The Black Church, Prophetic Ministry & Social Justice:
From Slavery...to Freedom...to Justice

Presented by Rev. Dr. Leslie Copeland-Tune
Louisiana Interchurch Conference
September 23-24, 2019
Overview

- Introduction
- From Slavery to Freedom: Who/What is the Black Church?
- What is Prophetic Ministry?
- What is Social Justice?
- Why does it matter?
- Questions?
Introduction

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=veiJLhXdwn8
Who/What is the Black Church?

• Typically, the Black Church refers to historically African American/Diasporan congregations:
  • African Methodist Episcopal Church
  • African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church
  • Christian (formerly Colored) Methodist Episcopal Church
  • National Baptist Convention USA, Inc.
  • Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc.
  • National Baptist Convention in America
  • National Missionary Baptist Convention of America
  • Church of God in Christ
  • Full Gospel Fellowship
  • Global United Fellowship
  • Many independent and non-connectional churches
The Black Church

- Born out of slavery and struggle for freedom
- Exodus 2:23-25
- Clips from “Birth of a Nation”:
  - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DzK Mn1f2LiY
  - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gm15udgj3zs
The Black Church

• A difficult history: “The black church was born fighting for freedom.”
  • *The Divided Mind of the Black Church*, Rev. Dr. Raphael G. Warnock

• Embraced Christianity in spite of the ways it was used to keep African people enslaved and to have a slave mindset
  • Exodus 2:23-25

• Clip from “Amistad”:
  • [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XLhFeELnGZE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XLhFeELnGZE)
Foundations for Prophetic Ministry

- Deuteronomy 10
- Proverbs 31
- Isaiah 61
- Luke 4
- Theological imperative to stand up and speak out against injustice and on behalf of those who cannot speak for themselves
QUESTIONS?
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Onward to Justice

• Ella’s Song

• https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KQm6MMVj7SA
Overview

- Opening Prayer
- What is Social Justice?
- Why does it matter?
- Table Talk/Conversation
- Questions?
The Words of Jesus

• “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because He has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”
~Luke 4:18-19
Social Justice Imperative

- Isaiah 10
- Matthew 6
- Matthew 25
- James 2
- **Matthew 23**
Social Justice vs. Individual Salvation

• Not one or the other
• Represents a Conflict in Christendom
• John 17: So that we may be one
• Statement on Social Justice or the Problem of the Pharisees
The Black Church & Social Justice

• Civil Rights Movement
• Black Power
• Black Lives Matter
• #TakeAKnee
Social Justice Issues

• Criminal Justice reform
• Environmental racism – Flint, Mi., Galesburg & Cicero, Ill.
• Police brutality
• Criminalization of everyday activities
• Immigration
• Racial hatred, White Supremacy, White privilege
Table Talk

- What is at risk in talking about/advocating for social justice?
- What role does the church/Christians have?
- How do we have the difficult discussion amongst Christians about social justice, racism and white supremacy?
Onward to Justice

• Justice vs. Benevolence
• Speak up
• Stand up/Stand with
• Provide care
• Prophetic witness
• Power speaking truth
QUESTIONS/COMMENTS?