

Trouble I've Seen - Chapter 5

Whiteness Matters

“No matter where I have lived, I have eventually had to come to terms with the reality that racial hierarchy is always present, and that whiteness, without fail, matters.”

Harrisburg Invasion Day: Church groups performing a “white Christian social practice”—often when race is discussed among participants in dominant cultural contexts, “everything gets named except whiteness.”

“Ironically, dominant society will proclaim colorblindness at one moment and then the next moment will have no problem calling out ‘black-on-black violence’ instead of just seeing it as human-on-human violence.”

“I have never heard anyone talk about the problem of ‘white-on-white violence’ even though, according to statistics, this type of violence occurs at very similar rates as that of black-on-black violence.”

Consideration such as these invite us to consider a crucial question: “What precisely does it mean to be white in our society? What is whiteness, and what is its socially constructed function in society?”

“In the church we must learn to change our view of racism in society as merely a ‘black issue.’ Instead, we must look at the other end of the racial hierarchy to explore” the concept of whiteness.

“There is a gap between how we use the term *white* and the way whiteness functions on people’s behalf in society.

White is the...socially constructed category used to centralize power among a certain portion of humanity at the direct harm and cost of people of color, especially Native American and black life in America.”

Whiteness operates out of the conditions of superiority, dominance, and control in the United States and must be addressed, challenged, and deconstructed in the work of anti-racist witness in pursuit of racial equity.

Christianity must be distinguished and disentangled from the assumptions and intuitions of Western culture and whiteness.