

# Race and Racism – Open Forum

A school community in  
courageous conversation

**Rector Connect – 21 July 2016**

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ST STITHIANS  
COLLEGE

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## Focus on race and racism

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- Many fault-lines of division and stereotyping in our society
- Good reasons to focus on race and racism as a priority
- Focus in the media, public campaigns  
#Rhodesmustfall
- Veneer of 'rainbow nation' has ruptured



## Focus on race and racism

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‘Despite all the attempts to wish it away, racism remains this country’s most serious problem.’

Stephen Friedman, political scientist

‘When black fury meets white denial, you have the combustible and fundamentally changed race relations we live in today [2015].’

Ferial Haffajee, editor, City Press and author of *What if there were no whites in South Africa?*



# Judge Johann van der Westhuizen (Concourt Judge)

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***'...I wish that all of us, before we solemnly declare: 'I am not a racist', would pause and look deep into our hearts and souls and motives. The world is not black and white. There are 50 shades of grey, or brown. Few of us have been left untouched by our past.'***

*(Mail and Guardian 26 February 2016)*



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# Defining racism

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- A phenomenon that is both complex and necessary to define in accessible terms.
- Racism is to stereotype negatively, isolate and act destructively against individuals or groups on the basis of the colour of a person's skin. Racism is experienced in this manner.

(there is more...)



# Defining racism

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- Racism flows from racial discrimination combined with the power to dominate and/or exclude.
- Racism is the structuring of South African society and economy which, given our racialized past and present, excludes black people from opportunity, access and dignity as equal citizens.



## Focus on race and racism : manifestation and social analysis

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- What people say and think, and how they act – in public, and in private spaces
- Structures of social division, hierarchy and opportunity – the long shadow of apartheid in our society and economy



# Focus on race and racism : manifestation and social analysis

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- Articulations of racism are most prevalent in the middle and upper middle classes: this is the crucible
- Changing racial demography of the political elite post-1994
- In society: the nature of the white middle class and upper middle class – continuity, privilege, opportunity and anxiety
- In society: The growth of the black middle class and upper middle class – challenging norms and racialized privilege, integration, anger and frustration





## School Character and Saints Character – our own language for addressing racism

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Honour God

Honour Others

Honour Self

Know myself

Be myself

Make my  
contribution



# School structures, the school community and responsibility

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- What values, norms and practices are being expressed and lived out at St Stithians, and do these reflect or reinforce racism?
- How are adults, who grew up under apartheid, influencing the views of their children?
- What is meant when a person (usually a white person in my experience) says: 'I don't see colour'?
- The challenges and dangers of denying race and racism.
- The challenges and dangers of labelling race and racism.



# School structures, the school community and responsibility

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- Transformation Statement 2009
- Campus Transformation Committee (Council Committee)
- School Staff Transformation Committees – all 5 schools
- Boys' College and Girls' College – Transformation and Diversity Committees
- Proposed Campus Staff and Student Transformation Committee



# School structures, the school community and responsibility

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Telling our stories

Terms of engagement

