



The Companion

“I am a companion of all them that fear Thee,
of them that keep Thy precepts.” Psalm 119:63

February 2017

Black History Month: Telling the Story of God’s Mighty Power

By Karen Waddles

A few weeks ago, I was asked to write a blog post for Black History Month. “Sure!” I replied. But when I sat down to write, the immensity of the task struck home. It’s such a huge topic to cover in a post . . . for sure, many would appreciate the information, but would there be those who would question why we even *have* black history month? The following is my heartfelt attempt to answer this question.

I grew up in Kansas in the late 50s and 60s. My sister and I were each the only African-American students in our elementary school classes. When we opened our textbooks, there was no mention of contributions of African-Americans to the advancement of this country. As we turned the pages of our history books, there were no pictures of people that looked like us, no scientists, no noteworthy doctors, no educators . . . So we began early on to internalize a sense of inferiority and “less than.” We had to make a concerted effort to rise above the expectations of our teachers and to excel.

A lot has changed since my sister and I were in elementary school. In my granddaughter’s sixth grade text books, much attention is given to the valuable contributions that African-Americans have made to this country. The newer textbooks record the election of the first black President of the United States, and many other firsts. It’s undeniable that much progress has been made. So, all is well, right?

If it were a matter of acquisition of positions and access to previously unattainable roles, I suppose we could say that. But this whole issue gets to matters of the heart, doesn’t it? Are things really better, or is there just the appearance of things being better? I think we may still have a problem in our country—even today. Consider the following current event that highlights this issue.

In Hollywood—arguably the most “progressive” and liberal place in America—George Lucas could not find one motion picture studio that would get behind his new movie, *Red Tails*. The studios didn’t believe that people would be interested in an all-black action movie. The movie is based on the true story of the Tuskegee Air Men (America’s first black military airmen) who flew bombing missions during World War II. These brave men risked their lives knowing that they would return to an American society that still regarded them as second-class citizens. It’s quite telling that in 2012, the movie has been received in much the same way that their service to America was received in 1940.

But that’s the world, not the Christian community. Surely we have set this issue aside and are able to see beyond skin color as Christians. Would that were true! I was having lunch about five years ago with a small group of ladies, all Christians. Somehow in our discussion, we started talking about black history and slavery. I was more than a little caught off guard when one of the ladies looked at me and said, “I think blacks should be thankful for slavery because if your ancestors had not been brought here, you wouldn’t have the good life that you have here in America.” It had never occurred to her that slavery took the brightest, the strongest, and the best of the Africans from their homeland. If they had been left there, Africa would be quite different than it is today . . . and America would be quite different as well. As I have reflected over that conversation many times since then, I have appreciated so much the dialogue that her honesty allowed.

Suffice it to say, a lot of us struggle with this issue—both inside the church and outside the church. So, is that it? We just nod assent to this problem and accept that that’s just the way things are? I pray not. I think we have to consider the grand meta-narrative. What was in the mind of God when He created different ethnicities? He had to know the great schisms that would evolve because of these differences. Indeed He did. It is entirely *human* to want to be with those who are “our kind.” It is entirely *human* to regard with suspicion those who are different. And it is entirely *human* for those of us who have

grown up in this country to accept that there is a sort of “pecking order” of ethnic groups. Indeed, God knew all these things. And I believe that is why, in Christ’s priestly prayer He prayed, “Father, keep them in your name, the name which you have given me, that they may be one even as we are one” ([John 17:11](#)).

This is it! This is the grand meta-narrative: That God would make us all one and enable us to defy our human instincts, transformed by His miraculous power. What a testimony it would be to a watching world to see instincts, transformed by His miraculous power. What a testimony it would be to a watching world to see believers in Jesus Christ go entirely against the grain of everything that is human and carnal, and just love on one another, without respect of person . . . or skin color.

When Joshua led the Israelites across the Jordan River, he commanded them to take twelve large stones from the river and erect a memorial so that whenever their children asked what they meant, they could tell of the miraculous way God had dried up the Jordan so they could cross on dry land ([Josh. 4:22b-24](#)). The stones testified of the mighty hand of God and inspired awe for Him.

In many ways, that is what Black History Month is to African-Americans. It’s much more than educating ourselves and others about the valuable contributions of our people. It is a time to remember and re-tell the story of how God moved on our behalf throughout history—eradicating slavery and opening doors that had been closed. It is a time, once again, to testify of His mighty hand and to be in awe of His power!

It’s a time to remember, to reflect. So, let’s take some time this month to remember together. Not just events and people, but what God was trying to accomplish all along. In this laboratory of American life, He brought a multitude of people together to demonstrate His power to make us all one. Let’s delight in the heart of our God—let’s do the hard work of becoming one!

What would it look like for the body of Christ to embrace oneness? What impact might it have on American culture for Christians to embody this critical spiritual truth? What can you do as an individual to move this dialogue and cause forward? How can we help our children develop healthy attitudes towards those of other ethnicities?

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Happy Valentines Day!

Celebrate Valentines Day by understanding God’s indescribable love for us!

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Colossians 3:14 And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

John 15:13 Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.

I John 4:8 Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.

1 John 4:19 *We love because he first loved us.*

Psalms 37:4 Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart.

I John 4:7-8 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.

Mark 12:33 **And to love him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices."**



February 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 6:30 am Men's Bible Study and Breakfast at Panera 6:00 pm PrayerFest-Potluck 7:00 pm Prayer Meeting	2	3	4
5 8:15 Traditional Worship 9:25 am Communion 10:00 am Blended Worship 10:00 am Sunday School for Children 2-4yrs. and Nursery for infants 10:30 am Children's SS 5:30 pm Outbound & Awana 7:15 pm Adult Choir	6	7 9:45 am Ladies Bible Study 6:30 pm Overflow	8 6:30 am Men's Bible Study and Breakfast at SAYSF 6:00 pm PrayerFest-Chicken 7:00 pm Prayer Meeting 7:00 Missions Meeting	9	10	11 8:30-10:00 am Small Group Leaders Meeting
12 8:15 Traditional Worship 9:25 am Communion 10:00 am Blended Worship 10:00 am Sunday School For Children 2-4yrs and Nursery for infants 10:30 am Children's SS 5:30 pm Awana & Outbound 7:15 pm Adult Choir	13	14 9:45 am Ladies Bible Study  6:30 pm Overflow	15 6:30 am Men's Bible Study and Breakfast at SAYSF 6:00 pm PrayerFest-Subs 7:00 pm Prayer Meeting	16	17	18
19 8:15 Traditional Worship 9:25 am Communion 10:00 am Blended Worship 10:00 am Sunday School for Children 2-4yrs and Nursery for infants 10:30 am Children's SS 5:30 pm Awana & Outbound 7:15 pm Adult Choir	20 Church Office Closed	21 9:45 am Ladies Bible Study 6:30 pm Overflow	22 6:30 am Men's Bible Study and Breakfast at SAYSF 6:00 pm Prayerfest-Pizza 7:00 pm Prayer Meeting	23 11:00 am Staff Meeting	24	25 8:00 am Men & Son's Breakfast at SAYSF
26 8:15 Traditional Worship 9:25 am Communion 10:00 am Blended Worship 10:00 am Sunday School For Children 2-4yrs and Nursery for infants 10:30 am Children's SS 5:30 pm Awana & Outbound 7:15 pm Adult Choir	27	28 9:45 am Ladies Bible Study 6:30 pm Overflow				