

THE REAL WHITE-BLACK DIVIDE

What separates whites and blacks the most these days is not race or class, it's religion. But don't expect to hear this from commentators or scholars. That's because most of them are well-educated white people, and they are the most likely to be non-religious. Blacks, on the other hand, are much more religious than whites.

Christianity has a long history with African Americans, but it also has a long history with white Americans. Church-going was common among most Americans of all races and ethnicities until fairly recently. So what's changed?

Belief in God and Church attendance vary considerably by age, race, education, political preference, and region of the country.

Non-believers are heavily concentrated among young white college-educated Democrats from the northeast and the west coast. Blacks are mostly Democrats but when it comes to religion, they have little in common with white Democrats; they are twice as likely to believe in God as white Democrats are.

Signs of this divide are all around us. After basketball superstar Kobe Bryant was killed, it was revealed that his Catholicism played a big part in his life.

After being charged with rape in 2003 (the charges were dropped after a settlement was reached), he told a magazine interviewer, "The one thing that really helped me through the process—I'm Catholic, I grew up Catholic, my kids are Catholic—was talking to a priest." He didn't use his religion as a crutch. He and his 13-year-old daughter, Gianna, attended Mass the morning of the helicopter crash.

The Grammy Awards were held in Los Angeles on the same day

that Bryant and eight others were killed. Though it was not widely reported—this was not a mistake—a black artist, Kirk Franklin, who won the award for Best Gospel Performance, gave praise to “Jesus the King, because it is all about Him.” Gloria Gaynor, the black singer who won the award for Best Roots/Gospel Album, said, “I want to thank my Lord and Savior, Christ, Jesus, for the gifts, talents and abilities that I’ve been given with which to make the strides that I’ve made in my life...”

Think of it. When white artists and actors win, they often give political speeches that are hate-filled tirades, and if religion is mentioned at all, it is only to bash it.

On May 2, Yankee Stadium will be filled to capacity, but the crowd will not be there to root for the Yanks. Joel Osteen is holding court with Kanye West. Billed as a “Night of Hope,” West will no doubt bring many of his fellow African Americans to the event. Media coverage of it will be, well, careful. It most certainly will not be celebratory.

If Christianity is still “relevant” for blacks, why not for whites? Much of the answer has to do with education: the more years spent in school, the more likely one is to be an agnostic or an atheist. And since young whites are much more likely to be college graduates than young blacks are, they are more likely to swing away from God.

In a 2018 Pew poll, it was found that 66 percent of those who have a high school education or less believe in God as described in the Bible (another 25 percent believe in a higher power). For those with some college, 53 percent believe in the Biblical God (36 percent believe in a higher power). Only 45 percent of college graduates believe in God as described in the Bible (an additional 38 percent believe in some other power).

Among those who do not believe in either God or some higher

power, this was true of only 6 percent of those with a high school education or less, but it was 16 percent for college graduates.

Why are college educated whites so inclined not to believe in God? Look who's teaching them.

In a recent survey published by the National Association of Scholars (I served on its board of directors for 20 years), it was found that Democrat professors outnumber Republicans by a ratio of 8.5 to 1 (in some fields it is much higher and women professors are more likely to be Democrats than their male counterparts). When it comes to donating to a political party, Democrat professors contribute more than Republicans by a margin of 95-1.

It is not hard to understand why whites and blacks are divided more on religion than any other factor: The professors are largely agnostics or atheists. Some have made a god of the environment, while others are content to settle for self-worship.

Their students eat this up. The idea that there is no such thing as right or wrong is appealing to the self-absorbed. Most blacks, on the other hand, have never shared these experiences. More important, they have yet to be intellectually and spiritually corrupted by the great sages of academia.

Is Kanye West for real? Is he really drawn to Jesus? I have no idea. But I do know that if God is dead for legions of young whites, he is very much alive for blacks of all ages.