events
Racism Defined

• Racism: an organized system, premised on the categorization and ranking of social groups into races and devalues, disempowers and differentially allocates desirable societal opportunities and resources to racial groups regarded as inferior.

• The development of racism is typically undergirded by an ideology of inferiority in which some population groups are regarded as being inferior to others.

• This leads to the development of negative attitudes and beliefs toward racial out-groups (prejudice and stereotypes), and differential treatment of these groups by individuals and social institutions (discrimination).

Bonilla-Silva, 1996; Williams 2004
Individual vs Institutional Discrimination
Individual Bias: Waiting at Crosswalks

- 3 Black and 3 White males, in Portland, OR
- Males in their 20s, wearing identical clothing
- Male indicates intention to cross
Multiple Cars Twice as likely to Pass Blacks

Average Number of Cars that Passed Without Stopping

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Black pedestrians</th>
<th>White pedestrians</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>2.02*</td>
<td>0.98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tara Goddard, et al., Psychology Faculty Publications, Portland State University, 2014, ( * : p ≤ .05 )
Blacks Wait 32% Longer to Cross the Street

Second elapsed until driver yield

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Black pedestrians</th>
<th>White pedestrians</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.79*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tara Goddard, et al., Psychology Faculty Publications, Portland State University, 2014, ( * : p ≤ .05 )
Institutional Discrimination is Pervasive
Institutional Discrimination: Waiting to Vote
Average number of minutes, 2012 Presidential Election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Average Waiting Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African Americans</td>
<td>23 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinos</td>
<td>19 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Americans</td>
<td>15 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Americans</td>
<td>13 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>12 min</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cooperative Congressional Election Study, 2012
Institutional Processes

• Length of time waiting to vote linked to the residence of the voter and the policies and procedures (budgeting and space constraints and local administrative procedures) linked to place:
  • How many voters being served by a polling site?
  • How many precincts in a given area?
  • Staffing of a precinct affects how long it takes to vote
The House that Racism Built

Racism
- Ideology of inferiority
- Institutional
- Cultural

Social Forces
- Political
- Legal
- Economic
- Religious
- Cultural
- Historical Events

A

Segregation
Place Matters

Residential Segregation is a striking legacy of racism

- As is the forced removal and relocation of indigenous peoples
- The institutionalized isolation and marginalization of racial populations has adversely affected life chances in multiple ways
African American Segregation: History - I

- Segregation refers to the physical separation of the races by enforced residence in different areas. It was
- Imposed by legislation
- Supported by major economic institutions
- Enshrined in the housing policies of the federal government
- Enforced by the judicial system and vigilant neighborhood organizations
- Legitimized by ideology of white supremacy that was advocated by religious & other cultural institutions

Racial Segregation Is …

- One of the most successful domestic policies of the 20th century
- "the dominant system of racial regulation and control" in the U.S

John Cell, 1982
Why Place Matters

Where you live determines access to:

• High-quality schools
• Job opportunities
• Safe, affordable & healthy housing
• Fresh produce & nutritious food
• Safe to exercise, walk or play outside
• Nearby Nature
• Toxins (from highways, factories & other)
• Quality primary care and good hospitals
• Affordable, reliable, public transit
• Social cohesion and social capital

Williams & Collins, Pub Hlth Reports, 2001
Racial Differences in Residential Environment

In the 171 largest cities in the U.S., there is not even one city where whites live in equal conditions to those of blacks.

“The worst urban context in which whites reside is considerably better than the average context of black communities.”

Sampson & Wilson 1995
Segregation Contributes to Large Racial/Ethnic Differences in SES
Residential Segregation and SES

A study of the effects of segregation on young African American adults found that the elimination of segregation would erase black-white differences in:

- Earnings
- High School Graduation Rate
- Unemployment

And reduce racial differences in single motherhood by two-thirds

Cutler, Glaeser & Vigdor, 1997
Median Household Income and Race, 2015

Racial Differences in Income are Substantial:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 dollar</th>
<th>1.23 dollar</th>
<th>72 cents</th>
<th>62 cents*</th>
<th>59 cents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td><img src="white_dollar.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="white_dollar_1.23.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="white_pennies.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="white_nickels.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="white_quarters.png" alt="Image" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td><img src="asian_dollar.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="asian_dollar_1.23.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="asian_pennies.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="asian_nickels.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="asian_quarters.png" alt="Image" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td><img src="hispanic_dollar.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="hispanic_dollar_1.23.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="hispanic_pennies.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="hispanic_nickels.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="hispanic_quarters.png" alt="Image" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AI/AN</td>
<td><img src="ai_an_dollar.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="ai_an_dollar_1.23.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="ai_an_pennies.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="ai_an_nickels.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="ai_an_quarters.png" alt="Image" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td><img src="black_dollar.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="black_dollar_1.23.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="black_pennies.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="black_nickels.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="black_quarters.png" alt="Image" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

U.S. Census Bureau: Proctor, Semega, Kollar, 2016; *2013, Native Her. Month, 2014
Median Wealth and Race, 2011

For every dollar of wealth that Whites have, 

- Asians have 81 cents
- Blacks have only 6 cents
- Latinos have only 7 cents

U.S. Census Bureau, 2014
Where Racial Inequities in SES are Born

Large Racial/Ethnic Differences in SES that are consequential for life:

-- They are not acts of God
-- They are not random events
-- They reflect successful implementation of social policies

Racism has produced a truly “rigged system”
The House that Racism Built

Racism
- Ideology of inferiority
- Institutional
- Cultural

Social Forces
- Political
- Legal
- Economic
- Religious
- Cultural
- Historical Events

Individual Discrimination

Segregation
The Pervasiveness of Discrimination

Getting a job

Renting an apartment

Purchasing a car

Pulled over by police

Arrested for drug–related crimes

Renting an apartment

Buying a home

Hailing a taxi

Suspended from preschool

Getting insurance

Receiving a promotion

Cost of bail

Quality of medical care

Pager & Shepherd, Annual Review of Sociology, 2008
Experiences of discrimination are a source of Toxic Stress
Every Day Discrimination

In your day-to-day life how often do these happen to you?

- You are treated with less courtesy than other people.
- You are treated with less respect than other people.
- You receive poorer service than other people at restaurants or stores.
- People act as if they think you are not smart.
- People act as if they are afraid of you.
- People act as if they think you are dishonest.
- People act as if they’re better than you are.
- You are called names or insulted.
- You are threatened or harassed.

What do you think was the main reason for these experiences?

Williams et al, J Hlth Psych, 1997
Everyday Discrimination: positively associated with:

-- coronary artery calcification (Lewis et al., Psy Med, 2006)
-- C-reactive protein (Lewis et al., Brain Beh Immunity, 2010)
-- lower birth weight (Earnshaw et al., Ann Beh Med, 2013)
-- cognitive impairment (Barnes et al., 2012)
-- poor sleep [object. & subject.] (Lewis et al, Hlth Psy, 2012)
-- visceral fat (Lewis et al., Am J Epidemiology, 2011)
Discrimination and Allostatic Load

- 331 Blacks (20 year olds), 9 rural counties in Georgia
- Discrimination assessed at age 16, 17, and 18
- Allostatic load assessed at age 20; overnight cortisol, epinephrine, norepinephrine, SBP, DBP, CRP, BMI
- 79% of sample had low and increasing levels of discrimination; 22% had stably high levels
- Stably high levels of discrimination as a teen linked to higher allostatic load at age 20
- Association increased when adjusted for CES-D, life stress, socioeconomic risk and unhealthy behavior.

Gene Brody et al., 2014., Child Development
The House that Racism Built

Racism
- Ideology of inferiority
- Institutional
- Cultural

Social Forces
- Political
- Legal
- Economic
- Religious
- Cultural
- Historical Events

Individual Discrimination

Segregation
- Stereotypes
- Implicit and explicit bias
- Stigma
Where do Negative Racial Stereotypes come from?
Racial Stereotypes in Our Culture

- **BEAGLE Project**

- 10 million words

- Sample of books, newspapers, magazine articles, etc. that average college-level student would read in lifetime

- Allows us to assess how often Americans have seen or heard words paired together over their lifetime

Verhaeghen et al. British J Psychology, 2011
# Stereotypes in Our Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>poor</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td></td>
<td>wealthy</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>violent</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td></td>
<td>progressive</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>religious</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td></td>
<td>conventional</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lazy</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td></td>
<td>stubborn</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cheerful</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td></td>
<td>successful</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dangerous</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td></td>
<td>educated</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEMALE</td>
<td>distant</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>MALE</td>
<td>dominant</td>
<td>.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>warm</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td></td>
<td>leader</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gentle</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td></td>
<td>logical</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>passive</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td></td>
<td>strong</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Verhaeghen et al. British J Psychology, 2011
## Stereotypes in Our Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BLACK</th>
<th></th>
<th>WHITE</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>poor</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>wealthy</td>
<td>.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>violent</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>progressive</td>
<td>.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>religious</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>conventional</td>
<td>.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lazy</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>stubborn</td>
<td>.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cheerful</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>successful</td>
<td>.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dangerous</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>educated</td>
<td>.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>charming</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>ethical</td>
<td>.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>merry</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>greedy</td>
<td>.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ignorant</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>sheltered</td>
<td>.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>musical</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>selfish</td>
<td>.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Verhaeghen et al. British J Psychology, 2011
Negative stereotypes about race remain deeply embedded in our culture

Negative Stereotypes Trigger Racial Discrimination
Racial Bias in Medical Care
Ethnicity and Pain Medicine

Percent of Patients with broken bone receiving no analgesia

- Hispanics: 55%
- NH Whites: 26%

Todd et al., JAMA, 1993
Disparities in the Clinical Encounter: The Core Paradox

How could well-meaning and highly educated health professionals, working in their usual circumstances with diverse populations of patients, create a pattern of care that appears to be discriminatory?
Unconscious Discrimination

• When one holds a negative stereotype about a group and meets someone who fits the stereotype s/he will discriminate against that individual.

• Stereotype-linked bias is an
  – Automatic process
  – Unconscious process

• It occurs even among persons who are not prejudiced.

• I am a prejudiced person.
Faster than the Twinkling of an Eye!

- Studies find that most Americans have rapid and unconscious emotional and neural reactions to blacks
- A millisecond is 1/1000 of a second
- 100 milliseconds - how quickly an individual's race is noticed and whether or not that person is trustworthy
- 300 - 400 milliseconds: time for human eye to blink
- 800 milliseconds: human resting heart cycle time

Fiske et al, Du Bois Review, 2009
The Devine Solution

• Non-black adults can be motivated to increase their awareness of bias against blacks, their concerns about the effects of bias and to implement strategies which were effective in producing substantial reductions in bias that remained evident three months later.

• Implicit biases viewed as deeply engrained habits that can be replaced by learning new prejudice-reducing strategies including stereotype replacement, counter-stereotype imaging, individuation, perspective taking and increasing opportunities for interracial contact.

Internalized Racism:

Acceptance of society’s negative characterization can adversely affect health
The House that Racism Built

Racism
- Ideology of inferiority
- Institutional
- Cultural

Social Forces
- Political
- Legal
- Economic
- Religious
- Cultural
- Historical Events

Individual Discrimination

Segregation
- Stereotypes
- Implicit and explicit bias
- Stigma

Income
- Education
- Employment
- Underemployment
- Wealth
- Health
- Incarceration
- Stress

Individual and Collective Resources, Social Resources
The House that Racism Built

Racism
- Ideology of inferiority
- Institutional
- Cultural

Social Forces
- Political
- Legal
- Economic
- Religious
- Cultural
- Historical Events

Individual Discrimination

Segregation
- Stereotypes
- Implicit and explicit bias
- Stigma

Income
- Education
- Employment
- Underemployment
- Wealth
- Health
- Incarceration
- Stress

Stereotypes Implicit and Explicit Bias Stigma

Individual and Collective Resources, Social Resources
The House that Racism Built

Racism
- Ideology of inferiority
- Institutional
- Cultural

Social Forces
- Political
- Legal
- Economic
- Religious
- Cultural
- Historical Events

Individual Discrimination

Segregation
- Stereotypes
- Implicit and explicit bias
- Stigma

Income Education
Employment
Underemployment
Wealth
Health
Incarceration
Stress

Stereotypes Implicit and Explicit Bias Stigma

Individual and Collective Resources, Social Resources
Improving America’s Health
Start Early
Carolina Abecedarian Project (ABC)

1972-77, economically disadvantaged children, birth to age 5, randomized to early childhood program

Program offered a safe and nurturing environment, good nutrition and pediatric care

At age 21, fewer symptoms of depression, lower marijuana use, more active lifestyle, & educational & vocational assetts benefits

In mid-30’s, lower levels of multiple risk factors for CVD and metabolic disease. Effects stronger for males

Campbell et al. AJPH, 2008; Campbell et al, Science, 2014
Carolina Abecedarian Project (ABC)

- Example: systolic BP 143 mm Hg in male controls vs. 126 mm Hg in the treatment group.
- One in 4 males in control group met criteria for metabolic syndrome compared to none in the treatment group.
- Lower BMI at zero to 5 yrs equals a lower BMI in their 30s.

Campbell et al. AJPH, 2008; Campbell et al, Science, 2014
Improving America’s Health
Comprehensive Approaches
Purpose Built Communities: Comprehensive

• Based on efforts in Atlanta’s East Lake district

• Purpose Built Communities uses integrative strategies including cradle-to-college educational opportunities, mixed-income housing, early child development programs, employment support and recreational opportunities

• Community engagement and philanthropy

• **Key:** addressing all of the challenges faced by disadvantaged communities simultaneously

• Purpose Built Communities in Atlanta, New Orleans, Indianapolis, Charlotte, among others
Implementing the Purpose Built Model

Strong local leadership. A proven national model. Best in class partners.
East Lake Meadows - 1995

Safety
- 18x national crime rate
- 90% of families victims of a felony each year
- $35 million a year drug trade

Housing
- 100% public housing
- 1400 residents in 650 apartments
- 40% of units unlivable

Employment
- 13% employment
- 59% of adults on welfare
- Median income of ~$4,500

Education
- One of lowest performing schools in Georgia
- 5% of 5th graders meet state math standards
- 30% graduation rate
## Villages of East Lake - Present

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Safety</th>
<th>Housing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• 73% reduction in crime</td>
<td>• High-quality, privately managed housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 90% lower violent crime</td>
<td>• Mixed-income (50% public housing, 50% market rate)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment</th>
<th>Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• 75% employment in public housing, remainder in job training, elderly or disabled</td>
<td>• ~1500 in Pre-K through 10th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Median income of ~ $15k in public housing households</td>
<td>• 98% meet or exceed state standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A top performing school in Atlanta and the state</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Improving America’s Health

Addressing Economic Well-being
Economic Policy is Health Policy

In the last 60 years, black-white differences in health have narrowed and widened with black-white differences in income.
Religion and Health Inequalities

What role can religious individuals and organizations Play?
Religion and Health Inequalities

Religious involvement can buffer the negative effects of stress on health
Religion & Discrimination: A Balm in Gilead?

• Prospective analyses of the National Study of Black Americans found that multiple aspects of religious engagement:
  -- religious attendance
  -- church-based social support, and
  -- seeking religious guidance in everyday life
• reduced the negative effects of experiences of racial discrimination on mental health

Ellison, Musick & Henderson, 2008
Religion and Health Inequalities

Religious institutions can raise awareness levels of the striking social inequalities that give rise to inequalities in health and multiple other domains of life.
Religion and Health Inequalities

Religious institutions can uplift solutions and be agents of social change
Religion and Health Inequalities

Religious institutions can deliberately and intentionally spur compassion, engender empathy, and facilitate the political will for sustained action to initiate and maintain social justice.
“The most difficult social problem in the matter of Negro health is the peculiar attitude of the nation toward the well-being of the race. There have... been few other cases in the history of civilized peoples where human suffering has been viewed with such peculiar indifference”
Lack of Empathy, Evident Early in Life

- Mainly white 5-, 7- and 10-year-olds rate pain of black and white children.
- No racial bias at age 5.
- Children show weak bias (blacks feel less pain) at age 7.
- At age 10 children rate pain of black child less than white one (strong, reliable racial bias).
- Unrelated to social preference (would like to be friends with).
- We may need to start empathy training very young.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/10/17/racial-empathy-gap_n_4118252.html

R. Dore et al, Br J Dev Psych, 2014
Religion and Racial Prejudice

How are the Two Phenomena Related?
Religion and Intolerance -I

• Early research found that religious people were more likely to be prejudiced

• The more orthodox the religiosity, the greater the prejudice

• The type of religious orientation matters

• Subsequent research revealed that an extrinsic religious orientation was associated with higher levels of racial prejudice while an intrinsic religious orientation predicted lower levels.

Intrinsic Versus Extrinsic Religion

• **Extrinsic** religion is utilitarian, rules-oriented and legalistic. Extrinsic religious involvement is often driven by a desire to obtain external benefits, such as security, status and self-justification.

• In contrast, **intrinsic** religion refers to religious involvement that is personally meaningful, integrated into one’s worldview and serves as a central motivating force that affects all aspects of life.

Shreve-Neiger & Edelstein, 2004; Smith, McCullough, & Poll, Psych Bull, 2003
Religion and Intolerance -II

- Some types of religious beliefs and orientations can lead to rigidity in thinking, prejudice, & intolerance
- Recent research documents that a fundamentalist orientation, defined as a rigid, close-minded worldview in which the individual believes that his or her religious beliefs are absolutely correct is predictive of higher levels of prejudice
- What seems to be important is not the content of the religious beliefs but the inflexibility with which one’s beliefs are held.

What does God *really* want?
The Least of These

- Jesus presented to His disciples the scene of the great judgment day.
- He indicates that their eternal destiny turned on just one point:
- What did His professed followers do or fail to do for Him in the person of the poor, the stigmatized and the suffering.
34 “Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. 35 For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; 36 naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.’”

Matthew 25:34 – 36 NASB
"True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar; it understands that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring."

- - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
Religious Groups Need to Make a Choice

“If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor...”

Desmond Tutu

https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=36964977
Neutrality Not An Option

“...If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality.”

Desmond Tutu
A Call to Action

“Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and those ripples build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.”

- Robert F. Kennedy