



# **Crowns: Portraits of Black Women in Church Hats**

*Michael Cunningham, Craig Marberry*

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Countless black women would rather attend church naked than hatless. For these women, a church hat, flamboyant as it may be, is no mere fashion accessory; it's a cherished African American custom, one observed with boundless passion by black women of various religious denominations. A woman's hat speaks long before its wearer utters a word. It's what Deirdre Guion calls "hattitude...there's a little more strut in your carriage when you wear a nice hat. There's something special about you." If a hat says a lot about a person, it says even more about a people—the customs they observe, the symbols they prize, and the fashions they fancy.

Photographer Michael Cunningham beautifully captures the self-expressions of women of all ages—from young glamorous women to serene but stylish grandmothers. Award-winning journalist Craig Marberry provides an intimate look at the women and their lives. Together they've captured a captivating custom, this wearing of church hats, a peculiar convergence of faith and fashion that keeps the Sabbath both holy and glamorous.

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