

# **Dr. Roger Green, American Christianity, Session 14, The Black Church in America**

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This is Dr. Roger Green in his teaching on American Christianity. This is session 14, The Black Church in America.

Thanks to Chris for helping me do that, but I'd encourage everybody to see the movie.

Let me talk about today. We're going to lecture today, and we're going to lecture to about 10 o'clock or so. And then I've got a lot of announcements and calendar things to figure out with you for the last kind of, for the next few weeks and the last half of the course and everything.

So, I'll stop at about 10 o'clock, and then we'll do the calendar stuff. And then I hope you have a great weekend. Then, on Monday and Wednesday, you're at midterm.

So, there you go. Okay, so this is lecture 11, The Black Church in America, and we're talking first of all about Methodism. So, all right.

Now, I'm not sure that I pulled this together very well for you on the other day, so I'm going to repeat again where we are in terms of The Black Church of America and starting with Methodism. We mentioned Richard Allen, a very, very important person in American Christian history. And I don't think I made this very clear, so now I would like to make it clear.

In 1793, Richard Allen began in Philadelphia, and he began a church of his own. It was called the Bethel Church. So, he starts his own church, but not his own denomination.

This was just a church for black Methodists. Richard Allen was a lay leader first, and then he was eventually ordained as a deacon in the Methodist Episcopal Church. So that's a church we're familiar with. We know about that church.

And so he's got his own church for black Christians, the Bethel Church. But what happened with the Bethel Church was that in 1814, that church evolved into a separate Methodist denomination. Then, other churches in Philadelphia, as well as other black Methodist churches in Philadelphia, followed suit.

In 1814, the African Methodist Episcopal Church was established. So that's where that denomination began. Allen was ordained as a bishop in the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

And we mentioned the other day, of course, he was ordained by Francis Asbury. So, Asbury was the one who gave his blessing to the black Methodist leadership, which Richard Allen exemplified. So, there's a picture of Richard Allen.

What I kind of said very quickly at the end was that the African Methodist Episcopal Church then had a magazine that came out of the church. That's important because it was the first black magazine in America, but also they began a university. It was a university in Ohio.

We kind of got rushed at the end, but it was called Wilberforce University, appropriate name, Wilberforce University in Ohio. And it was begun in 1856. So it was begun after, of course, Richard Allen, but it was begun in 1856.

And so the African Methodist Episcopal Church, before the Civil War, had its own university. I looked up Wilberforce University. I was just kind of curious about this.

I looked up Wilberforce University, which, of course, you don't want to do while I'm lecturing. Of course, we know that. But I did look up Wilberforce, which still exists today, run by the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

It has a student body of about 450 or so. So, it's not a very large school, but it is still operated by the African Methodist Episcopal Church. So, I felt like I didn't pull those things together very well the other day.

So, are we clear about the African Methodist Episcopal Church, with Richard Allen as the founder? And that's kind of another Methodist denomination then, separate from the Methodist Episcopal Church. This is different. Okay, so that's where we are.

All right, let's journey on here. We are now going to talk about another church, which is called the African Methodist Episcopal Zion, or the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. I don't particularly care where you put Zion as long as you put it there somewhere.

So this is how it's sometimes described: African Methodist Episcopal Church Zion or African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. But it was founded in 1821, not very long after the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Okay, so let me go back here.

It's kind of the same story as the African Methodist Episcopal Church. There was a man named James Varick, and James Varick was a black leader in New York. James Varick, like Richard Allen, James Varick also had a church in New York called the Zion Church. The Zion Church was a Methodist Episcopal Church with a very similar kind of history here, a Methodist Episcopal Church.

And in 1801, blacks decided to have their own kind of black church in New York, and they called it the Zion Church 1801. Now, other churches have been founded. Now, the problem was that these churches, like the Zion Church, didn't have a denomination, yet in 1801, the problem was that these churches were pretty much all-black churches, but with white ministers.

So, the congregation was black, and the ministers who supplied the pulpits were white. And that caused a bit of friction, and so the leadership among the blacks in New York decided that they were going to form their own denomination, and they did it under James Varick. So, in 1821, they formed the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, and they decided, I'm not exactly sure, that they didn't break off from the African Methodist Episcopal Church; they just started their own denomination.

It seems as though their feeling was that the African Methodist Episcopal Church had ministry down in Pennsylvania and Maryland, and they wanted to have their own ministry in New York City and spread out from New York City. So, it doesn't seem as though there were any kind of hard feelings with the African Methodist Episcopal Church, but just that geographically, they decided to begin a denomination that reached another geographical area, beginning at New York City. So James Varick became, like Richard Allen, the first bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church.

So now you've got another Methodist denomination going there. The numbers are pretty similar to the African Methodist Episcopal Church. In other words, by about 1900, you've got 350,000 people who belong to this denomination.

So, the denomination grew pretty well during the 19th century, no doubt about that. Now, what I want to do is read a quotation about the African Methodist Episcopal Church and the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. Here's a quotation.

As Union armies moved into the South, both of the AME churches began missions among the freedmen, which they sustained with outstanding success during the years that followed. That quotation tells us that these two African Methodist Episcopal churches had a tremendous ministry among freed blacks, and that's why their numbers grew so much. So they not only had missionary work down South, but as blacks were freed after the Civil War and came up North, they also had a ministry to the blacks who were flooding into the cities up North, especially New York, Philadelphia, New York, and even Boston.

So, both of those African Methodist Episcopal churches were quite successful. They grew, they were strong, they had good leadership, and they were quite successful. So there are two other denominations, African Methodist Episcopal Church denominations.

Okay, so so far with the Methodists, we've got two more denominations. Now, it didn't stop there because the next denomination formed by the African Methodist Episcopal Church was called the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church, and it was formed in 1870. Now, the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church was formed in the South.

The Methodist Episcopal Church in the South, after the Civil War, saw probably the value of saying to the black people in the Methodist Episcopal Church, if you want to form your own denomination, we certainly understand. And so, in 1870, they decided to form the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church. Now, we've got three Methodist denominations among the black churches in America.

All right, but it doesn't stop there because there is one more that is formed, and it's called the Negro Conference of the Northern Methodist Church. Negro Conference of the Northern Methodist Church. Okay, now why this language conference? Why this language? Because we haven't really seen this language before.

Some of you may be Methodists, however. The conference is a reference to the way in which the Methodist Church governs itself. They come together for the annual conference.

And so, as soon as the Civil War ended, blacks of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the North, who didn't join either of the AME churches, decided they wanted to stay within the Methodist Episcopal Church, but they decided to have their own conference. They decided to have their own annual conference. So out of that annual conference then came another denomination, and it was called the Negro Conference of the Northern Methodist Church.

So now the Methodists have four denominations among blacks, both in the North and in the South. So, we start with the Methodists because they were the ones that had the most denominations formed before the Civil War. So, in terms of the black church in America, the Methodists are really pretty important.

Okay, now let's go to the Baptists. Secondly, the Baptists. A couple of things happened with the Baptists.

First of all, there were already a lot of Baptist denominations, but yeah, Rachel? Is there any, again, I didn't... No, there are no theological differences. These people are Methodists. So, as Methodists, they believe in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

They believe in not only as individuals say, but individuals can be sanctified by the Holy Spirit and so forth. But they're Methodists. They hold on to Methodist

doctrines, Methodist church polity in terms of having bishops and district superintendents, and they also meet annually for conferences.

So, no, there are no theological differences. All four of them, of course, wanted to have churches where the blacks could go and feel very comfortable in their worship and so forth and not have white leadership. So no, there are no theological splits, though.

Okay, the Baptists. All right, let's say a couple of things about the Baptists. First of all, one of the first groups that was founded was called the Colored Primitive Baptist Church, and it was founded in 1866.

Now, we already have a lot of Baptist denominations starting to spring up here and there in America. But in this course, all we can do is concentrate on the major ones. Long story short here... Oh, did I put it on for us? Long story short, a Baptist denomination called the Primitive Baptist Church had already been formed.

So, there was already a denomination, pretty much of a white denomination, predominantly white denomination, called the Primitive Baptist Church. All right, now let's be clear. Why did they use the term primitive? What do they mean when they're using the term primitive Baptist Church? Anybody? What's that all about? Right, primitive is a term that means they're modeled after the early church.

So, by calling themselves the Primitive Baptist Church, we're the early church that came into the 19th century. All right, now, however, the blacks weren't comfortable in the denomination. So, in 1866, they formed their own denomination.

So, it's called the Colored Primitive Baptist Church. So that's one of the earliest among the Baptist churches. But then, in that same year, along came the Northern Carolina Black Convention.

Northern Carolina Black Convention. Okay, now, what is this all about? What is the North Carolina Black Convention all about? Remember, when we talked about the Baptist church before, one of the signals, one of the hallmarks of Baptist life and Baptist polity, is the autonomy of the individual Baptist church. So, remember, we talked about that before, the individual Baptist church; any of you who are Baptist would know that your church is autonomous.

You may belong to organizations and so forth, but the individual church is autonomous. You ordain people in your church. You believe the local church has the authority of ordination and so forth.

But remember, we mentioned before that there might be a Baptist church here and a Baptist church here and a Baptist church here and a Baptist church here, and they

would come together in Baptist associations. Now, those associations did not govern what was happening in the local Baptist church. They come together in associations.

Now, eventually, one of the ways that the Baptists associated themselves was by state conventions. For example, in North Carolina, the Baptists would come together like this in an annual state convention. Okay, so any of you who are Baptist, you'd be familiar with that as well as a way of kind of coming together.

What happened in North Carolina was that the Blacks in that state convention decided to have their own state convention. So, they decided not to meet with the broader state convention, which was mostly whites. They decided they were going to come together in their own state convention and have the North Carolina state convention.

So that's become technically a denomination. That became technically a separate denomination now of Black Baptist Christians. It was one of many.

Okay, I should have stayed over there because now the story continues. Well, no, let me move over here for just a minute. Okay, this is good.

We can do this. Now, the story continues with the National Baptist Convention. The National Baptist Convention was formed in 1895 and still today is a very large, basically Black Baptist denomination.

Okay, so what is the National Baptist Convention? The National Baptist Convention started to take all these state conventions that were forming, including the one Black state convention, the National Carolina Black Convention, started to take the state conventions and started to say at all the state conventions, why don't we come together? Why don't we come together as Black Baptists in a national organization? Why should we limit ourselves to being just like the North Carolina Black Convention? Why not come together in a national organization? So, they did that, and they called themselves the National Baptist Convention. So, the National Baptist Convention is today. So, there it is, 1895, but the National Baptist Convention is a very large Black Protestant denomination today.

Years ago, I can't quite remember exactly the years, but the dean of the chapel was a wonderful Black Christian, and I always remember that he was ordained at the National Baptist Convention. He and I talked occasionally about his denomination, the National Baptist Convention, and he was a minister in that National Baptist Convention. So that's the story of the third denomination, the National Baptist Convention.

And oh, I just say one thing, Emery, just so we're clear about this. Eventually, the North Carolina Black Convention, they died out because consciously they joined the

National Baptist Convention. So, they didn't exist and continued to exist as a denomination.

So yeah, it's a natural evolution starting with this North Carolina Black Convention. But then, once we get the National Baptist Convention, the North Carolina Black Convention just absorbed into the National Baptist Convention. So, Emery? Oh, okay.

So those are the Baptists. So, we do have, in terms of lasting denomination, a couple of ones, Colored Primitive Baptist Church and then eventually the National Baptist Convention. So, among the Baptists, we started to get some denominations as well because Blacks wanted to have their own worship and so forth.

Okay, number C, then, in your outline, is the contribution of Black churches. Once we get Black churches established, Methodist churches, Baptist churches, and other Black churches established, what contributions have the Black churches made to the Black community in American public life and American Christian life? Okay, I've got a few of them that I think are important. Okay, number one, the Black church became the primary place of social identification.

The Black church became a place of social identification for Black Christians. Because what had been lost in slavery was the primary social identification that people have, and that's family. The family had been lost.

Mothers are sold here, and fathers are sold here, and children are sold here. Families had been broken up, and so a lot of Black people did not have any kind of family identification as a primary social identification in their lives. So, what happens is that the church becomes their family.

The church became the place of primary social identification, and that became very, very important in Black churches. A second thing that happens is, of course, the church becomes a place of economic cooperation. Economic cooperation.

Now, for example, we've already mentioned the African Methodist Episcopal Church beginning a magazine, and we've also mentioned them beginning Wilberforce University, and the same could be said for the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church and so forth, and for Black churches. So, publication of magazines and the sale of magazines, and the support of colleges, universities, junior colleges, and so forth, there is kind of an economic cooperation among the Black churches, supporting Black ministries and supporting Black businesses, like universities, colleges, and magazines, and so forth. Number three, a third thing, is the church became, as one author said, a refuge from the hostile world.

The church became a place of refuge from the hostile world. Now, you didn't live through the Civil Rights Movement, so you didn't see this firsthand, but Ted and I saw this firsthand. We saw this place of refuge from the hostile world.

I remember watching live television on television. I remember times when Martin Luther King Jr. was speaking at a church, maybe in Montgomery or Selma or something like that. The church would be packed, the doors were locked, the shutters on the windows were closed, and while Martin Luther King was speaking, you could hear the crowds outside pounding at the church, throwing rocks at the church. I mean, it was incredible.

It was like being in a fortress. It was like they were being protected from a hostile world. Some of the hostility became obviously deadly as churches were bombed and so forth, but there's no doubt that the Black church became a place of refuge for the hostile world.

Another thing that the church became, or what are we calling this, contributions of the Black church, and I'm quoting here from another author, but the Black church became a surrogate for nationality, a surrogate for nationality. Now, by a surrogate for nationality, it means a kind of a replacement for nationality. Why? Because the Blacks could not participate in the national experience, and in a sense, that's also what the civil rights in the middle 60s of the 20th century was about.

It was about Black participation in national life, but because Blacks couldn't participate in national life, they could participate in the life of the church, so the life of the church became their national life in a sense, even though they couldn't participate in the national life, and now since the civil rights movement, that's beginning to change. Okay, number five, a fifth kind of thing here. The Black church became a place where leadership was developed.

Leadership is developed in the Black church and developed in many ways, but again, because Blacks could not have leadership in a predominantly White community, because they couldn't have leadership in business, or leadership in politics, or leadership maybe in education, apart from Black colleges, because that was true, where were their leadership skills developed? They were developed in the church, no doubt about that, and the person who became the leader in the Black community, the person who became the leader, I mean the top leader, the most important leader, was the minister, of course. The minister became the kind of top of the echelon in terms of leadership in the Black churches, and that became important, so when you think of Black leaders since the 1960s, you think, we'll just take Martin Luther King Jr., just to start with, when you think of Martin Luther King Jr. in the 1960s, where did he develop those leadership skills, those speaking skills, those skills to be able to kind of move the crowd? He developed those; his dad, of course, was a minister, he developed that in the church; that's where it got developed, that's



where his leadership skills took shape, so it was a place of development of leadership skills, no more so than with the minister. Okay, the next thing is that the church becomes an institution for developing Black heritage, so here we are. It's February, and it's Black Heritage Month. Well, where did all this kind of development of Black heritage begin? It all began in the Black church, which kept Black history and Black culture alive, so that's where it all started.

The next thing is that the church, and I've got, I'm going to break this down a little bit, but the church is a place that develops uniquely Black religious experience, uniquely Black religious experience, the church becomes a place where Blacks became free to do that. Okay, so under this, what I'd like to do is mention three things here in terms of Black experience. Number one, obviously, is the hymns, the spiritual, the spirituals, the Negro spirituals, kind of a new way of singing, but a new way of getting the biblical message across with the Negro spirituals and with the hymns of the church and so forth.

So, singing becomes important in the Black religious experience and especially with the Negro spirituals. Number two, of course, would be dance and the dance in the Black church, and that's not just an American thing. I'll tell you a quick story about my wife and me during my sabbatical; my wife and I were in Nigeria.

We had a beautiful time in Nigeria and because I was on sabbatical, I could be away for a couple of weeks in Nigeria and something we didn't, you know, we're here two White people, you know, in Nigeria, in these huge Black churches in Nigeria, and during the time, it was especially during the time when the offering was taken up when there was time for the offering, you know, we White folks, we sit there and we just kind of pass the plate. Not in Nigeria. In Nigeria, when it's time for the offering, everybody, you've got the offering plates and boxes up in the front of the church, but when it's time for the offering, everybody dances up to the offering and puts their, it takes a long time, which is great because they're all dancing up to the offering and singing and it's a great experience.

And, of course, tried to get Karen and me to get in there kind of, but, you know, we two White got people, you know, we, but anyway, they understood this, you know, our White feet just weren't moving, but they understood that. So, the dance was just unbelievable to see and to witness. And it went on for a long time.

I mean, we take up the offering in White churches. How long does it take? 10 minutes, four minutes? You sing the doxology. In Nigeria, it's about 45 minutes or so.

You have to get, you know, half an hour, 45 minutes to take because there's a lot of dancing that has to be done here. So, the dance is fascinating to me anyway, but yeah. No, I couldn't but thank you.

Thank you for asking. Yes. Bless your heart.

Okay. Thank you. Thank you for asking.

I, I, maybe I'll show a video of it someday, but okay. So that's number two. Now, number three is the most important.

So, I've saved the third to last, and the third, and I put it under this rubric of a kind of place for developing a uniquely Black religious experience. But number three is the development of Black theology. The development of Black theology.

The church became the place where Black theology was developed, written, preached about, talked about, and so forth. Okay. Now, that doesn't kind of get into books and everything until the 1960s and 70s.

So, and then on. So, what is Black theology? Black theology is taking key theological themes of the Bible and interpreting them through Black Christian glasses in a sense. So, key themes like salvation and redemption and the kingdom of God should be understood by way of the Black experience in America.

Now, for example, it's so easy to figure this out, isn't it? One of the great key themes was the Black understanding of the enslavement of the Hebrew people and the Hebrew people coming out of slavery through Moses into a new land, into a new promised land through Joshua, and so forth. So, the whole Old Testament issue of slavery and freedom and salvation came into a new land, coming into a promised land. Black theology takes that and interprets it as also the experience of the Black people.

The Black people are coming out of slavery and coming out of slavery into a new promised land, into a new promised world. So taking this kind of, taking these themes and applying them to the Black Christian experience, to the Black experience, and doing that in the church, that was pretty remarkable. So, we'll just give this a label of Black theology.

And that label, that Black theology really gets developed in the 1960s and 70s and 80s and on. So those would be the three things. Okay, one more thing in terms of what we're calling this: the contributions of Black churches.

What are the contributions of Black churches? And there's one more contribution that Black churches make. This contribution I take from Askew and Perard because they kind of, they kind of concentrate on this contribution. The Black churches preserved the central core of the revivalistic movement in America.

The Black churches preserved the central understanding of revivalism in America. So, this is the last contribution under number C, which is the contribution of Black churches. Okay, so the revivalist movement in America preserved that.

Now, Askew and Perard tell us that they preserved that in four ways. So here are the four ways that they have preserved revivalism in America. The Black church has conserved the revivalistic movement.

Okay, number one, you've read this in Askew and Perard already, but number one, a sense of divine immediacy. The Black revivalistic movements, a sense of divine immediacy. God is with us.

God is with us here and now. God is moving us. God is freeing us.

That sense of divine immediacy has been preserved by Black churches in the revivalistic movement. So, number two, Askew and Perard talk about the spontaneity of individual response. Individual response to the message of the gospel is very spontaneous, beautifully spontaneous, as individuals respond by the ministry of the Holy Spirit in their lives to the preaching of the gospel.

So, they call it the spontaneity of individual response. Number three, the third thing that Askew and Perard talk about is personal holiness, personal holiness. Salvation is the beginning of the pilgrimage of a Christian, but that Christian is moved into the life of holiness by the Holy Spirit.

So, the emphasis on personal holiness is very important in kind of maintaining the central core of the revivalistic movement. And then number four, for Askew and Perard, is the redress of present injustices. Speaking to an unjust world and calling for justice in an unjust world.

So, the redress of present injustices is part of that revivalistic movement as well. So, the contribution of Black churches preserving the central core of the revivalistic movement Black churches have done that for us. So, these are some contributions, which I think are all pretty important contributions to the American Christian experience and to American Christianity.

Okay, let me stop there for just a minute. We've got the Methodist, we've got the Baptist, we've got the contributions. Any questions about those three? Methodist, the Baptist, the contributions.

Any questions? Are we all set for those three? Okay, let's go to number four. Let's go to four: sectarian appeal, sectarian appeal. All right, let me just give a quick introduction.

Then, we're going to look at two groups here. So that followed the Civil War and came into the 20th century sectarian appeal. By way of introduction, before we look at the groups, a lot of Blacks were not just disenfranchised from the nation; they were disenfranchised from the church.

So, there were a lot of Blacks who, after the Civil War, it's not just that they felt they didn't feel part of the nation, they didn't feel part of the church. The church had nothing to give to them. The church had nothing to offer them.

They were kind of fed up with the church, with the Christian church. As far as they were concerned, the Christian church was part of the problem, not part of the solution. So, what happens is a vacuum is created.

And what happens is sectarian movements step into that vacuum and have a tremendous appeal to Blacks, especially in the inner cities, in the North, and in the South. But here we're going to talk about two in the North in particular. So sectarian groups step into the vacuum, and they've got something to say to Blacks who are disenfranchised not only from the nation but disenfranchised from the Christian church.

So, they know what they're doing here. So, this is pretty important. So the first we'll just mention is the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, also known as Jehovah's Witnesses.

So, there it is. And let's see where I put the name. Sorry, I just got Jehovah's Witnesses.

Sorry about this. Okay. Jehovah's Witnesses was founded by a man named Charles Taze Russell.

And here are the dates of Charles Taze Russell, 1856, 1916. Okay. Now, the Jehovah's Witnesses really have a couple of messages that really appeal to Black people in the inner city.

In this case, it is in the inner city of New York because it was founded in 1872. Okay. So they had a couple of messages.

One message was the end of the world message, the very apocalyptic message of the end of the world, the imminence of apocalyptic events described in the book of the Revelation that's happening now. Don't you people see that it is coming to an end here? So, there was kind of a fear factor here with all this apocalyptic language on the streets of New York City among Blacks. And the second thing that also kind of went along with that was, don't you want to be part of the remnant? Don't you want to be part of the true believers that are talked about in the book of Revelation? And

people, a lot of disenfranchised with nation and church, said, yes, I do want to be part of God's remnant.

I do want to be one of the 144,000 of God's remnant true believers. And so, I want to join. So, there was a witness of this kind of soul, a righteous remnant.

So that's what Jehovah's Witnesses appealed to, or the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society appealed to that. And a lot of Blacks joined. So, this is what we're calling a sectarian appeal here being made to Blacks in the cities, and a lot of Blacks joined.

Some Whites joined as well. 1872, 1872 in New York City. Okay.

The second group is a little, I have to say, a little stranger than the first group. You want to take note of the George Baker. So, there's the; I got to get him, I've got to get him, well, he didn't actually, he wasn't actually born and died.

So, I don't know what to do here. So anyways, George Baker, just remember that name. Okay.

His group was very interesting, strange, and wonderful. His group was the Father Divine Peace Mission Movement. And it began in Philadelphia.

The Father Divine Peace Mission Movement, Philadelphia. Do I have a date? In 1880. Okay.

Now there's there, by the way, this is George Baker here, down here. On the right-hand side is a kind of car that's moving along here. Now, this movement is a little bit strange.

Father Divine claimed. Yeah. Sure.

Yes. Right. There, there are new groups.

They think that these people are founding these new groups, so let's go back to Charles Taze Russell. Sorry, I didn't have this. Charles Taze Russell.

See, Charles Taze Russell lived from 1856 to 1916. In 1872, he founded what's called the Jehovah's Witnesses, kind of as a young man, but he founded the Jehovah's Witnesses. George Baker is a little bit of a stranger story on George Baker.

And I should see if I can actually get a birth date for George Baker. Does that make sense, Kika? Are we okay? Charles Taze Russell. Yes.

It was a black movement in New York City. And it was a very apocalyptic message that Russell and others, I mean, there obviously had other people around him doing this, but very apocalyptic message. And the other side of the apocalyptic message is, don't you want to be part of the remnant? I'm not sure about that.

I, it may be, but there are certainly, I mean, it certainly has shifted a bit, and it doesn't have the, quite the apocalyptic message. It's got the true remnant message, but in terms of makeup, I'm not sure, you know, what that would be today, but it was founded because there was a chasm created in these cities among blacks who didn't. They didn't feel part of the nation or part of the church. So, step in here.

Yeah. Does that help, Kika? Okay. George Baker, if you remember the name George Baker, founds the Father Divine Peace Mission Movement, and that's George journeying on here.

Now, George's message was, thank you very much, that he is God who has now come to earth. So that he, that's why they called him Father Divine. So, he is God.

If you want to know what God is like, George Baker is God. He came to earth to set up his movement, which was a communitarian movement. You live in common in his movement in Philadelphia.

You live in common, and you live in common under his authority. He is an authoritative figure. He runs the show.

And, so basically, it is a communitarian movement, and there, there, because people feel so disenfranchised from the nation and the church anyways, well, let's bring all these people together in a communitarian society. Let's live in common apart from the broader culture, and let's submit our lives to Father Divine, who is God. Why not? What better could you do than submit your life to God? So they submitted their life to Father Divine.

Now, I'm not. See, because he's God, he did, and he kind of showed up. I'm having trouble finding a birth date for him, but I'm also having trouble having a death date for him because I guess he died, but when he died, he's God. So, does God die? I mean, what happens when he dies? I mean, that becomes a little tough to explain, I think, among the people when he probably actually did die.

But anyway, the Father Divine Peace Mission Movement, the most extreme of the sectarian movements, appealed to blacks in the inner city of Philadelphia. Do you know anybody here from Philadelphia? I forget, Philadelphians. I did my high school and college years in Philadelphia.

Right down the street from Temple University on Broad Street is a Father Divine hotel. Did you, you've seen this? Okay. All right.

Okay. What happened to Father Divine? Do we know? I don't know. Okay.

Anyways, whatever happened to Father Divine, bless his heart. This is Dr. Roger Green in his teaching on American Christianity. This is session number 14, The Black Church in America.