

AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH

THE COLORFUL HISTORY OF A PEOPLE

(reprinted from The Palm and A Echoes February, 2010, Issue #2)

February has been designated as African American History month, and over the past number of years in African American churches, members celebrate the accomplishments and contributions of African Americans to the church, to the country, and to the world. The church, as well as our country, are indeed aware of the contributions of a diversified people in the nation, and in the churches more and more congregations are becoming diversified. After listening to the Mormon Tabernacle Choir pre-sent an evening of Negro Spirituals the other night, I thought that it would be interesting to see some areas of worship that different races of people have made an impact upon in Christianity-- from the Old Testament, the New Testament and in our contemporary society. From the book of Jeremiah, a man named Ebed-Melech, a Cushite, saved Jeremiah from death by lifting him up from a cistern. From the New Testament we find in the book of Luke that Simon of Cyrene carried the cross for Jesus. In the book of Acts we find that Philip baptized a eunuch from Ethiopia.

In the United States of America we see that the slaves and their descendants have also

made some great contributions to the growth of this country and have given a lot of input in the religious development of this great nation. From the field of music we have the Negro spirituals, gospel music, and in the greater society we have jazz other popular music as well. Most Americans are aware of African contributions to the medical field as well as the scientific field. For instance, George Washington Carver unlocked the mystery of the peanut. Paul Laurence Dunbar (June 27, 1872– February 9, 1906) was a seminal American poet of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The first clock to be made in America was created by a black man--Benjamin Baneker—and he also wore many other hats: as farmer, mathematician, astronomer, author and land surveyor.

Dr. Charles Drew was the inventor of the Blood Bank. It's impossible to determine how many hundreds of thousands of people would have lost their lives without the contributions of African-American inventor, Dr. Charles Drew. This physician, researcher and surgeon revolutionized the understanding of blood plasma – leading to the invention of blood banks. Drew excelled from early on in both intellectual and athletic pursuits. After becoming a doctor and

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working as a college instructor, Drew went to Columbia University to do his Ph.D. on blood storage. He completed a thesis titled "Banked Blood" that detailed a method of separating and storing plasma, and allowing it to be dehydrated for later use. It was the first time Columbia awarded a doctorate to an African-American.

In 1950, the Norwegian Nobel Committee awarded the Nobel Peace Prize to the first non-white person, the African-American and United Nations official, Ralph Bunche. He received the Peace Prize for his efforts as mediator between Arabs and Jews in the Israeli-Arab war in 1948-1949. These efforts resulted in armistice agreements between the new state of Israel and four of its Arab neighbors: Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.

Over the centuries, many African Americans have distinguished themselves in the areas of entertainment, music—and even preaching! I'm sure we'll never forget Sidney Poitier's commanding performances in "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner" and "Lilies of the Field". And people like Marion Anderson, Ella Fitzgerald, Sammy Davis, Jr., Lena Horne Bill Robinson, and Denzel Washington easily come to mind. We also cannot forget Duke Ellington, Count Basie, John Coltrane, Billie Holiday, Jester Hairston, and others. Some of them had very tragic lives,



but we cannot forget the gifts they gave to the world.

Some of the outstanding preachers have included men and women like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Joseph Lowery, Sojourner Truth, Dr. Ella Mitchell, Adam Clayton Powell, Elder Seymour (who started the Azusa Street Revival) and his wife, and many others.

God is no respecter of persons, and he distributes gifts as He chooses. As we enter into this period of time, let us be thankful for the great part African Americans have played in building this country. And let us remember that a verse of the chorus in the song "We Shall Overcome" is black and white together... So it is written, so let it be done...

During this month, we will try to use as many multi-cultural worship tools as we can—songs, poems, writings, quotations, etc. This is to make us aware of the rich and colorful history of all our people, whether they be Caucasian (European), African American, African, Hispanic, Native American or Caribbean.

Pastor James Isaacs



Global Women's Project Cultivating Gratitude in Children?

By Carrie Eikler

From the e-Links Newsletter October 2011

What does gratitude mean to you? What does it DO to you?

For me, it churns up my insides... but in a good way. It is a stirring, a turning. It is a cultivating of my inward parts, the spiritual light and darkness, turned to meet the goodness in the world. It *is* a physical sensation. Butterflies of gratitude.

I knew I touched gratitude when, day-after-day as I laid to nap with my young son, the windows open and the smell of autumn caressing our cheeks, the warm stirring consistently returned, like a covenant.

I knew I touched gratitude when I sat down to a meal with friends and I felt spiritually full before the fork even touched my lips.

I knew I touched gratitude when I saw Sister Stella of Uganda smile the Spirit's smile when she told us a story of a hard life none of us would be able to smile through, let alone be grateful for.



Sister Stella

It's hard for us as adults to cultivate gratitude. We see the weeds, the heavy tools, the bugs. But children... children remind us that this tangled garden of life is a joy. They toss out the hoes and dig in with their hands. They kick off their fancy waterproof boots and plunge their toes in the dirt. For children, gratitude is as close as breath. Likely it's us—adults—that gradually squash that intimate joy.

At Global Women's Project, we are trying to continue cultivating gratitude through our Children's Giving Project. A stewardship

opportunity for your congregation, the **Children's Giving Project** introduces children and adults alike to the meaningful work of GWP, and to our very special friends at SITEAW, our partner project in Uganda.

Join us in cultivating gratitude, and let the children show the way! The giving project will continue through Summer of 2012 and it's never too late to start. Proceeds will go to Global Women's Project to support remarkable women like Sister Stella and those at SITEAW in Uganda.

Go to www.globalwomensproject.org and click on "Children's Giving Project" to see stories, pictures, and suggestions for starting your project.

Together we will cultivate more than gratitude. We will cultivate justice. Together, we will cultivate a New World.

"Prayer" by Maya Angelou

Father, Mother, God
Thank you for your presence
during the hard and mean days.

For then we have you to lean upon.
Thank you for your presence
during the bright and sunny days,
for then we can share that which we have
with those who have less.

And thank you for your presence
during the Holy Days, for then we are able
to celebrate you and our families
and our friends.

For those who have no voice,
we ask you to speak.
For those who feel unworthy,
we ask you to pour your love out
in waterfalls of tenderness.

For those who live in pain,
we ask you to bathe them
in the river of your healing.
For those who are lonely, we ask
you to keep them company.

For those who are depressed,
we ask you to shower upon them
the light of hope.

Dear Creator, You, the borderless
sea of substance, we ask you to give to all
the world that which we need most--Peace.



Love Your Enemies

...Do good to those who hate you (Luke 6:27).

Meditation: Love your enemy? I have enough trouble loving my friends. But who is my enemy? Could it be a neighbor? A family member? A person with whom I disagree about religious or social issues? I hear our political leaders advocate killing our enemies. But Jesus tells us not to kill them. He also tells us to love them. It is not that difficult to refrain from killing the person I detest, but do I have to love that person? It helps to remember that I do not have to like everyone — just love them, treat them with respect.

We are to love our enemies because, even as we reject God, God loves us. In the Gospel there is hope for redemption for everyone. We must believe that the enemy can be transformed. Though we may see our enemies as people we cannot reason with, as people for whom there is no hope, we can love them by doing good to them, blessing them, and praying for them. That is rather specific.

Being spat upon, stoned, kicked, and punched by Israeli settlers during my work with Christian Peacemaker Teams in Hebron has tested my commitment to this teaching of Jesus. I have tried to respond in love and can say that some of the most exciting experiences of my life have involved enemy love: Israeli Jews visiting Palestinian Muslim families whose homes were demolished by the Israeli military; Muslims welcoming Jews and Christians into their homes; or Muslims, Jews, and Christians planting olive trees together.

“Love casts out fear.” If I ask God to give me love for the people I do not like, my fear of them can be overcome. If I can acknowledge the pain my “enemy” has experienced, maybe I can love that person, for I also have experienced pain.

For the day: Whom does the world define as our enemies? Whom do you find difficult to love?

Prayer: God, I cannot love my enemy. I need your help. Please give me love, for those people I do not like. I pray for their salvation. Amen.

Art Gish

Sharing Together in Prayer

In Our Community:

- ◆ For our church’s security after recent burglaries, and for the perpetrators, that the circumstances leading to their theft be opened to the healing love of God.
- ◆ Thanks for the safe return of **Pastor Ken, Michael Schober & all others** who took part in the trip to Guatemala.
- ◆ Thanks for those who participated in Snow Camp at Camp Koinonia, January 27-29.
- ◆ For **Kathy Korff**, recovering from back surgery on January 23.
- ◆ **Elsie Clayton**, now receiving hospice care.
- ◆ For **Bobbi Dykema’s** partner, **Gene Michael Stover**, recovering after hernia repair surgery on January 17, and for Bobbi’s friend, **Augusta Roos**, seeking treatment for pericarditis.
- ◆ For **Alice Dalrymple’s** daughter, **Sharon**, recovering from a fall which broke her femur, and from treatment to dissolve a blood clot in her lungs.
- ◆ For **Geraldine Campbell**, undergoing a new round of chemotherapy last week.
- ◆ Thanks for **Carol Landis**, traveling to California and Arizona.

Ongoing Prayer Requests:

Goldie Barnes	Melissa Hinton
Jim Barnes	Eunice Jarboe
Geraldine Campbell	George Jorgensen
Elsie Clayton	Kathy Korff
Peggy Cochran	Dorothy Rhodes
Jim Crider	Jerry Rodeffer
Adam Ford	Bill Shoemaker
Lowell Geiver	Theodora Stephens
Donna Harnden	Vera Gastfield Wolfe

Frosty & Nancy Louise Wilkinson
Bill Case & daughter Carol Kamada
Lew Fortin’s nephew, Michael Rogers
Sabra Hernandez’s brother Nicholas & son Gabriel
Sharon Haley’s siblings:
Mark, Ruth and Paul Andrews

