

EDITORIAL

Black Theology is and has always been a dialogical theology. It emerged when black christians and theologians plucked up courage, broke their long theological silence and started to reflect enthusiastically and vocally on their communal efforts of breaking the stranglehold of the history of national humiliation in the light of scripture. Only when they asked their own burning theological questions from within the struggle to throw off their burden and personally searched the scriptures again and again for answers that could dry their tears and produce sweat instead, did Black Theology emerge. It is, in that sense and for that reason, a dialogical theology.

This theology evolved, grew and continued to change in response to various challenges and in different circumstances. It evolved and changed as black theologians here and in the diaspora engaged in a critical exchange of ideas among themselves on the correctness of formulations and urgency of questions. It continued to develop as they considered whether they had searched the scriptures deeply enough and listened obediently, humbly and attentively enough to the God of the oppressed.

This theology was also sharpened as a polemical theology and forced to mature quickly by constructive critique that came from non-black theologians who wished to express their theological solidarity that way.

All these dimensions of a dialogue which is still going on appear in the present set of articles. These articles, all but one, are the reworked papers which were read at a Black Theology consultation between a team of black South African theologians and pastors on the one side and black American theologians and pastors on the other. We reported briefly in our last issue on that consultation which was held at Union Theological Seminary, New York in November 1986. We are now, almost a year after it took place, in a position to offer you the South African side of the presentations. Consider this issue as an invitation to join in this dialogue.