

Karen McCarthy Brown

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"When religious institutions ostracize certain groups, the rejected often respond by creating alternative religious practices to counter the prejudices of the mainstream institutions. Perhaps we in the Newark Project can help the country become more tolerant of those persons and their practices."

Karen McCarthy Brown

Areas of expertise

- Urban and Immigrant Religions
- Religion as a form of social resistance
- Religion and politics of Haiti

Topics in the News

- Rise of Pentecostalism among Hispanics
- African Americans and the Church
- Sexuality, gender, and the Church

Biography

Karen McCarthy Brown is a leading expert on religious practices carried on outside of religious institutions, a major component of contemporary urban religious life. Brown contends that, as a result of recent immigration patterns, American religious pluralism is not likely to articulate itself in familiar congregational models. Since 1993, she has led Drew University's Newark Project, a field-based education program linking ethnographic research, curriculum development, advocacy, and community organizing. The Newark Project seeks to understand and document how "living religions" are adopted—and adapted—by individuals and communities trying to practice their religious traditions and affirm their identities, especially when these same people are ignored or condemned by traditional church, synagogue or temple teachings. Brown is on the editorial boards of *The North Star*, an Online Journal of African-American Religious History, *The Boston Healing Landscape*, a Ford project, and *Meridians*, an interdisciplinary journal focused on feminism, race and transnationalism.

Resources by this expert

- *Mama Lola: A Vodou Priestess in Brooklyn* (Univ. of California Press, 2001, 2nd ed.)
- *Tracing the Spirit: Ethnographic Essays on Haitian Art* (University of Washington Press, 1995)

Recent Interviews & Articles

- *Los Angeles Times*, December 28, 2002, "You Better Believe Federal Faith-Based Funding Is a Bad Idea"
- *Morning Advocate* (Baton Rouge, LA.), December 8, 2001, "Voodoo priestess or nun?"
- *Chicago Tribune*, January 21, 2000, "A Return to Roots"
- *The New York Times*, December 31, 1998, "Where the Spirits Feel at Home"

Organizational links for this expert

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