From Resilience to Resignation: 
Women’s Religious Agency in the Face of Food Insecurity in North Carolina

Annie Hardison-Moody
NCSU Department of Agricultural and Human Sciences

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Recent debates about increasing work requirements for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps) have played on long-standing U.S. traditions of stigmatizing people for receiving help from the government. Drawing on five years of interviews and engagement around foodwork with 124 black, white, and Latina mothers as part of Voices into Action: The Families, Food, and Health Project, this talk examines the ways that women interpreted experiences of food insecurity and poverty through belief in a God who would “make a way” despite hardship. In particular, this talk will track changes in ways women talk about “making a way” over time, focusing on how this sense of resilience or hope shifted after the 2016 election. For some women, the sense of God’s presence as they attempted to “make a way” shifted from a posture of resilience to a position of resignation as they navigated intense worries and anxieties about the future.