



A Black Theology of Liberation

By James H. Cone

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With the publication of his two early works, *Black Theology & Black Power* (1969) and *A Black Theology of Liberation* (1970), James Cone emerged as one of the most theological voices in North America. These books, which offered a searing indictment of white theology and society, introduced a radical reappraisal of the Christian message for our time. Joining the spirit of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr., Cone radically reappraised Christianity from the perspective of the oppressed black community in North America. Forty years later, Cone's work retains its original power, enhanced now by his reflections on the evolution of his own thinking and of black theology.

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Editorial Review

Review

Twenty years ago, when the civil rights and "Black Power" movements were at their peak, James Cone introduced a revolutionary theology based on the African-American experience of oppression and the quest for liberation. The book brought a new perspective to theology in the United States. Cone contends that theology grows out of the experience of the community; the community itself defines what God means. Western European theology serves the oppressors; therefore theology for African-Americans should validate their struggle for liberation and justice. In seven brief chapters, he argues passionately that God must be on the side of oppressed black people and develops the concept of a black God, noting: "To say God is Creator means ... I am black because God is black!" The anniversary edition recognizes Cone's contribution to U.S. theology with a 50-page section of critical reflections by six leading theologians including Gayraud Wilmore, Robert McAfee Brown and Rosemary Radford Reuther. Cone responds to these commentaries in an afterword. The foreword points out Cone's influence on Latin American liberation theology. The interplay among text, commentaries, afterword and preface provides a lively discussion and analysis of developments in black liberation theology over the past two decades. The book should be read for the clarity with which it demonstrates the relationship between theology, oppression and liberation, and for its historic importance in raising the consciousness of its readers about the possibility of viewing God from a black perspective. Anyone concerned about U.S. social history, liberation theology and racism will find the book of interest. It is particularly suitable for university and seminary libraries. --Independent Publishe

About the Author

James H. Cone is Charles A. Briggs Distinguished Professor of Systematic Theology at Union Theological Seminary, New York City. His many books include *Black Theology and Black Power*, *God of the Oppressed*, *The Spirituals and the Blues*, and *Martin & Malcolm & America*.

Users Review

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