Caribbean Theology as Public Theology:
The Caribbean Taking Theological Responsibility for Itself

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Abstract

The thesis that Caribbean Theology is Public Theology is an articulation of the praxis of seeking to build a just and responsible society. It surveys the historical and contemporary context of the Caribbean and defines its struggle against inequality and the distortion of identity. This history of the Caribbean is a history of the resistance by the people of the Caribbean against inequality and notions of their inferiority. Caribbean Theology is founded on this emancipatory imagination of the people and this spirit of resistance.

The liberation biblical hermeneutic reading strategy of Caribbean Theology is a reader response approach which comes to the text from the world in front of the text. The Legion narrative in Mark Chapter Five is offered as an example of this reading strategy. The narrative is used as lenses to reflect upon the problem of self-mutilating violence in the Caribbean. It argues that the high incident of violence is the result of the interiorization of oppression and therefore the distortion of identity. The narrative is also an analogy of Caribbean reality in the ways in which recalcitrant forces collude in order to seek to re-entrench patterns of inequality and oppression.

Caribbean Theology began as a self-conscious movement in response to the call for justice and liberation, to pursue Caribbean identity and to conscientize. It is also alert to the fact that the struggle for Caribbean selfhood contends with reactionary forces that are determined to reverse historical gains. These forces are aided and abetted by idolatry. Caribbean Theology must therefore pursue the triple tasks of exorcism, iconoclasm and holism through the congregational life and prophetic witness of the Church in the public square.
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