

Why Celebrate Black History?

Black history month is a time to recap, reflect, and recite the vast contributions of Black and Brown men and women to our great American society. From the names of Fredrick Douglass, Richard Allen, and Booker T. Washington to Mary McLeod Bethune, Maya Angelou, and newly elected Kamala Harris, we celebrate the indelible effect these men and women have had on America today.

Black History Month celebration is not relegated to the U.S. only but other countries, such as the United Kingdom and Canada alike, recognize this annual celebration. Read more [here](#).

There is a budding interest on the part of many of our denominational leaders today, long bellowed by our Black and Brown leaders, to address the issue of raising up a new generation of Black leaders and churches in the Church of the Nazarene. Last year the Black Strategic Readiness Team, in conjunction with the Board of General Superintendents, released a “Statement Towards Racial Justice and Righteousness,” which further clarified this resolve. We work together with a shared goal and vision for this singular purpose.

There has been a growing vacuum of Black leadership development since the early 1970s closing of the Nazarene Bible Institute in West Virginia. Black clergy have played a critical role in the development of the Church of the Nazarene in the Black community. During this month, we celebrate the contributions of Black clergy in the Church of the Nazarene and the church universal. Despite the obstacles that stood in front of them, often marginalized and misunderstood, these men and women evangelized, sacrificed, and stood the test of time as they gave their lives for the cause of reaching Blacks for Christ in and through the Church of the Nazarene.

I’d like to call to remembrance and celebrate the contributions of Blacks to the Church of the Nazarene. Let’s begin with men like Dr. Warren Rogers, Rev. Clarence Jacobs, Rev. Clarence & Dr. Roger Bowman, Rev. Seymour Cole, Dr. R.W. Cunningham, Rev. Boyd Procter, and Rev. D.A. Murray. Other names that come to mind like Rev. Rosie Moore, Dr. Charles Johnson, Rev. Roland Chopfield, Dr. Edward Husband, Rev. Lula Williams, and Rev. Cora Dials. We are grateful for the recent progress under Dr. Oliver Phillips, Dr. Elmer Gillett, Dr. JoeAnn Ballard, Dr. Sam Vassel, Rev. S. Carl Bompert, and Dr. Larry Lott. We thank God for them and their servant leadership to the Church of the Nazarene.

During the month of February, let us stop and take a moment to recognize and applaud the achievements of great Black Americans within the confines of our church and the greater American society! Read articles and books written by Black authors. Visit a Black museum, or better yet, worship in a Black church. I leave you with the words of Galatians 3:28, “There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (NIV).



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