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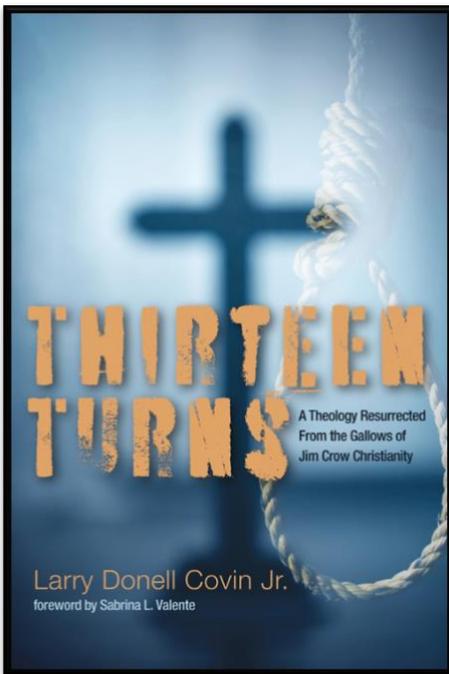
Contact Information:

Dr. Larry Donell Covin Jr.
larry.covin@alum.ptsem.edu
443-621-0820
www.drllarrycovin.org

*Thirteen Turns: A Theology Resurrected From the Gallows of Jim Crow
Christianity*

by Dr. Larry Donell Covin Jr.
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New Title from Dr. Larry Donell Covin Jr.
***Thirteen Turns: A Theology Resurrected From the Gallows of Jim Crow
Christianity***



It is remarkable that African Americans, the descendants of slaves, embrace Christianity at all. The imagination that is necessary to parse biblical text and find within it a theology that speaks to their context is a testimony to their will to survive in a hostile land. Black religion embraces the cross and the narrative of Jesus as savior, both theologically and culturally. But this does not suggest that African Americans have not historically, and do not now, struggle with the reconciliation of the cross, black life, suffering. African Americans are well aware of the shared relationship of Christianity with the white oppressors of history. The religion that helped African Americans to survive is the religion that was instrumental in their near genocide.

Dr. Larry Donell Covin Jr. is the Systematic Theologian-Religion Scholar at Trinity UCC Church in York, Pennsylvania. He earned a BS in criminal justice from Albany State University, an MDiv from the Interdenominational Theological Center, a DMin from Lancaster Theological Seminary, and a Postdoctoral-ThM in theology and ethics from Princeton Theological Seminary. For over twenty years he taught at Morgan State University, University of Baltimore, Lutheran Theological Seminary, Lancaster Theological Seminary, and the Schaefer Center for Public Policy.



1. Dr. Covin, how did *Thirteen Turns* come into being?

Thank you for asking that question. *Thirteen Turns* was written over two years as a Postdoctoral research project at Princeton Theological Seminary.

2. What is the meaning of the title *Thirteen Turns*?

Actually, the full title is—*Thirteen Turns: A Theology Resurrected From The Gallows of Jim Crow Christianity*. *Thirteen Turns* is symbolic, in that it takes thirteen coils to construct a hangman's noose.

3. How does that come into play relative to your book?

Unfortunately, the hangman's noose was the ever present symbol of terror and death used for lynching in the Jim Crow period of America. Sadder still, is that historically the Christian Church in America used its platform, rhetoric, theology and cultural influence to validate slavery, lynching and Jim Crow segregation, both tacitly and overtly.

4. What are some of the issues you tackle in *Thirteen Turns*?

Some of the issues we address are our contemporary societal challenges today. We do this by using a methodology of historical Protestant Theologians and reviving their voices. For example, how does Dietrich Bonhoeffer speak to our public ethical and moral crisis of today? What can we learn from Reinhold Niebuhr concerning the immorality of our inhumane treatment of refugees at our borders? What insights are gained from Dr. Martin Luther King relative to income and wealth disparity? How would he speak to the untenable gap between the rich and the poor?

5. Who is *Thirteen Turns* written for?

It is a book concerned with Public Theology, Social Justice, and Liberation Theology. But it is very useful for its sociological value, and will inform those who are students of race relations and justice advocates as well. As such, it is a book for racial reconciliation advocates, college and university students, seminarians, the local church, and anyone seeking to better understand the intersection of theology, race and justice in America.

6. Dr. Covin, is it more important that white people read this book?

I would simply say that the book speaks to and holds in conversation very sensitive race and cultural topics. That being said, it is important that people across the color and cultural spectrum of society, familiarize themselves with the tenets and principles of *Thirteen Turns*. The hope then is for an informed conversation grounded in understanding and respect.

An Excerpt from *Thirteen Turns: A Theology Resurrected From the Gallows of Jim Crow Christianity*

What does *Thirteen Turns* have to offer marginalized people in Baltimore, Staten Island, Ferguson, Sanford, Cleveland, Brunswick, Minneapolis and cities around the United States which devalue black and brown lives? An uncovered, reclaimed history of theological hope and resistance, hope and resistance which sustained generations of Africans, as well as Africans in the diaspora, descents of all “Shithole Countries” through lynching and American domestic terrorism. It offers insights gained from extensive research that stands ready to inform all engaged in justice work on multiple fronts.

Praise for *Thirteen Turns: A Theology Resurrected From the Gallows of Jim Crow Christianity*

“Dr. Covin does an amazing job of inviting the reader to engage the hard truth about Christianity, race, and justice. This is a must-read for anyone who embraces progressive Christianity, is called to social justice and liberation work, and is prepared to handle the truth.”

—**Jamie Washington, Senior Pastor, Unity Fellowship Church of Baltimore; President and Founder, The Social Justice Training Institute**

“This slender volume is a remarkable and timely achievement. Marshaling insights from a diverse spectrum of thinkers, ranging from Friedrich Schleiermacher to James Cone, the book articulates a powerful African American message of life in the midst of death. Its reflections are both visceral and critical, informed by the memory of Jim Crow lynchings and by the eschatological speculations of Jürgen Moltmann. In the face of the resurgent white nationalism that plagues our era, Dr. Covin offers a revitalizing vision of resilient hope and undaunted resistance.”

—**Lee C. Barrett, Henry and Mary Stager Professor of Theology, Lancaster Theological Seminary**

