

Media, Spirituality, and Community: Oral History of Maintaining an African American Community

By

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Abstract:

This paper examines how African-American members migrated to the local area, and created and maintained cultural values and beliefs of African-American community. The analysis is based on in-depth interviews with learned African-Americans in the local area. The paper consists of three sections: a) Theoretical review of cultural studies in communication, especially the relationship between media, spirituality, and community; b) Qualitative analysis of interview materials, focusing on the leadership of Black Radio stations and churches; c) Data presentation and discussion. The emerged themes and patterns from the interview data indicate that religion and spirituality is an important part of African American culture and community. African American strongly support churches and actively build new churches or expand existing churches, and organize various community activities through churches. With about 10,000 African American residents there are 22 Black churches in the local area. The interviewees express that they believe in God and feel "God protect me." They provide many examples that religion supports and promotes education in African American community, media's relationship with churches. The data especially demonstrate the role church plays in politics, such as providing a forum for politician, relating Bible with real life, and supporting African American political activities.

For more information about the paper, please contact Joyce Chen at chen@uni.edu.