

african american religious history

The Enduring Spirit: Exploring African American Religious History and its Cultural Impact

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Summary: This article explores the rich and complex tapestry of African American religious history, tracing its origins from the transatlantic slave trade to its contemporary expressions. It examines the crucial role religion played in shaping African American identity, fostering resilience, driving social movements, and influencing various cultural industries.

H1: The Roots of Faith: African American Religious History in the Antebellum South

The history of African American religion is not simply a story of faith; it's a narrative interwoven with struggle, resistance, and remarkable adaptation. During the era of slavery, the forced migration of Africans to the Americas resulted in a syncretic religious landscape. African spiritual traditions, often suppressed, blended with Christianity to create a unique expression of faith—a "slave religion"—that provided solace, community, and a coded language of resistance. The spirituals, born from this context, became powerful symbols of hope and longing for freedom, profoundly influencing music genres from gospel to blues and beyond. This period's profound impact on the development of African American religious history is undeniable, shaping its character for generations to come.

H2: The Black Church: A Beacon of Hope and Social Change

The establishment of independent Black churches after emancipation marked a pivotal moment in African American religious history. These institutions became more than just places of worship; they transformed into vital community centers, providing education, social services, and a platform for

political mobilization. The Black church played a central role in the Civil Rights Movement, offering sanctuary, organizing protests, and fostering a sense of collective identity and purpose. Leaders like Martin Luther King Jr., drawing heavily on their faith, championed nonviolent resistance, demonstrating the potent intersection of religious belief and social action within African American religious history.

H3: Gospel Music: A Voice of the Spirit and a Cultural Force

Gospel music, deeply rooted in the African American religious experience, emerged as a powerful force, both spiritually and commercially. Its vibrant rhythms, passionate vocals, and inspirational lyrics resonated far beyond the confines of the church, influencing popular music genres and establishing a multi-million dollar industry. The evolution of gospel music, from its origins in spirituals to its contemporary expressions, reflects the dynamism and adaptability of African American religious history and its ongoing cultural impact. The story of gospel music is inseparable from the broader narrative of African American religious history.

H4: Contemporary Expressions: Diversity and Evolution in African American Religious History

Today, the landscape of African American religious life is diverse and multifaceted. While the Black church remains a central institution, new religious movements, Pentecostalism, and diverse expressions of Christianity, Islam, and other faiths have flourished. This continuing evolution underscores the dynamic nature of African American religious history and its ongoing adaptation to the changing social and cultural contexts.

H5: Implications for Industry: The Cultural and Economic Impact

African American religious history has had a profound and multifaceted impact on various industries. The influence of gospel music on the music industry is undeniable, generating significant revenue and shaping musical trends. The contributions of African American religious leaders and thinkers to the publishing and media industries are equally significant. Moreover, the social justice activism rooted in African American religious history has influenced social movements, policies, and the evolving ethical landscape of many industries. The legacy of African American religious history is deeply intertwined with the cultural and economic fabrics of society.

Conclusion

The study of African American religious history is essential for understanding the resilience, creativity, and social impact of a community shaped by profound adversity and unwavering faith. Its influence extends far beyond the religious sphere, shaping cultural expressions, driving social movements, and impacting various industries. As we continue to explore this rich history, we gain valuable insights into the enduring power of faith, the importance of community, and the ongoing struggle for justice and equality.

FAQs:

1. What is the significance of spirituals in African American religious history? Spirituals served as coded messages of hope and resistance during slavery, later becoming influential in the development of gospel and other music genres.
1. How did the Black church contribute to the Civil Rights Movement? The Black church served as a central organizing hub, providing sanctuary, resources, and leadership for the movement.
1. What are some key figures in African American religious history? Martin Luther King Jr., Frederick Douglass, Richard Allen, Madam C.J. Walker, are just a few examples.
1. How has African American religious history impacted popular culture? Gospel music, its themes and styles, significantly influenced popular music genres like R&B and soul.
1. What role did women play in African American religious history? Women have played a crucial and often overlooked role as preachers, community leaders, and spiritual guides.
1. How did African traditions influence the development of African American religion? Many African spiritual practices and beliefs were blended with Christianity, shaping unique religious expressions.
1. What are some contemporary issues facing African American religious communities? Issues like economic disparity, racial injustice, and the challenges of maintaining tradition in a changing world.
1. How can we better understand and appreciate African American religious history? Through studying primary sources, engaging with scholarly works, and actively participating in cultural events and celebrations.

1. What are some resources for learning more about African American religious history? Museums, archives, academic institutions, and religious organizations.

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african american religious 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.

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african american religious history: *African American Religions, 1500-2000* Sylvester A. Johnson, 2015-08-06 This book provides a narrative historical, postcolonial account of African American religions. It examines the intersection of Black religion and colonialism over several centuries to explain the relationship between empire and democratic freedom. Rather than treating freedom and its others (colonialism, slavery and racism) as opposites, Sylvester A. Johnson interprets multiple periods of Black religious history to discern how Atlantic empires (particularly that of the United States) simultaneously enabled the emergence of particular forms of religious experience and freedom movements as well as disturbing patterns of violent domination. Johnson explains theories of matter and spirit that shaped early indigenous religious movements in Africa, Black political religion responding to the American racial state, the creation of Liberia, and FBI repression of Black religious movements in the twentieth century. By combining historical methods with theoretical analysis, Johnson explains the seeming contradictions that have shaped Black religions in the modern era.

african american religious history: *The African American Religious Experience in America* Anthony B. Pinn, 2005-11-30 Most who think about African American religion limit themselves to black churches, or perhaps to aspects of Islamic thought and practice. But a close look at the religious landscape of African American communities presents a much more complex, thick, and layered religious reality comprising many competing faiths and practices. *The African American Religious Experience in America* provides readers with an introduction to the tremendous religious diversity of African American communities in the United States, with snapshots of 11 religious traditions practiced by African Americans—from Buddhism to Catholicism, from Judaism to Voodoo. Each snapshot provides readers a better understanding of how African Americans practice their faiths in the United States. *The African American Religious Experience in America* provides resources for students taking classes on the history of American religion, African American Studies, and on American Studies. In addition to the in-depth discussion of the varieties of African American Religion, the volume includes a historical introduction to the development of African American Religion, a glossary of terms, a timeline of important events, a series of short biographies of important figures in the history of African American religion and a bibliography of sources for further study. Finally, the book includes a series of primary source documents that will provide students with first-person accounts of how religion is practiced in the African American community both today and in the past.

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

african american religious 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.

african american religious 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 religious 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 religious 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 religious history: *Teaching African American Religions* Carolyn M. Jones Medine, 2005 The variety and complexity of its traditions make African American religion a difficult topic to teach at undergraduate level. The essays in this volume offer practical, innovative ways to teach this subject in a variety of settings.

african american religious 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 religious history: *The Religious History of American Women* Catherine A. Brekus, 2007 More than a generation after the rise of women's history alongside the feminist movement, it is still difficult, observes Catherine Brekus, to locate women in histories of American religion. In this collection of 12 essays, contributors explore how considering the religious history of American women can transform our dominant historical narratives. Covering a variety of topics—including Mormonism, the women's rights movement, Judaism, witchcraft trials, the civil rights movement, Catholicism, everyday religious life, Puritanism, African American women's activism, and the Enlightenment—the volume enhances our understanding of both religious history and women's history. Taken together, these essays sound the call for a new, more inclusive history.

african american religious 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 religious 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 religious 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 religious 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 religious 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 religious 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 religious history: Varieties of African American Religious Experience Anthony B. Pinn, 2017-10-15 Twenty years ago, Anthony Pinn's engrossing survey highlighted the rich diversity of black religious life in America, revealing expressions of an ever-changing black religious quest. Based on extensive research, travel, and interviews, Pinn's work provides a fascinating look especially at Voodoo, Santeria, the Nation of Islam, and black humanism in the United States and uses the diversity of religious belief to begin formulation of a comparative black theology-the first of its kind. This twentieth-anniversary edition is an expanded version, including a new preface and a new concluding chapter. An important contribution to classroom studies!

african american religious 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 religious 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 to Religion in American History provides concise yet broad surveys of specific fields, with an extensive glossary and bibliographies listing relevant books, films, articles, music, and media resources for navigating different streams of religious thought and culture. The collection opens with a thematic exploration of American religious history and culture and follows with twenty topical

chapters, each of which illuminates the dominant questions and lines of inquiry that have determined scholarship within that chapter's chosen theme. Contributors also outline areas in need of further, more sophisticated study and identify critical resources for additional research. The glossary, *American Religious History, A-Z*, lists crucial people, movements, groups, concepts, and historical events, enhanced by extensive statistical data.

african american religious 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 religious 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 religious 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 religious 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.

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