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***When “The Family” is Not Enough: The Social Surround of Black Evangelical Religious Solidarity***

Evangelicalism in the United States is often studied in terms of evangelicals’ emphasis of the heteropatriarchal nuclear family (“the family”) as an ideal model for social organization, a site for moral anxiety, and a platform for political mobilization. Nonetheless, investigating the social dynamics of contemporary evangelicalism in terms of “the family” misses the broader networks of sociality that make evangelical productions of “the family” possible. In the midst of the ongoing pathologization of black family systems by family values stakeholders, studying black evangelical religiosity in terms of “the family” runs the risk of rendering black evangelicalism as a failed or an assimilative religious project. A closer look at black evangelical ideals and practices of relational spirituality reveals a broader diasporic and religious-based reckoning of kinship shaping black evangelicals’ family and community memberships. As a result of my ethnographic collaboration with the congregants of Corinthian Bible Chapel and Dixon Bible Chapel (CBC and DBC) of an Afro-Caribbean and African American evangelical church network in the Atlanta metropolitan area (SGBA) in 2008, I argue that black evangelicals used spiritual kinship—discourses and practices of relatedness produced by “church brothers and sisters,” “spiritual mothers,” “spiritual fathers,” and “prayer partners”—as a counter-hegemonic discourse of family that reified *and* critiqued the enclosures of the popular trope of “the family” associated with mainstream U.S. evangelical religiosity.