GRADUATE STUDENT ESSAY AWARD

Time to Tell

Dennis Ray Knight, Jr.

Abstract

If he is known for anything other than his writings, James Baldwin is best known for his work as a civil rights activist. What is often overlooked is Baldwin's work toward uniting two under-represented and oppressed groups: African Americans and homosexuals. With his first novel, *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, Baldwin began a career of speaking about and for homosexuals and their relationship with the institutions of African-American communities. Through its focus on a sensitive, church-going teenager, *Go Tell It on the Mountain* dramatizes the strain imposed upon homosexual members of African-American communities within the Pentecostal Church through its religious beliefs.

Keywords: African-American literature, black church, homosexual, queer, James Baldwin, Pentecostal, *Go Tell It on the Mountain*

Go Tell It on the Mountain was published in 1953 after James Baldwin's emigration to Paris during a time of legal discrimination in the United States, a time when a unified "homosexual" lifestyle or perspective had yet to emerge in the public domain. In his book *Their Own Receive Them Not*, in which he describes African-American homosexuals' experiences within the Pentecostal reformation of the Christian faith, Horace L. Griffin states that "[Baldwin] channeled his anger and frustration over the injustices of homophobia and racism into his novels, namely, *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, *Another Country*, *Giovanni's Room*, and *Nobody Knows My Name*."¹ Knowing how controversial Baldwin's first novel would be, his publisher, Alfred A. Knopf, asked him to edit sections containing homosexual and religious connotations. Randall Kenan states that "Baldwin would later say that he felt that the editors didn't understand the book very well and that he regretted making some of the changes—like taking out any explicit references to the protagonist's sexuality and slicing much of the religious material."² Yet

Baldwin still managed to communicate his message. Marc Lombardo notes that “Baldwin had a singular talent for tailoring his message to his audience in a rather iconoclastic way. Instead of telling an audience what they wanted to hear, Baldwin always seemed to tell them what they did not want but, rather, *needed* to hear.”³ This makes Baldwin the perfect narrator for the African-American experience of those who felt cast out by the Pentecostal reformation of the Christian faith. Baldwin’s work critiques the construction of homosexuality as a crime, a mental disorder, and an immoral condition, and in this novel makes deliberate attempts to confront and expose the effects of the Pentecostal Church’s oppression of, and disdain for, members who were considered sexually impure.

The African-American experience in the Pentecostal Church takes on many meanings for those who subscribe to its practices and ordinances. The influence of this reformation in the communities of African Americans is vital to the thoughts and ideologies of the characters represented in *Go Tell It on the Mountain*. Kenan makes this connection as well: “The book is one of our best evocations of African-American interwar life and of the world of the so called Holy Rollers, a world of religious ecstasy and transplanted Southern culture.”⁴ Kenan speaks about the intimacy that African-American culture shares with the church and its faith, and Baldwin shows this by setting most of his first book in and around the Pentecostal church his characters attend. Csaba Csapó discusses Baldwin’s experience with the black church: “The black church offered shelter and refuge to Baldwin from the terrors of the street, thus safety and religion became synonymous for him, and the Church served as a kind of survival strategy when he was young.”⁵ Clarence Hardy also points to Baldwin’s experience: “He [Baldwin] understood, perhaps only as a religious outsider who once believed could, the architecture of religious thought and how it shaped black people’s collective aspirations and their connections to the larger society and world.”⁶ Baldwin, too, even though he renounced his affiliation with the Pentecostal Church early on in life, acknowledged the role of the church in African-American communities. Hardy continues, “Baldwin describes a Christianity that equates the black with the ugly and damned, even as it paradoxically provides the rhetorical and instructional space for black resistance and black humanity.”⁷ I argue that Baldwin dramatizes this influence, and its detriment to African Americans, in *Go Tell It on the Mountain*. Baldwin, a product of the African-American experience in the Pentecostal Church, documents through the life of young John Grimes the condemnation faced by African-American homosexuals through the strict religious guidelines practiced and propagated by the Pentecostal Church. *Go Tell It on the Mountain* allows Baldwin to disturb the heteronormative African-American culture through his words and experiences which allows the recognition of the existence of people like him.

Go Tell It on the Mountain scrutinizes the relationship between the African-American experience in the Pentecostal Church and African-American homosexuals. The relationship remains torn due mainly to principles that are built upon hypocrisy. Griffin states early in his text, “For though black church leaders once refused to accept white church leaders’ use of the Bible to justify oppressing them

during the periods of slavery and segregation, presently many use the Bible in a similar fashion to justify oppressing lesbians and gays.”⁸ The Pentecostal Church insists that homosexuality is sinful, unnatural, and unacceptable. Griffin continues, “Such preaching and teaching create psychological and theological problems for lesbians and gays in black churches, and for their heterosexual friends, family members, and fellow congregants.”⁹ The African-American community, both during Baldwin’s time and today, desires its members to crusade for equality, but does not want to address the discrimination faced by gay black men. Gregory B. Lewis addresses the black community’s response: “Blacks’ position as an out-group in American society could make discrimination such a central issue for them that all other variables decrease in importance.”¹⁰ As Griffin points out, the Pentecostal Church is the cornerstone in much of African-American culture and communities. Many of the African-American communities’ actions are grounded, guided, and inspired by the principles and theology of the Pentecostal Church. Most devastating is the psychological distress gay black men must endure in either disguising their true sexual identity or succumbing to social expectations.

The theological notion that homosexuals have to experience spiritual deliverance and their misdiagnosis within the DSM-I has caused a divide in many black families that include a homosexual male. William Spurlin writes:

While Cold War discourses in the 1950s conflated homosexuality with communism, positioning it as a threat to national security and on the constitutive ‘outside’ of national belonging, psychiatric and psychoanalytic discourses extended this violently exclusionary gesture, reaching their most homophobic height during this period.¹¹

In *Go Tell It on the Mountain* and some of his other works, Baldwin shows how the misinterpretation of historical holy scriptures has driven much of the contempt the African-American community directs toward homosexuals. Baldwin even suggests in “Down at the Cross” that “It is not too much to say that whoever wishes to become a truly moral human being ... must first divorce himself from all the prohibitions, crimes, and hypocrisies of the Christian church. If the concept of God has any validity or any use, it can only be to make us larger, freer, and more loving.”¹²

The life of the main character in *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, John Grimes, is positioned at the center of this battle. Csapó states that “The fourteen-year-old protagonist of the novel, John, shuttles between the subject position of the ‘saved’ and the ‘damned,’ which is a corresponding slippage in his sexual orientation; his religious conversion may be read as a metaphor for his awakening to his new, i.e. gay identity.”¹³ John experiences desires toward another male character, Elisha, which his church family would shun vehemently. John is perplexed by his own emotional state and the doctrine preached within the Temple of the Fire Baptized about human sexuality. These details of John’s life resemble those experienced by his creator, especially those details regarding the church and Baldwin’s faith. One of the churches that influenced Baldwin’s personal life and appeared in his writing,

under the name of the Temple of the Fire Baptized, was Fireside Pentecostal Assembly. Both the real and the fictional church operate under the Pentecostal faith which is known for its devotion to the purity of its members through the strict practice of biblical principles. Kenan notes, "At the age of fourteen, Baldwin became a young minister at the Fireside Pentecostal Assembly, a storefront church in Harlem. Loud, chaotic, full of music and prayers and personal testimonies, this world had enormous impact on James Baldwin. It was an escape, in some ways, from his harrowing home-life."¹⁴ The use of the church, the understanding of its function in culture, and the ability to be released from it drives much of the development that is seen in Baldwin. The changes in his belief system, at a young age and at the prime of his notoriety as a young preaching prodigal, were groundbreaking for Baldwin's overall development. Kenan states that "Baldwin was beginning to see the church as a Band-Aid for the ills of racial discrimination and poverty and injustice."¹⁵ These ideas were creating a problem that Baldwin alone would have to answer. His "new appreciation for how important art was in his life, his recognition of his sexuality, and his growing ambivalence with the church led Baldwin, in 1941, to preach his last sermon."¹⁶ Having left the pulpit, Baldwin was able to approach *Go Tell It on the Mountain* in ways different from his earlier pieces by integrating race, religion, and sexuality. Baldwin features a young black boy who does not struggle so much with his racial identity as with his sexual identity, a perspective which was very rare in American fiction.

John is a fictional replica of Baldwin, raised in the traditional Christian faith and facing disapproval and rejection. The shared characteristics between Baldwin and John allow the audience to see Baldwin's experience as a young man trying to discover himself through the innocence and inexperience of his young character. Baldwin employs pathos as he draws his audience to sympathize with John, living in a world where he yearns to be loved and understood. Certainly, the thoughts Baldwin had toward other men, sexually, at that time would have been condemned. Like John Grimes, "Baldwin had exemplified characteristics common to many gay boys; he was good, kind, and caring with a strong sense of faith and devotion to God."¹⁷ Unfortunately none of these characteristics allowed Baldwin to escape the ridicule of the church and people vital to his development as a young man. In discussing Baldwin, Griffin states that he "suffered oppressive homophobic and physical abuse by his Pentecostal father and the members of the black Pentecostal denomination [who] eventually ostracized him."¹⁸ Details of Baldwin's personal life flow over into his narrative of John Grimes and his experience with the church and those who are representative of it. Kenan confirms this idea of John Grimes being a version of Baldwin: "This is the world he would later write about with such vivid tenderness in his first novel, *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, an achingly autobiographical work."¹⁹ Kenan also mentions the similarities in nicknames, location, and religious experience that gave Baldwin the inspiration to write this painstakingly personal novel. Baldwin highlights the extremes of his personal experience, such as the public humiliation that black churches use to encourage conformity to what is deemed holy and righteous.

Through his portrayal of Deacon Gabriel Grimes, John's stepfather, Baldwin establishes the church's harsh condemnation of perceived sexual misconduct and impurity. Readers can directly align Gabriel's disdain for John with the African-American Pentecostal Church's disdain for the homosexual. For instance, in Part Two of the novel, there is a moment when Gabriel is snapped back into reality from reminiscing about his past. This moment gives insight into just how strained the father-son relationship is both between Gabriel and John, and between Baldwin and his stepfather. Baldwin writes,

A lone voice, joined by others, among them, waveringly, the voice of John. Gabriel recognized the voice ... fearing that it was John he heard, that it was John who lay astonished beneath the power of the Lord. He nearly looked up and turned around; but then he knew it was Elisha, and his fear departed.²⁰

Even in the most sacred of times, such as prayer, John, and the oppressed group he represents, is "feared" and looked down upon for nothing that they have done or said but simply because of who they are. Gabriel's relationship with John is strained, because John is "different" and is not Gabriel's biological son. There is no direct statement from Baldwin or Gabriel to confirm that Gabriel knows John to be homosexual, but Gabriel's thoughts and comments reveal his true feelings. Gabriel describes John as "silent, watching, full of evil pride—they [John and his mother] would be cast out, one day, into the outer darkness" (p. 115). Here Gabriel perceives John as something evil or impure that must be punished.

The portrayal of Gabriel Grimes in this work serves a twofold purpose. Gabriel symbolically represents both the black church that Baldwin was raised in, and the stepfather who raised Baldwin, David Baldwin. Many scholars, and even Baldwin himself, acknowledge the similarities between David and Gabriel. Both men were raised in the South and migrated to the North in an attempt to escape racial discrimination. The most important similarity between David Baldwin and Gabriel Grimes is the way in which they control their homes. The fear and terror they both instill carries the greatest weight in the development of the young men affected. Kenan states that "[David] became a hard, difficult, and bitter man ... He would often beat them upon little or no provocation, and James received the most severe punishment—often, he felt, due to his illegitimacy."²¹ Leeming too confirms this notion of David Baldwin: "To the people of his house the father's prophecy took the form of an arbitrary and puritanical discipline and a depressing air of bitter frustration which did nothing to alleviate the pain of poverty and oppression."²² The same experiences Baldwin felt and suffered as a child through the harsh ways of a stepfather spill over into his writing and are replayed through the relationship shared between his main character, John, and John's stepfather, Gabriel.

John Grimes's relationship with Gabriel is tumultuous; his father's words and actions routinely inspire fear. The narrator states that "His father's arm, rising and falling, might make him cry, and that voice might cause him to tremble" (p. 20). As John is being "delivered" on the threshing floor in Part Three of the novel, he

recalls a traumatic scene in the bathroom. In this instance Baldwin alludes to the biblical sin of Ham looking on his father Noah's naked body. When John accidentally sees his father's naked body while assisting him in bathing, Gabriel screams, "I'm going to beat sin out of him. I'm going to beat it out" (p. 197). As Gabriel screams, John is surprised by the intensity of his outburst. Csapó says, "When John looks at his father's penis in the bathroom, Gabriel beats up his son in order that John should become a 'proper' man; a 'proper' man (in this context heterosexual) must not sexualize the male body."²³ What is most significant about this section is the impact of Gabriel's religious beliefs on his interactions with John. This scripture concerning Noah is traditionally used to illustrate the Pentecostal belief in God's disapproval of impure desires, specifically homosexuality. Baldwin calls into question this idea and that of who God is and what God would approve of. Hardy takes note of this:

Pressed against the rigidities of traditional sexual morality, Baldwin sees this Christian god not only as a human-created illusion that supplies refuge from a hostile world, but also as a tyrant ... a symbol of our capacity for self-loathing and for damning various kinds of sexual intimacy and identity ... "it is not in the sight of nature that the homosexual is condemned," Baldwin writes [in "Preservation of Innocence"], "but in the sight of God."²⁴

Baldwin builds upon this notion of God's intentions through Gabriel's reaction to John in the bathroom. Gabriel's outburst reveals his belief that John looking on him is a sin of sexual impurity which is condemned by the Pentecostal Church. The homosexual undertones of the biblical story of Noah and his son is one of the Pentecostal Church's reasons for deterring this form of sexual impurity. This experience with Gabriel intensifies John's fear of him.

The fear that permeates John's thoughts and actions comes from Gabriel's position within the community and the family. Gabriel is highly respected by the other members of the congregation. John believes that "no one, none of the saints in any case, had ever reproached or rebuked his father, or suggested that his life was anything but spotless" (p. 51). John is well aware of Gabriel's standing and knows that disrespect toward Gabriel would bring more attention and harsh condemnation from others in the church. Roy and John, however, know that Gabriel deserves to be rebuked. Roy actually threatens Gabriel, and John recalls that "this man, God's minister, had struck John's mother, and John had wanted to kill him—and wanted to kill him still" (p. 51). This reveals how Baldwin uses his characters as a representation of the effects of the theology and beliefs of the Pentecostal Church. The unwavering respect for positions of power and authority causes Roy and John stand idly by while Gabriel abuses their mother. Gabriel, who is the patriarch, represents the church and its authority over the parishioners. Csapó also notes the religious symbolism of Gabriel in the text: "John's stern stepfather, Gabriel, has a speaking name in biblical terms. His name literally means 'God's messenger.' This can be seen as John's defiance against the vengeful God represented in his reli-

gion.”²⁵ When Elizabeth steps in to protect her children, Gabriel strikes and reprimands her. The violence displayed by Gabriel indicates the harsh and extreme measures taken by the church in opposition to homosexuality. In John’s mind the church is the ultimate authority and power within his world. To step outside or to represent something that goes completely against its theology would be courting open rebuke. John’s desire to kill Gabriel represents his desire to bring an end to the religious principles that restrain him and cause him to condemn himself.

Gabriel is not the only character who presents an obstacle to John finding himself and balancing his life as a Christian and as a black male with sexual desires for other males. Father James, Pastor of the Temple of the Fire Baptized, also stands in a position of religious authority. Fear of Father James contributes to John’s emotional turmoil. Pastors are respected and revered in the African-American experience of the Pentecostal Church. Baldwin explains it as the “awful responsibility placed on his shoulders by almighty God—let them remember that God would ask an accounting of him one day for every soul in his flock” (p. 17). The congregation’s knowledge of this responsibility elicits respect and reverence for Father James. What is ironic is that the person who inspired the character of Father James was Baldwin’s pastor from his church in Harlem, Bishop Rosa Artemis Horn, known as Mother Horn. Leeming cited her as being a “celebrated preacher” who won over Baldwin by her warmth and openness to receive him. Leeming states that Baldwin

chose Mother Horn and the church over the heavy-breathing men in hallways and the pimps on the street, and on a Sunday night when he felt more stained with sin than usual, he responded to the preacher’s exhortations by flinging himself onto the threshing floor in front of the altar.²⁶

Yet there was still a fear that even Mother Horn instilled in Baldwin. Upon Baldwin leaving her church, she devised a plan to vex his reputation as a good God-fearing young man. Leeming continues, “So it was that even before he became a preacher, Baldwin experienced something of the hypocrisy and intolerance that were eventually to drive him away from the ‘saints.’”²⁷ This same fear and anxiety arises again when Baldwin details Father James and his impact on his congregation, especially in the face of sin and sexual impurity.

Much of John’s anxiety about his sexual desires for other males begins when Father James shames Elisha and Ella Mae in front of the entire congregation for simply experiencing sexual attraction. Baldwin speaks about this from what he learned as a teenager in his essay, “Down at the Cross.” Baldwin writes about coming into his sexual nature at the age of 14 like the other teenagers in his neighborhood and church. They were taught: “For this was the beginning of our burning time, and ‘It is better,’ said St. Paul—who elsewhere, with a most unusual and stunning exactness, described himself as a ‘wretched man’—‘to marry than to burn.’”²⁸ John is now fearful because he has had lustful thoughts about other boys and even masturbates to those thoughts. Hardy states that “Baldwin, like John

Grimes, his alter ego in his first novel, saw how his body, viewed from within religion's rules against sexual desire, seemed both 'treacherous and bewildering.'"²⁹ If the pastor and the congregation are in such an uproar about two young people of the opposite sex experiencing "natural" sexual desire, then how much more harsh would they be toward him and his "unnatural" homosexual desires? John, being a product of this culture, has to come to terms with how these teachings and beliefs affect his life. Hardy states that "As long as John stays within this reality that his religion endorses, his body is condemned and his sexual desires are damned as sinful."³⁰ Since the Pentecostal Church is so closely tied to the African-American community, being labeled as impure ostracizes a church member and leaves that person vulnerable. John is very aware of this as an active member of his church and is not left with many, if any, choices on how to live and love.

John shows a sincere reverence and admiration for members of the church who, presumably, would not show the same admiration toward him if they knew of his secret desires and dreams. Csapó reveals the reasoning behind this devout reverence, stating that "*Go Tell It on the Mountain* explores the extent to which inner drives can be contained within the available approved models of society."³¹ The admiration John has for Elisha can be perceived as both spiritual and sexual. This admiration leads to an infatuation which creates an internal conflict for John between sexuality and spirituality. Elisha is a role model for John. This dynamic between Elisha and John, and its eroticism, is noticed by William Spurlin.

His identification with Elisha, a different kind of identification with masculinity and the male body, occurs in the church, in the place of bodily prohibitions; in fact, one could easily argue that the church eroticizes desire, so that John's 'conversion' at the end of the novel is both spiritual *and* (homo)erotic insofar as his desire refuses to be domesticated or tamed.³²

Like John, Elisha is interested in the ministry. The narrator states,

He was not much older than John, only seventeen, and he was already saved and was a preacher. John stared at Elisha all during the lesson, admiring the timbre of Elisha's voice, much deeper and manlier than his own, admiring the leanness, and grace, and strength, and darkness of Elisha in his Sunday suit, wondering if he would ever be holy as Elisha was holy. (p. 13)

John focuses not only on Elisha's spirituality but also his body. John's attention to Elisha's physical body provides more evidence of the fact that John is sexually attracted to him. Thus Baldwin weaves together John's spiritual aspirations and his physical attraction to Elisha, two desires that John confronts in the church.

The description of John's encounter with Elisha during Sunday school emphasizes this attraction: "he did not follow the lesson, and when, sometimes, Elisha paused to ask John a question, John was ashamed and confused, feeling the palms of his hands become wet and his heart pound like a hammer" (p. 13). John's inner-

most feelings surface and completely distract him from what he should be learning about the Bible. Furthermore, the account of their playful wrestling underscores John's attraction to Elisha. Here again Baldwin brings together religion and sexuality, setting this scene in the church:

And so they turned, battling in the narrow room, and the odor of Elisha's sweat was heavy in John's nostrils. He saw the veins rise on Elisha's forehead and in his neck; his breath became jagged and harsh, and the grimace on his face became crueler; and John, watching these manifestations of his power, was filled with a wild delight. (p. 53)

It is the scent of another male that arouses John and causes this euphoria. The vivid description of their bodies intertwining portrays something more erotic than playful between the two. John is experiencing homosexual desires and tendencies that he must confront and no longer avoid.

After the wrestling match, Elisha talks to John on a spiritual level, saying, "But when the Lord saves you He burns out all that old Adam, He gives you a new mind and a new heart, and then you don't find no pleasure in the world, you get all your joy in walking and talking with Jesus every day" (p. 54). The pleasure here that Elisha refers to comes from the religious belief that sexual pleasure between man and woman is sinful due to the understanding that sex is strictly assigned for procreation. Hardy says, "His own body filled with (sexual) desires was the fundamental and ever-present truth he felt Christianity ignored."³³ The interaction between John and Elisha is evidence of Baldwin's attempt to shine a light on the truth of his desires. John is confused as he listens to Elisha; he is unable to understand how Elisha would be in a position to say all of this after having been rebuked by Father James. In his mind's eye, John "saw him standing—had Elisha forgotten?—beside Ella Mae before the altar while Father James rebuked him for the evil that lived in the flesh. He looked into Elisha's face, full of questions he would never ask. And Elisha's face told him nothing" (p. 54). Elisha serves as a symbol for the hypocrisy of religion and theology which is confining John and denying him an avenue to understanding. Since Elisha has just been shamed for a mistake, John feels Elisha should be more empathetic with this crucial decision about spirituality. Now Elisha takes on an air of superiority because of his recent deliverance. Elisha continues, "I just look at them and I tell them Jesus saved me one day, and I'm going to go all the way with Him. Ain't no woman, no, nor man neither going to make me change my mind" (p. 55). Elisha appears to be very devout in his faith. He desires to live a life that will not jeopardize his salvation. Thus John is unable to confide in Elisha, and it seems that no one empathizes with him or understands his internal battle. Elisha and Gabriel stand in as the main proxies for Baldwin's depiction of the nature of the black church, male and heterosexual dominated. This leaves no room for men with desires like John.

At one point the novel suggests there is some relief for John from the church's disdain and condemnation. While the men in his life inspire fear or reservation,

John's mother offers support and consolation. The novel hints that she is aware of the truth of her son's being. They have a close relationship. Before Gabriel came along, Elizabeth and John were alone. John is less troublesome than her younger son, Roy. When John respectfully replies to his mother and follows her commands, she praises him. More importantly, she encourages and seems to understand him. The relationship John shares with his mother is very reminiscent of the relationship Baldwin shared with his mother, Emma Berdis. Leeming writes, "In Baldwin's eyes his mother was a protector and a maintainer of family unity."³⁴ This relationship inspired Baldwin to create the character of Elizabeth. Leeming continues, "Much of her early life's 'journey' is suggested in the person and events surrounding Elizabeth in *Go Tell It on the Mountain*."³⁵ Through this personal experience of a mother's love, Baldwin delivers one of his most endearing characters.

Shortly after John finds out that his mother had remembered his birthday, they share an intensely emotional moment of spoken and unspoken communication: "And he knew again that she was not saying everything she meant, in a kind of secret language she was telling him today something that he must remember and understand tomorrow" (p. 32). The use of the phrase "a kind of secret language" and John's sense that she is going to tell him "something" worth remembering indicate that her next words are charged with importance. She says, "The Lord'll reveal to you in His own good time everything He wants you to know. You put your faith in the Lord, Johnny, and He'll surely bring you out. Everything works together for good for them that love the Lord" (p. 32). Baldwin further intimates that Elizabeth realizes John is gay and that she wants to reassure him that God is not against him: "He [John] had heard her say this before ... but he knew that today she was saying it to him especially; she was trying to help him because she knew he was in trouble" (p. 32). Elizabeth is aware of the world that she and her family live in and, like the church, it is dominated by the hegemony of heterosexual males. With her knowledge of her son's difference and desires, she knows he has a long battle ahead in a world that is not kind to those who deviate from social norms and mores. Elizabeth sympathizes with John because she knows what is about to happen to him as he matures. The narrator states, "At this there sprang into his mother's face something startlingly, beautiful, unspeakably sad—as though she were looking far beyond him at a long, dark road, and seeing on that road a traveler in perpetual danger" (p. 32).

John becomes a victim of the theology of sex and sexuality of the church and begins to condemn himself. Father James's public shaming, earlier in the novel, frightens John and makes his memory of masturbating a source of emotional turmoil.

He had sinned ... he had sinned with his hands and that was hard to forgive. In the school lavatory, alone, thinking of the boys, older, bigger, braver, who made bets with each other as to whose urine could arch higher, he had watched in himself a transformation of which he would never dare to speak. (pp. 18–19)

John's thoughts and life are transforming into something that he will have difficulty accepting because he has been taught to regard sexual desire as sin. Though John cannot change instantly, he knows that he is destined to change, as Baldwin reveals when he states that John "had made his decision. He would not be like his father, or his father's fathers. He would have another life" (p. 19). Like Baldwin, John must go against everything that he has been taught. In "The Price of the Ticket" Baldwin writes, "To do your first works over means to reexamine everything. Go back to where you started, or as far back as you can, examine all of it, travel your road again and tell the truth about it."³⁶ Baldwin, here, writes of his own experiences and the journey he took into self, religion, and cultural discovery. In his autobiographical notes Baldwin also writes, "One writes out of one thing only—one's own experience."³⁷ As John is in the midst of a journey of self-discovery, he must evaluate his personal and religious beliefs.

John knows he will never be affirmed and accepted as a male attracted to other males, so he succumbs to the idea that a "holy life" as a man married to a woman and rearing their children in church is his only option. Baldwin writes, "It was somehow on that Sunday, a Sunday shortly before his birthday, that John first realized that this was the life awaiting him—realized it consciously, as something no longer far off, but imminent, coming closer day by day" (p. 18). John finds himself conflicted about what he has been taught and what he feels. As Marc Lombardo observes,

The process of growing up—of evolution, as Baldwin refers to it—is one in which, whether we like it or not, we are each at some point going to have to experience things that we do not yet have categories for—things that confuse us, frustrate us, and may even bring us to doubt our very place in the world.³⁸

This is exactly John's experience. The attraction and desire that John feels for the young men at his school and Elisha are uncategorizable to him, but the church teaches him to call masturbation "sin." John is extremely confused by his feelings and frustrated with the conflict between them and his religion. His faith teaches him that sex before marriage between a man and a woman is impure. The only mention of John's faith's view of same-sex attraction is sodomy, which does not address the nonsexual attraction to the same sex that John is experiencing.

The novel's action occurs on John's fifteenth birthday, a moment that marks a transition from childhood to young adulthood. He is indeed evolving and developing, but with much heartache from opposing factors of his life. On his birthday excursion away from the Grimes's home, John decides to see a movie that he believes may offer him some insights: "he felt identified with the blond young man, the fool of his family, and he wished to know more about his so blatantly unkind fate" (p. 37). This emphasizes John's feelings of oppression at home and that he is looking beyond home and church for answers and explanations. Unfortunately, watching the movie causes more confusion: "Again, had the thought not been blasphemous, he would have thought that it was the Lord who had led him into

this theater to show him an example of the wages of sin" (p. 40). The power of the church's dogma and doctrine overtake John's thoughts. While for some, to be overtaken by belief is to find clarity, John remains confused.

At the end of Part One, John is faced with a question from Elisha and a comment from a mother of the church, both of which confirm that the church causes John to suppress his feelings. Elisha asks John, "Do you want to be saved, Johnny?" John's answer is revealing: he says, "I don't know" (p. 55). In just a short time, John has run through so many emotions and puzzling thoughts that what seems to be an easy question for a devoutly raised Christian boy turns out to be most perplexing. To add insult to injury, John is later scolded by the mothers of the church. After Elisha reveals that John has not accepted salvation, Mother Candless warns him about the danger of sin. She says, "Satan get his foot in the door, he ain't going to rest till he's in the room. You is in the Word or you *ain't*—ain't no halfway with God" (p. 59). Baldwin positions John at a pivotal point in his life as the church is preparing for one of the most spiritual and practiced rituals of the Christian faith, prayer. Gabriel's self-righteous anger, Father James's rebuke of Elisha, Elisha's religious fervor, and Mother Candless's ultimatum all come together to make John feel beaten and unworthy.

The best place for resolution for John is at the altar, a place where he can communicate with God. In Part Two, "The Prayers of the Saints," Florence, Elizabeth, and Gabriel relive their pasts while in deep prayer and in the process reveal some of the contradictions that religion has allowed many of the characters to hide and disguise. Hardy states that "What Baldwin, in fact, offers is inside knowledge of how religious people think and act."³⁹ Through the stories of Florence, Elizabeth, and Gabriel, Baldwin exposes how the flaws of religion shape the lives of these main characters. Their experience suggests why they show support or disdain for John. Aunt Florence's role in the story provides justification for some of the turbulence displayed in John and Gabriel's relationship.

In the midst of Aunt Florence's prayer, Baldwin shifts perspective to John and to his experience during the prayer service:

Tonight, his mind was awash with visions; nothing remained. He was ill with doubt and searching. He longed for a light that would teach him, forever and forever, and beyond all question, the way to go; for a power that would bind him, forever and forever, and beyond all crying to the love of God. (p. 80)

John's longing echoes Florence's experience of not belonging and being overlooked in her younger years, before and even after leaving her mother's home. Florence's mother shows favoritism toward Gabriel, while Gabriel definitely shows favoritism toward Roy. Florence knows this, which is why she is quick to defend her nephew, even against his own father. By shifting to John in the middle of Florence's prayer, Baldwin shows how their unspoken pains and hurts tie them so closely together. Florence's treatment at home leads her to leave home and enter a turbulent marriage. She becomes for John what she did not have, an advocate.

Florence's flashbacks reveal how the church indoctrinates members about the role of men and women. One of those doctrines that Florence and Gabriel's mother held dear was the belief of male dominance. The church teaches the scripture found within Paul's epistle to the Ephesian church. Paul informs believers that the man should be the head of all as Christ is the head of the church. Paul writes in Ephesians 5:22–3, "Wives, submit to your husbands as you do to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior." Florence resents her brother because of her mother's favorable behavior toward the young and wayward Gabriel. Baldwin writes,

Gabriel was the apple of his mother's eye ... With the birth of Gabriel which occurred when she was five, her future was swallowed up. There was only one future in that house, and it was Gabriel's—to which since Gabriel was a manchild, all else must be sacrificed. (p. 72)

The mother sacrificed Florence's education to ensure that Gabriel was educated in order to take care of his family in the future. Eve Sedgwick states, "It has been clear that women had a kind of ultimate importance in the schema of men's gender constitution—representing an absolute of exchange value, of representation itself, and also being the ultimate victims of the painful contradictions in the gender system that regulate men."⁴⁰ Though Gabriel's and Florence's mother is willing to continue that legacy of contradiction, Florence is an outspoken opponent of the system.

Both Florence and John experience being the older, yet inferior, child to their younger and more defiant sibling. It is clear that John is searching for acceptance from Gabriel just as Florence was from her mother. Neither Gabriel nor Roy has to undergo these searches because the love from their parent is unconditional. Florence is denied access to an education because her mother feels that Gabriel is entitled to it. John is denied access to freedom and exploration in the city on his birthday and in life as a young man. This denial is a result of Gabriel's feeling that John could, in some unknown way, prevent Roy from getting into trouble. Florence and John fight these systems in different ways. Baldwin reveals John's hopes and prayers in the midst of Gabriel's prayer:

Then he and his father would be equals, in the sight, and the sound, and the love of God ... He could speak to his father then as men spoke to one another—as sons spoke to their fathers, not in trembling but in sweet confidence, not in hatred but in love. (p. 145)

Through prayer, hope, and faith John hopes to bring solace to his relationship with Gabriel, though his father treats him as the "evil stepchild."

Florence's approach to this oppression is more direct and confrontational. She represents a challenge to authority and its traditional standards that oppress

those, like John, who do not conform. As David Ikard observes, Florence is “aware of the ways that black women, like her mother Rachel, become policing agents in maintaining these patriarchal patterns.”⁴¹ Florence does not hide her opposition to these patriarchal patterns. When she recognizes that her mother is allowing Gabriel to follow these patterns, she removes herself from being a contributing factor. Spurlin highlights her resistance: “She especially exposes the fallacy of conflating truth and goodness with organized religion and, similar to Baldwin himself, the hypocrisy of the black church in justifying and perpetuating phallic masculinity and heteronormative social relations.”⁴² Florence’s role also presents a counter-narrative to dominate heteronormative religious beliefs in the African-American experience in the Pentecostal Church which represents Baldwin’s efforts to shine a light on issues that plague the black church and its relationship with members who do not fit the traditional mold.

By no means does Florence conform to the traditional role of a religious woman like her mother. Florence defies the patriarchal religious teachings presented by Paul in the books of First Timothy and First Corinthians. In these scriptures, Paul speaks against women being vocal in public settings and insists that women remain submissive to men. During a heated argument in which Gabriel begins to blame Elizabeth and John for Roy’s misfortune, Florence objects, “I ain’t heard you ask that boy nary a question about how all this happened. Look like you just determined to raise cain *anyhow* and make everybody in this house suffer because something done happened to the apple of your eye” (p. 45). Refusing to continue her mother’s enabling of her brother, Florence breaks all the rules and speaks against the male authority she has been taught to serve.

As Florence represents opposition to religious doctrine, Gabriel represents the male domination that Florence is opposing. In his “prayer,” a long section that comes immediately after Florence’s account, Gabriel’s flashback paints a disturbing picture of contradictions and hypocrisy. His actions throughout the novel show how his religion is used only to conveniently prove points that positively reflect on him. He readily condemns “inappropriate” behavior when John looks on his naked body and even threatens to beat the sin out of him. Yet, unlike John, when Gabriel was sexually promiscuous, his mother never laid a hand on him. Instead, she was steadfast in her prayers. Baldwin writes, “For she [Gabriel’s mother, Rachel] would live to see the promise of the Lord fulfilled. She would not go to her rest until her son, the last of her children, he who would place her in the winding-sheet, should have entered the communion of the saints” (p. 93). Gabriel’s hypocrisy even spreads to access to the Holy Spirit, something that he has absolutely no control over. Throughout the novel, as the audience is made privy to the past years of Gabriel’s life, he preaches a message about people needing the Holy Spirit and salvation from the fiery pits of hell. Yet he seeks to deny John’s access to this because he is not his biological son. Baldwin writes, “They [Gabriel’s biological sons] were not there. Only the son of the bondwoman stood where the rightful heir should stand” (p. 114). While he was in his sinful nature, Gabriel’s mother was compassionate toward him. Yet

he refuses to bestow on John, Elizabeth, or Florence the same sentiment shown to him.

The sermon that Gabriel preached when he was young, before he even met Elizabeth, represents the doctrine that John has been hearing in his home and church. Instead of consoling and restoring the broken and the sinner, Gabriel's preaching follows the traditional evangelical message: fire and brimstone. The lack of sympathy in this message contradicts the idea of a caring, loving, and merciful God. An excerpt from one of Gabriel's sermons shows the doctrine at work. Gabriel says, "For let us remember that the wages of sin is death; that it is written, and cannot fail, the soul that sinneth, it shall die" (p. 103). This emphasis on sin and damnation is carried throughout the rest of Gabriel's message and offers no sign of hope that one can be saved or delivered from sin. He continues, "Ah. Woe is me. Woe is *me*. Yes, beloved—there is no righteousness in man. All men's hearts are evil, all men are liars—only God is true" (p. 104). Gabriel positions himself as a messenger and instrument of God, but his message does not reflect the totality of the person of God. Gabriel's message lacks the true love and inclusivity of God's grace and mercy. He takes on a superior attitude over sinners and fails to realize that his own sinful past required grace and mercy to help him find his way to a forgiving God. Baldwin's experience within the church allows him to show this disparity. Sermons of this nature would inspire the members to despise sin and the sinner and refrain from all expressions of compassion for another. For outsiders, like Baldwin and John, there seems to be no refuge, no comfort. While he condemns others' sinfulness, Gabriel fails to acknowledge his own infidelity.

Gabriel's tendency to downplay his own faults and past indiscretions reveals his hypocrisy, sexism, and egocentricity. He has been shaped by southern racial discrimination before he migrates to the North. His actions throughout the book constitute an example of compensatory masculinity. A recent article by six doctors published in the *American Journal of Public Health* states that "Masculinities of male subgroups who are not members of the socially dominant group, such as Black men and gay men, have often been described as compensatory masculinities, developed in reaction to blocked access to the power and authority of the dominant group."⁴³ The term "compensatory masculinities" stems from the idea that the oppression of the hegemony causes black men to overcompensate through the assertion of their masculinity over women, children, and homosexuals. Gabriel compensates for his lack of authority and equality with white men by oppressing those whom he feels are inferior to himself: John, Florence, Elizabeth, Deborah, and Esther. John is the usual recipient of Gabriel's overcompensation. When he returns home after his birthday excursion, Gabriel is frantic because Roy has been injured in a brawl. In this situation, Gabriel directs his fury and frustration at John: "And John knew, in the moment his father's eyes swept over him, that he hated John because John was not lying on the sofa where Roy lay" (pp. 42–3). When John returns home Gabriel immediately sees a target for his anger and frustration about what the white boys, who represent oppression for Gabriel, have done to Roy. His verbal outburst at John, who bears no responsibility in this

incident, displays his compensatory masculinity at work. Gabriel, a product of the antebellum South, is upset most that white boys have beaten up his prized possession, Roy. Since Gabriel cannot attack the white boys personally, the most obvious target is the weaker of the sons, John. For this father, John does not represent the heir that he has envisioned for the Grimes legacy, thus making him inferior to both Gabriel and Roy.

Gabriel has a point to prove, and John becomes his punching bag for all the frustration he feels about his place in the world. John appears weak to Gabriel because of his relations with others, especially white people. His verbal insults continue throughout the heated discussion around Roy's injuries. Even though it is apparent that Roy's injuries are as much his own fault as that of the white boys, Gabriel continues to deflect attention from Roy's involvement to John's absence. Gabriel says to John, "You see?" ... 'It was white folks, some of them white folks *you* like so much that tried to cut your brother's throat'" (p. 45). To add insult to injury, Gabriel delivers his final warning to John:

"You can tell that foolish *son* of yours something," he said to his wife with venom, having decided, it seemed, to ignore his sister, "him [John] standing there with them big buckeyes. You can tell him to take this like a warning from the Lord. *This* is what white folks does to niggers. I been telling you, now you see." (p. 46)

None of Gabriel's hostility is directed toward the actual cause of his current frustration, which is his beloved son, Roy. In Gabriel's mind, Roy is what he wants in an heir and cannot be publicly humiliated and blamed for his actions. So to compensate for his son's brutal beating at the hands of a group of white boys and his inability to get justice, John becomes the target of Gabriel's anger. Though difficult to understand, this is Gabriel's way of life and thought.

Understanding Gabriel's way of life is essential to understanding how he represents the construction of theology in the Pentecostal Church. Ikard states that "He [Gabriel] views himself as the ordained 'head of the household' and approaches any challenges to his authority as spiritual treason—a mind-set that empowers him to resort to whatever measures he deems appropriate to maintain 'order in his house.'"⁴⁴ Gabriel does this by calling into question the religion of Elizabeth. While in prayer, Gabriel recalls a conversation he had with Elizabeth concerning her decision to have John out of wedlock. Elizabeth delivers a response that challenges Gabriel. As he reflects on John and Roy, his thoughts are quite disturbing and hypocritical. Gabriel thinks,

But how could there not be a difference between the son of a weak, proud woman and some careless boy, and the son that God had promised him, who would carry down the joyful line his father's name, and who would work until the day of the second coming to bring about His Father's Kingdom. (p. 115)

Through Gabriel, Baldwin shows how the church constructs a hierarchy in spite of the fact that a principle of its faith compels the church not to judge others. When

Esther, Gabriel's mistress during his first marriage, walks into a service to which Gabriel had invited her, the congregation's reaction to her is evidence of how this condemning and superior behavior is taught, practiced, and preached. Baldwin writes, "Heads turned when they [Esther and her mother] came in, and a murmur, barely audible, of astonishment and pleasure swept over the church. Here were sinners, come to hear the Word of God" (p. 118). This pleasure experienced by the church members is one of religious delight that "two sinners" are coming to hear the Gospel preached; the automatic response is not to be welcoming, but judgmental.

John experiences this same judgment throughout the prayers of the saints. Near the end of Gabriel's prayer, Baldwin shifts the perspective back to John, who hears Mother Candleless tell him, "Salvation is real ... God is real. Death may come soon or late, why do you hesitate? Now is the time to seek and serve the Lord" (p. 144). John has not made an open confession of faith, and he knows this does not sit well with Father James, Gabriel, or the other members of the church. He believes that the best decision for him would be to conform to the church theology that he needs to be delivered of his "sin." He thinks: "John, who having lain in darkness would no longer be himself but some other man. He would have been changed, as they said, forever; sown in dishonor, he would be raised in honor: he would have been born again" (p. 145). John's intention to be delivered reveals that his experience of being raised in the church has been traumatic. John wants to believe that after his deliverance

he and his father would be equal, in the sight, and the sound, and the love of God ... He could speak to his father then as men spoke to one another—as sons spoke to their fathers, not in trembling but in sweet confidence, not in hatred but in love. His father could not cast him out, whom God had gathered in. (p. 145)

John's need for deliverance relies not on the basis of a spiritual need or deficit, but on the fact that he longs for and needs the acceptance of the only father figure in his life, Gabriel.

In this distraught state, John turns to a most sacred place within the Christian church: the threshing floor or the altar. In Part Three of the novel, John finds himself prostrate here with his mother, stepfather, and aunt. Baldwin is very strategic in writing this last part of the novel. Csapó states that "When Baldwin first wanted to publish *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, he was made to rewrite the novel's ending because of its overt homosexual theme. In the final version, Baldwin hid the homosexual content in several codes."⁴⁵ Biblically, the threshing floor is considered a sacred place, a ritual ground. In the book of Genesis, Joseph and his Egyptian followers stop at the threshing floor of Atad to mourn the loss of their leader, Jacob. In First Chronicles the infamous temple that David was assigned to build as a monument to God was constructed upon a threshing floor where David had previously built an altar. The threshing floor is also where the biblical character Ruth is finally shown to her future husband, Boaz. This place would

be considered a ritual ground, a sacred place within African-American culture that represents community and refuge. For John, there is no refuge or solace on the threshing floor. Yet on this threshing floor there is escape from the religious dogma that he has practiced and been taught and an opportunity for him to embrace his authentic self.

While on the threshing floor, John's desires overtake him. As John comes to a deeper revelation of himself, he continues to prove the intimate love he has for Elisha. Baldwin writes, "In his [John's] heart there was a sudden yearning tenderness to hold Elisha; desire, sharp and awful as a reflecting knife, to usurp the body of Elisha, and lie where Elisha lay, to speak in tongues, as Elisha spoke, and with that authority, to confound his father" (p. 195). What continues to fascinate John about Elisha is the boldness in his faith and the respect the other men seem to have for him. John does not feel this respect, nor does he receive it from his father. Even after John confesses and receives Christ as his savior, Gabriel shows John a cold shoulder. His words and actions are, at minimum, passive: "'Praise the Lord,' said his father. He did not move to touch him, did not kiss him, did not smile" (p. 207). Though John has reached what he believes is the pinnacle of his faith, Gabriel still does not seem pleased.

John knows that he must find some liberation from the torment he is putting himself through to please others, even if the church does not support him. Csapó writes, "The central event of the novel, John's conversion, functions as a certain form of realization of his homosexuality as well as his defiance against the God of the fundamental black church."⁴⁶ John has to first free himself, and after Gabriel's disregard for his move toward salvation, John is assured of this. He knows that "Now the storm was over, And the avenue, like any landscape that had endured a storm, lay changed under Heaven, exhausted and clean, and new. Not again, forever, could it return to the avenue it once had been" (p. 215). This newness is John's acceptance of who he is. The troubled storm within his mind that has plagued him is now over. Spurlin states,

John's 'conversion' at the end of the novel is both spiritual *and* (homo) erotic insofar as his desire refuses to be domesticated or tamed or 'cured' ... a (re)visionary move toward another grid of masculine identification and system of meaning—wherein homoerotic desire operates as a site of personal and social transformation in a world ravaged by Cold War anxiety, racism, gender oppression, and homophobia.⁴⁷

Most poignant in this liberation are some of the last words that John is able to speak to Elisha in the book: "Elisha, he said, no matter what happens to me, where I go, what folks say about me, no matter what anybody says, you remember—please remember—I was saved. I was *there*" (p. 220). It is here that John makes a bold statement and confession. He is freed from the torture and torment of a people and a religious institution that have oppressed him for so long. John has reached the peak of his hardest and most difficult mountain in life thus far, and now he is ready to tell the world, without shame, who he is.

Notes

- 1 Horace L. Griffin, *Their Own Receive Them Not: African American Lesbians and Gays in Black Churches* (Cleveland, OH, The Pilgrim Press, 2006), p. 119.
- 2 Randall Kenan, "James Baldwin, 1924–1987: A Brief Introduction," in Douglas Field (ed.), *A Historical Guide to James Baldwin* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 37.
- 3 Marc Lombardo, "James Baldwin's Philosophical Critique of Sexuality," *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, 23:1 (2009), p. 41.
- 4 Kenan, "James Baldwin, 1924–1987," p. 27.
- 5 Csaba Csapó, "Race, Religion and Sexuality in *Go Tell It on the Mountain*," in Carol E. Henderson (ed.), *James Baldwin's Go Tell It on the Mountain: Historical and Critical Essays* (New York, Peter Lang, 2006), p. 62.
- 6 Clarence E. Hardy III, "James Baldwin as Religious Writer: The Burdens and Grief of Black Evangelicalism," in Field (ed.), *A Historical Guide to James Baldwin*, p. 65.
- 7 *Ibid.*
- 8 Griffin, *Their Own Receive Them Not*, p. vii.
- 9 *Ibid.*
- 10 Gregory B. Lewis, "Black–White Difference in Attitudes toward Homosexuality and Gay Rights," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 67:1 (2003), p. 69.
- 11 William J. Spurlin, "Go Tell It on the Mountain and Cold War Tropes of National Belonging: Homoerotic Desire and the Redeployment of Betrayal under Black Nationalism," in Henderson (ed.), *James Baldwin's Go Tell It on the Mountain*, p. 34.
- 12 James Baldwin, "Down at the Cross," in *James Baldwin: Collected Essays*, ed. Toni Morrison (New York, Library of America, 1998), p. 314.
- 13 Csapó, "Race, Religion and Sexuality," p. 58.
- 14 Kenan, "James Baldwin, 1924–1987," pp. 26–7.
- 15 *Ibid.*, p. 29.
- 16 *Ibid.*
- 17 Griffin, *Their Own Receive Them Not*, p. 119.
- 18 *Ibid.*, p. 118.
- 19 Kenan, "James Baldwin, 1924–1987," p. 27.
- 20 James Baldwin, *Go Tell It on the Mountain* (New York, Doubleday, 1952), p. 113. All subsequent quotations are taken from this edition. Page numbers are given in parentheses in the text.
- 21 Kenan, "James Baldwin, 1924–1987," pp. 25–6.
- 22 David Leeming, *James Baldwin: A Biography* (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), p. 5.
- 23 Csapó, "Race, Religion and Sexuality," p. 67.
- 24 Hardy, "James Baldwin as Religious Writer," p. 77.
- 25 Csapó, "Race, Religion and Sexuality," p. 63.
- 26 Leeming, *James Baldwin: A Biography*, p. 24.
- 27 *Ibid.*, p. 25.
- 28 Baldwin, "Down at the Cross," p. 297.
- 29 Hardy, "James Baldwin as Religious Writer," p. 30.
- 30 *Ibid.*, p. 69.
- 31 Csapó, "Race, Religion and Sexuality," p. 61.
- 32 Spurlin, "Go Tell It on the Mountain and Cold War Tropes," p. 37.
- 33 Hardy "James Baldwin as Religious Writer," pp. 68–9.

- 34 Leeming, *James Baldwin: A Biography*, p. 9.
- 35 *Ibid.*
- 36 James Baldwin, "The Price of the Ticket," in Morrison (ed.), *James Baldwin: Collected Essays*, p. 841.
- 37 James Baldwin, "Autobiographical Notes," in Morrison (ed.), *James Baldwin: Collected Essays*, p. 8.
- 38 Lombardo, "James Baldwin's Philosophical Critique," p. 45.
- 39 Hardy, "James Baldwin as Religious Writer," p. 65.
- 40 Eve K. Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1985), p. 134.
- 41 David Ikard, *Breaking the Silence: Toward a Black Male Feminist Criticism* (Baton Rouge, LA, Louisiana State University Press, 2007), p. 58.
- 42 Spurlin, "Go Tell It on the Mountain and Cold War Tropes," p. 32.
- 43 Laren M. Bogart, Jonathan Ellen, Errol Lamont Fields, David J. Malebranche, Mark A. Schuster, and Katherine C. Smith, "I Have Always Felt I Had to Prove My Manhood': Homosexuality, Masculinity, Gender Role Strain, and HIV Risk Among Young Black Men Who Have Sex With Men," *American Journal of Public Health*, 105:1 (2015), p. 122.
- 44 Ikard, *Breaking the Silence*, p. 51.
- 45 Csapó, "Race, Religion and Sexuality," p. 57.
- 46 Csapó, "Race, Religion and Sexuality," p. 61.
- 47 Spurlin, "Go Tell It on the Mountain and Cold War Tropes," p. 37.

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Contributor's Biography

Dennis Ray Knight, Jr. is a native of Enfield, North Carolina. He is a double graduate of North Carolina Central University in Durham, North Carolina, where he received both a Masters and Bachelors of Arts in English. He has served as an English/Language Arts instructor for the past four years in both the public and charter school systems of North Carolina and New Jersey. He has presented much of his research on the literary works of James Baldwin and E. Lynn Harris, and inclusion of LGBTQAI persons in education throughout the country at various literary and educational conferences and symposiums. He has also received awards for his oral presentation and written research on issues related to African-American homosexuals.