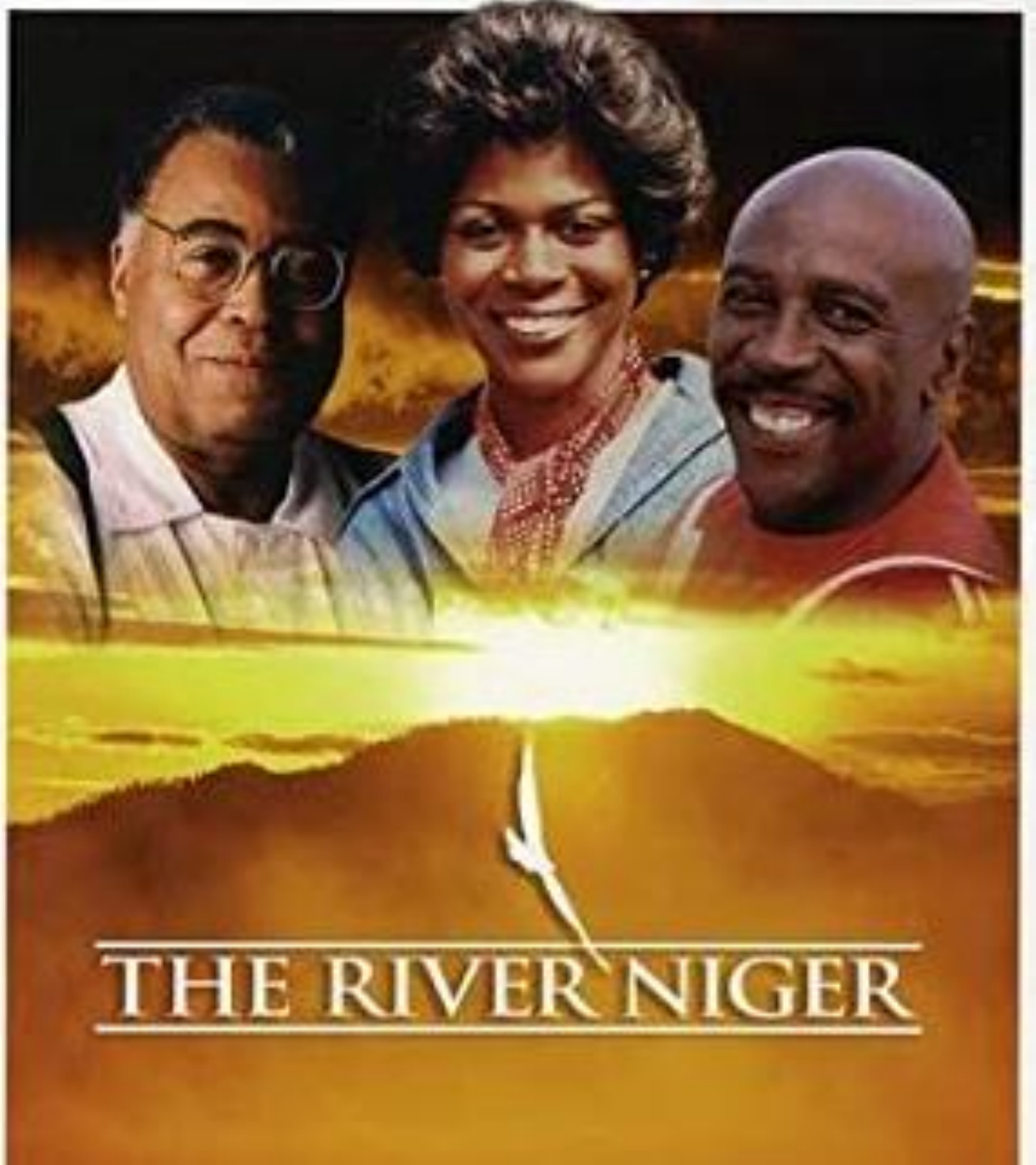


REMEMBERING CICELY WITH THE RIVER NIGER

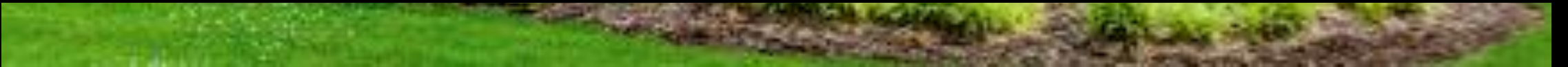
A Sermon By:
Bishop Andy C. Lewter





I AM A *1976* GRADUATE OF

OBERLIN COLLEGE IN OBERLIN, OHIO



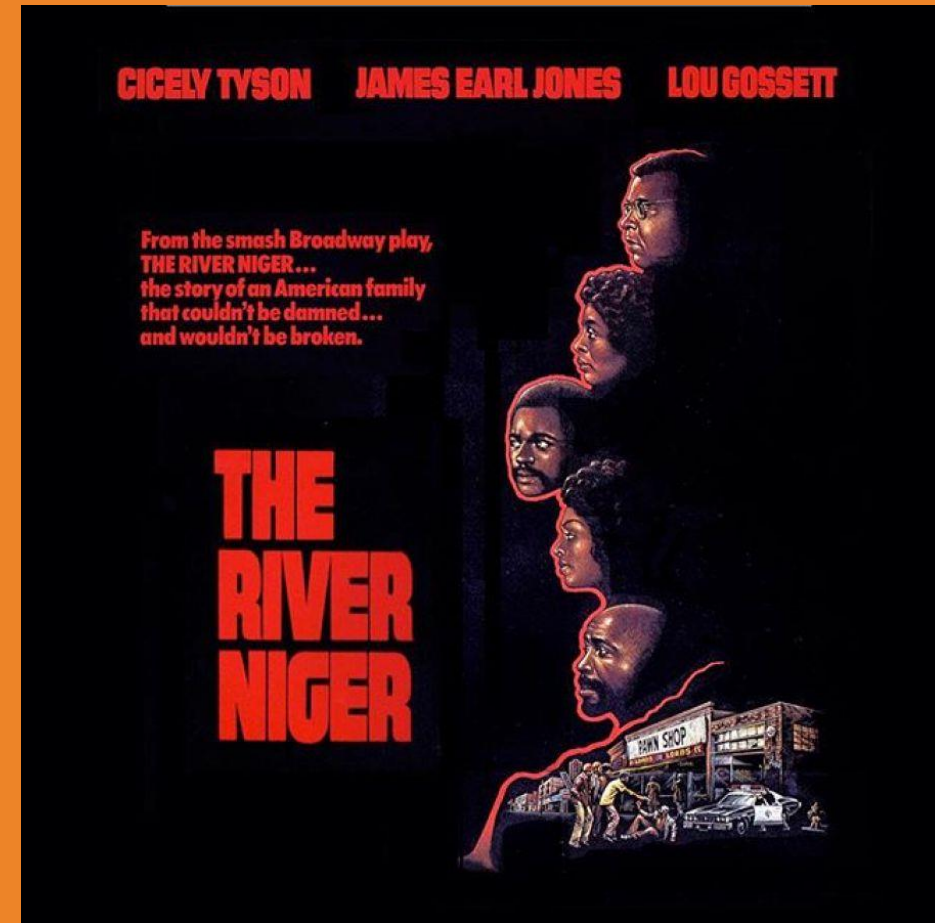


OBERLIN OPERATED A RATHER UNIQUE
ACADEMIC SCHEDULE WHICH INCLUDED A
FALL SEMESTER, A SPRING SEMESTER BRIDGED BY
A WINTER TERM

**This meant that
once we broke for
the Christmas break
we did not resume
regular classes
until the first week
in February.**



IN JANUARY OF 1976 I
ASSEMBLED A CAST OF
CHARACTERS THAT
STAYED ON CAMPUS
DURING THE WINTER
TERM TO REHEARSE
THE PRODUCTION OF
THE PLAY, "THE RIVER
NIGER".



The River Niger

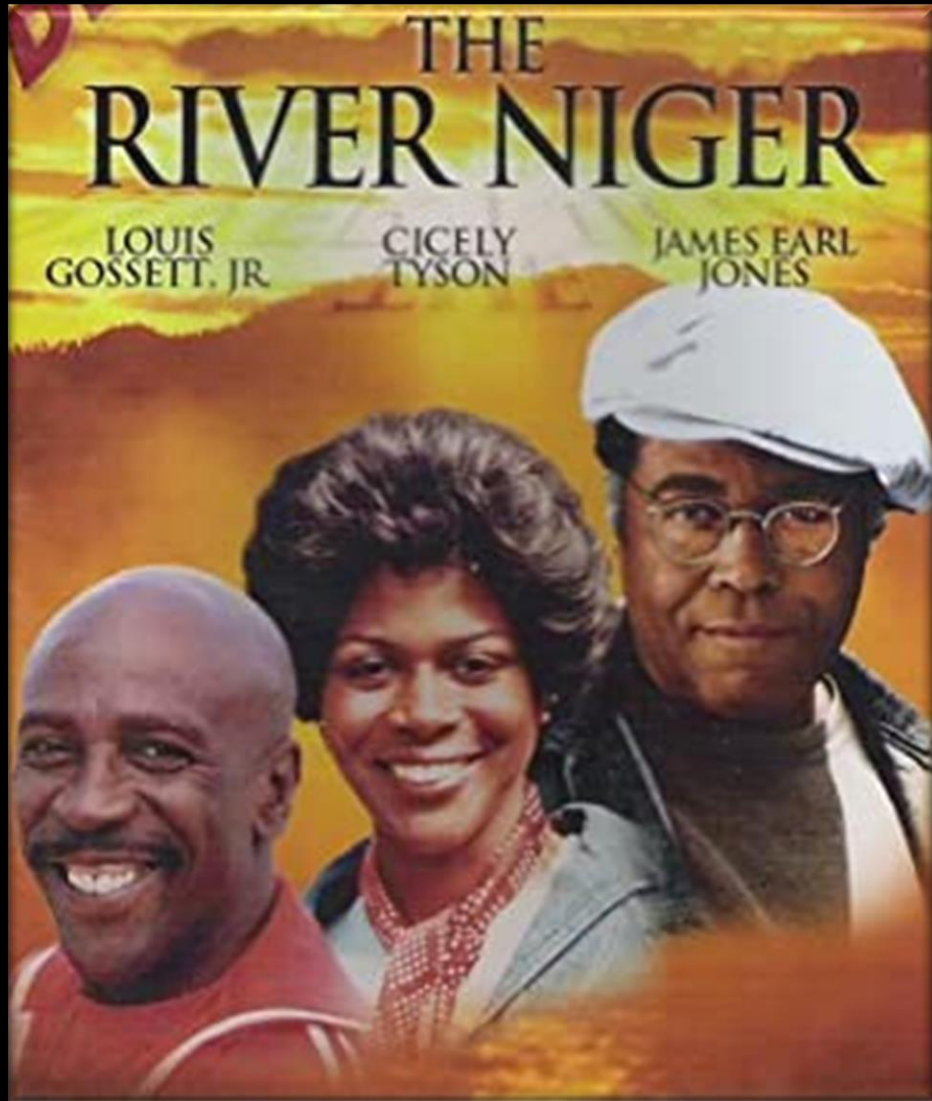
A play by JOSEPH A. WALKER



**THE RIVER NIGER
WAS WRITTEN BY
JOSEPH WALKER
IN 1972**



IN 1976 I DIRECTED A STAGE PERFORMANCE
OF THE PLAY AS MY SENIOR YEAR
WINTER TERM PROJECT

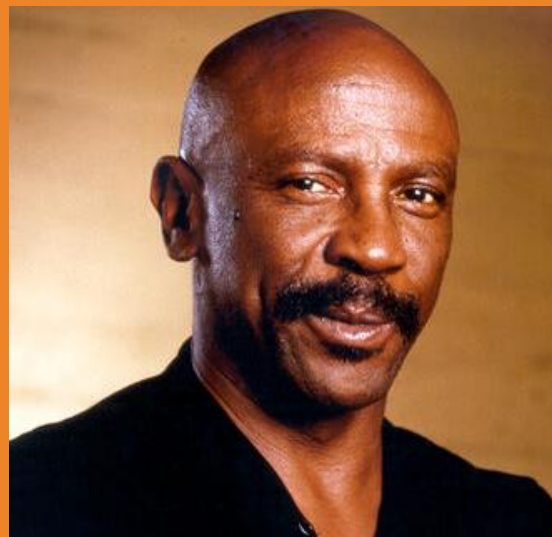
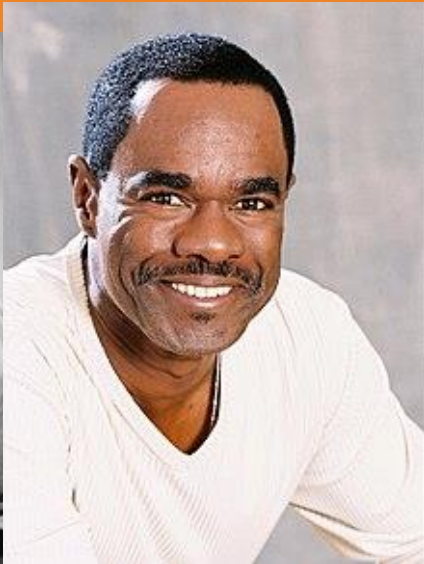


**YOU CAN IMAGINE
THEN HOW
EXCITED I WAS
WHEN LATER THAT
YEAR, 1976 A FILM
VERSION OF THE
PLAY WAS
RELEASED**

WITH THE
RECENT DEATH
OF **CICELY TYSON**
MY MIND RACED
BACK TO THE
PLAY, *THE RIVER*
NIGER



**THE FILM VERSION OF THE PLAY INCLUDED
JAMES EARL JONES AS THE FATHER FIGURE OF
THE FAMILY, LOU GOSSETT AS THE FATHER
GOOD FRIEND AND DOCTOR,
GLYNN TURMAN AS THE FATHER'S
SON JEFF**





BUT THE STANDOUT
PERFORMANCE OF
THE FILM WAS
TURNED IN BY
CICELY TYSON WHO
PORTRAYED THE
MOTHER FIGURE,
MATTIE



**PART OF THE PLOT IS THE
FATHER'S REPEATED
ATTEMPTS TO
CONSTRUCT A POEM
THAT HE HAS BEEN
WORKING ON THAT HE
DOES NOT COMPLETE
UNTIL THE NEAR END OF
THE PLAY**

Listen to a portion of the poem



THE RIVER NIGER

I am the River Niger - hear my waters!
I wiggle and stream and run.
I am totally flexible.
I am the River Niger - hear my waters!
My waters are the first sperm of the world.
When the earth was but a faceless whistling embryo
Life burst from my liquid kernels like popcorn.
Hear my waters - rushing and popping in muffled finger drum
staccato.

It is life you hear, stretching its limbs in my waters -
I am the River Niger! Hear my waters!
When the Earth Mother cracked into continents
I was vomited from the cold belly of the Atlantic
To slip slyly into Africa
From the underside of her brow
I see no -
Hear no -
Speak no evil,
But I know,
I gossip with the crocodile
And rub elbows with the river horse
I have swapped morbid jokes with the Hyena
And heard his dry cackle at twilight.
I see no -
Hear no -
Speak no evil,
But I know,

I am the River Niger - hear my waters!
Hear, I say, hear my waters, man!
They is Mammy-tammys, baby.
I have lapped at the pugnacious hips of brown mamas.
Have tapped on the doors of their honeydews, yeah!
I have shimmered like sequins.

THE POEM GOES
ON TO
FUNCTION AS A
DESCRIPTION OF
THE BLACK
COMMUNITY

**THE BASIC
UNDERLYING
OBJECTIVE OF THE
FATHER FIGURE IS
TO FIND A
BATTLEFIELD SO
THAT HE CAN BE A
GREAT AFRICAN
WARRIOR**





**HE OF COURSE FINDS THE BATTLEFIELD HE IS
LOOKING FOR BY TAKING BLAME FOR THE
CONFLICT WITH THE POLICE AND THE SHOOTING
OF AN UNDERCOVER POLICE OFFICER**

**ALL OF US NEED TO FIND WORTHY
BATTLEFIELDS TO DEVOTE OUR
ENERGY AND TIME TO**






**THE BOOK OF FIRST
SAMUEL DESCRIBES A
BATTLEFIELD WHERE
DAVID FACES AND
DEFEATS AN ENEMY
BY THE NAME OF
GOLIATH**

THE BOOK OF FIRST SAMUEL DESCRIBES A BATTLEFIELD WHERE DAVID FACES AND DEFEATS AN ENEMY BY THE NAME OF GOLIATH



**In the end,
the victory of
David on the
battlefield
opened the
door for a life
of prosperity
and blessings
for David**





**IN LIKE FASHION, FINDING OUR
PURPOSE IS THE PATH TO OUR
BLESSINGS**

THANK YOU
... for watching!