

Michael Eric Dyson

Quotes

*People, White, Thinking, Black, Men, Brother, America, Book, Country, Believe,
Hip Hop, Kings, Church, Identity, Political, Responsibility, Mean, Light, Needs,
Race*

Justice is what love sounds like when it speaks in public.

~Michael Eric Dyson

I don't worship the Bible, I worship the God who gave the Bible.

~Michael Eric Dyson

The writer's gift can make us see ourselves and our morals differently than our reality suggests.

~Michael Eric Dyson

He was not hip-hop's most gifted emcee. Still, Shakur may be the most influential and compelling rapper of them all, he was more than the sum of his artistic parts.

~Michael Eric Dyson

My ambition didn't grow out of nowhere. It was planted in me by a community that nurtured me.

~Michael Eric Dyson

Donald Trump amplifies the worst instincts. And his nationalism is really a white racist supremacist nationalism.

~Michael Eric Dyson

All of us should be much more humble and contrite when we point the finger at somebody else, because four more fingers are pointing back at us.

~Michael Eric Dyson

We can't exempt ourselves from the same moral calculus that we are willing to apply to others.

~Michael Eric Dyson

The language of faith is crucial because it affords human beings the privilege of intimacy with the ultimate.

~Michael Eric Dyson

I used to tell people when I preached at a church, 'If you want a great sermon, be a great audience.'

~Michael Eric Dyson

I guess I'm a Luddite.

~Michael Eric Dyson

I was very struck when Min. Farrakhan said if Jesus and Muhammad were here today, they'd be embracing each other. That's a tremendous message that needs to be heard more broadly.

~Michael Eric Dyson

Hip-hop is about the brilliance of pavement poetry.

~Michael Eric Dyson

I don't believe in that kind of American John Wayne individualism where people pull themselves up by their bootstraps. Someone changed your diapers. And if that's the case, you ain't self-made.

~Michael Eric Dyson

I think it's extremely important to challenge white brothers and sisters and think more systematically and strategically about the whiteness that they possess.

~Michael Eric Dyson

All Americans deserve an equal crack at what it means to be a - having - having resources in your own home and in your state and in your country.

~Michael Eric Dyson

Black women must challenge black men to live up to their best in every arena of the culture - at job, at home, in school and in religious arenas.

~Michael Eric Dyson

I believe in a God of a second chance and a God of love and mercy, because I need so much more of it myself.

~Michael Eric Dyson

We are not all the same; we don't think alike; and we have the right to openly express those differences in ways that, hopefully, will contribute to our community's welfare.

~Michael Eric Dyson

Comedy is to force us to observe ourselves in ways that are humorous and yet, at the end of the day, that cause us enough discomfort with the status quo to make a change.

~Michael Eric Dyson

The parallels between Elvis and Michael Jackson as incredible artists is evident. But I think that where Michael Jackson even transcends Elvis Presley.

~Michael Eric Dyson

I don't think you can bury words. I think the more you try to dismiss them, the more power you give to them, the more circulation they have.

~Michael Eric Dyson

There are things that you can do on an individual level, even as you continue to fight oppression systemically, that make things a little bit better for an identifiable group.

~Michael Eric Dyson

If white and black and red and brown can come together to focus our energies on overcoming the racial malaise that persists, then this will have been a great moment.

~Michael Eric Dyson

There's a dark underside to philanthropy. People who give a bunch of money are deferred to, even when they are wrong. The emperor cannot be shown to have no clothes.

~Michael Eric Dyson

I have no interest in romanticizing poor black people, having been one of them myself in our beloved hometown of Detroit.

~Michael Eric Dyson

I went to a segregated school; I was born a Negro, not a black man.

~Michael Eric Dyson

When Dr. King was murdered, I had no idea who he was. But as soon as I heard his words on television that night when I was 9 years old, I was dumbstruck, awestruck by their power.

~Michael Eric Dyson

It is true that race is a social fiction, a myth perpetuated by a variety of peoples throughout the modern period, especially, to further their own gains at the expense of others.

~Michael Eric Dyson

That kind of peer learning, that peer teaching, that peer evaluation, and then administration of insight.

~Michael Eric Dyson

I had an exciting, interesting childhood, to be sure, with all of the challenges that ghetto life provides - but had loving parents.

~Michael Eric Dyson

I'm nervous about the prospects of an America that refuses to abide by its best conscience and its best lights and its best angels.

~Michael Eric Dyson

I received my calling and accepted it at around 18.

~Michael Eric Dyson

My church is the world! I want to bring the gospel to as broad and as interesting an audience as possible.

~Michael Eric Dyson

There is no conscious choice of heterosexual identity any more than there is a homosexual one. The last person in the world who wants to be homosexual, for the most part, are homosexuals.

~Michael Eric Dyson

Even when you don't know, you're supposed to know.

~Michael Eric Dyson

We have to understand and explain to each other what blackness is.

~Michael Eric Dyson

I think that the over-incarceration of black and brown folk is one of the great crimes of American society.

~Michael Eric Dyson

Men think women, they don't think men. They don't think toxic masculinity.

~Michael Eric Dyson

My empathy for poor people comes from having been one of them for so long, from knowing that their humanity is more complex and that the truths of their suffering have to be told honestly.

~Michael Eric Dyson

Michael Joseph Jackson's genius was the ability to be the raw article

himself - the real article himself. He is part of the African American people who were marginalized.

~Michael Eric Dyson

I grew up in Detroit. I was a teen father. I lived on welfare for three years. I have a brother serving life in prison, though I believe he's innocent.

~Michael Eric Dyson

Michael Jackson fundamentally altered the terms of the debate about African American music.

~Michael Eric Dyson

Blackness is not simply a reactionary title or identity; that is indeed the "negative" way of characterizing African American identity.

~Michael Eric Dyson

The demand for racial (and sexual) justice gets reduced to politics of identity - and excoriating the so-called perpetrators of the identity politics.

~Michael Eric Dyson

We began to connect literacy and learning and the lively effects of biblical knowledge and preaching pretty early. That was a tremendous impact.

~Michael Eric Dyson

I grew up in the church and began to recite set pieces at the age of four and five, like many of the other kids.

~Michael Eric Dyson

When I was 12 years old, my pastor came to the church: Dr. Fredrick Samson. And that was revolutionary because he mentored me and I got a chance to see up close the impact of a rhetorical genius.

~Michael Eric Dyson

I grew up on the West Side - the "near West Side," [in Detroit], as they say - in what would be considered now the inner city.

~Michael Eric Dyson

I was trying to write a straightforward book of sociological analysis, or at least cultural criticism, and I failed.

~Michael Eric Dyson

Tony Morrison said, 'Can't I love what I criticize, criticize what I love.'

~Michael Eric Dyson

Black people watch more television than anybody else, which makes it legitimate to talk about television. Its anesthetizing effect has been quite real. But that concern isn't new.

~Michael Eric Dyson

No other group has internalized its self-hatred as much as blacks have. It would be difficult to find other groups who behave similarly in that their most esteemed members berate its poorest members.

~Michael Eric Dyson

White-on-white crime is a devastation in America like so-called black-on-black crime. It's not black or white-on-white crime. It's proximity murder.

~Michael Eric Dyson

I've been a social gospel-er and a person who sees politics as a central dynamic to the encoding of religious rhetoric.

~Michael Eric Dyson

The culture will not be able to persist in light of the rigid systems of its own innocence.

~Michael Eric Dyson

If journalism is the first draft of history, then digital literacy is the first blush of the first page of history.

~Michael Eric Dyson

I do believe that it is quite necessary for us as a people to reach back, over and down to help the less fortunate of our number.

~Michael Eric Dyson

You must address the historical and political differences in race and ethnicity in this country before you hold tenaciously to insubstantial, and unsubstantiated, beliefs.

~Michael Eric Dyson

I don't think that an emphasis on the peculiar plight of black males at all suggests that others are not suffering, or that such attention suggests that black men and women feel sorry for themselves.

~Michael Eric Dyson

Bigotry is surely an exportable American commodity, especially when it comes to race.

~Michael Eric Dyson

It's not enough to be against something.

~Michael Eric Dyson

I went to the library and began to read some stuff on my own. My discovery of James Baldwin was life-changing. I read *Go Tell It on the Mountain* first, and that was hugely impactful.

~Michael Eric Dyson

Hip-hop has globalized a conception of blackness that has had a political impact, whether or not it had a political intent.

~Michael Eric Dyson

..And the same rapper who revels in a woman's finely proportioned behind may also speak against racism and on behalf of the poor, even as he encourages them not to look at hip-hop as their salvation.

~Michael Eric Dyson

I don't mind the job of saying to white people, "Yes, this is what I think you need to know, this is what I think you've been missing." And it's my job to educate white folks every day.

~Michael Eric Dyson

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