

Sunday, February 5, 2012

(See the special Black History Timeline video below.)

Guest Writer for This Unit: Krystal D. Frazier, Assistant Professor of History at West Virginia University, currently attends City Church, Morgantown, WV.

The unit you are viewing, [A Celebration of Black History](#), is a compact unit. This means that it is not a complete commentary of the Scripture(s) selected for this day on the calendar, nor does it have a full, supporting cultural resource unit and worship unit. Instead, to enliven the imagination of preachers and teachers, we have provided a sermonic outline, songs, suggested books, and suggested articles, links, and videos. For additional information see [A Celebration of Black History](#) in the archives of the Lectionary for 2010. Also, readers interested in Black History celebrations may want to view the [MAAFA](#) units for 2008, 2009, and 2011. In 2011 the African American Lectionary began posting compact units for moments on its liturgical calendar.

I. Description of the Liturgical Moment

With annual celebrations, African American churches across the nation recognize our responsibility to learn and teach Black History as an important source of empowering our communities, which often include few other common venues for disseminating our history. We represent ourselves to ourselves through the stories we tell of those who came before us, paved our pathways to freedom, and shaped us into who we are. As we investigate and honor the lives and experiences of our fore parents, we commemorate great men and women of the faith.

Through Black History initiatives we celebrate the faith that has sustained our communities for centuries and our souls cry out, “Bless the Lord,” and “forget not one of His benefits.”



We rejoice in God’s great faithfulness consistently displayed through our great struggles and great strides. This moment on the African American Liturgical Calendar reminds us that we have persevered through horrendous adversity, and triumphed, and that we have not done so alone. While celebrations of our history remind us of the work our forbearers accomplished, we are also made aware of what they left undone. We celebrate our history to remind us that empowered by God as they were, we can continue their work and likewise

pass down legacies of strength, perseverance, faith, and victory to future generations.

II. A Celebration of Black History: Sermonic Outline

A. Sermonic Focus Text(s): Matthew 1:1-17 (New Revised Standard Version)

(v. 1) An account of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

(v. 2) Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, (v. 3) and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Aram, (v. 4) and Aram the father of Aminadab, and Aminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, (v. 5) and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, (v. 6) and Jesse the father of King David. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, (v. 7) and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asaph, (v. 8) and Asaph the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the

father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, (v. 9) and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, (v. 10) and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah, (v. 11) and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon. (v. 12) And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Salathiel, and Salathiel the father of Zerubbabel, (v. 13) and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, (v. 14) and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, (v. 15) and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, (v. 16) and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah. (v. 17) So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David to the deportation to Babylon, fourteen generations; and from the deportation to Babylon to the Messiah, fourteen generations.

B. Possible Titles

- i. There Is Victory in Your Bloodline!
- ii. It's All in the Family and All Covered by the Blood
- iii. The Blood Makes All the Difference

C. Point of Exegetical Inquiry

In any text there can be several words or phrases that require significant exegetical inquiry. One exegetical inquiry raised by this text is the fact that Jesus is listed as the "Son of David" and the "Son of Abraham" although he is not the biological descendant of either man. Moreover, the bloodline through which Christ came was certainly less than stellar and by our accounts unworthy of the Messiah. However, in light of God's awesome power and favor the text shows us what God is able to do with our bloodlines. God inserted Jesus into the family line of "Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born." Through their obedience and submission Joseph and Mary were brought into communion with God and an eternal inheritance. If we choose to accept Christ we are also adopted into his family and can enjoy the blessing of fellowship with all the saints and an inheritance from God no matter who or what appears in our biological bloodlines.

III. Introduction



Many African Americans draw inspiration from the historical struggles and triumphs of the familiar black heroes and heroines heralded each year during Black History Month. Yet few of us have taken the time to explore our own family histories. Even when we do commemorate family history at formal family reunions or during holiday festivities, we often focus on the good news of graduations, marriages, births, promotions, and various achievements. Rarely do we discuss the challenges we faced with high school attrition, divorce, suicide, incest, drug abuse, joblessness, criminal activity, and incarceration. We shy away from these topics embarrassingly, not recognizing how much we can learn and benefit from these stories to fuel our determination to enrich our future and not repeat past failures.

In the first chapter of 2 Timothy, Paul encourages his son in the Gospel (Timothy) by reminding him of a “sincere faith, a faith that first lived” in Timothy’s mother, Eunice, and grandmother Lois. Paul tells Timothy to reference this legacy as he pursues his work in the gospel. In Hebrews Paul describes our heritage of faithfulness and charges believers to persevere along our own paths being strengthened by the testimonies of those who came before us and are rooting for our success.

Matthew’s record of Jesus’ genealogy includes histories of triumphs and histories of failure. In this lection we explore what Jesus’ diverse lineage has to teach us about reckoning with our own complex familial histories and the powerful lessons they include.

IV. Moves/Points

Move/Point One – Jesus’ genealogy includes good examples and bad examples.

- a. Jesus’ line includes people who represented the best of humanity;
- b. Jesus’ line included people who represented the worst of humanity; and

c. God is faithful to work his plan through and in spite of human weaknesses and frailties.

Move/Point Two – We should embrace the lessons from all of the examples in our family histories.

a. We can learn from examples what NOT to do;

b. We can mirror the behaviors of people we want to follow; and

c. Learning from our family tree gives us the opportunity to affect positive change in our family legacies.

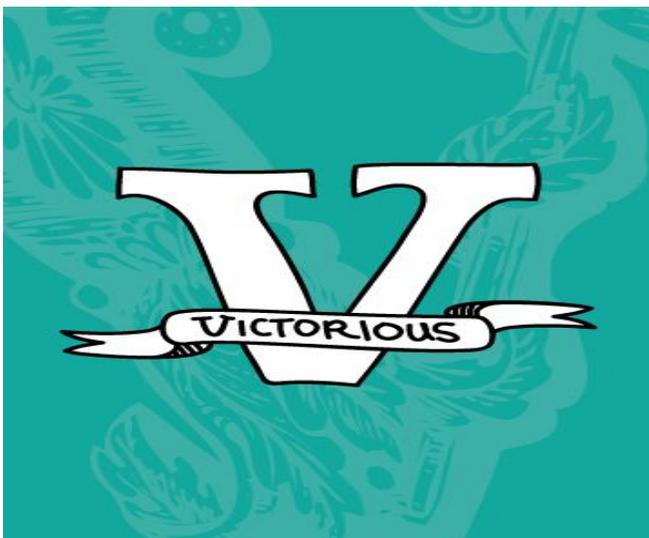
Move/Point Three – Being in the family of Christ expands our family tree and changes our inheritance.

a. When we become Christians we are adopted into Jesus' family and gain a new host of redeemed relatives;

b. Membership in the family of God equips us with examples, lessons, and resources that may not have been accessible within our natural families; and

c. As a part of Christ's bloodline and with the Spirit we are released from negative generational patterns and can unlearn negative behaviors we inherited.

V. Celebration



No matter what we have in our family lines, adding Christ makes all the difference! There is victory in your bloodline because you belong to the family of God, and being engrafted into his family means that you are an overcomer. There is nothing that we can't overcome because of our heavenly bloodline. No matter how difficult the day or dark the night, we are on the winning side. Despite a family line that included folk who did not honor God, God still worked his plan and delivered the Messiah through imperfect people. Our Lord conquered sin, hell, and the grave. So, with him on our side is there anything that we can't do? Is there anything our families can't overcome? Is there anything that the world can do to stop us? I hear our slave ancestors answering, "No!" I hear the civil right marchers, answering, "No!" And let me add my personal testimony, "No!" and we have victory in him.

VI. Illustration(s)

The Communist Party in the USSR during the 1950s put out a heavy assault upon the underground Christian church with large billboard signs reading, "The Reign of Christ is Over." The underground church met to counteract this damaging propaganda. After much thought and consultation, they decided not to take the signs down or to change any of the lettering. Rather, they decided to just add one word to each of the signs, "ALL." The signs would then read, "The Reign of Christ is Over ALL!" Those people showed us that we can always make the best out of any situation if we just know what to add."

—George Champion, 100 Illustrations for Preaching and Speaking.
Orlando, FL: Self Published, 2001. p. 45.

See the Sermon Illustrations section of the African American Lectionary for additional illustrations that you may wish to use in presenting a sermon for this moment on the liturgical calendar.

VII. Sounds, Sights, and Colors in This Passage

Sounds: People rejoicing at the birth of a child; a mother's travail in childbirth; people wailing in prayer in repentance for the sins of their fore parents; joyous praise at the birth of the Messiah;

Sights: A line of ancestors, men and women of various shapes and sizes, standing shoulder to shoulder, some with heads hung in shame, others with faces turned toward the sky in victory, some with shifty eyes, others with proud shoulders, hands outstretched in worship or clasped in prayer; the glory of God at the birth of Jesus; and

Colors: People of various shades of brown, the colors of the glory of God.

Sounds: People rejoicing at the birth of a child; a mother's travail in childbirth; people wailing in prayer in repentance for the sins of their fore parents; joyous praise at the birth of the Messiah;

Sights: A line of ancestors, men and women of various shapes and sizes, standing shoulder to shoulder, some with heads hung in shame, others with faces turned toward the sky in victory, some with shifty eyes, others with proud shoulders, hands outstretched in worship or clasped in prayer; the glory of God at the birth of Jesus; and

Colors: People of various shades of brown, the colors of the glory of God.

VIII. Songs to Accompany This Sermon

A. Hymns

- Lift Every Voice and Sing. By James W. Johnson
This hymn, which provides a general celebration of Black History and encourages us to be strengthened by what our ancestors have endured, can be used to open the service.
- Blest Be the Tie the Binds. By John Fawcett
This hymn is a recognition of family and the ways in which we are connected.

B. Spirituals

- No More Auction Block for Me, Many Thousands Gone. By Gustavus Pike
- I Shall Not Be Moved. Arr. by Betty Gadling
- Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me 'Round. Arr. by Lavinia L. T. Odejimi
- I Want Jesus to Walk with Me. Arr. by Nolan Williams, Jr.
- We'll Understand It Better By and By. By Charles Albert Tindley. Arr. by Theodore Thomas

C. Modern Song(s) (Written between 2005–2011)

- I Need You to Survive. By Hezekiah Walker. *Display the lyrics for reflection.*

I need you, you need me.
We're all a part of God's body.
Stand with me, agree with me.
We're all a part of God's body.

It is his will, that every need be supplied.
You are important to me, I need you to survive.
You are important to me, I need you to survive.
(repeat 3X)

I pray for you, you pray for me.
I love you, I need you to survive.
I won't harm you with words from my mouth.
I love you, I need you to survive.
(repeat 8X)

It is his will, that every need be supplied.
You are important to me, I need you to survive.

YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uMcJL_UDAvw

- Power in the Blood. By Andraé Crouch
YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VjB4zGa6Tl4>
- I'll Trust You. By Richard Smallwood
- Help Somebody. By Deitrick Haddon, Tim Kelley, and Bob Robinson
- Moving Forward. By Israel Houghton and Ricardo Sanchez

D. Well-known Song(s)

- Come and Let Us Sing. By Israel and New Breed
- I Don't Feel No Ways Tired. By James Cleveland
- Revolution. By Kirk Franklin

E. Liturgical Dance Music

- Beautiful Savior. By Judith Christie McAllister
- We're All in the Same Boat. By David Grover and Aaron Schroeder

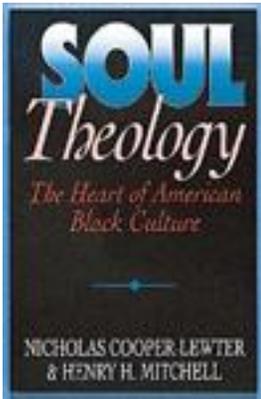
F. Invitational Song(s)

- Nothing but the Blood of Jesus. By Robert Lowry

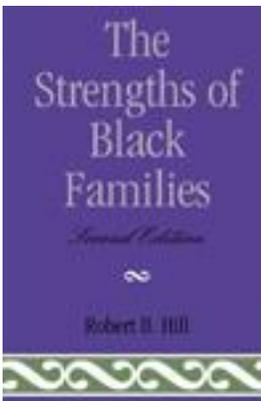
IX. Videos, Audio, and/or Interactive Media

- Dr. Carla Peterson discusses her book Black Gotham: A Family History, which explores her family's legacy in New York City. Online location:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JQuLfkavfh8>
- Ms. Angela Walton-Raji, expert in the research of African-Native American Genealogy, provides a brief overview for beginning research in African American Family history via the Internet. The webinar is entitled "The Best Internet Resources for Researching African American Genealogy: An Overview." Online location:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vuuku-TTWRI>
- The Origins of Black History Month. Online location:
<http://www.history.com/topics/black-history-month/videos#origins-of-black-history-month>
- An interactive black history timeline. Online location:
<http://www.history.com/topics/black-history-month/interactives/black-history-timeline>
- A Moment in Black History by Deacon Berry Jordan. Online location:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gpdfqPqA6dU>
- What Is Your Name (Part 1), a sermon by Dr. Keith Augustus. Online location:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q79Fkx8w11k>

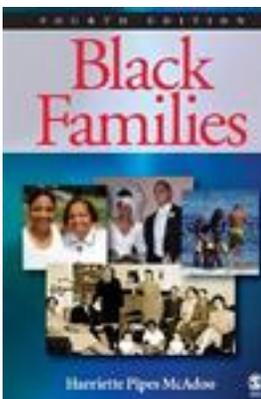
X. Books and Articles to Assist in Preparing Sermons or Bible Studies Related to A Celebration of Black History



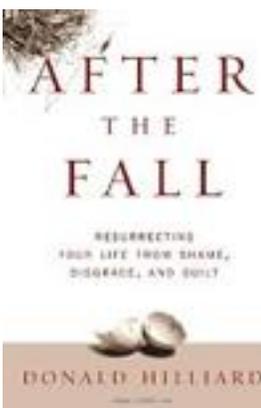
Cooper-Lewter, Nicholas and Henry H. Mitchell. Soul Theology: The Heart of American Black Culture. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1991.



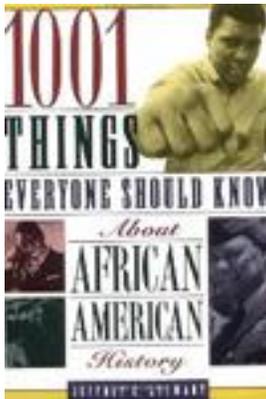
Hill, Robert B. with a foreword by Andrew Billingsley. The Strengths of Black Families: Twenty-Five Years Later. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1999.



Dodson, Jualynne Elizabeth. “Conceptualization and Research of African American Family Life in the United States: Some Thoughts.” In Black Families Fourth Edition, Harriette Pipes McAdoo, ed., Thousand Oaks, CA; London; New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2007.



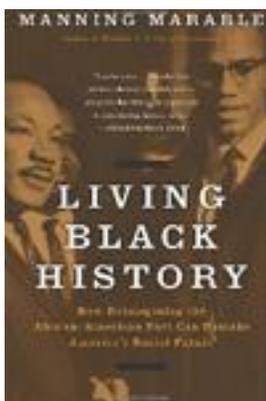
Hilliard, Donald. After the Fall: Resurrecting Your Life from Shame, Disgrace, and Guilt. Destiny Images Publisher, 2007.



Stewart, Jeffrey C. 1001 Things Everyone Should Know about African History. New York, NY: Three Rivers Press, 1998.



Painter, Nell Irvin. Creating Black Americans: African-American History and Its Meanings, 1619 to the Present. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2006.



Marable, Manning. Living Black History: How Reimagining the African-American Past Can Remake America's Future. Jackson, TN: Basic Civitas Books, 2011.

XI. Article to Assist in Preparing Sermons and Bible Studies Related to A Celebration of Black History

- Hill, Robert B. “Understanding Black Family Functioning: A Holistic Perspective.” In Journal of Comparative Family Studies. Vol. 29, Iss. 1, Spring 1998, 15–25, for an extensive argument that black families cannot be understood without a systematic approach to analyzing the historical, cultural, political, and economic forces that impact them.

XII. Links to Helpful Websites for Researching Black Family History

- Family Reunion Institute, Dr. Ione Vargus, Founder, Temple University. Online location: <http://www.temple.edu/fri/familyreunion/>
- AfriGenas.com. Online location: <http://www.afrigeneas.com/>
- African Ancestry.com. Online location: <http://www.africanancestry.com/>
- The Roots Project. Online location: <http://www.uml.edu/roots/>
- African Ancestry. Trace your DNA. Find your roots. Online location: <http://www.africanancestry.com/>
- A chronology of black history from the early slave trade through Affirmative Action. Online location: <http://www.infoplease.com/spot/bhmtimeline.html>
- Resources for black history research. Online location: <http://www.archives.gov/research/alic/reference/black-history.html>

XIII. Notes for Select Songs

A. Hymns

- Lift Every Voice and Sing. By James W. Johnson
Location:
African American Heritage Hymnal. Chicago, IL: GIA Publications, 2001. #540

- Blest Be the Tie that Binds. By John Fawcett
Location:
African American Heritage Hymnal. #341

B. Spiritual(s)

- No More Auction Block for Me, Many Thousands Gone. By Gustavus Pike
Location:
Online location: http://www.negrospirituals.com/news-song/no_more_auction_block_for_me.htm
- I Shall Not Be Moved. Arr. by Betty Gadling
Location:
African American Heritage Hymnal. #479
- Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me 'Round. Arr. by Lavinia L. T. Odejimi
Location:
Zion Still Sings for Every Generation. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2007. #104
- I Want Jesus to Walk with Me. Arr. by Nolan Williams, Jr.
Location:
African American Heritage Hymnal. #563
- We'll Understand It Better By and By. By Charles Albert Tindley. Arr. by Theodore Thomas
Location:
Zion Still Sings. #168

C. Modern Song(s) (Written between 2005–2011)

- I Need You to Survive. By Hezekiah Walker
Location:
Walker, Hezekiah and the Love Fellowship Choir. Family Affair II: Live at Radio City Music Hall. New York, NY: Verity/Zomba, 2002.
- Power in the Blood. By Andraé Crouch
Location:

Crouch, Andraé and the Disciples. Live in London: Andraé Crouch and the Disciples. Nashville, TN: Compendia 1978/1995.

- I'll Trust You. By Richard Smallwood
Location:
Journey: Live in New York. New York, NY: Verity, 2007.
- Help Somebody. By Deitrick Haddon, Tim Kelley, and Bob Robinson
Location:
Haddon, Deitrick. 7 Days. New York, NY: Verity, 2006.
- Moving Forward. By Israel Houghton and Ricardo Sanchez.
Location:
Walker, Hezekiah and Ricardo Sanchez. Souled Out. New York, NY: Verity, 2008.

D. Well-known Song(s)

- Come and Let Us Sing. By Israel and New Breed
Location:
Houghton, Israel and New Breed. Israel & New Breed Alive in South Africa. New York, NY: Epic, 2005.
- I Don't Feel No Ways Tired. By James Cleveland
Location:
I Don't Feel No Ways Tired. Jackson, MS: 601 Records, 1998.
- Revolution. By Kirk Franklin
Location:
Franklin, Kirk and The Family. The Nu Nation Project. Inglewood, CA: Gospocentric, 1998.

E. Liturgical Dance Music

- Beautiful Savior. By Judith Christie McAllister
Location:
Raise The Praise. Los Angeles, CA: Judah Music, 2003.
- We're All in the Same Boat. By David Grover and Aaron Schroeder
Location:

Hawkins, Tramaine. All My Best to You. Nashville, TN: Sparrow Records, 1994.

F. Invitational Song(s)

- Nothing but the Blood of Jesus. By Robert Lowry
Location:
African American Heritage Hymnal. #262