

Freedom-Cry

Exodus 3:7-10

“The LORD said, ‘I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey...the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.’” (New International Version)

Many oppressed people groups have found a spiritual connection to the great Exodus event of the Hebrew Bible. Mercy Amba Oduyoye is the director of the Institute of African Women in Religion and Culture at Trinity Theological Seminary in Ghana. She has written 4 books and over 80 articles focusing on Christian theology from a feminist and African perspective. One of her central subjects is how African religion and culture influences the experiences of African women. In particular, she addresses the effects of economic oppression on African women.

“I cannot help but hear the promise and the call to the adventure of freedom in the exodus story. In every situation of alienation some escape the internalization syndrome. They recognize that a situation that prevents one from full human responsibility cannot be natural. This realization informs rebellion against the so-called normal, traditional, natural way. It stimulates the crying and the groaning. The individual Hebrew was liberated in order to get on the road to fulfillment. But the exodus is not so much personal as it is political. Pharaoh made a sociopolitical decision. His consideration had to do with cheap labor and state security; he neglected the fact that the personal growth and the well-being of two ethnic groups (Egyptian natives and Habiru immigrants) would both be affected by his decision. When God saves, God saves totally. God purges the sociopolitical chaos in order to provide an atmosphere within which the fullness of humanity can flower.

...God’s power in the exodus was creative: the power to save, to create space in which people could grow. But power can be put to negative use—in the hands of Pharaoh it was. That kind of power is to be repudiated and broken.”

Mercy Amba Oduyoye, *Hearing and Knowing*

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Point for Prayer:

Who in our communities do not have the atmosphere within which the fullness of humanity can flower? From global extreme poverty to sex trafficking in our cities, how can we participate with God’s saving exodus on behalf of those whom our world has kept down?