History of Christianity

Christianity originating in Bethlehem with the birth of Christ, is one of the three religions of the world which holds that God is Divine, an Infinite Being and supremely good; that He created the world, is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. The other two faiths: Judaism, the religion of the Jews, which took shape in Palestine several thousands of years ago; and Islam, the religion of the Muslims, which was founded in Mecca c.750 A.D. by Mohammed, the prophet.

Before the advent of these three monothestic religions, Menes, c.3100 B.C., and Ikhnaton, c.1357 B.C., two Ethiopian kings who reunified Egypt and became pharoahs, were the first recorded proponents of the One God concept.

The following log will chronologically trace Black Christianity from its prehistory in North Africa down through the continent to the New World across the Atlantic Ocean.

c1000 B.C. - Makeda (Sheba) Queen of Ethiopia, gave birth to King Solomon's son, Menelik, thus creating a link between the royal family and sons of the nobles of Israel.

1st-4th Century A. D. - Christianity is introduced in North Africa.

3rd Century A.D. - St. Cyprian, the bishop of Carthage, wrote "On the Unity of the Catholic Church". He died a martyr.

307 A.D. - Constantine became the first Christian emperor and declared it the state religion in 325. Until this time, missionaries in North Africa practiced with the constant spectre of persecution and great personal danger.

325 A.D. - King Ezana is converted to Christianity and the Ethiopian Orthodox (Ceptic) Church is established.

342 A.D.-354 A.D. - Nubia (Sudan) becomes the birthplace of the Christian Church among blacks by the arrival of an emissary from the royal court of Egypt, which, at that time, practiced the religion. Many churches were built and mass conversions made.

354-430 A.D. - St. Augustine, regarded by theologians as the founder of theology, is Bishop of Hippo. His writings continue to influence Catholics.

6th-5th Century - Little activity relevant to the Black Christian Church was recorded. Spain and Portugal were powerful colonizers. Recognizing this, and attempting to minimize conflict between the two powers, Pope Alexander VI reserved Africa (west of the Cape Verde Desert) and Brazil for exploration by Portugal; to Spain, he gave America and the Philippines Hence, the early Catholic missionaries in Africa were Portuguese.

1520-Prince Dom Henrique is the first Kongolese ordained a Catholic bishop. Schools, churches and other reforms were ineffective in the expansion of Christianity after his death.

1523 - The Reformation (or revolt) created Protestantism (protesters) from the Catholic faith, and opened the continent of Africa to an "invasion" of missionaries from almost all of Europe's many sects. Deep inroads into the indigenous religions were not significant until the 18th century.

The dominant force during the 17th and 18th centuries in Africa and the American colonies was the slave trade. There were, however, some notable efforts in Christianizing blacks on both continents:

1693 - Reverend Cotton Mathers, a founder of Yale University, organized a "Society for Negroes". He advised the slaves "...to be good and faithful servants in order to enjoy the great privileges of heaven."

1701 - To counteract the success that the Methodists, Baptists and Presbyterians (to a lesser degree) were having with the underclass (including slaves) in the colonies, the Church of England formed the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. Slaves were required to declare, under oath, that their conversion was for the "hereafter".

1726 - Exhorters (untrained ministers or evangelists who were well-versed in the Bible) met with great success in proselytizing free blacks in the North; and overseers and (clandestinely) slaves in the South.

1744 - Jacobus Eliza Johannes Capitein was the first African to receive Protestant ordination. As a member of the Dutch Reformed Church, he was appointed chaplain at Cape Coast.

1764 - Christian Protten, a European educated Ghanaian, produced a grammar in the Fanti language that included selections from the Bible.

1765 - Philip Quaque, ordained by the Church of England, was responsible for the religious training of the Negroes on the Gold Coast. He served the difficult post for 50 years.

Moravians developed a mission in Barbados. By the end of the century, they had converted close to four thousand slaves.

1772 - Slavery was essentially abolished in England by a judicial decree.

1773 - The first black Baptist church was founded at Silver Bluff, South Carolina.

1779 - The House of Commons in England passed a law that allowed priests to allot time, each Sunday, to the instruction of slaves. This was not fully transmitted however, to the West Indies - the remaining British colonies in the Americas, until 1815.

1780 - Lemuel Haynes was licensed to preach in the Congregational Church.

Because he was a gifted preacher, George Liele was permitted, by his master, to preach at different times to slaves and whites. After manumission, he baptized his wife, Hannah, Andrew Bryan, Kate Hogg and Hogar Simpson. They became the founders of the First African Baptist Church in Savannah, Georgia.

1782 - Rev. Harry (Black Harry) Hosier became the assistant to Rev. Francis Asbury, the first bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the U.S. Rev. Hosier also founded the circuit Rider System.

1783 - By the end of the Revolutionary War, all of the members of the Society of Friends (Quakers) had manumitted their slaves.

1786 - Due to the Church of England's laxity in mounting an organized Christianizing program in the West Indies, Moses Baker, George Liele, George Lewis and George Gibbo, black missionaries from the U.S., were able to engage in effective conversions by preaching to the slaves. It was finally prohibited by the government for fear of instilling an attitude of equality in the slaves.

1787 - The Clapham Sect received cooperation from the British government to establish a settlement in Sierra Leone. Liberated slaves were among the 411 passengers to form a nucleus for taking Christianity and "civilization" to Africa.

Richard Allen and Absalom Jones organized the Free African Society. It was the first black organization dedicated to assisting widows, orphans, the sick, and indigent blacks.

1789 - The first Methodist Meeting-house was built on Barbados. It acquired few adherents and was deeply resented by the settlers.

1792 - Twelve hundred Nova Scotians joined the Sierra Leone Company.

"Uncle Jack" preached to appreciative white audiences that raised a fund for his freedom.

1794 - St. Thomas African Episcopal Church and Bethel Church were founded by Jones and Allen, and dedicated by Bishop Asbury.

Although repeated persecutions were visited upon him, his followers and any slaves who cared to hear him preach, Andrew Bryan refused to become bitter; instead, he prayed for those who abused him. The sympathy he thus aroused created a greater freedom for worship and allowed him to rebuild the First African Baptist Church. He added the Second, Third and Fourth African Baptist Churches to aid and enchance the religious life of blacks in Georgia.

The Nineteenth Century was witness to a tremendous surge in the attempt to Christianize blacks. Abolitionist societies' successful efforts to save bodies by halting the slave trade caused attention to focus upon saving souls.

1809 - The First African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church was constructed in New York City. It was the first black-administered church in the city. Rev. James Varick was its first pastor. He, along with others, decided to separate from the Methodist Episcopal Church after suffering some indignities during a sermon.

c.1801 - John Chavis was made a missionary to the slaves by the Presbyterian Church after having been tutored by Dr. Witherspoon of Princeton University. After the "black laws" were passed in 1232, he established a school in North Carolina.

1807-Rev. John Glouster founded the first black administered church in Philadelphia.

1810-1811 - Rev. Joseph Bishop, an eloquently impressed minister to a racially mixed church in Virginia, became pastor of the Abyssinian Baptist Church in New York - the first black Baptist church in the free states.

1816 - Black Methodists were the first to establish a national church.

This was done during a meeting in Philadelphia. Rev. Richard Allen became its bishop-elect. The Vesey (1822) and Turner (1831) insurrections inhibited its growth, somewhat, until the "black laws" were repealed.

1820-Liberia was founed and supported by the American Colonization Society for the purpose of settling "...free persons of color on the African Continent."

Rev. Lott Carey was the first American missionary sent to Liberia after having bought his freedom seven years earlier.

1821 - AMEZ became a national body with Rev. James Varick as its first bishop.

1826-8 - Rev. Carey administered the affairs of the Liberian Settlement; first as vice agent, then as administrator until his death from an explosion.

1830 - The first national convention of black men, organized by Rev. Richard Allen, was held in Philadelphia.

1831 - Legislation permitted free "coloreds" in Barbados to vote.

Nine years later, anyone could be elected to the House of Assembly.

1834 - Slavery was formally abolished throughout the British Dominion.

The ambitious education program developed by the Church of England for the slaves had founded twenty-one churches and chapels, and 154 schools on Barbados.

1837 - The Anglican Church Missionary Society established a settlement for freed slaves at Frere Town, (Mombasa) Kenya.

1843 - Samuel Johnson Prescod was the first black Barbadian in the Assembly.

Mid-1800s - David Livingston, aided by Tippu Tip and Chuma (Livingston's "Man Friday"), explored the African interior and paved the way for missionaries to evangelize the interior around 1878. Bombay, a native of Zanzibar, was also instrumental in aiding Stanley, Cameron, Burton and Speke for the same purpose.

1853-73 - Dr. Alexander Crumwell served as clergyman and educator in Sierra Leone and Liberia. From 1873 until his death, he was a prolific writer and speaker throughout leading cities in the States.

1857 - Bishop Samuel Ajaye Crowther, first black bishop of the Church of England, founded the Niger Mission.

1880s-1900-Workers from Jamaica and Antigua formed a small Christian community on the west coast of Africa. Missions were formed with mixed success throughout the area. Others were formed by Catholic and Protestant orders at a tremendous toll: close to nine hundred members were lost nin about sixty years of Christianizing.

1860-62 - French Catholic missionaires established three schools and a tehnical center in Tanzania.

1861 - Anglican missionaries were the first to proselytize in Malawi.

1868 - The first Christian mission was founded in Bagamo, Tanzania by the Holy Ghost Fathers of France. Others quickly followed to achieve a balance of the Catholic and Protestant faiths.

1870 — The first Zulu pastor was ordained by American missionaries.

Black members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, broke away to form the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church. This was a direct result of the evangelistic work that the M. E. Church did among the (then) slaves.

1877 - Christianity was introduced into hostile Uganda. It was recorded that forty-five missionaries suffered martyrdom until the establishment of a British administration in 1894.

1883 - American missionaires translate the Bible into the Zulu language.

1886 - Ricketts and Scholl, two black missionaries from the Northern Baptist Organization, were appointed to the Congo.

The National Baptist Convention was created in St. Louis. It served to consolidate state, regional and missionary bodies into a whole.

1887 - In addition to being a statesman and educator for Liberia, Edward Wilmot Blyden had published, "Christianity, Islam and the Negro."

1899 - James (Holy) Johnson was appointed assistant bishop of the Niger Delta Church Pastorate.

1900-John Chilembwe of Malawi, a graduate of the Virginia Theological Seminary and College, established the first independent (black) African-operated mission in his homeland. His martyrdom in the Chilembwe Rebellion of 1915 encouraged his countrymen to produce more teachers, evangelists and artisans.

The phenomenal growth of the Baptist and Methodist denominations among blacks is attributed to the high emotionalism involved in the evangelical form of Christianity which has done much to fashion the present form of worship.

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BLACK HISTORY, THE BLACK CHURCH
And
Encourage Black People everywhere; that With God We are somebody

"The heights of great men, reached and kept
Were not attained by sudden flight
But they while their companions slept
Were toiling upward through the night."

DR. WALTER E. PAIGE, Minister

Kuwait donates $100,000 to King Center

The government of Kuwait decided in its Cabinet meeting of Dec. 23 to contribute $100,000 to the Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Social Change.

This contribution was made in response to a request by the widow of the civil rights leader, Mrs. Coretta King, to send some donation to the fund being raised by this center to build the new Foundation Hall

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Important dates in Black History

January

1. Emancipation Proclamation issued by Abraham Lincoln, 1863. The Liberator first issued by William Lloyd Garrison, 1831. Haiti declared its independence, 1804.

2. Kumbi (Ghana) discovered to be in its apogee, 900.

3. Lucretia Mott, Pennsylvania abolitionist, born, 1793.

4. Benjamin Lundy, colonizationist, born, 1789.

6. Charles Sumner, fearless advocate of equality and justice, born, 1811.

17. Benjamin Franklin, a supporter of the anti-slavery movement, born, 1706.

17. The Virgin Islands purchased by the United States, 1917.

20. Angelina E. Grimke, South Carolina abolitionist.

21. Osai Tutu Kwamina defeated the British under Sir Charles McCarthy at Assamoko, Ashanti, 1824.

23. Lott Carey, minister and pioneer leader in Liberia, sailed for that country in 1821.

26. Bishop William Capers, founder of missions in South Carolina, born, 1790.

28. George S. Boutwell, author of the Thirteenth Amendment, born, 1818.

29. Thomas Paine, an advocate of freedom, born, 1737.

31. Anthony Benezet, a teacher and promoter of the anti-slavery cause in Pennsylvania, born, 1713.

February

1. Charles Lenox Redmond, abolitionist, born, 1810.

4. James G. Birney, Free Soil candidate for president of the United States, born, 1792.

10. Joseph C. Price, orator and educator, born, 1854.

12. Abraham Lincoln, born, 1809.

14. Frederick Douglass' "Birthday."

15. Senator B.K. Bruce presided over the United State Senate, 1897

16. Henry Wilson, abolitionist, born, 1812.

20. Angelina E. Grimke, South Carolina abolitionist, born, 1805. 92.

5. Booker T. Washington, "born," 1856.

9. Surrender of Robert E. Lee, 1865.

10. Judge John Belton O'Neal, of South Carolina, advocate of the enlightenment of the slaves, born, 1793.

12. Battle of Fort Pillow during the Civil War, 1864.

13. Thomas Jefferson, advocate of freedom, born, 1743.

14. First abolition society in the United States, founded 1775.

16. Emancipation in the District of Columbia, 1862.

17. Francis Williams, first black college graduate in the Western Hemisphere, published Latin poem in 1758.

March

1. The Abyssinians defeated the Italians at Adowa, 1896.

1. B.K. Bruce, United States senator, born, 1841.

1. Cudjoe, leader of the Maroons in Jamaica, brought the Jamaican Government to terms in 1738.

5. Cripus Attucks, a seaman, fell in the Boston Massacre, 1770.

7. Little Stephen, set out to explore the Southwestern part of the United States, 1539.

10. El-Hadj Omar, Tukulor Conqueror, started his empire with the capture of Segu, 1861.

12. Benjamin Banneker with L'Enfantt to lay out Washington in the District of Columbia, 1791.

14. Menelik became ruler of Abyssinia, 1889.

17. Texas, as a republic, abolished the slave trade, 1836.

18. Gabriel de la Concepcion Valdes (Placido), poet, born in Havana, Cuba, 1809.

23. The abolition of slavery in Puerto Rico, 1873.

25. Slave trade abolished by British Parliament, 1807.

25. Samori, the builder of the Wasulu Empire, signed with the French the Treaty of Bisandugu, 1887.

28. Samuel Sewall, anti-slavery author, born, 1625.

28. Thomas Clarkson, British abolitionist, born, 1760.

30. Promulgation of the Fifteenth Amendment, 1870.

April

1. Thomas Powell Buxton, British emancipationist, born, 1786.

3. Edward Everett Hale, anti-slavery writer, born, 1822.

3. James Madison Bell, poet, born, 1826.

4. Thaddeus Stevens, distinguished reconstructionist, born, 1792

14. Harriet Beecher Stowe, born, 1811.

16. Dessalines declared emperor of Haiti, 1804.

20. Charles Waddell Chesnutt, novelist, born, 1858.

21. Henry Ossawa Tanner, famous American painter transplanted to France, born, 1859.

22. Lord Mansfield's decision in the Somerset case, 1772.

24. Henry Ward Beecher, promoter of equal rights, born, 1813.

27. Paul Laurence Dunbar, born, 1872.

May

5. The Will of Thaddeus Kosciusko, providing for the education of blacks, 1798.

6. Martin R. Delany, army officer and author, born, 1812.

9. John Brown, the martyr, born, 1800.

10. Elizabeth Taylor Greenfield, invited to sing before Queen Victoria, 1854.

10. P.B.S. Pinchback, reconstruction

13. Robert Smalls, of South Carolina, dared to take the Planter to the Union Fleet, 1862.

14. Abolition of slavery in Brazil, 1888.

20. Toussaint Louverture, Haitian liberator, born, 1743.

22. Arthur Tappan, abolitionist, born, 1786.

23. Assault of Port Hudson, 1863.

23. Lewis Tappan, abolitionist, born, 1788.

25. Ralph W. Emerson, advocate of freedom, born, 1803.

28. Daniel Reaves Goodloe, North Carolina emancipationist, born, 1814.

31. Walt Whitman, open-minded poet, born, 1819.

June

3. The United States recognized Haiti and Liberia as nations, 1862.

10. Richard Allen started independent African Methodist movement, 1794.

10. Antonio Candido Gonzales Crespo. Portuguese poet, born, 1846.

22. James Russell Lowell, liberal poet, born, 1819.

24. Bishop Daniel A. Payne, reformer and educator of the AME Church, born 1811.

25. Hiram R. Revels, first black United States senator, took the oath of office, 1870.

27. Dominican Republic established, 1844.

July

1. Abolition of slavery in the Dutch West Indies, 1863.

4. Booker T. Washington began his work at Tuskegee, 1881.

4. E.M. Bannister, painter of African blood, exhibited "Under the Oaks" at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia and was awarded first prize, 1876.

16. Pompey at Stony Point was with Anthony Wayne, 1779.

17. The arming of blacks approved by Congress, 1862.

18. Lemuel Haynes, preacher to whites, born, 1753

21. Charles L. Reason, teacher and poet, born, 1818.

24. Alexandre Dumas, pere, the great French novelist, born, 1803.

24. Ira Aldridge, Shakespearean actor acknowledged in Europe, born, 1804.

25. Maria Weston Chapman, abolitionist, born, 1806.

28. Fourteenth Amendment declared ratified, 1868.

29. Alexandre Dumas, French author, born 1806.

31. Europeans had their first glimpse of Chaka, the distinguished chieftain of the Zulus, 1824.

August

1. Slavery finally abolished in British dependencies, 1834.

3. Edward W. Blyden, scholar and diplomat, born, 1832.

4. Robert Purvis, abolitionist, born, 1810.

20. Twenty blacks brought as slaves to Jamestown, 1619.

21. Nat Turner's Insurrection, 1831.

23. Jean Baptiste Lislet-Geoffrey, a distinguished French geographer, grandson of Touca Niama, King of Galam, born, 1755.

23. African Methodist Episcopal Church incorporated, 1796.

24. Theodore Parker, liberal-minded minister, born, 1810.

24. Independence of Liberia proclaimed, 1847.

31. Gonga Musa (Mansa Musa), the most famous of the rulers of the Manding, went on a pious pilgrimage to Mecca, 1324.

August, 1892 - AFRO-AMERICAN Newspaper chain founded in Baltimore, Md. by John H. Murphy Sr.

September

1. Hiram R. Revels, first black United States senator, born, 1822.

1. Bishop Charles Betts Galloway, of Mississippi, promoter of interracial goodwill, born, 1849.

6. Marquis de Lafayette, friend of the blacks, born, 1757.

9. John Gregg Fee, Kentucky abolitionist founder of Berea College, born, 1816.

11. Angelo Soliman (Mmadi-Make) warrior under Joseph II, of the Holy Roman Empire, born, 1721.

12. Samuel J. May, abolitionist, born, 1797.

18. Fugutive Slave Act of 1850 passed.

22. Lincoln gave notice of his intention to proclaim the emancipation of the slaves, 1862.

24. Jupiter Hammon published his Address to the Negroes of New York, 1786.

28. David Walker, author of the "Appeal" against slavery, born, 1785.

October

7. William Still, abolitionist and agent of the Underground Railroad, born, 1821.

Juan Latino, Spanish poet, wrote Latin poem in celebration of the Battle of Lepanto, 1571.

10. Robert Gould Shaw, colonel of the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts Regiment, born, 1837.

16. John Brown's attack on Harper's Ferry, 1859.

19. Cassius Marcellus Clay, Kentucky emancipationist, born, 1810.

19. John Woolman, anti-slavery worker, born, 1720.

25. William Goodell, abolitionist and author of the American Slave Code, born, 1792.

28. Levi Coffin, founder of the "Underground Railroad," born, 1792.

November

3. William Cullen Bryant, liberal-minded poet, born, 1794.

7. Elijah P. Lovejoy, the abolitionist, killed by a pro-slavery mob at Alton, Illinos, 1837.

9. Benjamin Banneker, inventor and astronomer, born, 1731.

11. Elihu Embree, Tennessee emancipationist, born, 1782.

11. Bishop William Meade, preacher in Virginia, born, 1789.

17. Behanzin, King of Dahmoney, made his last stand against the French in defense of his native land, 1892.

17. Henrique Dias, distinguished general, won a decisive battle against the Dutch in Brazil, 1636.

17. Stephen S. Foster, abolitionist, born, 1809.

25. Andrew Carnegie, philanthropist, born, 1835.

26. Sara Grimke, South Carolina anti-slavery worker, born, 1792.

29. Wendell Phillips, orator of the abolition cause, born, 1811. Edmonia Lewis, a sculptor of African blood, presented medallion portrait of Wendell Phillips.

29. Louisa May Alcott, anti-slavery sympathizer, born, 1832.

30. Askia the Great claimed the throne vacated by the death of Sonni Ali, 1492.

December

2. John Brown executed at Charles Town, West Virginia, 1859.

4. Bishop Henri Gregoire, anti-slavery worker in France, born, 1750.

6. Christopher Columbus discovered the Island of Haiti, 1496.

The Black Firsts

The first school for "Colored children" was established in 1798 in Boston, Massachusetts. It was held in the home of Primus Hall, who was a reputable black man. The teacher's name was Elisha Sylvester. Her salary was paid by the parents of the children who attended the school.

Because of the fact that very few parents could afford to pay for their children's schooling, sixty-six (66) black citizens presented a petition to the School Committee of Boston, requesting that a school which would benefit them be established.

The first black newspaper to appear came out in New York on March 16, 1827. It was named Freedom's Journal. The name of the newspaper told its purpose: abolition. It was founded by Samuel Cornish and John B. Russwurm.

Samuel Cornish was a Presbyterian minister and an organizer in the Negro Convention movement. John Russwurm was a black first himself. He was the first black college graduate.

The Freedom's Journal was followed by other black-owned and black-managed newspapers. They were being published at the rate of almost one a year for the following thirty (30) years. The word in their names also carried a message. Two of such were the "Mirror of Liberty" and "The Rights of All."

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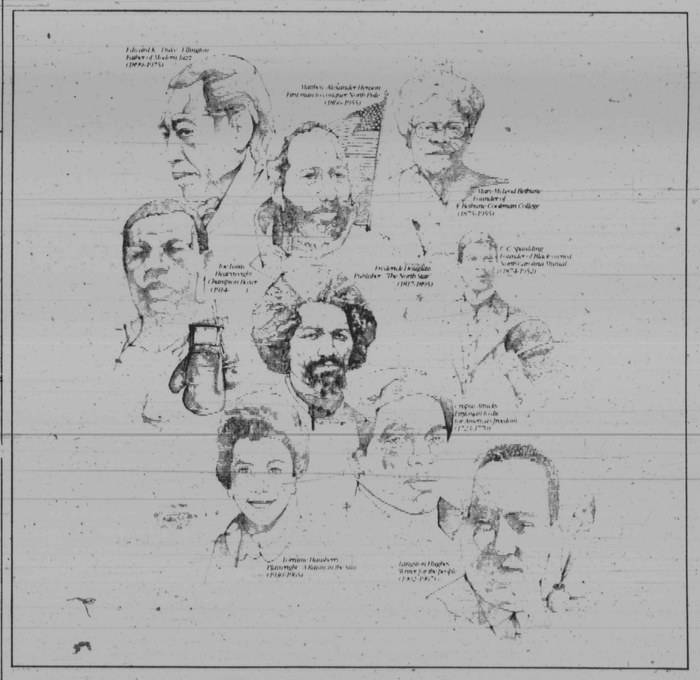

Hear history repeat itself on WWIN. McDonalds honors Black History Month.

Throughout the month of February relive many of the great moments in Black history. These great moments are brought to you by your nearby McDonalds Restaurants.

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