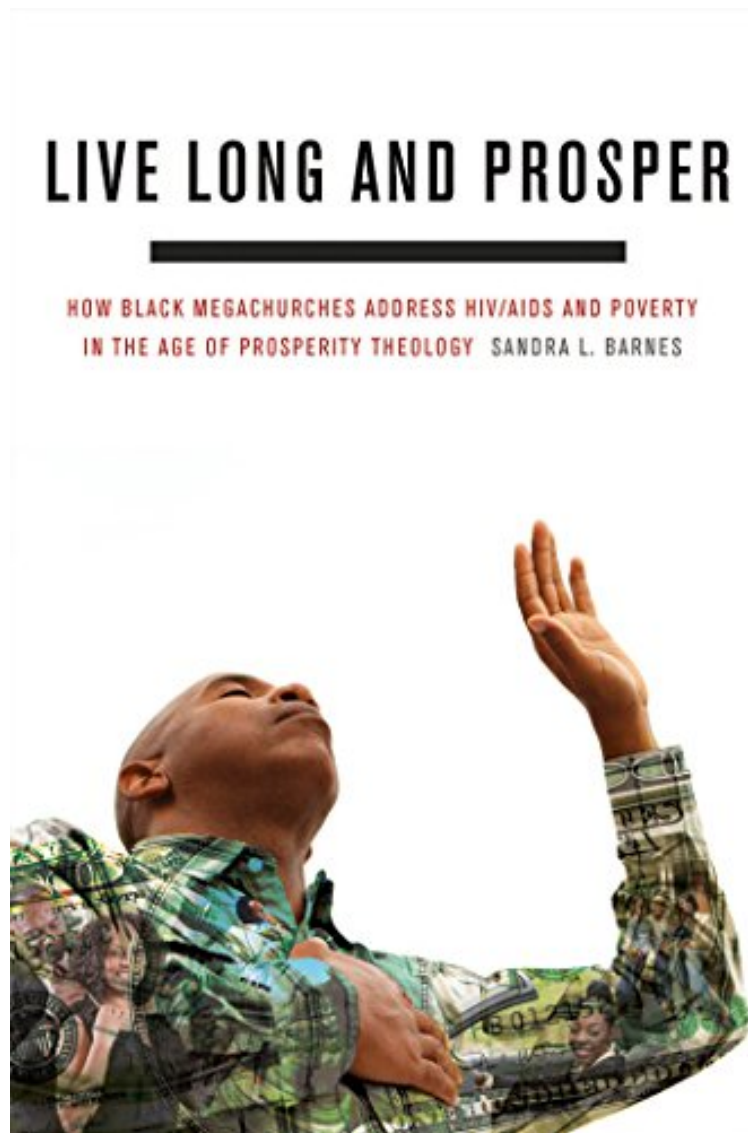


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Live Long and Prosper: How Black Megachurches Address HIV/AIDS and Poverty in the Age of Prosperity Theology

Sandra L. Barnes

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Sandra L. Barnes : Live Long and Prosper: How Black Megachurches Address HIV/AIDS and Poverty in the Age of Prosperity Theology before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Live Long and Prosper: How Black Megachurches Address HIV/AIDS and Poverty in the Age of Prosperity

Theology:

This pioneering new study of the Black megachurch phenomenon brings nuance and depth to the question, Are Black megachurches more focused on prosperity than on people? Black megachurches and their pastors are often accused of failing to use their considerable resources to help the poor; focusing on prosperity theology rather than on social justice; requiring excessive monetary and time commitments of members; and pilfering church coffers for their personal use. The debate rages on about whether these congregations are doing all they can to address specific challenges facing African American communities. *Live Long and Prosper* is a refreshing, innovative study that reaches beyond superficial understandings of the Black megachurch phenomenon in a piercing interrogation of how powerful megachurches address (or fail to address) two social crises in the Black community: HIV/AIDS and poverty. *Live Long and Prosper* offers an intriguing examination of sixteen representative Black megachurches and explores some of their motivations and subsequent programmatic efforts in light of prosperity or health and wealth theology. Professor Barnes makes the case that the Black megachurch is a complex, contemporary model of the historic Black church in response to globalism, consumerism, secularism, religious syncretism, and the realities of race. She contends that many of these megachurches hold unique characteristics of adaptability and innovation that position them well to tackle difficult social issues. Prosperity theology emphasizes two characteristics: physical health and economic wealth as examples of godly living and faith. This book considers whether and how efforts to address HIV/AIDS (a health issue) and poverty (a wealth issue) are influenced by church and clergy profiles; theology, in general; and prosperity theology, in particular. Frame analysis informs this mixed-methodological study to compare and contrast experiences, theological beliefs, pastoral profiles, and programs. *Live Long and Prosper* is a must-read for general readers, academics, and students alike indeed, anyone interested in the contemporary Black megachurch's response to social problems and the link between theology and social action. It is at once a fascinating, readable narrative and a rich piece of scholarship complete with extensively documented endnotes, statistics, informative charts and tables, and an exhaustive bibliography.

A rich ideological analysis of black megachurches from within comparative theological frames that include social gospel, liberation, prophetic, and prosperity gospel in relation to calling and corner. (Victor Anderson Vanderbilt University) A pioneering work! Dr. Barnes offers us a vitally important contribution, not only for black church scholarship, but for sociology of culture, sociology of religion, with implications in social movement theory, urban sociology, and American studies." (Shayne Lee University of Houston) This new study of the black megachurch phenomenon asks whether such megachurches are more focused on prosperity than on people. (Publishers Weekly) About the Author Sandra L. Barnes is professor in the Department of Human and Organizational Development (HOD) and the School of Divinity at Vanderbilt University.