

## **Trouble I've Seen - Chapter 3**

### **Leaving Behind the Whitened Jesus**

What is the gospel? Who is Jesus?

“Only through a long journey would I discover that the gospel is much more comprehensive, subversive, dangerous, and even undermining of everything that I know and took for granted in life.”

The gospel is about Jesus—his life, teaching, death, and resurrection—and this Jesus does not fit neatly into our predetermined notions.

Because of the centrality of Jesus for Christian faith, he has been made and remade over the centuries.

This has often been done—consciously or unconsciously—to fit the desires and aspirations of those who held societal and cultural power.

For example, God has commonly been thought of as an old white man in the European and American imagination.

“And Jesus also was remade though white supremacist imagination into the likeness of a white man with distinctively Anglo-Saxon features and Western culture.”

Vincent Harding quote (1967)

Is this white Jesus really the Jesus of the New Testament?

“When considering the racial problems in the United States, we must begin taking the New Testament Jesus more seriously, in all of his subversive and troubling implications for our social order.”

Jesus lived, taught, and died from “the underside of the underside.”

The life taught by Jesus was subversive of the social order of his day—the Roman Empire, a domination society.

The witness of the Gospels present two ways of life: the old order of coercive power, intimidation, and oppression; and the Kingdom of God (Luke 4:16-21).

The followers of Jesus are called to immerse themselves in the subversive way of life he lived and taught in order to bring about the Kingdom he proclaimed.