

Commentary: The radical, revolutionary faith of Christmas spirituals

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There are about 6,000 known spirituals, sometimes called “sorrow songs.” This extraordinary body of literature contains multiple sub-sets, none more potent, more poignant, more powerful than those that deal with the Christmas narratives.



Robert DardenThe stories in Luke’s gospel about the birth of Jesus resonated with the unnamed and unknown slave poets in a profoundly personal way, perhaps more so than any other in Scripture, save the crucifixion. Perhaps it was because the African-American slaves of the 19th century were strangers in an appallingly strange land, landless refugees, constantly on the move, helpless pawns in sweeping geo-political games. They were foreigners, aliens, living a precarious existence in occupied territory ruled by a harsh dictatorship that, literally, considered them to be worth less than cattle.

[Read the full column in the Dallas Morning News.](#)

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