

Total Praise: An Orientation
To Black Baptist Belief
And Worship @ McKimney '03

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Ain't Gwine Lay My 'Ligion Down

African American Baptist History and Traditions from Slavery to the Present

OVERVIEW

The history of the African American church and the religious worldview of African Americans are undeniably tied to our African past and heritage. Melville Herskovits once stated that slaves brought with them from West Africa a considerable amount of "invisible cargo," represented in the African traditions that today are part of our services of religious worship. Most Africans were not Christians when they were brought as slaves to America in 1619.¹ Others, however, might have found in Christianity familiar views taught as early as the second century when the Christian mission spread to North Africa, "one of the gospel's securest homes," and further south in Africa, to Nubia (see Acts 8:27).² As a result, though Africans arrived in America with specific cultural and religious beliefs and experiences, some of their religious practices may have been Christian or included Christian practices.

Dr. Henry H. Mitchell has conducted seminal research that indicates the many similarities between the doctrines of African traditional religion and Christian beliefs. These shared doctrines include the view of God as **omnipotent**, **omniscient**, **omnipresent**, **provident**, and just. "No slave master taught us that

God is just. We knew that very well before we came here, and there are hundreds of [African] proverbs to document this. The only new things to slaves were Jesus and Hell. The Bible had a new way of saying the rest of our basic worldview."³ Among the Baptist practices that were similar to traditional African religious rituals was **baptism** by **immersion**, a practice that resembled a water rite of the river cults of West Africa.

African American religion is an interesting mix of historical African worldviews and our uniquely American slave-time conversion to, continuance of, or experience of Christianity, a faith whose foundation in one God resembled the traditional faith slaves brought with them from Africa. Some historians and religious scholars refer to the African worldview as the "black sacred cosmos," a set of beliefs that the universe is sacred, that engages believers in special religious rituals, and that respects certain sacred objects.⁴ Cultural historians consider **religion** to be a social phenomenon, a system of faith and belief organized by people who wish to understand, worship, and reap the benefits of a relationship with a power greater than themselves. As is the case with people of all races and ethnicities, Africans were strongly influenced by their many histories and cultures.⁵

With a view of the world that held people and objects as universally holy and valuable, Africans (those brought to America and African Americans born into slavery in this country) had a peculiar experience when their slave masters introduced Christianity to them. Although they were enslaved, despised, mistreated, and devalued by whites, and although they were forced to sit in the balcony or stand outside the door of the church, Africans learned about the God of love. They could easily have decided to reject the religion of their slave masters, but they did not. Instead, our ancestors found in the Christian God someone to love and comfort them in the midst of their painful and degrading environment.

The Christian God ultimately revealed in Jesus of Nazareth dominated the black sacred cosmos. While the structure of beliefs for Black Christians were the same orthodox beliefs as

that of white Christians, there were also different degrees of emphasis and valences given to certain particular theological views. For example, the Old Testament notion of God as an avenging, conquering, liberating [hero and champion] remains a formidable anchor of the faith in most Black churches.⁶

Jesus was thought to be a Savior not just of our souls—our ancestors believed that he would also provide divine rescue from earthly slavery and pain in addition to the reward of heaven for true believers.

As part of this tradition of black Christians, African American Baptists began the first black churches in America that were not extensions of larger white religious denominations.⁷ “Following slavery and a long period of involuntary servitude, many African Americans chose to become Baptist because the faith valued freedom; choosing to be Baptist allowed us to be in charge of our own churches and religious destinies. As an old prayer says, African American Baptists believe that ‘we are free to pick and choose our own praying ground.’”⁸

This chapter addresses the history, organization, culture, and challenges of the African American Baptist praying ground by posing the following questions:

- What is the history of African American Baptist churches?
- Do African American Baptists believe and worship differently from other Baptists?
- Historically, why did so many African Americans choose to be Baptist?
- Do African American Baptists have a unique interpretation of the Bible?
- What are typical forms of religious expression among African American Baptists?
- How are African American Baptist churches typically organized?
- Does the African American Baptist Church have **bishops**?
- What is the role of conventions in African American Baptist churches?
- What current challenges face African American Baptist churches?

THINKING THROUGH MY CHOICE

WHAT IS THE HISTORY OF AFRICAN AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES?

African American Baptists have the same Baptist beliefs and traditions of religious practice as the Europeans who started the faith in the 1600s and those who later brought it to North America. Once in America, black Baptist traditions of religious freedom occurred alongside those of black Methodists and were similarly timed to the American Declaration of Independence, which pushed to free the American colonies from British political rule.

A man named Quassey was the first known black Baptist, registered in 1743 as one of fifty-one members of the Baptist **church** in Newton, Rhode Island. There is controversy among historians about which of two churches was the first African American Baptist church. African Baptist or “Bluestone” Church was founded in 1758 in Mecklenberg, Virginia. While historical records indicate that George Liele, a slave, established the Silver Bluff Church on the Savannah River in South Carolina between 1773 and 1775, the church cornerstone lists 1750 as its founding date.

As churches were founded, they began to gather in convention structures. “Fugitive slaves and free blacks in the North [formed] abolitionist missionary associations and societies, the leaders of which then organized the first regional black conventions. Many of the participants of these associations were for a long time simultaneously involved in white Baptist organizations.”⁹

African American Baptist churches lost some independence after Nat Turner’s insurrection.¹⁰ “That movement sent hot hate back and wide consternation all over the Southland. Generally, what independence Negro churches had enjoyed was taken away. A revised black code was enacted . . . silencing . . . colored preachers. A [white] church . . . [and] association . . . would take a Negro church as a branch; and thus the independence of the Negro church was further postponed.”¹¹ Today there are “eight identifiable black Baptist communions in the United States.”¹² The largest are the National Baptist Convention USA, Inc. (NBC-USA), the National Baptist Convention of America (NBCA), and the Progressive National Baptist Convention (PNBC). The Lott Carey Baptist Foreign

Mission remains a powerful body serving black Baptists. (See Appendix 1 for more information on African American Baptist conventions.)

DO AFRICAN AMERICAN BAPTISTS BELIEVE AND WORSHIP DIFFERENTLY FROM OTHER BAPTISTS?

Baptists from all ethnic groups have the same basic beliefs and theology, although **worship** practices frequently vary as a result of cultural differences and perspectives, which fall into the following categories:

- *Theology*: African Americans of all religions bring components of their African heritage into their worship services. The forms of music that we sing in our praise of God, as well as the physicality of our praise (hand clapping, holy dancing, and lifting holy hands), are tied to our African roots. (See Chapter 8 for a discussion of the influence of historically African traditions on African American Christian music and praise.)

- *Revolutionary perspective*: The African American Christian perspective is also tied to the way our population grew in slavery. After the second generation of slaves was brought to America, more people were born into slavery in America than were brought from Africa. At the time of the Revolutionary War, one-fourth of the American population was black and enslaved. With such large numbers of slaves, accompanied by the tendency of whites to view religion as having a calming influence on the enslaved population, the revolutionary quality of slave religious practices (for example, songs that told slaves to follow the North Star to freedom) went unnoticed for a time, allowing more than three hundred slave rebellions to form. Most of them were led by black preachers.

- *Christian practice*: African American Christians may interpret religious traditions and practices in accordance with their experiences. For example, **Communion** traditions may be uniquely interpreted. Miles Jerome Jones states that "to be at the table . . . is to realize that for some persons to come to the table means at first to overcome the hindrances imposed by hardship and denial."¹³ As was previously mentioned, African American Christians also tend to maintain an Old Testament view of God as an avenging and protective Spirit who understands the struggles of the downtrodden and will bring them out of bondage, much as he did for the children of Israel.

HISTORICALLY, WHY DID SO MANY

AFRICAN AMERICANS CHOOSE TO BE BAPTIST?

Today the majority of religious African Americans identify themselves as Baptist, a statistic with a fascinating history. African Americans and the early white Baptists shared a history of being despised.

The reason why the Baptist faith appealed so strongly to the Negroes is not far to seek. From the onset they had more in common with the white Baptists than with any other denomination. As the white Baptists were looked upon as an outgrowth of the Anabaptists, they were held in contempt by many. There were not many men of standing in this [white] church at first. Therefore, this church drew its members for the most part from the poorer class of people. As these did not own but few, if any slaves, it was easy for them to oppose the institution of slavery.¹⁴

In choosing the Baptist faith, African Americans were also provided the freedom of the autonomous church. "Its local democracy enabled the Negro preachers to participate in the affairs of the church much earlier than any other denomination, and allowed people to worship God in their own way. The African heritage was given free play."¹⁵

DO AFRICAN AMERICAN BAPTISTS

HAVE A UNIQUE INTERPRETATION OF THE BIBLE?

Hermeneutics is the technical term for biblical interpretation. The African American hermeneutic has focused on several facets of interpretation:

- *New Testament teachings*: Although we believe in an Old Testament God who will lead us out of our social and spiritual wilderness, African American Christians focus on the life and teachings of Christ as found in the New Testament. The life of Christ is described in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The remaining New Testament Scripture focuses on the **divinity** of Christ.
- *Liberation language*: Considered essential to how African Americans interpret the Bible, liberation language relates the ways that God and

his Son work to set us free from spiritual and physical bondage. "From the story of Moses in the Hebrew Bible to Jesus' ministry to the poor and oppressed in the New Testament, African Americans have embraced the Word of God and made it their own."¹⁶ African Americans have also strongly supported the idea that religious values should be interpreted within the context of personal experience. One result of this belief is the knowledge that God looks like us. Jesus was noted to have hair like lamb's wool (Revelation 1:14) and is known to be from a geographical region of brown-skinned people. On this issue, A.M.E. **bishop** Henry McNeil Turner once stated,

We have as much right biblically and otherwise to believe that God is a Negro, as you . . . white people have to believe that God is a fine looking, symmetrical and ornamented white man. . . . Every race of people since time began who have attempted to describe God by their words, or by paintings, or by carvings, or by any other form or figure, have conveyed the idea that the God who made them and shaped their destinies was symbolized in themselves, and why should not the Negro believe that he resembles God as much as other people?¹⁷

Affirming that God is black is a component of liberation language, just as the ability to view and adore a painting of a black Jesus is a liberating experience for people of African descent. The bondage of slavery clearly shaped the African American attraction to a God who greatly loves, saves, sacrifices for, resembles, and frees his people, especially when the view has Scriptural support.

- *Development of African American theology*: A number of African American scholars have dedicated their careers to looking at Scripture through a lens colored by their cultural experience. This has resulted in a number of articles and books on African American biblical interpretation, some of which can be found in the Reference sections for each chapter as well as in the recommended resources (Appendix 2). Development of an African American theology has led to courses on African American theology in respected schools of religion and materials to assist ministers in "applying black biblical scholarship to the lives of the people in their congregations."¹⁸

WHAT ARE TYPICAL FORMS OF RELIGIOUS EXPRESSION AMONG AFRICAN AMERICAN BAPTISTS?

We are expected to go into the world, spreading God's Word, through methods including the following:

- *Living the Great Commission*
 - ◊ Missionary work: Missionary work is very important to us. The African American mission movement was begun when Lott Carey established an African mission in Sierra Leone, West Africa, in 1821. The Lott Carey Baptist Foreign Mission Convention was formed in 1897 after a split with the National Baptist Convention over creating a separate black publishing house (see Appendix 1). Not wanting to lose access to resources of the American Baptist Publication Society or to lose votes as required by a merger, the Lott Carey group dedicated itself to foreign missions. Although the Lott Carey Baptist Foreign Mission Convention remains active in its foreign mission work, most of the larger black Baptist conventions now have well-funded missionary societies.
 - ◊ Ministry to others: Designed as strategies for advancing economic and spiritual survival while living the **Great Commission**, church ministries feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and provide many important services that meet the needs of communities inside and outside the church (see Chapter 4 for more information on church **ministry**).
 - *Evangelism*: Simply defined, evangelism is the spreading of Christianity for the purpose of converting souls for Christ. Missionary work is one form of evangelism. Other forms, more often seen in local communities, are:
 - ◊ Revivals: Revivals are usually held in the spring in the weeks surrounding Easter, a time of spiritual rebirth. Revivals are week-long preaching missions designed to renew our spirits and assist us in reviving our commitment to Jesus Christ. Revivals were historically held in tents located in open fields, which allowed persons from surrounding towns to create a temporary **congregation** in which God could be praised. While "old-time" revivals can still be found, most are now held in churches. Revivals tend to be preached by visiting ministers or by full-time

evangelists, traveling preachers without churches whose entire ministry is devoted to bringing souls to Christ.

◊ Lecture series: Many churches also hold lecture series, the focus of which includes pastoral teaching about a particular passage of Scripture, discussions about African American theology, or the application of Scripture to issues of social importance.

◊ Witnessing: Christians frequently tell other people about their conversion experiences. Through this process, Christians serve as witnesses to Christ's goodness to them. By explaining our experiences, we hope to bring new converts to Jesus.

• *Physical and emotive experiences in worship*: African Americans are often expressive worshipers, involving our whole bodies in our praise of God. There are several historical reasons for the physicality of our praise. In Africa, all religious and secular celebrations were accompanied by exuberant singing and dancing. Rhythm, mainly through the use of drums, was an African form of nonverbal language that allowed us to communicate with one another over long distances. We brought those traditions with us when we came to America as slaves. More recent reasons for our emotional responses in church are that our lives are frequently very hard. Church is for us a true sanctuary, a safe haven in which we are free to demonstrate our emotions (pain, disappointment, and happiness) in the presence of the family of like believers. Additionally, as African American Baptist churches increasingly gained from white Baptists the true autonomy of worship that is central to our beliefs, church became a place where we could celebrate outside the eyes and judgment of those who often mistreated us. In church we gave each other respect that was denied us in the world outside of church. Being called Mother, Sister, Brother, and Mister are still experiences worthy of celebration—that we can celebrate our humanity in a world that still denies it is evidence that God loves us. The most common forms of spiritual expressiveness among African American Baptists are:

◊ Getting happy: Also known as shouting, getting happy is a form of joyful dancing that may include arm waving, crying, calling upon God, proclaiming God's goodness, or falling onto the floor in religious ecstasy.¹⁹

◊ Hand clapping: Hand clapping often accompanies singing, acknowledges agreement with speakers, or thanks God for his goodness to us.

◊ Lifting holy hands: Believers often raise both hands toward heaven as a sign of respect for and adoration of Christ.

◊ Prayer: Prayer is the most common way that we use words to communicate with God. African Americans recognize our ancestry in our prayers by calling on the God of our ancestors.

◊ Speaking in tongues: Technically known as *glossolalia*, speaking in tongues is typically found in **Pentecostal** churches and in some Baptist congregations as well. It is thought to be a sign of religious perfection that represents an infilling of the Holy Spirit.²⁰

◊ Standing to honor God: When moved by Scripture, sermons, or singing, African American worshipers may stand to honor God as a sign that they are moved by God's Word.

• *Self-help*: While self-help may sound like an odd category of African American religious expression, it is an essential part of our history and current behavior. The African American church has a tradition of self-help that is tied to our recognition that

the Black Church is the most economically independent institutional sector in the black community. . . . The origins of the black self-help tradition were found in the attempts of slaves to help each other survive the traumas and terrors of the plantation system in any way they could. . . . Mutual aid or beneficial societies and churches were among the first social institutions created by black people.²¹

Modern churches are increasingly involved in community economic development. They have credit unions and banks, build affordable housing, and work with civic and political organizations to make certain that important stores and services are owned by racial minority group members and are located in or near communities of color. (Also see Chapter 9 for a discussion about the role of the church in addressing social issues.)

• *Dress*: Increasingly, African American Christians have found

ways to bring African forms of dress into their religious traditions. For example, many churches are incorporating traditional African fabrics such as kente cloth into their worship services in the following ways:

- ◊ In ministerial or choir robes and stoles
- ◊ For special cultural events where the entire congregation celebrates by wearing African garb
- ◊ By making a personal decision to wear African dress to church on a regular basis.
- *Décor*: African American churches proudly display evidence of African heritage through:
 - ◊ Use of African fabrics as lining for offering baskets or banners
 - ◊ Displays of African art throughout the sanctuary and church building.

HOW ARE AFRICAN AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES TYPICALLY ORGANIZED?

African American Baptist churches follow the same organizational structure as most Baptist churches. See Chapter 3 for information about the typical organization and management of Baptist churches.

DOES THE AFRICAN AMERICAN CHURCH HAVE BISHOPS?

The Baptist faith is not one that includes individual **bishops** and a collective **bishopric** as a higher category of pastoral responsibility. Because the Baptist faith does not have an oversight organizational structure outside of the structure imposed by each local church, it does not *typically* have **bishops**. Bishops tend to work within larger church organizations such as those provided by the Episcopal, AME, and Presbyterian denominations and the Catholic Church (the **Pope**, for example, is the head bishop of the Roman Catholic Church). These church organizational bodies provide qualifications for bishops, assign them to service, and train them for that service by positioning them in specific congregations and moving them up the hierarchy of the denomination. The Full Gospel movement within the Baptist denomination has created an informal **bishopric** that has some well-known church leaders. While individual Baptist bishops

have done good work and are well-respected, the issue of the Baptist bishopric goes against Baptist history and **tenets**. As such, it is quite controversial within the **denomination**.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF CONVENTIONS IN AFRICAN AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES?

Held each year, Baptist conventions provide for African American Baptists a place to meet and discuss the work of their individual churches and to collectively plan for activities and programs that advance Christ's teachings.

Historically, conventions provided a way for a group of local Baptists to provide support programs for newly emancipated slaves. When the Civil War ended in 1865, local Southern churches organized into an association to consolidate their resources. The first state convention was organized in North Carolina in 1866. By 1870 there were Baptist conventions in every Southern state, and a reported five hundred thousand African American Baptists were represented by them.²²

African American conventions are also strongly tied to the missionary movement. Leroy Fitts notes,

The evolution of an African mission was a strong motivating factor in the development of associations and conventions among black Baptists. The primary objective of most organized movements was to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ to millions of Africa's sons and daughters groping in spiritual darkness. To this end, much of the economic strength of the associations and conventions went to the support of an African mission.²³

These conventions are also political in nature, providing African American Baptists with a venue for power and acknowledgment that is often denied them in the outside world. According to Dr. Benjamin Mays, well-know **theologian**, historian, and the sixth president (1940–1967) of Morehouse College,

The great importance attached to the political maneuvering at a National Baptist Convention . . . can be explained in part by the

fact that the Negro is largely cut off from leadership in the body politic. The local churches, associations, conventions and conferences become the Negro's Democratic and Republican conventions, his Legislature, his Senate and House of Representatives.²⁴

There are reported to be approximately thirteen million African American Baptists, the majority of whom are affiliated with three conventions. These conventions are the National Baptist Convention USA, Inc., the National Baptist Convention of America, and the Progressive National Baptist Convention. The NBCA and the PNBC broke away from NBC, the largest and oldest of the black Baptist conventions. It is important to note that African American Baptists are often dually aligned in their convention memberships. For example, many African American Baptists also affiliate with non-black Baptist groups, such as American Baptist Churches in the USA, the group previously known as the Northern Baptists, who supported the abolition of slavery. Appendix 1 provides details about African American Baptist convention history, beliefs, and challenges.

Conventions are attended by ministers, lay leaders of the church, and members of local congregations. The committee structure of the conventions allows groups interested in similar issues to make policy and to plan programs that can then be enacted by local congregations if they choose. Conventions are also very social events and give life to the familiar statement that "there ain't no party like a Holy Ghost party, 'cause a Holy Ghost party don't stop!"

WHAT CURRENT CHALLENGES FACE AFRICAN AMERICAN BAPTISTS?

There are a number of issues that face today's African American church, presenting challenges to its survival and creating opportunities to bring new souls to Christ. Among these issues are:

- *The maintenance of outreach strategies.* We need to actively maintain outreach ministries so that we can address the needs of the least, the last, and the lost in our communities. It is essential that the black church understand its role as an institution at whose center is Christ

and whose mission has been and must continue to be compassionate and caring service to others. That service is theological—we must provide to those within our walls the Word of God, a Word that is rich and relevant in the lives of African Americans. Paraphrased, that Word says, "when I was hungry, homeless, sick, downtrodden, distressed, and without, you provided for me." The black church lives its theology through service. Caring and compassionate service is also part of our evangelical mission.

- *Evaluation and accountability.* Although the black church cannot easily assess the success of the church's mission because the objectives that are part of the church's ministry are seldom evaluated by way of measurable standards, striving for evaluation and accountability is still a critical goal. Without vision, the people perish. Without accountability, the church cannot survive. For this reason, Rev. William Shaw, the president of the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc., restructured the convention around the VISA plan: Vision, Integrity, Structure, and Accountability. Individual Baptist churches must also implement programs of accountability. For example, finances should be transparent; annual reports must reflect line items for every expenditure of the church, including all salaries.²⁵

- *The quality of black church leadership.* A hotly debated subject on Tavis Smiley's 2003 "State of the Black Church: Relevant, Repressive or Reborn" was the quality of black church leadership. Discussions focused on the fact that as many as 90 percent of black ministers are not-seminary trained. According to Rev. Dr. Jeremiah A. Wright Jr. of Chicago's Trinity United Church of Christ, "You can't be a doctor without going to medical school. And you can't be a lawyer without going to law school," but you can become a minister and hold sway in a pulpit with no training. While no one disputes that God calls ministers to service, those called owe it to God and the people to be well prepared. Our black forebears lost their lives in pursuit of equal educational opportunities for our people. As leaders, ministers must set the example for educational excellence.

For additional information on challenges facing the African American church, see Chapter 7, pages 82–84, for challenges to

black church leadership and Chapter 9 for a discussion on the role of African American Baptist churches in response to social issues and needs.

FVI

Based on Lamentations 3:22-23, the following contemporary song provides strong support for the ways in which African Americans exercise their religious faith. Believing in a just God, a God who has been merciful to us in the worst of times, we know that each morning brings opportunities for a new life in Christ.

"New Morning, New Mercies"²⁶

*It's not for anything I've done,
The mercy God shown through his Son.
I'm blessed beyond what I should be,
The more I stop and think,
It's so hard to believe.*

*New morning, new mercies,
They are new every day of my life.
Unmerited favor, showered on me from above,
New mornings, new mercies.
... Every time I wake up in the morning,
See the dawning; yeah! that's new mercy!
When I'm down he picks me up,
Running low he fills my cup;
Yeah! that's new mercy.*

Morning, new mercies.

THAT'S WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT . . .

- What are the most influential stories that you have heard from your elders about "old-time religion"?
- What are the most important lessons taught by the slaves' acceptance of Jesus into their new lives and traditional cultural practices?

- In what ways does your church participate in the traditional missionary role of the African American church?
- How does your church address the social challenges that it faces in its community?
- What does the song "New Morning, New Mercies" teach about African American religious belief and practice?

PRAYERFUL CONSIDERATIONS

- What are my prayers for the sacrifices of my ancestors to grant me this opportunity for religious freedom?
- What am I willing to commit to God and my church to keep alive its history and traditions, even in the changing environment of today's church?
- How do I show my thankfulness for God's mercies to me?

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NOTES

1. Some Africans came to America not as slaves but as bonded servants, craftsmen, and explorers.
2. Craig S. Keener and Glenn Ury, *Defending Black Faith: Answers to Tough Questions About African American Christianity* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 14.
3. Letter to author from Drs. Ella and Henry H. Mitchell, April 26, 2002.
4. The sacred objects and figures that are central to the black sacred cosmos will differ depending on the particular African religious tradition. See C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1990), 3.
5. While most African Americans are likely to have ancestors who came from the west coast of Africa, the many groups of the region differed by tribe, language, physical appearance, culture, and behavioral practices.
6. *Ibid.*
7. The first African American churches were Methodist churches that split from white congregations. Because Baptist churches are autonomous, African Americans were easily able to start their own churches.
8. Interview with Rev. Dr. Samuel B. McKinney, pastor emeritus, Mount Zion Baptist Church, Seattle, Washington, February 14, 2002.
9. Lincoln and Mamiya, 20.
10. Born into slavery, Nat Turner inherited a deep hatred of slavery from his mother and grandmother. Able to read and write, Turner received a vision from God to rise up against slavery. On August 21, 1831, he and seven other slaves killed his master. They were joined by seventy-five more slaves and killed sixty more whites. Three thousand state militiamen ended the uprising, killing one hundred slaves not involved in the fighting. Turner was executed on November 11, 1831.
11. Lincoln and Mamiya, 20-21.
12. *Ibid.*, 21.
13. Miles Jerome Jones, *Preaching Papers: The Hampton and Virginia Union Lectures* (Hampton, Va.: Martin Luther King Fellows Press, 1995), 21.
14. Wade Hampton McKinney, *A Study of the Negro Baptist Groups in the United States*, a thesis submitted to the faculty of the Rochester Theological Seminary, April 1, 1923, 1. It is also important to note that many white Baptists, particularly those who held many slaves, supported slavery, resulting in a split in the Baptist convention. See Appendix 1.
15. *Ibid.*, 21.
16. Jacqueline Trussell, "Making Religion Relevant: What Does It Mean to Be Black and Christian?" www.blackandchristian.com.
17. Quoted in Lincoln and Mamiya, 177.
18. Trussell.
19. Many African American Baptist churches have nurses on duty during serv-

ices in the event that people accidentally hurt themselves in a moment of religious ecstasy.

20. This form of ecstatic speaking, not understood by human ears, is thought to be heard and understood only by God.

21. Lincoln and Mamiya, 243.

22. www.blackandchristian.com.

23. Leroy Fitts, *A History of Black Baptists* (Nashville: Broadman, 1985), 24.

24. Benjamin E. Mays and Joseph W. Nicholson, in Jacqueline Trussell, "The Convention Movement of the Black Baptist Church," www.blackandchristian.com.

25. The author notes that many ministers do not agree with her regarding the publication of their salaries. However, as a deacon and a parishioner, the author thinks it essential that church budgets honestly reflect all expenditures, perquisites (such as benefit packages), and income, all defined clearly through line item budgets. For additional information on church budget procedures, see Floyd Massey Jr. and Samuel B. McKinney's *Church Administration in the Black Perspective*, Revised in 2003.

26. "New Morning, New Mercies," Nolan Williams Jr., NEW-J Publishing/ASCAP, 2000.