

UR714 Leadership Development in the Urban Church
Dr. Nathaniel Perez & Dr. Charles Galbreath - Spring 2022
The Color of Compromise Book Analysis
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The Color of Compromise by Jemar Tisby walks us through racism both systemic and individualized in America through the eras. His main objective is to inform, challenge all to act, and pursue justice and freedom and he does this by highlighting “racism never goes away, it just adapts.” (pg. 171) He argues, “an honest assessment of racism should acknowledge that racism never fully goes away; it just adapts to changing times and contexts.” (pg. 154) Due to the inadequate handling of racism, it continued to evolve in different manifestations in every generation. I appreciate Tisby’s approach in highlighting the church’s complicity in racism from the very beginning, with colonialism. Although when the Europeans arrived, the racial caste system wasn’t developed yet, it was eventually developed as a social construct by the social, political, and religious spheres of influence for power and control.

Jemar Tisby targets all persons as it is everyone’s responsibility to seek justice. He exposes the church’s complicity and challenges all to take action to end racism in all its forms. The writing style and content is appropriate as he factually goes through history methodically and takes his time unpacking the consequences of each inaction of all persons. Tisby’s strengths are his historical resources, relevance to contemporary time, and a hopeful call to action. I appreciate Tisby’s careful examine of America’s history from colonialism to present day. He didn’t hold back on graphic details or the gruesome reality of racism. His use of resources was well done, and he bridged the events to today’s era. When many, especially in the church, try to brush America’s ugly history, he brings it all to light showing how it’s still happening today without holding back. He gives instruction to have conversations in the church about injustice but not only as each incident occurs, but also analyze the larger patterns. He argues “to see the historic and systemic picture and advocate for more effective solutions.” (pg. 184) Tisby calls the church to be strong and courageous and not be afraid of what others will say or do when you

confront racism. He rightfully expresses, fear of other people is what holds the church back from more aggressive action to bring about justice. (pg. 214) The only critique I hold is I wished he touched the topic of the slave bible and how that came about and used. He does mention what was only preached, but even the bibles were changed and scriptures of exodus and freedom from oppression were removed. I think that is a critical decision of the church that needs to be brought to light and held to accountability. Overall, this book is useful to the audience it's intended for. I believe it is helpful in setting up America and the church's history and complicity and complacency in racism and how it's morphed through the generations. The call to action is hopeful and inspiring for all readers. It's impossible to deny the reality of our church and American history.

The takeaways about leadership development and the church based on reading this book are stay fully informed, bring awareness to those in my sphere of influence, and take action whether in voting, speaking up, and confronting racism. Even if those in high position are pushing a racist agenda, to speak up and vote out who are continuing the baton of racism. Going on pilgrimages where actual civil rights movements had taken place where those who have gone before me have stepped foot. Continuing to watch documentaries and read books on our history is a way for myself to stay informed. I believe also sharing all of the resources I come across with others in critical when it comes to bringing awareness. Studying the word of God in the process I believe is something important for leadership development as I see it can be consuming to digest all of the violent and ugly oppression that has taken place by the hands of "Christians." Seeking God's face and His word on what He believes of all humans and the agency God has given us to take authority to face evil. I don't want my heart to be hardened, instead, I want to be in step with God's heartbeat. I think the flesh can want to handle things differently than the heart

of the Father. So yes, staying informed and aware, speaking out, but keeping my heart soft as I hear for His voice and direction. For those who have been hurt by the generations of racism, there needs to be leadership who will advocate and listen to the broken hearted. There are generations of hurt, and the need to address the soul is so prevalent. I am continuing to pray that the universal church would stand up and repent of racism so we can work towards true reconciliation and healing.