The Art of Quilting and Womanist Thought

A Celebration of Women

There are Prophets Among Us

“Second Wave” Feminism at 50

The Original Girl on Fire

A LOVE SUPREME

HARRIET TUBMAN
The womanist theological enterprise is a twenty-eight-year collaborative discourse initiated by Black female theologians, ethicists, biblical scholars, historians, pastoral caregivers, religious leaders, and laity who take seriously the lived experiences of Black women in theory and praxis. The primary aim of womanist work is to transition Black women's experience from the margins to the center by confronting the quadruple oppression facing Black women and other groups at the intersections of race, gender, sexuality, and class while calling for critical theological re-formation and careful ethical practice that resists all forms of oppression in the classroom, church, and community. Drawing from the Black idiomatic expression, "you actin' womanish" (meaning courageous or willful), womanism is an audacious endeavor that engages Black women at its radically subjective center and involves all persons seeking justice.

The question of the moment is whether the womanist prophetic voice remains relevant for theological education today. As an emerging scholar, I enter womanist dialogue as a daughter who continues to be intellectually nurtured and shaped by womanist scholarly work. I contend that womanism jeopardizes its prophetic edge when it fails to translate its wisdom to Black church women desiring to subvert multi-layered oppression in their ecclesial communities and the world at large. Womanist thought must uphold its multi-dialogical, liturgical, and didactic intentions by fostering necessary exchange between the academy, church, and broader society. Budding womanist scholars, including myself, are beckoned by our foremothers to not simply rely on the womanist legacy, but to advance the prophetic agenda in word and deed bodaciously. The unlikely presence of six Black female women studying at the highest academic level of this institution at one time challenges Chicago Theological Seminary to continue evaluating its institutional commitments with respect to Black women and other marginalized groups. Those of us who utilize a womanist paradigm in our doctoral projects here at Chicago Theological Seminary bear the blessing of striving toward a womanist prophetic vision of revolutionary socio-religious transformation.

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