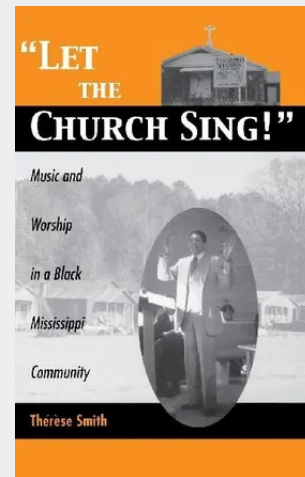


"Let the Church Sing!"

Music and Worship in a Black Mississippi Community

An examination of worldviews, religious belief and ritual as seen through the musical performances of one Afro-American Baptist church in a small black community in rural Mississippi. "Let the Church Sing!": Music and Worship in a Black Mississippi Community is based on years of fieldwork by an Irish ethnomusicologist, who examines, in more detail than ever before, how various facets of the Clear Creek citizens' worldview find expression through religious ritual and music. Thérèse Smith, though originally very much an outsider, gradually found herself welcomed into Clear Creek by members and officials of the Clear Creek Missionary Baptist Church. She was permitted to record many hours' worth of sermons and singing and engaged in community events as a participant-observer. In addition, she conducted plentiful interviews, not just at Clear Creek but, for comparison, at Main St. Baptist Church in Lexington, Kentucky. All of this enables her to analyze in detail how music is interwoven in the worship service, how people feel about the music that they make and hear, and, more generally, how the religious views so vividly expressed help the Church's members think about the relationship between themselves, their community, and the larger world. Music and prayer enable the members and leaders of the Church to bring the realm of the spiritual into intersection with the material world in a particularly active way. The book is enriched by extensive musical transcriptions and an accompanying CD of recordings from actual church services, and these are examined in detail in the book itself. Thérèse Smith is in the Music Department, University College, Dublin.

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