

EMPIRE TALK AND LIVING THE PROPHETIC LIFE

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I've been thinking about the moral nature of empire lately.

I begin in the 1800s.

An order by the commander of the military division of Mississippi

16 January 1865

Special Field Orders, No. 15

I. The islands from Charleston, south, the abandoned rice fields along the rivers for thirty miles back from the sea, and the country bordering the St. Johns river, Florida, are reserved and set apart for the settlement of the negroes now made free by the acts of war and the proclamation of the President of the United States.

II. Whenever three respectable negroes, heads of families, shall desire to settle on land, and shall have selected for that purpose an island or a locality clearly defined, within the limits above designated, the Inspector of Settlements and Plantations will himself, or by such subordinate officer as he may appoint, give them a license to settle such island or district, and afford them such assistance as he can to enable them to establish a peaceable agricultural settlement. The three parties named will subdivide the land, under the supervision of the Inspector, among themselves and such others as may choose to settle near them, so that each family shall have a plot of not more than (40) forty acres of tillable ground, and when it borders on some water channel, with not more than 800 feet water front, in the possession of which land the military authorities will afford them protection, until such time as they can protect themselves, or until Congress shall regulate their title. The Quartermaster may, on the requisition of the Inspector of Settlements and Plantations, place at the disposal of the Inspector, one or more of the captured steamers, to ply between the settlements and one or more of the commercial points heretofore named in orders, to afford the settlers the opportunity to supply their necessary wants, and to sell the products of their land and labor.

I begin with part of the actual text of the special field orders because I find many things about it noteworthy first, the notion of “and a mule” is no where to be found. Not in

sections 1 and 3 which I read. Not in sections 2, 4, 5, or 6 which are more concerned about loyalty to the union and military service and defense.

Second, this was a decidedly un-universal field order. The boundaries are clear:

Islands from Charleston, south, the abandoned rice fields along the rivers for thirty miles back from the sea, and the country bordering the St. Johns river, Florida

In other words, the sea islands on the coast of South Carolina and Georgia:

these included Edisto, Hilton Head, Port Royal, St. Helena and many other smaller islands that had been under union control since 1861

I must admit being surprised by the limits of the field order. All my life I have heard and spoken versions of “where is my 40 acres and a mule?”

I thought, as I suspect many of us did or have, that this was 40 acres anywhere we could find it in the United States. I had no idea that Beulah land was such a small area of possibilities given the vastness of this country geographically and, so, I sat with this--for weeks. Not because I could not believe it but because this new piece of knowledge caused me to re-think *one* context for empire from the perspective of faith and life in the United States.

Context: April 1861:

The civil war begins with the confederate attack on Fort Sumter, South Carolina. President Lincoln issues the proclamation for troops to put down the rebellion.

Context: May 1862:

General David Hunter declares free all slaves in South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. President Lincoln issues a proclamation nullifying General Hunter’s emancipation edict and urges Kentucky, Missouri, Maryland, and Delaware to embrace gradual, compensated emancipation.

Context: January 1863:

Lincoln issues the emancipation proclamation that declares free all slaves in the confederate states except Tennessee, southern Louisiana, and parts of Virginia.

Context: April 1864:

The senate approves a constitutional amendment to abolish slavery

June 1864: The house of representatives fails to approve the constitutional amendment congress makes the pay of black soldiers equal to that of white soldiers (from \$10/month to \$13/month) congress increases the pay of all privates to \$16/month with corresponding increases for higher ranks

November 1864: Lincoln is re-elected

Context: January 1865: Sherman issues field order 15. The house of representatives approves the constitutional amendment to abolish slavery and sends it to the states for ratification.

April 1865: The army of Confederate General Robert E. Lee surrenders at Appomattox court house, Virginia. Lincoln is assassinated and Vice President Andrew Johnson succeeds to the presidency.

December 1865: The 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution is ratified that abolishes slavery throughout the United States - "except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted".

These are only parts of the whole context, to be sure, but what they signal for me is that this whole conversation about empire for colored folks in the United States across the spectrum (yes, this includes white folks as well) signals that the notion of empire stands on some terribly troubling ground. . . . actually shifting sand and that neglecting to factor this into our present day discussions on reparations, domestic policies, public moralities, and all those issues that shape us as we shape them may doom us to endless debate -- which is another word for failure: we simply go on talking without resolving anything.

This causes me to seek a somewhat different, though, I believe, tangential and necessary course to even begin to think about empire.

I want to explore empire because I find it to be ranging about as an abysmal sylph, a chuckling phantom, a moaning ghost inhabiting the air around us but largely unseen or perhaps it's more accurate to say—unacknowledged. For instance, it is clear to me that although many of our conversations about reparations today do not include financial solutions as the sole answers. This does not remove us, as people drawing our breath in the largest imperial power in the world, from what holds this country in its place on the global scale.

Versions of "can't we all just get along and move on" only speak to the ways in which we are suspect historians in this country. We only teach and are taught, in most cases, what is pleasing to the myth of the city on the hill. No attention given, generally, to who and what may be at the foot of that hill or clinging to its side or at what cost do we keep our houses on top of the mountain. If we do not factor empire into our faith talk as we seek to live the prophetic life most days any notions of fairness or justice or reconciliation or any of their kin will stumble and fall before the massive juggernaut of turbo-capitalism twined with a studied, oblivious amnesia.

As a Christian social ethicist who is also a womanist ethicist, I am particularly drawn to this conversation by a fact seldom noted. Many of us know that General Sherman and Secretary of War Major-General Stanton met with 20 black leaders just 3 days before

issuing the field order, but what is often lost is that these 20 black leaders were black male ministers and church officers: their ages ranged from 26 to 72, some were free-born, some had been set free by their masters and mistresses, some had bought their own freedom, some had been freed by the union army. But, even here, the mutterings of empire begin to be heard for the minutes of meeting contain some interesting details for those who were pastors: the size of the congregation, the race of the trustees, the value of the property, and whether or not the congregation owned the property. For those who had bought their freedom, the amount they paid for themselves was included.

This is a rich proving ground for this ethicist. For after the first question to the men that asked if they understood Lincoln's 1863 proclamation to the rebellious states, the next question asks if they understood what slavery and freedom meant in the proclamation.

Their representative was clear:

“Slavery is, receiving by *irresistible power* the work of another man, and not by his *consent*. The freedom, as I understand it, promised by the proclamation, is taking us from under the yoke of bondage, and placing us where we could reap the fruit of our own labor, take care of ourselves and assist the Government in maintaining our freedom.”

The next question asks if they think they can take care of themselves and how they believe they can best assist the government in maintaining their freedom.

Again, their representative was clear

“The way we can best take care of ourselves is to have land, and turn it and till it by our own labor--that is, by the labor of the women and children and old men; and we can soon maintain ourselves and have something to spare. And to assist the Government, the young men should enlist in the service of the Government, and serve in such manner as they may be wanted. (The Rebels told us that they piled them up and made batteries of them, and sold them to Cuba; but we don't believe that.) We want to be placed on land until we are able to buy it and make it our own.”

The fourth question asked them to “state in what manner you would rather live--whether scattered among the whites or in colonies by yourselves.”

Answer: “I would prefer to live by ourselves, for there is a prejudice against us in the South that will take years to get over; but I do not know that I can answer for my brethren.”

In a notation, it states that “Mr. Lynch says he thinks they should not be separated, but live together. All the other persons present, being questioned one by one, answer that they agree with Brother Frazier.”

Brother Frazier was their chosen representative

Fifth question: “Do you think that there is intelligence enough among the slaves of the South to maintain themselves under the Government of the United States and the equal protection of its laws, and maintain good and peaceable relations among yourselves and with your neighbors?”

Answer: “I think there is sufficient intelligence among us to do so.”

No one of their number disagreed with this assessment.

138 years later black folks are still answering these kinds of questions about who we are, what we think, and are we able.

It would be a flawed strategy to think about reparations or empire without acknowledging that some part of their roots are lodged in this field order which was issued not out of a sense of humanitarianism, strong support for the newly freed, or a universal notion of place and property.

Sherman was trying to relieve his army of the thousands of freed men and women who had been following it since his invasion of Georgia. As he marched, slaves had abandoned the plantations to follow the army and feeding and clothing these folks had become a strain.

What gets lost, often, is Sherman’s later claim that his order was a temporary solution and not one designed to grant permanent possession of the land to black folks

I rehearse this history in cursory form to highlight the fact that 40 acres and a mule has always been on tenuous ground if not outright contested ground. Sherman didn’t really mean it. Congress never fully supported it and President Johnson began dismantling it just 1 year later. And it is seldom mentioned that President Lincoln wanted to establish black colonies in Central America or the Caribbean as a necessary part of emancipationⁱ

As I read this part of the history, this has never been a particularly moral argument. However, it has been, most decidedly, an economic one. We should always be wary of “gifts” passed our way that have serious economic ramifications that are not discussed, acknowledged, or recognized at the time of the gift-giving. They have a way of being withdrawn, dismantled, and disavowed and those who were the supposed beneficiaries of the “gift” are pathologized and subjected to all manner of moral condemnation and devaluation.

Before I go on, let me clarify any confusion I might be sparking just about now. I do not consider reparations a gift or to be about gift-giving for I take seriously the words of warning recorded in Marie-Sophie’s notebook from her father:

In fact, Sophie my Marie, I who received it know that
Freedom is not given, must not be given. Liberty awarded
does not liberate your soul...ⁱⁱ

I.

As this is part of what we call a narrative, let me offer a counternarrative that I hope will haunt us this night. These lines are from the notebook kept by Marie-Sophie Laborieux. She is the protagonist in the Martiniquan writer, Patrick Chamoiseau's novel *Texaco*. Chamoiseau's novel, *Texaco*, chronicles the path to freedom of Martinique from colonial rule through the eyes of Marie-Sophie and her ancestors—slaves and former slaves.

Marie-Sophie records the words of her father:

One day, probably in the season of his coming death, he whispered: Sophie, bamboo flower, crutch of my old age, raindrop on my thirsty tongue. Oh Marie, my sweet madou syrup, *one must not answer all questions.*ⁱⁱⁱ

then later,

In what I tell you, there's the almost-true, the sometimes-true, and the half-true. That's what telling a life is like, braiding—all of that like one plaits the white Indies currant make a hut. And the true--true comes out of that braid. And Sophie, you can't be scared of lying if you want to know everything...^{iv}

and again,

But legends are memories greater than memories.^v

and then in response to this,

So Idomenee would say: But what is memory?

It's the glue, it's the spirit, it's the sap and it stays.

Without memories, no City, no Quarters, no Big Hutch.

How many memories? she would ask.

All the memories, he would answer. Even those the wind and the silences carry at night. You have to talk, tell, tell the stories, live the legends. That's why.^{vi}

Chamoiseau tantalizes with the notion of legend—memories greater than memories. Memories, for Chamoiseau are the glue, the spirit, the sap—and it stays. Memory has not faded for Chamoiseau—it cannot. In memory, we have the true-true through the braided plaits of the almost-true, the sometimes-true, and the half-true.

Chamoiseau captures in novel form an important subtext in my remarks. That is, we have existed on the almost-true, sometimes-true, and half-true without looking for the true-true.

the true-true

All the memories are more than those remembered selectively or imposed as history, so Chamoiseau is an island guide for understanding how “40 acres and a mule” functions as legend, a legend that is alive and well as we talk about and think about empire.

As a memory greater than memory, “40 acres and a mule” functions as a kind of mediating ethic in understanding empire in American face

This mediating ethic is not one to seek easy reconciliation but, as womanist ethicist Marcia Y. Riggs suggests, it is an ethic which is a “process of acknowledging seemingly diametrically opposing positions and creating a response that interposes and communicates between opposing sides. It is living with tension rather than aiming at an end result of integration, compromise, or reconciliation. These may be outcomes, but mediating as process occurs whether or not mediation as an end does.”^{vii}

Mediating as process whether rather than mediation as end, the legend of “40 acres and a mule” and the reality of empire are two diametrically opposed sides of our socio-cultural and economic worlds - globally and domestically. And I suggest that the only way we can faithfully look at who we are as a nation and the roles we should and must play as people of faith who must live our lives not always comforted by the holy but haunted by God’s call to us to live a prophetic life and not just talk about it or wish for it or think about it means that we remain in the tension. In the process of uncovering and working through how we can build faith-filled responses to meet the needs of those who may be the least of these or folks just like many of us— we find we are blessed with resources and abilities and a divine mandate to use them, with a spirituality that will not let go of that relentless justice that can only come from a rock-steady God.

II.

But I want to be incandescently clear that I believe that a major part of the context of a faith community-based look at empire partially sparked by “40 acres and a mule” is that it is taking place in a time in which imperialism is being dwarfed by empire.

Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri argue that unlike imperialism, empire with multinationals functioning as its chattering, chuckling cheerleaders has no territorial center of power and it does not rely on fixed geographic, cultural, religious, or social boundaries or barriers as it incorporates the entire global realm in its ever-expanding frontiers.^{viii}

For them, nation-states, even the US, have less and less power to regulate economic and cultural exchanges around the flow of money, technology, people, and goods under empire, but they say that the construction of empire is still in process.

Now, although I find their perspective to be a breath of fresh air, I am left, in the end, with a sense of uneasiness about the myriad loose ends they leave because in

those loose ends, I find the lives of people struggling to survive if not thrive in a troublesome economy where more and more state, county, and local governments face the 3 furies of budget shortfalls, the need to provide services, and shrinking resources. These folk are not abstract theoretical actors in an academic public policy debate. They have flesh and blood—they are real and it is in their lives where our ministries live and grow. This is where we answer God's call to faithfulness.

So I find that there remains much to be said about what is going on within the united states and what concerns me is the role of empire in this.

Now from the beginning of this country as a republic the myth of universal uninhibited freedom has always had its evil twins--studied sadistic subordination and annihilation. Our history is one that cast Native Americans outside of the constitution and included blacks in the constitution--but not as 5/5ths of being human. This has, to my mind, always been a great problematic in our self-understanding as a nation. We have not been the land of unfettered liberty, equal access, and open markets for all peoples and on a truly equal playing field. We have, domestically and globally, been a nation that has practiced—far too many times--imperialistic domestic and global outrages that carry kinder and gentler names such as the

- personal responsibility and work opportunity act of 1996
- usa patriot act 2001
- economic growth and tax relief reconciliation act of 2001
- free trade area of the americas

Hardt and Negri rightly point out that our reliance on foreign savings has pushed the value of the dollar up. This makes goods produced in the united states less competitive in world markets and it contributes to unemployment and low sales in those parts of our economy that are vulnerable to international competition.

Yes, things have changed. We no longer produce the cheapest, best, and most profitable goods. We no longer have a robust onward and upward economy. In fact we are in a recession sparked by over investment and an ill-conceived tax cut that has spawned a \$165 billion deficit for fiscal year 2002 and the strong likelihood that we will have \$100 billion deficits each year for the rest of this decade. We do not have low rates of unemployment and the federal solutions thus far continue to be tax breaks for the wealthy and upper middle class. This sadistic smiley face economic policy unfolds in the face of rising unemployment and plunging stocks. As our grief and anger are molded into unrighteous vengeance and sprained patriotism.

No, it is no longer the late 1990s where the united states was among the best and brightest economic performers in a world economy plagued by high unemployment in Europe and financial disaster in Asia.

As helpful as Hardt and Negri are in stirring the pot they do not convince me that their version of Brunswick stew is a good description of the contemporary world

system.

I cannot reconcile their world with the one I live in. In my world, and I suspect in your world as well, our country possesses an incredible concentration of financial, diplomatic and military power. And if we have been blessed with these gifts we must be wise and genuinely compassionate when we flex our muscle because what can appear and feel like a ripple on a pond to us, can be a tidal wave to others

III.

I suspect that many of you have seen or used the piece “something to think about!” It comes in a variety of formats, but each format asks us to consider the diversity already found in our world. The exercise is simple--shrink the earth’s population to 100 people with all the existing human ratios remaining the same. It always strikes me that this is not what we *might* look like or *could* look like but that there would be:

- 57 Asians
- 21 Europeans
- 14 from North and South America
- 8 Africans
- 52 would be female
- 48 would be male
- 70 would be darker skinned people, 30 white people
- 70 would be from a religious tradition other than christianity
- 30 would be Christian
- 89 would be heterosexual
- 11 would be homosexual
- 59% of the entire world's wealth would belong to only 6 people and all 6 would be citizens of the United States
- 80 would live in substandard housing
- 70 would be unable to read
- 50 would suffer from malnutrition
- 1 would be near death
- 1 would be near birth
- Only 1 would have a college education
- 99 of them will not see this message, because only 1 would have a computer

and then it ends: When one considers our world from such a compressed perspective, the need for both acceptance and understanding becomes glaringly apparent

One version goes on:

If you woke up this morning with more health than illness...you are more blessed than the million who will not survive this week. If you have never experienced the danger of battle, the loneliness of imprisonment, the agony of torture, or the pangs of starvation ...you are ahead of 500 million people in the world. If you can attend a church meeting without fear of harassment, arrest, torture, or death...you are

more blessed than three billion people in the world. If you have food in the refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof overhead and a place to sleep...you are richer than 75% of this world. If you have money in the bank, in your wallet, and spare change in a dish someplace ... you are among the top 8% of the world's wealthy. If your parents are still alive and still married ... you are very rare, even in the United States and Canada. If you can read this message, you are more blessed than over two billion people in the world that cannot read at all.

I use these global markers because I find that we often get caught in our domestic or national or state or local lives with myopic hearts and miserly minds that keep us from seeing the richness of who we are as people of faith, as members of a large country that is a world power well on its way to being an empire.

We are tempted to stop far too short of exploring who we really are and how we prepare for and do ministry of head and heart and body in light of this and this has always been an unwise tack to take. But it turns deadly in the kind of climate we have today, which tempts us to gaze closer and closer at our navels rather than insist that we ask, as people of faith, tough questions about where we are headed as nations, as religious bodies, as local and global citizens, as seekers of the spirit, as doers of the word. We are tempted to do a religious version of turning down the main power generator to conserve energy and can engage in some of the most internecine and inane turf battles while forgetting the flood, the locusts, the 500 prophets of Baal, the prophets, the disciples, the rainbow. And we, my brothers and sisters, have the not so enviable task of reminding folks of what we are called to do as people of faith, as leaders—lay, ordained, and in between—in a wide variety of ministry settings, to religious bodies that are, far too often, either captive to or taking captives in a status quo that does not call out the best in us.

But this is only one side of the picture because I am also amazed at the incredible ways in which many churches roll up their sleeves see the resources that they have as gifts, not limitations, and proceed to do faith-filled ministry that does make a difference in not only the lives it touches but in the lives of those who are doing the touching. These are ministries that are alive with the spirit that find ways to keep the door open to god's ongoing revelation. These churches—your churches—large and small and in between, combine spirituality and justice as imperatives for faithful, prophetic living. You do the mundane things like allow homeless folk to not only sleep on their steps, but invite them in to keep warm and perhaps even fed not only at the prescribed times, if they have a meals or shelter program. You take large endowments and use more than the prescribed 4.5% draw down rate on the interest earned and expand their social ministries, not simply by adding new staff but by getting members of the church involved in the communities in which they worship and perhaps even beyond them. Or, even more get involved with the community and both work together to determine how the church can live out its witness in that place. You take in all manner of folk we send to you from our seminaries and you help us grow them into leaders or help them discover that their call may be something else. And you challenge and love and encourage while expecting the best. Yet we cannot escape the fact that we are engaged in ministries at a time of incredible promise and blinding danger.

For all the promises we find in our ministries as we watch lives grow in grace and witness, we still live in the only nation that has 5 global military commands. We police the world. We maintain more than a million men and women in our armed forces on 4 continents (keep in mind there are only seven continents). We have carrier battle groups on watch in every ocean and, the analysis of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri notwithstanding, we drive the wheels of global trade and commerce and we have packaged our dreams and desires as commodities that are exported to other nations and peoples—whether like it, want it, need it, or can benefit from it.

It is troubling that any victory in Iraq won't end the world's distrust of the United States because the Bush administration has repeatedly abrogated international agreements in just two years, this administration told Europe it had no interest in dealing with global warming, told Russia to that it had no interest in maintaining our mutual agreements on missile defense, told developing countries that it was not interested in dealing with onerous trade policies regarding lifesaving pharmaceuticals, told Mexico it would not honor the immigration agreements it has forged with it, mortally insulted the Turks, and pulled out of the International Criminal Court.

We act like an empire when Under Secretary of State John Bolton tells Israeli officials that after defeating Iraq, the U.S. would deal with Iran, Syria, and North Korea.^{ix}

The same administration that stole the presidential election through lies, friends in high places, and national malaise is the same administration that has consistently lied to us about the need to go to war and argued its get tough on Iraq case (one I might add that I agree needed to be done because Hussein consistently and persistently showed himself to be a man willing to get what he wants at all costs—human and other wise.) But it argued its case by making assertions about a weapons of mass destruction and Iraqi links to Al Qaeda—both so far as we can tell, thus far, are based on more lies.

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as a nation, we have made it political, social, economic, and religious policy to dwell in the land of false consciousness^x

we consistently and persistently refuse to come to terms with the “reality of the obvious”^{xi}

as we live off the bitter fruits of a fantastic hegemonic imagination which caricatures and pillages peoples, all peoples, lives--our thoughts, our culture, our religion, our is-ness

we have logo-ized versions of ourselves

Native Americans are reduced to spiritual

Blacks are reduced to hip-hop
Asians are reduced to intellect
Latinos/as are reduced to salsa
and Whites . . .well Whites have no culture, no is-ness
they are simply—White

there is definitely something wrong with this equation

we are living in a time where saber rattling gains votes and silences opposition
now one of things that i was taught growing up (in durham, nc)

that is precious, if not unique to us as a nation
is that we value the right to have an opinion and to speak it out loud
this is the beauty of free speech

and it is a hallmark of a democracy

if we, as people of faith, sanction the silencing of thoughtful, faithful dissent

we forget the ebb and flow of history
we have done an injustice to the declaration of independence and the constitution
and it will eventually destroy us as a nation and as people of faith

we have forgotten our baptism which, in part, calls us to live our faith

as witnesses to and in the world around us

this kind of forgottenness pulls us away from our commitment to a living gospel

for a world in deep need

IV.

so what of empire at this point

this kind of forgottenness lets empire off the hook

in fact, it feeds into empire and our attempts and successes at shaping the world in our image

and attempts to talk about reparations

domestically or globally

falter because we have failed to recognize that empire is a concept and a reality

and it is us

it that reveals and explains the our economic interests and links them collectively to a position of class, gender, military, and racial dominance

reparations talk be it here in the u.s. or in south Africa, or great Britain, to my mind, is not ultimately about black folks

its about power and privilege sashaying around with forgottenness

that translates directly into forms of social organization that shape daily life

residential, social, and educational segregation have moved from de jure (by law) to de facto (existing) segregation

housing patterns, home loan lending policies, educational systems, affordability and accessibility to health care, policing policies, availability and accessibility to public transportation and decisions about how it will be plotted out on city grids

all point to the myriad ways in which we continue to be a compilation of segregated societies in the United States

in this country

i believe reparations are about the ability or inability of the wealthy and their kin

to recognize they have attained their power and privilege on the backs of

the poor

the darker skinned

the feminine

and it just might be the time to have an honest conversation about this

deal with the denial and guilt it is sure to spark
and then talk about just what reparations might mean in empire

yep, it's a faith thing

sadly, if not strategically, stanton and sherman's fifth question have never fully left the lips of many in this country

“Do you think that there is intelligence enough among the slaves of the South to maintain themselves under the Government of the United States and the equal protection of its laws, and maintain good and peaceable relations among yourselves and with your neighbors?”

and i have just enough of

aunt jemima
topsy
jezebel
sapphire

not to mention

miss nora
and momma mary

in me

that my answer has not changed and will not change

not in the context of empire

not in the context of imperialism

not in the context of the fantastic hegemonic imagination

not in the context of forgottenness

for there is sufficient intelligence among us to do so

but the problem is not us

i worry more about the intelligence, intentions, and will of my neighbors

it remains for us

as people of faith

haunted by the holy of holy

to work through whether we are working with and living through

the almost-true
the sometimes-true
the half-true

or, will we live into an ever-unfolding prophetic faith

and braid all these into the plait of the true-true

which is, i believe, another way to talk about living a deep and abiding faith

in a God who got up one Sunday morning

and redeems us all

morning by morning and day by day^{xii}

thank you

ENDNOTES

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- i George Frederickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817-1914* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1971), 149.
- ii Patrick Chamoiseau, *Texaco*, trans. Rose-Myriam Réjouis and Val Vinokurov (New York: Vintage International, 1997), 83.
- iii Chamoiseau, 53.
- iv Chamoiseau, 122.
- v Chamoiseau, 176.
- vi Chamoiseau, 178.
- vii Marcia Y. Riggs, *Awake, Arise and Act: A Womanist Call for Black Liberation* (Pilgrim Press, 1993), 77.
- viii Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), xii.
- ix Paul Krugman, "Things to Come," *nytimes.com*, 18 March 2003.
- x Charles H. Long, *Significations: Signs, Symbols, and Images in the Interpretation of Religion* (Aurora, CO: The Davies Group, Publishers, 1995; Fortress Press, 1986), 149.
- xi *Ibid.*
- xii I am indebted to ethicist Katie Geneva Cannon for reminding me of the power of this phrase in keeping faith alive and vital.