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In this small but mighty volume, Robinson contends that white American theologians have an urgent call to uncover, analyze, and dismantle racism. She pleads, “If theologians don’t address the questions of race, the implicit message to church members and leaders is that race and racism are not theological or ecclesial matters” (10). Robinson addresses racism, utilizing theologians—classical white males, African Americans, Latino/as, Asians, and Native Americans—as well as experts in related fields of political science, sociology, and economics, not shying away from the complexity presented by the “multifaceted hydra” (18). James H. Cone’s Black liberation theology is her lens and method as she challenges the complicity of Christianity in the United States in constructing, promoting, and sustaining racist structures.

Not surprisingly, her sources and audience are primarily Protestant Christians. Significantly, she also reflects on insights gained through sustained relationships with the likes of the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference, the Nueva Vida United Methodist Church, and the Quayle United Methodist Church, as well as her personal efforts toward Du Bois’ double consciousness.

In chapter one, she outlines and examines key notions and dynamics of racism, white privilege, and white supremacy. She rightly points out that the very nature of the church shifted when, under Constantine the Great, it became an association of the privileged and a function of the state.

Chapter two explores theological anthropology. Robinson demonstrates how both whites and persons of color are dehumanized and how the *imago Dei* is violated by the systemic sin of racism. Deplorably, white theologians are reluctant, under the guise of neutrality, to name racism and engage in dismantling it. Robinson adopts Ali Ratansi’s use of racialization, which connotes institutionalized racism that is a combination of factors that result from unjust discrimination—social, political, economic, etc. Peggy McIntosh’s classic material identifies white privilege as unearned individual advantage, and white supremacy as a function of hierarchal power in whole societies. Using Cornell West and Enrique Dussel, Robinson explains how “Constantinian Christianity” thwarted efforts to expose systems of racism while “Prophetic Christianity” required speaking truth to power (24-25).

Chapter three is an outstanding, concise exposé of Christianity’s involvement in racialized US history. Using Cornell West’s methodology of demythologizing and demystifying, Robinson uncovers three historical periods: 1) Pre-US Civil War–1865, when whites questioned whether other racial and ethnic groups were human or of another species. Here theology’s sin was to provide the warrants for the dehumanization of people of color and privilege for whites. 2) 1865-1960s Civil Rights Movement, when science and pseudo-science maintained white supremacy by asserting the continued inferiority of people of color through ever more sophisticated means. Theology’s sin
here was silence, allowing “scientific” and “legal” oppression to go unchallenged. 3) Contemporary racism, which assumes that legislation has taken care of all injustices and leveled the playing field for all. Theology’s sin is to use civil law to do the work of justice without questioning the ever more subtle forms of racism in churches, society, institutions, and academic guilds.

In chapter four, Robinson proposes a three-part reformation strategy. First, repentance must be solidified by “becoming black with God,” i.e. white theologians and Christians must commit to engage with and learn from people of color (87). The sole incentive is the Gospel. Second is to “establish an ethical component to theological reflection” that includes the liberating demands of the Gospel (89; Lk 1:52). Finally, we must adopt a “logic of inclusion”—presumed white normativity, resulting in token hiring or assumed inferiority of scholars of color and their work, must yield to respectful mutual relations (93).

Much of what Robinson presents here is not new, but she concisely outlines essentials for an urgently needed conversation on racism, calling Christian theologians and churches to accountability. Her treatment of Native American theology on race is rare. The book’s format makes it attractive as a great tool for undergrads, adults in education classes, or graduate students exploring Protestant theological sources. I recommend it!