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Paul Harvey illustrates how black Christian traditions provided theological, institutional, and personal strategies for cultural survival during bondage and into an era of partial freedom. At the same time, he covers the ongoing tug-of-war between themes of "respectability" versus practices derived from an African heritage; the adoption of Christianity by the majority; and the critique of the adoption of the "white man's religion" from the eighteenth century to the present. The book also covers internal cultural, gendered, and class divisions in churches that attracted congregants of widely disparate educational levels, incomes, and worship styles.

Through the Storm, Through the Night provides a lively overview to the history of African American religion, beginning with the birth of African Christianity amidst the Transatlantic slave trade, and tracing the story through its growth in America. Paul Harvey successfully uses the history of African American religion to portray the complexity and humanity of the African American experience.

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