

## IS OUR CHURCH DOING ENOUGH TO ELIMINATE RACISM? IS THE AUSCP? ARE WE MEMBERS & FRIENDS?

In the Fall 2018 edition of *Theological Studies*, Editor Paul G. Crowley, SJ, takes note of the theology of recently deceased James Hal Cone and his 1968 essay on "Christianity and Black Power." In that essay Cone "limned a theology of structural sin that implicated the churches in the white supremacist ideology that had led to slavery and the destruction of a whole people." That ideology remains active among us. A later book of Cone's was titled *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* in which he explored "dangerous memories."

Crowley writes that "Cone argued that the church is called to live the Gospel by facing its own internal racism and its entanglements with the racism of US society." Then he cites Cone:

If the Church is to remain faithful to its Lord, it must make a decisive break with the structure of this society by launching a vehement attack on the evils of racism in all forms. It must become *prophetic*, demanding a radical change to the interlocking structures of this society."

Crowley then cites M. Shawn Copeland's 2018 address to the Black Catholic Theological Symposium in which she affirmed that "Black theology is the *prophetic theology of a crucified community in a crucifying world*," a theology that affirms black personhood ... and affirms and values *all* human persons as the expression of God's own self." Copeland referenced "liberation from racism" as a goal of Black theology. She goes on to say:

In the United States, this liberation will be expressed in authentic collaboration between blacks and whites ... [who] in response to the demands of the Gospel will work together in effective solidarity for the eradication of white racist supremacy and its effects in themselves in political and economic arrangements, in culture, and in the church.

Eliminating Racism is an AUSCP goal. How seriously are we taking our goal? How strongly are we collaborating with our Black brothers and sisters through our NBCCC connection? How prophetic are we being on this front? How persistent? How determined are we to make a decisive break with the interlocking structures of our society (and our church) which enable and sustain racism?

Are we doing enough, individually and as an Association of US Catholic Priests?

Our dangerous memory may be our commitment to being a "prophetic and pastoral voice of hope and joy in our church and world."