

8th Day Center for Justice: Statement on White Supremacy

White ignorance . . .

It's a big subject. How much time do you have?

It's not enough.

*Ignorance is usually thought of as the passive obverse to knowledge,
the darkness retreating before the spread of Enlightenment.*

But . . .

Imagine an ignorance that resists.

Imagine an ignorance that fights back.

*Imagine an ignorance militant, aggressive, not to be intimidated,
an ignorance that is active, dynamic, that refuses to go quietly—
not at all confined to the illiterate and uneducated but propagated
at the highest levels of the land, indeed presenting itself unblushingly
as knowledge.*

- Charles Mills, author of *The Racial Contract*

8th Day Center for Justice joins with our many partners in denouncing both the movements for white supremacy and their specific actions in Charlottesville, Virginia. We offer the following points for reflection, an article, and resources for deeper understanding and action.

This is not new. The presence of movements whose ideology roots in beliefs of white supremacy traces back to the genocide and slavery that “founded” the country. It is not surprising that the figures of Robert E. Lee and Thomas Jefferson serve as flashpoints; the statues point to the depth of historical legacy and contemporary manifestations that need to be transformed. The approval of white supremacy by President Donald Trump’s actions *and* President Thomas Jefferson’s actions needs to be addressed and repaired.

There are not two sides. The ideology of white supremacy is not an equivalent argument to the rejection of white supremacy. The people who opposed the Nazis were not morally or ideologically equivalent to the people who supported them. The position of unequivocally naming white supremacy as wrong is not a denial of the belief systems or

rights of a group. It is an affirmation that there is a line that can never be crossed. It is a step toward addressing the radical harms that white supremacy has enacted globally.

White “ignorance” needs to be named. White ignorance is the denial of knowledge of harms of oppression that the white community commits. Arguments that minimize and distort concrete realities that white supremacy produces can no longer be excused. Frameworks that “explain away” the self-evidentiary knowledge of white supremacy’s impacts and actions are not neutral or compassionate to the people that hold them. Claims of “not-knowing” aid and abet abusive systems of power that rely on complacency to perpetrate. As stated by Charles Mills above, the white community claims of “ignorance” comes not from a position of naiveté, but from a position of power and explicitly the maintenance of that power.

This could be an opportunity to open a creative and transformative space that works to address holistically the current and historical manifestation of white supremacy. We offer the following resources to help individuals and communities committed to addressing oppression.

We refer you to this [article](#) by Jelani Cobb, [this](#) resource from Southern Poverty Law Center, and [this](#) one from the Nation magazine.