

---

# Said I Wasn't Gonna Tell Nobody

*The Making of a  
Black Theologian*

JAMES H. CONE



ORBIS BOOKS  
Maryknoll, New York

ORBIS  BOOKS  
Maryknoll, New York 10545

 Fathers and Brothers  
MARYKNOLL™

Founded in 1970, Orbis Books endeavors to publish works that enlighten the mind, nourish the spirit, and challenge the conscience. The publishing arm of the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, Orbis seeks to explore the global dimensions of the Christian faith and mission, to invite dialogue with diverse cultures and religious traditions, and to serve the cause of reconciliation and peace. The books published reflect the views of their authors and do not represent the official position of the Maryknoll Society. To learn more about Maryknoll and Orbis Books, please visit our website at [www.maryknollsociety.org](http://www.maryknollsociety.org).

---

Copyright © 2018 by James H. Cone  
Foreword © by Cornel West.

Published by Orbis Books, Box 302, Maryknoll, NY 10545-0302.

All rights reserved.

The cover photo was taken at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary where James Cone was delivering the Rall Lectures for 1970. His first lecture, on April 15 in the Chapel of Unnamed Faithful, was titled “Black Theology and the Afro-American Revolution.”

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any information storage or retrieval system, without prior permission in writing from the publisher.

Queries regarding rights and permissions should be addressed to: Orbis Books, P.O. Box 302, Maryknoll, NY 10545-0302.

Manufactured in the United States of America

---

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Cone, James H., author.

Title: Said I wasn't gonna tell nobody : the making of a Black theologian / James H. Cone.

Description: Maryknoll : Orbis Books, 2018. | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2018010522 (print) | LCCN 2018026630 (ebook) | ISBN 9781608337682 (e-book) | ISBN 9781626983021 (cloth)

Subjects: LCSH: Cone, James H. | Theologians — United States — Biography. | Black theology — History of doctrines.

Classification: LCC BX4827.C65 (ebook) | LCC BX4827.C65 A3 2018 (print) | DDC 230.092 [B] — dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2018010522>

---

# Contents

Foreword, <i>by Cornel West</i>	ix
Introduction	xv
1 Couldn't Keep It to Myself <i>Removing My Mask</i>	1
2 What the Lord Has Done for Me <i>Black Theology and Black Power</i>	31
3 You Oughta Been There <i>A Black Theology of Liberation</i>	51
4 When He Put My Name on the Roll <i>Learning from My Critics</i>	85
5 When He Saved My Soul <i>Learning from My Students</i>	108
6 I Started Walkin' and Talkin' <i>The Cross and the Lynching Tree</i>	126
7 I Started Singin' and Shoutin' <i>Learning from Baldwin</i>	144
Conclusion	170
Acknowledgments	175
Index	177