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A Brief Genealogical Accounting of the History, Hermeneutics, and Horizon of African American Preaching

Abstract

As a cultural form of sacred discourse, African American preaching in North America, historically and contemporarily, has been esteemed for its aesthetic richness, persistent calls for justice, ecclesiastical reform, moral and ethical responsibility, spiritual redemption, and transformation. Identifying its rhetorical features and sociofunctional dynamics, exploring issues and challenges that have had an effect on its development and advancement, describing the role its practitioners and theorists have played in defining its traditions and examining its theological underpinnings, communal influence, and social relevance to Black religious life and beyond its perceived borders are fundamental commitments that have been central to establishing its nomenclature as a specific genre of Christian preaching. *This lecture provides a brief genealogical accounting of African American preaching in North America. Following a historical treatment, the lecture details contrastive hermeneutical perspectives on biblical interpretation, and considers contemporary trends and innovations on the horizon in African American homiletic theory and practice.*

Lecture Outline

I. Historical Origins

- African Cultural Retentions
- West African Religious Traditions and Ontological Systems
- African Orality
- The Muntu and Cultural Signatures
- Developmental Phases in the United States (7 phases)
 - Colonial North America Period
 - Revival Period
 - Reconstruction Period
 - Great Migration Period
 - Civil Rights Period
 - Post-Civil Rights Period
 - Postmodern Period

II. African American Preaching and Biblical Interpretation

- Uses of Scripture and Domains of the Black-Lived Experience
- Hermeneutical Perspectives
- Preaching Negotiations and the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures

III. Future Developments