



Volume 57 | Issue 2

Article 25

2014

Floyd-Thomas's "Making it Plain: Liberating Black Church History" (Book Review)

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Recommended Citation

Roberts, Paul A. (2014) "Floyd-Thomas's "Making it Plain: Liberating Black Church History" (Book Review)," *The Christian Librarian*: Vol. 57: Iss. 2, Article 25.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55221/2572-7478.1423>

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What is most impressive about *In the Zone* is Crear's clear focus on the goal achievement process, always reiterating that serving God should be foremost in any person's mind. This is no prosperity gospel, and many of Crear's suggestions strongly resemble classic spiritual disciplines. This book may be appropriate for institutions with a leisure nonfiction collection, or for those interested in a faith-based motivational book that has a less formulaic feel than many that can be found in the nearest Christian bookstore.

Making it Plain: Liberating Black Church History,

by Juan M. Floyd-Thomas. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2014.

163 pp. \$17.99. ISBN 9780678332755

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The author's purpose in writing this volume is to raise key issues and critical insights within the broad history of the Black Church tradition as viewed through the perspectival lens of Black liberation theology (pg. 10). With this purpose in mind, the author divides the book into three sections: (1) the Black Church tradition from enslavement to emancipation, (2) the Black Church tradition from segregation to the Civil Rights Movement, and (3) the Black Church tradition from Black liberation theology to Barack Obama.

In the introduction to his work, the author takes great pains in setting the record straight regarding the study of the past that has served to oppress African-Americans. As the title suggests, the *making it plain* for the author means looking back at the problems, prayers, progress and promises of his forbearers to gain the diverse tapestry of the African-American religious history. The rest of the book seeks to answer the questions who is the God that we call God? How do we imagine this God, and how does that affect our experience of that God? And, in turn, our relationships with one another? Without the benefit of being raised in the African-American tradition, it is difficult to understand and appreciate the emphasis the author presents. There is no attempt to explain to those outside the Black context to help everyone understand, learn, and appreciate what has taken place.

With this stated, I recommend that everyone read this book. Those who will benefit the most from the reading are from the African-American tradition. The bibliography will point the reader to excellent sources to fill in the gaps created by the text.