



## This Far by Faith

By Juan Williams  
ISBN: 9780060934248

### Introduction

African-American religious life has played a pivotal but largely unheralded role in shaping many of the ideals that are central to our notions of democracy and justice in America today. Arriving on ships with names like Brotherhood and John the Baptist, slaves who had previously embraced a myriad of religions in their home countries were confronted with the Christianity of their captors. Africans did not merely adopt the religion of the European colonists and new Americans, they used its principles and practices to forge a path to freedom and deliverance, and in the process changed the very moral fabric of our country. Using archival and contemporary photography, historical research and modern-day interviews, and featuring messages from some of America's foremost clergy men and women today, *This Far by*

*Faith* stands as the first in-depth treatment of this social history.

### Topics for Discussion

1. How did the influx of African slaves ultimately change the way Christianity was practiced in America?
2. In what ways did Christianity shape the Civil Rights Movement? How important was Christianity to Dr. King's message of brotherhood?
3. What are some important issues facing Christian African Americans today? How can Christianity improve the quality of life in Black communities?

### About the Authors

Juan Williams is a senior correspondent for National Public Radio and a veteran print journalist with over 23 years of experience. He is also the author of *Thurgood Marshall: American Revolutionary* and *Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years 1954-1965*.

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