

Trouble I've Seen - Chapter 4

Don't Go With Your Gut

Speaking event on race and racism at the oldest Mennonite congregation in America (founded in 1683)

While most people in the church want to contribute constructively to dismantling racial divisions, this desire alone is not enough to make the necessary changes.

“To make any progress in understanding each other across racial lines, we in the church must begin to talk about our own socialization, which we have received from various communities.”

This chapter explores how the unwitting acceptance of the dominant cultural view on race, cripples our conversations on racism in the church.

Relying on assumptions and intuitions formed by our racialized social contexts has led many Christians to problematic understandings of existing racial dynamics.

“Many dominant-culture Christians never even imagine that they may need to interrogate their own intuitive responses to racism.”

Cultural socialization is much easier to understand and recognize when you are in the minority and your tradition, stories, and values are constantly critiqued.

For those who are members of the dominant culture, this socialization process is usually not as obvious with the result that those who are part of the majority are less likely to be conscious of their own socialization.

White Dominant Cultural Intuition in America's Past: Slavery; the Dred Scott decision; Plessy v Ferguson; Civil Rights movement

“We must seriously wrestle with the fact that so many in the dominant group, in the midst of racial segregation and oppression, could convince themselves that things were already fine and equal for all.”

From Impaired Intuition to Solidarity: American Christians must move decisively toward a counter-intuitive solidarity with those on the margins.

Stories of Counter-Intuitive Solidarity: Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Martin Luther King Jr.