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Spring Quarter 2005  
M,W,F 12:00-12:50

Office Hrs: Tuesdays and Thursdays 1-3 or by appointment  
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ETHNIC STUDIES 188/USP 132  
AFRICAN AMERICANS, THE CHURCH, AND THE CITY

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course examines the development of an urban African-American religious tradition that develops as a result of the Great Migration. Structured thematically and historically, this class explores the impact of the migration upon African-American culture and the religious identity of African Americans. The first part of the quarter will focus on the history and development of African-American religion. The second part of the term will address urban issues confronting the "black church" and how it attempts to address them.

REQUIRED TEXTS: Available at Groundworks Books

- Milton Sernett, Bound for the Promised Land
- Clarence Taylor, The Black Churches of Brooklyn
- C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence Mamiya, The Black Church in the African American Experience
- Albert Raboteau, Slave Religion
- Hans A. Baer and Merrill Singer, African-American Religion in the Twentieth Century
- Course Reader available from University Readers Printing Services (1-800-200-3908)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

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|---|--------------|
| • Site Visit—Participant Observation Paper<br>(Due April 29 <sup>th</sup> ) | 40% of grade |
| • Term Paper (June 3 <sup>rd</sup> )  | 55% of grade |
| • Attendance and Class Participation  | 5% of grade  |

\*An excellent website for information concerning African-American Christianity is <http://www.blackandchristian.com>.

More detailed assignment guidelines will be provided in class.

## PART ONE: THE BLACK CHURCH IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The first part of this course is devoted to providing a historical perspective of the Black Church. It is important to understand its roots and how it has functioned in the lives of African Americans in an urban context. We will look at issues of gender roles, music, and specific case studies of Black Churches in an urban context.

### WEEK ONE —WHAT IS THE BLACK CHURCH?

The "Black Church" is most stable and influential institution in African-American culture but unfortunately this term masks the diversity that exists in the African-American religious experience. This first week is devoted to understanding the beginnings and significance of this critical institution in the African-American community. Albert Raboteau's Slave Religion, published more than thirty years ago, still remains the seminal text for this study.

#### MONDAY

- Raboteau, "The African Diaspora" and "Death of the Gods" in Slave Religion, pp. 3-94.
- Hans Baer, "Introduction" and "Cultural Background" in African-American Religion in the Twentieth Century, pp. xv-27

#### WEDNESDAY

- Raboteau, "Catechesis and Conversion" and "The Rule of Gospel Order" in Slave Religion, pp. 95-210.

#### FRIDAY

- Raboteau, "Religious Life in the Slave Community," "Religion, Rebellion, and Docility," and "Canaan Land" in Slave Religion, pp. 211-322.

### WEEK TWO—UNDERSTANDING THE BLACK CHURCH IN AN URBAN CONTEXT

The Black Church's existence was not limited to rural areas. Though invisible during slavery, it did not remain an institution that functioned secretly. The ending of the Civil War created a visible space for the black church to thrive. By the twentieth century, the black church could be felt in urban cities throughout the nation.

#### MONDAY

- Hans Baer, "Religious Diversification during the Era of Advanced Industrial Capitalism" and "Social Transformations in African-American Religion" in African-American Religion in the Twentieth Century, pp. 28-64, 214-229.
- C. Eric Lincoln, "The Religious Dimension: Toward a Sociology of Black Churches," in The Black Church in the African American Experience, pp. 1-19.
- Lowell Livezey, "The New Context of Urban Religion," in the reader.

#### WEDNESDAY

- Hans Baer, "Mainstream Churches" "Messianic-Nationalist Sects" in African-American Religion in the Twentieth Century, pp. 65-146.
- Dyson, "Speech is My Hammer" in the reader.

#### FRIDAY

- Hans Baer, "Conversionist Sects" and "Thaumaturgical Sects" in African-American Religion in the Twentieth Century, pp. 147-213.
- Dyson, "Searching for Black Jesus" in the reader.

### WEEK THREE—THE GREAT MIGRATION

The Great Migration was a watershed event in African-American history. It marked the first significant move of African Americans to

northern cities. The result of this migration was significant in regards to racial politics and church development in northern cities. This week we will look at this phenomenon and its impact upon African-American religion.

#### MONDAY

- Milton Sernett, Bound for the Promised Land, pp. 1-121.

#### WEDNESDAY

- Milton Sernett, Bound for the Promised Land, pp. 122-153, 180-209.
- West, "Subversive Joy and Revolutionary Patience in Black Christianity" in reader.

#### FRIDAY

- West, "American Africans in Conflict: Alienation in an Insecure Culture" and "The Four Traditions of Response" in the reader.

### WEEK FOUR—GROWTH OF URBAN CHURCHES/STOREFRONTS

One of the results of the Great Migration was the development of storefront churches. The proliferation of storefront churches and the increased membership in more traditional churches led to tremendous church growth. This week we will look at the development of urban churches.

#### MONDAY

- C. Eric Lincoln, "In the Streets of the Black Metropolis: A Profile of Black Urban Clergy and Churches," in The Black Church in the African American Experience, pp.115-163.

#### WEDNESDAY

- Clarence Taylor, "Brooklyn's Black Churches and the Growth of Black Culture, " in The Black Churches of Brooklyn, pp. 67-98.

#### FRIDAY

- Milton Sernett, "When Chicago was Canaan," in Bound for the Promised Land, pp.154-179.

## WEEK FIVE—MICRO-STUDY BLACK PENTECOSTALISM IN BROOKLYN

This week we will focus on the growth of Black Pentecostal churches in Brooklyn. We will analyze their developments and their role in these major urban areas as well as the role of women in urban church development.

### MONDAY

- C. Eric Lincoln, "The Black Pentecostals: The Spiritual Legacy with a Black Beginning," in *The Black Church in the African American Experience*, pp. 76-91.
- Gilkes, "Together and in Harness" in the reader.

### WEDNESDAY

- Clarence Taylor, *The Black Churches of Brooklyn*, pp.1-66.

### FRIDAY

- Clarence Taylor, "Driven by the Spirit" in *The Black Churches of Brooklyn*, pp. 165-188.
- Gilkes, "The Politics of Silence," in the reader.
- Satter, "Marcus Garvey, Father Divine and the Gender Politics of Race Difference and Race Neutrality" in the reader.

## WEEK SIX—A GENDERED PERSPECTIVE—BLACK WOMEN AND THE BLACK CHURCH

The pivotal role of Black women in the "Black Church" has never been contested. Their access to power, particularly in the pulpit, has been challenged, however. This week we will look at the historic role and their influence of Black women in the church.

### MONDAY

- C. Eric Lincoln, "The Pulpit and the Pew: The Black Church and Women," in *The Black Church in the African American Experience*, pp. 274-308.
- Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, "The Black Church: A Gender Perspective," in the reader.

#### WEDNESDAY

- Canon, "Introduction," "Surviving the Blight," "The Emergence of Black Feminist Consciousness," "Womanist Perspectival Discourse and Canon Formation" in the reader.

#### FRIDAY

- Canon, "Womanist Interpretation and Preaching in the Black Church" in the reader.
- Grant, "Women's Experience as the Context and a Source for Doing Theology" in the reader.
- Video

### WEEK SEVEN—THE DEVELOPMENT OF GOSPEL MUSIC

Sacred music has long been central in African American religious experiences. In the city, gospel music became immensely popular. The music influences the culture of the city but the city also influenced the music.

#### MONDAY

- C. Eric Lincoln, "The Performed Word: Music and the Black Church," in The Black Church in the African American Experience, pp. 346-381.
- Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, "Rethinking Vernacular Culture: Black Religion and Race Records in the 1920's and 1930's," in the reader.

#### WEDNESDAY

- Michael Harris, "Old-Line Religion and Urban Migrants: 1920-1930" and "The Emergence of Gospel Blues, 1931-1932," in the reader.
- Bernice Johnson Reagon, "Twentieth-Century Gospel: As the People Moved They Sang a New Song," in the reader.

#### FRIDAY

- Portia Maultsby, "The Impact of Gospel Music on the Secular Music Industry," in the reader.
- Video

## WEEK EIGHT—ANOTHER DIMENSION OF THE BLACK CHURCH: BLACK MUSLIMS

Up until this point in our study, much of our attention has been focused on Black Protestant Christianity. Now, we will turn our focus to two other important expressions of the African-American religious tradition—Islam and Catholicism.

### MONDAY

- Turner, "What Shall We Call Him," "Muslims in a Strange Land", and "The Name Means Everything" in the reader.

### WEDNESDAY

- Turner, "Missionizing and Signifying" and "Malcolm X" in the reader.
- Dyson, "Prophetic Black Islamic Ethics" in the reader.

### FRIDAY

- C. Eric Lincoln, "Reaching for the Masses," in the reader.
- Video

## PART TWO: ISSUES OF URBANIZATION AND ITS CHALLENGES

African Americans move into urban areas, north and south did not occur without its challenges. The promises of moving to the Promised Land were often left unfulfilled. Issues of living in urban areas confronted Black Churches, which grappled with effective means of meeting these challenges. The last two weeks of the term will be devoted to addressing these challenges and analyzing the "black church's" response to them.

## WEEK NINE—ALTERNATIVE RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS IN THE BLACK CHURCH

Living in the city created a fertile environment for the growth of alternative religious movements. Many of these movements were not rooted in a Christian experience but drew many followers. Many of these alternative movements are in existence today.

MONDAY

- Fauset, Black Gods of the Metropolis, in the reader.

WEDNESDAY

- Rabbi Matthew, "Black Judaism in Harlem," in the reader.
- Gold, "The Black Jews of Harlem" in the reader.

FRIDAY

- Hans Baer, The Black Spiritual Movement: A Religious Response to Racism, in the reader.

WEEK TEN—POVERTY, HOMELESSNESS, ECONOMIC INJUSTICE,  
AND RACISM

In this final week, we will look at issues that every "black church" in the city must deal with. We will look at the writings of black theologians who provide us with their views and possible solutions concerning these issues.

MONDAY

Memorial Day—No Class

WEDNESDAY

- Gayraud Wilmore, "Black Power, Black People, and Theological Renewal," in the reader.



## GUIDE SHEET FOR SITE VISIT TO AFRICAN-AMERICAN CHURCH

- **Observe the structure of the service**
  - \*What is the first thing that takes place in the service?
  - \*Where is most of most of the time spent in the service?
  - \*Who speaks publicly and who doesn't?
- **Analyze the sermon**
  - \*What is the subject?
  - \*What is the style of the sermon—narrative, rooted in theological discourse, etc.
  - \*How did the congregation respond to the sermon?
  - \*Are men only preachers in the church or are women also in the pulpit?
- **Analyze the music**
  - \*What type of music (i.e., hymns, contemporary, traditional)?
  - \*Who sings in the church (i.e., choir, ensemble, congregation)
  - \*What are the messages in the songs? Why do you think that these songs were selected? What was the reaction of the congregation? How does the music reflect or not reflect the congregation?
- **Congregation**
  - \*What is the demographic make-up of the congregation?
- **Church's History**
  - \*What type of church is it?
  - \*How old is the church?
  - \*Where is it located?
- **Personal Reflections**
  - \*What were the strengths and weaknesses of the church?
  - \*How does the church attempt to meet the needs of its congregation and the community in which it is located?

## **LIST OF POSSIBLE CHURCHES TO ATTEND FOR SITE VISIT**

### **METHODIST**

BETHEL A.M.E.

3085 K St.

619/232/8717

### **BAPTIST**

BAYVIEW BAPTIST CHURCH

6126 Benson Ave.

619/262/8384

### **PENTECOSTAL**

NORTH PARK APOSTOLIC CHURCH

4079 54<sup>TH</sup> ST.

619/229/2800

ST. STEPHEN'S CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST

5825 Imperial Ave.

619/262/2671

### **CATHOLIC**

CHRIST THE KING CATHOLIC CHURCH

29 N 32<sup>nd</sup> St

619/231/8906.

## **TERM PAPER ASSIGNMENT FOR ES 188/USP 132**

**The purpose of this assignment is for you to analyze the development of a “Black Church” in an urban context. You will read several studies throughout the quarter. Use these as examples for your paper. I have provided a structure for you to follow as well:**

- Explain the roles of the “Black Church” during the Great Migration.
- Identify one Black denomination, movement, or church and trace its historical development and role in a **Southern California city\*** during this era.
- What is its history? Why was it created? When did it start? Who were the leaders?
- Where does it fit in Hans Baer and Lincoln and Mamiya’s typologies of Black Churches?
- How does it respond to the challenges posed by the social gospel? (i.e. HIV/AIDS, poverty, racism, sexism, youth, violence, classism)
- How does it fare in the city—does it grow, does its membership increase or decrease, does urbanization affect its identity? Why?
- Does it embrace or reject the elements of slave religion as discussed by Raboteau? Why or Why not?

**\*Please note that you cannot use the church you attended for a site visit.**

