

We've Come A Long Way But the Journey Isn't Over – A Call for Resistance

Religion as Resistance

Isaiah 64:1-4, 8-9 ; James 4:1-10

Recap – This year's Black History Black History Month theme is Black Resistance. Last we we started with Reimagining as Resistance – (1) Rejection of the idea that this is the best we can do. (2) Invitation to dream and cultivate alternative narratives and visions of what could be (3) Mandate to experiment and live those possibilities into existence in the here and now! This we we take up a focus on Religion as Resistance

Exegesis

- Today is Founder's Day in the AME Church (2nd Sunday in February). Birthday of Richard Allen on Feb 14th, birthday of Jarena Lee on Feb 11th, Black History Month.
- New Roots is a untraditional church but we are within the legacy of the AME Church

What is Resistance Religion?

1. A Radical Gospel about God's Love – Richard Allen & Absalom Jones

They said God loved Black people and desired their freedom and flourishing. In a time where the church was complicit with slavery, this was heretical.

2. A Radical Gospel about God's Gifting – Jarena Lee – 1817 –

Jarena Lee said – God doesn't just love me but has called me. She seized a moment to speak prophetically, pushing back on the patriarchy that limited who God could call.

3. A Radical Gospel about God's Liberation – Undergr. railroad; Rosa Parks; James Cone.

They were not about waiting for justice in heaven but naming that God wanted justice in the Earth. They participated in concrete actions for justice AND articulated a Black Liberation Theology (Cone) that lifted their resistance up as holy

This is the legacy of the AME Church and it is part of who New Roots is. We can stand proudly in that legacy and continue to push so that for everyone to be fully acknowledged and accepted. In particular we continue to pray and work against the spirits of patriarchy and heterosexism.

Questions for reflection

1. Is it an act of resistance to declare God's love for you? If so, how can you proclaim that good news? If not, how can you embody God's love to someone who does not yet believe it? How can you actively resist theologies and institutions that promote the notion that God doesn't really love some folk?
2. Is it an act of resistance to walk in God's gifting on your life? How can you publicly acknowledge that gift and continue to cultivate your gift? How can you walk alongside someone who needs solidarity in the declaration and cultivation of their gift?
3. Where are you called to partner with God in pursuit of liberation – in your own life, family, community and beyond? What work of liberation do you feel called to in this moment? What liberatory work are we called to at New Roots either from a justice (setting it right within the world as it is) or jubilee (creating a new Spirit-led system) perspective?