

Review: How Ableism Fuels Racism

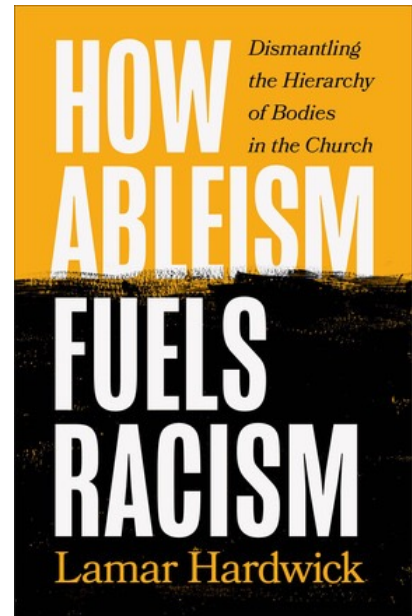
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How Ableism Fuels Racism: Dismantling the Hierarchy of Bodies in the Church

By Lamar Hardwick (Brazos Press)

Reading this book, the second published by “The Autism Pastor” Lamar Hardwick, might take longer than it normally would for a book of under 200 pages. Not because it isn’t well written or thoughtfully presented, but precisely because it is both.

In *How Ableism Fuels Racism: Dismantling the Hierarchy of Bodies in the Church*, Hardwick, who has quickly established himself as a leading voice in disability theology, does an exceptional job of demonstrating and challenging the way the American (white) church has allowed bias to inform its theology.



Hardwick walks through American Christian history and demonstrates,

rather convincingly, the initial sin, as he calls it, of American Christianity is ableism—the ranking of human bodies—that gives birth to racial bias.

In addition to historical discussion, Hardwick shares personal experiences of living in a Black disabled body, including grappling with stage 4 colon cancer in a medical landscape that continues to hold bias against Black bodies—bias that reduces quality of care and increases mortality for Black patients.

Participants in the American (white) church, get ready to have some idols torn down. The critiques Hardwick presents are pointed directly at you, at me. But his rebuke is gentle, biblical and convicting.

Reading this book was an exercise in repentance—an exercise that I needed. So does the rest of the American (white) church. And in repenting, we then can take actions to become dismantlers of the hierarchy of bodies in the church.

Calli Keener, news writer

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