



Preaching, Teaching and Reaching for
Transformation and Liberation

“CONSCIOUS AND INTENTIONAL MINISTRY: DOING WHO I AM WITH UNDERSTANDING”

Of Issachar, those who had understanding of the times, to
know what Israel ought to do... 1 Chronicles 12:32

THE PASTOR’S PEN February 12, 2023

BLACK HISTORY / BLACK CHURCH THOUGHTS

Over the next few weeks, I will share some of my thoughts from previous writings regarding the Black Church. As I think out loud, I pray that you join me on the journey.

Development of a Black Religious Perspective

As a preface to this section, I think that it is necessary to point out that while I do place intentional emphasis on the Black church, I do so because it is the context in which I am currently in ministry. I acknowledge that theological issues can be sometimes sliced so thin that the substance can be lost. Therefore, I am not suggesting that the Black church has any exclusive rights or claims on Jesus or that the religious experience of Blacks merit a more prominent relationship with Jesus over non-Blacks. Secondly, while many Blacks in this country were and continue to be systematically and systemically oppressed, and while the weight of this oppression stimulated the growth and development of the Black church, I do not consider the terms ‘oppressed people’ and the ‘Black church’ to be interchangeable. In fact, I believe that the phrase, ‘oppressed’ is one of the concepts that have kept the Black church from reaching its full potential. If the Black church considers itself to primarily be oppressed, it will take on an oppressed nature and negate any power available to it from God. Thirdly, while my emphasis is on the Black church, I also believe that the thesis can easily be transferred to any ministry context. Therefore, the goal is to see Jesus through the eyes of the context versus developing a context to see Jesus. If this goal is accomplished, we reduce the risk of trimming Jesus to fit into a particular context. Jesus, as he should, remains whole and intact while each individual has the opportunity to develop a personal relationship. Roberts states:

...Jesus must not be locked into a given cluster of political and cultural perceptions. We seek a Christ above culture who is at the same time at work in culture and history for redemptive ends – setting free the whole person, mind, soul and body.¹

I have outlined five basic stages in the development of the Black religious experience in this country. Each stage is associated with a particular stage of growth and development in a human. Each stage expresses the uniqueness of the Black church and the impact that the incarnation of Jesus has had on it.

Stage 1: The Black religious experience is born in African spirituality.

Any look at Black religious experience will have to look at the continent of Africa. This continent: the dawn of creation, the cradle of civilization, the motherland, the place where it all began. This is where God created humans in his image and likeness. This is where we rejoice when we consider the greatness of our rich history. As well, this is where we gain an understanding of who we are as spiritual beings. Contrary to what some have taught and others have believed, the Africans were not savage, heathen animals. They were not untamed, wild beast waiting for someone to come along and give them civilization. Neither were they void of God’s participation in their lives. They were children of God.

Everyone believes in the existence of God, it means that there are no atheist in Africa. An Ashanti proverb summarized this point, “No one shows a child the Supreme Being.” That means that everybody knows God’s existence almost by instinct, and even children know him.²

¹ J. Deotis Roberts, *A Black Political Theology* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1974) p. 119.

² Nya Kwawon Taryor, Sr., *Impact of The African Tradition of African Christianity* (Chicago: Strugglers’ Community Press, 1984) p. 75.

This being true, the Europeans did not bring God to the Africans, instead the Africans already

knew God. Perhaps they called God by a different name and expressed their relationship with God in a different way, still, they knew God. In fact, the African may have had an even closer relationship with God while practicing African traditional religion because it was more than just a religion to them – it was a lifestyle. Taryor compares it to Christianity:

African traditional religions cannot be separated from life itself. Those who practice them are always filled with something to do. But Christianity is a Religion which was locked up six days a week, meeting only for two hours on Sundays and perhaps once during the week.³

In short, African spirituality provided a foundation that would later support the Black church.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 182.

The Pilgrim Rest Oasis

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Through faith God has given us the space to be an **oasis** in the middle of the city.

An **oasis** is a fertile spot in the desert where refuge, relief, and refreshment is found.

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Thank you for your continued support of God’s plan for us.



Your contribution can be dedicated to a specific activity or the Oasis, in general.

| | Educational Enrichment | Technology Literacy | Athletics & Recreation | Performing Arts | Facility Innovation |
|----------|--|---|---|--|--|
| \$500 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 Subject books for elementary (math, literature, history, etc.) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 iPad | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 basketballs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 art sets for aspiring artists | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> External security lighting to keep the street well-lit and safe |
| \$1,000 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100 Summer Bridge books to help students retain learning during breaks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100 “learn how to code” kits for elementary students | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 tennis rackets | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 beginner saxophones or 8 beginner violins | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Camera security system to keep everyone safe |
| \$2,500 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9 students can be challenged to excel using interactive problem-solving programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 computer for graphic design and website creation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12 sets of golf clubs for children | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 Play Scripts with performance/licensing fee and cast instructions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wireless PA system to easily communicate at the school |
| \$5,000 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 smartboard to help teachers engage students in learning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 STEM lab cart of materials for a classroom with multiple activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3-day Speed and Agility workshop for 15 young aspiring track stars | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100 pairs of tap shoes for aspiring dancers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Battery operated floor scrubber to keep the building looking its best |
| \$10,000 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 trip for 15 students to visit 1 HBCU | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100 Robotic kits to reinforce studies in STEAM subjects | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open gym for 20 young people 1 X a week throughout the winter in a safe place | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 200 tickets to see Alvin Ailey Dance Company | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LED light fixtures throughout the school to promote learning and natural light |

WORK FOR THE WEEK

FEBRUARY MEMORY VERSE

¹²O our God, will You not judge them? For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes *are* upon You.”

2 Chronicles 20:12

FEBRUARY MEDITATION QUOTE

"Nat Turner's faith in God did not stop his insurrection, nor thousands of slave insurrections all over the south. Every time a black man led an insurrection, he knew that he was doing the will of God. When you fight, you must believe that you are doing the will of God. Just being mad is not enough... We must believe that our struggle is a revolutionary struggle designed to change the world and to establish us in our rightful position.."

Dr. Albert B. Cleage, Jr.

TODAY'S STUDY QUESTIONS AND MEDITATION:

God can use me with what I have _____

What do I have? _____

FOR THE YOUTH

What do I have and how can God use it? _____
