

african american religion history

African American Religion History: A Journey of Faith, Resistance, and Resilience

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Introduction: Forging Faith in the Crucible of Oppression

The study of African American religion history is not merely an examination of religious practices; it's a crucial lens through which to understand the lived experiences, resilience, and cultural innovations of African Americans throughout history. From the forced migration of enslaved Africans to the contemporary Black church's role in social justice movements, faith has been a central pillar in shaping identity, community, and resistance. This report delves into the rich and complex tapestry of African American religion history, exploring its origins, evolution, and enduring impact.

The African Roots: A Legacy of Spirituality

Before the transatlantic slave trade, diverse religious traditions thrived across the African continent. These traditions, often deeply intertwined with ancestor veneration, nature worship, and communal rituals, profoundly influenced the religious landscape of the Americas after the forced migration of enslaved Africans. While many were forcibly converted to Christianity, they creatively synthesized elements of their indigenous beliefs with aspects of Christianity, leading to unique forms of religious expression that

reflected their struggles and hopes. Research indicates that syncretism, the blending of different religious beliefs, was not simply a passive adoption but an active process of cultural negotiation and resistance. (Saidiya Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America*)

The Black Church: A Sanctuary and a Bastion of Resistance

The establishment of the Black church during slavery stands as a monumental achievement in African American religion history. Denied access to white churches, enslaved Africans forged their own religious communities, finding solace, spiritual sustenance, and a space for collective resistance. Secret meetings, coded language, and the use of spirituals – songs that often contained veiled messages of hope and rebellion – became crucial tools for survival and maintaining cultural identity. The study of slave narratives provides invaluable insights into the role of religion in maintaining hope and spirit during unimaginable hardship. (Henry Louis Gates Jr., *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of Afro-American Literary Criticism*)

The Post-Emancipation Era: Growth, Diversification, and Social Activism

Following emancipation, the Black church experienced unprecedented growth and diversification. Various denominations emerged, each with unique theological perspectives and organizational structures. However, the church remained a central institution in the African American community, playing a pivotal role in education, economic development, and social activism. The Civil Rights Movement provides a prime example of the Black church's power, with ministers like Martin Luther King Jr. leading the charge for racial equality and justice. The ongoing research into the role of Black churches in the Civil Rights Movement continues to unearth crucial details about their strategic importance and organizational capacity. (Taylor Branch, *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954-63*)

The Pentecostal Explosion and Contemporary Trends

The 20th century witnessed the rise of Pentecostalism within African American communities, characterized by its emphasis on spiritual gifts, emotional expressiveness, and personal encounters with the divine. This movement further diversified the religious landscape, adding to the rich tapestry of African American religion history. Contemporary trends indicate the continued significance of the Black church, while also reflecting the growing influence of other faith traditions and spiritual practices within the African American community. This reflects a complex interplay between traditional beliefs and the changing socio-cultural context. Ongoing studies on millennial religious practice continue to add to our understanding of how faith is being

interpreted and practiced in modern times.

Challenges and Transformations

The African American religious experience has not been without its challenges. Internal divisions, debates over theological issues, and the ongoing struggle for racial justice have shaped the trajectory of African American religion history. Yet, these challenges have also spurred innovation, resilience, and a commitment to social justice that continues to inspire.

Conclusion: A Legacy of Faith and Resilience

The history of African American religion is a powerful testament to the enduring power of faith in the face of adversity. It is a story of survival, resistance, cultural innovation, and unwavering hope. From its African roots to its contemporary expressions, African American religion history continues to shape the identity, culture, and social landscape of the United States. Understanding this history is crucial for comprehending the complexities of American society and the ongoing struggle for racial justice.

FAQs:

1. What are some of the key differences between African Traditional Religions and Christianity as practiced by African Americans? While many aspects of Christianity were adopted, syncretism resulted in unique expressions of faith, blending traditional beliefs with Christian theology. Examples include the emphasis on communal worship, the incorporation of spirituals, and the belief in the power of prayer for healing and deliverance.
1. How did the Black church contribute to the Civil Rights Movement? The Black church served as a central organizing hub, providing meeting spaces, leadership, and a spiritual foundation for the movement. Ministers like Martin Luther King Jr. played crucial leadership roles, utilizing the church's infrastructure and moral authority to mobilize support for civil rights.
1. What role did spirituals play in the lives of enslaved Africans? Spirituals were more than just songs; they served as coded messages of hope and resistance, maintaining cultural identity and providing solace amidst hardship. They conveyed messages of freedom and faith, often

employing metaphorical language to evade the attention of slave owners.

1. What are some of the major denominations within the African American religious landscape? African American religious communities encompass a wide range of denominations, including Baptist, Methodist, Pentecostal, and various other Christian traditions, as well as other faith traditions such as Islam and Judaism.
1. How has African American religion history influenced other religious movements? The vibrant and dynamic nature of African American religious expression has influenced other religious communities, prompting reflection on issues of social justice, inclusivity, and the role of faith in social change.
1. What are some of the current challenges facing African American religious communities? Current challenges include addressing issues of racial injustice, maintaining intergenerational connections within congregations, navigating changing demographics, and adapting to evolving social contexts.
1. What is the significance of the Black church in the 21st century? The Black church continues to be a vital community hub providing social services, spiritual guidance, and a space for collective action. Its role in social justice advocacy remains prominent.
1. How has globalization impacted African American religious practices? Globalization has introduced new religious perspectives and practices, leading to a further diversification of religious expression within African American communities.
1. Where can I find more information about the history of African American religion? Numerous books, academic journals, and online resources provide in-depth information on African American religion history. Consult university libraries, online archives, and reputable academic publishers.

Related Articles:

1. "The Black Church and the Civil Rights Movement": This article explores the pivotal role of the Black church in organizing and mobilizing the Civil Rights Movement, examining its strategies, leadership, and enduring impact.
1. "African American Pentecostalism: A History": This article traces the development and growth of Pentecostalism within African American communities, focusing on its unique theological expressions and social impact.
1. "Spirituals and the Struggle for Freedom": This article analyzes the lyrics and musical structures of spirituals, highlighting their use as coded messages of hope and resistance during slavery.
1. "The Role of Women in the Black Church": This article examines the significant contributions of Black women to the development and growth of the Black church, exploring their leadership roles, theological insights, and activism.
1. "African American Religious Syncretism: A Case Study": This article delves into specific examples of religious syncretism among enslaved Africans, illustrating the creative blending of African traditions and Christianity.
1. "The Black Church and Economic Empowerment": This article explores the historical and contemporary role of the Black church in promoting economic self-sufficiency within African American communities.
1. "Contemporary Challenges Facing the Black Church": This article analyzes the challenges faced by the Black church in the 21st century, including declining membership, changing demographics, and evolving social

contexts.

1. "African American Islam: A History": This article explores the history and development of Islam within the African American community, highlighting its unique expressions and social impact.
1. "The Black Church and Social Justice in the 21st Century": This article examines the ongoing role of the Black church in advocating for social justice, addressing issues of racial equality, economic disparity, and systemic oppression.

african american religion history: African American Religious History Milton C. Sernett, 1999 This is a 2nd edition of the 1985 anthology that examines the religious history of African Americans.

african american religion history: Black Religion and Black Radicalism Gayraud S. Wilmore, 1998 Since its first publication 25 years ago Black Religion and Black Radicalism has established itself as the classic treatment of African American religious history. Wilmore shows to what extent the history of African Americans can be told in terms of religion, and to what extent this religious history has been inseparably bound to the struggle for freedom and justice. From the story of the slave rebellions and emancipation, to the rise of Black nationalism and the freedom struggles of recent times, up through the development of Black, womanist, and Afrocentric theologies, Wilmore offers an essential interpretation of African American religious history.

african american religion history: African American Religion: A Very Short Introduction Eddie S. Glaude Jr., 2014-08-27 Since the first African American denomination was established in Philadelphia in 1818, churches have gone beyond their role as spiritual guides in African American communities and have served as civic institutions, spaces for education, and sites for the cultivation of individuality and identities in the face of limited or non-existent freedom. In this Very Short Introduction, Eddie S. Glaude Jr. explores the history and circumstances of African American religion through three examples: conjure, African American Christianity, and African American Islam. He argues that the phrase African American religion is meaningful only insofar as it describes how through religion, African Americans have responded to oppressive conditions including slavery, Jim Crow apartheid, and the pervasive and institutionalized discrimination that exists today. This bold claim frames his interpretation of the historical record of the wide diversity of religious experiences in the African American community. He rejects the common tendency to racialize African American religious experiences as an inherent proclivity towards religiousness and instead focuses on how religious communities and experiences have developed in the African American community and the context in which these developments took place. About the Series: Oxford's Very Short Introductions series offers concise and original introductions to a wide range of subjects--from Islam to Sociology, Politics to Classics, Literary Theory to History, and Archaeology to the Bible. Not simply a textbook of definitions, each volume in this series provides trenchant and provocative--yet always balanced and complete--discussions of the central issues in a given discipline or field. Every Very Short Introduction gives a readable evolution of the subject in question, demonstrating how the

subject has developed and how it has influenced society. Eventually, the series will encompass every major academic discipline, offering all students an accessible and abundant reference library. Whatever the area of study that one deems important or appealing, whatever the topic that fascinates the general reader, the Very Short Introductions series has a handy and affordable guide that will likely prove indispensable.

african american religion history: *African American Religions, 1500-2000* Sylvester A. Johnson, 2015-08-06 A rich account of the long history of Black religion from the dawn of Western colonialism to the rise of the national security paradigm.

african american religion history: *African-American Religion* Albert J. Raboteau, 1999 Throughout African-American history, religion has been indelibly intertwined with the fight against intolerance and racial prejudice. Martin Luther King, Jr.-America's best-known champion of civil liberties-was a Baptist minister. Father Divine, a fiery preacher who established a large following in the 1920s and 1930s, convinced his disciples that he could cure not only disease and infirmity, but also poverty and racism. An in-depth examination of African-American history and religion, this comprehensive and lively book provides panoramic coverage of the black religious and social experience in America. Renowned historian Albert J. Raboteau traces the subtle blending of African tribal customs with the powerful Christian establishment, the migration to cities, the growth of Islam, and the 200-year fight for freedom and identity which was so often centered around African-American churches. From the African Methodist Episcopal Church to the Nation of Islam and from the first African slaves to Louis Farrakhan, this far-reaching book chronicles the evolution of an important and influential component of our religious and historical heritage. *African American Religion* combines meticulously researched historical facts with a fast-paced, engaging narrative that will appeal to readers of any age. *Religion in American Life* explores the evolution, character, and dynamics of organized religion in America from 1500 to the present day. Written by distinguished religious historians, these books weave together the varying stories that compose the religious fabric of the United States, from Puritanism to alternative religious practices. Primary source material coupled with handsome illustrations and lucid text make these books essential in any exploration of America's diverse nature. Each book includes a chronology, suggestions for further reading, and index.

african american religion history: *Down by the Riverside* Larry Murphy, Larry George Murphy, 2000-11 An introductory overview of the development of African American religion and theology *Down by the Riverside* provides an expansive introduction to the development of African American religion and theology. Spanning the time of slavery up to the present, the volume moves beyond Protestant Christianity to address a broad diversity of African American religion from Conjure, Orisa, and Black Judaism to Islam, African American Catholicism, and humanism. This accessible historical overview begins with African religious heritages and traces the transition to various forms of Christianity, as well as the maintenance of African and Islamic traditions in antebellum America. Preeminent contributors include Charles Long, Gayraud Wilmore, Albert Raboteau, Manning Marable, M. Shawn Copeland, Vincent Harding, Mary Sawyer, Toinette Eugene, Anthony Pinn, and C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence Mamiya. They consider the varieties of religious expression emerging from migration from the rural South to urban areas, African American women's participation in Christian missions, Black religious nationalism, and the development of Black Theology from its nineteenth-century precursors to its formulation by James Cone and later articulations by black feminist and womanist theologians. They also draw on case studies to provide a profile of the Black Christian church today. This thematic history of the unfolding of religious life in African America provides a window onto a rich array of African American people, practices, and theological positions.

african american religion history: *Introducing African American Religion* Anthony B. Pinn, 2013 A creative and unique approach to the history of African American religion, offering a reader-friendly depiction of the major themes and issues confronted by African Americans involved in a variety of traditions.

african american religion history: The Black Church Henry Louis Gates, Jr., 2021-02-16 The instant New York Times bestseller and companion book to the PBS series. "Absolutely brilliant . . . A necessary and moving work." —Eddie S. Glaude, Jr., author of *Begin Again* "Engaging. . . . In Gates's telling, the Black church shines bright even as the nation itself moves uncertainly through the gloaming, seeking justice on earth—as it is in heaven." —Jon Meacham, New York Times Book Review From the New York Times bestselling author of *Stony the Road* and *The Black Box*, and one of our most important voices on the African American experience, comes a powerful new history of the Black church as a foundation of Black life and a driving force in the larger freedom struggle in America. For the young Henry Louis Gates, Jr., growing up in a small, residentially segregated West Virginia town, the church was a center of gravity—an intimate place where voices rose up in song and neighbors gathered to celebrate life's blessings and offer comfort amid its trials and tribulations. In this tender and expansive reckoning with the meaning of the Black Church in America, Gates takes us on a journey spanning more than five centuries, from the intersection of Christianity and the transatlantic slave trade to today's political landscape. At road's end, and after Gates's distinctive meditation on the churches of his childhood, we emerge with a new understanding of the importance of African American religion to the larger national narrative—as a center of resistance to slavery and white supremacy, as a magnet for political mobilization, as an incubator of musical and oratorical talent that would transform the culture, and as a crucible for working through the Black community's most critical personal and social issues. In a country that has historically afforded its citizens from the African diaspora tragically few safe spaces, the Black Church has always been more than a sanctuary. This fact was never lost on white supremacists: from the earliest days of slavery, when enslaved people were allowed to worship at all, their meetinghouses were subject to surveillance and destruction. Long after slavery's formal eradication, church burnings and bombings by anti-Black racists continued, a hallmark of the violent effort to suppress the African American struggle for equality. The past often isn't even past—Dylann Roof committed his slaughter in the Mother Emanuel AME Church 193 years after it was first burned down by white citizens of Charleston, South Carolina, following a thwarted slave rebellion. But as Gates brilliantly shows, the Black church has never been only one thing. Its story lies at the heart of the Black political struggle, and it has produced many of the Black community's most notable leaders. At the same time, some churches and denominations have eschewed political engagement and exemplified practices of exclusion and intolerance that have caused polarization and pain. Those tensions remain today, as a rising generation demands freedom and dignity for all within and beyond their communities, regardless of race, sex, or gender. Still, as a source of faith and refuge, spiritual sustenance and struggle against society's darkest forces, the Black Church has been central, as this enthralling history makes vividly clear.

african american religion history: African-American Religion Timothy E. Fulop, Albert J. Raboteau, 2013-01-11 African American Religion brings together in one forum the most important essays on the development of these traditions to provide an overview of the field.

african american religion history: African American Religion: A Very Short Introduction Eddie S. Glaude Jr., 2014-08-27 Since the first African American denomination was established in Philadelphia in 1818, churches have gone beyond their role as spiritual guides in African American communities and have served as civic institutions, spaces for education, and sites for the cultivation of individuality and identities in the face of limited or non-existent freedom. In this *Very Short Introduction*, Eddie S. Glaude Jr. explores the history and circumstances of African American religion through three examples: conjure, African American Christianity, and African American Islam. He argues that the phrase African American religion is meaningful only insofar as it describes how through religion, African Americans have responded to oppressive conditions including slavery, Jim Crow apartheid, and the pervasive and institutionalized discrimination that exists today. This bold claim frames his interpretation of the historical record of the wide diversity of religious experiences in the African American community. He rejects the common tendency to racialize African American religious experiences as an inherent proclivity towards religiousness and instead

focuses on how religious communities and experiences have developed in the African American community and the context in which these developments took place. About the Series: Oxford's Very Short Introductions series offers concise and original introductions to a wide range of subjects--from Islam to Sociology, Politics to Classics, Literary Theory to History, and Archaeology to the Bible. Not simply a textbook of definitions, each volume in this series provides trenchant and provocative--yet always balanced and complete--discussions of the central issues in a given discipline or field. Every Very Short Introduction gives a readable evolution of the subject in question, demonstrating how the subject has developed and how it has influenced society. Eventually, the series will encompass every major academic discipline, offering all students an accessible and abundant reference library. Whatever the area of study that one deems important or appealing, whatever the topic that fascinates the general reader, the Very Short Introductions series has a handy and affordable guide that will likely prove indispensable.

african american religion history: Canaan Land Albert J. Raboteau, 2001 Offers insight into the history of African American religious traditions in the United States.

african american religion history: *Down in the Valley* Julius H. Bailey, 2016-04-08 African American religions constitute a diverse group of beliefs and practices that emerged from the African diaspora brought about by the Atlantic slave trade. Traditional religions that had informed the worldviews of Africans were transported to the shores of the Americas and transformed to make sense of new contexts and conditions. This book explores the survival of traditional religions and how African American religions have influenced and been shaped by American religious history. The text provides an overview of the central people, issues, and events in an account that considers Protestant denominations, Catholicism, Islam, Pentecostal churches, Voodoo, Conjure, Rastafarianism, and new religious movements such as Black Judaism, the Nation of Islam, and the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors. The book addresses contemporary controversies, including President Barack Obama's former pastor Jeremiah Wright, and it will be valuable to all students of African American religions, African American studies, sociology of religion, American religious history, the Black Church, and black theology.

african american religion history: Black Religion and Black Radicalism Gayraud S. Wilmore, 1972 Wilmore's book is a standard, and fairly thorough, introduction to the connection between African American religiosity (written large) and African American societal protest. Tracing the connection from African religion (Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and traditional religions) through slavery and supposed freedom to the present day, Wilmore presents a sweeping argument that throughout history African Americans have used their religious understandings to strengthen their resistance to oppressive realities.

african american religion history: Religion in the Lives of African Americans Robert Joseph Taylor, Linda M. Chatters, Jeffrey S. Levin, 2004 Religion in the Lives of African Americans: Social, Psychological, and Health Perspectives examines many broad issues including the structure and sociodemographic patterns of religious involvement; the relationship between religion and physical and mental health and well-being; the impact of church support and the use of ministers for personal issues; and the role of religion within specific subgroups of the African American population such as women and the elderly. Authors Robert Joseph Taylor, Linda M. Chatters, and Jeff Levin reflect upon current empirical research and derive conclusions from several wide-ranging national surveys, as well as a focus group study of religion and coping. Recommended for students taking courses in racial and ethnic studies, multicultural and minority studies, black studies, religious studies, psychology, sociology, human development and family studies, gerontology, social work, public health, and nursing.

african american religion history: The End of Days Matthew Harper, 2016-08-24 For 4 million slaves, emancipation was a liberation and resurrection story of biblical proportion, both the clearest example of God's intervention in human history and a sign of the end of days. In this book, Matthew Harper demonstrates how black southerners' theology, in particular their understanding of the end times, influenced nearly every major economic and political decision they made in the

aftermath of emancipation. From considering what demands to make in early Reconstruction to deciding whether or not to migrate west, African American Protestants consistently inserted themselves into biblical narratives as a way of seeing the importance of their own struggle in God's greater plan for humanity. Phrases like jubilee, Zion, valley of dry bones, and the New Jerusalem in black-authored political documents invoked different stories from the Bible to argue for different political strategies. This study offers new ways of understanding the intersections between black political and religious thought of this era. Until now, scholarship on black religion has not highlighted how pervasive or contested these beliefs were. This narrative, however, tracks how these ideas governed particular political moments as African Americans sought to define and defend their freedom in the forty years following emancipation.

african american religion history: New World A-Coming Judith Weisenfeld, 2018-11-06 When Joseph Nathaniel Beckles registered for the draft in the 1942, he rejected the racial categories presented to him and persuaded the registrar to cross out the check mark she had placed next to Negro and substitute Ethiopian Hebrew. God did not make us Negroes, declared religious leaders in black communities of the early twentieth-century urban North. They insisted that so-called Negroes are, in reality, Ethiopian Hebrews, Asiatic Muslims, or raceless children of God. Rejecting conventional American racial classification, many black southern migrants and immigrants from the Caribbean embraced these alternative visions of black history, racial identity, and collective future, thereby reshaping the black religious and racial landscape. Focusing on the Moorish Science Temple, the Nation of Islam, Father Divine's Peace Mission Movement, and a number of congregations of Ethiopian Hebrews, Judith Weisenfeld argues that the appeal of these groups lay not only in the new religious opportunities membership provided, but also in the novel ways they formulated a religio-racial identity. Arguing that members of these groups understood their religious and racial identities as divinely-ordained and inseparable, the book examines how this sense of self shaped their conceptions of their bodies, families, religious and social communities, space and place, and political sensibilities. Weisenfeld draws on extensive archival research and incorporates a rich array of sources to highlight the experiences of average members.--Publisher's description.

african american religion history: African-American Christianity Paul E. Johnson, 1994-07-06 Eight leading scholars have joined forces to give us the most comprehensive book to date on the history of African-American religion from the slavery period to the present. Beginning with Albert Raboteau's essay on the importance of the story of Exodus among African-American Christians and concluding with Clayborne Carson's work on Martin Luther King, Jr.'s religious development, this volume illuminates the fusion of African and Christian traditions that has so uniquely contributed to American religious development. Several common themes emerge: the critical importance of African roots, the traumatic discontinuities of slavery, the struggle for freedom within slavery and the subsequent experience of discrimination, and the remarkable creativity of African-American religious faith and practice. Together, these essays enrich our understanding of both African-American life and its part in the history of religion in America.

african american religion history: The Black Church in the African American Experience C. Eric Lincoln, Lawrence H. Mamiya, 1990-11-07 Black churches in America have long been recognized as the most independent, stable, and dominant institutions in black communities. In *The Black Church in the African American Experience*, based on a ten-year study, is the largest nongovernmental study of urban and rural churches ever undertaken and the first major field study on the subject since the 1930s. Drawing on interviews with more than 1,800 black clergy in both urban and rural settings, combined with a comprehensive historical overview of seven mainline black denominations, C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya present an analysis of the Black Church as it relates to the history of African Americans and to contemporary black culture. In examining both the internal structure of the Church and the reactions of the Church to external, societal changes, the authors provide important insights into the Church's relationship to politics, economics, women, youth, and music. Among other topics, Lincoln and Mamiya discuss the attitude of the clergy toward women pastors, the reaction of the Church to the civil rights movement, the

attempts of the Church to involve young people, the impact of the black consciousness movement and Black Liberation Theology and clergy, and trends that will define the Black Church well into the next century. This study is complete with a comprehensive bibliography of literature on the black experience in religion. Funding for the ten-year survey was made possible by the Lilly Endowment and the Ford Foundation.

african american religion history: Teaching African American Religions Carolyn M. Jones, Theodore Louis Trost, 2005-07-14 The variety and complexity of its traditions make African American religion one of the most difficult topics in religious studies to teach to undergraduates. The sheer scope of the material to be covered is daunting to instructors, many of whom are not experts in African American religious traditions, but are called upon to include material on African American religion in courses on American Religious History or the History of Christianity. Also, the unfamiliarity of the subject matter to the vast majority of students makes it difficult to achieve any depth in the brief time allotted in the survey courses where it is usually first encountered. The essays in this volume will supply functional, innovative ways to teach African American religious traditions in a variety of settings.

african american religion history: The History of the Negro Church Carter Godwin Woodson, 1921

african american religion history: Preaching on Wax Lerone A Martin, 2014-11-14 The overlooked African American religious history of the phonograph industry Winner of the 2015 Frank S. and Elizabeth D. Brewer Prize for outstanding scholarship in church history by a first-time author presented by the American Society of Church History Certificate of Merit, 2015 Award for Excellence in Historical Recorded Sound Research presented by the Association for Recorded Sound Collections From 1925 to 1941, approximately one hundred African American clergymen teamed up with leading record labels such as Columbia, Paramount, Victor-RCA to record and sell their sermons on wax. While white clerics of the era, such as Aimee Semple McPherson and Charles Fuller, became religious entrepreneurs and celebrities through their pioneering use of radio, black clergy were largely marginalized from radio. Instead, they relied on other means to get their message out, teaming up with corporate titans of the phonograph industry to package and distribute their old-time gospel messages across the country. Their nationally marketed folk sermons received an enthusiastic welcome by consumers, at times even outselling top billing jazz and blues artists such as Bessie Smith and Ma Rainey. These phonograph preachers significantly shaped the development of black religion during the interwar period, playing a crucial role in establishing the contemporary religious practices of commodification, broadcasting, and celebrity. Yet, the fame and reach of these nationwide media ministries came at a price, as phonograph preachers became subject to the principles of corporate America. In *Preaching on Wax*, Lerone A. Martin offers the first full-length account of the oft-overlooked religious history of the phonograph industry. He explains why a critical mass of African American ministers teamed up with the major phonograph labels of the day, how and why black consumers eagerly purchased their religious records, and how this phonograph religion significantly contributed to the shaping of modern African American Christianity. Instructor's Guide

african american religion history: Black Religion and Black Radicalism Gayraud S. Wilmore, 1983

african american religion history: The New Black Gods Edward E. Curtis IV, Danielle Brune Sigler, 2009-04-23 Taking the influential work of Arthur Huff Fauset as a starting point to break down the false dichotomy that exists between mainstream and marginal, a new generation of scholars offers fresh ideas for understanding the religious expressions of African Americans in the United States. Fauset's 1944 classic, *Black Gods of the Metropolis*, launched original methods and theories for thinking about African American religions as modern, cosmopolitan, and democratic. The essays in this collection show the diversity of African American religion in the wake of the Great Migration and consider the full field of African American religion from Pentecostalism to Black Judaism, Black Islam, and Father Divine's Peace Mission Movement. As a whole, they create a

dynamic, humanistic, and thoroughly interdisciplinary understanding of African American religious history and life. This book is essential reading for anyone who studies the African American experience.

african american religion history: *Come Shouting to Zion* Sylvia R. Frey, Betty Wood, 2000-11-09 The conversion of African-born slaves and their descendants to Protestant Christianity marked one of the most important social and intellectual transformations in American history. *Come Shouting to Zion* is the first comprehensive exploration of the processes by which this remarkable transition occurred. Using an extraordinary array of archival sources, Sylvia Frey and Betty Wood chart the course of religious conversion from the transference of traditional African religions to the New World through the growth of Protestant Christianity in the American South and British Caribbean up to 1830. *Come Shouting to Zion* depicts religious transformation as a complex reciprocal movement involving black and white Christians. It highlights the role of African American preachers in the conversion process and demonstrates the extent to which African American women were responsible for developing distinctive ritual patterns of worship and divergent moral values within the black spiritual community. Finally, the book sheds light on the ways in which, by serving as a channel for the assimilation of Western culture into the slave quarters, Protestant Christianity helped transform Africans into African Americans.

african american religion history: Introducing African American Religion Anthony B. Pinn, 2013 A creative and unique approach to the history of African American religion, offering a reader-friendly depiction of the major themes and issues confronted by African Americans involved in a variety of traditions.

african american religion history: *Philosophy of Religion and the African American Experience* John H. McClendon III, 2017-07-03 Most white philosophers of religion generally presume that philosophy of religion is based on what is a false universality; whereby the white/Western experience is paradigmatic of humanity at-large. The fact remains that Howard Thurman, James H. Cone and William R. Jones, among others, have produced a substantial amount of theological work quite worthy of consideration by philosophers of religion. Yet this corpus of thought is not reflected in the scholarly literature that constitutes the main body of philosophy of religion. Neglect and ignorance of African American Studies is widespread in the academy. By including chapters on Thurman, Cone and Jones, the present book functions as a corrective to this scholarly lacuna.

african american religion history: *The Talking Book* Allen Dwight Callahan, 2008-10-01 The *Talking Book* casts the Bible as the central character in a vivid portrait of black America, tracing the origins of African-American culture from slavery's secluded forest prayer meetings to the bright lights and bold style of today's hip-hop artists. The Bible has profoundly influenced African Americans throughout history. From a variety of perspectives this wide-ranging book is the first to explore the Bible's role in the triumph of the black experience. Using the Bible as a foundation, African Americans shared religious beliefs, created their own music, and shaped the ultimate key to their freedom—literacy. Allen Callahan highlights the intersection of biblical images with African-American music, politics, religion, art, and literature. The author tells a moving story of a biblically informed African-American culture, identifying four major biblical images—Exile, Exodus, Ethiopia, and Emmanuel. He brings these themes to life in a unique African-American history that grows from the harsh experience of slavery into a rich culture that endures as one of the most important forces of twenty-first-century America.

african american religion history: The Columbia Guide to Religion in American History Paul Harvey, Edward J. Blum, 2012-02-14 The first guide to American religious history from colonial times to the present, this anthology features twenty-two leading scholars speaking on major themes and topics in the development of the diverse religious traditions of the United States. These include the growth and spread of evangelical culture, the mutual influence of religion and politics, the rise of fundamentalism, the role of gender and popular culture, and the problems and possibilities of pluralism. Geared toward general readers, students, researchers, and scholars, *The Columbia Guide*

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african american religion history: African American Religious Studies Gayraud S. Wilmore, 1989 Gayraud S. Wilmore is Professor of Church History and Afro-American Religious Studies at The Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, Georgia. He has published numerous articles and books including *Black Witness to the Apostolic Faith*, David Shannon, co-ed.; *Black and Presbyterian: The Heritage and the Hope*; and *Last Things First*. Professor Wilmore is the recipient of the Bruce Klunder Award of the Presbyterian Interracial Councils (1969), the Sward of the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance of Harlem (1971), and various honorary degrees.

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argues, was the deep-rooted notion that blacks were somehow naturally religious. At first, this assumed natural impulse toward religion served as a signal trait of black people's humanity -- potentially their unique contribution to American culture. Abolitionists seized on this point, linking black religion to the black capacity for freedom. Soon, however, these first halting steps toward a multiracial democracy were reversed. As Americans began to value reason, rationality, and science over religious piety, the idea of an innate black religiosity was used to justify preserving the inequalities of the status quo. Later, social scientists -- both black and white -- sought to reverse the damage caused by these racist ideas and in the process proved that blacks were in fact fully capable of incorporation into white American culture. This important work reveals how interpretations of black religion played a crucial role in shaping broader views of African Americans and had real consequences in their lives. In the process, Evans offers an intellectual and cultural history of race in a crucial period of American history.

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black religious leaders. He describes the creative tensions that resulted when the southern migrants who saw their exodus as the Second Emancipation brought their religious beliefs and practices into northern cities such as Chicago, and traces the resulting emergence of the belief that black churches ought to be more than places for praying and preaching. Explaining how this social gospel perspective came to dominate many of the classic studies of African American religion, *Bound for the Promised Land* sheds new light on various components of the development of black religion, including philanthropic endeavors to modernize the southern black rural church. In providing a balanced and holistic understanding of black religion in post-World War I America, *Bound for the Promised Land* serves to reveal the challenges presently confronting this vital component of America's religious mosaic.

african american religion history: *Jesus, Jobs, and Justice* Bettye Collier-Thomas, 2010-02-02
"The Negroes must have Jesus, Jobs, and Justice," declared Nannie Helen Burroughs, a nationally known figure among black and white leaders and an architect of the Woman's Convention of the National Baptist Convention. Burroughs made this statement about the black women's agenda in 1958, as she anticipated the collapse of Jim Crow segregation and pondered the fate of African Americans. Following more than half a century of organizing and struggling against racism in American society, sexism in the National Baptist Convention, and the racism and paternalism of white women and the Southern Baptist Convention, Burroughs knew that black Americans would need more than religion to survive and to advance socially, economically, and politically. Jesus, jobs, and justice are the threads that weave through two hundred years of black women's experiences in America. Bettye Collier-Thomas's groundbreaking book gives us a remarkable account of the religious faith, social and political activism, and extraordinary resilience of black women during the centuries of American growth and change. It shows the beginnings of organized religion in slave communities and how the Bible was a source of inspiration; the enslaved saw in their condition a parallel to the suffering and persecution that Jesus had endured. The author makes clear that while religion has been a guiding force in the lives of most African Americans, for black women it has been essential. As co-creators of churches, women were a central factor in their development. *Jesus, Jobs, and Justice* explores the ways in which women had to cope with sexism in black churches, as well as racism in mostly white denominations, in their efforts to create missionary societies and form women's conventions. It also reveals the hidden story of how issues of sex and sexuality have sometimes created tension and divisions within institutions. Black church women created national organizations such as the National Association of Colored Women, the National League of Colored Republican Women, and the National Council of Negro Women. They worked in the interracial movement, in white-led Christian groups such as the YWCA and Church Women United, and in male-dominated organizations such as the NAACP and National Urban League to demand civil rights, equal employment, and educational opportunities, and to protest lynching, segregation, and discrimination. And black women missionaries sacrificed their lives in service to their African sisters whose destiny they believed was tied to theirs. *Jesus, Jobs, and Justice* restores black women to their rightful place in American and black history and demonstrates their faith in themselves, their race, and their God.

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