

The black churches can be assumed that Christianity shaped slave culture in several ways such as developing a common bond among slaves. At some time, it could also be argued that slavery altered Christianity in various ways including the formation of Methodist and Baptist denominations. However, these were not the only manners in which both cultures influenced each other. Black converts dramatically increased the number of Christians in the New World. The ideas instilled in slaves by Christianity gave some slaves thoughts of rebellion and influenced African American music and dance. .

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the majority of slave brought to the new world were young men who were mostly not especially religious. Very few Africans had previously obtained Christian beliefs prior to being shipped from Africa to the New World. Most slaves were, in fact, followers of one of the numerous native African religions which whites often categorized as heathen. Because of the vast range of beliefs, it was extremely difficult for religion to bond Africans together in America. It wasn't until the 1790s that whites even attempted to convert slaves to Christianity. Religions that derived from West Africa, where many American slaves came from, depicted few distinctions between the palpable and divine worlds and believed that water was a symbol of life and hope. With water having an importance in Christianity in the sacrament of baptism, it's possible that the admiration for water may have inclined slaves to acknowledge Christianity.

About a quarter of the Methodist and Baptist churches were formed by blacks by the 1790s and slave owners dreaded that Christianity could result in insubordinate slaves. As a matter of fact, of the three major uprisings by slaves, converted slaves played key parts. Leaders of Gabriel's Rebellion used the biblical story of the Israelites to show slaves that even against overpowering statistics they could triumph. After reading the Bible, Denmark Vessey accumulated black followers of which most belonged to Charleston's African Methodist Church to seize Charleston. Nevertheless, these rebellions motivated Protestant missionaries to convert more slaves by saying a Christian slave is better than a bitter slave. As an outcome, the amount of black Baptists doubled between 1845 and 1860.

Christianity was the first big step to integration. While slaves set in segregated sections, churches were the most interracial institutions in the Old South. Although ministers did go out of the way to remind slaves that public equality was a far different thing than divine equality. Blacks and Whites often listened to the same sermons but could draw split ideas about them. Privately some slave construed Christianity as a liberation religion, but generally Christianity didn't turn slaves into radicals.

What Christianity did do for Africans was inspire them to express their feelings in the form of dance and music. These slave dances and music were incorporated into black Methodist and Baptist churches. By making music from whatever they had on hand, slaves sang spirituals of religious songs. They would sing psalms and hymns while praying or working in the field which masters approved of because they thought that the songs displayed the slaves as cheerful.

In conclusion, religion in the Old South and the slaves who resided there had a symbiotic relationship. Without the influence of the church slaves would not have developed into their distinctive style of music and dance which later resulted into many of the brands of music we listen to nowadays. Moreover, if not for slave culture there would be no Baptist and Methodist denominations today. It is for these reasons and many more that it can be argued that Christianity and slave culture affected each other in dramatic ways. It can be assumed that Christianity shaped slave culture in several ways such as developing a common bond among slaves. At some time, it could also be argued that slavery altered Christianity in various ways including the formation of Methodist and Baptist denominations. However, these were not the only manners in which both cultures influenced each other. Black converts dramatically increased the number of Christians in the New World. The ideas instilled in slaves by Christianity gave some slaves thoughts of rebellion and influenced African American music and dance. Not to mention the church was a major supporter of the proslavery argument which conveyed slavery as a positive thing during the antebellum period of the United States.

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