



VOLUME 1

SWING LOW

A HISTORY
of BLACK
CHRISTIANITY
in the
UNITED STATES



WALTER R.
STRICKLAND II



InterVarsity Press
ivpress.com

Taken from *Swing Low, Volume 1* by Walter Robert Strickland II.

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Published by InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL.

www.ivpress.com.

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INTRODUCTION

IT WAS APRIL 24, 1823, and after months of braving the open sea, land was in sight. A passenger on the vessel, a woman with the complexion of cocoa, later recalled, “The sight chilled our very hearts. The ladies retired to the cabin and burst into tears; and some of the gentlemen turned pale: my own soul sickened within me, and every nerve trembled.” She recollected thinking to herself during the voyage,

I must look forward to that Sabbath which will never end—there to see, face to face, what we now see dimly through a glass; and to meet you, with my other friends, whom I have left behind. It is a source of consolation to me to be able to think that you, with many others in my native land, pray for me. Were it not for that, I should almost despair.

This is not a record of the dreaded Middle Passage but of missionary Betsey Stockton’s transit from America’s Eastern Seaboard to the Sandwich Islands (later named Hawaii). Stockton was born into slavery in 1798 and was soon without mother or father to look after her. She converted to Christianity in 1816 and was manumitted (freed) the following year. Stockton became a member at First Presbyterian Church in Princeton, and soon after she concluded that it was the sacred duty of every Christian “to offer themselves in humble obedience to God’s call to carry out his plan of salvation through Jesus Christ for the world.”¹

Her conviction kindled a desire to depart for Africa as a missionary. Shortly thereafter, Stockton learned that Princeton Theological Seminary student Charles S. Stewart was planning to depart for the Sandwich Islands, and she joined her efforts with those of his family. Stockton was commissioned by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and became the second single American woman sent overseas.

¹Robert J. Stevens, *Profiles of African-American Missionaries* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2012), 65.

While on the island, Stockton established a school for the Makaʻainana, the common people of Maui. After receiving some opposition from the local chiefs, in 1824 Stockton established a school and was its first teacher.² She taught algebra, English, Latin, and history. Her missionary strategy was upheld by the conviction that reading and writing were essential to ongoing discipleship. By 1826, the school Stockton founded had educated eight thousand Hawaiian students with the intention of imparting the gospel of Jesus Christ. In 1825, Stockton returned to Princeton due to the poor health of Stewart’s wife, Harriet.

Like the tale of Betsey Stockton, the African American Christian story recounts a determined people driven by faith to pursue spiritual and social uplift for themselves and others to God’s glory. The narrative contained in these pages tells the story of countless heroes and heroines of the faith who were often overlooked while they walked the earth, who have been forgotten in history, but whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.

A STORY WITHIN A STORY

The Christian story is a global story composed of a “cloud of witnesses” (Hebrews 12:1) from “all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues” (Revelation 7:9). Contributions from Black Catholics and other organized faiths notwithstanding, this volume is limited to professed Black Christians within Protestant denominations and communions in the United States, or missionaries who were sent from America to other nations. This volume’s focus on African American Christianity means that the expansive witness of the broader African diasporic Christian community is not within the book’s immediate scope despite their meaningful contributions to the faith. The tale of Black faith is interwoven into the tapestry of God’s people but is often absent in the pages of church history. This Christian narrative steps into that void by featuring the stories of Hosea Easton, Zilpha Elaw, Elias Camp Morris, Harriett A. Cole Baker, Gardner C. Taylor, Mary McCleod Bethune, and others as they displayed how the gospel of Jesus Christ redeems sinners and restores them to walk faithfully within their cultural and historical context. This narrative highlights the beauty of the African American contribution to the universal Christian story, of which Jesus Christ is at the center.

THE THEOLOGICAL ANCHORS OF BLACK CHRISTIANITY

The story of Black Christianity in the United States has been told in a variety of ways. A common approach features denominational development. C. Eric Lincoln and

²Gregory Nobles, *The Education of Betsey Stockton: An Odyssey of Slavery and Freedom* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2022), 115.

Lawrence H. Mamiya's *The Black Church in the African American Experience* is a classic example of this method. Another approach focuses on African origins, and this is characterized by Albert J. Raboteau's *Slave Religion*. The most common method employed by trained theologians reflects the priorities of Black liberationists who evaluate African American Christianity with the rubric of radicalism.

Theologian James H. Cone argues that "the black church was born in protest" and that a radical posture is the hallmark that legitimizes a Black church.³ Historian Gayraud S. Wilmore's 1973 publication of *Black Religion and Black Radicalism* cemented Cone's insistence on political protest as the means of belonging to the African American religious tradition.⁴ This approach incorporates figures based on their opposition to slavery, resistance against Jim Crow segregation, and fight against social injustice, and often overlooks Conversion stories and the vibrant spiritual witness of Black Christianity.

The two-volume work *Swing Low* resists assessing the African American Christian tradition with a method that materialized in the middle of the twentieth century. Instead, this volume employs a theological criterion that emerged from the nascent days of African American faith. The rubric deployed in these volumes is defined as theological Anchors that conceptualize the doctrinal themes that emerge from within the story of Black Christianity in America. *Swing Low* volume 1 chronicles how the Anchors emerged and matured and developed in their sophistication and emphasis through history while maintaining independent viability until a calculated methodological shift led by Black liberation theologians.

By offering a historically detailed account with a keen eye toward its theological foundations, the Anchors maintain a familiar cord that traces its roots to the orthodox theological commitments of both African and non-African church fathers. While Black Christians did not set out to establish an organized doctrinal

³James H. Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997), 94.

⁴Cone and Wilmore's contemporaries also critiqued their historical approach. Chief among them was Cecil Cone, the brother of James Cone. Cecil Cone insisted that James Cone's deployment of Black power in his theological project bequeathed essential problems in his formulation. Cecil Cone writes, "Because [James] Cone used Black Power as the point of departure for this theological analysis of black religion, our argument is that he was unable to grasp its essence. He wrongly perceived black religion to be primarily political activity as found in Stokely Carmichael and Rap Brown. This led Cone to an affirmation of the pre-Civil War black religious traditions of Nat Turner, Denmark Vesey, and Gabriel Prosser, but to a rejection of the post-Civil War traditions as compensatory. . . . The confessional story of black people's relationship to the Almighty Sovereign God is replaced by the call to political activity." Cecil Wayne Cone, "The Identity Crisis in Black Theology: An Investigation of the Theological Interpretation of Black Religion in the Works of Joseph R. Washington, James Cone and J. Deotis Roberts" (PhD diss., Emory University, 1974), 63.

framework, these thought patterns consistently emerge from the literature. The following theological Anchors summarize the doctrinal commitments that African Americans have historically affirmed.

Anchor 1: Big God. A Big God is at the center of African American Christianity—the one who is “able to do exceedingly abundantly above all we ask or think” (Ephesians 3:20). The God who is able is affirmed without dispute throughout the tradition. In the Black community, African American theologians conclude that the ultimate question is not “Does God exist?” but rather “What is his character?”

During the Great Awakenings, Black converts received an overly spiritualized faith from evangelists. Despite accepting the Christian faith, they did not internalize all they received. African slaves contested a dualistic expression of God confined to the spiritual realm. From the beginning of the African American story, there was an expectation that divine interaction profoundly shaped every area of human existence—including the social, political, and economic spheres. Divine handiwork ascribed intrinsic value to God’s creation and especially to his image bearers. Consequently, Black Christians were convinced that the oppression they endured and the counterfeit doctrine used to uphold Black inferiority were not beyond divine judgment.

God’s sovereignty affirmed that neither slave masters nor bigots were ultimate—God is. The need for a Big God in the face of suffering did not expire at emancipation; it was necessary when Reconstruction unraveled, during Jim Crow segregation, and throughout decades of de facto racism and disenfranchisement. God’s meticulous providence brought comfort to the faithful despite their circumstances because perfect love, grace, and mercy are essential to God’s character. The tension created between life’s barbarous circumstances and a sovereign God caused theodicy (that is, divine engagement with evil in the world) to emerge as a centerpiece of theological consideration. However, God’s praiseworthy character deemed him worthy of confidence. God executes his divine will, which includes justice on earth as it is in heaven and hope in the life to come.

Anchor 2: Jesus. Christ is essential to the Christian faith, and his person and work are fundamental to the African American theological tradition. A driving motif of the incarnation is identification. For example, Jesus identified with God the Father, the Holy Spirit, and humanity at his baptism and once again with humankind during his wilderness temptations. For Black Christians, Jesus’ identification with life’s joys and sorrows forged meaningful solidarity with the marginalized.

Referring to the Savior as Jesus (his given name), rather than Christ (his office), emphasized Jesus' nearness to the plight of the least.

Jesus' kinship with those who are "despised and rejected" contradicts the social order's ongoing assault on their image-bearing capacity. Jesus' earthly life was a foretaste that casted seeds of love and justice that will fully bloom in his kingdom. While his life bespoke solidarity with the "least of these," this is only comforting because he is God. The God-man purchased redemption on Calvary's cross, and sinners who receive Jesus' death and resurrection for their sin are free from sin's deadly consequences.

African American Christians have long placed a strong emphasis on the blood of Jesus. "The blood," which is central in Black preaching and hymnody, testifies that the Savior is acquainted with grief, and his blood washes away their guilty stains. Blacks in the antebellum period were captivated by Christ's blood because unjust bloodshed by slaves draped over barrels, strapped to trees, and tied to fenceposts was a tragically common occurrence. But Jesus' redeeming blood, shed on the cross, granted hope in the pit of suffering, and his resurrection offered believers a foretaste of victory over sin and oppression that is theirs in Christ Jesus.

Anchor 3: Conversion and Walking in the Spirit. Conversion and Walking in the Spirit coalesce as an event and a process. Like two sides of the same coin, these distinct realities relate to each other. The Conversion (or salvation) event exchanges sin and condemnation for new life in Christ through his atoning death and resurrection. The moment of Conversion initiates the sanctification process, wherein believers are conformed to Christ's likeness by overcoming the power of sin in their lives by the Spirit's power. While the lion's share of the tradition affirms that sanctification is a lifelong process, those in the holiness tradition embrace Christian perfectionism, which affirms that believers are fully sanctified in a second blessing of the Spirit (distinct from salvation).

The concepts of sin, repentance, Conversion, and sanctification are prominent within African American Christianity because large numbers of Blacks converted to faith in Christ at revivals during the Great Awakenings. These themes were woven into the fabric of African American Christianity. From one generation to the next, these biblical concepts were passed down through discipleship because believers are prone to pass along notions that fanned their own belief into flame.

Walking in the Spirit is the means of demonstrating Christ's lordship in the believer's life. Sanctification encompasses pursuing personal piety expressed in the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) and social awareness as described in Micah's

summary of godly living (Micah 6:8). Spiritual warfare, in the form of racial terrorism, reinforces the need for God's Spirit in daily life. The need for a powerful spiritual experience marked Black church gatherings, which featured exuberant worship and dynamic preaching that made doctrine dance. Parishioners gathered with expectancy to encounter the Spirit to overcome the hurts of the past and prevail over the trials to come. The role of the Holy Spirit in the African American Christian tradition cannot be overestimated.

Anchor 4: The Good Book. The Bible is the Good Book. African Americans are a Bible-centric people with a healthy dependence on God's revealed Word. Despite high illiteracy rates, Bible knowledge increased dramatically as enslaved Blacks rehearsed biblical stories and sang spirituals in the fields and in their living quarters. Telling and retelling biblical accounts of Israel was far more than entertainment; it was an act of resistance. African Americans avoided making the Good Book an object of distanced analysis by thrusting themselves into the biblical narrative. Slaves identified with the Hebrew people and declared themselves participants in the biblical drama. Their identification with the story further cemented them within the people of God and reassured their inherent dignity.

During the antebellum period, few desires rivaled education within the Black community. Throughout Reconstruction, literacy skyrocketed as Blacks were educated. Reading was the primary goal of education, and in particular reading Scripture. The impact of the biblical narrative was amplified, especially among Black leaders, because pastors did not read theological treatises crafted by formally trained theologians; they mastered "telling the story." African Americans also desired to read Scripture to undo the exegetical abuses of slave owners who sought to justify Black subservience with the words of God.

African American Christians affirmed that Scripture was the sole divinely authored guide for salvation and godly living. The nineteenth century gave rise to debates about the sufficiency and inerrancy of Scripture that were primarily located in the ivory towers of theological academies to which Blacks had no access. Among African Americans, the most fundamental assertion concerning Scripture's nature has been regarding authority—does the Bible have the right to guide personal and public life? An affirmative answer has been virtually unquestioned because it is assumed that when the Bible speaks, God speaks. Among contemporary African American Christians, interpretative issues that question the Bible's authority are largely relegated to the academy, not the church. Rank-and-file Black Christians are a Bible-believing people.

Anchor 5: Deliverance. God is a liberator. This biblical theme directly applies the Christian faith to the African American experience. Sometimes also called freedom or liberation, Deliverance is established in significant biblical events that serve as an interpretative key for unlocking Scripture's message and discerning the unchanging character of God. Most prominently, the exodus reminded Israel of God's faithfulness and demonstrated that slavery was against his will and that divine power was available to deliver his people. Similarly, Jubilee was a celebration of canceling debts and freeing slaves that was intended to establish God's liberating character in the social consciousness of his people. These acts of Deliverance culminated in Christ's death and resurrection, which secured victory over every manifestation of sin for his people.

Liberation language describes a series of experiences in the Christian life. Three separate acts of Deliverance start with liberation from sin at Conversion and culminate with Deliverance in God's eschatological kingdom. Between the liberating acts of Conversion and glorification, sinfulness is palpable in the social, economic, and political realms of daily life. Consistent with his unchanging nature, God, by the power of Jesus' resurrection, is the deliverer from each of these dire circumstances.

Liberation's place in the biblical witness is nearly uncontested among African Americans, but the method employed to pursue liberation by God's people has been the locus of spirited discussion, especially since the civil rights movement. Wide-ranging proposals notwithstanding, two categories emerge in discussions of pursuing divine Deliverance. The first comprises those who insist that the gospel *is* liberation—with a nearly exclusive gaze toward political and social freedom. The second group constitutes those who hold that liberation is an imperative of the gospel and that the intensity of racial oppression warrants concerted attention to apply the balm of the gospel to this social wound. At its best, the tradition holds salvific, social, and eschatological liberation in tension and shrewdly applies this theme to the Black experience.

Inherent integration of the Anchors. African American theological reflection is a celebratory task. Passionate doctrinal expression is a means of extolling the God who can save his people from their sins and overcome life's trials. As the Anchors are assessed throughout the narrative, it is essential to note that thought, action, and worship are intrinsic to Christian faithfulness within historic Black faith. Theological reflection on the Anchors does not conclude with abstract concepts but with a living witness to biblical teaching. Said differently, for Blacks, Christianity is a practiced faith, so the Anchors have not achieved their purpose

until they guide activity in both public and private life. In addition to serving as an instructional means of introducing the theological themes of African American Christianity, this story of Black faith incorporates a wide variety of self-confessed Christians, and these Anchors are a means of demonstrating whether their doctrinal commitments lie within or extend beyond the orthodox faith that African Americans have historically affirmed.

PERIODS AND CHAPTERS

Each chapter highlights significant ecclesiastical events and provides a nuanced historical context to trace the doctrinal Anchors of the African American Christian tradition. Following this introduction, chapter two documents manifestations of the Christian faith in Africa prior to the transatlantic slave trade, which refutes the fallacy that God used slavery to introduce Christianity to Africans. This chapter also recounts the circumstances of Africans arriving in the New World. Chapter three demonstrates how the Christian faith spread among Africans in America during the First and Second Great Awakenings. Chapter four explores how African Americans took the often-warped faith given to them by their masters, made it their own, and reclaimed it for freedom. This chapter is punctuated by exploring where Blacks worshiped and how faith energized the “invisible institution” and Black abolitionism.

Chapter five marks the beginning of a new era, initiated by the Emancipation Proclamation. Saying that the invisible institution became visible during this period is the best way to describe the establishment of Black churches and denominations, which became the central institution of the African American community.⁵ Chapter six chronicles how the Black church remained the central organizational body in the Black community and provided services for Black people, including educational opportunities.

Chapter seven begins with the advent of Jim Crow segregation, which marked a new normal in America that was punctuated by the Great Migration. Chapter eight highlights two budding theological movements, namely, Black Pentecostalism and Black fundamentalism, that burst on to the scene amid the rapidly changing intellectual and ecclesiastical climate in America. Chapter nine accounts for the development of the intellectual foundations of the civil rights movement, along with the historical and theological foundations of its leaders and foot soldiers.

⁵George F. Bragg, *History of the Afro-American Group of the Episcopal Church*, Academic Affairs Library (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1922), 30-31.

The book's interlude chronicles the advent of the Black consciousness movement. This movement was so profound in the African American community that it required a response from Black leaders in education, community development, and in the church. The response was so disparate among Black Christians that it results in a need to account for two distinct responses to Black consciousness. Whereas before the interlude, the story is told in chapters that advance chronologically, after the interlude, two stories will be told, one of Black evangelicalism and the other of Black liberationism, which are concurrent movements with overlapping chronologies.

Chapter ten documents the formation of the National Negro Evangelical Association along with its social, political, and theological priorities. Chapter eleven recounts a distinct shift in the association's ethos as it sought to bear witness to Christ amid a volatile cultural moment. Chapter twelve recounts the diasporic nature of Black evangelicals within historically Black denominations, evangelical institutions of higher education, and parachurch ministries.

Chapter thirteen accounts for the origin and early stages of Black liberation theology. In addition, this chapter highlights the contributions of select first-generation Black liberationists. Chapter fourteen accounts for second-generation Black liberationists and proposes a third generation. The final chapter offers a short account of developments in the twenty-first century that are not conclusive but worth noting because they will likely develop into a movement deserving attention as historical distance grants further clarity.

USING THESE VOLUMES

This volume is intended to be accessible enough to serve as a first-time foray into the African American Christian tradition, but it also provides an overarching narrative for those who are familiar with aspects of the tradition outside a consistent theological framework. With both readers in mind, here are some tips to help every reader get the most out of this book.

Two volumes working together. This book is part of a two-volume set. Each volume can be read independently, but their value is amplified when they are used together. Throughout both books, careful attention is given to tracing the development of the theological Anchors that emerge from the African American Christian tradition. The Anchors appear capitalized as proper nouns when they are assessed. The anthology, volume 2, highlights the theological Anchors as they appear throughout the primary sources. Another feature that integrates the

volumes is the reference of over one hundred primary sources in volume 1 that are featured in volume 2. This allows readers to have a firsthand encounter with the literature that drives this theological narrative.

Representing Black dialects. To allow African American saints to speak for themselves, both volumes contain representations of Black dialects that remain as they were originally recorded. This authentically captures the strength, resilience, and beauty of African American faith in the words they were expressed in. This editorial decision insists that the strength of Christian faith is not awakened because of complex theological expressions. Faith’s power emits from its object and living in faithful obedience to a praiseworthy God. In addition, the grammatical solecisms of Black dialects convey important regional and chronological details that would be otherwise lost.

Project scope. This volume’s primary focus is African American Christianity. Exceptional African diasporic contributions to the faith are numerous but are only included in reference to Black Christianity in America. In this volume, it follows that the term *Black* is commonly a designation for African Americans. Further, the focus on Christian expressions of “God-talk” (i.e., theology) does not discount the impact of non-Christian religious expression in the Black community but is not featured in the narrative.

The purpose of a survey. Both volumes are surveys. Volume 1 provides a historical-theological narrative spanning several hundred years, and volume 2 offers a sampling of the literature produced by this theological tradition. As a result, neither volume is exhaustive, but they are the seedbed for more focused research and a foray into resources that are yet to receive the attention they deserve. After completing these volumes, I am dedicating my research and writing to this much-needed task of retrieval—and I encourage others to do the same.

Corresponding Chapters/Sections in Volumes 1 and 2

Volume 1 Chapter	Volume 2 Section
1	introduction
2, 3, 4	1
5, 6	2
7, 8, 9	3
10, 11, 12	4
13, 14	5
15	6

THE CONTINUED JOURNEY OF BETSEY STOCKTON

Upon returning to New England, Stockton was hired by the Committee for the Establishment of the Coloured Infant School in Philadelphia. The school was the first of its kind, and Stockton founded and served as the school's principal and as a teacher from 1828 to 1830. Soon after, she departed the United States as a missionary once again to establish a school in Grape Island, Canada, that instructed Native American children. Stockton's biographer notes, "Within two months, the fruits of Stockton's work were apparent—'She came for the purpose of setting up an Infant School, which has succeeded admirably'—and other teachers across the region built upon her success well into the 1830s."⁶

In September 1830, Harriet Stewart died, and Stockton cheerfully took over the care of her three children, who had previously become her family. In addition to her new maternal responsibilities, she established a school for Black children in Princeton, New Jersey, the only such school in Princeton at the time. In 1836, the African American members of First Presbyterian Church, where Stockton attended, were given permission to receive Communion at their own parish. She was one of the founding members of the church, the First Colored Presbyterian Church of Princeton, later named Witherspoon Street Church. Stockton transitioned to glory in 1865, and her services were held at Princeton University, where President John Maclean Jr. and theologian Charles Hodge presided.

African American Christianity is full of stories like Betsey's—tales of the faithful that will be forgotten if they are not told.

⁶Nobles, *Education of Betsey Stockton*, 147.

A TRANSATLANTIC FAITH

THE CONTEMPORARY TREND of disregarding Christian orthodoxy because it was used as a tool of Western hegemony and colonization is prevalent in America. The abuse of Christian doctrine to gain power is unfortunate and undeniable, but an honest look at the church's history demonstrates that "contending for the faith once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3), based on biblical authority, is an ancient African practice that predates colonization. The theological Anchors of Black faith have their roots in Africa and were transported to America and blossomed into a fully orbed Christian witness. In particular, the establishment of a Big God, Jesus, and the Good Book are prominent in Black transatlantic faith.

This brief sketch of African Christianity is not exhaustive but bears witness to precolonial African Christianity that was not established by coercion but as a free choice. These regional accounts of early African faith demonstrate that the African American Christian story begins in Acts 8 with the Ethiopian eunuch—not the transatlantic slave trade.¹ From the pages of the New Testament to the church fathers, African Christianity is an often-overlooked wellspring of the church's history. By the fifth century, four principal African civilizations were predominantly Christianized: North Africa, Egypt, Nubia, and Ethiopia. The Christian gospel spread throughout the continent from these early societies via trade routes where goods were exported, and religion was in tow.

In the New Testament, the term *Ethiopian* is commonly used to describe Black persons residing south of Egypt. Consequently, the biblical references to the queen of Sheba and the Ethiopian eunuch are not direct references to sub-Saharan nations.

¹This summary closely follows the work of Vince L. Bantu in *A Multitude of All Peoples: Engaging Ancient Christianity's Global Identity* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2020).

North Africa is a seedbed of Christian thought. Born in Carthage, Tertullian (b. 155/160, d. after 220) was one of Africa's most significant early church fathers. His theological treatises in Latin shaped the doctrinal vocabulary of the church around the world. Cyprian (200–258), a Carthaginian native, provided theological and ecclesiological leadership during a time of false teaching, schism, and persecution. His most profound treatise was *On the Unity of the Church*. Tertullian and Cyprian's influence in the church and beyond is difficult to overestimate.

However, the influence of Tertullian and Cyprian is eclipsed by that of Augustine (345–430), who is unquestionably the most influential Christian thinker outside Scripture. Augustine expounded a Big God for the universal church to anchor its hope. While his African roots are commonly neglected, he was born in the Numidian city of Thagaste (modern Souk Ahras, Algeria) and made references to himself as being African.² While he wrote his famous *Confessions* and *City of God* in Latin, Augustine continually identified with his people by speaking the common Nubian language.

In addition to theological formation, North Africa was the site of inspiring stories of faithfulness that spread throughout the region. Perpetua (182–203), a noblewoman from Carthage, was imprisoned for her faith and was later martyred. Her book, *The Passion of Saints Perpetua and Felicity*, is the first known Christian text composed by a woman, and as it spread throughout ancient North Africa, the gospel was broadcasted in its pages.

Anthony the Great (251–356) was a famous Egyptian monk from Scetis who promoted asceticism, self-denial of all forms of sensual indulgence, as the model Christian lifestyle. Athanasius wrote his biography and promoted his ideas, and Anthony became a central figure in the Egyptian church.

While North Africa was a doctrinal fountainhead, Egypt and Alexandria were points of departure for the Christian faith onto the rest of the continent. Among Coptic (Egyptian) Christians, the long-held story remains that the apostle Mark introduced their region to the Christian faith. The apostle converted Egyptians, appointed natives as bishops, and continued with his missionary journeys. After the Council of Constantinople in 381, the Egyptian church fought to maintain orthodoxy, and Christianity became the dominant religion over against paganism.

²Bantu, *Multitude of All Peoples*, 114.

Benjamin of Alexandria (590–662) was an Alexandrian patriarch who fought for an indigenous African expression of the Trinity and combated Roman theological error.

The Council of Constantinople in 381 was the second ecumenical church council. This assembly pronounced the trinitarian doctrine of equality of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

After Egyptian missionaries shared the gospel with Nubians, the struggle to maintain an indigenous expression of the Trinity raged during the fifth century. Figures such as Julianus and Theodora resisted the spread of the trinitarian language from the ecumenical church councils in favor of an African expression of Christ's humanity and divinity. Theodora's help was essential. As the emperor's wife, she was able to stall an envoy of Chalcedonian bishops at the Egyptian boarder who were intent on carrying the Chalcedonian trinitarian formula into Nubia. Orthodox North African language for the divinity and humanity of Christ spread in Africa via Theodora's missionaries under Julianus's leadership.

Alexandrian trinitarianism embraced the full humanity and divinity of Jesus but had difficulty with the language of two natures. Africans maintained that Jesus' humanity and divinity were migrated into one nature (*physis*) at the incarnation, in contrast with the "one person, two natures" affirmation of Chalcedon.

Ethiopia is one of the oldest world civilizations, and its influence is felt throughout sub-Saharan Africa. Ethiopia's dramatic precolonial story of Christian orthodoxy climaxed soon after Ethiopian King Ezana (303–350) was baptized, insisted on the construction of church buildings, and adopted Christianity as the national religion. The Roman emperor Constantinus (317–461), son of Constantine the Great, attempted to enforce heretical doctrine that made the Son inferior to the Father. Despite numerous acts of intimidation, King Ezana defended Christ's divinity while Rome was under heretical rule.

After King Ezana's reign, Christianity continued to spread through missionaries called the nine saints. These missionaries were especially active in northern Ethiopia, and they introduced monastic practices and built monasteries that are in existence today. The nine saints were highly effective and proclaimed Christ with contextualized language from Egypt and Syria.

After a millennium of the church maturing in Ethiopia, Emperor Zar'a Ya'qob (1399–1468) caused a reformation more than a century before Martin Luther sparked the European Reformation. During Ya'qob's reign (1434–1468), there was strife between sects that insisted on different days for observing the Sabbath. Ya'qob's marvelously written *Book of Light* brought peace between the factions by instructing them to observe the Sabbath on both days. The *Book of Light* also defines the doctrinal commitments of the Ethiopian nation; it states, "This Book of Light tells of the abolition of magic which was practiced in the land of Ethiopia, and it teaches the worship of God alone: without any mixing with [other] cults, astrology, or augury."³

Ya'qob gained significant political power and influence during his successful efforts to unify the Ethiopian church. This caused the Stefanites, a group of ascetic Ethiopians, to challenge the king's inflated authority in church matters and the elevation of any text in addition to Scripture. Ethiopian Christians identified the grievances that Martin Luther and other European Reformers lamented over one hundred years later. This story is virtually unknown but establishes the Good Book and its stories as central to African Christianity.

The story of the Christian faith in these regions demonstrates the free choice of Africans to follow Jesus before colonization. While this narrative does not negate the presence of African traditional religion and other faiths, it abolishes the notion that Christianity is strictly a White man's religion. The oral nature of African cultures precludes gathering modern demographic evidence for Christianity. Nevertheless, may this oral history maintain its truth value today as it did for Africans in the past.

During colonialization, European missionaries and explorers came to Africa proclaiming a mixed message of death and life to indigenous peoples. Their proclamation contained the life-giving message of Christ, but deadly manipulation tactics were added so Europeans could master fellow image bearers in God's name. The conscientious observer can untangle the web that colonists (and later slave owners) wove to dehumanize African people. This task is exactly what African Christians undertook in North America as they reclaimed the faith as the means of their deliverance.

BLACK CHRISTIANITY IN AMERICA

The relationship between Africans in America and the Christian faith changed dramatically during the pre-emancipation era. The story begins with Captain John

³Bantu, *Multitude of All Peoples*, 106.

Smith's 1619 description of a scene in Jamestown, Virginia. He recounts, "About the last of August came in a Dutch man of warre that sold us twenty Negars."⁴ During the transatlantic slave trade, there was no data compiled on the percentage of captured Africans who were Christian, but it is evident that by emancipation (1865) Christianity was an unmistakable pillar in the Black community.

From Christopher Columbus's arrival in the "New World" in 1492 to the end of the slave trade in 1867, more than ten million Africans were transported to the Americas on approximately 27,000 expeditions (nearly 170 a year). More than half a million of those who endured the Middle Passage arrived in the American colonies (about 95 percent of the Africans transported across the Atlantic were sent to the tropical, sugar-growing regions of Brazil and the Caribbean).⁵ In the later 1600s, the demand for slaves increased as colonial plantations grew larger, and the price of indentured servants from England and the Caribbean increased.

A SLAVE'S JOURNEY

Africans were captured on their native soil and taken to the Atlantic coast. They endured the dreaded Middle Passage—the transatlantic voyage from Africa to the Americas. Slaves suffered inhumane conditions on overcrowded and disease-ridden ships. The emotional, physical, and sexual abuse endured by captives resulted in mortality rates of 15 to 20 percent of the "cargo." Slaves disembarked, were sold on the auction block, and were taken to workplaces throughout colonial America.

The economic benefit of slavery was not enough to justify the troubled conscience of colonists. Consequently, slave owners created a mythos of the supremacy of Whites and the subhumanity of Blacks—the invention of race. Blackness and Whiteness are human fabrications produced by the process of racialization. Race is a socially constructed reality that attributes negative and/or positive meaning to biological traits and cultural manifestations that are used to categorize people. The concept of race (and the process of racialization) resulted in the ability to justify the mistreatment of Blacks. This dehumanization gave license to one group to assert dominance over another, and its vile repercussions echo throughout American history.

The distinction between slave masters and the enslaved was deeply religious. From the beginning of the American story, race and religion were intermingled

⁴John Smith, *The Generall History of Virginia, New-England, and the Sumer Isles* (London, 1624).

⁵Nell Irvin Painter, *Creating Black Americans: African-American History and Its Meanings, 1619 to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 30.

because Christianity was a means of crystallizing notions of Whiteness and Blackness. Being Black was the equivalent to being a heathen (i.e., pagan) and signified diminished inherent worth, resulting in exploitation. Being European was equated with being Christian. This superior status was designated as being White. Despite the Christian faith being weaponized against Black people, Christianity was the means of Deliverance deployed by African Americans to begin dismantling the social implications of racialization.

DISTINGUISHING RACE, ETHNICITY, AND CULTURE

Race is an appalling social fabrication that weaponizes ethnic distinctions and cultural expression to categorize humanity. By contrast, the biblical word *ethnē* refers to God-given biological designations that distinguish people groups (Matthew 28:19; Revelation 5:9). In addition, the making of culture is a biblical undertaking given to humanity by God (Genesis 1:26-28).^a

^aFor more, see Walter R. Strickland II and Dayton Hartman, eds., *For God So Loved the World: A Blueprint for Kingdom Diversity* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2020), xix-xxi.

SLAVE EVANGELIZATION

In the late 1600s, slaves converted to Christianity with increasing regularity, and colonists were forced to grapple with their English heritage, which insisted that Christians could not be slaves. During this time, large swaths of Christians insisted that the debate over slave evangelization was trivial because Blacks had no soul to proselytize. Missionary Morgan Godwyn (1640–1686) encountered this sentiment. While reporting his missionary efforts to slaves, a parishioner interrupted, saying, “You might well baptize puppies as Negros.”⁶

As time passed, while some European colonists remained convinced that Blackness was irreconcilable with Christianity, the consensus affirmed that Blacks had souls. This conclusion forced colonists to wrestle with the question of whether baptism made slaves White—that is, free, intelligent, and fully human.⁷ An affirmative answer threatened to undermine the social order because the British

⁶Morgan Godwyn, *The Negro’s & Indian’s Advocate: Sung for the Admission to the Church, or A persuasive to the instructing and baptizing of the Negro’s and Indians in our plantations shewing that as the compliance therewith can prejudice no man’s just interest, so the wilful neglecting and opposing of it, is no less than a manifest apostasy from the Christian faith: to which is added, a brief account of religion in Virginia* (London: Printed for the author by J.D., 1680), 38.

⁷Paul Harvey, *Through the Storm and Through the Night: A History of African American Christianity* (Plymouth, UK: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011), 19.

custom was that Christians are not fit for servitude, and thus slaves were freed upon baptism.

The intensity of the controversy escalated during the first half of the eighteenth century as Africans were imported to the colonies at a rate three times greater than that of the White population. By 1750, nearly 20 percent of the colonies' population was of African descent. The need to preserve the social hierarchy that necessitated White dominance and Black subservience was essential.

In 1701 the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, an Anglican missions organization, was formed to share the gospel with Black and native people in the New World. Their missionaries insisted that their efforts would not threaten the social order by encouraging insurrection and rebellions. The society's pamphlets and publications declared that Scripture supported slavery, citing passages including Ephesians 6:1, "Slaves, obey your earthly masters" (NRSV).

Despite their assurances, acknowledging that Blacks had souls to evangelize threatened the social order. Proponents of slave evangelization appealed for the bishop of London to decree that baptism no longer granted slaves manumission—and the proposal passed. To further assuage the fear of slave masters, evangelists followed the lead of Francis Le Jau (1665–1717), who drafted a vow for slaves to sign before baptism. Le Jau's statement read, "You declare in the presence of God and before the congregation that you do not ask for the holy baptism out of any design to free yourself from the Duty and Obedience you owe your Master while you live, but merely for the good of Your soul and to partake of the Graces and Blessings promised to the Members of the Church of Jesus Christ."⁸

In time, the fear of slave evangelization and looming rebellion grew as the African population swelled—especially on large plantations and among churches with large Black populations. White concern for maintaining the social order was affirmed because slaves intuitively discerned the relationship between their faith and Deliverance. This was evident in 1723, when a group of Christian slaves sought legal action for their freedom. In a letter to an Anglican bishop, Edmund Gibson, Virginian slaves argued that their masters disallowed them from observing the Sabbath.

Two theological Anchors were manifest in this scene as these slaves deployed the Good Book and Deliverance, comparing their masters to the Egyptians who ruthlessly oppressed the Israelites in the book of Exodus, saying, "Our task mastrs

⁸Francis Le Jau, "Slave Conversion in the Frontier," in *African American Religious History: A Documentary Witness*, 2nd ed., ed. Milton C. Segnett (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000), 27.

are has hard with us as the Egypttions was with the Chillardann of Issrall.” The slaves did not affix their names to the letter “for feare of our masters for if they knew that wee have Sent home to your honour wee Should goo neare to Swing upon the gassass [gallows] tree.”

Despite the peaceful nature of this appeal, the debate raged as the fear of slave rebellion increased and opponents of slave evangelization claimed that Christianity made slaves headstrong because spiritual liberation insisted on bodily freedom. Still others argued that Christianizing slaves was appropriate because the faith served as an internal motivation to keep slaves docile and subservient. Amid the heated debate, one thing that both sides affirmed was the maintenance of the social hierarchy.

Slave masters and missionaries warped the Christian faith to serve their social agenda. Christian teaching was weaponized to uphold logic that disjointed the spiritual and physical existence that God declared very good (Genesis 1:31). This “plantation gospel” reduced the Christian faith to valuing the soul while disregarding the embodied state. Spiritual life was regarded over against physical well-being, which promoted a dualistic anthropology that maintained the status quo. Ironically, this theological deformity, formulated and employed to subjugate Black people, was internalized by its proponents.

For the first one hundred years of slavery, missionaries made limited progress evangelizing slaves, especially those who were brought to America by way of the Middle Passage. The language barrier and the cultural trappings of Anglo Christianity were off-putting to slaves. In addition, it was difficult for slaves to understand the redemptive value of a belief system used to justify their servitude.

PROSLAVERY CHRISTIANITY

Cotton Mather (1626–1710) and others formalized a version of the Christian faith in pamphlets and other writings that boasted a justification for the goodness of Black servitude. Consistent with his theological claims, Mather hosted a weekly gathering of the “Society of Negroes” in his home, intended to Christianize African attendees. Mather asserted that neither Scripture nor the Church of England’s teaching insisted that Christianization was equated with freedom from servitude.

John Staffin made theological arguments that complemented Mather’s slaveholding ideals. Staffin argued that Scripture decreed some men to be born slaves, and he authorized this claim by demonstrating that Abraham owned slaves.

Moreover, Staffin introduced a fallacy that is widely affirmed today, namely that slavery brought Africans out of a pagan land to a new world to be saved from divine judgment.

Proponents of proslavery Christianity eased the fears of Anglos who worried incessantly about insurrection by buttressing their theological convictions in the legal code. As slave codes were introduced, they supported the Christianization of Blacks while disallowing their freedom. Slave codes varied from one colony to the next, but they shared underlying similarities. The codes featured, first, exclusion from the legal process. This exclusion took various forms, including Blacks not having recourse to the court system, the allowance to testify in court against a White person, or the ability to vote.

The slave codes also regulated two fundamental social units central to God's design for society, namely, family and church. The codes denied slaves legal protections for marriage because "property" could not be party to a legally binding contract. Because slave unions were not recognized by states or commonwealths, slave masters split families to make a profit without legal interference, disregarding familial relationships. These dictates made slaves vulnerable to the physical, sexual, and emotional abuse that marked slave life.

The codes also ensured the perpetual state of oppression for those who had "one drop" of African blood in their heritage. One of the earliest legislative acts that ensured the domination of a pure White race was enacted in 1662. In December 1662 in Virginia, Act XII was enacted, concerning slave nativity:

Whereas some doubts have arisen whether children got by any Englishman upon a Negro woman should be slave or free, be it therefore enacted and declared by this present Grand Assembly, that all children born in this country shall be held bond or free only according to the condition of the mother; and that if any Christian shall commit fornication with a Negro man or woman, he or she so offending shall pay double the fines imposed by the former act.

This code protected the dominance of Whites over Blacks, and mixed-race children (often conceived by a slave mother at the will of their slave master) were disenfranchised by ensuring that they were at the bottom of the social hierarchy.

Slave codes also regulated aspects of Black life that complicated Christian practice. The codes included prohibitions against slaves learning to read and criminalized teaching slaves to read. In the West, the ability to read the biblical text has

been central to the Christian faith since the Protestant Reformation and is a foundational means of knowing God and his will. Black Christians were banned from reading Scripture firsthand by statutes, such as the South Carolina Act of 1740, which states,

Whereas, the having of slaves taught to write, or suffering them to be employed in writing, may be attended with great inconveniences; Be it enacted, that all and every person and persons whatsoever, who shall hereafter teach or cause any slave or slaves to be taught to write, or shall use or employ any slave as a scribe, in any manner of writing whatsoever, hereafter taught to write, every such person or persons shall, for every such offense, forfeit the sum of one hundred pounds, current money.

Prohibitions against Blacks reading resulted in malicious biblical interpretations, used as a tool to manipulate slaves and maintain the social order.

The slave codes comprehensively imposed on the rights of slaves in order to shackle them to the status quo. The proliferation of the codes took place just before large numbers of slaves responded to the gospel message during the revivals that swept the colonies beginning in the early 1740s.

THE FIRST GREAT AWAKENING

The First Great Awakening swept through the British colonies during the mid- and late seventeenth century and sparked concern for the spiritual well-being and treatment of slaves. The revival reoriented Black religious life as slaves responded to the gospel's call at an unprecedented rate in the New World. The tent meetings that characterized the revival were marked by an unusual expression of racial unity and an insistence that the gospel was for all people. The sense was that the invitation to Christ was for everyone despite their station in life.

KEY FIGURES IN THE AWAKENING

In 1730, John Wesley traveled to Georgia as a Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts missionary to Native Americans and African slaves. Wesley was followed by George Whitefield (1714–1770), who set off on his first preaching tour through the colonies (1739–1741), which arguably inaugurated the awakening. Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758) was a Congregationalist minister, evangelist, and theologian of the revival who gave direction to the emotionalism of the movement.



The theological tenets of the awakening were simple. The primary concern was establishing a personal relationship with God, initiated by repenting of sin. Revivalists traveled the colonies offering crowds the gift of unmerited favor (or grace) and new birth in Jesus Christ. Revivals were marked by celebration, including singing, dancing, and other highly emotional expressions giving gratitude to God for his salvific work. The personal faith promoted during the revival contrasted with the state church in England. Revivalists insisted that being a faithful churchgoer or a moral person did not earn salvation—justification came only through repentance and faith in Christ.

The emphasis on Conversion promoted the inclusion of Whites and Blacks in revival meetings. The personal nature of salvation devalued the place of social status, race, and wealth as prerequisites for participation. The atmosphere of the revivals was such a contrast to the times that it was common for the illiterate or enslaved to preach and pray at these public evangelistic events.

The success of the revivals provided a stark contrast with the initial evangelization efforts of Anglican missionaries, who focused on the slow process of memorization and catechesis. The emphasis on Conversion and being Spirit-filled took the focus away from wordy doctrinal statements that left slaves unmoved. The African American theological foundation was forged during the revivals, and deep commitments to Conversion and Walking in the Spirit remain prominent features in the African American theological tradition today.

The effectiveness of the Great Awakenings was also felt because practices in the revival had clear parallels to African religious rituals. The evangelistic emphasis on rebirth was reminiscent of rebirth rituals in African secret societies. Furthermore, baptism by immersion evoked the memory of African customs that featured being washed by submersion in water and emerging anew. These parallels do not necessarily imply syncretism but provided a sense of familiarity with African customs that were fulfilled by the Christian faith.

The Great Awakening was a countercultural movement. The methods of itinerant evangelists composed of clergy and laity challenged the clerical pecking order. The revivals also skirted the Church of England's oversight and ministered wherever evangelists deemed expedient. But despite the Awakening's countercultural disposition, it remained captive to the racial dynamics of the age—White dominance and Black subservience. One example is great preacher George Whitefield, who arrived in Charleston, South Carolina, as an avid opponent of slavery. Ironically, by the 1750s, Whitefield upended his biblical convictions and was happy to own

slaves because it freed him for the work of evangelism. Whitefield adopted common Southern justifications including the fallacy that people were born into divinely intended social classes and must uphold God's intentions.

Whitefield's anemic gospel, which freed the soul while keeping the body enslaved, was unfortunately common during the First Great Awakening. Despite demonstrations of brotherhood and the affirmation that the gospel is for all—including Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female (Galatians 3:28)—the revival's individualistic emphasis limited the faith's implications to spiritual realities. As a result, the gospel's restorative power was truncated, and the oppressive institution of slavery went unchallenged.

In light of the vast number of Blacks who converted during the First Great Awakening, there was already evidence of unique emphases within the faith that directly interfaced with the particulars of Black life. The early development of a Big God theology prioritized God's providence over all things, big and small. God's sovereignty insisted that nothing, even the sinful actions of people, was beyond his divine reach. Together, these divine characteristics insisted that God was "able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Ephesians 3:20).

Evidence of a Big God is apparent in the sermons and writings of Lemuel Haynes (1753–1833). Haynes was converted early in the First Great Awakening, and his theology was decidedly Calvinistic. As he was the first person of African descent ordained in America, his legacy as a pastor and theologian served to establish the category of a God who is able. Haynes expressed God's cosmic providence as Creator and sustainer in an 1805 sermon titled "Divine Decrees, an Encouragement to the Use of Means": "Not only events of great, but those of less magnitude, are ascribed to God; even the falling of a sparrow, or a hair on our head. It is difficult for us to distinguish between great and small events; there is not a superfluous link in the whole chain; they all depend on each other."⁹ In the same sermon, Haynes connects God's sovereignty to human obedience and dependence:

The humble Christian will feel his own weakness and insufficiency to do anything of himself and will see that all his sufficiency is of God, and his faith and hope will rest on His power and providence to do all—which will be a motive to diligence. This will be the foundation of his trust and will excite him to work out his salvation with fear and trembling, knowing that

⁹Lemuel Haynes, *Divine Decrees, an Encouragement to the Use of Means: A Sermon, Delivered at Grandville, N.Y., June 25th, 1805, AD Before the Evangelical Society, Instituted for the Purposes of Aiding Pious and Needy Young Men in Acquiring Education for the Work of the Gospel Ministry* (Herlad Office, 1805).

it is *God that worketh in him*, both to will and to do His good pleasure
(Philippians 2:12-13).¹⁰

Despite the suffering in the foreground, the Big God that Haynes described was always working in the background.¹¹ In addition to Haynes's emphasis on the first person of the Godhead, the incarnation of Jesus loomed large in Black Christianity from the beginning. Jesus' humanity and sufferings forged a profound entry point into the faith amid the sorrows of life.¹²

Phillis Wheatley (1753–1784), the first published African American poet, captures Jesus' identification with the common struggle of losing a spouse while declaring the victory of the resurrection for God's children. In her 1773 poem "To a Clergyman on the Death of His Lady," the twenty-year-old Wheatley wonderfully embodies the way Black Christians brought Jesus into their struggles and claimed his victory as their own:

There too may the dear pledges of our love
Arrive, and taste with us the joys above;
Attune the harp to more than mortal lays,
And join with us the tribute of their praise
To him, who dy'd stern justice to atone,
And make eternal glory all our own.
He in his death slew ours, and, as he rose,
He crush'd the dire dominion of our foes;
Vain were their hopes to put the God to flight,
Chain us to hell, and bar the gates of light.¹³

In addition to the nearness of Jesus and resurrection power in the moment of trial, the Savior's blood is central in the salvific equation.¹⁴

In the faith of the Great Awakening, the crucified and risen Lord was central, but the emphasis among Black Christians intermingled with daily life in ways that were atypical compared to their fellow revivalists. The brutality of the African American experience necessitated an emphasis on the sufferings Christ endured

¹⁰Haynes, *Divine Decrees*.

¹¹See vol. 2 for an excerpt from Lemuel Haynes's sermon on John 3:3.

¹²See vol. 2 for an excerpt from *Chavis's Letter upon the Doctrine of the Extent of the Atonement of Christ*.

¹³Phillis Wheatley, "To a Clergyman, on the Death of his Lady," in *Memoir and Poems of Phillis Wheatley, a Native African and a Slave. Dedicated to the Friends of the Africans* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1834), 64–65.

¹⁴See vol. 2 for the text of Phillis Wheatley's "On Being Brought from Africa to America."

to achieve redemption. An untold multitude of Black Christians viewed their lives as the Friday of Passion Week looking ahead to the victory of Sunday. It follows that the 1823 sermon of Joseph Baysmore consistently echoed “the blood” amid the call to regeneration:

This was God’s scheme of redemption, that the blood of Christ should wash believers from the great sin of unbelief. And it is written: in that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness, Hence:

There is a fountain filled with blood,
 Drawn from Immanuel’s veins:
 And sinners plunged beneath that flood,
 Lose all their guilty stains.

And now the application of the blood, by faith, broke up the surface of sin and unbelief, and hence we are planted in the blood of Christ by our faith toward God, and we groweth in favor toward God, and we groweth in favor of God, by faith in the blood of Christ.¹⁵

Baysmore’s progression from Jesus’ blood, to redemption, followed by obedience strikes a note that continues to anchor Black conceptions of Jesus (Anchor 2) through history. Connecting these aspects requires faithful action to follow belief, which many Blacks lamented was missing in predominant American Christianity.¹⁶

FEATURES OF NASCENT BLACK CHRISTIANITY

After Blacks came to faith in large numbers during the revivals, unique emphases and trends marked Black faith in Christ. While harmonious with historic Christianity, distinctive actions highlighted loving God and neighbor within the antebellum context. These initial trends set trajectories for African American Christianity that are evident among Black Christians today. These theological Anchors of Black Christianity have explanatory power to demonstrate the faithfulness of Black Christians and the tensions antebellum saints faced during their time.

¹⁵Joseph Baymore, *A Historical Sketch of the First Colored Baptist Church Weldon, N. C., With the Life and Labor of Elder Joseph Baysmore, with Four Collected Sermons, First: The Harmony of the Law and Gospel. Second: Subject of the Pure in Heart. Third: How We Were Made Sinners and How We Were Redeemed from Sin and Made Heirs of God by His Love. Fourth: The Confirmation of Christian Faith* (Weldon, NC: Harrell’s Printing House, 1887), 8-10.

¹⁶See vol. 2 for an excerpt from Joseph Baysmore’s “Sermon Preached to the Convicts in the Penitentiary at Raleigh, N. C., Sept. 26, 1886.”

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