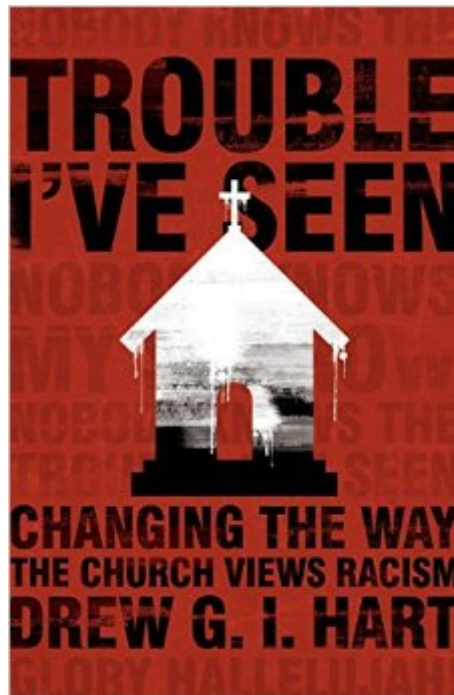


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# Trouble I've Seen: Changing The Way The Church Views Racism



## Synopsis

What if racial reconciliation doesn't look like what you expected? The high-profile killings of young black men and women by white police officers, and the protests and violence that ensued, have convinced many white Christians to reexamine their intuitions when it comes to race and justice. In this provocative book, theologian and blogger Drew G. I. Hart places police brutality, mass incarceration, antiblack stereotypes, poverty, and everyday acts of racism within the larger framework of white supremacy. Leading readers toward Jesus, Hart offers concrete practices for churches that seek solidarity with the oppressed and are committed to racial justice. What if all Christians listened to the stories of those on the racialized margins? How might the church be changed by the trouble we've seen? Key Features: -Written by well-known theologian and blogger Drew Hart with foreword by Christena Cleveland -Hard-hitting analysis of racial injustice in the twenty-first century -Provides a call to action for Christians committed to racial justice and creative proposals for antiracist practices for churches

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Excellent book! Drew Hart writes "truth in love" about racism to white Christians in the U.S. using clear examples of personal experiences and knowledge of the Bible, history, and current events. Jesus and his life and teachings are front and center. I will need to re-read to capture the layers. And buy a few more copies to share with friends.

Few topics cause the emotional response that racism does, especially when we discuss the wider Christian cultures culpability in perpetuating it. Those of us who are white are especially nervous, not wanting to be characterized as "racist", conjuring images of cross-burning extremists. What we need more than anything is an honest, yet unwavering examination of the history that is offered with the grace and hope that real change can happen. That is what this book offers, written by someone who has and continues to do the hard work of reconciliation- Drew G.I. Hart. This book is a much needed resource for churches, organizations and individuals who want to see the restoration of the beloved community. Few books are more timely and important as this one. Order it now. (The only reason I gave this book 4 stars, instead of 5, is because many potential readers dismiss 5 star reviews as being "fanboy" propaganda.)

I appreciate Drew's thoughtfulness and bravery in approaching such a challenging subject. This book is a much needed resource to help the church move from viewing incidents in our society as "isolated" or "exceptional" to understanding how they are deeply woven into the systems that structure our society. Through his story and sharp intellect he illuminates the complexities of the racial divide that has plagued the church through time. I deeply appreciate that this is written to faith-based communities. Often resources on race and racism are secular and miss the transformational power of Christ. Drew is able to weave in faith to complex societal issues in a way that invites everyone into the hard work of reconciliation.

So this book is several things. One, it is a book of theology of the kingdom of the Messiah. Dr. Hart lays out the plans of God through Jesus Christ in instituting his kingdom, which is topsy-turvy: it is not power-based, it is not authority-based, it is not self-based. It is, instead, based upon love and community, honesty and commitment, risk and sacrifice and the great reward of connection with Jesus. For that alone, you should read this book. It is also a book about America, plainly stated, as it was, and is, and perhaps may not always be. It is a book about how we Christians have acquired a worldview of the church and society, of God and Jesus, that matches with our own estimation of the normalcy of "whiteness." There are books which will give you much more detail about the American past, creating the concept of "whiteness" and "blackness" in order to justify power and ownership of one person over another. There are books which will give you more details about how these all worked out in society, from redlining to education to family stability to job access, even to the point of membership and participation in the church. The thesis is that we American Christians have re-created the Jesus of Scripture to be a slightly more

beneficent-appearing Uncle Sam, a Jesus committed to the supremacy of America, along with its violence and authority and rulership. The Jesus of the America church, he argues, represents a Jesus we have created in our image so that we may receive approval for our actions in his name. It is not a Jesus that represents humility and service and sacrifice, but one that represents anger and exclusion and hostility to anyone who might threaten the power of America or the church--which are often confused as being the same thing. It is also a book about wounding and healing, about the many, many millions of people who have been wounded by American, Christian values, and even in their wounding have been overlooked and dismissed. It is a book that opens up the Book; it talks about the real Kingdom and the real Jesus and how He cannot be used by anyone to advance a political or religious objective; indeed, it appears that Jesus has his own agenda and purposes, and they are not necessarily being implemented in the American church. Dr. Hart makes the argument that Christians, representing Jesus, *should* be at the forefront, all along, of restoration and healing. He provides many examples of the wounding, and provides many ideas for the healing that we, as Christians, can begin implementing. And finally, it is a book of redemptive love. It is Jesus, after all, who has loved us and saved us, such squabbling nuisances, such angry elves, such short-sighted and individualistic believers, such unloveable and unloved humans. Above all the message of Dr. Hart is the reminder that Jesus is worth knowing and loving and serving, that Jesus is in the business of restoration and healing, that Jesus is calling us all, right now, to participate in his kingdom, that Jesus' love is not limited by his need for power and authority, that people are always, ALWAYS more important than success or fame or accomplishment. There are many great stories in this book. A few spoke to me more than others. One is his story (also told elsewhere) of the meeting of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Franklin Fisher. It pulled together the life of Bonhoeffer for me--I knew he made a great sacrifice during WWII, but did not understand how he had come to be the person who could walk out his life that way. The other is the story of a woman in contemporary America, a white woman, who found herself in a situation she was unprepared to handle regarding an honest, open discussion of racial actions and reactions in the American church. She was unable to handle her emotional reactions (it's not an uncommon thing), and was honest enough to admit her anxieties. The response of Dr. Hart was perfect, meeting her at her level, actively listening, helping her stay on her journey--and yet not dismissing the importance of broaching the topic of racism just because it makes a lot of us uncomfortable. That is the kind of discussions and interactions we need to have. Dr. Hart helpfully provides some mechanisms and actions we can take in response to his message, which are great tools. It is a full, rich, complete book. It is challenging and hopeful and honest. It is a message of truth that can appear to be brutal because it is not softened by an attempt

to be "liked."But it is a book worth reading and thinking about.

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