

13-645

African American Ministry: Confronting Historical Challenges

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Rationale

From early colonial days, African Americans have been involved, officially as well as informally, in Christian ministry. As part of an historically circumscribed and socially marginalized people, they have faced the challenges and issues inherent in this status as well as those uniquely related to their historical/social situations. So, too, have their responses shared much in common with ministerial colleagues of other identities, while offering some unique contributions to the corpus of ministerial practice. Their story provides useful lessons for ordained and lay ministers who serve the present age.

Objectives

--To examine select issues black ministers have faced and addressed as they pursued the mission and ministries of the church.

--To discern from this study insights into the effective contemporary practice of ministry.

Lecture/Discussion/Reading Schedule

Sept. 2 Historical Background/Context

9 Basic Civil Rights

(*"Equality Before the Law,"* Intro, Chap. I; *God and Race*, Intro, Chaps. I – III)

16 Pastoral/Theological Vision and Leadership

(Hamilton, Chaps. I, II; *Divided Mind of the Black Church*, Chaps 1,2)

23 Theol. Leadership, cont.

(Smith, *Every Mountainside*, Intro; *Divided Mind*, Chaps. 3,4; Lincoln/Mamiya, Chaps. 7, 8)

30 Emigration, Urbanization

(Murphy/Daniels; Laudarji/Murphy)

Film: "Going to Chicago"

Oct. 7 Economic Development; Community Organizing

(Lincoln/Mamiya, Chap. 9)

14 Economic Devel., Community Organizing, cont.

(Smith, New Day Begun, Chap. 9; Flake, Chap. 9)

Guest presentation on historic initiatives and current best practices re: community organizing and economic development.

21 Education

(*"Equality,"* Chaps. IV, V; Every Mountainside, Chap. 8)

28 The System of Justice

(*"Equality,"* Chap. II; New Jim Crow, Intro., Chaps. 1-3)

Nov. 4 Justice, cont.

(New Jim Crow, Chaps. (4-6)

11 Gender and Leadership

(Divided Mind, Chap. 5; New Day, Chap. 6; Lincoln/Mamiya, Chap. 10)

Written outline or synopsis of intended term project due.

18 Health and Wellness

(Every Mountainside, Chap. 10; journal, Internet, TV info on healthcare and healthcare disparities in AA communities; on AA clergy, churches, and communities re: Obamacare)

Dec. 2 Reflection/Integration

12 Term project due. *No projects will be accepted after this date.*

During the course of the quarter, please use the occasion of your attendance at church-related functions (e.g. worship, business meetings, public programs, youth group meetings, Sunday School) to observe the style and character of the proceedings. Seek to discern the functions, purposes, and meanings of these events for the participants. What concerns and issues from our class are illustrated? What insights about the nature of ministry and its challenges are suggested? Take written notes as seems useful.

Evaluation

- Attendance, participation. There will be a 5 point reduction in grade for each class session missed. Please notify the instructor ahead of time to see if make-up work is available for a given session you must miss. Three or more unremediated absences will result in failure of the course. **20%**
- Oral reports, class session leadership. **10%**
- Each week, students will submit a two-page report on the readings for that given week. The report will include a synopsis of what you consider to be the key points from each individual reading; critical responses to the material presented; insights you have gained from the reading. **40%**
- Term-end assignment. Select a topic from among those addressed in our course. In consultation with the instructor, devise a project which traces the presence of that topic in a case setting that you identify; which explores and analyzes the dynamics and challenges present in the case situation relative to the topic. Then, write out a plan of faith-based action for a constructive address to the situation. **30%**

Assigned Readings

Course Reader [Available for purchase through the instructor, in class.]

Michelle Alexander, The New Jim Crow. The New Press. 2010

Larry G. Murphy, "Equality Before the Law." Dissertation, 1973 [On reserve, the United library]

Mark A. Noll, God and Race in American Politics. Princeton University Press, 2007

Raphael G. Warnock, The Divided Mind of the Black Church. New York University Press, 2014

Additional Readings, Resources

Dale P. Andrews, Practical Theology for Black Churches

William L. Andrews, Sisters of the Spirit: Three Black Women's Autobiographies

Richard Bardolph, The Civil Rights Record

G. Willis Bennett, Guidelines for Effective Urban Church Ministry

Andrew Billingsley, Mighty Like a River: The Black Church and Social Reform

Children's Defense Fund, America's Cradle to Prison Pipeline

William E. B. DuBois, The Souls of Black Folk

Curtis Evans, The Burden of Black Religion

Floyd Flake, et. al., African American Church Management Handbook

Walter Fluker, The Stones That the Builders Rejected

Robert Franklin, Liberating Visions: Human Fulfillment and Social Justice in AA Thought

Cheryl Townsend Gilkes, If It Wasn't for the Women: Black Women's Experience and Womanist Culture in Church and Community

Lowell Livezey, ed., Public Religion and Urban Transformation

Samuel McKinney and, Church Administration in the Black Church

Larry G. Murphy, Sojourner Truth: A Biography
Peter Paris, The Social Teachings of the Black Church
Marcia Riggs, Can I Get a Witness: Prophetic Religious Voices of AA Women
Houston Bryan Roberson, Fighting the Good Fight: The Story of the Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church, 1865 – 1977
Andrea Stuart, Sugar in the Blood: A Family's Story of Slavery and Empire
Emilie Townes, In a Blaze of Glory: Womanist Spirituality as Social Witness
Jonathan Walton, Watch This: The Ethics and Aesthetics of Black Televangelism
George Washington Woodbey, Black Socialist Preacher
Isabel Wilkerson, The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration
Melvyn Williams, Community in a Black Pentecostal Church
Videos concerning African American Religious and social life available from and through the Institute for Black Religious Research, G-ETS

*NOTE: I encourage you to make an appointment to see me if you have conditions which require special assistance or accommodations in the classroom, in handling the reading and writing assignments, or any other areas related to our work together. I can adapt my mode of presentation; mentoring/ tutorial assistance can be arranged; assignments can be modified; and so forth. Also, the office of Affirmative Action and Disability Service has many resources at your disposal.

****Cellular phones and pagers must be turned off or placed on silent signal during class. Students are asked not to leave class to answer calls or texts, except in extreme emergency. Laptop and tablet computers are not to be used in class, except for note taking or upon request of the instructor to do a web search related to a class subject. Managing email, social networking, web surfing for non-class matters are not permissible during class time.**

***** Please be aware of the seminary's policy on un-cited use of published materials, materials derived from sources other than oneself, and other improperly documented uses of intellectual property, all falling under the heading of intellectual dishonesty/plagiarism, for which disciplinary action will be taken, potentially including failure of the class and dismissal from the school. Refer to the Academic Handbook.**