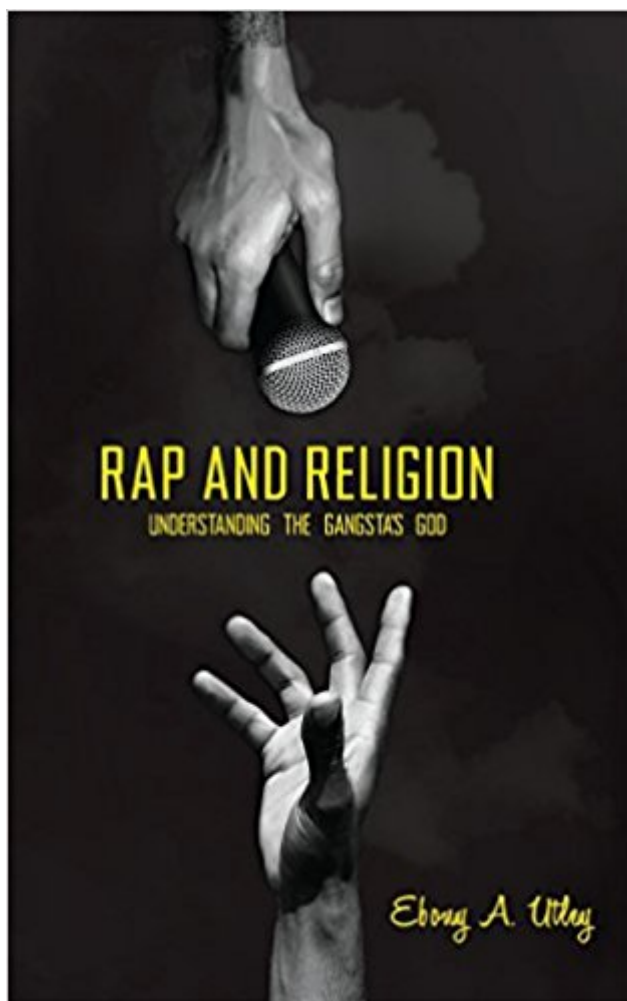


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# Rap And Religion: Understanding The Gangsta's God



## Synopsis

This book provides an enlightening, representative account of how rappers talk about God in their lyrics and why a sense of religion plays an intrinsic role within hip hop culture. A bibliography of cited sources on rap music and hip hop culture. An index of key terms and artists. A discography of rap songs with religious themes

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Rap and Religion is a compelling read. It will provoke the reader to examine their attitude to a genre that arguably has hegemony in popular culture. Utley vividly describes some of the video footage referred to, enabling the reader to follow the line of academic argument. But there are times when you will simply need to 'YouTube' a track. Utley enables the reader to recognize that the Hip Hop genre has reinterpreted a Jesus with a strong survival/elevation ethic as opposed to a liberation ethic, helping the gangsta 'to make it through' and embrace success. An outstanding book and a must-read for every academic and practitioner serious about engaging popular culture in an urban context." - Black Theology

"Utley . . . presents a unique study of the cultural and sociological context in which religion and hard-edged rap intersect, mainly from the mid 1990s to the present. Also, the book's laid-back prose offers a quick read. . . . Summing Up: Recommended." - Choice

[A]n important contribution to an understanding of how people mobilize cultural resources in ways that give meaning to their lives. Utley's writing is engaging and accessible, and is inviting to audiences for whom hip hop culture is more than an academic interest,

and rather a central aspect of their lived experience." - Rhetoric & Public Affairs

"A close reading of mainstream hip hop lyrics and artists of the last three decades, *Rap and Religion* uncovers the place where God, spirituality, and Christianity meet. Hip hop aficionados have long proclaimed that hip hop is a culture. If this is true, what is its spiritual philosophy? Ebony Utley offers a persuasive answer." (Bakari Kitwana, Author of *The Hip-Hop Generation*) "The intellectual range with which Utley explores the spiritual contours of rap and hip hop are perhaps only matched by the vocalic range of the lyricism she examines. In this fascinating, thought-provoking, experience-driven, and often encyclopedic journey through hip hop's multifaceted legacies, Utley makes a compelling case about rap and hip hop's spiritual relevance, leaving us both breathless and re-energized." (Ronald L. Jackson II, Author of *Scripting the Black Masculine Body: Identity, Discourse, and Racial Politics in Popular Media*) "Hip hop has not abandoned Jesus they have reinterpreted Jesus. Utley has done for us in this book what James Cone did for us in *The Spiritual and the Blues*. Her book like Dr. Cones' book is destined to be a classic." (Dr. Ralph C. Watkins, Author of *Hip Hop Redemption: Finding God in the Rhythm and the Rhymes* and *The Gospel Remix: Reaching the Hip Hop Generation*) "This book is a must-read for anyone who has interests in popular culture, biblical interpretation, or theological ethics; as well as a whole generation who has done incredible self-reflection and self-revelation and packaged it as rap." (Reverend Cheryl A. Kirk-Duggan, PhD, Professor of Religion, Shaw University Divinity School; Coauthor of *Wake Up!: Hip Hop, Christianity, and the Black Church*) "Rap and Religion is elegant, compelling, and desperately needed. Utley's bracing exploration of the godly and divine in rap music illuminates new, powerful, and poignant intersections between the politics of religion, race, gender, and commerce. A remarkable scholarly achievement, and a gift to hip hop fans everywhere." (Michael P. Jeffries, Author of *Thug Life: Race, Gender, and the Meaning of Hip-Hop*, Assistant Professor of American Studies, Wellesley College)

I found this text to be very intriguing. The author gives you a comprehensive breakdown of each major point she addresses in the chapter. I feel that she did an excellent job in explaining the role that God plays within the realm of hip-hop and how the influence of religion overall is a necessary part of the discussion of the evolution of contemporary music. Another feature of this book that I found interesting was the examples Utley used. She was able to keep audience's attention by relating the discussions of the chapters to popular artists and trends in today's society. For instance my favorite chapter was Chapter 3

“The Jesus Piece” where Utley used the story of Jesus to draw parallels between the depictions of the Son God in the Bible and depictions of urban youth that are shown in popular media. Here she suggested that the Jesus’s background shared so many commonalities with inner city youth that they often felt a kinship or an understanding of Jesus beyond that of a figure of eternal salvation. This whole concept of Jesus as a gangster and the support as articulated by Utley to me was astounding. Honestly, I don’t think that I will ever look at music or religion the same after reading this book.

I really enjoyed this book. It was well written in discussing the topics of rap and religion. I was highly pleased with the knowledge that came upon reading it. The descriptions of each topic were well thought out and helped to add to my own knowledge of rap and religion. In reading the topics I found Chapter two to be my favorite, "Doin it for Daddy". with being a female and liking hip hop I really learned from these topics. I also enjoyed how she incorporated the most well-known artist into the story which helped me staying intrigued. It’s always good to have great examples to show the reader. In all, this was a great book and I recommend it to everyone who wants more knowledge on rap or religion. It’s a great edition for both male and female.

Just another over-educated person trying to speak on behalf of the streets, and failing... miserably.

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