

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Reverend Emmanuel McCall

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## Overview of the Collection

<b>Repository:</b>	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
<b>Creator:</b>	McCall, Emmanuel L.
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Emmanuel McCall,
<b>Dates:</b>	September 25, 2004
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2004
<b>Physical Description:</b>	6 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:28:53).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Pastor and theologian Reverend Emmanuel McCall (1936 - ) served on the faculty at Southern Baptist Seminary, where he developed the Black Church Studies program that was later used by three SBC seminaries. He also served as visiting professor at theological seminaries in Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, West Africa, and Emory University. McCall was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on September 25, 2004, in Atlanta, Georgia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2004_181
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Pastor, scholar, and author Reverend Emmanuel McCall was born on February 4, 1936, in Sharon, Pennsylvania. As a native of Sharon, McCall matriculated at the public schools of West Shenango in Township, Pennsylvania. After graduating high school, he attended Simmons Bible College, University of Louisville, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and Emory University. McCall holds four degrees including a doctorate of ministry from Emory University. He also has honorary degrees from Simmons Bible College and United Theological Seminary in Louisiana.

McCall was a faculty member at Southern Baptist Seminary from 1970 until 1996, where he developed the Black Church Studies program that was later used by three SBC seminaries. He also served as visiting professor at theological seminaries in Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, West Africa, and Emory University. McCall has written four books and has contributed chapters to thirty-one others. He has also written for denominational and theological magazines. McCall has served on the board of trustees for the Interdenominational Theological Center since 1978. He also served on the board of the Atlanta University Center, the board of governors of the Georgia Association of Pastoral Care, the Ethics Commission of the Baptist World Alliance, and the Arrangements Committee for the International Summit of Baptists Against Racism and Ethnic Conflict, just to name a few. He has received many honors and recognitions, such as the E.Y. Mullins Distinguished Denominational Service Award in 1990, which is the highest recognition given by the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. In 1999, he was inducted in the Morehouse College "M.L. King Board of Preachers," and he also received the James H. Costen Award from the Interdenominational Theological Center.

McCall is married to Emma Marie McCall. They are the parents of two children and five grandchildren.

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# Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Reverend Emmanuel McCall was conducted by Jodi Merriday on September 25, 2004, in Atlanta, Georgia, and was recorded on 6 Betacame SP videocassettes. Pastor and theologian Reverend Emmanuel McCall (1936 - ) served on the faculty at Southern Baptist Seminary, where he developed the Black Church Studies program that was later used by three SBC seminaries. He also served as visiting professor at theological seminaries in Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, West Africa, and Emory University.

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# Restrictions

## Restrictions on Access

Restrictions may be applied on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of The HistoryMakers®.

## Restrictions on Use

All use of materials and use credits must be pre-approved by The HistoryMakers®. Appropriate credit must be given. Copyright is held by The HistoryMakers®.

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# Related Material

Information about the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview, as well as correspondence with the interview subject is stored electronically both on The HistoryMakers® server and in two databases maintained by The HistoryMakers®, though this information is not included in this finding aid.

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# Controlled Access Terms

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

## Persons:

McCall, Emmanuel L.

Merriday, Jodi (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

## Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

McCall, Emmanuel L.--Interviews

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# Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

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## The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

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Baptists.

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Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

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### Occupations:

Pastor

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Theologian

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### HistoryMakers® Category:

ReligionMakers

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## Administrative Information

### Custodial History

Interview footage was recorded by The HistoryMakers®. All rights to the interview have been transferred to The HistoryMakers® by the interview subject through a signed interview release form. Signed interview release forms have been deposited with Jenner & Block, LLP, Chicago.

### Preferred Citation

The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Emmanuel McCall, September 25, 2004. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

### Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 5/30/2023 by The HistoryMakers® staff. The finding aid was created adhering to the following standards: DACS, AACR2, and the Oral History Cataloging Manual (Matters 1995).

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## Other Finding Aid

A Microsoft Access contact database and a FileMaker Pro tracking database, both maintained by The HistoryMakers®, keep track of the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview.

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## Detailed Description of the Collection

### Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Emmanuel McCall, Section A2004\_181\_001\_001,  
TRT: 0:28:20 ?

Reverend Emmanuel McCall was born on February 4, 1936 in Sharon, Pennsylvania. His mother, Myra Mae Preston McCall, was born in Wheatland, Pennsylvania in 1918. Her father was an African American steelworker; her mother was a Cherokee woman who cooked and cleaned at the mills. McCall's father, George McCall, was born in Cheraw, South Carolina in 1913 and was of Gullah heritage. When McCall's father was fourteen years old, he escaped being lynched and resettled in West Middlesex, Pennsylvania with his adoptive father, a preacher who later gave McCall his name, Emmanuel Lemuel, and predicted that he would be called to ministry. McCall grew up in a farming community in Pennsylvania; his family were the only African Americans in the area. The others were recent European immigrants. Neighbors often helped each other with farm work and shared foods from their various ethnic communities. He did not experience racial hostility or segregation until he traveled to Louisville, Kentucky to attend Simmons Bible College.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Emmanuel McCall, Section A2004\_181\_001\_002,  
TRT: 0:29:10 ?

Reverend Emmanuel McCall and his two younger siblings attended Stoney Hill, a one-room schoolhouse in rural Pennsylvania. His teacher taught seven grades over the course of each day, rotating between students and subjects in fifteen minute intervals. After seventh grade, he attended West Middlesex Joint Consolidated School in Pennsylvania; his knowledge about butchering farm animals gave him an edge in his biology classes. Fellow churchgoers in Wheatland, Pennsylvania served as McCall's role models. When he was eight, he felt a call to ministry. At age fourteen, he was presented to the church by his pastor and learned of his adoptive grandfather's prediction that he would be a preacher. McCall studied English and literature at the University of Louisville. After graduating, he enrolled at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, taught at Simmons Bible College and married. In 1960, he began pastoring 28th Street Baptist Church where he remained for eight years before moving to Atlanta, Georgia in 1968.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Emmanuel McCall, Section A2004\_181\_001\_003,  
TRT: 0:28:50 ?

Reverend Emmanuel McCall attended The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. He was the only African American on campus in 1959. There were other black students from the Caribbean and Africa, but they were given preferential treatment. Attempting to combat racism, white classmates insisted that he and other students of color be allowed to remain in the Baptist Student Union. After seminary, he started an interracial ministers' conference with John Claypool and became its second president. In 1968, he became the first African American to obtain an executive position in the Southern Baptist Convention. He was also hired at the Home Board Mission and worked there until 1991. McCall established Christian Fellowship Baptist Church in College Park, Georgia after the mismanagement at Union Baptist Church in Atlanta caused a large number of parishioners to leave. McCall was asked to pastor the new church, which grew from 219 on the first Sunday to more than 1,640 at the time of the interview.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Emmanuel McCall, Section A2004\_181\_001\_004,  
TRT: 0:28:50 ?

Reverend Emmanuel McCall led his first congregation from 1960 to 1968, 28th Street Baptist Church in Louisville, Kentucky. The secretary at Simmons Bible

College recommended him after a series of problems with their previous pastor. His wife led the choir and he was able to grow the congregation significantly. McCall decided to complete his doctorate in ministry while still working for the Home Mission Board in Atlanta. Balancing both was challenging, but he was able to recruit a fellow classmate to join the Home Mission Board. He graduated from Emory University in 1976. In 1991, he unexpectedly returned to ministry. After helping to establish Christian Fellowship Baptist Church in College Park, he was asked to pastor it. As pastor, he found it necessary to rebuild trust with the congregation, who had left a church where the pastor misused their money. McCall talks about his pedagogy as a pastor and educator, his thoughts on gospel rap, changes in the black church since the 1980s and books he has written.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Emmanuel McCall, Section A2004\_181\_001\_005, TRT: 0:31:03 ?

Reverend Emmanuel McCall travelled extensively throughout the Americas, Asia, Europe, Africa, and Australia for his work with the Home Mission Board. On McCall's first trip to Africa, he went to Liberia. Prior to him, the only Southern Baptists that many had seen there were white. He was suspected to be a spy for the CIA, but eventually became an advocate in addressing Liberians' concerns regarding poor treatment of local people by missionaries. At the time of the interview, he had a number of critiques for the Southern Baptist Convention leadership and the politics associated with fundamentalism. McCall does not think that such resources as the African Heritage Bible or ethnic depictions of Jesus provide accurate historical representations. He describes his hopes and concerns for the African American community and reflects upon his life, legacy, and how he would like to be remembered. McCall concludes by offering a message to future generations and narrating his photographs.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Emmanuel McCall, Section A2004\_181\_001\_006, TRT: 0:02:40 ?

Reverend Emmanuel McCall narrates his photographs.