

For Immediate Release

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## **The Black Church: Alive and Well**

April 21, 2010, Valley Forge, PA – A new Judson Press book celebrating the vitality, gifts, and strength of the black church stands in sharp contrast to the death knell sounded by Dr. Eddie Glaude, Jr. in his recent Huffington Post essay titled “[The Black Church is Dead.](#)” In [What We Love about the Black Church: Can We Get a Witness?](#), William H. Crouch and Joel C. Gregory identify twelve aspects of the black church that highlight its impact and contributions. What makes this resource particularly unique and compelling is that Crouch and Gregory are white pastors and academics who have discovered the benefits of being *in* the black church without being *of* it.

In response to Glaude’s so- called obituary, Crouch, president of Georgetown College, reflected on a recent experience which speaks to the health of the black church:

“Recently a newspaper editor visited our campus to examine our diversity program. When he did his exit interview with me, he said he knew that what made our program so rich is the fact that our African American students are coming from within the black church, where they are being encouraged, prayed for, funded and guided by their pastors. We have more than an 80% retention rate with these black church members. I am stunned by Dr. Glaude’s pronouncement and invite him to visit our campus and see the outgrowth from the black church!”

Gregory, professor of preaching at George W. Truett Theological Seminary of Baylor University, confessed to being mystified by Glaude’s conclusion:

“As a white minister who has spoken hundreds of times in black church and conference settings from coast to coast for a dozen years, I see the polar opposite. I do not know any other institution that demonstrates the inherent vitality of the black church. There is no more vital, resilient and energetic institution in America.”

More than two dozen leaders of the African American church contributed to *What We Love about the Black Church*, including:

- Sheila M. Bailey
- Bryan L. Carter
- Cynthia L. Hale
- Donald Hilliard Jr.
- Major Lewis Jemison
- A. Louis Patterson Jr.
- Melvin V. Wade Sr.
- Ralph Douglas West Sr.
- J. Alfred Smith Sr. (foreword)
- Rhoda McKinney-Jones (afterword)

Their contributions and endorsements recognize the book's passion for and testimony to both the past and future of the black church, and celebrate its potential to bridge the racial divide and cultural chasm that have segregated the Body of Christ in this country.

*What We Love about the Black Church* will be available in early May 2010 and can be ordered by calling 800-458-3766 or visiting [www.judsonpress.com](http://www.judsonpress.com).

**About Judson Press:** Founded in 1824, Judson Press – a publishing ministry of National Ministries, American Baptist Churches USA – produces Christ-centered leadership resources for the transformation of persons, congregations, communities and cultures. Judson has been recognized by *Publishers Weekly* as one of the leading publishers of resources for the black church.

American Baptist Churches USA is a historic Protestant denomination that includes 1.5 million members in 5,600 congregations in the United States and Puerto Rico. Nearly half of its members are African American.

NOTE: Glaude's obituary for the black church has resulted in an undeniably passionate and vocal response on both sides of the issue. Shortly after it appeared, a panel of African American religious scholars responded with "[The Black Church is Dead – Long Live the Black Church](#)" on the Religion Dispatches website. On April 16, *The New York Times* joined the conversation with Samuel G. Freedman's "[Call and Response on the State of the Black Church](#)." Crouch, Gregory, and various book contributors will be posting their comments on these sites.

The media may request a galley and/or interview with the authors by calling Judson Press marketing director, Kim Shimer, at 610-768-2458 or sending an email to [publicity@judsonpress.com](mailto:publicity@judsonpress.com).