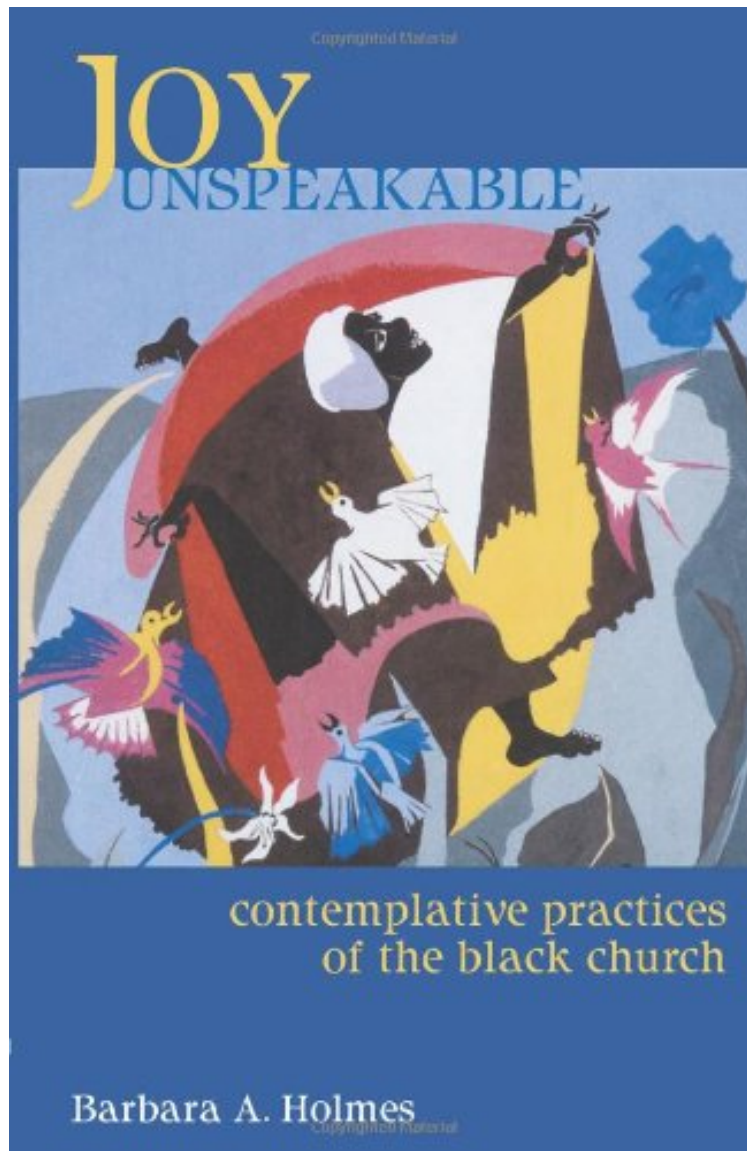


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2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Barbara Holmes has written with simplicity, but with deep ...By MEOBarbara Holmes has written with simplicity, but with deep analytical mind and she leads her audience into the depths of African American spirituality. Reading this work has given me a lot of insight into the 'joy' that beams with African American spirituality and its connection to their history beyond the barriers of congregational setting. It points

to that seamless theme that identifies the black church as a unique experience. It is very insightful and educative!7 of 8 people found the following review helpful. A Rich and Rare Contribution to the SubjectBy Robert W. Kellemen"Joy Unspeakable: Contemplative Practices of the Black Church" by Barbara A. Holmes is a rich and rare contribution to the subject. You will search far and wide to find anyone discussing spiritual formation in the history, culture, and present situation of the Black Church. Thus Holmes' contribution, by focus alone, is an important one.Holmes does an excellent job "re-imagining" contemplation. That is, in "Euro-Cultures" contemplation is often seen only as individual and silent. However, as Holmes carefully details, African American Christianity has practiced communal, active, verbal contemplation.Holmes is especially insightful when she derives contemplative practices from the historical black church in slavery. From lament, to dancing, to the hush arbor, to the ring shout, to the slave spirituals, and much more, Holmes explains how each of these rituals were contemplative in that they led the community to see with spiritual eyes God's goodness in the midst of humanity's badness and madness.Holmes also does an excellent job explaining how holistic and integrative African American faith was and is. Heavenly hope, for African American believers, is certainly about a future filled with relationship and joy. However, it is also about seeing and experiencing God NOW, even in the midst of the horrors of slavery and racism.For African American Christians wanting to "tap into" their spiritual legacy, "Joy Unspeakable" will become a standard. For European American Christians wanting to understand and learn from their brothers and sisters in the faith, "Joy Unspeakable" is a must read.Reviewer: Dr. Robert W. Kellemen is the author of "Beyond the Suffering: Embracing the Legacy of African American Soul Care and Spiritual Direction," "Soul Physicians," and "Spiritual Friends."3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. JOY UNSPEAKABLEBy Paul RichardsonJoy unspeakable is an unspeakable joy to read! This is a thorough analysis of contemplative actions in the Black church from its beginnings.

Holmes's research - through oral histories, church records, and written accounts - details not only ways in which contemplative experience is built into African American collective worship but also the legacy of African monasticism, a history of spiritual exemplars, and unique meditative worship practices.

About the AuthorBarbara A. Holmes is Associate Professor of Ethics and African American Religious Studies at Memphis Theological Seminary. Also an accomplished attorney, she is author of Race and the Cosmos (2002) and A Private Woman in Public Spaces: Barbara Jordan's Speeches on Ethics, Public Religion, and Law (2000).