

Accepting the call and overcoming the challenges: leadership practices of African American clergymen

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THESES AND DISSERTATIONS

Accepting the call and overcoming the challenges: leadership practices of African American clergymen

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Abstract

Clergy leadership is identified as an immensely challenging vocation. This study proposes that challenges African American clergymen face are exacerbated due to the combination of their ethnicity and gender. Forces such as patriarchy and gender discrimination are explicated in this study and identified as major sources of oppression for African American women in clergy leadership. This study provides historical background by exploring gender arrangements both on the African continent and in the United States, to allow the reader to understand frustrations that African American clergymen experience as they encounter myriad challenges to emerging and thriving in clergy leadership roles within the Black church setting. Social science literature, leadership and management studies, Theological studies, and biblical accounts are provided to offer the researcher propositions, theories, philosophies, and frameworks that aid in providing perspective and understanding of the research topic. The origin, prominence, and role of the historic African American church is also discussed extensively in the study. The African American church has been instrumental in advancing the liberation of African Americans at large, but is also directly complicit in the challenges African American clergymen experience. As such, this study seeks to identify leadership strategies and practices employed by African American clergymen to overcome the myriad challenges in their leadership roles. Furthermore, this study highlights how African American women in clergy leadership measure their success. The study also spotlights recommendations and lessons African American clergymen offer to others in similar leadership positions.

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