

ABSTRACT

CREATIVE PROJECT: The Response of the African-American Faith Community to the Economic Crisis

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PAGES: 25 page paper and 11-minute video report.

In a time of deepening skepticism about religious institutions, the black church in America continues to provide a structure of support for African-Americans caught in the aftermath of the worst economic downturn in more than seven decades. Its growth and influence traceable to the country's history of slavery and discrimination, the black church has adapted its historic social mission in the face of economic setbacks that threaten decades of gains made by the black middle class.

This creative project examines these issues through the experience of a black congregation in Muncie, Ind., with an emphasis on the powerful rhetorical style of preaching that offers hope and encouragement on a social level, while underscoring the traditional religious themes at the heart of the black worship experience. The project's video presentation documents that experience, including the vivid rhetorical style characteristic of the black church and considers the meaning of this experience for other Americans including white majority culture. A central component of the creative project and the reason why this work is important centers on the unique qualities of the African American church experience, especially from the perspective of white Americans.