

The souvenir bookmark pictured above is one of the hundreds of items in the "Praying Grounds" archive. For more information on our efforts to collect memorabilia and other items documenting the role of CSU students in the history of religion and gospel music, see page two.

TRADITIONS AND BELIEFS

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE INITIATIVE FOR THE STUDY OF
RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY IN THE HISTORY OF AFRICA AND THE DIASPORA (RASHAD)

'PRAYING GROUNDS' LAUNCHES \$1 MILLION FUNDRAISING AND ARCHIVE-BUILDING PROJECT

By Regennia N. Williams, PhD

July 1 marked the beginning of a new fiscal year and the official start date for our first major capital campaign, "1,000 for \$1 Million." While gifts of all sizes are greatly appreciated, our goal is to identify 1,000 Cleveland State University alums—and their families, churches, choirs, or other groups—who will contribute at least \$1,000 per year to support our work. We are coordinating our fundraising efforts with the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CLASS), and we are working closely with Laura P. Gaines, CLASS Development Officer. We will use the tax-deductible contributions to support the following:

- Additions to library collections
- Student scholarships
- Student and faculty research activities
- Annual lecture series
- Academic conferences
- Performing arts series
- Publications, including events calendars, promotional materials, occasional papers, a quarterly newsletter, a scholarly journal, and conference proceedings
- Job creation
- Teacher institutes and workshops
- "Spiritual Gifts," A Black Sacred Music Repertory Ensemble



Special thanks to **Floyetine Roberts** ("Miss Flo") for pledging her support for RASHAD and "Praying Grounds" through the CSU Faculty / Staff Appeal's payroll deduction program. Miss Flo is the secretary in the Field Services Office of the College of Education and Human Services and the corresponding secretary for the Black Faculty and Staff Organization. She has been a member of the New Bethlehem Baptist Church for 51 years.

For more information on how you
can support this project:

Call: (216) 523-7182

Write to: r.williams@csuohio.edu

Praying Grounds: African American Faith Communities, a documentary and oral history project, will, through its on-going efforts to enhance and maintain its permanent archive at Cleveland State University, document and facilitate research on the evolving role of religion and spirituality in African American history. When processing of the archival collection is complete, all materials will be available in University Library Special Collections at CSU and via the Cleveland Memory website at www.ClevelandMemory.org/pray/.

WANTED:

YOUR HELP IN DOCUMENTING THE ROLE OF CSU STUDENTS AND ALUMS IN THE HISTORY OF RELIGION AND GOSPEL MUSIC

In April 2009, members of the CSU community will observe the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Messengers of Joy Afro-American Choral Ensemble, a recognized student organization. Please help us write an accurate history of gospel music on this campus by sharing copies of photographs, concert programs, newspaper clippings, and other documents related to the work of the Messengers of Joy (MOJ), the Spiritual Gifts Gospel Choir, the Expressions of Praise, and other CSU student choral groups, small ensembles, and solo artists. We would also like to hear from current and former students who are involved in family, church, and community gospel choirs, and individuals who are working as church leaders, professional gospel musicians, recording artists, and scholars and educators in African American Religious Studies. If you are interested in working with us on this project, please call (216) 523-7182, or send an email message to r.williams@csuohio.edu.



(above) Regennia sings with CSU's Messengers of Joy Afro-American Choral Ensemble in April 1984. This Black Aspirations Week concert was held in the University Center Auditorium.



(left to right) CSU alums Lana, Regennia, and Nathaniel Williams, Jr. outside Cleveland's New Joshua Missionary Baptist Church c. 1963.



(above) Regennia addresses the audience after a December 1994 performance by the Spiritual Gifts Gospel Chorus in CSU's Music and Communication Building.



(above) The Williams Family Singers at the 49th Anniversary Banquet for the New Joshua Missionary Baptist Church, May 25, 2008. Pictured (left to right) are siblings Kimberly, Regennia, Lisa, Irma, Lana, and Nathaniel.



In June 2008, CSU Pre-Music major, Dr. Regennia N. Williams, posed for this photo outside RT309A, the new library office for the "Praying Grounds" project. She is wearing one of the robes used by the Messengers of Joy Afro-American Choral Ensemble (MOJ) in the 1980s.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS:
ORAL TRADITIONS AND
THE MUSIC OF THE AFRICAN AMERICAN CHURCH

From the 'Praying Grounds' / Cleveland Memory Archives. . .

Songs That Eased the Burden of Oppression

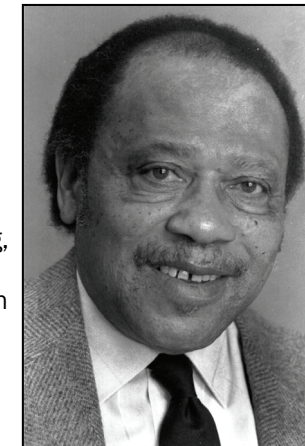
By Prof. Curtis Wilson

**This essay is reprinted from the program booklet for the February 26, 1994 Spiritual Gifts Concert.*

It has been said that music is the only universal language of humankind. Historically speaking, it is certainly true that people in all of the regions of the world have made music as long as they have been able to communicate in languages. Or, it might be claimed that—through the imitation of animal noises or other sounds occurring in nature—some musical notes were likely uttered by the earliest people on earth. Among those ethnomusicologists who have studied the music produced by people in this hemisphere, it is now common knowledge that those Africans who were transplanted to the North American continent from the 15th century onward raised songs. There is clear evidence that many of these songs were performed by early colonials (Africans) in the performance of work and in pleasurable pursuits. Children's games and celebrations that occurred—which perhaps only the Africans understood—used musical expression. The same was true for Africans in the Caribbean and Latin American areas.

The exact origin or beginnings of the transplanted African's religious expressions can't be precisely dated. But we do know that after the African's exposure to the European's religion, by the first quarter of the nineteenth century, a religious form of music that could only be attributed to the slaves (and perhaps free African Americans) became a common part of the African American's musical lore. This body of music, commonly called Spirituals, submits enough evidence, based on their own language, that they are uniquely something that came from the African American's creative senses.

For years it was claimed that the Spiritual was created or came out of the period that is commonly called the Second Great Awakening of the American Protestant Movement (c. 1800). Slave populations throughout the South, particularly the upper South, were often transported to attend the camp meetings that were an integral part of the 19th century evangelical movements. Some whites actually disdained the fact that the slaves seemed to prefer singing more than they did the spoken word. The claims of those who believed that many of what became "standard" Negro Spirituals were actually corruptions of old European and American hymns cannot be supported. Even a casual examination of the music proves that this kind of logic is preposterous. This humble writer would argue to the death that there is absolutely nothing in the standardized hymnal that compares with the message, meaning, depth, and signals that are so prominent in the language of the Spiritual. (Continued on the next page)



Prof. Curtis Wilson (1932-1996), a Native of Northpoint, Alabama, came to Cleveland in 1959. CSU hired him as the Director of Black Studies and Assistant Professor of History in 1971, and he continued to serve in that capacity until his retirement in 1989. While at CSU, he designed courses on the history of jazz and the history of African American music in general.

**PART TWO:
CLEVELAND'S
CHORAL GROUPS**



The Spiritual Gifts Gospel Chorus performed in CSU's Music and Communication Building in December 1994.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS:
ORAL TRADITIONS AND
THE MUSIC OF THE AFRICAN AMERICAN CHURCH

From the 'Praying Grounds' / Cleveland Memory Archives. . .

(Continued from the previous page)

It should be noted that this music did not likely stem from calls by Richard Allen and others of the early African Methodist Episcopal Church for a more "spirited" or "spiritual" music. What they likely were asking for was a more African adaptation of the standard hymnal. The Spiritual that came out of African American religious fervor or creative zeal brought forth a poetic language that spelled out so much of the slaves' interpretation or analysis of their own experiences in this country, relative to their understanding of Christianity's humanistic claims.

The Great Frederick Douglass and others, in recounting their experiences as slave children, talked about how they sang those "sad songs." In reflecting back, they understood that these were often **songs that eased the burden of oppression**. Fanny Kemble, the British wife of a Georgia slave owner, referred to them as "that god-awful noise" and "those painful songs," but these lyrics that made their way across the Southern landscape from Virginia to Texas contained strong psychological suggestions of realism and escapism at the same time.

It is difficult to walk back through the pages of history and understand why people did what they did at a particular time, but it is somewhat easier to understand how and why the slaves and the oppressed African American free population created songs such as the Spiritual. After all, they had adapted to a religion and life that was previously unknown to most Africans. With the forces of imagery, they forged a music that somehow reflected deeply on their status in this land. Music certainly was one avenue of escape, through a deeply abiding faith found in the words of their new religion. They knew that God would one day deliver them. This, perhaps, is why the deliverance song is the most prominent among all the spirituals.

The ultimate question we have to deal with relates to the idea of continuity and change, relative to African American sacred music before and after the Civil War, and this requires an understanding of the overall sociological and psychological changes that occurred between that state of bondage and that new state of uncertain freedom. One can well imagine that the newly freed African American would busily begin to shape institutions and frameworks that would somehow reflect on their new status of freedom and new beginnings. Sometime during the last quarter of the 19th century, significant religious changes began to occur in the African American population. They were ready, in a sense, to try on new clothes. Their religious beliefs leapt and branched and grew in new dimensions and directions. They began to apply something new and different to the way they sang. They didn't totally drop the old, but it must be admitted that new meanings and practices within the realm of the Scriptures called for something more. The massive movement toward the Pentecostal edicts of the Gospel called for literal "rejoicing." Then, perhaps, psychologically African Americans wanted to drop some of the reminders of their troublesome past.

Gospel music was more than likely born in this upheaval and transmutation of Christianity. During this last decade of the 19th century and the first quarter of the 20th century, what is now commonly called Gospel music took its form. We do know that a *capella* quartets and groups began to move and perform throughout the southern tier of the United States around the time that the first large waves of urban migration took place in the Southern states. The children of ex-slaves populated small, medium, and large towns and cities in the South. Then, on the heels of World War I, they began to flood into northern urban centers like Chicago, Cleveland, New York, and St. Louis. They brought with them their need for churches in which they could practice their faith without criticism or shame. Gospel music began to flourish with the growth of these churches. Eventually, it would become an integral part of the services of some of the older established black Protestant faiths.

These songs called Gospel generally reflected a desire of individuals or groups to sing songs of praise or faith, of trials and tribulations. Perhaps the best adjective to apply to Gospel is triumphant, in that it ties a personal will to, in a sense, live in the service and the word of the Lord.

(Continued on the next page)



Williette Firmbanks Thompson served as the pianist-director for Cleveland's original Wings Over Jordan Choir in the 1930s and 1940s. The choir mainly performed a *capella* Spirituals and Gospel songs.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS:
ORAL TRADITIONS AND
THE MUSIC OF THE AFRICAN AMERICAN CHURCH

From the 'Praying Grounds' / Cleveland Memory Archives. . .

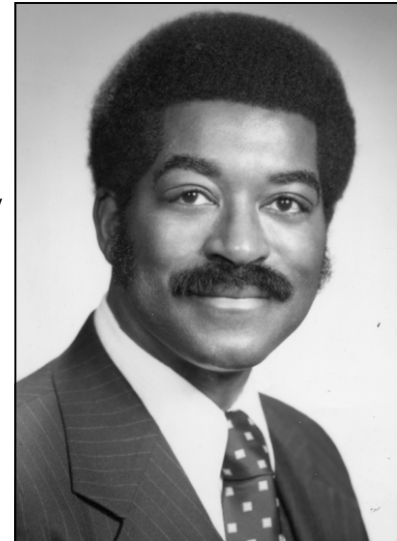
(Continued from the previous page)

One of the most interesting facets of the study of gospel music is its sojourn from the a *capella* types of quartets and small groups to the music of sophisticated arrangements and improvisations that we experience today. Gospel was certainly influenced musically by certain forms of secular music that were popular in the black community during this time. It is not coincidental that much of Gospel music takes on the flavor of certain components of Jazz, Blues, and Rhythm and Blues. This influence is clearly felt in the music of The Golden Gate Quartet, Thomas Dorsey, Edwin Hawkins, and others. We have also found a constant movement of personalities from secular to gospel and, occasionally, one settling back into one or the other. This is not to claim that people would decide to stop sinning and become religious or vice versa, but it does imply that there are certain similarities and commonalities that link these musical forms in both their styles and approaches to music.

"It is not coincidental that much of gospel music takes on the flavor of certain components of Jazz, Blues, and Rhythm and Blues."

Back to the question concerning continuity and change, one could argue that perhaps there has not been as much change as we have been led to believe, except that African Americans have had the unique ability, throughout their history on this continent, to entertain themselves in their secular music, both in bondage and in the state of freedom. The Spirituals as they were captured by John Work, William Dawson, James Weldon and J. Rosamond Johnson, R. Nathaniel Dett, and other composers and arrangers of great repute reveal hardrock-bound African rhythmic patterns that have traveled for four centuries in the conscience and the hearts of these people we call African Americans. "Rocking in the Bosom of Abraham" or "Ezekiel Saw De Wheel" contain all of the rhythmic complexities in hand clapping, toe tapping jubilation that you will find in the most up-tempo, sophisticated gospel song of today. In a sense, I think that it would be accurate to claim that the content of African American secular music throughout history has represented a poetry that exemplified the creators' and originators' interpretations of their experiences with God. As the great W.E.B. DuBois explained in that beautiful chapter in *Black Reconstruction*, "After all they knew God on a personal basis, for he had visited upon them in the dark stillness of the night. . ."

(Continued on the next page)



Rev. Dr. Earl Preston, Jr. (c.1977), former CSU student, pastor of the Morning Star Baptist Church, and founder of the Prestonian Choral Ensemble

**Forty Third Annual Session
of the
National Convention
of
Gospel Choirs and Choruses, Inc.**

Cleveland Sheraton Hotel
Downtown Public Square
Cleveland, Ohio 44119
August 2-8, 1975
Dr. Thomas A. Dorsey
Chicago, Illinois - National President

Julia Mae S. Whitfield	Financial Secretary
Clara Williams	Recording Secretary
Vivian Rivers	Assistant Recording Secretary
Elizabeth McIntosh	Corresponding Secretary
Cassie Wright	Building Fund Secretary
Sallie Martin	Organizer

Host
PRESTONIAN CHORAL ENSEMBLE
Rev. Earl Preston - Host President
Perry Cardwell - Executive Assistant

SPIRITUAL GIFTS: ORAL TRADITIONS AND THE MUSIC OF THE AFRICAN AMERICAN CHURCH

From the 'Praying Grounds' / Cleveland Memory Archives. . .

(Continued from the previous page)

In slavery they needed a music that would help them believe that their promise of freedom would be soon-coming. Gospel, on the other hand, signifies a belief that through service and faith and practicing the word of God and their Savior, they would become good men and women on earth, and find a heavenly peace in eternity.

One of the most awesome aspects of the Spiritual is that we have to assume that the creators were basically illiterate. Are these simply the "Sorrow Songs" alluded to by W.E.B. DuBois in *Souls of Black Folk*? I suggest that they are more, for they represent jubilation, celebration, triumph and promises of deliverance, and the definition of power. The newer Gospel, perhaps, represents this power in the freedom to create and continue to create one's own personal vision about those things that are not so well understood by man—a celebration in the power of belief and faith.



Aaron Humphries (center, facing choir) directs CSU's Expressions of Praise student gospel choir on the stage of the University Center Auditorium (c.2006).

PROFILE: JEREMY SCOTT MUSICIAN AND CSU STUDENT

I am a 26-year-old Music Education major at Cleveland State University, and I am the Youth Choir Director at the St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church in Cleveland, Ohio. I am, primarily, a singer–pianist, and Christian music is my main focus. I have been singing since the age of six. I also enjoy composing music, whether that involves creating melodies on the piano or turning my written poetry into songs. I did not have a specific influence in music when I was younger, because I learned how to appreciate many different genres of music. This appreciation helped me develop my own style.

I recently recorded and produced an album titled "Salvation." The album includes 11 songs that I either composed or arranged. The songs are heavily influenced by scriptures in the bible, especially those passages related to the life of Jesus Christ.

After I graduate in 2009, I plan to use my Music Education degree to teach children about music and how to live life with integrity. I also want to open a music and art school, where children can explore composition, ensemble playing, music theory, technology, and whatever their creative impulses lead them to do musically.

Music is only an instrument to teach a more important lesson about enriching your life through creativity and respecting others while you do it.



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CALL FOR PAPERS

*The Initiative for the Study of Religion and Spirituality in the
History of Africa and the Diaspora (RASHAD)
is seeking contributions for*

“PRAYING GROUNDS AND CONTESTED TERRAIN: AFRICAN AMERICANS, RELIGION, AND THE ACADEMY”

**The charter issue of
The Journal of Traditions and Beliefs**

Dr. Regennia N. Williams
Associate Professor of History, Cleveland State University
Founder and Editor

Deadline for Submissions: November 15, 2008

Notification of Acceptance: February 15, 2009

Final Revisions Due: May 15, 2009

Publication Date: Fall 2009

**For detailed submission guidelines, please write to:
r.williams@csuohio.edu.**

FOUNDERS OF ‘SPIRITUAL GIFTS’ BLACK SACRED MUSIC REPERTORY ENSEMBLE PLAN FOR FUTURE

On Friday, July 11, 2008, David M. Thomas, Regennia N. Williams, and Drene Ivy announced the formation of the Spiritual Gifts Black Sacred Music Repertory Ensemble. This professional choral group will perform the music of the African American church and other religious songs of the Black Diaspora. The repertoire will include spirituals, hymns, gospels, contemporary Christian songs, and larger works for chorus and orchestra. Thomas, a pianist, organist, composer, and music educator, will serve as director. The new ensemble will perform during the Praying Grounds Open House activities in October. For more information, call (216) 523-7182.



Shown above with the plan in hand are (left to right)
David Thomas, Regennia N. Williams, and Drene Ivy.

SONG AND SPIRIT: THE WIND BENEATH HER WINGS



(clockwise from bottom left) Dr. Nishani Frazier, John H. Foxhall, Rose Simmons, and Gladys Goodloe at Cleveland's Gethsemane Missionary Baptist Church in 2004.

By Patricia Dzadony

Gladys Goodloe's life has been filled with song and spirit, and she is convinced that her voice is a testament to God's work in the world. At the age of three she would accompany her parents as they sang in the choir at Cleveland's Shiloh Baptist Church, where her love of music and singing took root. As a teenager singing in the choir at Central High School, she was recruited by a fellow member to join the Wings Over Jordan Choir, becoming their youngest member.

Her life is filled with examples of both her strength and her spirit. Awakening one morning as a young girl, she informed her mother that God has just instructed her to join the church and be saved, which she promptly did. In Birmingham, Alabama, on tour with Wings Over Jordan in the 1940s, she recollects sitting in the front of the bus behind the white bus driver, like Rosa Parks, rather than in the back of the bus with her alarmed friends. The defying of the imposition of segregated water fountains also seemed, to her, a natural thing to do, as she was always actively engaged with the world around her.

Her favorite songs, "I've Got a Home in That Rock" and "His Eye Is on the Sparrow," reveal her awareness and acknowledgment of God's presence everywhere and in everything, and the gospel music, spirituals, and other church music she exults in reflect this.

Mrs. Goodloe believes that the church will remain the center of the African American community as W.E.B. DuBois stated, and that the younger generation will bring in new ideas and energy that will reaffirm and reinvigorate its centrality. She is now the possessor and caretaker of a valuable collection of Wings Over Jordan memorabilia, and her illuminating interview as the first interviewee with the Praying Grounds Oral History Project adds personal insight and depth to an important chapter of African American history. Throughout her life, Mrs. Goodloe has refused to fly on an airplane. Her voice and spirit, however, have traveled and uplifted the hearts and lives of countless individuals through her journey with Wings Over Jordan.

EDUCATORS, ARCHIVIST FORM 'GRASSROOTS GRIOTS' ORAL HISTORY COLLABORATIVE

A new project, the Grassroots Griots Oral History Collaborative, is designed to strengthen ties between CSU and its surrounding communities. Like the oral historians and praise singers of many West African societies, Cleveland's Grassroots Griots will acquire the skills that will allow them to serve as the primary custodians of their own oral and documentary histories.

The brainchild of archivist Rita Knight-Gray and CSU professors Regenia N. Williams and Dwayne Wright, Grassroots Griots will plan and direct community oral history workshops for high school students and adults, establish community archival collections, and create gateway projects that link community and university collections.

The first workshop is planned for 12:00 p.m. on Monday, October 13, 2008, in the Garden Valley Neighborhood's Burton, Bell, Carr Center. Admission is free, but registration is required. For more information, call (216) 523-7182.

*See related Garden Valley photos on page 11.



(left to right) Regenia N. Williams, Rita Gray-Knight, and Dwayne Wright.



John H. Foxhall (above right) presents Dr. Samuel Barber with a proclamation from the office of Mayor Frank Jackson.



Eddie Malone, videographer for Cleveland's Channel 23, was on hand for the media conference at the Gethsemane Missionary Baptist Church.



Pictured above (left to right) are Mia Moore, Teretha Settle, Dr. Sam Barber, Myrtle Mell (foreground) and Teretha Settle Overton. (Below) Pianists Glenn A. Brackens (left) and Todd C. Thompson before their June 28th Piano Duo concert at CSU.



BLACK MUSIC MONTH EVENTS HONOR ELLINGTON, WINGS OVER JORDAN, AND OTHERS

RASHAD celebrated Black Music Month in a series of public programs, *The Church, the State, and the Music of the African Diaspora*. The series—which featured live music, recorded music, lectures, and group discussions—was part of the 70th anniversary celebration for the original Wings Over Jordan Choir.

Dr. Regennia N. Williams started the celebration with a paper presentation, "Duke Ellington's Sacred Concerts," on Monday, June 23, 2008. The series continued with several activities related to the work of Dr. Samuel Barber, choral director and one of the nation's foremost experts on the music of the world-renowned Wings Over Jordan Choir. Dr. Barber flew in from his native North Carolina to participate in the series.

On the morning of Tuesday, June 24th, Dr. Barber shared his oral history with the Praying Grounds project, during a taping in the sanctuary of the Gethsemane Missionary Baptist Church. Following the interview, Dr. Barber and members of the Wings Over Jordan 70th Anniversary Committee participated in a media conference, highlighting Cleveland's role in the history of the choir and sharing information on upcoming events in August and October.

Dr. Barber also delivered a lecture on the "The Music of the Wings Over Jordan" in Cleveland State University's Main Classroom Building. The CSU presentation included the screening of two documentary trailers: one produced by Dr. Barber and the other co-produced with support from the MacArthur Foundation and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

The celebration ended on a high note with the "Encore Performance: Piano Duo Concert." In a concert program that included everything from spirituals and gospel to classical and popular songs, Maestros Glenn A. Brackens and Todd C. Thompson shared their gifts with an audience of more than 200 music lovers. Black Music Month is over, but the Wings celebration continues with Founders Day on August 31, 2008 and the closing 70th Anniversary Dinner and Musical Gala on October 17, 2008.



Former Howard University classmates, Norma Nelson and Dr. Samuel Barber.

SAVE THESE DATES!

Wings Over Jordan Founders' Day Celebration
Sunday, August 31, 2008 — Morning Star Baptist Church, 10250 Shaker Blvd
6 p.m., Reception — 7 p.m., Program

Wings Over Jordan 70th Anniversary Dinner and Musical Gala
Friday, October 17, 2008, 7 p.m., Doubletree Inn, Independence, Ohio, \$

For more information, call (216) 921-2363.

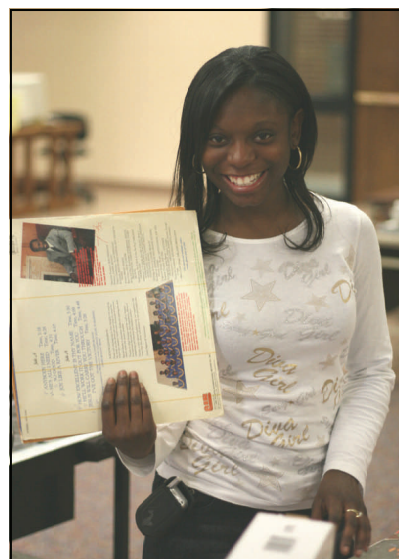
GAINING GROUND: BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH RESEARCH AND PARTICIPATION



Ramon



Patricia Dzadony



RaShawnda Cheese

Contacting churches to request their participation in the RASHAD / Praying Grounds project and the Public Influences of African American Churches (PIAAC) survey was an experience that proved to be both educational and profitable.

People were enthusiastic and interested in the project and survey, and grateful that there would finally be a place where information on African-American churches and traditions could be systematically gathered and retrieved. We felt the sense of being welcomed into a family- offered the food, song, and celebration that exemplify the sense of unity and communality that lies at the heart of the Black religious experience.

Many respondents spoke of the serious lack of reliable information on the African American church. The Praying Grounds /Cleveland Memory website is an antidote to this serious omission, and strength and community are gained through the access to information and the networking opportunities this site provides.

It is the active and enthusiastic participation of individuals and community groups in the research project itself that leads to both the quality and diversity of material featured on the website. From a student's perspective, this is the essential nature of engaged learning.

— Patricia Dzadony and Barbara Jernigan



The RASHAD team in a University Library CONTENT dm training session



Krishna Sisir Dhulipala



Toriano Bell

CLEVELAND'S GARDEN VALLEY NEIGHBORHOOD: KINSMAN AREA PARTNER IN THE 'GRASSROOTS GRIOTS' ORAL HISTORY COLLABORATIVE



St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church



Garden Valley Neighborhood House



Original Harvest
Missionary Baptist Church

Related story
on the
**Grassroots
Griots
Oral History
Collaborative**
appears
on page 8.



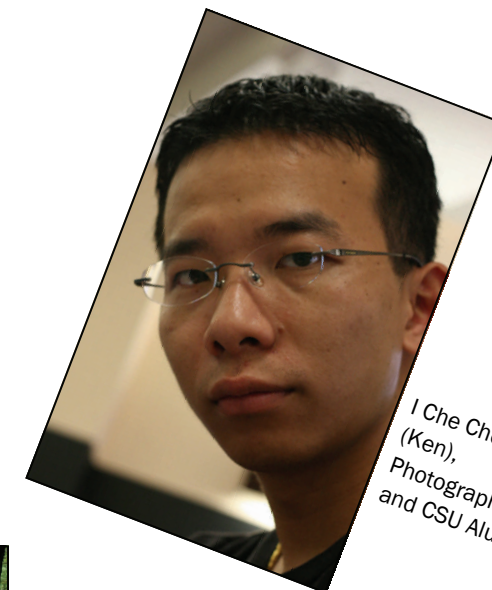
St. Theresa Holiness Science Church



left to right: RASHAD team
members Ramon Smith and
RāShawnda Cheese with
Rev. Michael Cheese, pastor
of the Original Harvest
Missionary Baptist Church



Sisters Ruby Alexander (left) and
Marcella Caffie, members of the
Original Harvest Baptist Church,
on Father's Day, Sunday,
June 15, 2008. Their father,
Rev. Marcellus Chatman, organ-
ized the church in 1957.



I Che Chen
(Ken),
Photographer
and CSU Alum



The RASHAD Team (June 2008).
(left to right) Ken, Ramon, Barbara, Regennia,
RāShawnda, Patricia, and Krishna.



Cleveland's Fair Family Singers. (left to right) Benitra, Ben, Brianna, and Brandon after a June 2008 concert performance at the New Fellowship Christian Church



Dr. Regennia N. Williams with Dr. James Abbington, keynote speaker for the May 2008 *Blues and the Spirit Symposium* at Dominican University, in River Forest, Illinois

(Left to right) Nasro Mohamed, Safia Nur, Dr. Regennia N. Williams, and Hibat Sharif at the June 2008 National Women's Studies Association's Conference in Cincinnati, Ohio

**RASHAD
AND
PRAYING GROUNDS:
ON CAMPUS, IN THE
COMMUNITY, ACROSS
THE COUNTRY, AND
AROUND THE WORLD!**



Dr. Regennia N. Williams in Beijing, where she met with Chinese and African American educators in August 2008 to discuss a proposed faculty / student exchange program.



RASHAD

Initiative for the Study of
Religion and Spirituality in the
History of Africa and the Diaspora



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