

Walking Blind! Does Black America Even Care Anymore?

Written by Jeffrey L. Boney

Wednesday, 15 February 2012 21:22



All across the United States, this month, people are once again celebrating Black History Month.

Teachers are giving out special school reports and communities are holding special programs, all with the intent of celebrating the rich history of African-Americans in this country.

But what black history is being celebrated?

Is it the history that we learn through the public school systems that primarily marginalizes the accomplishments of people of African descent?

Or is it the history that has lulled black people to sleep, selling a falsehood that black history alone doesn't really matter because at the end of the day we are all Americans?

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Black History Month, as we know it, originated in 1926 and was actually called "Negro History Week." "Negro History Week" was the brainchild of the famous African-American author and historian Carter Godwin Woodson, who chose the second week of February because it marked

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the birthdays of two notable Americans whom he felt greatly influenced the lives and social condition of African Americans. Those two notable individuals were former slave Frederick Douglass and former President Abraham Lincoln. Carter G. Woodson was a powerful journalist and historian, convinced that the role of black people in American history and in the history of the world was being ignored or misrepresented by educators and scholars. He realized that the need for research into the neglected past of African Americans was a priority that he could not overlook or ignore.

Woodson believed in self-reliance and racial respect. He was a bold leader, who was not afraid to take on controversial subjects concerning African-Americans. Woodson devoted the majority of his life to historical research and worked tirelessly to preserve the history of African Americans. He believed that African-American contributions were constantly overlooked, ignored and deliberately suppressed by the writers of history textbooks, with the primary intent of teaching people that blacks have never contributed anything for the betterment of society.

STATE OF DENIAL

If you take a careful and close look at the cultural makeup of the United States of America, you will find that blacks in America are one of, if not the only culture group in America, that has completely detached from its heritage and its history.

Many would argue that it is because of the results of slavery and the separation of families that has disconnected black people from their roots.

Many blacks refuse to identify themselves as descendants of African slaves, because they were born in "America," so that makes them their own unique culture, separate and apart from anyone else. Immigrants, who have come to the United States, express their pride and connection to their origin and culture. They are proud and focused on celebrating their heritage. If you visit many metropolitan cities you will find a strong, Chinese population, who have a strong residential and business community. In many cities, you will often find streets and buildings in the Chinese language.

They are extremely proud of their heritage.

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WHO ARE YOU REALLY?

Knowing who you are is important.

Take a moment to think about the culture groups in America and ask yourself if there are any other culture groups that deny their original heritage, other than African-Americans.

Countless African-Americans refuse to acknowledge the “African” portion of their cultural classification, because they weren’t born in Africa.

If an expectant mother from Africa, visiting a family member here in the United States, goes into labor and has her child here in America, does that make the child an American?

It would make them an African, born in America.

Africans were sold into slavery and taken from their native land, many of which came to America. Many offspring were born here, but the fact remains, they come from a strong and rich African heritage.

OPEN UP YOUR EYES

It is so ironic that nearly 80 years after Carter G. Woodson first published “The Mis-education of the Negro” in 1933, not much has changed.

Woodson seems like a 20th century Nostradamus, with his ability to write about the mindset and mentality of black America in the early 1930’s and have his writings be as relevant today as they were then.

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Sadly, many African-Americans make statements like they “don’t think about being black” or that “race doesn’t matter.”

Historically, the Bible was a tool used by many to oppress African-Americans and justify slavery. Many African-American Christians make comments like “we are all the same in God’s eyes and God doesn’t see color.” If racial significance and uniqueness was not important to God, then why would he create us racially and culturally different? Could it be that God wants everyone to embrace and appreciate the racial and cultural diversity of everyone?

EDUCATION IS THE KEY

There are many economic and social challenges that face African-Americans, but there is hope. Educational awareness that starts within the home is the first step.

African-American youth must be challenged to learn more about themselves more than what they hear on the radio or watch on T.V. Next, parents and communities within each state must demand that their school board trustees, state education agencies and higher learning institutions treat Carter G. Woodson with the same historical relevance as William Shakespeare.

Black history is important beyond Black History Month.

Carter G. Woodson stated, “In history, of course, the Negro had no place in this curriculum. He was pictured as a human being of the lower order, unable to subject passion to reason, and therefore useful only when made the hewer of wood and the drawer of water for others. No thought was given to the history of Africa except so far as it had been a field of exploitation for the Caucasian. You might study the history as it was offered in our system from the elementary school throughout the university, and you would never hear Africa mentioned except in the negative. Thereby, you would never learn that Africans first domesticated the sheep, goats, and cows; developed the idea of trial by jury; produced the first stringed instruments, and gave the world its greatest boon in the discovery of iron. You would never know that prior to the Mohammedan invasion about 1000 A.D. these natives in the heart of Africa had developed powerful kingdoms which were later organized as the Songhay Empire on the order of that of the Romans and boasting of similar grandeur.”

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As with anything that is challenged, it will not be easy, but African-Americans must demand more and not continue to settle for less.

Black people owe it to the Kings and Queens that laid a solid foundation prior to coming to America; Black people owe it to the families that were snatched from their homes in Africa and separated through slavery. Black people owe it to those that endured the hardship of slavery.

Black people owe it to their children and children's children. {jcomments on}