

Black History Month 1998 The African - American Male

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Section

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After World War II, discharged Black veterans went to meetings to decide their future. The Urban League tried to find jobs and education for them. This organization negotiated with employers and sent out hand-picked qualified workers to jobs previously held only by whites.

Courtesy of the Oregon Historical Society.



George Washington was the Black founder of Centralia, Washington. He had settled the area, still a part of Oregon Territory in 1850.

Courtesy of Oregon Historical Society.

*Our Heartfelt Thanks To The
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For Their Support During Our
Black History Month Celebration*

Honoring The Black Man

By JOY RAMOS

Collectively, African American men are evolving to the sacred truth of All is One. "We are connected to all of life and that every choice we make and every belief we hold exerts influence upon the whole of life," explains Carolyn Myss, author of *Anatomy of Spirit*.

A physical expression of this truth is our need to come together and need one another. A violation of this truth is Separatism, Racism and Sexism.

The Honorable Elijah Muhammed, head of the Nation of Islam had inspired Black men to become neat, obedient, upright loyal workers and "brothers." Through Muslim principled living, the Black man would have respect for his family. He called for total separation in another state completely run by the "brothers."

Many Black men like the

Honorable Elijah Muhammed have lead out of self-interest using negative strategy. It was based on the "where's mine?" rationality. It only detracted their people from integration by not acting for the good of the whole.

In the 1960's, Stokely Carmichael popularized "Black Power." "It is a call for Black people in this country to unite, recognize their heritage, to build a sense of community. It is a call to reject the racist institutions and values of this society."

The Black Power movement had integration as its main goal, but argued that integration should be delayed until African Americans develop a strong political base. The followers staged unorganized riots and ravaged stores. Stokely Carmichael combined forces with the Black Panthers to demand justice using a violent stance.

The Black Panthers chose force as a means to correct Racism. Their vision was incomplete. Embracing Cultural Diversity is an alternate, greater vision because it supports the truth of All is One. Once this is understood, the labelling of Minority becomes too limiting and meaningless. This is poverty consciousness of "I am less, small, minor."

Many Black men have surpassed the trappings of Separatism, Racism and Sexism. To break the veil of illusion, they sought commonality with everyone. They understood the tribe in its larger sense, the spiritual community of all humanity.

Malcolm X and Dr. Martin Luther King were clear channels for this truth.

Malcolm X went on a pilgrimage to Islam that changed his awareness. "I have eaten from the same plate with people whose eyes were the

bluest of blue, whose hair was the blondest of blond and whose skin was the whitest of white...and I felt the sincerity in the words and deeds of those 'White' Muslims that I felt among the African Muslims of Nigeria, the Sudan and Ghana," expressed Malcolm X. His inner urgings were to let go of 'Black versus White' mentality.

Reverend Howard Thurman journeyed to India in 1935 as a "pilgrimage of friendship." From his meetings with Mahatma Gandhi, Thurman taught the principles of non-violence at the campus church of Morehouse College. One of the students listening was Martin Luther King.

King instilled the meaning of non-violence with Christian thought to effect world wide change by heading the Civil Rights movement.

Reverend Howard Thurman praised Martin

Luther King by saying, "In him the 'outsider' and the 'insider' come together in a triumphant synthesis. Here at last was a man who affirmed that the oneness of Black and White under a transcendent unity, for whom community meant the profoundest sharing in the common life."

Reverend Thurman added, "We must know that for all to be alike is the death of life in all, and yet perceive the harmony that transcends diversities and in which diversity finds its richness and significance."

A contemporary of Dr. Martin Luther King was inspired by his greater vision. He is Jessie Jackson, a champion for Cultural Diversity.

In the 1980's, Jessie Jackson established Operation PUSH (People United to Save Humanity), a rainbow coalition of women, workers, immigrants, elders, youth, lesbians and gays, and all those

left out and locked out of political power. Jessie Jackson has acted to promote justice and dignity for all.

Just recently, the Million Man March in Washington was organized by African American men for the welfare of all men. They embraced Diversity and reclaimed their humanity. It was a grand gathering of unified intentions to be honorable and responsible men of God for family and community.

To all African American men, the gains you've made have been tremendous. Your strength as "brothers" has been to remain deeply 'rooted' in the beauty of your culture while becoming living expressions of the sacred truth that All is One. Collectively, you have furthered the whole of humanity by being reminders of that. We owe our deepest gratitude and honor you.