

The Color of Compromise:

The Truth about the American Church's Complicity in Racism

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Overview

The central theme or object of Tisby's book *The Color of Compromise* was written to introduce or heighten the reader's awareness to the complexity of the color of compromise. Readers were challenged to evaluate their constructed thoughts regarding who they perceived as compromisers in the color struggle. The author's intriguing content of the book nudged readers into soul-searching and repenting as they progressed through the chapters of the book. By the end of the book, the author had artfully guided the readers to a reflective but also progressive path in their understanding and relativity to the subject topic of the color of compromise.

Analysis

The first notable strength is how the author incorporated the historical connection in regard to this subject topic. This provided a context that this is not a new concept, but one which however, warrants being recognized, addressed, as well as engaged with steps towards progress being achieved. The second strength was the vastness of the tremendous amount of supporting points on the subject topic which were presented to the readers such as the works of Martin Luther King. He also mixed the relativity of the topic of color of compromise into his discussions on the following: Methodism, slavery, white supremacist views, Jim Crow era and racism. The third strength was providing a current component to the discussion when the moral majority, President Ronald Reagan's era, and proceeding in the 21st century were mentioned.

I enjoyed reading this book but there are two items, which I think would have added to the depth and strength of its content. The first weakness was his minimal or almost negligible use of scriptures as a frame of reference and validation regarding the points which were discussed. This would have produced a heightened theological connection to this topic. Second,

the author failed to include his own personal experiences including struggles and victories in association to the topic. It was great to read about the impact this topic of the color of compromise had on the lives of those he wrote about. However, it would have been great to read about how Tisby faced similar challenging situations and circumstances.

In my opinion, there is tremendous usefulness for all readers to invest in reading this book. Tisby provided reflective as well as progressive points for one to consider in regards to their personal and collective engagement. The usefulness and help which is provided is that it does not leave the readers in a state of repenting for what they or others did or should have done, but instead also provided a path for forging forward from that point. The book also highlighted that we can all strive to be agents of change to positively impact the trajectory in our societies.

Take-a-ways

One of my take-aways is that “injustice must be exposed, with all the tension its exposure creates, to the light of human consciousness and all the air of national opinion before it can be cured.”¹ This brings attention to the fact that it calls for our committed engagement to sustain attention to this topic until change occurs. Second take-away is that “ In reality, the struggle for black freedom took place everywhere throughout the country, not just in the South.”² This fact reinforces the opinion that the Black struggle was not resolved by individuals migrating to northern states. Unfortunately, some of the struggles of racial disparities, inequities, and injustices which were encountered in the past, are still being encountered today. My third

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1. Jemar Tisby, *Color of Compromise: The Truth about the American Church’s Complicity in Racism*.(Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2020), 15.

2. Tisby, *Color of Compromise: The Truth about the American Church’s Complicity*, 112.

take away is that “we recognize that racism which yet plagues our culture today is inextricably tied to the past.”³ Understanding this concept helps in understanding the connection of past with the present, and bridging what is at times the rocky and tumultuous travel in between.

Significance for Ministry

My fostered rationale is that “if racism can be made, it can be unmade.”⁴ This will require my engaged commitment and concerted efforts towards promoting a culture for myself and others that this can truly occur. Second, is keeping in the forefront of my thoughts that “the refusal to act in the midst of injustice is itself an act of injustice. Indifference to oppression perpetuates oppression.”⁵ There is a need to move from being an observer or indifferent to being a full participant in what occurs. A third point is recognizing the fact that “Another type of fear that may affect some of us is the fear of getting it wrong. Standing for racial justice involves risk. At some point you must act.”⁶ I cannot hide because of being afraid of not doing it right. It is God’s doing and I am a participant in the mission. “We have the power, through God to leave behind the compromised Christianity that makes its peace with racism and to live out Christ’s call to courageous faith.”⁷ Courageous faith can transform and empower us as promoters and proclaimers, toward addressing the need for all of God’s people independent of racial, ethnic, social or cultural differences. In the continued struggle for racial diversity, we are called to address the color of compromise wherever and whenever it exists.

3. Tisby, 172.

4. Tisby, 39.

5. Tisby, 15.

6. Tisby, 214.

7. Tisby, 215.

Bibliography

Tisby, Jemar. *Color of Compromise: The Truth about the American Church's Complicity in Racism*. Grand Rapids, MI. Zondervan. 2020.