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**Topic:**

Doomed from the beginning? An examination of 19<sup>th</sup> Century Afro-Jamaican Missionaries in Africa

**Abstract:**

In the scholarship on colonization, Christianization, and the Black Atlantic experience, some much needed attention has been given to experiences of formerly enslaved Africans who returned to Africa beginning in the late eighteenth century. Within this discourse however, the contributions of African Americans, including those who went as missionaries, loom large, with very little attention given to the other former slaves who were also involved in the return to Africa. In this paper I will seek to interrogate the stories of these other former slaves, specifically the Afro-Jamaican missionaries to Africa in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. My examination will engage the following questions: What were the factors in Jamaica that shaped their lives, identity, faith, and gave rise to their missionary fervor? What were the different avenues that were available for conducting mission work? What were their interactions with and perceptions of European missionaries and indigenous people and how were these shaped by their Jamaican socialization processes? How did these Afro-Jamaican missionaries navigate discrimination and other forms of oppression? What were the experiences of female Afro-Jamaican missionaries? In what ways did they conform to the prescribed social norms of the time? In what ways were they revolutionary or countercultural? Extricating these stories from the shadows enables us to recover some of the additional linkages that shape the Black Atlantic experience, give voice to the witness of these ancestors, and elucidate the ramifications of this legacy for the Jamaican church – both on the island and in the diaspora.

**Bio:**

Dr. Janice McLean-Farrell is the Dirk Romeyn Assistant Professor of Metro-Urban Ministry and Assistant Dean of Doctoral Studies at New Brunswick Theological Seminary (NBTS). Her research areas include Christianity in the Caribbean, migration, urban immigrant youth, parenting Afro-Caribbean youth in the US; immigrant churches in the Diaspora, marriage and sexuality among Black immigrant youth in NYC; and women and migration. Dr. McLean-Farrell is the author of numerous articles and *West Indian Pentecostals: Living their Faith in New York and London* (Bloomsbury, 2016). She also serves as the co-chair of World Christianity unit of the American Academy of Religion.