

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Reverend Dr. Maisha Handy

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Handy, Maisha, 1968-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Dr. Maisha Handy,
Dates:	August 22, 2005
Bulk Dates:	2005
Physical Description:	6 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:36:50).
Abstract:	Religion professor and minister Reverend Dr. Maisha Handy (1968 -) was an assistant professor of Christian Education at the Interdenominational Theological Seminary (ITC) in Atlanta, and has served as teaching assistant to Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa. Handy was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on August 22, 2005, in Atlanta, Georgia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2005_200
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Reverend Maisha Itia Handy was born on September 20th in Chicago, Illinois. Her mother and father were musicians associated with the Phil Cohran Ensemble, the Pharaohs and Earth, Wind and Fire. She started school at Ile Iwe Ominara School, which means “School of Knowledge”. Handy also attended Faulkner School and St. Felicitas Elementary School. A talented singer and a pom pom girl, Handy graduated from Whitney M. Young Magnet High School in 1985. That summer she felt called to the ministry. At Lincoln University she earned a B.S. in Criminal Justice in 1989 and briefly attended the University of Missouri Law School. Handy received her Master of Divinity from Candler School of Theology, Emory University in 1994 and her Ph.D. from Emory University in 2002. Dr. James W. Fowler III, Dr. Robert M. Franklin, Jr. and Dr. Jacqueline Grant served as Handy’s mentors.

Handy was national president of the Baptist Student Union from 1988 to 1989. Licensed to preach in 1991, Handy was ordained in the gospel ministry at First Baptist Congregational Church in Chicago in 1994. She worked as youth minister and minister of music for the Suwanee Parish United Methodist Church from 1994 to 1998 and served as program assistant for the Black Church Studies Program at Candler School of Theology. Handy served as program assistant and research consultant for the Lilly Endowment’s Youth Theology Institute from 1994 to 1997. In 1999, Handy spent a year as teaching assistant to Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa. Since 2000, she has been assistant professor of Christian Education at the Interdenominational Theological Seminary (ITC) in Atlanta. Handy is currently minister of Christian Education at First Iconium Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia.

Handy, a member of Theta Phi National Honors Society, has presented scholarly papers to the American Academy of Religion and other institutions. Her themes range from youth and women’s issues to shame as a socializing mechanism. An example of one of her articles is, “Fighting the Matrix: Toward a Womanist Pedagogy for the

Black Church,” which appeared in volume XXXII of the *Journal of the ITC* in 2005. Handy serves on the board of the Youth and Family Convocation and is a council member of Ndugu and Nzingha Rites of Passage. She serves as Minister of Music for the First African Presbyterian Church in Atlanta.

Handy was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on August 23, 2005.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Reverend Dr. Maisha Handy was conducted by Larry Crowe on August 22, 2005, in Atlanta, Georgia, and was recorded on 6 Betacame SP videocassettes. Religion professor and minister Reverend Dr. Maisha Handy (1968 -) was an assistant professor of Christian Education at the Interdenominational Theological Seminary (ITC) in Atlanta, and has served as teaching assistant to Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa.

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:

Handy, Maisha, 1968-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Handy, Maisha, 1968- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Baptists

Occupations:

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. Maisha Handy, August 22, 2005. 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. Maisha Handy, Section A2005_200_001_001,
TRT: 0:29:10 ?

Reverend Dr. Maisha Handy was born September 20, 1968 in Chicago, Illinois to Clara Johnson Handy-Griffin and Charles Handy. As sharecroppers in Mississippi and Louisiana, her maternal ancestors attended school infrequently and were indebted to the plantation owner, and her maternal great-grandmother was killed outside a southern juke joint. Handy's mother was born in 1941 in New Orleans, Louisiana and studied music at Cohen High School. She moved to Chicago upon her mother's death. At Crane Junior College, she met Handy's father, a horn player born in 1938 in Little Rock, Arkansas whose grandfather was a Baptist minister. During the Black Arts Movement in Chicago, Charles Handy helped found the Afro-Arts Theater and played with Maurice White in The Pharaohs. Handy's parents were Nation of Islam adherents and were introduced to Kwanzaa by HistoryMaker Maulana Karenga. Handy's mother sang with HistoryMaker Philip Cohran, and Handy studied African dance with HistoryMaker Darlene Blackburn.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Dr. Maisha Handy, Section A2005_200_001_002,
TRT: 0:29:00 ?

Reverend Dr. Maisha Handy developed her artistic side from her father, who collaborated with Maurice White and HistoryMaker Philip Cohran. Handy's mother, who sang and taught, co-founded Ile Iwe Ominara, an African-centered elementary school that Handy attended in Chicago's Hyde Park. Handy tested into a higher grade at Faulkner School. In the late 1970s, she attended St. Felicitas School, a Catholic school, where her mother sang in the choir. They converted to Christianity, attending Chicago's First Baptist Congregational Church with Handy's stepfather, Burdett Griffin, Jr. Handy attended Whitney M. Young Magnet High School where she sang, danced and became interested in psychology. She also studied at Joseph Holmes Dance Theatre in Chicago's Fine Arts Building. When she graduated in 1985, while she felt called to ministry, she decided to attend Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri. She describes Islam's impact on the Black Power movement, and reflects upon Mayor Harold Washington's death.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Dr. Maisha Handy, Section A2005_200_001_003,
TRT: 0:28:20 ?

Reverend Dr. Maisha Handy was called to ministry during Reverend Brenda P. Little's sermon at First Baptist Congregational Church on the West Side of Chicago. She was encouraged by the pastor, her great uncle Arthur Griffin. At Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri, she pledged Alpha Kappa Alpha, danced, and sang in a choir. She was elected Baptist Student Union national president in 1988. Handy studied criminal justice and interned for the Missouri Department of Corrections' Division of Probation & Parole in Jefferson City and for Senator John Bass. Upon receiving her B.S. degree in 1989, she matriculated at University of Missouri School of Law in Columbia. She interned in Chicago's traffic court before preaching her first sermon at First Baptist in 1991. After a year at Northern Baptist Theological Seminary in Lombard, Illinois, she transferred to Emory University's Candler School of Theology in Atlanta, Georgia, where she studied with James W. Fowler III and HistoryMaker Robert Franklin.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Dr. Maisha Handy, Section A2005_200_001_004,
TRT: 0:29:40 ?

Reverend Dr. Maisha Handy attended Candler School of Theology at Emory

University in Atlanta, Georgia. There, she was program assistant for HistoryMaker Robert Franklin. She also studied womanist theology with HistoryMaker Reverend Dr. Jacquelyn Grant at Atlanta's Interdenominational Theological Center. For her master's dissertation, she used psychological theories of shame to analyze the Los Angeles riots. Upon Robert Franklin's recommendation, she entered Emory's Graduate Division of Religion, where she studied the intersections of psychology, human development and theology. Her Ph.D. dissertation, which incorporated Jarena Lee's autobiography, focused on black women's experiences of shame in the black church. A Christian educator and theologian, Handy differentiates between black, classical, womanist and feminist theologies. She describes cultural representations of God and biblical literalism that justifies oppression. In Atlanta, she is a member of Ndugu and Nzinga Rites of Passage.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Dr. Maisha Handy, Section A2005_200_001_005, TRT: 0:29:50 ?

Reverend Dr. Maisha Handy, at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, was a teaching assistant for Bishop Desmond Tutu's course on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission; in this context, Handy considers the relationship between Christianity and punishment. Upon completing her Ph.D. degree in 2000, Handy accepted a full-time, tenure track position in Christian education at Atlanta's Interdenominational Theological Center. She taught courses in administration, leadership development and womanist theology. She received a grant to conduct research on womanist issues from the Office of Black Women in Church and Society's Womanist Scholars Program; at the time of the interview, she intended to travel to Akropong, Ghana. She describes the importance of womanist theology beyond academia. She describes rites of passage groups, including Atlanta's Ndugu and Nzinga; differences between black theologians; and her hopes and concerns for the black community. Handy also shares her opinion on mega churches.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Dr. Maisha Handy, Section A2005_200_001_006, TRT: 0:10:50 ?

Reverend Dr. Maisha Handy was a member of First Iconium Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia at the time of the interview. There, under Pastor Reverend Timothy McDonald III, Handy served as the minister of Christian education and a church organist. She talks about her eclectic interests, including hip hop, theology, performance and worship arts. Handy also reflects upon her hopes and concerns for the African American community, her life and legacy, and how she would like to be remembered.