

THE RELEVANCE OF BLACK THEOLOGY IN POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA

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Abstract

Black theology became popular in South Africa in the late 1960s and early 1970s as a result of the contradictions of White oppression that spanned over three centuries. The height of white oppression of Blacks and other races in that country was the formal legalization of apartheid in 1948. The Black theology movement played a significant role in the collapse of apartheid and the introduction of democracy in 1994. Following the demise of apartheid, scholars like Charles Villa-Vicencio, Valpy Fitzgerald, and Jesse Mugambi have argued that Black theology is no longer relevant in South Africa. They contend that it should be replaced with the theology of reconstruction. The predominant question from the foregoing is whether Black theology is still relevant in the transformation of South Africa or not. This paper proposes that Black theology is still relevant in the sense that most of the problems that stimulated its emergence —racialism, poverty, and cultural imperialism still exist in the country. More importantly, Black theology evolved as a crisis theology, which went into a state of inertia after the demise of apartheid and still possesses the potentials that are yet to be fully explored in Post-apartheid South Africa. Such untapped potentials can be important instruments for the transformation of South Africa. This paper therefore argues that Black, rather than Reconstruction theology would be a better approach to resolving the aforementioned problems. This article answers the question of the relevance of Black theology in South Africa by undertaking a critical analysis of the state of Black theology today in South Africa and adducing points for the continuous relevance of Black theology in Post-apartheid South Africa.