

Trouble I've Seen - Chapter 8

Renouncing Every Hierarchy

“I never run into Native Americans where I live in Philadelphia. The shock of that statement eludes most of us. We are not baffled. We are not confused about how that could be.”

The neighborhood Drew lived in when he wrote the book is over 95 percent black. He writes that to understand the significance of this demographic, we must not only consider the black experience and white flight, but also the history of the Native people who first inhabited the land.

“The story of white America is inextricably bound to the continual breaking of treaties and covenants with Native American people and the near genocide that was executed.”

We cannot understand the present without a knowledge of how Native Americans have struggled simply to exist in their own land.

The white Jesus was the symbol used to insist on their conformity. “This meant letting their culture, stories, practices, clothes, music, and wisdom die so they could live into Anglo-Saxon names, Western clothes, and white values.”

“Too many in the American church have perpetuated the myth that this land was built on Christian principles rather than on stolen land and stolen labor. Too many American Christians act as though this land justly belongs to white Anglo-Saxon people, and as hosts of the land they could expect everyone to assimilate into their world.”

Christians seeking to follow the way of Jesus must challenge and seek to dismantle all forms of socially constructed hierarchy such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and class.

Galatians 3:27-28: As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.

The myth of a universal theology: All theology is contextual, everyone thinks from a particular set of backgrounds and circumstances. No one speaks for all.