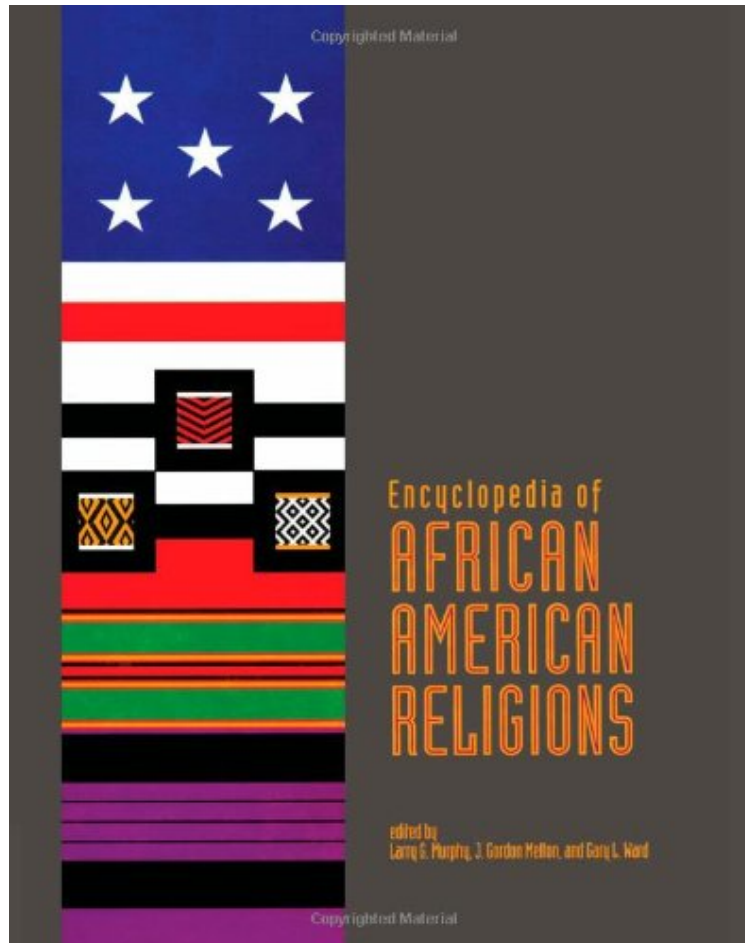


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From Routledge : Encyclopedia of African American Religions (Religious Information Systems) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Encyclopedia of African American Religions (Religious Information Systems):

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Preceded by three introductory essays and a chronology of major events in black religious history from 1618 to 1991, this A-Z encyclopedia includes three types of entries: * Biographical sketches of 773 African American religious leaders* 341 entries on African American denominations and religious organizations (including white churches with significant black memberships and educational institutions)* Topical articles on important aspects of African

American religious life (e.g., African American Christians during the Colonial Era, Music in the African American Church)

From Booklist J. Gordon Melton, one of the editors of this encyclopedia, has compiled numerous reference works on religion in the U.S., the best known of which is the *Encyclopedia of American Religions* (3d ed., Gale, 1989). Coeditors Murphy and Gary L. Ward are affiliated respectively with Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary and the Institute for the Study of American Religion, which is headed by Melton. Approximately 30 contributors prepared articles devoted to aspects of African American religions. The encyclopedia includes three types of entries: biographical sketches of 773 African American religious leaders; 341 entries on African American denominations and religious organizations (including white churches with significant black memberships and educational institutions); and topical articles on important aspects of African American religious life (e.g., African American Christians during the Colonial Era, Music in the African American Church). The biographical sketches range from a paragraph to several pages for such major figures as Martin Luther King. Entries for the larger African American denominations are likewise several pages in length, as are most of the topical articles. The alphabetically arranged entries are preceded by three introductory essays and a chronology of major events in black religious history from 1618 to 1991. A bibliography of 303 major texts on African American religion follows the entries. Most of the entries conclude with a list of references specifically related to that subject. A directory section provides the current addresses and telephone numbers of the national headquarters of the churches and organizations covered in the encyclopedia. In addition to the name and subject index, a "Biographical Cross-Index by Religious Tradition" lists all persons whose biographical sketches appear in the encyclopedia under the names of the denominations with which they have been associated. While the introduction makes reference to "30 or so major topical entries," examination of the alphabetical list of entries and the index identified only about half that number. A separate listing of the topical articles would have been useful. The *Directory of African American Religious Bodies* [RBB D 15 91] claimed to be the first comprehensive reference work exclusively devoted to the African American religious experience. Although there is some duplication with the book under review, the two titles are complementary in significant ways. The unique contribution of the *Encyclopedia* is the biographies of religious leaders. The *Directory*, on the other hand, covers almost three times as many religious bodies and organizations, and users of the *Encyclopedia* are referred to the *Directory* for "more detailed listings of names and addresses within the African American religious community." The *Directory* was recommended for "larger academic and public libraries and for other libraries where there is interest in black religious bodies." The *Encyclopedia* is appropriate for a broader spectrum of libraries. Highly recommended for scholars and researchers, or for anyone seriously interested in African American religion. Choice A monumental achievement and one that is essential to a core reference collection in African-American religion. *American Reference Books Annual*