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978-0-521-19853-0 - African American Religions, 1500–2000: Colonialism, Democracy,
and Freedom

Sylvester A. Johnson

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African American Religions, 1500–2000

This book provides a narrative historical, postcolonial account of African American religions. It examines the intersection of Black religion and colonialism over several centuries to explain the relationship between empire and democratic freedom. Rather than treating freedom and its others (colonialism, slavery, and racism) as opposites, Sylvester A. Johnson interprets multiple periods of Black religious history to discern how Atlantic empires (particularly that of the United States) simultaneously enabled the emergence of particular forms of religious experience and freedom movements as well as disturbing patterns of violent domination. Johnson explains theories of matter and spirit that shaped early indigenous religious movements in Africa, Black political religion responding to the American racial state, the creation of Liberia, and FBI repression of Black religious movements in the twentieth century. By combining religious studies methods with analysis of empire, Johnson explains the seeming contradictions that have shaped Black religions over several centuries.

Sylvester A. Johnson is Associate Professor of African American Studies and Religious Studies at Northwestern University. He is a founding coeditor of the *Journal of Africana Religions*, the only English-language peer-reviewed journal devoted to publishing research on religions in Africa and throughout the Black diaspora.

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SYLVESTER A. JOHNSON

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