

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Reverend Dr. Jeremiah A. Wright, Jr.

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Wright, Jeremiah A., Jr.
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Dr. Jeremiah A. Wright, Jr.,
Dates:	January 11, 2002
Bulk Dates:	2002
Physical Description:	9 Betacame SP videocassettes (4:08:40).
Abstract:	Pastor Reverend Dr. Jeremiah A. Wright, Jr. (1941 -) was the outspoken leader of Chicago's Trinity United Church of Christ, and the author of four books. Trinity's membership grew from eighty-seven adult members to a congregation of nearly 10,000 under Wright's leadership who was vocal in making once-taboo issues, such as AIDS, a priority in African American church leadership and service. Wright was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on January 11, 2002, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2002_043
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Considered a "preacher par excellence," Reverend Jeremiah A. Wright, Jr. was born on September 22, 1941, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. His parents, Reverend Jeremiah Wright, Sr., and Dr. Mary Henderson Wright, were his earliest influences instilling in him the possibility of balancing the intellectual with the spiritual. Armed with this philosophical upbringing, Wright has pastored Chicago's Trinity United Church of Christ since 1972, seeing its membership grow from eighty-seven adult members to a congregation of nearly 10,000. Wright's early education took place in Philadelphia's public schools. From there, he went on to earn a B.A. and M.A. from Howard University, an M.A. from the University of Chicago and a doctorate in divinity from United Theological College, where he studied under the eminent, late Dr. Samuel DeWitt Proctor.

Wright takes seriously not only the call to worship but also the call to take action as mandated by the Gospel. Under his leadership, Trinity adopted the motto "Unashamedly Black and Unapologetically Christian" and has set out to make activism within and on behalf of the African American community a key aspect of the church's mission. An outspoken community leader, Wright has been vocal in making once-taboo issues, such as AIDS, a priority within the African American church leadership and service. His commitment to political activism coupled with his dedication to the African American sermonic tradition has made him a highly sought-after speaker nationally and internationally.

Wright is the recipient of numerous awards, including three honorary doctorates and three presidential commendations. An accomplished musician and author, Wright has written four books, numerous articles and countless sermons and was voted one of *Ebony Magazine's* top fifteen preachers. In addition to national and international ministry, Wright serves on several boards of directors and committees. Married to Reverend Ramah

Reed Wright, Pastor Wright has five children and three grandchildren.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Reverend Dr. Jeremiah A. Wright, Jr. was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on January 11, 2002, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 9 Betacame SP videocassettes. Pastor Reverend Dr. Jeremiah A. Wright, Jr. (1941 -) was the outspoken leader of Chicago's Trinity United Church of Christ, and the author of four books. Trinity's membership grew from eighty-seven adult members to a congregation of nearly 10,000 under Wright's leadership who was vocal in making once-taboo issues, such as AIDS, a priority in African American church leadership and service.

Restrictions

Restrictions on Access

Restrictions may be applied on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of The HistoryMakers®.

Restrictions on Use

All use of materials and use credits must be pre-approved by The HistoryMakers®. Appropriate credit must be given. Copyright is held by The HistoryMakers®.

Related Material

Information about the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview, as well as correspondence with the interview subject is stored electronically both on The HistoryMakers® server and in two databases maintained by The HistoryMakers®, though this information is not included in this finding aid.

Controlled Access Terms

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

Persons:

Wright, Jeremiah A., Jr.

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Wright, Jeremiah A., Jr.--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Pastor

HistoryMakers® Category:

ReligionMakers

Administrative Information

Custodial History

Interview footage was recorded by The HistoryMakers®. All rights to the interview have been transferred to The HistoryMakers® by the interview subject through a signed interview release form. Signed interview release forms have been deposited with Jenner & Block, LLP, Chicago.

Preferred Citation

The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Dr. Jeremiah A. Wright, Jr., January 11, 2002. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 5/30/2023 by The HistoryMakers® staff. The finding aid was created adhering to the following standards: DACS, AACR2, and the Oral History Cataloging Manual (Matters 1995).

Other Finding Aid

A Microsoft Access contact database and a FileMaker Pro tracking database, both maintained by The HistoryMakers®, keep track of the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview.

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Dr. Jeremiah A. Wright, Jr., Section
A2002_043_001_001, TRT: 0:30:00 ?

Pastor and author Jeremiah Wright describes his family background, focusing on his father. Wright describes his father's personality and personal beliefs, and

what it was like growing up in his father's household. Wright shares his family's experience in dealing with his father's diagnosis of cancer, his treatment, and his death. Wright also describes other family members like his great aunt and his grandfather.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Dr. Jeremiah A. Wright, Jr., Section A2002_043_001_002, TRT: 0:30:00 ?

Pastor and author Jeremiah Wright continues to describe his parents' backgrounds and personalities, as well as sharing some of his favorite childhood memories. Wright focuses on his mother, talking about her sense of humor and commitment to education. Wright also describes the black community in which he grew up in Philadelphia, particularly the church community.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Dr. Jeremiah A. Wright, Jr., Section A2002_043_001_003, TRT: 0:30:00 ?

Pastor and author Jeremiah Wright recalls memories from his childhood growing up in Philadelphia's Germantown neighborhood. Wright gives examples of his mischevieuos personality and describes the family atmosphere in which he grew up, which was strict and supportive. Wright also discusses the racial demographics of his neighborhood and his high school, which was predominantly white and Jewish.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Dr. Jeremiah A. Wright, Jr., Section A2002_043_001_004, TRT: 0:30:00 ?

Pastor and author Jeremiah Wright shares more memories from his childhood, and discusses his early musical interest and musical training he had throughout his youth. Wright explains his choice to attend Virginia Union University, and details his time there, including what he learned while studying the Bible. Wright then talks about his decision to enter the military and his experience at boot camp in North Carolina.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Dr. Jeremiah A. Wright, Jr., Section A2002_043_001_005, TRT: 0:30:00 ?

Pastor and author Jeremiah Wright finishes a discussion about his time in the military and explains why he decided to go into religious studies, including his decision to focus on becoming a minister instead of a teacher. Wright explains how he became called to the Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago, and gives a detailed history of the membership of the church, including the reaction to his focus on African American church traditions. Wright also discusses the history of the United Church of Christ and its mergers.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Dr. Jeremiah A. Wright, Jr., Section A2002_043_001_006, TRT: 0:30:00 ?

Pastor and author Jeremiah Wright explains why he chose to pastor at Trinity United Church of Christ, and discusses how he broke the news to his father, a Baptist preacher. Wright then gives many examples of preachers and preaching styles that have influenced him, and advocates the view that one need not be educated to be an effective preacher. Wright also explains his incorporation of African culture into his own church and sermons.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Dr. Jeremiah A. Wright, Jr., Section A2002_043_001_007, TRT: 0:30:00 ?

Pastor and author Jeremiah Wright discusses the impact of African music on the African American experience and advocates for its teaching in African American churches. Wright shares his thoughts on the history of Christianity and criticizes the view that slavery brought Christianity to Africans. He discusses Trinity United Church of Christ's status as a megachurch, spelling out

the ways in which he uses this status to benefit the community, and outlines Trinity's plans for the future.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Dr. Jeremiah A. Wright, Jr., Section
A2002_043_001_008, TRT: 0:30:00 ?

Pastor and author Jeremiah Wright explains why African American churches need to take a leading role in helping to improve health care in the United States, particularly in the field of HIV-AIDS treatment. Wright also outlines other ways in which churches can take on positive social roles. Wright closes with a touching story about a churchgoer who used one of Wright's sermons to overcome the loss of his infant daughter.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Dr. Jeremiah A. Wright, Jr., Section
A2002_043_001_009, TRT: 0:08:40 ?

Reverend Dr. Jeremiah A. Wright, Jr. narrates his photographs.