

Tribute to Prof. James Hal Cone

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ABSTRACT

This article, written as its author's Tribute, has reviewed most of the published scholarly output of Professor James Hal Cone, across the five decades of his very prolific theological teaching and authorship (1968-2018). He spent most of his vocation as Professor at Union Theological Seminary, New York. The works are reviewed chronologically, in the sequence of publication. Each volume builds on the earlier ones. Thus it is possible to discern the progress in Cone's thinking, as he expressed his responses to the debate among African Americans and the impact thereof. The books are reviewed in their sequence of publication: **1.** *Black Theology and Black Power* (1969); **2.** *A Black Theology of Liberation* (1970); **3.** *The Spirituals and the Blues* (1972); **4.** *God of the Oppressed* (1975); **5.** *Black Theology: A Documentary History Vol. I- 1966-1979* (1979); **6.** *My Soul Looks Back* (1982); **7.** *For My People: Black Theology and the Black Church* (1984); **8.** *Speaking the Truth: Liberation and Black Theology* (1986); **9.** *Martin Malcolm and America* (1991); **10.** *Black Theology: A Documentary History Vol. II* (1993); **11.** *Risk of Faith: The Emergence of a Black Theology of Liberation 1968-1998* (1999). **12.** *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* (2011). The article includes this reviewer's memorable encounters with James Hal Cone, concluding the tribute with concise remarks on the legacy and challenge that Professor Cone has bequeathed for the current and future generations of Africans, locally, nationally, continentally and globally.

Introduction

This article, a Tribute to Professor James Hal Cone, is presented in a set of commentaries on his major published works. Cone studied, worked, researched and published within the context of USA. His publications had impact far beyond North America – especially among some African Christian theologians – within the Ecumenical Movement between 1973 and 1994. Cone has been one of the most articulate and most prolific among African-American Christian theologians. His mastery of the English language is exceptional, and his oral presentations are unmatched. My acquaintance with him dates from early June 1973, when I visited Union Theological Seminary, New York, to attend the first exploratory meeting between African and African American Christian theologians. James Cone was our host. In attendance together with me there were, from Africa,

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