

Racism

Raimundo Barreto

The word “racism” entered our lexicons in the 1930s, arising from Nazism and the philosophy of racial superiority. Racism is any attitude that denies human flourishing to a person or a social group based on their ethnic origin. Such attitudes have been present in the world since ancient history.

Since the sixteenth century, racism has played a critical role in the formation of Latin American societies. Historians highlight the fact that the starting point for Latin American existence and identity is the eclipse of the other. The negation of “otherness” and the affirmation of all things European were behind the violence of the conquest of the New World, which began with the genocide of millions of native inhabitants representing different ethnic groups and continued with the cruelty of slavery, which turned both indigenous peoples and imported African settlers into merchandise.

In the United States of America, slavery was followed by a system of segregation bolstered by legal and theological support that affirmed the separation of the races as a natural, and even biblical,

Raimundo César Barreto Jr., from Brazil, is Assistant Professor of World Christianity at Princeton Theological Seminary in New Jersey. He has served as a pastor and professor in Brazil and for five years was the director of the Division of Freedom and Justice of the Baptist World Alliance.

