

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Reverend Dr. Jacquelyn Grant

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Grant, Jacquelyn
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Dr. Jacquelyn Grant,
Dates:	August 12, 2003
Bulk Dates:	2003
Physical Description:	7 Betacame SP videocassettes (3:23:35).
Abstract:	Academic administrator, minister, and theology professor Reverend Dr. Jacquelyn Grant (1948 -) is the founder of the Center for Black Women in Church & Society. Grant was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on August 12, 2003, in Atlanta, Georgia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2003_183
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Jacquelyn Grant was born in Georgetown, South Carolina, on December 19, 1948. Attending Catholic school at an early age, Grant then moved on to public schools, graduating from Howard High School in 1966. From there, she attended Bennett College, the Turner Theological Seminary in Atlanta, Georgia, and earned her Ph.D. from Union Theological Seminary in New York City.

Grant became involved with the Women's Studies Program at the Harvard Divinity School within the Women's Research Program in 1977. Her involvement there led to the creation of the Women's Studies in Religion Program, and she remained there until 1979. Grant founded the Center for Black Women in Church and Society at the Interdenominational Theological Center in 1981, where she continues to serve as director and professor. As a practicing minister, Grant has served as the assistant minister at Flipper Temple African Methodist Episcopal Church from 1980 to 1982. She is presently the assistant minister at the Victory African Methodist Episcopal Church in Atlanta.

A successful author, Grant has written or edited several books, including *White Women's Christ and Black Women's Jesus: Feminist Christology and Womanist Response*, the all-time best selling book released by Scholars Press, and her most recent book, *Perspectives on Womanist Theology*. Grant was the recipient of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Ministry Award in 1986 and has been nominated as the Woman of the Year in Religion by the Iota Phi Lambda Sorority. She also appears in *Who's Who Among African Americans*. Grant and her husband, the Reverend John Collier, live in Atlanta.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Reverend Dr. Jacquelyn Grant was conducted by Larry Crowe on August 12, 2003, in Atlanta, Georgia, and was recorded on 7 Betacame SP videocassettes. Academic administrator, minister,

and theology professor Reverend Dr. Jacquelyn Grant (1948 -) is the founder of the Center for Black Women in Church & Society.

Restrictions

Restrictions on Access

Restrictions may be applied on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of The HistoryMakers®.

Restrictions on Use

All use of materials and use credits must be pre-approved by The HistoryMakers®. Appropriate credit must be given. Copyright is held by The HistoryMakers®.

Related Material

Information about the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview, as well as correspondence with the interview subject is stored electronically both on The HistoryMakers® server and in two databases maintained by The HistoryMakers®, though this information is not included in this finding aid.

Controlled Access Terms

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

Persons:

Grant, Jacquelyn

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Grant, Jacquelyn--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Theologian

Minister

HistoryMakers® Category:

ReligionMakers

Administrative Information

Custodial History

Interview footage was recorded by The HistoryMakers®. All rights to the interview have been transferred to The HistoryMakers® by the interview subject through a signed interview release form. Signed interview release forms have been deposited with Jenner & Block, LLP, Chicago.

Preferred Citation

The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Dr. Jacquelyn Grant, August 12, 2003.
The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 5/30/2023 by The HistoryMakers® staff. The finding aid was created adhering to the following standards: DACS, AACR2, and the Oral History Cataloging Manual (Matters 1995).

Other Finding Aid

A Microsoft Access contact database and a FileMaker Pro tracking database, both maintained by The HistoryMakers®, keep track of the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview.

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Dr. Jacquelyn Grant, Section A2003_183_001_001, TRT: 0:30:30 ?

Jacquelyn Grant was born on December 19, 1948 in Georgetown, South Carolina. Her mother, Lillie Mae Ward Grant, was a cosmetologist and ran a salon from a storefront in front of their family home. Grant's mother only had a high school education, but was a good businesswoman and learned a lot from listening to the clients in her salon. Grant's maternal grandmother was a domestic worker and worked for 25 cents a week; her husband worked on a ship and eventually disappeared. Grant's father, Joseph Grant, was an A.M.E. minister who began preaching while picking cotton in Loris, South Carolina. He officially accepted the call to preach in 1952 and was ordained at Arnett A.M.E.

Church in Georgetown. Grant's paternal grandfather was a sexton, taking care of a historic church and cemetery in downtown Georgetown. When Grant's parents married, they moved in with him before deciding to purchase their own lot and build a house on it. Grant is one of nine children.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Dr. Jacquelyn Grant, Section A2003_183_001_002, TRT: 0:29:25 ?

Jacquelyn Grant was raised in Georgetown, South Carolina, which is in an area of South Carolina called the Lowcountry where Geechee/Gullah culture is heavily present. As a child, Grant heard people speak in the Geechee/Gullah dialect, but it was not an accent she was taught to emulate. She reflects upon current efforts to preserve Geechee/Gullah culture. Grant's hometown was racially segregated. She remembers going to the colored community center where she learned arts and crafts, and abiding by Jim Crow laws regarding segregated water fountains and waiting rooms at the doctor's office. She found the black church to be a refuge from the racism of her secular environment. Grant describes herself as having been a bookworm as a youth and remembers spending time with a close friend, reading during their lunch breaks at school. Grant attended St. Cyprian Catholic School; J.B. Beck Elementary School, which was named after a black physician; and Howard High School where she graduated salutatorian of her class.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Dr. Jacquelyn Grant, Section A2003_183_001_003, TRT: 0:29:45 ?

Jacquelyn Grant grew up in Arnett A.M.E. church in Georgetown, South Carolina; her father was a minister of the church. At Arnett A.M.E., she served as president of the junior usher board, youth council, junior missionary society, and other groups. Grant began playing the piano in the seventh grade, and soon began to play the organ for her church as well as the piano for the churches her father pastored in rural areas. Grant graduated from Howard High School in 1966 and enrolled at Bennett College in Greensboro, North Carolina, where she had previously taken summer courses during a science institute. At Bennett, she majored in French and founded a Christian service organization on campus. During her junior year in college, Grant decided she wanted to write literature which made Christianity relevant to the African American experience. In 1970, she matriculated at Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, Georgia to pursue her M.Div. degree. Grant details the history and theology of the A.M.E. church.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Dr. Jacquelyn Grant, Section A2003_183_001_004, TRT: 0:29:50 ?

Jacquelyn Grant began to consider the role of gender in theological study as a student at Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC) in Atlanta, Georgia, where there were only seven women out of 200 students when she enrolled. Grant graduated with her M.Div. degree in 1973, and earned her Ph.D. in theology from Union Theological Seminary in New York, where HistoryMaker James Cone was her advisor. Grant was also ordained as a minister in the A.M.E. Church; during that process she noticed ways in which she was singled out, in way that her male peers were not. In 1980, Grant joined the faculty of ITC; a year later, she founded the Center for Black Women in Church and Society, which was a place for women to address their place within the church. The Center also offered programs and internships. Grant talks about womanism, the role of black women in the black church and Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s religious practice. She raises questions about challenging patriarchy through theological inquiry.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Dr. Jacquelyn Grant, Section A2003_183_001_005,
TRT: 0:30:05 ?

Jacquelyn Grant offers an explanation of womanism and traces the roots of the term to Alice Walker's 'In Search of My Mother's Garden.' The term is important for her and other womanists as being distinct from feminism due to the latter's association with middle class white women and, retroactively, white suffragettes who did not grasp the particular position of black women in struggles against racism and patriarchy. In 1989, Grant published her first book, 'White Women's Christ and Black Women's Jesus,' which focused on the differences in lived religion between enslaved black women and white plantation wives. Grant reflects on black theology and other liberation theologies and challenges the notion that white theologians' work is normative. She also reflects on prosperity and faith.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Dr. Jacquelyn Grant, Section A2003_183_001_006,
TRT: 0:30:20 ?

Jacquelyn Grant was in the midst of authoring a three volume book on black theology and black art at the time of the interview. Artists she interviewed noted that other black people often laughed at their depictions dark-skinned religious figures. Grant reflects on positive changes in black children's view of such art and its importance in socializing them. In 2002, Grant participated in a major summit on black religion, hosted by HistoryMaker Tavis Smiley in Detroit, Michigan. Grant reflects on the role of black art and Afrocentricism in womanism and details various arguments about the place of people of African descent in Christianity. She talks about the need for interfaith dialogue and stresses the importance of seeking out the stories of unknown black women. Grant also describes her hopes and concerns for the black community.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Dr. Jacquelyn Grant, Section A2003_183_001_007,
TRT: 0:23:40 ?

Jacquelyn Grant identifies as a womanist and constructs her personal religious philosophy through that lens. She believes that it is necessary to fight oppression on multiple fronts, the most important for her being sexism and racism. At the time of the interview, she was in the process of writing several books, including two on African American women in the ministry. Grant talks about the A.M.E. church's position on gay rights and considers the presence of West African traditions within the styles of preaching and worship in the African American church. Grant concludes the interview by reflecting upon her legacy and describing how she would like to be remembered.