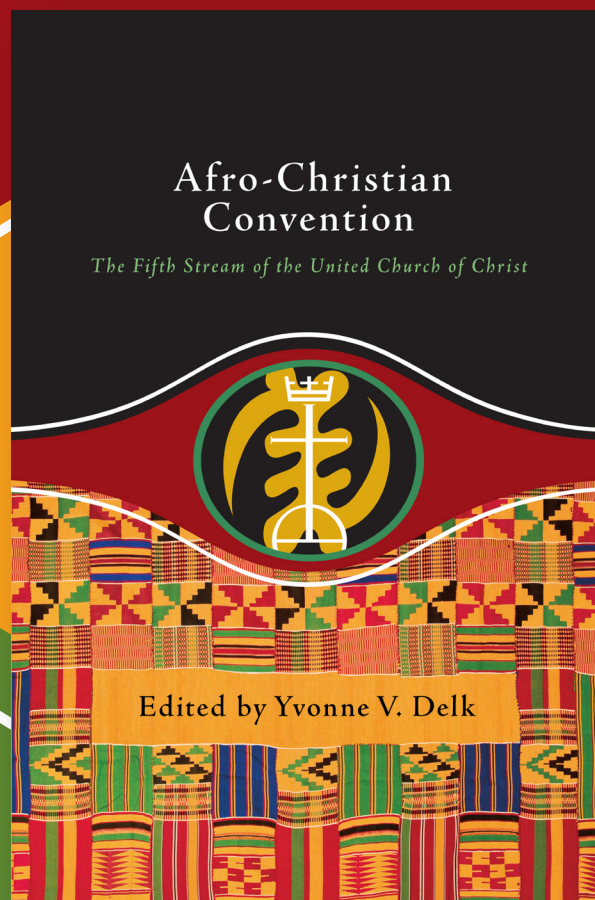


# An Study Guide for

## Afro-Christian Convention

*The Fifth Stream of the United Church of Christ*



by Yvonne V. Delk (editor, contributor) and contributors Iva E. Carruthers, K. Ray Hill, Vivian M. Lucas, Henry T. Simmons, Julia M. Speller, Brenda Billips Square, Richard H. Taylor, and Jeremiah A. Wright Jr.

## Purpose of the Guide

The purpose of this study guide is to provide an opportunity for deeper knowledge and understanding of the legacy of the Afro-Christian Convention as the fifth founding stream of the United Church of Christ and how it widens and deepens our commitment and vision as a denomination and church. An underlying theme running through this book is Ubuntu. This Nguni Bantu term means “humanity toward others.” It is understood more fully through the phrase “I am because we are; since we are, therefore I am.” This understanding of individuals and communities produces, among others, the values of dignity, compassion, co-responsibility, and justice.

Within the legacy of the Afro-Christian tradition, it is the African taproot that defines the kinship ties of the “beloved community” and that resonated with the “united and uniting” ideal of the United Church of Christ. It is through the lens of Ubuntu, revealed in the story of the fifth founding stream, that this study guide for *Afro-Christian Convention: The Fifth Stream of the United Church of Christ* explores forms of “consciousness” experienced by Afro-Christians that continue to offer important points of reflection today. As a community of faith, Ubuntu guides our journey toward greater awareness and responsiveness in our work and fellowship.



## How to Use This Guide

This discussion guide is intended for small groups, Bible studies, book clubs, and individuals who wish to discuss and explore the Afro-Christian tradition that bridges between West Africa and the Tidewater regions of Virginia and North Carolina; how it formed, was sustained through years of enslavements and legalized segregation, was suppressed within the United Church of Christ, has been carried on by faithful individuals and communities, and is now established as a fifth founding stream of the United Church of Christ. This is a story of a deeply embedded faith,

historical perseverance, Black ingenuity and independence, and a model for revising our origin stories to include more of our history.

This guide provides an overview, scripture, discussion questions, and a list of additional resources for each chapter. The suggested format for study is to combine two chapters for discussion, based on common themes:

- Introduction and Chapter 2 – Different worldviews that became the historical foundation for the growth of the Afro-Christian Convention.
- Chapters 3 and 4 – Narratives that shaped the Afro-Christian Convention and informed its work and witness.

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- Chapters 5 and 6 – Struggles for identity and purpose experienced the Afro-Christians as Black members of a majority white denomination.
- Chapters 7 and 8 – Gifts and visions that emerged from the Afro-Christian tradition and offer wisdom and hope for our collective work.

Two useful resources can be used to accompany the sessions. First, “Retelling the Origin Story: Leading Voices share Afro-Christian presence in UCC” by Kayla Berkey (published Feb. 21, 2023) provides a short, accessible overview to the material encountered in the book. Second, the 2023 video, “Retelling the Origin Story: The Power and Presence of the Afro-Christian Convention

in the United Church of Christ” (sponsored by the Baxter Fund for African American Studies at Lancaster Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania), includes interviews with many of the book’s contributors. The video is approximately 1 hour and 15 minutes. It can be played in small sections to accompany the chapters.

As study sessions are planned, the leader and participants are encouraged to should use their own judgment on how to use the scriptures, discussion questions and resources for their context. The intent of this guide is to foster rich, constructive conversations and actions that celebrate this part of our collective story and deepen our commitments as a united and uniting Church.

## Resources

- [“Retelling the Origin Story: Leading voices share Afro-Christian presence in UCC”](#) by Kayla Berkey
- (video) [“Retelling the Origin Story: The Power and Presence of the Afro-Christian Convention in the United Church of Christ”](#) [use passcode \*=ZNq!1q ]



## Introduction

# A Resurgent Spiritual Consciousness: Flowing from Africa

**Read: Pages 1-16**

**Scripture: John 7:37-39**

This is the story of an African people whose memory of Africa is embedded in its name as “Afro.” This is the story of a spirit-filled people impacted by an indigenous revival of Christians in the period of the Great Awakening, which provides the “Christian” part of its name. While it is part of what came to be known as the “Black Church” in America, it is a distinct strand with its own unique history.

The introduction and conclusion by Yvonne V. Delk are framed by the lyrics to the 1900 “Negro National Anthem,” with lyrics by James Weldon Johnson and music by J. Rosamond Johnson. The Johnson brothers’ song demanded that African people in America never forget their story, their journey, and the place where they first met the divine. The Afro-Christian tradition, Delk says, was not born in slavery. It was tested in slavery. Scholar Brad Braxton writes, “The story of Africa’s involvement with Christianity is as old as the church itself.” But Europe’s Transatlantic slave trade perverted Christianity to provide religious justification to brutalize Africans. Braxton says, “Amid this horrible violence, a new moral community arose in the United States—the African-American church.” The Afro-Christian Convention is part of this story, rooted in the earliest arrivals of enslaved Africans in British America’s Tidewater region of Virginia (this is earlier than the Pilgrims from Britain in 1628). The Afro-Christian Convention flows from those first Africans.

The foreword by Jeremiah A. Wright provides one person’s testimony to how the spiritual and

*“A history that does not press us into the future is dead. . . . As we look back to see who we have authentically been, we also lean forward into who we are authentically becoming.”*

—Yvonne V. Delk

political power of Afro-Christian tradition has been made manifest in his own life story. In particular, Wright traces transformations in worship, academia, and culture in the U.S. and beyond. Wright’s ministry at Trinity United Church of Christ has had a profound impact on the denomination, society, and political life in the United States.

Delk reminds us that the church is not static. Like all true encounters with the action of God in history, the story of the Afro-Christian tradition will have little meaning unless it produces new human action growing out of new faith. To “remember” is to define who we are in ways that we are not free to walk away from. Now is the time to remember, recognize, and resurrect a fresh origin story.



## For Discussion

Consider and share your thoughts on the experiences of relearning your own history in your context.

- What does it mean that the Afro-Christian tradition was not born, but tested, in slavery?
- When have you or your community learned something about your history that changed your self-understanding and caused you to act differently?
- Delk says that the church is not static. Has your community ever confused fidelity with a refusal to change or stability with permanence? How could the values Ubuntu (dignity, compassion, co-responsibility, and justice) have been helpful as you navigated those conversations?

## Resources

- Read aloud or sing James Weldon Johnson's "Lift Every Voice and Sing."
- Brad Braxton, "Worship and Prayer in African American Christianity," *Huffington Post*, October 25, 2011.
- Beth Austin, "1619: Virginia's First Africans," Hampton History Museum.
- Vincent G. Harding, *There Is a River: The Black Struggle for Freedom in America* (1981).



## Chapter Two

# A Contested Christian Consciousness: Becoming Simply Christian

**Read: Pages 17-21**

**Scripture: Ecclesiastes 4:1-3**

*“The white Christian Churches in the Tidewater and their members’ slave plantations were near to the center of the Rebellion. This was followed by new legislation against education and movement or assembly by Africans, both enslaved and free. What did this mean to the enslaved people hovering in nearby cabins?” —Richard H. Taylor*

Richard H. Taylor’s chapter begins with a snapshot of how the American Revolution championed freedom, independence, individual choice, through democratic participation. When applied to religious communities, these ideals eliminated aristocracy and welcomed diverse biblical understandings resulting in an American denomination that understood itself as “simply Christian.” Yet, within this communion was division shaped by the realities of slavery. A few religious leaders denounced it and even confessed their own past racism, but the majority did not. Thus, a contested consciousness grew in Christian churches that sanctioned exclusion and inequality informed by the sin of racism and built into the policies and practices of the nation.

In the midst, Afro-Christians embraced another kind of freedom, born in the gospel of Jesus

Christ and affirmed in scripture. In John 8:31-32 they read, “If you abide in my word then you are my disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free” (NKJV). For them, the truth of God’s love in Jesus Christ assured liberty and freedom in this world and not simply in the next. Thus, Afro-Christians were able to walk in hope, in spite of social and religious contradictions, led by their faith in Christ and the enduring strength and presence of their African ancestors.

The contested Christian consciousness that shaped the world of Afro-Christians in the nineteenth century continues in many forms today, across lines of difference in faith, culture, and consciousness. Through the lens of Ubuntu, we find another form of engagement, rooted in the practice of “humanity toward others” and strengthened by actions of authenticity and grace.



## For Discussion

Consider and share your thoughts on the experiences of contested consciousness in your context.

- When have you or your faith community experienced points of challenge and growth around “contested” theological or social perspectives?
- What were some of the responses? What lessons were learned in the process?
- What do “actions of authenticity and grace” look like in your context, when informed by the values of Ubuntu (dignity, compassion, co-responsibility, and justice) and what are ways these actions can be lived out more fully?

## Resources

- [Historical Directory of the Christian Denomination and Afro-Christian Churches by Richard Taylor \(2023\)](#)
- [“The Christian Churches”](#)
- [The Life of Rev. James O’Kelly and the Early History of the Christian Church in the South by W. E. MacClenny \(1910\)](#)
- [The Christians’ Annual](#)
- [“Essay on Negro Slavery,” by James O’Kelly \(1789\)](#)





## Chapter Three

# A Renewed Historical Consciousness: Survival and Liberation with the Spiritual Gifts of Faith, Hope, and Resistance

**Read: pages 23-40**

**Scripture: Psalm 145:1-7**

Brenda Billips Square's chapter offers the detailed story of the Afro-Christian Convention that had been shared for generations through oral tradition, but is now available in a new and revealing archival record. Through richly nuanced accounts of the Afro-Christian legacy, the voices of countless women and men of faith are heard, affirming that the ancestors are still speaking, in ways that continue to encourage and empower. These resources appear as minutes, addresses, and reports as well as sermons, music, and images giving voice to a silenced story that now broadens and deepens our collective denominational narrative, through the fifth stream.

These archival documents that uncover the organizational mechanisms of the Afro-Christian Convention also offer a glimpse of the vision and self-determination of everyday people who lived out their work and witness as a segregated Black denomination within a white one. In their diligent acts to preserve their past, the Afro-Christians exercised their right to renew their historical consciousness, by rejecting previous versions that dismissed or misinterpreted their journey. In the spirit of Deuteronomy 6:7, they heeded the command to pass on a legacy of faith: "when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up" (NIV). This reveals

a grace-filled story of God's power and presence that began on the shores of Africa and continues yet today.

The same energy that fueled the renewed historical consciousness of the Afro-Christians to preserve their story, is required today in light of

*"These records contain sacred wisdom of how the Afro-Christian faith resisted enslavement and Jim Crow to build churches, sustain communities, and empower leaders who today remain at the forefront of global struggle for equity, justice, and peace."*

—Brenda Billips Square

factions that seek to restrict and dismiss the voices of many in our nation. The spirit of Ubuntu prepares us to honor grace-filled narratives—narratives that expand, rather than limit, our capacity to faithfully and fearlessly live into our collective commitments and future as a church.





## For Discussion

Consider and share responses within your context, to the expansion of our collective story, through the acknowledgment of the fifth stream.

- Name and discuss some of the points of affirmation and question that have emerged for you, in light of this renewed collective history.
- Where do you see points of connection between the Afro-Christian story and the other streams of our faith community?
- What are specific ways that the values of Ubuntu (dignity, compassion, co-responsibility, and justice) encourage your congregation and our church to more fully embrace the “grace-filled narratives” in our midst?

## Resources

- [“Address of Rev. Joseph Mann, Senior Elder of the Afro-Christian: One of the Early Pioneers of Our Work,” pages 64-66 in Proceedings and Biennial Journal of the Semi-Centennial \(25th Session\) Biennial General Convention of the Afro-Christian Church of the United States of America, Canada, South America and the West Indies.](#)
- *A History of Black Congregational Christian Churches* by J. Taylor Stanley
- [Lest We Forget: Our God, Our Heritage, Our Responsibilities, produced by the Southern Conference of the United Church of Christ \(1979\)](#)



## Chapter Four

# A Fortified Social Consciousness: Working Out Our Soul Salvation

**Read: pages 41-59**

**Scripture: Romans 12:1-2**

Vivian M. Lucas' chapter discusses the strong link in the Afro-Christian tradition between education and freedom, a link that prepared its people to fight against adversities with power and conviction. Through a passion for learning and a commitment to justice, Afro-Christians have been able to name their reality in ways they were not free to walk away from. This fierce conviction helped them to not only survive but thrive. It was this energy that supported them as they sought ways to prepare themselves for the future through formal education, even though the systems and structures of their time restricted and severely stifled this goal.

Thus, the story of Franklinton Christian College, exemplifies this primacy of education, empowerment, and freedom in the Afro-Christian tradition. It affirms the prophetic voices and leadership of their forebears, who expressed their faith in God through their embodied worship, as well as their efforts

*“God’s people have continually claimed a sacred place where God’s people remit and repent for America’s original sin of racism, seek God’s face for the moral use of the property, and experience lasting transformation through education, liberation, social justice, and God’s love.” —Vivian M. Lucas*

for social change. Inspired by God’s word, they were prepared to answer the charge in Micah 6:8 to “act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with your God” (NIV). This legacy of the Afro-Christian tradition, informed by Micah’s words, offered holistic education for mind, body and spirit. It also fashioned a tool box that would sustain a fortified social consciousness for generations to come.

Through the values of Ubuntu, Afro-Christians, supported by their love for God and their people, were able to withstand and resist the structures of oppression and exclusion. This two-tiered love, fortified with justice, created a social consciousness that demanded an ethical response to injustice. In the nineteenth century, it foreshadowed the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who proclaimed that “injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”



## For Discussion

Consider and share experiences of creating and sustaining a fortified social consciousness in your context.

- Name and discuss specific gifts and challenges encountered in your community around social awareness, consciousness, and action. How do education and moral formation inform your justice concerns?
- What do you think freedom meant to Afro-Christians in the 19th century and what does it mean to you today? When have hard ethical questions emerged for you? How has Micah’s “toolbox” of justice, mercy, and humility come into play?
- What are specific ways the values of Ubuntu (dignity, compassion, co-responsibility, and justice) can fortify an expanded social consciousness that will serve generations to come in your community as well as the broader church?

## Resources

- [Video: Franklinton Center at Bricks](#)
- [“The Franklinton Center at Bricks: Cultural Landscape” by Laura Elizabeth Schuetz](#)
- [“A Movement Is Born: Environmental Justice and the UCC—Marking the 40th Anniversary of the Warren County Civil Disobedience Campaign and the 35th Anniversary of the Toxic Wastes and Race Report”](#)



## Chapter Five

# An Empowered Theological Consciousness: Christ Is the Only Head of the Church

**Read: pages 61-72**

**Scripture: Luke 17:20-21**

K. Ray Hill's chapter affirms that theology evolves out of context and the Afro-Christian tradition represents the sacred confluence of African religions with Christianity in a manner that heals as well as empowers. It shows how Afro-Christians adapted rather than adopted the theology of white churches by viewing theology through the lens of an African worldview. The result was a commitment to foundational Christ-centered principles linked to a holistic African perspective that nurtured dignity, self-determination, and a fierce independence in response to the challenges of racism and oppression in the church and in the world.

*"The Afro-Christian churches were places of resistance—resistance to enslavement in its beginning and to white supremacy today. Our theology helps people to find a sense of identity and purpose within a system meant to objectify them." —K. Ray Hill*

It was in this space between the struggle for dignity and the realities of racism that Afro-Christians claimed their connection to the Imago Dei, with the understanding that all life was sacred. For them, the sacrality of life had a deeply spiritual dimension that empowered their theological consciousness and affirmed that they too, in the words

of the psalmist, were made "a little lower than the angels and crowned with glory and honor" (Psalm 8:5 NIV). The power of this theological understanding was expressed in their embodied worship as well as in their daily lives beyond the walls of their churches, as a holistic response to God and the world.

Through an empowered theological consciousness, emerging from the notion of Imago Dei and animated by the Spirit, Afro-Christians claimed the sacrality of life as a birthright that demanded dignity and respect. These values of Ubuntu are essential for us today as we encounter so many evolving theologies, within as well as outside of our communities. They serve as a litmus test to measure the way that our personal and collective theologies empower or disempower.



## For Discussion

Consider and share some of the diverse levels of theological consciousness in your context.

- When in your faith community have you encountered varying and challenging theological positions?
- How were these perspectives expressed and what were some of the responses?
- What are specific ways the values of Ubuntu (dignity, compassion, co-responsibility, and justice) can provide a broader space for more empowered engagement around contrasting theologies in your community as well as the broader church?

## Resources

- [Address of Rev. Joseph Mann in Proceedings \(1916\) pages 64-66](#)
- “The Afro-Christian Connection” by Rev. Percel O. Alston in Barbara Brown Zikmund, *Hidden Histories in the United Church of Christ* (1984)
- [Audio: “Freed to Follow” sermon by Rev. Yvonne V. Delk at Princeton Seminary](#)



## Chapter Six

# A United Black Consciousness: Flowing in the Convention of the South

**Read: pages 73-91**

**Scripture: 2 Corinthians 9:9-12**

Julia M. Speller's chapter examines the journey of Afro-Christian and Black Congregational churches as they struggled to develop common ground and a united Black consciousness during the creation of the Convention of the South in 1950. The merger of the Congregational and Christian denominations in 1931 brought together two diverse segments of the African American religious community that would evolve over nearly two decades into the Convention of the South. This new denominational entity emerged as a logical solution to the complex realities of racism in the church that mirrored the experiences of exclusion and separation of the nation. Afro-Christians and Black Congregationalists represented two distinct Black ecclesial bodies with different strategies of survival in a majority white denomination, not unlike the classic debate between Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois. The Afro-Christians chose self-reliance and independence and the Black Congregationalists chose integration through an educated elite.

These responses created distinctive self-identities that led to moments of tension within their numbers, further complicated by their socially constructed locations shaped by the racism of church and society. Although they responded differently, they were united on the common goal of dignity,

respect, and inclusion in a majority white denomination. Their experiences in the Convention of the South awakened in them the truth of Christian unity: "There are different kinds of working, but in them and in everyone it is the same God at work . . . to each the manifestation of the Spirit given for the common good" (1 Corinthians 12:6-7 NIV). Thus, their different expressions of Blackness were gifts to be celebrated in the spirit of unity rather than uniformity.

Through a united Black consciousness, Afro-Christians and Black Congregationalists co-existed in a space of mutual acceptance. Viewed through the lens of Ubuntu, they embraced the joy and energy of kinship ties and learned that differences did not signal deficiencies but were instead alternate ways to worship and serve God.

*"Afro-Christians and Black Congregationalists . . . crafted a self-identity that they believed would help them cope with the vicissitudes of being Black in this majority-white nation and, more pointedly, one that helped them answer the difficult question of what it meant to be Black in a majority white denomination." —Julia M. Speller*





## For Discussion

Consider and share experiences within your context when differences challenged group cohesion and unity.

- Name and discuss times in your faith community when differences were understood or interpreted as “deficiencies.”
- How did these experiences shape or misshape efforts toward unity and what were the responses?
- Which of the values of Ubuntu (dignity, compassion, co-responsibility, justice) could have been used to honor and encourage unity rather than uniformity in your congregation and our Church more broadly?

## Resources

- *The Children Is Crying: Congregationalism Among Black People* by A. Knighton Stanley (1979)
- *From Consciousness to Conscience: Blacks and the United Church of Christ* by Lawrence Neale Jones (1976)
- *Walkin’ the Talk: Keepin’ the Faith in Africentric Congregations* by Julia M. Speller (2005)



## Chapter Seven

# A Prophetic Liberation Consciousness: Unashamedly Black, Unapologetically Christian

**Read: pages 93-103 (Chapter 7)**

**Scripture: Psalm 33:1-3**

Henry T. Simmons' chapter outlines the challenges faced by Black members of the newly formed United Church of Christ during the racial turbulence of the 1950s and 1960s, in the context of the Civil Rights and Black Power movements. A new sense of self-worth grew among Afro-Christians and Black Congregationalists that fueled their sense of dignity as members of the United Church of Christ. This led to their strategic efforts that challenged racism within the denomination and gave them wider visibility and a greater voice.

Their determination for justice was fueled by the important link between personal piety and social responsibility that flowed from the Afro-Christian tradition. The link produced a prophetic liberation consciousness that was more than a mere foretelling of future freedom. It was instead a bold forth-telling of the divine purpose of God: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim

*"Afro-Christians fiercely defended, cultivated, and passed on their strong sense of self-worth by understanding and owning the liberatory good news in God's Word. Out of this they refused to drop their African identity and established institutions such as churches, camps, and Franklinton Christian College to train for and carry on their proud Afrocentric legacy in the faith." —Henry T. Simmons*

good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Luke 4:18-19 NIV). In this prophetic statement by Jesus, he offered a model of justice that restored dignity and self-worth to the oppressed, a model revealed through the power of God's divine vision.

Through the lens of Ubuntu, the legacy of the Afro-Christian tradition affirmed full personhood for all, linking the sacred and secular through a prophetic liberation consciousness that required both accountability and grace. This same value is helpful today. It challenges communities of faith to move toward a more holistic form of liberation that reconciles and restores both church and society.



## For Discussion

Consider and share places in your context where a prophetic liberation consciousness can restore and heal.

- Name and discuss some of the ways that the current climate of division and mistrust in our nation have shaken feelings of self-worth and dignity in your faith community.
- In what ways do you think that confidence can be restored through the partnering of personal piety and social responsibility—the sacred and secular? What would that look like in your context?
- Which values of Ubuntu more specifically (dignity, compassion, co-responsibility, and justice) can move your community and our Church toward greater accountability and grace during these troubled times?

## Resources

- *The Negro's God: As Reflected in His Literature* by Benjamin E. Mays (1938)
- ["The Black Manifesto"](#)
- *Shaping of the United Church of Christ: An Essay in the History of American Christianity* by Louis H. Gunnemann and Charles Shelby Rooks (1999)



## Chapter Eight

# A Restorative Jubilee Consciousness: A Global Model of Ubuntu for Justice and Liberation

**Read: pages 105-120**

**Scripture: Isaiah 35:3-8**

Iva E. Carruthers portrays the legacy of the Afro-Christian tradition as it has spread beyond the church; a legacy that flowed from 1892 to the present. It is a cautionary tale for those who oppress, yet a story of hope for those who seek equity and dignity for all. Afro-Christians, as an exiled people in the “promised land of democracy,” found strength in the spiritual taproot of Africa.

Afro-Christians also had a particular connection to the stories of the Israelites and their quest for liberation during their experiences of exodus, exile, and diaspora amid oppression and struggle. In many ways, the biblical practice of “jubilee,” which affirmed the sacrality of life through its practice of restoration and reconciliation, aligned with the spirit of Ubuntu calling for the creation of the beloved community. For Afro-Christians, this desire for justice cultivated a restorative jubilee consciousness that proclaimed liberty for themselves and others. In the words of Prophet Amos, this required justice to “roll on like water and righteousness like a never-failing stream” (Amos 5:24 NIV). This consciousness demanded acts of restorative justice, placing in tension the realities of oppression (social and spiritual) and the demands of the gospel (moral and ethical). This spirit of jubilee, through its practices of restoration and reconciliation, reveal the values of Ubuntu as the embodiment of the “united and uniting” ideal of the United Church of Christ and that are at the heart of the Afro-Christian tradition today.



*“The lesson for all who will listen is that to ignore a story doesn’t negate the truth of its existence; to silence a story does not prevent the power of the story to live; and to discover a story doesn’t make it yours unless you embrace it.” —Iva E. Carruthers*



## For Discussion

Consider/share your thoughts on the gifts and challenges of embodying a jubilee spirit in your context.

- When were times in your faith community when you were confronted with tension between difficult social realities and the ethical demands of the gospel?
- Identify and discuss the parts of these experiences that adapted more easily to practices of restoration and reconciliation and those that did not. What factors lead to these responses?
- How do you see the values of Ubuntu (dignity, compassion, co-responsibility, and justice) being used as specific ways to support and sustain the beloved community in your context as well as our church?

## Resources

- *The Black Church in the African American Experience* by C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya (1990)
- *The Divided Mind of the Black Church: Theology, Piety and Public Witness* by Raphael G. Warnock (2013)
- *The Black Messiah* by Albert Cleage, Jr. (1968)



# Closing Prayer

*ADAPTED FROM THE 1916 AFRO-CHRISTIAN CONVENTION  
PRAYER BY REV. J.H. MABREY*

We ask Thy Holy Spirit to help us—  
first, to lay aside every weight that might hinder us  
in making this work a success.  
Draw in our wandering minds and scattering thoughts  
and fix our confidence upon Jesus Christ.  
Help us to go forward in this work.  
We ask that You would assist and guide us—  
guide our hearts and guide our minds  
so that we may be benefitted by these meetings.  
May all we do and all we say redound  
to the glory and honor of Thy name.  
We would ask that Thou would rivet out any wrong or hate  
that is found among us and fill us with love for Thee and each other.  
We ask Thee to let the Spirit of Jesus  
be so prevalent in our gatherings  
that Satan cannot take a seat among us.  
Let Jesus come—let Jesus come—  
let Jesus come and take charge of our hearts.  
Stand for us and by us, and, when these and our other works are done,  
when the entire work is done to the glory and honor of Thy name,  
then give us a home in heaven where we shall see God,  
where we shall meet together,  
and where we will be apart no more,  
world without end. Amen.





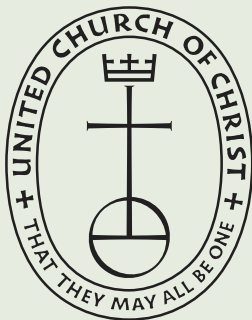
# THE AFRO-CHRISTIAN PRESERVATION PROJECT

The Board of Franklinton Center at Bricks is committed to preserving the history and legacy of the Afro-Christian Convention of the United Church of Christ. The Afro-Christian Preservation Project is housed in the Bricks Museum and Library. Donations to the project can be made to Franklinton Center at Bricks, Inc. (memo: Afro-Christian Preservation Project) at 281 Bricks Lane, Whitakers, NC 27891 or at [www.franklintoncenteratbricks.org](http://www.franklintoncenteratbricks.org).

To [DONATE](#), select amount, then designate “Afro-Christian Preservation.” Thank you.

All Afro-Christian Legacy congregations are encouraged to select a church representative to participate in the Afro-Christian Preservation Project. If anyone has historical documents, photographs, or Afro-Christian publications, please contact Rev. Brenda Billips Square, minister for the Afro-Christian Preservation Project, at [fcabhistoricpreservation@gmail.com](mailto:fcabhistoricpreservation@gmail.com) for instructions on how to register your church or donate materials to the archives.

All royalties from the sale of *Afro-Christian Convention: The Fifth Stream of the United Church of Christ* support the Afro-Christian Preservation Project at Franklinton Center at Bricks, Inc.



This guide was developed by Julia M. Speller and Rose Marie Berger.  
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