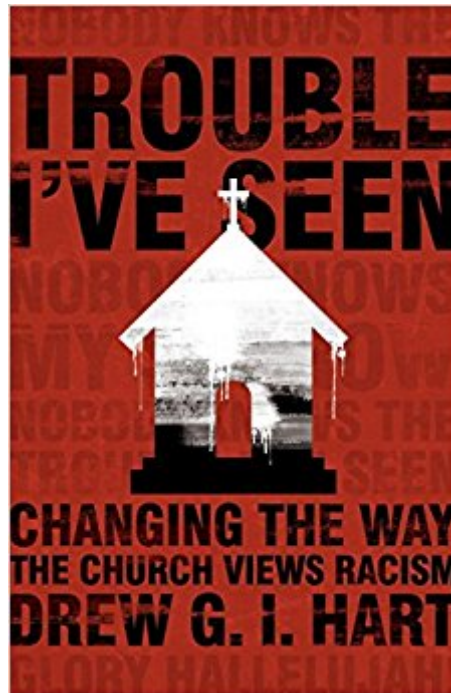




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# Trouble I've Seen: Changing The Way The Church Views Racism



## 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

In this emotionally wrenching yet accessible book, Hart theologian and minister provides an overview of the systemic racism that nonwhite people, particularly African-Americans, face in the U.S. today, as well as the responses of Bible-based Christian theology...A savvy and balanced blend of the topics that should serve as a useful introduction for Christians of all races who haven't yet understood the full scope of the problem and been inspired to enact change. Publisher's Weekly In this raw, honest, truth-telling book, Drew Hart offers himself his life, his story, his tears, his

fire in the most vulnerable way in the hopes of interrupting the vulgar disposability of black lives in our society. This book is a gift from the heart of one of the sharpest young theologians in this country. Hold it carefully, and allow it to transform you and our blood-stained streets. Drew Hart's *Trouble I've Seen* is a memoir in the tradition of the blues...it is theological blues...and it will move you to do something about the ugly residue of racism that still haunts us. Shane Claiborne, author of *The Irresistible Revolution* Drew Hart masterfully cuts through all the platitudes and good intentions to reach the fleshy, beating heart of true justice. An unforgettable read, *Trouble I've Seen* deserves the church's full attention and considered action. It certainly challenged and changed me. --Rachel Held Evans, bestselling author of *A Year of Biblical Womanhood* and *Searching for Sunday* Reader, brace yourself! *Trouble I've Seen*, one of the best books I've encountered on race and Christian faith, will illuminate and challenge the assumptions that you don't even know you possess. I urge you to pay close attention to Drew Hart's eye-opening analysis. Christena Cleveland, author of *Disunity in Christ*, from foreword Drew Hart makes a courageous and compelling call to the church to get on the road to racial reconciliation and righteousness. He provides practical insights and deep theological reflections in this challenging and necessary resource. You won't be comfortable with this read, but you will be led into the deep waters of the social dilemma and reality of the race matrix. In the end, there is an opportunity for the church to be a bridge over these troubled waters. Efrem Smith, president and CEO of World Impact and author of *The Post-Black and Post-White Church* Drew Hart is an emerging voice in the one of the most difficult conversations facing the church today the reality and ongoing effects of white supremacy in American Christianity. He challenges the church to take a long, hard look at its complicity with the racism that still permeates our society and to be transformed in thought, word, and deed by the gospel of Jesus Christ. A provocative, powerful, and necessary book. --John R. Franke, theologian in residence, Second Presbyterian Church, Indianapolis *Trouble I've Seen* makes it plain: in repenting of white supremacy, we have nothing to lose and everything to be liberated from. Hart refuses to silence two gospel scandals that cannot be separated: that in Christ, Pharaoh's armies are invited into the Promised Land, but the only way in is through the waters, where Pharaoh's supremacy and his chariots are drown-ded. This is the saving solidarity of Christ's cross. Jarrod McKenna, award-winning peace activist and cofounder of First Home Project In a critical moment of American history, Drew Hart has given us a book that is vital for the church. *Trouble I've Seen* captures the complexity of race in its systemic and personal consequences and points us to why race should be central to any Christian's life as a follower of Jesus. It is a book for people who are just beginning this journey and for those of us who need encouragement along the way. --Brian Bantum, associate professor of theology,

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, anti-black stereotypes, poverty, and everyday acts of racism within the larger framework of white supremacy. He argues that white Christians have repeatedly gotten it wrong about race because dominant culture and white privilege have so thoroughly shaped their assumptions. He also challenges black Christians about neglecting the most vulnerable in their own communities. 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 they've seen? "This book is a gift from the heart of one of the sharpest young theologians in the United States. Hold it carefully, and allow it to transform you--and our blood-stained streets."--Shane Claiborne, author of *The Irresistible Revolution*

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.

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.

Troubles I Have Seen is a needed book in regards to dealing with racism in the church. This book takes a hard, grim look on racism today. I'll be honest, this book isn't for the faint of heart. You may not agree with everything said, but you'll benefit greatly from reading this. In nine chapters he speaks of how sin has fleshed itself out in racism, white supremacy, and anti-black ideology, not just in America but in the church. And through it shows how to subvert these realities in the church. He goes back to the beginning of American history showing how from this country's birth till now, white supremacy has infiltrated everything, even down to our theology. Even more, he shows how majority culture, even the church, has been blind to the mistreatment of people of color. And if we were honest, the white church today at large misses the full extent of how black folks are oppressed today. And the only way to see is to enter into the pain as Jesus did. I must highlight chapter 3 and chapter 9. It may not have been his intent, but chapter 3 reminded me how important it is to keep Jesus in his historical context. His re-telling of Jesus' story put steel in my spine as I re-discovered a Savior who can identify with people of color today. Often the gospel is simplified down to justification ripping Jesus from the world he lived in. Drew shows how in Jesus, God is uniquely at work amongst the poor, marginalized, and unwanted and the way to serve is amongst them in humility. Chapter 9 gives 7 practices that will help communities deconstruct the white supremacy, racial hierarchy, and racial prejudice we've inherited. May Jesus give us the courage for the days ahead. I wish I could give more, every chapter is necessary but you'll have to get the book.

Drew Hart, now an assistant professor in Theology at Messiah College in Pennsylvania, provides a readable and accessible introduction to the social construction of race, aimed specifically at church-goers (and more specifically at White church-goers). Hart's strength is his weaving of his own personal narrative with solidly backed academic research and theory. He moves seamlessly back and forth between stories about his growing up in Philadelphia and the invention of "whiteness" as a fundamental power tactic in American society. Hart also outlines a theological reading of the Jesus story that emphasizes Christ's love for the poor, the marginalized, and the underprivileged and deftly connects it to

the necessity for every church to address structural racism on every level in American society. Although advanced students of critical race theory may find Hart's book simplistic, it speaks to its target audience powerfully and importantly. Recommended for undergraduates in religious studies and peace and justice and for church study groups in particular.

Drew G.I. Hart book "The Trouble I've Seen." will challenge your mind and renew your soul. A prophetic book that interweaves modern day society culture to the love of Jesus of Nazareth. A must read for anyone who is in church leadership or wanting to plant a church in America. Learn the historical context which the American church is set in. Self reflect to learn how you see culture and start to recognize the cultural lenses you put on everyday. Join in the movement to reclaim our community as Christ followers by standing with all, especially those who lives haven't matter to the dominant society. Educate your self through the authors authenticate personal life journey that intersects race and Jesus every step of his journey.

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