

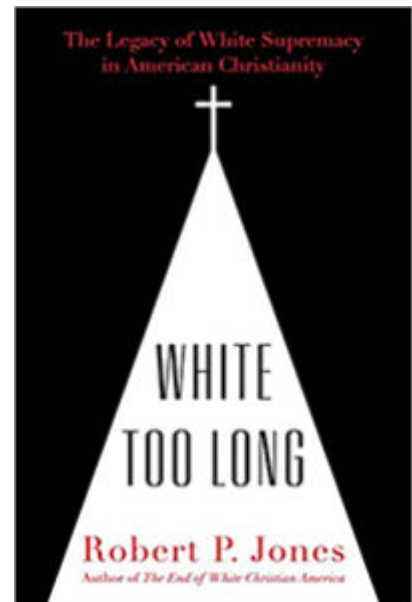
# Review: White Too Long

July 9, 2021

## *White Too Long: The Legacy of White Supremacy in American Christianity*

**By Robert P. Jones (Simon & Schuster)**

If a friend tells you she enjoyed reading *White Too Long*, you know she was just turning pages and not paying attention. If a friend tells you she was captivated and convicted by *White Too Long* and suggests you read it, follow her advice.



[Robert P. Jones](#) writes as both a credentialed researcher in the sociology of religion and as a Southern-born and Southern-bred white Christian with a keen self-awareness of his heritage. Many of us can relate to Jones' personal story—baptized at age 6 in a Texas Baptist church, reared in a Southern Baptist church in Mississippi, educated first at a Baptist college and then at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. And all that time, oblivious to the way every institution that shaped his life had benefited initially from chattel slavery and later from the continued oppression of Black Americans.

However, Jones is an equal opportunity offender. As founding CEO of the Public Religion Research Institute, his in-depth research has revealed white evangelical churches in the South are not alone in their racist underpinnings. Mainline Protestants in the Midwest and Roman Catholics in the Northeast likewise have been constructed on white supremacist presuppositions.

Jones asserts white supremacy has been woven into the warp and woof of the American Christian tapestry. In some instances, that has included church structures literally built by slave labor and occupied by folks who wore white sheets and burned crosses. More commonly, it simply means systemic racism has infiltrated otherwise benevolent Christian institutions in subtle and not-so-subtle ways. Furthermore, selective reading of Scripture through the lens of a society built on white supremacist beliefs created a theological foundation for maintaining the status quo.

If all that sounds a bit like critical race theory, recognize Jones did not come to his understanding based on Marxist ideology or left-wing indoctrination. He reached his conclusions based on biblical principles he first learned in Sunday school and Training Union at Baptist churches and based on hard data from diligent research.

Don't expect to agree with everything in *White Too Long*. But be ready to look into a mirror and take an honest appraisal of what you see. Read *White Too Long* and be challenged by it.

*Ken Camp, managing editor*

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