

Pastors Appreciation

The Carolinian's Special Edition 2023



Table of Contents

2 *The Black Church Experience Is Quite Unique*

3 *A Brief History Of The Black Church's Diversity And Its Vital Role In American Political History*

5 *Why Financial Planning Needs More Religion*

6 *Religion And Technology Are On A Journey*

8 *Martin Luther King In London, 1964*

9 *Why American Churches Are On The Decline*

10 *How The Virgin Mary Is Seen Around The World*

11 *How Jesus Came To Resemble A White European*

The Black Church Experience Is Quite Unique

In the fall of 2008, newspapers, talk shows and blogs exploded with news that the Rev. Jeremiah Wright, the African American minister from Chicago's Trinity Church, had denounced the United States with inflammatory language: "God damn America!" Wright's most famous parishioner was the leading Democratic contender for the presidential nomination, Barack Obama. Trinity was Obama's spiritual home -- the place where he had found religion, where he was married, and where his daughters had been baptized. Rev. Wright, a former Marine with a Ph.D., had served as his spiritual mentor.

While many white voters seemed surprised, puzzled and shocked by Wright's angry rhetoric, African Americans were less so. Obama seized the moment to deliver a profound meditation on race in

America, a speech titled "A More Perfect Union." Tracing the deep historical roots of racial inequality and injustice, Obama put Wright's anger into historical context. In very personal terms, he also described his experience at Trinity:

Like other black churches, Trinity's services are full of raucous laughter and sometimes bawdy humor. They are full of dancing, clapping, screaming and shouting that may seem jarring to the untrained ear. The church contains in full the kindness and cruelty, the fierce intelligence and the shocking ignorance, the struggles and successes, the love and yes, the bitterness and bias that make up the black experience in America.

Eventually Obama broke with Wright

and left Trinity, but his speech illuminated the role of the black church in the African American experience. Standing apart from the dominant white society, yet engaged in a continuing dialogue with it, the church evolved with countless acts of faith and resistance, piety and protest. As historian Anthea Butler has observed, the church has been profoundly shaped by regional differences, North and South, East and West, yet in both the private and public spheres, the church was, and remains, sustained and animated by idea of freedom.

The term "the black church" evolved from the phrase "the Negro church," the title of a pioneering sociological study of African American Protestant churches at the turn of the century by W.E.B. Du Bois. In its origins, the phrase was largely an academic category. Many African Americans

did not think of themselves as belonging to "the Negro church," but rather described themselves according to denominational affiliations such as Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, and even "Saint" of the Sanctified tradition. African American Christians were never monolithic; they have always been diverse and their churches highly decentralized.

Today "the black church" is widely understood to include the following seven major black Protestant denominations: the National Baptist Convention, the National Baptist Convention of America, the Progressive National Convention, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church and the Church of God in Christ.



A Brief History Of The Black Church's Diversity, And Its Vital Role In American Political History

Jason Oliver Evans

University of Virginia

With religious affiliation on the decline, continuing racism and increasing income inequality, some scholars and activists are soul-searching about the Black church's role in today's United States.

For instance, on April 20, 2010, an African American Studies professor at Princeton, Eddie S. Glaude, sparked an online debate by provocatively declaring that, despite the existence of many African American churches, "the Black Church, as we've known it or imagined it, is dead." As he argued, the image of the Black church as a center for Black life and as a beacon of social and moral transformation had disappeared.

Scholars of African American religion responded to Glaude by stating that the image of the Black church as the moral conscience of the United States has always been a complicated matter. As his-

torian Anthea Butler argued, "The Black Church may be dead in its incarnation as agent of change, but as the imagined home of all things black and Christian, it is alive and well."

As a scholar of Christian theology and African American religion, I'm aware of this long history of the Black church and its contribution to American politics. Its story began in the 15th and 16th centuries, when European empires authorized the capture, auction and enslavement of various peoples from across the coast of Western and Central Africa.

As millions were transported through the "Middle Passage" to the Americas, Europeans forcefully baptized the enslaved into the Christian faith despite many of them adhering to traditional African religious systems and Islam. European slave traders dismissed Africans as "heathenish" to justify their enslavement of Africans and the coercive proselytization to Christianity.

In the 1600s, British missionaries traveled throughout the American Colonies to convert enslaved Africans and the Indigenous peoples of the continent. Originally, however, white slaveholders were hesitant to convert enslaved Africans to Christianity because they feared that Christian baptism would lead to the enslaved Africans' freedom, causing both economic ruin and social upheaval. They widely supposed that British laws mandated the freedom of all baptized Christians, and thus white slaveholders initially refused to grant missionaries permission to instruct enslaved Africans into the Christian faith.

By 1706, six Colonies had passed laws that declared that Africans' Christian status did not alter their social condition as slaves. Consequently, missionaries created "slave catechisms," modified religious instruction manuals that instructed enslaved Africans about Christianity while reinforcing their enslavement.

Over time, evangelical Protestant groups followed suit in their proselytization of the enslaved community, most notably during the First and Second Great Awakenings, the Protestant religious revivals that swept across the American nation in the mid-18th and early 19th centuries.

Both during and after the end of slavery, African Americans began to establish their own congregations, parishes, fellowships, associations and later denominations. Black Baptists founded first the National Baptist Convention USA, in 1895, the largest Black Protestant denomination in the United States. The National Baptist Convention of America International and the Progressive National Baptist Convention were founded years later.

The first independent Black denomination, the African Methodist Episcopal

(See *BRIEF HISTORY*, P. 4)

Thank you for your contributions for persons of African Ancestry!

Walk together. Work together.
Love each other. POPE FRANCIS, JUNE 4, 2017

REV. MONSIGNOR JOSEPH NTUWA

REV. MARCOS LEÓN-ANGULO

REV. PIUS WEKESA

REV. ROGER MALONDA NYIMI

The African Ancestry Ministry and Evangelization Network (AAMEN) is established by the Diocese of Raleigh to foster the mission of the Roman Catholic Church. The ministry is concerned with nurturing those in the faith, reconciling those fallen away from the faith, and offering a church home to the un-churched through conversion to the Catholic faith.

CATHOLIC DIOCESE of RALEIGH
www.dioceseofraleigh.org

*Wear
Your Faith
On Your
Sleeve*



\$45.00

**October
Only**

**Call The Carolinian To
Place Your Order
919-834-5558**



BRIEF HISTORY

Continued from page 3

Church, which was formalized in 1816, grew out of the Free African Society founded by Richard Allen, a former enslaved man and Methodist minister, in the city of Philadelphia in 1787. Allen and his colleague Absalom Jones walked out of St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church after white members demanded that Allen and Jones, who had been kneeling in prayer, leave the ground floor and go to the upper balcony, which was designated for Black worshippers.

Other Black Methodists founded two other denominations – the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in 1821 and the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church in 1870. The Church of God in Christ, the largest Black Pentecostal denomination in the United States, was founded by Charles Harrison Mason, a former Baptist minister, in 1897 and incorporated in 1907.

Other Black Christians belong to mainline Protestant denominations. Additionally, there are 3 million Black Roman Catholics in the United States, and a smaller number of African Americans who attend Eastern Orthodox churches. Moreover, a number of African Americans belong to independent nondenominational congregations, while others belong to white conservative evangelical, Pentecostal and charismatic churches.

The Black church has played a vital role in the shaping of American political history. African American churches provided spaces for not only spiritual formation but also political activism.

Black churches were spaces where slave abolitionism was envisioned, and insurrections were planned. Black preachers such as Denmark Vesey and Nat Turner were actively involved in attempted and successful slave insurrections in the South

During the Reconstruction era, the African Methodist Episcopal Bishop Henry McNeal Turner served as one of the first African American legislators for the state of Georgia. Turner was famous for his scathing critiques of American Chris-

tianity and the nation at large. Ida B. Wells was an investigative journalist and educator who wrote extensive accounts of the lynchings of Black people in the South, fought against Jim Crow policies, and advocated for Black women's right to vote. An active churchgoer, Wells also organized and led Bible study classes for young Black men at Grace Presbyterian Church, a predominantly Black church founded in 1888 in the city of Chicago.

Many Black Christians participated in the Civil Rights movement, including Bayard Rustin, an openly gay Quaker, who was instrumental in organizing the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom on Aug. 28, 1963. Despite his contributions to advancing Black people's freedom, Rustin was pushed to the background by his peers because of his homosexuality.

Pauli Murray, the first Black woman to be ordained in the Episcopal Church, was a lawyer, legal scholar, civil rights and gender equality advocate and poet. Murray compiled an extensive collection of laws and ordinances that mandated racial segregation and wrote extensively on women's rights.

The Black church is far from monolithic. Its members hold different theological positions and hail from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, education levels and political affiliations.

Some African American Christians did not participate in efforts to end racial segregation, fearing violent backlash from white people. Today, Black Christians are divided over other social justice issues, such as whether to support LGBTQ equality. Nevertheless, African American Christians have drawn insights from their experience of enduring racism and their Christian faith to contest racial subjugation and advocate for their freedom and human dignity.

Despite the rise of the religiously unaffiliated or "Nones" within the African American community, the Black church, I believe, continues to be an influential institution.

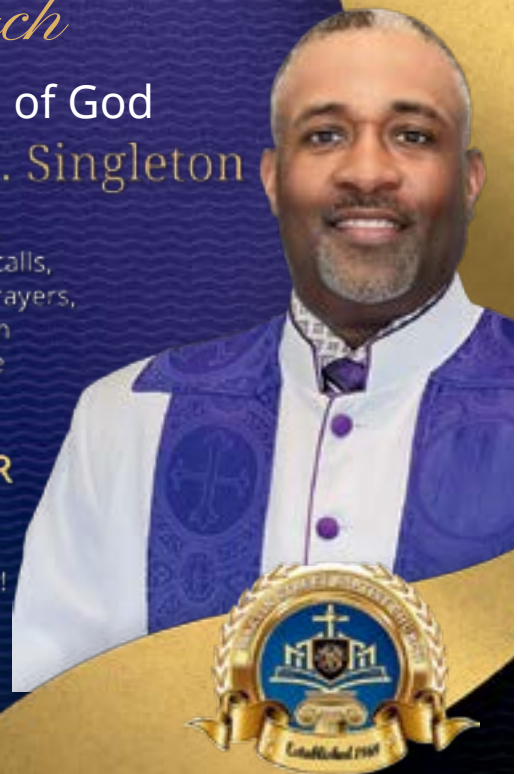
**MARTIN STREET BAPTIST
Church**

**Lifting Up the Man of God
Rev. Dr. Shawn J. Singleton**

For the early Sunday mornings, the middle of the night phone calls, the wise counsel and fervent prayers, for being true to God's WORD in preaching and teaching, for the patience, love, and sacrifice —

THANK YOU PASTOR
for always going above and beyond in faithful service to our church and our community!

*I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit— fruit that will last.
John 15:16*



Why Financial Planning Needs More Religion

By Candice McGarvey

Money

As part of my getting-to-know you interview with new clients, I ask about their faith. Most are caught off guard. “Why do YOU care?” was one client’s response.

Such a reply comes with good reason; my clients hired me to talk about money, not religion. But there are many advantages to discussing spirituality with clients before we address their finances.

Spiritual thinkers from Socrates to John Calvin advocated the importance of introspective familiarity in the pursuit of wisdom. Certainly, in the financial realm, the client who understands why he behaves the way he does will be more successful in achieving goals. Asking him to articulate the spiritual beliefs that drive him is a great exercise for him as well, even in cases where those beliefs are simply, “I don’t practice any sort of spirituality.”

If you don’t practice your own spirituality, or you simply don’t want to talk about spirituality with clients, a discussion of values can be an effective start to the relationship. Everyone has values, regardless of their stated faith or religion. Even old Ebenezer Scrooge valued wealth, frugality and financial independence. My clients receive a list of 140 common values from which they select the most important. I then have them narrow the list down to 20, then 10 as they look at themselves in a completely new way.

As many advisers have learned by experience, it is the long term that will make or break a client’s financial goals. When our assets serve a larger purpose, we experience a deep inspiration and motivation over the long haul. By incorporating the big picture into our planning, we have better success with helping clients implement behavior changes. Rather than saying, “You need to spend less next month, and every month thereafter,” we can include a client’s faith to motivate a greater level of intentionality: “I know you want to be able to provide XYZ for ABC. That will be much easier if you spend less in the short term.”

Maybe money shouldn’t be the key ingredient in our financial decisions. Where strong values are present, ideally our financial life will reflect them. When your money is in service to your values, it becomes a supporting cast member of a show where your values play the leads.

In a fast-paced, credit-loving society, it is easy to let money guide our decisions. We make risky investments in hopes of large payoffs with money we can’t afford to lose. We take jobs that pay well but require such



dedication of time that we begin to lose touch with the people we love. We constantly seek “more” without taking the time to be grateful for what we have.

But when values take the lead in our decision-making, our behavior finally changes for good. Investments no longer cause insomnia, jobs support a worker’s lifestyle, and gratitude becomes a regular part of life. Clients will appreciate an adviser who cares for the whole person and advocates that kind of wellness.

I have one client who took a different view of money; she hated it. Despite tremendous earning potential, she considered wealth the cause of greed in this world. In what she deemed acts of faith, she continually put herself in positions to earn very modest amounts. Is she wrong? That’s not my place to determine, but I do have a responsibility to help her understand her default reactions so she can evaluate whether or not they reflect her core beliefs.

I knew she was a Christian, and her upbringing took place in a notoriously upper class town. I suggested she examine her religious teachings for more detail on the topic of wealth. She eventually decided that her attitudes don’t reflect the actual teachings of her faith. She read of biblical figures who used the power of their wealth to serve God and in so doing, mightily improve the lives of others.

My client’s entire financial plan changed once she acknowledged her attitudes toward money were more reflective of her teenage response to her home town than they were an outcropping of her faith. She has accepted a new mantle; while avoiding monetary entrapments, she wants to make more money so she can use it to improve the lives God brings into her path.

can lead to ineffective attempts to grow.

As much as we hate this fact, we grow in leaps and bounds when we suffer. For those who dedicate their lives to a higher purpose, even life’s pitfalls present growth opportunities; we learn to grapple gracefully and walk out of those pits with our soul intact. I frequently mention to my clients my own financial struggles due to two chronically ill family members. While I wouldn’t want to relive those life setbacks, their spiritual benefit seriously outpaces the dollar signs. Where the prudent financial plan would create such stability that you never find yourself in a financially precarious position, there still is beauty in those down times, and they serve to forward our purposes for being in this world.

Certainly, knowing your client’s faith is not a shortcut; there are as many varieties of beliefs among denominations as there are types of trees and root structures. But it helps you know the right questions to ask. How much more effective could you be if you brought your advice under the umbrella of her faith and spirituality?

I liken our spirituality to the root system of a tree: It gathers nutrients and supports the weight of the tree. In nature, what we see above ground only partially represents the root structure we can’t see. Everyone has roots, and ignoring those root systems



PASTOR DONALD L. MCCOY
PLEASANT HILL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

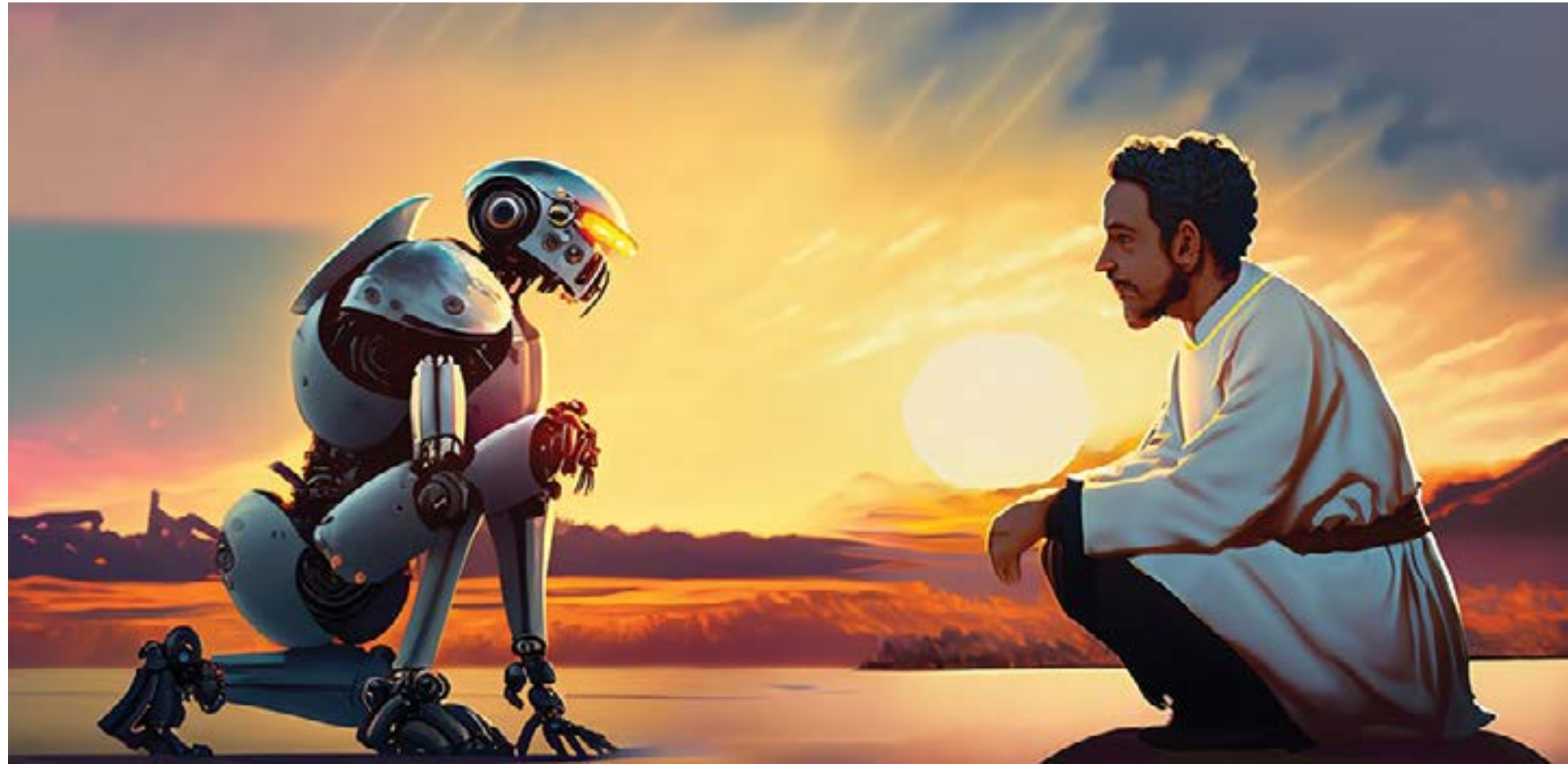
With heartfelt appreciation, I thank God for my husband and Pastor who is a faithful servant of God. He has served the Congregation for 55 years, in obedience to the Holy Spirit. Pastor McCoy is a Man of Faith and Courage, with a Passion for prayer, the study of God’s word, and the salvation of souls for Jesus Christ.

Thank you, Pastor McCoy, for reflecting the heart of God in your ministry. You are a Pastor who truly loves and cares for your congregation and others. Much love and many thanks.

“The Lord bless you and keep you.” Numbers 6:24

Your Loving Wife,
Annie McCoy





Religion And Technology Are On A Journey

Technological innovations brought on by the internet have touched virtually all aspects of human life, including religion. In addition to letting people stream religious services, apps and websites can help people pray, read scripture, learn about religion, and participate in online prayer groups, among other things.

Still, the usage of some comparable “analog” technologies is more common. For example, 79% of highly religious U.S. adults read religion-focused books, higher than the 45% who watch religion-focused videos online. Nearly six-in-ten highly religious adults (57%) listen to religion-focused radio stations, higher than the 38% who listen to religion-focused podcasts. And 61% of highly religious adults go to prayer groups or scripture study groups in person, compared with 19% who join such groups online.

That said, digital technology clearly has a foothold among highly religious Americans (defined, for the purposes of this analysis, as U.S. adults who say they attend services weekly, pray daily and consider religion to be very important in their lives). About half of Americans with this high level of religious commitment say they use an app or website to help them or remind them to read scripture (52%) or go online to search for information about religion (53%). Nearly three-in-ten (28%) say they use an app or website to help them or remind them to pray.

In the population at large, on the other hand, three-in-ten U.S. adults (including those who are not religious) say they go online to search for information about religion. Roughly two-in-ten say they use apps or websites as aids or reminders for scripture reading (21%) or to watch religion-focused videos on platforms such as YouTube or TikTok (20%), while 14% use apps to help them or remind them to pray.

Among the country’s large religious groups, members of historically Black Protestant denominations tend to use

digital technology in their religious lives more than others do.

Americans ages 65 and older are slightly less likely than younger adults to use apps and websites for religious purposes. According to a scale measuring overall usage of multiple kinds of religious technology, 13% of people 65 and older are “heavy users” of apps and websites for religious reasons, compared with 16% to 18% of those in younger age brackets. The difference is larger when looking just at highly religious Americans: 32% of highly religious adults 65 and older are heavy users of religious technology, compared with 42% of those 50 to 64; 49% of those 40 to 49; and 51% of those 18 to 39. (More details about the scale of religion-related technology use can be found here. A table showing the differences by age can be found in the Overview of this report.)

Regarding social media use, the new survey also shows that 17% of U.S. adults say they have ever unfollowed, unfriended, blocked someone, or changed their social media settings to see less of someone online because of religious content the person posted. A lower share (3%) say they themselves have been unfollowed or blocked by someone else for sharing religious content online.

In addition, the survey asked about using apps for a couple of purposes that some people may consider religious or spiritual, while others may not. These findings show that 18% of U.S. adults use apps or websites to help them or remind them to meditate, and an identical share say they use apps or websites to help them or remind them to be grateful.

About two-in-ten or fewer U.S. adults take to their online devices to help them or remind them to read scripture (21%), meditate (18%), be grateful (18%) or pray (14%) either daily, weekly, monthly or less often. More than a third of U.S. adults (37%) say they ever use apps or websites for at least one of these four purposes.

Frequency of usage of these apps and websites varies widely. Still, roughly one-in-ten U.S. adults say they use an app or website every day to help them or remind them to read scripture (9%), pray (8%) or be grateful (8%). And 5% say the same about apps or websites that help (or remind) them to meditate.

Notably, usage tends to be higher among members of the historically Black Protestant tradition, who are, for example, more than twice as likely as the general adult population to say they ever use apps or websites for reading scripture (47% vs. 21%). Close to a quarter of adults who belong to historically Black Protestant denominations say they use apps or websites every day for reading scripture or for praying (23% for each activity). All in all, 59% of adults in the historically Black Protestant tradition report that they ever use apps or websites in at least one of the four ways listed.

Looking at other religious groups, evangelical Protestants also stand out as heavy users of apps and websites that help them or remind them to read scripture: 39% say they use these technologies, including 18% who say they use such apps or sites daily. Evangelicals also use prayer apps or websites at above-average rates.

Jews are less likely than people in most other U.S. religious groups to say they use apps or websites to help (or remind) them to pray than are people in most other religious groups that are large enough to analyze separately. Just 7% of Jews say they use these technologies for prayer.

About half (52%) of U.S. adults with high levels of religious commitment say they use apps or websites to help them or remind them to read scripture, including about three-in-ten (29%) who do this every day. And 28% of Americans in the highly religious category say they use prayer apps or sites, including 18% who do so daily.

Irrespective of religious traditions,

Black adults are more likely than other Americans to use apps or sites to help them pray or read scripture. For example, 41% of Black Americans use apps or sites to help them read scripture, compared with 25% of Hispanic adults, 18% of Asian adults and 17% of White adults.

And, by just a slight margin, younger adults outpace older adults in using apps or sites that encourage meditation. Roughly a quarter of adults under 50 (22%) say they use apps or sites to help (or remind) them to meditate, compared with 16% of those ages 50 to 64 and 9% of those 65 and older.

Overall, 11% of U.S. adults say they follow or keep track of their own religious leaders online or on social media. Similarly, one-in-ten say they follow or keep track of any celebrities, authors or pastors specifically for their religious content online.

About a quarter of Americans who affiliate with historically Black Protestant churches say they use the internet or social media to follow or keep track of their own religious leaders (26%) or any celebrities, authors or pastors specifically for their religious content (23%). Evangelical Protestants are the next most likely religious group of those analyzed to say they do these things; about one-fifth of evangelicals follow their own clergy or other creators of religious content online.

The survey assessed Americans’ general online religious curiosity and activity by asking whether – and how often – they take to the internet to search for information about religion. Three-in-ten U.S. adults say they do this, including 9% who say they search online for religious information weekly or more often, 11% who do it monthly, and 10% who do it on occasion but less than monthly. Still, a large majority of U.S. adults (70%) say they never go online to search for information about religion.

Among U.S. adults who affiliate with

(See *RELIGION*, P. 7)

Religion And Technology—*CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6*

either evangelical Protestant denominations or historically Black Protestant churches, 15% say they use the internet to search for religious information at least weekly, compared with just 3% of the religiously unaffiliated (those who identify as atheist, agnostic or nothing in particular).

Across religious lines, roughly half of adults with a high level of religious commitment (53%) say they search online for information about religion. This includes 23% who say they do so at least once a week.

Two-in-ten U.S. adults say they consume religious content through online videos, for example, on YouTube or TikTok, and 15% say they listen to religion-focused podcasts. (The question about online videos asked whether respondents watch online videos other than religious services. Other questions in the survey asked specifically about watching religious services online.)

While younger adults use YouTube and TikTok more often than older adults in general (meaning, for all online content, about all topics), there is essentially no variation by age among those who say they watch videos specifically about religion. A similar pattern emerges when comparing general podcast consumption with podcasts that focus on religion. This could be because younger Americans tend to be less religious than older ones.

Overall, adults in the historically Black Protestant tradition and evangeli-



cals are more likely than other religious groups to say they ever watch religion-focused videos online (44% and 38%, respectively). And nearly one-in-ten (9%) Black adults overall (irrespective of religious tradition) say they watch religion-focused online videos every day (9%), compared with 4% of the general adult population.

In addition to asking about the use of digital technology to get religious content, the survey also asked about more

traditional ways of accessing information about religion.

About a third of U.S. adults (34%) say they read religion-focused books, which is more than the 20% who say they watch religion-focused videos online. And a quarter of U.S. adults report listening to religious radio stations – more than the 15% who listen to religion-focused podcasts.

Among Protestants, majorities of evangelicals and those in the histori-

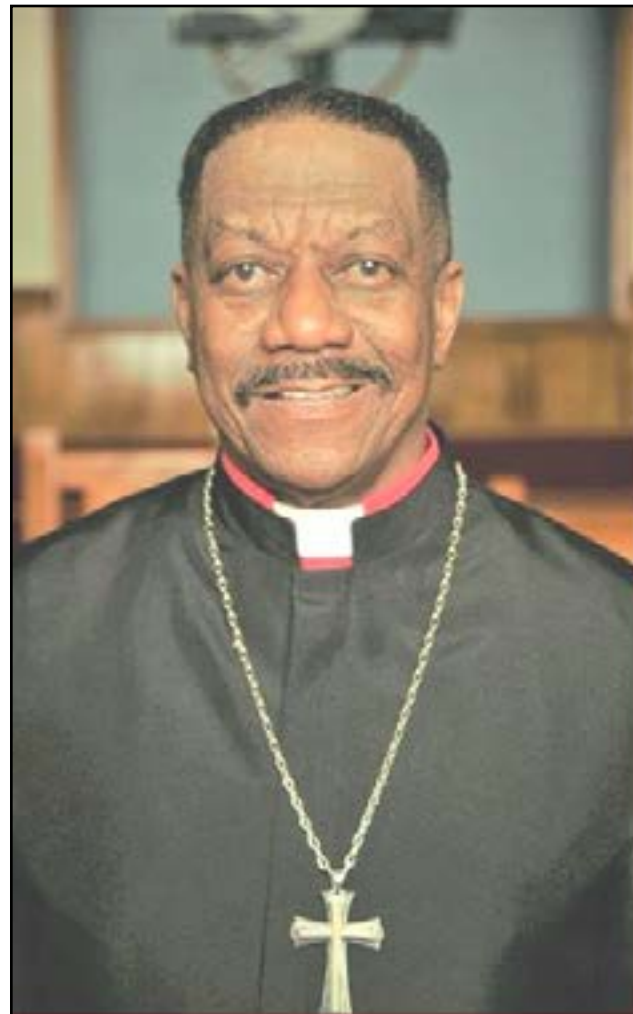
cally Black tradition read books which focus on religion or listen to religious radio stations, including about three-in-ten adults in both groups who say they do this at least weekly. Meanwhile, about a quarter of U.S. Jews (24%) read religion-focused books at least weekly, and 14% listen to religious radio stations weekly. By contrast, only about one-in-ten or fewer religiously unaffiliated Americans say they ever do these things.

Looking at age differences, U.S. adults ages 65 and older are much more likely than Americans ages 18 to 29 to say they ever read books focused on religion (42% vs. 23%) as well as to report that they do so at least weekly (23% vs. 11%).

Overall, fewer than one-in-ten Americans (7%) say they ever participate in online prayer groups, scripture study groups or religious education programs, compared with more than twice as many (19%) who say they participate in such groups in person. Just 4% engage in these activities online at least weekly, compared with 11% who do so in person that frequently.

Evangelical Protestants (23%) and those in the historically Black Protestant tradition (20%) stand out when it comes to meeting in person for at least one of these activities at least weekly. Meanwhile, 14% of Jews say they do this.

Overall, 4% of U.S. adults say they participate at least once a month in both online and in-person versions of prayer groups, scripture study groups or religious education programs.



General Overseer William Eli Ratcliff is the Pastor of Lincoln Park Holiness Church, Raleigh, North Carolina, and Presiding Elder of Truvine Assembly of Pentecostal Churches Inc., with seven churches under his leadership. Lincoln Park is the Headquarters Church.

He is the son of the late Bishop Eli Ratcliff Jr. and Margaret Nichols Ratcliff, who is still a loving mother and a very intricate part of his home and church life. He is married to the former Chandallal Rochelle Arrington, and they have two children and three granddaughters.

He received most of his nurturing, training, spiritual growth, and development under the auspices of his father, the late Bishop Eli Ratcliff Jr., the late Dr. Frank Weaver, and the late Dr. Tyrone P. Jones III. He attended North Carolina Central University, majoring in Business Administration. He completed four years of Theological Training at Shaw University Divinity School in 1997 and 1999 earned a BS degree in Organizational Management from St. Augustine University.

Overseer Ratcliff was the pastor at Mt. Moriah Missionary Baptist Church in Louisburg, North Carolina for over 14 years.

In 2015, after the death of his father, Overseer William Eli Ratcliff bravely continued the legacy of his grandfather and father as Pastor of Lincoln Park Holiness Church, where our "Main Objective is Winning Souls."

Under his pastorate, Lincoln Park has made substantial progress concerning the remodeling of our sanctuary and the Community Development and Revitalization. Overseer led the charge to fully remodel the garage across the street from the church and change the site for small businesses such as a natural hair salon, the Black Farmers Hub, and a non-profit.

In 2020, the world as we knew it changed, and Overseer was determined to continue the work of the Lord. Overseer connected with local grocery stores, the Inner Faith Food Shuttle, and the Food Bank to provide food for hundreds of people three days a week. Even now, he is still making strides in ministry.

Under his leadership, Lincoln Park Church is on the NFI internet radio station Thursday morning for Bible Study and Sunday morning at 11:30. Overseer led the charge as Lincoln Park has a successful YouTube ministry and website ministry. You can see why we say he is the hardest-working man in the gospel.

Join us on Sunday mornings at 10:00 a.m. for Sunday School and 11:00 a.m. for morning worship. Our church is located at 13 Heath Street, Raleigh, NC 27610. We believe in "High Powered Preaching, Sound Doctrine Teaching, Compassionate Reaching and Hallelujah Praise. LPHC stands for Loving People Helping Community. We, the Lincoln Park Holiness Church members, love our Pastor, Overseer William (Billy) Eli Ratcliff, and appreciate all he does in our church and our community. To view complete sermons by Pastor William Eli Ratcliff and associate ministers, please visit our YouTube Channel. Thank you!

Martin Luther King In London, 1964

By Hugh Muir

The Guardian

If the words of Martin Luther King have always encapsulated an era of great struggle and change, the same is true of the images. In sepia tones, we see him at the front of the march in Montgomery, Alabama, where the bus boycott by African Americans claimed world attention. We see him at the Lincoln Memorial, sharing his dream with millions around the globe. We see him on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel, next to Jesse Jackson, hours before the assassination. Jackson smiles, King oblivious to what was to happen, nevertheless looks pensive.

Much less familiar, but undoubtedly potent and closer to home, is the image being celebrated in London on Thursday 4 December of King in the capital. Fifty years ago, on 6 December, as he travelled from the US to Oslo to collect the 1964 Nobel peace prize for his leadership of the civil rights movement, King broke his trip to preach a scholarly sermon in front of a 3,000-strong congregation at St Paul's Cathedral. His evensong address, *The Three Dimensions of a Complete Life*, is not one of the speeches best known by the wider public, but it underpinned his theological career. It was the sermon he first preached as his trial address at the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery in 1954. He

subsequently gave versions of that sermon every year until his assassination in 1968. St Paul's, grand and imposing, seemed an unlikely stopping point for a man of establishment-shaking politics, but it was the perfect London platform for King's sermon.

The cathedral had long before thrown its weight behind the fight against racism with the recruitment of the radical Anglican priest John Collins to the cathedral chapter in 1948. Collins, a co-founder of War on Want and CND and very much the internationalist, was heavily involved in South Africa's anti-apartheid movement and the support network for the King-led civil rights movement.

Dogged, brave and resourceful, Collins – like King – saw his role as extending far beyond theology and the pulpit. Eight years earlier, he had run a campaign to raise funds to help anti-apartheid activists in South Africa – including Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu – fight treason charges. He arranged for the African-American superstar and activist Paul Robeson to sing spirituals in the cathedral, but fundraising was only part of the achievement. The key was smuggling £100,000 into the apartheid state with its hugely oppressive security infrastructure. Collins was very much the point man for radical activists. After Dr King's death, Collins organised the visit by Dr King's widow, Coretta Scott King, who

became the first woman to preach in the cathedral.

But on that crisp Sunday in 1964, with all seats taken and hundreds standing, it was King himself centre stage. Official pictures show him in the pulpit, having negotiated the curved wooden staircase in his severe black robe.

This was the other Dr King, the teacher and lecturer; studious, deliberate. "At times his voice was a slow, soft southern drawl," said the Times. "Then the tempo would increase and the words would come tumbling out in a flood of oratory. Quotations rolled off his tongue. He was actor, poet and preacher all at the same time."

King took his theme from the Book of Revelation and John's description therein of the dimensions of a city: "The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal." This was symbolism, said King. "He's saying at bottom that life as it should be and life at its best is a life that is complete on all sides." At his conclusion – after a weave of quotations and homilies described by the Times as "spellbinding", he said of the Three Dimensions: "When you get all three of these together, you can walk and never get weary. You can look up and see the morning stars singing together, and the sons of God shouting for joy." "We must not seek to rise from a position of disadvantage to one of advantage, substituting injustice of one type for that of another," he told the congregation. "God is not interested in the freedom of white, black or yellow men, but in the freedom of the whole human race."

Theological duties complete, he descended the staircase to give a press conference in the St Paul's chapter house. Wearing a smart suit, this was King the passionate activist, emphasising the common social traits between the struggle he knew best in the US and the situation here. "I think it's a fact now, and everybody knows it, that there are growing racial problems in Britain as a result of the large number of coloured persons from the West Indies, from Pakistan and India who are coming into the country," he told ITN. "And it is my feeling that if Britain is not eternally vigilant and if England does not, in a real sense, go all out to deal with this problem now, it can mushroom and become as serious as the problem we face in some other nations."

He spoke of the iniquity of immigration laws based on colour, condemning the practice – according to the Times – as totally contrary to "the laws of God and with the trends of the 20th century". Left unchecked, he said, such failings would "encourage the vestiges of racism and endanger all the great democratic principles which this country held dear". The parallels were there to be drawn with the US, he said. Attention needed to be paid to education, housing and employment in the UK, "if the nation was to prosper in spirit and in truth". His tone was stark. "Morality cannot be legislated, but behaviour can be regulated. The law cannot make a man love me, but it can stop him lynching me, and that is quite important."

The Times was entranced by the pulpit rhetoric, but also conveyed the tough message delivered subsequently. "Dr King's racial warning to Britain," its headline said.

Watching King that day, Canon Collins's wife, Diana, saw a complex figure. "He gives the impression of a deeply solitary person, a man who has wrestled with God ... he came to London from a sick bed and was clearly exhausted. But the feeling of his inner strength remains with one; he moves



through the crowds, through both execration and exclamation, his eyes fixed on a distant goal."

If he was exhausted, this couldn't be allowed to impede his schedule. King made headlines again the next day, when he travelled to the City Temple hall in central London, where his message was broader in scope, touching on racism in apartheid South Africa, as well as Britain.

That he spoke with authority was not the result of a rushed briefing about the state of race relations in the UK. King – always conscious of how international opinion affected his struggle in the US – sought to keep abreast of the shape and progress of battles elsewhere. In 1957, on his way back to the US from Ghana, he travelled through Nigeria, Rome, Geneva and Paris and stopped in London, where he had lunch with social theorist CLR James.

The event is recorded in Frank Rosen-garten's biography of James, *Urbane Revolutionary*. "A high point in James's life in relation to his belief in the capacity of ordinary people to be agents of their own liberation was a five-hour conversation that he, together with his wife, Selma James, and the novelist George Lamming had at the Jameses' home on the afternoon of 24 March 1957, with Martin Luther King and his wife, Coretta Scott King," writes Rosen-garten. "King's description of his experiences during the year-long Montgomery bus boycott of 1955-56 made a powerful impression on James."

In Appreciation



DR. DORWIN L. HOWARD, SR., PASTOR
FIRST COSMOPOLITAN BAPTIST CHURCH

We praise God for your loyal, faithful, and dedicated service to God and to His people. We are grateful for your humble spirit and your work in His vineyard because we feel eternally blessed to be the recipients of the fruit of your labor.

Out of the abundance of your heart, you preach God's Word, you earnestly and emphatically pray for the sick, you counsel the broken hearted and you believe wholeheartedly in feeding the hungry through the Food Pantry program.

We, the congregation of First Cosmopolitan Baptist Church, are grateful for your Pastoral Leadership, for your love and for your sacrifices. We pray that God will sustain you and your family spiritually, mentally, and physically as you strive to do His will.



Why American Churches Are On The Decline

By Adam Gabbatt

The Guardian

Churches are closing at rapid numbers in the US, researchers say, as congregations dwindle across the country and a younger generation of Americans abandon Christianity altogether – even as faith continues to dominate American politics.

As the US adjusts to an increasingly non-religious population, thousands of churches are closing each year in the country – a figure that experts believe may have accelerated since the Covid-19 pandemic.

The situation means some hard decisions for pastors, who have to decide when a dwindling congregation is no longer sustainable. But it has also created a boom market for those wanting to buy churches, with former houses of worship now finding new life.

About 4,500 Protestant churches closed in 2019, the last year data is available, with about 3,000 new churches opening, according to Lifeway Research. It was the first time the number of churches in the US hadn't grown since the evangelical firm started studying the topic. With the pandemic speeding up a broader trend of Americans turning away from Christianity, researchers say the closures will only have accelerated.

“The closures, even for a temporary period of time, impacted a lot of churches. People breaking that habit of attending church means a lot of churches had to work hard to get people back to attending again,” said Scott McConnell, executive director at Lifeway Research.

“In the last three years, all signs are pointing to a continued pace of closures probably similar to 2019 or possibly higher, as there's been a really rapid rise in American individuals who say they're not religious.”

Protestant pastors reported that typical church attendance is only 85% of pre-pandemic levels, McConnell said, while research by the Survey Center on American Life and the University of Chicago found that in spring 2022 67% of Americans reported attending church at least once a year, compared with 75% before the pandemic.

But while Covid-19 may have accelerated the decline, there is a broader, long-running trend of people moving away from religion. In 2017 Lifeway surveyed young adults aged between 18 and 22 who had attended church regularly, for at least a year during high school. The firm found that seven out of 10 had stopped attending church regularly.

Some of the reasons were “logistical”, McConnell said, as people moved away for college or started jobs which made it difficult to attend church.

“But some of the other answers are not so much logistics. One of the top answers was church members seem to be judgmental or hypocritical,” McConnell said.

“And so the younger generation just doesn't feel like they're being accepted in a church environment or some of their choices aren't being accepted by those at church.”



About a quarter of the young adults who dropped out of church said they disagreed with their church's stance on political and social issues, McConnell said.

A study by Pew Research found that the number of Americans who identified as Christian was 64% in 2020, with 30% of the US population being classed as “religiously unaffiliated”. About 6% of Americans identified with Judaism, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism.

“Since the 1990s, large numbers of Americans have left Christianity to join the growing ranks of US adults who describe their religious identity as atheist, agnostic or ‘nothing in particular’,” Pew wrote.

“This accelerating trend is reshaping the US religious landscape.”

In 1972 92% of Americans said they were Christian, Pew reported, but by 2070 that number will drop to below 50% – and the number of “religiously unaffiliated” Americans – or ‘nones’ will probably outnumber those adhering to Christianity.

Stephen Bullivant, author of *Nonverts: The Making of Ex-Christian America* and professor of theology and the sociology of religion at St Mary's University, said in the

Christian world it had been a generational change.

While grandparents might have been regular churchgoers, their children would say they believe in God, but not go to church regularly. By the time millennials came round, they had little experience or relationship with churchgoing or religion.

In the Catholic church, in particular, the sexual abuse scandal may have driven away people who had only a tenuous connection to the faith.

“The other thing is the pandemic,” Bullivant said.

“A lot of people who were weakly attached, to suddenly have months of not going, they're then thinking: ‘Well we don't really need to go,’ or ‘We've found something else to do,’ or thinking: ‘It was hard enough dragging the kids along then, we really ought to start going again ... next week.’”

Bullivant said most other countries saw a move away from religion earlier than the US, but the US had particular circumstances that slowed things down.

“Canada, Britain, France, Australia, New Zealand, the nones rise much earlier, the

wake of the 1960s the baby boom generation, this kind of big, growing separation of kind of traditional Christian moral morality,” Bullivant said.

“What happens in America that I think dampens down the rise of the nones is the cold war. Because in America, unlike in Britain, there's a very explicit kind of ‘Christian America’ versus godless communism framing, and to be non-religious is to be un-American.

“I think that dampens it down until you get the millennial generation for whom the cold war is just a vague memory from their early childhood.”

When people leave, congregations dwindle. And when that gets to a critical point, churches close. That has led to a flood of churches available for sale, and a range of opportunities for the once holy buildings.

Brian Dolehide, managing director of AD Advisors, a real estate company that specializes in church sales, said the last 10 years had seen a spike in sales. Frequently churches become housing or care homes, while some of the churches are bought by other churches wanting to expand.

But selling a church isn't like selling a house or a business. Frequently the sellers want a buyer who plans to use the church for a good cause: Dolehide said he had recently sold a church in El Paso which is now used as housing for recent immigrants, and a convent in Pittsburgh which will be used as affordable housing.

“The faith-based transaction is so different in so many ways from the for-profit transaction. We're not looking to profit from our transactions, we're looking for the best use that reflects the last 50 years or 100 years use if possible.”

The closures aren't spread evenly through the country.

In Texas, John Muzyka of Church Realty, a company that specializes in church sales, said there were fewer churches for sale than at any point in the last 15 years. He believes that is partly down to Texas's response to the pandemic, where the governor allowed churches to open in May 2020, even when the number of new Covid cases was extremely high.

“I would say if a church stayed closed for more than a year, it was really hard to get those people to come back. When you were closed for three months, you were able to get over it,” Muzyka said.

That aside, closures are often due to a failure of churches to adapt.

“A church will go through a life cycle. At some point, maybe the congregation ages out, maybe they stop reaching young families.

“If the church ages and doesn't reach young people, or the demographics change and they don't figure out how to reach the new demographic, that church ends up closing.

“Yes, there's financial pressures that will close a church, but oftentimes, it's more that they didn't figure out how to change when the community changed, or they didn't have enough young people to continue the congregation for the next generation.”

Stay Informed! Subscribe To The Carolinian Today At www.CARO.news

A Study Exploring Faith And Black Churches

Standing in the parking lot of her church on a summer morning, Modestine Davis explained why she was drawn to the predominantly Black congregation in the Maryland suburbs of Washington, D.C.

“First Baptist Church of Highland Park just meets all of our spiritual needs and wraparound service needs in terms [of] family, children’s church, ministries that are strong,” she said. And those ministries include social justice and job-hunting for its African American members.

The holistic approach of the congregation in Prince George’s County includes community distribution of free food and COVID-19 vaccinations as well as services featuring gospel singers, praise dancers, and sermons that highlight the Bible, real-time Black cultural issues, and self-improvement tips.

Her senior pastor “reminds us to use wisdom and to get understanding,” Davis said before heading home with her husband and

their 6-year-old daughter after the 7:30 a.m. service.

“For example, God is with us, but we have to do our part in terms of taking care of our personal health, getting vaccinated, going to our doctor’s appointments, making sure our health is in check.”

The church on a hill—from which it’s possible to spot the Washington Monument on a clear day—is one example of the houses of worship that a far-reaching study by the Pew Research Center found remain popular with African Americans: Sixty percent of Black Americans who attend religious services go to Black congregations. An even higher share of Black Protestants—67%—attend Black churches, which the study defines as congregations with predominantly Black attendees as well as African American leadership.

The study, released in February, also found that while 7 in 10 Black adults say

that offering spiritual comfort and a sense of fellowship are highest on their list of key functions of houses of worship, more than half (55%) cite helping the needy with food, bills, and housing. More than 40% cite the teaching of practical life skills and providing a sense of racial pride. A quarter say sermons addressing political topics such as race relations and immigration are important.

The 176-page report, “Faith Among Black Americans,” is the center’s most in-depth look at the Black church in particular and the religious life of African Americans in general. It also is a departure, both in approach and size, from comparative studies that the Center had conducted previously, said Besheer Mohamed, the lead author.

“We realize that really to understand Black American life broadly, one of the things you have to understand is Black American religious life,” Mohamed said of

the research, which had been planned for years and is the first part of a new series focused on Black Americans.

The nationally representative sample of 8,660 Black adult respondents, surveyed from Nov. 19, 2019, through June 3, 2020, is highly unusual. Most studies don’t have nearly that many research participants overall. And Black respondents tend to number in the hundreds in studies that contrast them, as a whole, with other racial/ethnic groups.

Many of the respondents answered questions online, but the Center also reached participants by phone and mail to ensure the inclusion of people from a variety of age levels and socioeconomic situations. The Center drew from three nationally representative survey panels, supplemented by a new survey designed to aid in representing the views of harder-to-reach groups such as foreign-born Black Americans.

How The Virgin Mary Is Seen Around The World

By Dr. Joy Martinez

Staff Writer



Every year thousands of Catholics from around the world embark on a weeks-long procession throughout Europe, celebrating the Feast of the Assumption of Mary, crowding past the discarded crutches of the miraculously healed to look upon the dark-skinned image of the Black Madonna, praying for a just blessing as one of the nearly five million devotees that visit each year.

Thousands of Black Madonnas in the form of paintings and statues are honored across Spain, France, Italy, Switzerland, and Russia, their shrines representing the world’s most famous and frequented Marian (that is, centered around the Virgin Mary) locations.

While most of the icons are concentrated in Europe—and particularly in the Mediterranean—they are also found in the Americas. Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico is one such example that, like the Black Madonna in Poland, serves as a vital aspect of the country’s religious pulse.

Too often, racism and ignorance obscure the true origins of the Black lady, many passionately refute their very existence, claiming that they are just unusual images of the Virgin Mary.

One common account of the Black Madonna in France’s Chartres Cathedral holds that her skin was once white, but became dark over the centuries due to exposure to candle soot (notably, her clothing did not suffer the same darkening, nor did comparable images of saints housed in the same sanctuaries).

This theory, although easily disproven, is accepted in many locations throughout Europe. In other cases, icons have been purposely whitened, such as in Rome’s Santa Maria del Popolo Church, where the representation displayed in the main altar has been bleached, while the same image on the choir altar remains Black.

In its most substantial renovation since Chartres was rebuilt between 1194 and 1225, the building has changed almost beyond recognition. The 2017 restoration aimed not only to clean and maintain the structure, but also to offer an insight into what the cathedral would have looked like in the 13th century.

Its interior was designed to be a radiant vision, as close to heaven on earth as a pilgrim might come, although many modern visitors have responded more with shock than with awe. The architecture critic Martin Filler has described the project as a “scandalous desecration of a cultural holy place.” The once Black Madonna is now white.

Dr. Malgorzata Oleszkiewicz-Peralba, associate professor of Latin American Literary and Cultural Studies in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, studies syncretic religions and representations of the divine feminine.

Her acclaimed book, *The Black Madonna in Latin America and Europe*, explores the historical precedents of modern-day Black Madonna worship.

As Dr. Oleszkiewicz-Peralba explains, the Mother Goddess, revered throughout all of human history represents the essential state of reality, that which gives birth to all of material existence. “She is the mother of universes, identified with the primordial darkness and chaos of the universe, and with the moist and fertile black earth.”

But if Black women are associated with power, fertility and creation at the beginning of history, Trans-Atlantic slavery and its lasting anti-Blackness has replaced those strengths with insane ferocity, overt harlotry, and a lack of control over individual child bearing.

This ideological construct of the wanton Jezebel legitimized White men’s sexual abuse of Black enslaved women; for if Black women were inherently promiscuous, they could not be violated. Her opposite, the White woman, was virtuous and pure and worthy of protection.

Strong female figures, especially those representing Black race and culture, have been either sweetened or demonized in our entertainment rich culture. Even Black Girl Magic has been criticized, as the “strong, black woman” archetype, which also includes the mourning Black woman who suffers in silence, furthering the idea that we can survive it all, that we can withstand it. That we are, in fact, superhuman.

Not superhuman. But human. Desiring respect as humans. But there stands a Madonna in Tindari, Sicily, which dates from well before the 8th century. The Madonna statue is displayed up on high above the altar, and beneath her is a Bible quotation in Latin, from the Song of Songs: “Nigra sum sed Formosa”—I am Black but I am beautiful.

Truth.

How Jesus Came To Resemble A White European

Anna Swartwood House

University of South Carolina

The portrayal of Jesus as a white, European man has come under renewed scrutiny during this period of introspection over the legacy of racism in society.

As protesters called for the removal of Confederate statues in the U.S., activist Shaun King went further, suggesting that murals and artwork depicting “white Jesus” should “come down.”

His concerns about the depiction of Christ and how it is used to uphold notions of white supremacy are not isolated. Prominent scholars and the archbishop of Canterbury have called to reconsider Jesus’ portrayal as a white man.

As a European Renaissance art historian, I study the evolving image of Jesus Christ from A.D. 1350 to 1600. Some of the best-known depictions of Christ, from Leonardo da Vinci’s “Last Supper” to Michelangelo’s “Last Judgment” in the Sistine Chapel, were produced during this period.

But the all-time most-reproduced image of Jesus comes from another period. It is Warner Sallman’s light-eyed, light-haired “Head of Christ” from 1940. Sallman, a former commercial artist who created art for advertising campaigns, successfully marketed this picture worldwide.

Through Sallman’s partnerships with two Christian publishing companies, one Protestant and one Catholic, the Head of Christ came to be included on everything from prayer cards to stained glass, faux oil paintings, calendars, hymnals and night lights.

Sallman’s painting culminates a long tradition of white Europeans creating and disseminating pictures of Christ made in their own image.

In search of the holy face

The historical Jesus likely had the brown eyes and skin of other first-century Jews from Galilee, a region in biblical Israel. But no one knows exactly what Jesus looked like. There are no known images of Jesus from his lifetime, and while the Old Testament Kings Saul and David are explicitly called tall and handsome in the Bible, there is little indication of Jesus’ appearance in the Old or New Testaments.

Even these texts are contradictory: The Old Testament prophet Isaiah reads that the coming savior “had no beauty or majesty,” while the Book of Psalms claims he was “fairer than the children of men,” the word “fair” referring to physical beauty.

The earliest images of Jesus Christ emerged in the first through third centuries A.D., amidst concerns about idolatry. They were less about capturing the actual appearance of Christ than about clarifying his role as a ruler or as a savior.

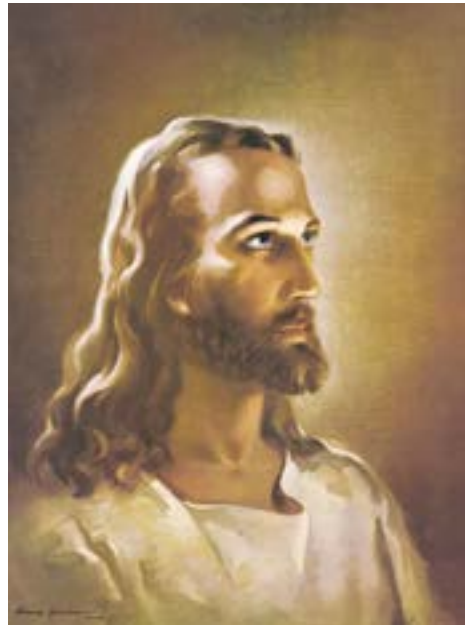
To clearly indicate these roles, early Christian artists often relied on syncretism, meaning they combined visual formats from other cultures.

Probably the most popular syncretic image is Christ as the Good Shepherd, a beardless, youthful figure based on pagan representations of Orpheus, Hermes and Apollo.

In other common depictions, Christ wears the toga or other attributes of the emperor. The theologian Richard Vilade-sau argues that the mature bearded Christ, with long hair in the “Syrian” style, combines characteristics of the Greek god Zeus and the Old Testament figure Samson, among others.

Christ as self-portraitist

The first portraits of Christ, in the sense of authoritative likenesses, were believed to be self-portraits: the miraculous “image



not made by human hands,” or acheiropoi-etos.

This belief originated in the seventh century A.D., based on a legend that Christ healed King Abgar of Edessa in modern-day Urfa, Turkey, through a miraculous image of his face, now known as the Mandylion.

A similar legend adopted by Western Christianity between the 11th and 14th centuries recounts how, before his death by crucifixion, Christ left an impression of his face on the veil of Saint Veronica, an image known as the volto santo, or “Holy Face.”

These two images, along with other similar relics, have formed the basis of iconic traditions about the “true image” of Christ. From the perspective of art history, these artifacts reinforced an already standardized image of a bearded Christ with shoulder-length, dark hair.

In the Renaissance, European artists began to combine the icon and the portrait, making Christ in their own likeness. This happened for a variety of reasons, from identifying with the human suffering of Christ to commenting on one’s own creative power.

The 15th-century Sicilian painter An-

tonello da Messina, for example, painted small pictures of the suffering Christ formatted exactly like his portraits of regular people, with the subject positioned between a fictive parapet and a plain black background and signed “Antonello da Messina painted me.”

The 16th-century German artist Albrecht Dürer blurred the line between the holy face and his own image in a famous self-portrait of 1500. In this, he posed frontally like an icon, with his beard and luxuriant shoulder-length hair recalling Christ’s. The “AD” monogram could stand equally for “Albrecht Dürer” or “Anno Domini” – “in the year of our Lord.”

In whose image?

This phenomenon was not restricted to Europe: There are 16th- and 17th-century pictures of Jesus with, for example, Ethiopian and Indian features.

In Europe, however, the image of a light-skinned European Christ began to influence other parts of the world through European trade and colonization.

The Italian painter Andrea Mantegna’s “Adoration of the Magi” from A.D. 1505 features three distinct magi, who, according to one contemporary tradition, came from Africa, the Middle East and Asia. They present expensive objects of porcelain, agate and brass that would have been prized imports from China and the Persian and Ottoman empires.

But Jesus’ light skin and blue eyes suggest that he is not Middle Eastern but European-born. And the faux-Hebrew script embroidered on Mary’s cuffs and hemline belie a complicated relationship to the Judaism of the Holy Family.

In Mantegna’s Italy, anti-Semitic myths were already prevalent among the majority Christian population, with Jewish people often segregated to their own quarters of major cities.

Artists tried to distance Jesus and his parents from their Jewishness. Even seemingly small attributes like pierced ears – earrings were associated with Jewish women, their removal with a conversion to Christianity – could represent a transition toward the Christianity represented by Jesus.

Much later, anti-Semitic forces in Europe including the Nazis would attempt to divorce Jesus totally from his Judaism in favor of an Aryan stereotype.

White Jesus abroad

As Europeans colonized increasingly farther-flung lands, they brought a European Jesus with them. Jesuit missionaries established painting schools that taught new converts Christian art in a European mode.

A small altarpiece made in the school of Giovanni Niccolò, the Italian Jesuit who founded the “Seminary of Painters” in Kumamoto, Japan, around 1590, combines a traditional Japanese gilt and mother-of-pearl shrine with a painting of a distinctly white, European Madonna and Child.

In colonial Latin America – called “New Spain” by European colonists – images of a white Jesus reinforced a caste system where white, Christian Europeans occupied the top tier, while those with darker skin from perceived intermixing with native populations ranked considerably lower.

Artist Nicolas Correa’s 1695 painting of Saint Rose of Lima, the first Catholic saint born in “New Spain,” shows her metaphorical marriage to a blond, light-skinned Christ.

Legacies of likeness

Scholar Edward J. Blum and Paul Harvey argue that in the centuries after European colonization of the Americas, the image of a white Christ associated him with the logic of empire and could be used to justify the oppression of Native and African Americans.

In a multiracial but unequal America, there was a disproportionate representation of a white Jesus in the media. It wasn’t only Warner Sallman’s Head of Christ that was depicted widely; a large proportion of actors who have played Jesus on television and film have been white with blue eyes.

Pictures of Jesus historically have served many purposes, from symbolically presenting his power to depicting his actual likeness. But representation matters, and viewers need to understand the complicated history of the images of Christ they consume.



N.C.’s Twice-Weekly African American Newspaper

SUBSCRIBE TODAY

Yes, I Want A 1 Year Subscription For **\$45.00**
 Yes, I Want A 2 Year Subscription For **\$75.00**

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE ____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____

EMAIL _____



Make checks payable to The Carolinian Newspaper
 Mail your subscription form and payment to PO Box 25308 Raleigh, NC 27611

M&F Bank

Empowering Growth

Serving the Triangle for 116 Years

Our commitment to the people and businesses of this vibrant region runs deep, providing financial stability and support when it matters most. As your trusted community bank, we look forward to more years of growth with you.



"We wouldn't be here without the right people and the right bank who really wanted to help us provide for our community. **Soberina Traywick** from M&F Bank has always been there for us, answering every email and every phone call right away."

-Dennis Lewis
Owner, Carolina Legacy Volleyball Club

FOUR BRANCH LOCATIONS SERVING RALEIGH-DURHAM

- Business & Personal Checking
- Small Business & Personal Lending
- Mobile & Online Banking
- Free access to 44,000 ATMs Nationwide