



Race and Theology (Horizons in Theology)

Elaine A. Robinson

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White privilege and racial injustice persist in the Church; and despite a commitment to promote justice for all, racism is a reality of life, and has been since before the founding of our nation. In addition throughout most of our nation's history, theology, as a discipline, has remained silent about racism and, at its worst, overtly supported racist practices. This book, examines: 1) what racism is and how it functions, especially in the contemporary setting; 2) how the United States has claimed to be God's chosen nation, yet systematically disadvantages persons of color; 3) how theology's silence sustains racial injustice in the Church, rather than excises it; and 4) how reformulating theological discourse can contribute to racial justice within ecclesial communities and the larger landscape of society.

The Horizons in Theology series offers brief but highly engaging essays on the major concerns and questions in theological studies. Each volume addresses in a clear and concise style the scope and contours of a fundamental question as it relates to theological inquiry and application; sketches the nature and significance of the subject; and opens the broader lines of discussion in suggestive, evocative, and programmatic ways. Written by senior scholars in the field, and ideally suited as supplements in the classroom, Horizons will be an enduring series that brings into plain language the big questions of theology. It will inspire a new generation of students to eagerly embark on a journey of reflective study.

The most important theological insight of our time is that theology is always done in the context of power. Race is inextricably linked to power and shapes not only our everyday lives but also our faith. That a white theologian tackles this topic is significant because it shows that race is not a matter of special interest for minorities alone, and that addressing race in light of the gospel of Jesus Christ provides new faith, hope, and freedom for all.

--Joerg Rieger, Wendland-Cook Professor of Constructive Theology, Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas

An extraordinary resource for understanding how mainline U.S. constructed Christianity has privileged whiteness at the expense of all others. This volume is vital for those who want to join the liberationist ranks as allies so we can free our faith from racism and further the work of social transformation in the changing U.S. context.

— Stacey M. Floyd-Thomas, Associate Professor of Ethics and Society, Vanderbilt University, Executive Director of the Society of Christian Ethics and the Black Religious Scholars Group

Elaine Robinson, as a prominent white scholar, has placed herself at the margins in her scholarly work. She speaks *with* scholars of color whose work focuses on racism. More importantly, she speaks *from* them and in so doing brings vigor to the renewed debates on racism in the academy and the church.

--M. Douglas Meeks, Cal Turner Chancellor Professor of Theology and Wesleyan Studies, Vanderbilt University Divinity School, Nashville, Tennessee

For those who take race seriously (we all should) this is a theologically insightful and nuanced book that de-constructs whiteness in the United States, and offers a re-construction that will begin a must needed dialogue in the academy and the church. This book will be a conversation starter like few others!

-- F. Douglas Powe, Jr., E. Stanley Jones Associate Professor of Evangelism and Associate Professor of

With *Race and Theology* Elaine A. Robinson provides a critical resource for understanding the ways that race and racism have distorted the Christian faith in North America. More important, the book offers insights for what we might do about this distortion. By offering an analysis of the frequently used but, often wrongly conflated ideas of race and racism Robinson, uncovers the ways that oppressive social powers often flourish in contexts where well-meaning people would wish otherwise. In her unfolding of this analysis, Robinson introduces to not only some of the more important theologians and theorists of our day, but also to what it means to expand this conversation beyond simply black and white. In all, an important work that is useful to both academic and more popular conversations about the content of faithfulness in a race conscious society. ---Stephen G. Ray Jr., Professor of Systematic Theology, Neal A. and Ila F. Fisher Chair of Theology, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary; and Executive Director, the Society for the Study of Black Religion

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