



THE ADELAIDE L. SANFORD INSTITUTE

BLACK HISTORY IN OUR CHURCHES



The Adelaide L. Sanford Institute
P.O. Box 640039



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Dear Distinguished Clergy,

It is well-documented that children who see themselves reflected in their learning environment through lessons, books, and other educational materials possess a heightened sense of self-esteem and are likelier to achieve their academic goals in school and beyond. While the connection between self-actualization and self-esteem is well established, there is no evidence that our schools are engaging students in a comprehensive, well-developed, and highly structured course of study that highlights the breadth and depth of the African diaspora.

For decades, we have discussed this omission. During February, Black History Month, many schools focus on notable Black historical figures, including Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, George Washington Carver, and numerous athletes and entertainers.

However, our history is much more than our outstanding contributors, past and present. Our history spans the globe and reflects political, social, economic, and cultural influences omitted from the written accounts of the world's development and progress.

Our insistence on the moral obligation to teach Black History in schools is a noble demand. However, we don't have to wait for the schools to comply. We have a vehicle/ venue in our communities that has been the foundation of our rise from the shackles of slavery: the Black Church! It has the captive audience, the pulpit, and the legacy of activism and reformation.

The Adelaide L. Sanford Institute (ASI) has assumed the charge of sharing a program of Black History enlightenment with our churches. We plan to partner with you in this groundbreaking initiative. Here are some components that will ensure an effective program of information sharing:

BLACK HISTORY INFORMATION

The videos include:

- African Empires
- The Middle Passage
- The Underground Railroad
- Emancipation Proclamation
- Reconstruction Era
- The Great Migration

- Civil Rights Movement
- Black Wall Street
- Historic Figures

IMPLEMENTATION

- We suggest presenting information on at least one individual or historical fact at a designated time during each Sunday service, such as during the morning announcements or at another specified time.
- If possible, show the person's picture and descriptive text on a screen.
- Post the information in the church bulletin and website for additional exposure.
- To increase participation, hold competitions after one month, then three and six months. Hold an annual contest and award prizes to motivate members and recognize achievement.
- The program should be intergenerational, encouraging people of all ages to learn about our history.
- Assign a church member to select and manage the weekly presentations, contests, and other activities. We have ASI's Parent Leadership Institute members ready to work with your designee to build our capacity to learn and value our culture and history.

I know many of you have similar programs in operation in your churches. We would love to hear about the challenges you experienced, your successes, and any lessons learned.

Please let me know if you will join us in this project to teach our people about our people. I can't over-emphasize the significance of this endeavor.

Blessings,

Renee Young

Renee Young, Ph.D.

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