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guiding values  
introductions  
questions  
guiding definitions  
outline for study  
Cone's formative influences  
the Cross  
the Lynching Tree  
more questions  
silence

By the end of tonight's session, you will have the necessary background, especially regarding the cross, lynching tree, and the general outline of this work to feel confident as you crack open and read each chapter.

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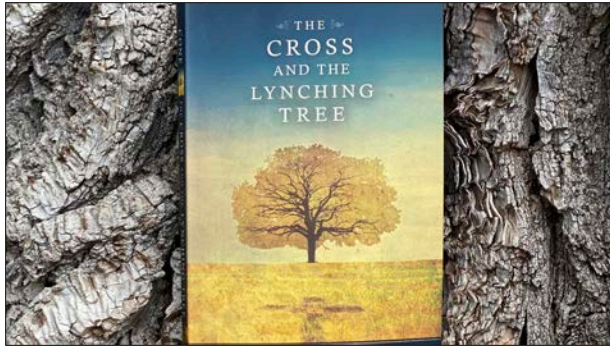
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**Unconditional positive regard.**

—Carl Rogers

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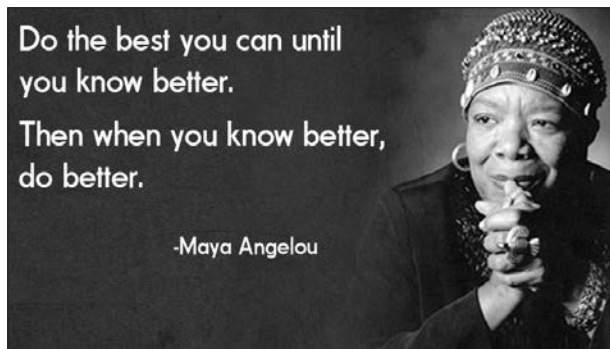
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**The power of silence.**

**“Just come back tomorrow.”**



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Can you briefly introduce yourself and tell us why you are interested you in a lenten book study on James Cone?

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1. Can you describe your earliest thoughts about the cross?
2. What do you know about lynching in America?
3. Cone's provocative suggestion is that we can't understand the cross without the lynching tree. How does that settle within your body?

**What is White Supremacy?**

"White supremacy is a racist ideology that is based upon the belief that white people are superior in many ways to people of other races and that therefore, white people should be dominant over other races. White supremacy is not just an attitude or a way of thinking. It also extends to how systems and institutions are structured to uphold this white dominance."

—Layla Saad, *me and white supremacy*, pg. 12



**What is Racism?**

**"The struggle to be fully human and to see that others are fully human.**

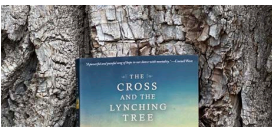
**Racist: One who is supporting a racist policy through their actions or inaction or expressing a racist idea.**

**Antiracist: One who is supporting an antiracist policy through their actions or expressing an antiracist idea."**

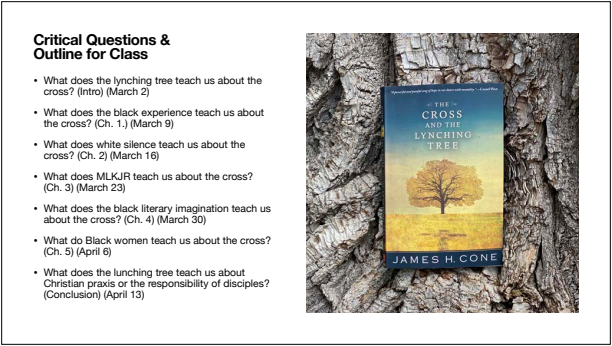
—Ibram X. Kendi, *How To Be An Antiracist*, pgs. 11 & 13

## Critical Questions & Outline for Class

- What does the lynching tree teach us about the cross? (Intro) (March 2)
- What does the black experience teach us about the cross? (Ch. 1.) (March 9)
- What does white silence teach us about the cross? (Ch. 2) (March 16)
- What does MLKJR teach us about the cross? (Ch. 3) (March 23)
- What does the black literary imagination teach us about the cross? (Ch. 4) (March 30)
- What do Black women teach us about the cross? (Ch. 5) (April 6)
- What does the lynching tree teach us about Christian praxis or the responsibility of disciples? (Conclusion) (April 13)

The image shows the front cover of the book "The Tree of the Cross and the Lynching Tree" by James H. Cone. The cover features a photograph of a large, leafy tree in a field under a blue sky. The title is printed in white serif font at the top, and the author's name, "JAMES H. CONE", is at the bottom. The book is placed against a background of rough, textured tree bark.

- What does the lynching tree teach us about the cross? (Intro) (March 2)
- What does the black experience teach us about the cross? (Ch. 1.) (March 9)
- What does white silence teach us about the cross? (Ch. 2.) (March 16)
- What does MLKJR teach us about the cross? (Ch. 3) (March 23)
- What does the black literary imagination teach us about the cross? (Ch. 4.) (March 30)
- What do Black women teach us about the cross? (Ch. 5) (April 6)
- What does the lynching tree teach us about Christian praxis or the responsibility of disciples? (Conclusion) (April 13)







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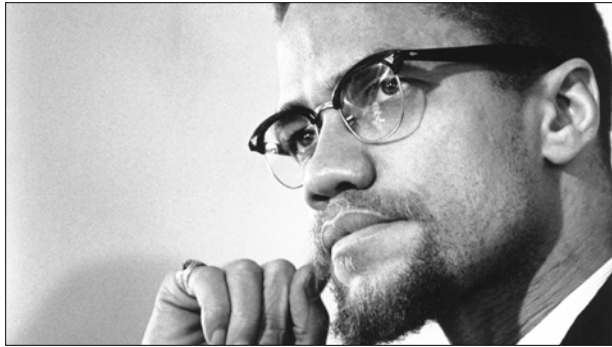
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## The Cross

- Sedition (Rome)
- Roman Spectacle, Pax Romana
- Blasphemy (Judaism)
- **Christus Victor** (image= battle of good versus evil)
- **Satisfaction Atonement** (image: repaying moral debt)
- **Substitutionary Atonement** (image=God as judge)
- **Moral Atonement** (image= calloused heart transformed by love)

Figure: Individualist, personal and not social, and ornamental, decorative, detached from real people's suffering.



“Unfortunately, during the course of 2,000 years of Christian history, this symbol of salvation has been detached from any reference to the ongoing suffering and oppression of human beings—those whom Ignacio Ellacuría, the Salvadoran martyr, called “the crucified peoples of history.” The cross has been transformed into a harmless, non-offense ornament that Christians wear around their necks. Rather than reminding us of the “cost of discipleship,” it has become a form of “cheap grace,” an easy way to salvation that doesn’t force us to confront the power of Christ’s message and mission. Until we can see the cross and the lynching tree together, until we can identify Christ with a “recrucified” black body hanging from a lynching tree, there can be no genuine understanding of Christian identity in America, and no deliverance from the brutal legacy of slavery and white supremacy.”

—James Cone, *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*, introduction xiv-xv.

“The cross helped me to deal with the brutal legacy of the lynching tree, and the lynching tree helped me to understand the tragic meaning of the cross. In writing this book, my primary concern is to give voice to black victims, to let them and their families and communities speak to us, exploring the question: how did ordinary blacks, like my mother and father, survive the lynching atrocity and still keep together their families, their communities, and not lose their sanity? How could they live meaningful lives, knowing that they could be lynched for any small violation of what Richard Wright called “the ethics of living Jim Crow”?[4] I wrestle with questions about black dignity in a world of white supremacy because I believe that the cultural and religious resources in the black experience could help.” all Americans cope with the legacy of white supremacy and also deal more effectively with what is called “the war on terror.”

—James Cone, *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*, introduction xv.



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1. What have you learned in this first session about the cross?
2. What did you learn tonight about lynching in America?
3. Cone's provocative suggestion is that we can't understand the cross in America today without the lynching tree. Take 60 seconds and draw, doodle, or journal what is rising within you from tonight's lesson.

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