

Special Issue

Faith and Religion Among African Americans

Message from the Guest Editor

Manning Marable used the term “Blackwater” to describe “an activist tradition of Black faith.” This Black faith tradition, on Marable’s account, was born in resistance to chattel slavery, yet endured through the post-civil-rights era. For Marable, Black faith helped African Americans “return to the source of our humanity” and build a strategy for liberation in the material world.

Today, “Blackwater” remains a useful and interesting term with which to consider Black religious traditions. How has it helped to better understand the ways African Americans have attempted to return to, or completely reimagine, “the sources of our humanity”? How have those who inherited, extended, or reconfigured the tradition imagined and enacted strategies for liberation, both material and spiritual? How have artists, activists, and religious practitioners challenged binaries between “this-worldly” and “other-worldly” approaches to Black religion? Lastly, what is the place of doubt, despair, or pessimism within the tradition of Blackwater?

Guest Editor

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Fresh developments in the disciplines that consistently make significant contributions to our understanding of religious personality, authority, devotion, and community – disciplines ranging from psychology, sociology, and anthropology to history, art history, philosophy, literary criticism, and political science – fuel general, as well as scholarly, interest in the world's religions.

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