

## Teaching unit 15: Grammar and code-switching in African-American English

### Transcript

The extract below is from a sermon by an African-American preacher named Dr. Claudette Copeland. In an early part of the sermon she addresses the experiences of her audience, which is mostly comprised of women who are themselves preachers or work in churches:

There's a secret legacy of depression among who women who preach.	1
It's acted out in private moments when we cry alone.	2
It tells on us in public opportunities as we try to outrun and outperform	3
and out-succeed and obscure our personal life sorrows.	4
We make extravagant demands on our congregations.	5
So they can buy us bigger toys and bigger things.	6
So we can feel like we're loved because of what our people did for us.	7

Later in her sermon, she shifts to a humorous personal experience in which she ill-advisedly goes out for a walk in an unfamiliar city and suddenly encountered three yard dogs. She delivers the story in the style of a stand-up comic, with long pauses for dramatic effect and laughter from the audience. (She eventually uses the comic incident to relate to a Biblical story that is concerned with facing threats boldly and with courage rather than running in fear.):

You can tell the difference between somebody's pet and a yard dog.	8
Pet been taken care of.	9
Pet ribs ain't showing.	10
Pet don't have no mange on him.	11

This extract is from:

Kortenhoven, Andrea. 2017. 'Why are you here? Stylistic variation in the construction of a preaching woman persona.' Doctoral dissertation, Stanford University.