

*For Women of Color Scholars...*

I want to suggest that this lofty theology also accounts for this pietistic yet ridiculous opening prayer of many African American preachers prior to beginning their sermonizing:

*Lord, hide me behind the cross, so that your people might not see me but Christ!*

The desired goal is that the ontological nature of the preacher will be temporarily transformed. One becomes a bit more than the paragon of virtue as preachers are so often esteemed to be. There has been this accompanying mystical presentation within the ethos of the black church of the black male preacher who is lifted up so high and given such reverent regard that – with few exceptions – one might understand the black male preacher as one who is as close to God as is humanly, indeed superhumanly possible. And so, black men preaching have been said to be *caught up by the Spirit* as sweat pours from their bodies, as foam appears from the corners of their mouths and as bass voices ascend to falsetto sopranos. Though some cringe from such sights, by and large the black church has received such behavior as par for the core, as a common manifestation of the presence of God within the being of the preacher. God is on the inside working on the outside!

Yet aside from God entering the body of woman to lay seed, the black church's approach to its clergywomen is not as extraordinary. In the United Methodist Church, because of its itinerate nature, there still remains those churches who see female clergy of all hues as no more than "supply" pastors whom they will tolerate until a male pastor is episcopally dispatched. In recent years, women have been subject more and more to

pastoral teaching – from male and female clergy alike - which stresses a male/female relationship of *depositor/receptacle* wherein the woman is obliged to play *seed receiver* while the man occupies the role of *thrusting seed planter*. Otherwise ingenious clergywomen have bought into this rigid asininity hoping to demonstrate their total and complete acceptance of what is espoused as God's perfect will for the believer. (Much more could be said, but I refrain for one could write a book on this matter)

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