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THE GROWTH JOURNAL

ISSUE 3, VOLUME 3 – FEBRUARY 2018

As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another

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I am a Miracle

The Burning Bush, Lazarus Raised from the Dead, The Parting of the Red Sea and Jesus Turning Water to Wine are just a few miracles in the bible. I've heard people say God does not perform these kinds of miracles anymore. I beg to differ as I am a miracle. I was a hot mess on my way to hell in a hand basket. There were times even my own mother was disgusted at the sight of me. All seemed lost and hopeless. Crime, street life and ruin were all I saw in my future at times. But one day I cried out to God and he saw fit to transform my life into something totally different. I'm a new creature. My life today compared to how it was before Christ is like night and day. **I am a living miracle.** Anything God does for you is a miracle because God only does things we do not have the power to do ourselves. **#YearOfMiracles**

Lonnie Johnson, Executive Director,
Growth Ministries, Inc.

"WORDS TO GROW BY"

LINDA LEWIS AKA HOLLYWOOD'S MOTHER
GMI DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

Life is too short to wake up with regrets,
So love the people, who treat you right,
Forget about those who don't.

BELIEVE

That everything happens for a reason.

If you get a chance,

TAKE IT!

If it changes your life,

LET IT!

Nobody said life would be easy,

They just promised

It would most likely be

Worth it.

HOWEVER,

God's Word says...

But they that wait upon the Lord

Shall renew their strength.

They shall mount up on wings like eagles,

They shall run and not be weary,

And they shall walk and not faint. *Isaiah 40:31*

That's Gods PROMISE!

So be of good courage and hang on in there, no
matter what it looks like and no matter what it feels like.

God's got YOU!

Love and Roots

LINDSAY HARDIMAN

LOVE AND ROOTS

LINDSAY HARDIMAN

AKA HOLLYWOOD'S SISTER

February...The month of Love and the celebration of BLACK roots! It's also the shortest month of them all and with that said; I ask that you focus on two things in this short time frame;

1. The Love of God and 2. OUR roots, which unite us all...children of God.

We were created to Love God and Love People (His children). Remember that **God** is your foundation, the **Bible** is your handbook, and **Prayer** helps you gain clarity! If you remember those 3 things, the task of Loving others isn't hard at all.

Sharing who you are and what God has done for you (aka the Love He has shown you) is how we'll reach the Kingdom. Whether you know it or not, each of you has a story to tell. Your Testimony! And the thing is, you have no clue how Your Testimony can be used to save others!

It is my hope that each of you put into practice the Love you've received from God, OUR Father on a consistent basis so that more of our brothers and sisters (His children) are led back to Him! Remember, someone is counting on YOU to Love them just as Christ Loves you!

Because I've gone on and on about showing the Love of Christ to Our Brothers and Sisters, I want to extend my Love to you all by praying for Peace in each of your lives.

I, too, am currently in a situation or "battle" and I know that beyond the shadow of a doubt, I would fold under the pressure BUT I have my Faith! I have Faith in knowing that with each "blow to the chest" that I take, God IS on my side and He has shielded me with armor so that each "blow" doesn't hurt as much as the enemy intended it to. My Faith has also given me a sense of Peace, but even it at that, I still pray for Peace and Understanding on a daily basis. ☺

So, I leave with you all a prayer for Peace! The devil will NEVER stop coming at you BUT remember that you have power over the Enemy! I pray you find Peace in knowing that God is walking with you through the battle, He's walking with you through the hurt, and He's walking with you through the pain! Don't give up! **The Best Is Yet To Come!** *John 14:27*



“From the Yard”

Black Christian History

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED, DARRYL L. LEWIS (HOLLYWOOD)

The Bible is the world's most read history book!! It records the Creation of the Universe as well as of the human family. It chronicles the bloodline and the lineage of those begotten of Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, Moses and many others onto the genealogy of Jesus; with emphasis on the Jewish\Israelite traditions. With this being the case, surely the recognition of history, culture and the human family tree experience is of importance in God's World, if not there would not be as much mentioning of it all throughout the Bible and other Holy Books. The questions then become, should history be important to Christians these days, and how does looking back help us move forward as Believers??

February is designated in America as Black History month. It was created by Dr. Carter G. Woodson in 1926 as a way to remind the world of the accomplishments, inventions and contributions of Black People in America, and is recognized by people of all races. Notwithstanding, there are many Black Christians who believe that their history nor their Blackness has anything to do with their faith, and for that matter, the God Who fashioned them so.

Once again, the Holy Bible records the histories of the Egyptians, the Hamites, the Canaanites, Hebrews, Samaritans, Philippians, Romans and of course the Children of the Nation of Israel, who are distinguished by individual tribes, each of which had their own culture, covenants and encounters documenting their Love and reverence for God. If God Almighty Fashioner of all allows these legacies and heritages to flourish in His Scriptures about people from the ancient past in faraway lands, what about those from the recent past in this nation??

Did you know that Black Christians strongly helped to build the powerful infrastructure for American Christianity to be what it is today? Black Christians have established churches all across America for every denomination, from the Baptist, the Methodist, the Church of Christ to the Unitarians, Lutherans, and Presbyterians on to the Pentecostals for the most part on their own. The eldest known surviving church to be built solely to serve Black Christians was called the African Meeting House, built in 1806, during slavery, in Boston, and is still standing today.

Richard Allen was the first ordained Black Bishop and the founder of the AME (African Methodist Episcopal) churches in 1815, and before that he compiled the first Black Spiritual Hymnal in 1801. In 1817, Elder Jarena Lee was the first allowed Black woman preacher and evangelist on these shores. And, when White folk in Savannah, Georgia would not allow Black worshippers to enter their churches, Minister Andrew Bryan erected the First African Baptist Church to serve God's Purpose. Professor Deborah Wolfe was the first Black Woman President of the Clergy Council of New Jersey; these are only a small portion of the contributors to the advancement of Christianity in America.

Black Christian History *Cont'd*

Finally, but not nearly the final, we should not forget ordained Pastor Nat Turner, who in 1831 used the Guidance and the Spirit of God to help with the overthrowing of the most devilish hell any people have suffered in any history, which would be American chattel slavery (1831-1831).

Truly we must always remember that the largest champion in the struggle for liberation, civil rights, human equality and an end to racial bigotry, also the founder of the Southern CHRISTIAN Leadership Conference (SCLC) which pathed the ways for God-trusting people to embrace the dream of living with justice and in harmony was, REVEREND Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., a very strong Black Christian.

To answer the question should history be important to Christians, of course the answer is yes, if not how would we know who Jesus is, where he came from, what the experiences were that shaped him to be who he was and what his message was without looking to the past?? Surely the Resurrection of Christ would lose some of its flavor without knowing the significance of his birth, his baptism and the crucifixion, right??

In order for a single person, a group or a nation of people to know where they are going (hopefully Heaven Bound), they must have a beginning to know the direction in which they should move in to get there. Knowing the history of your faith is the only way by which you can gage your progress as a Believer, this is why we each have and give our testimonies, as it tells what God has brought us through to get to where we are. What would be the Blessing of making it to the Promised Land without knowing about the forty years of wandering; history is very important.

In conclusion, the Black Christian has a very enormously rich heritage, from the Nubian (African) that Phillip the Deacon converted in 35 A.D. in Acts 8:26-40, up to the Founder of Growth Ministries Lonnie Johnson, we have done a good and faithful job in the service of God and humanity. God does not Create anything that does not fulfill His Divine Purpose and Plan. Unless in His Infinite Wisdom He made a mistake with Black People by giving us our skin color, our culture and our experiences as the Original Chosen People of the Earth, knowing who we are, our accomplishments, our struggles and victories, diminishes the Greatness of God and the Favors He Has Bestowed on us within the human family. Appreciating the Beauty of the mold that God Has Shaped YOU and your people from is as important to your salvation and the placement of your soul as going to church. Jesus of Nazareth knew where he was from and the line of people that carried him over the troubled waters to be Who He Is-Amen?? Let it be written, let it be so. God Loves You So Love yourself.

Be Blessed and Be Yourself.

African Awareness Organization History Test

(Answers will be issued separately - Don't peek)

1. When was the first Black History Celebration?
2. On January 1, 1923 what happened in Rosewood, Florida?
3. What is the street name for the Electra 225 car?
4. What are three meanings for the acronym "PJs"?
5. When and where was Fisk University established?
6. Who invented and patented the fountain pen?
7. What are "Fredastaires"?
8. What are two main sodas at a black family gathering?
9. Who was Nat Love?
10. Which Amendment abolished slavery, and when?
11. What are the three main flavors of Kook-Aid?
12. What black QB made history by setting and breaking records in a super bowl, but did not get his picture on a box of Wheaties?
13. Who was Crispus Attucks?
14. Who invented and patented the fire extinguisher?
15. What car was known as a "poor man's car"?
16. On February 21, 1956 which influential black man was assassinated?
17. Which Amendment guarantees blacks the right to vote?
18. On April 4, 1968 which influential black man was assassinated?
19. Who was the first black man to break the barrier and play Major League Baseball?
20. Bobby Hutton was 16 years old when killed by police in Oakland, Ca on April 6, 1968. What group was he a member of?
21. Who developed the plasma method for preserving blood?
22. Who was the first black Supreme Court justice?
23. What was Kareem Abdul-Jabbar's name before he changed it?
24. What was the "Black Star Line"?
25. Which current state was the first colony to abolish slavery in 1777?
26. What was Muhammad Ali's name before he changed it?
27. Which Sister is on a syrup bottle?
28. Who performed the world's first open heart surgery in 1893?
29. Who discovered the North Pole?
30. What is the Brother's name whose picture is on a box of rice?
31. What was the first black sitcom that did not portray the main character in a stereotypical role?
32. Who was the 1st black female professional tennis player?
33. What and when was the "Harlem Renaissance"?
34. Who invented and patented the traffic signal in 1923?
35. Who wanted to be the 1st 7-foot guard in the NBA?
36. Who were the 7 main characters on Good Times?
37. Who invented and patented the pencil sharpener in 1897?
38. Who put a patent on the golf tee in 1899?
39. Name the oldest black college in the United States?
40. What are these cities nicknames? New York, Newark, Los Angeles, Chicago and Washington DC?
41. What are these? The Flintstones, Errol Flynn and Cosmic Slop.
42. Who was the developer of the Hinton test for diagnosing syphilis?
43. Who was the publisher of the anti-slavery newspaper, The North Star which started December 3, 1847?
44. The average Sunday dinner in a black household consisted of what?
45. What is the most played card game at most black family gatherings?
46. Who was named "Black Moses" and why?
47. A father told his son, "A man needs to have a black suit for four occasions", what are they?
48. Where and when was the 1st black library founded?

Stories of Ex-Convicts Who Turned Their Lives Around

Each month we will try to share with you a case of an individual who has been released from prison and went on to make a positive impact on society.

The Millionaire Ex-Convict



Uchendi Nwani lived a very Jekyll/Hyde existence during his college years. On the surface, Nwani—raised by his stepfather, who was a pastor in one of Nashville’s largest Baptist congregations—played the role of exemplary student to his family and friends. However, Nwani hid a very dark secret underneath that shining exterior: He was a drug dealer, and a very notorious one at that. His greed got the better of him on October 15, 1993, when police caught a million-dollar shipment of cocaine while he was in the middle of an exam during his senior year.

He later turned himself in and did six and a half months of hard labor at a federal boot camp before he returned to finish his studies. To make ends meet, he cut hair at the university salon while living in a halfway house. After he graduated, he opened his own barber shop and school which later became a huge success. Nwani now travels around the country to show that he is living proof that, no matter how low you sink, you really can turn your life around if you don’t give up.

Color Me Christian a Poem by James Edward Lee, Sr.

If I am tan or beige color me Christian
 If I am brown or black color me Christian
 If I am pale in skin or a native of this land
 color me, color me Christian
 If I have scars and marks
 Just let me rejoice, rejoice
 Hear my voice, I’m a Christian

And just what is a Christian
 A Christian is one who does just like Christ
 Must be spit on, must suffer, must die

Must be born again, and rise
 To follow and live forevermore
 Within a mansion with open doors

I shall wait at the golden gates
 As I rise soon to walk on golden bricks
 So, if everything that happened to Christ
 happens to me
 Oh Well, then I guess this is what I be...
 A Christian



Just for Laughs



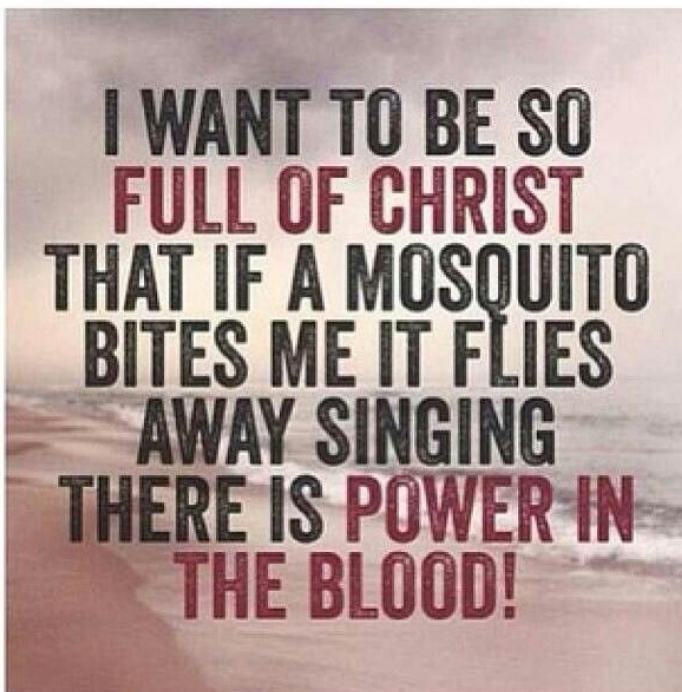
Three Hymns

One Sunday a pastor told his congregation that the church needed some extra money and asked the people to prayerfully consider giving a little extra in the offering plate. He said that whoever gave the most would be able to pick out three hymns.

After the offering plates were passed, the pastor glanced down and noticed that someone had placed a \$1,000 bill in the offering. He was so excited that he immediately shared his joy with his congregation and said he'd like to personally thank the person who placed the money in the plate.

And there sat our Rosie, all the way in the back, and she shyly raised her hand. The pastor asked her to come to the front. Slowly she made her way to the pastor. He told her how wonderful it was that she gave so much and in thanksgiving asked her to pick out three hymns.

Her eyes brightened as she looked over the congregation, pointed to the three most handsome men in the building and said, "I'll take him and him and him!"



Closing Words

LONNIE JOHNSON, GMI EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I am who God says I am!

Growing up I pretty much went with the flow. To my family I tried to appear to be "a good kid". To my teachers I aspired to be a scholar. To the people in my tough neighborhood I aimed to be as slick as possible. This behavior is pretty common for anyone that is "finding themselves". The sad thing about it is that this behavior follows many people into their adult life.

When God saved and transformed me I found out what I really was and no longer had to be what others thought I should be. Because of His Word, I now know I am... **More than a Conqueror, Part of a Royal Priesthood, Christ's Ambassador, The Head and not the tail, God's Child, A New Creature, A person with the power of Life and Death in his tongue, One whose every need is provided through Christ, One who can do all things through Christ and the Temple of the Holy Spirit.** These are just a few of the things God has declared that I am.

I am glad that I am so much more than what the world wants me to be or says that I am.

What must I do to be saved?

If you have never accepted Christ as your Lord and Savior, or if you have turned away from Him living a life of unrighteousness, and wish to be connected to Him then take a moment and say the prayer below:

"Lord, I confess that I am a sinner and ask for your forgiveness. I believe that your son Jesus died on the cross for my sins and was resurrected with all power. I invite Jesus to be the Lord of my life and your Holy Spirit to come into my heart to guide me for the rest of my days. Amen."

Romans 10:9 says that *if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

If this is you, please write Growth Ministries and we will gladly help you start your new life in Christ.

Growth Ministries, Inc., Attn: Executive Secretary, P.O. Box 9045, Kansas City, KS 66112