4th Annual Conference
Black Religion and Spirituality in the 21st Century

Challenges and Opportunities
in a Changing Sociopolitical Environment

October 21—23, 2009
Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center
East Lansing, MI

FOCUS ON:
- Health, Wellness and Spirituality
- Religious and Spiritual Legacies
- Changing Sociopolitical Environment
- Faith Communities and Contemporary Challenges for Youth
Conference Goals and Objectives

This conference will focus on the diversity of faiths among Blacks/African Americans and how they are addressing challenges and opportunities in the 21st century including emphasis on the following:

1. Examine the diversity of faiths in the Black community;
2. Surveying the variety of means by which these diverse faiths are addressing challenges and opportunities in the 21st century;
3. Developing a network of academics, practitioners, and community members to collaborate about strategies for disseminating opportunities and addressing challenges;
4. Explore the impact of faith communities on Black people;
5. Creating a research repository of collaborative partnerships with academic scholars and diverse faith communities and diverse faith communities.
Wednesday, October 21, 2009

11:00AM – 6:30PM
Registration
Kellogg Center Lobby

1:30PM – 2:00PM
Opening Remarks
Welcome: Dr. Lee June
Vice President Michigan State University, BRS Co-Chairperson
Occasion: Dr. Gloria Stephens Smith, BRS Chairperson

2:00PM – 5:00PM
Multiple Perspectives on Black Religion and Spirituality
Presiding: Dr. Sonya Gunnings-Moton
College of Education, Michigan State University

Keynote Speaker:
Rev. Dr. Michael C. Murphy
Peoples United Church of Christ, Washington D.C.

Respondents:
Dr. Ron Landfair, Lansing Black Catholic Ministry
Rev. Dr. Melvin Jones, Union Missionary Baptist Church
Dr. Denise Maybank, Student Affairs and Services, Michigan State University
Rev. Samerrah Shereef, St. Stephen’s Community Church

5:00PM - 7:00PM
Dinner On Your Own

7:00PM – 9:00PM
Impact of Religion and Spirituality in a Changing Environment
Presiding: Rev. Dr. Michael C. Murphy
BRS Committee

The Earl Nelson Singers
Mrs. Verna Holley, Director

Welcome: Rev. Greg Roberts
Governor’s Faith Based and Neighborhood Partnerships

Keynote Speaker:
Rev. Wendell Anthony
Fellowship Chapel Church, Detroit, MI
### Thursday, October 22, 2009

**8:15AM – 6:00PM**

#### Registration

### 9:00AM – 10:30AM
**Room 103 A**

**Black Family and Spirituality: Examining Shared Domains of Literacy in the Home, Church, and School of Black Children**

**Convener:** Mr. Lisbon C. Berry, III  
BRS Committee

**Dr. Patricia Edwards**, International Reading Association, Professor, Michigan State University  
**Dr. Gwendolyn T. McMillon**, Oakland University

### 10:30AM – 12:00PM
**Room 103 B**

**Yet with a Steady Beat: The Black Church Through a Psychological and Biblical Lens**

**Convener:** Dr. Julian Dixon  
Counseling Center, Michigan State University

**Dr. Lee June**, Vice President, Michigan State University

### 12:00PM – 2:00PM
**Centennial Room**

**Lunch**

**Interdisciplinary Challenges: Perspectives of a Theologian and Administrator**

**Presiding:** Dr. Lee June  
Vice President, Michigan State University

**Keynote Speaker:**  
**Dr. Marsha Foster Boyd**  
President, Ecumenical Theological Seminary, Detroit, MI

### 2:00PM – 4:00PM
**Room 103**

**Faith Communities and Effective Strategies for Working with Youth**

**Presiding:** Dr. Lloyd Bingam  
LLS Consultants

**Mr. Dominick Quinney**, Doctoral Student, Michigan State University  
**Ms. Tammi Cole**, Michigan State University  
**Mr. Hassan Malouf**, Bahá’í Youth Community Leader  
**Dr. Jeffrey Robinson**, University of Detroit—Mercy  
**Mr. Kefentse Chike**, Michigan State University

### 4:15PM - 4:30PM

**Break**
Music, Religion and Spirituality
Presiding:  Dr. Christel Temple
University of Maryland Baltimore County

Keynote Speaker:
Professor Rodney Whitaker
*with the* Michigan State University Jazz Band and Total Praise Choir

Friday, October 23, 2009

8:15AM– 2:00PM  Registration

9:15AM – 10:30AM  Room 103 A
African Retention and Spiritual Practices in Africa and African Diaspora
Convener:  Dr. Denise Maybank
Michigan State University

*Sacred Spaces and Religious Tradition of Oriente Cuba*
Dr. Jualynne Dodson, Michigan State University

*Murder in Ochima: Priestess Mgbafor-Ezira, Nwachukwu, and the Circumstances Leading up to the Death of Major G.L.D. Recaste*
Dr. Nwando Achebe, Michigan State University

9:15AM – 10:30AM  Room 103 B
Aligning Medicine and Religion: Exploring Ethiopian and Nigerian Practices
Convener:  Mr. Harry Odamtten
Michigan State University

Speaker:  Mr. Steven Thomas, Michigan State University

Promoting Hope, Faith, Trust, Endurance in Families: Impact of Census
Convener:  Ms. Dichondra Johnson-Geiger
Partnership Specialist, United States Census Bureau

10:45AM – 12:30PM  Room 103 A
Spiritual Indentity: Black Bahá’í in African Diaspora
Convener:  Ms. Darcia Grant
BRS Committee, Michigan State University

Speakers:
Dr. Richard Thomas, Professor Emeritus of History, Michigan State University
Mr. Mehtzun Tedla, Former Member National Assembly of the Bahá’í of Northern East Africa
Dr. Cora M. Ssengoba, Member of Local Spiritual Assembly of Bahá’í
Black Women and the Church
Convener: Ms. Shirley June
BRS Women’s Network

Panel/Speaker: BRS Women’s Network
Dr. Joan Jackson Johnson, Human Relations, Community Services, City of Lansing
Minister Rosalyn Jones, Mount Hope Church, Lansing
Ms. Rhonda Jones, Michigan Education Special Services Association (MESSA)

Challenges and Opportunities in a Changing Sociopolitical Environment
Presiding: Dr. Geneva Smitherman
Michigan State University

Invocation: Dr. Hilton Thomas
BRS Committee

Introduction of Speaker: Rev. Lester D. Stone
Friendship Baptist Church

Keynote Speaker:
Rev. Dr. Jeremiah Wright, Jr.
Pastor Emeritus
Trinity United Church of Christ, Chicago, IL

Closing Remarks: Dr. Gloria S. Smith, BRS Chairperson

Thank you for attending the 4th Annual BRS Conference.

Sponsors
Department of History, Governmental Affairs, Student Affairs and Services, African American and African Studies (AAAS), University Outreach and Engagement, Libraries, Computing and Technology, Office for Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives.