

A Publication of the National Black Chaplains Association

The Capsule

FEBRUARY 2018 | Volume 1 Issue 2

CELEBRATE

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Unconditional
Love

Words That
Divide
Eyes on
the Prize

Use What
You Have

2018 NBCCA Convention
Mission Bay, CA

From the Desk of the President

¹³ ... I do not consider that I have made it my own; but one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.
Philippians 3:13-14 RSV

Recently, I was reflecting on the theme of our newsletter and I vividly recalled dramatic images of the Civil Rights movement. The rhythmic patterns of chanting and singing along with the fervor of voices and the marching of feet all gave rise to the birth of the song, "keep your eyes on the prize." For present day circumstances may obscure and diminish the hope of continuing the journey unless your eyes are fixed wholeheartedly on the prize. Apostle Paul unequivocally spoke to this in his letter to the Church at Philippi.



The origin of the words "keep your eyes on the prize" is scriptural and probably a derivative of Paul's letter to the Philippians. The Apostle Paul paints a picture of the Olympic runner, who races with heart and soul, never looking back but straining every muscle and fabric until the race is won. To inspire and motivate the runner, the organizers of the race would center the prize precisely where the race was set to end. In doing so, the runners were inspired to drive on until reaching the finished line.

If for a moment, you make the hermeneutical move and consider the upcoming 28th annual session as a prize to win, the real essence of this training will be illuminated. You are competing for travel dollars up against a budget in the red and other disciplinarians are seeking those same travel opportunities. But think on the immortal words that fell from the lips of Frederick Douglas, who said, "We still live, and while there is life, there is hope". This is the message of those standing on the opposite side of suicide. This is the message we bring to our Veterans who are diagnosed with terminal illnesses. KEEP Your Eyes on The Prize.



Chaplain Marvin L. Mills, Sr.
President, NBCA

"We Care, Because We Are"



28th Annual Conference
National Black Chaplains
Association



March 14-17, 2018
Hyatt Regency Hotel
Mission Bay, CA

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FROM MY HEART TO YOUR HEART

As we celebrate Black History Month, I want to honor our past and present. We have so much to be thankful for, not only as African Americans, but all ethnic groups collectively. Civil rights were not only fought by Blacks and Whites, but by other ethnic groups. Our current history is directly tied into our past and present, and will thrust itself into future generations. Our history is also tied into every culture and race of people because God has made us all equal as brothers and sisters across the globe, no matter how we may feel about each other or the color of our skin. No person is an island; we need each other. This is the beauty of God's creation. The color of one's skin, race, culture, and place of birth is determined by God. How we treat, respect, accept, and love each other depends on our attitude toward God and His creation.

In this volume, if you swallow the pill or "The Capsule," you will be enriched and inspired by such great writers. This volume features articles on our history, experiences, feelings, emotions, inspirations, YOU TUBE clips, a published author, and diverse opinions on how we view the world and life as African American Black Chaplains. It is an honor to tell and share our story.

Lastly, I want to thank our contributors who have labored in the vineyard so that you can be informed during Black History Month. I also want to thank Linda Few who works behind the scenes to give this publication a polished and professional look.



Chaplain Rev. Dr. Alfray Thomas, Jr.
Editor-in-Chief

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Celebrating Black History Month

My Black History Hero: Chaplain Alice M. Henderson

by Chaplain Rev. Tammie Elfadili, Houston, TX

Chaplain Alice M. Henderson was the first female chaplain to officially serve in the United States Army. She was commissioned a chaplain in 1974. She was the only female of 1,467 Army Chaplains. Her contribution to the military was her accession to tread waters never explored or allowed by another female Soldier.

Chaplain Henderson was as a symbol of equality, hope, and achievement. Her selection as a chaplain occurred at the height of a struggle for gender equality, when women were not viewed as capable of filling roles socially accepted as positions for men. In most traditions during the 1970s, only men were ministers, and women became nurses, secretaries, or stayed at home with the children.

Chaplain Henderson exuded bravery when she was appointed amidst racial tensions in the United States and when African Americans protested peacefully for their Civil Rights. Chaplain Henderson was a spiritual symbol to the women of the Women's Army Corps. She expressed that being available to women who chose not to speak to a male chaplain was a haven for women Soldiers. Chaplain Henderson reached beyond women Soldiers and helped wives to adjust to the pace of military life and to navigate challenges as mothers.

Although Chaplain Henderson did not view herself as a pioneer or a member of a woman's movement, she inspired women in military service to accomplish their dreams. Chaplain Henderson's story inspires me. She is my hero because she created a path through which I would travel one day. She made it easier for me and other female chaplains to be welcomed into the Army Chaplain Corps., and albeit, the role as a chaplain in any setting. I salute Chaplain Alice M. Henderson for her courage in pursuing a career route unpopular for women in the 1970s. Because of Chaplain Henderson's tenacity, I will carry the torch of hope and mentor future female chaplain.



Chaplain Alice M. Henderson



Black History Videos

Dr. Martin Luther King “Been to the Mountaintop” Speech

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kjLrgZfFj0E>

I Have a Dream Speech

<https://vimeo.com/35177221>

Eyes on the Prize

This is a documentary series about the glory years of the American Civil Rights Movement, starting in 1952 with the murder of Emmett Till and the subsequent trial and ending with the civil rights march to Selma in 1965. Along the way, the series touches on the major figures of the movement such as Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rosa Parks and major incidents such as the Little Rock school riots and Montgomery, Alabama Transit Boycott.

(Part 1) Awakenings 1954–1956

<https://youtu.be/Ts10IVzUDVw>

(Part 2) Fighting Back 1957–1962

https://youtu.be/4D5xwC6M_Gk

(Part 3) Ain't Scared of Your Jails 1960–1961

<https://youtu.be/neDpuJVc4Ko>

(Part 4) No Easy Walk 1961–1963V2

<https://youtu.be/1hkNqIQWfFs>

(Part 5) Mississippi Is This America 1962–1964

https://youtu.be/aP2A6_2b6g8

(Part 6) Bridge to Freedom 1965

<https://youtu.be/Ej2BCUldUI4>

(Part 8) Two Societies 1965–1968

<https://youtu.be/rh3yG6SFzVo>

(Part 7): The Time Has Come 1964-1966

<https://youtu.be/EPMMU3QoR90>

(Part 9) Power! 1967–1968

<https://youtu.be/0ktcv6BOL38>

(Part 10) The Promised Land 1967–1968

<https://youtu.be/wQJP0Yj5GO0>

(Part 11) Ain't Gonna Shuffle No More 1964–1972

<https://youtu.be/1WmVeDSZ8T8>

(Part 12) A Nation of Law 1968–1971

<https://youtu.be/V1BlbVOOH7I>

(Part 13) The Keys to the Kingdom 1974–1980

https://youtu.be/zn2-TT_Bk1M

(Part 14) Back to the Movement 1979–1983

<https://youtu.be/RC8JjbV5jlw>



BLACK HISTORY MEMORABILIA

MARCH ON WASHINGTON FOR JOBS AND FREEDOM

AUGUST 28, 1963

LINCOLN MEMORIAL PROGRAM

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. The National Anthem | <i>Led by Marian Anderson.</i> |
| 2. Invocation | <i>The Very Rev. Patrick O'Boyle, Archbishop of Washington.</i> |
| 3. Opening Remarks | <i>A. Philip Randolph, Director March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.</i> |
| 4. Remarks | <i>Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, Stated Clerk, United Presbyterian Church of the U.S.A.; Vice Chairman, Commission on Race Relations of the National Council of Churches of Christ in America.</i> |
| 5. Tribute to Negro Women
Fighters for Freedom | <i>Mrs. Medgar Evers</i> |
| Daisy Bates | |
| Diane Nash Bevel | |
| Mrs. Medgar Evers | |
| Mrs. Herbert Lee | |
| Rosa Parks | |
| Gloria Richardson | |
| 6. Remarks | <i>John Lewis, National Chairman, Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.</i> |
| 7. Remarks | <i>Walter Reuther, President, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America, AFL-CIO; Chairman, Industrial Union Department, AFL-CIO.</i> |
| 8. Remarks | <i>James Farmer, National Director, Congress of Racial Equality.</i> |
| 9. Selection | <i>Eva Jessye Choir</i> |
| 10. Prayer | <i>Rabbi Uri Miller, President Synagogue Council of America.</i> |
| 11. Remarks | <i>Whitney M. Young, Jr., Executive Director, National Urban League.</i> |
| 12. Remarks | <i>Mathew Ahmann, Executive Director, National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice.</i> |
| 13. Remarks | <i>Roy Wilkins, Executive Secretary, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.</i> |
| 14. Selection | <i>Miss Mahalia Jackson</i> |
| 15. Remarks | <i>Rabbi Joachim Prinz, President American Jewish Congress.</i> |
| 16. Remarks | <i>The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., President, Southern Christian Leadership Conference.</i> |
| 17. The Pledge | <i>A Philip Randolph</i> |
| 18. Benediction | <i>Dr. Benjamin E. Mays, President, Morehouse College.</i> |

"WE SHALL OVERCOME"

March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom—Lincoln Memorial Program, August 28, 1963. Program. NAACP Records, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress (122.00.00)
[Digital ID # na0122p1]

<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/naacp/the-civil-rights-era.html>

Statement by the heads of the ten organizations calling for discipline in connection with the Washington March of August 28, 1963:

"The Washington March of August 28th is more than just a demonstration.

"It was conceived as an outpouring of the deep feeling of millions of white and colored American citizens that the time has come for the government of the United States of America, and particularly for the Congress of that government, to grant and guarantee complete equality in citizenship to the Negro minority of our population.

"As such, the Washington March is a living petition—in the flesh—of the scores of thousands of citizens of both races who will be present from all parts of our country.

"It will be orderly, but not subservient. It will be proud, but not arrogant. It will be non-violent, but not timid. It will be unified in purposes and behavior, not splintered into groups and individual competitors. It will be outspoken, but not raucous.

"It will have the dignity befitting a demonstration in behalf of the human rights of twenty millions of people, with the eye and the judgment of the world focused upon Washington, D.C., on August 28, 1963.

"In a neighborhood dispute there may be stunts, rough words and even hot insults; but when a whole people speaks to its government, the dialogue and the action must be on a level reflecting the worth of that people and the responsibility of that government.

"We, the undersigned, who see the Washington March as wrapping up the dreams, hopes, ambitions, tears, and prayers of millions who have lived for this day, call upon the members, followers and wellwishers of our several organizations to make the March a disciplined and purposeful demonstration.

"We call upon them all, black and white, to resist provocations to disorder and to violence.

"We ask them to remember that evil persons are determined to smear this March and to discredit the cause of equality by deliberate efforts to stir disorder.

"We call for self-discipline, so that no one in our own ranks, however enthusiastic, shall be the spark for disorder.

"We call for resistance to the efforts of those who, while not enemies of the March as such, might seek to use it to advance causes not dedicated primarily to civil rights or to the welfare of our country.

"We ask each and every one in attendance in Washington or in spiritual attendance back home to place the Cause above all else.

"Do not permit a few irresponsible people to hang a new problem around our necks as we return home. Let's do what we came to do—place the national human rights problem squarely on the doorstep of the national Congress and of the Federal Government.

"Let's win at Washington."

SIGNED:

Mathew Ahmann, Executive Director of the National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice.

Reverend Eugene Carson Blake, Vice-Chairman of the Commission on Race Relations of the National Council of Churches of Christ in America.

James Farmer, National Director of the Congress of Racial Equality.

Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., President of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

John Lewis, Chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.

Rabbi Joachim Prinz, President of the American Jewish Congress.

A. Philip Randolph, President of the Negro American Labor Council.

Walter Reuther, President of the United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America, AFL-CIO, and Chairman,

Industrial Union Department, AFL-CIO.

Roy Wilkins, Executive Secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Whitney M. Young, Jr., Executive Director of the National Urban League.

In addition, the March has been endorsed by major religious, fraternal, labor and civil rights organizations. A full list, too long to include here, will be published.

WHAT WE DEMAND*

1. Comprehensive and effective civil rights legislation from the present Congress—without compromise or filibuster—to guarantee all Americans

access to all public accommodations
decent housing
adequate and integrated education
the right to vote

2. Withholding of Federal funds from all programs in which discrimination exists.

3. Desegregation of all school districts in 1963.

4. Enforcement of the Fourteenth Amendment—reducing Congressional representation of states where citizens are disfranchised.

5. A new Executive Order banning discrimination in all housing supported by federal funds.

6. Authority for the Attorney General to institute injunctive suits when any constitutional right is violated.

7. A massive federal program to train and place all unemployed workers—Negro and white—on meaningful and dignified jobs at decent wages.

8. A national minimum wage act that will give all Americans a decent standard of living. (Government surveys show that anything less than \$2.00 an hour fails to do this.)

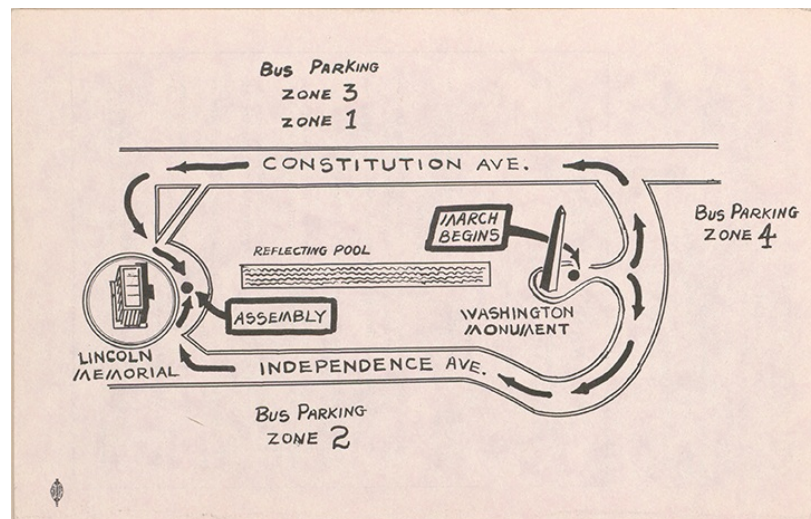
9. A broadened Fair Labor Standards Act to include all areas of employment which are presently excluded.

10. A federal Fair Employment Practices Act barring discrimination by federal, state, and municipal governments, and by employers, contractors, employment agencies, and trade unions.

*Support of the March does not necessarily indicate endorsement of every demand listed. Some organizations have not had an opportunity to take an official position on all of the demands advocated here.

March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom—Lincoln Memorial Program, August 28, 1963. Program. page 2. NAACP Records, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress (122.00.01)

[Digital ID # na0122p2]



<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/naacp/the-civil-rights-era.html>

March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom—Lincoln Memorial Program, August 28, 1963. Program. Page 3.

NAACP Records, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress (122.00.02)

[Digital ID # na0122p3]

<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/naacp/the-civil-rights-era.html>

Celebrating Black History Month

UPDATE TO OUR BLACK HISTORY

by Chaplain Elder Sherri Headen, Indianapolis, IN



Once again, I received a forwarded chain letter on my facebook instant messenger app! So often, I become annoyed by the numerous forwards I receive with positive messages and promises of blessings if I send it on to 10, 20, 30 or more people. Will there ever be an end to these chain letters!

A few weeks ago, I received a video message from one of my facebook friends, that I neglected to look at for a few days because I thought it was another one of these annoying messages. Finally, I decided to listen to this brief video message. Someone, probably a few months ago, decided to make their own homemade video (the graphics and typed message) with a portion of a sermon from Pastor Jesse Duplantis of Jesse Duplantis Ministries. I am familiar with him and have heard a few of his sermons. In this portion of his sermon highlighted by this video, he spoke words that resonated with my conviction and experience as an African American. I also felt he spoke volumes regarding the tenacity of my ancestors. I was stunned, amazed and felt a keen sense of pride as I listened to this Caucasian American pastor explain his understanding of the African American spiritual strength and stamina throughout history and the spiritual challenge in our community today.

Here is my version of what Pastor Duplantis said and my conviction tied in as well: From the time the first African American slaves stepped onto North American soil with their feet and hands shackled in the colony of Jamestown, Virginia in 1619, to the feet that marched in the non-violent protest in the 1960s Civil Rights Movement and beyond, African Americans have possessed a spiritual strength that has kept them going despite the challenges they have faced. Sometimes that spirituality called on Yahweh, sometimes on Allah and other times on Jesus Christ. No matter the name attached to the deity or transcendent, we come from a people who drew strength from outside of themselves and did not relent to do so even in the face of heinous adversity.

Throughout history, African Americans have called on the Name above all names, even when the world around them stripped them of their ancestral name. With few exceptions to the rule, we didn't curse God and die, even when it was claimed by misguided theologians that we come from an accursed race (Noah's son Ham). We continued to sing "Amazing Grace, How Sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me, I once was lost, but now am found T'was blind but now I see". Our spirituality, our trust and faith in God kept us from completely folding under slavery, discrimination, Jim Crow and the fight for equality.

Pastor Duplantis claims we are the only race of people throughout American history who have kept such a strong disposition of spiritual strength, for such a long period of time, in the face of such discriminatory adversity. I do not know if that is accurate, but I agree we have overcome many challenges! However, as we view our current dilemma and tragedy of black on black crime among our youth, especially many of the young men in our community, it seems as if the spiritual stamina that once inhabited the African American community has changed. There's a level of spiritual depravity that has fostered an environment of hatred toward one another. For those who believe in an evil force or an enemy who is contrary to God and desires to destroy humanity, one could arrive at the conclusion that this evil force is trying to use this hatred toward one another and lack of sanctity of life in attempt to steal, kill and destroy our young men and ultimately our community from the inside out, because we were unable to be spiritually broken from the outside in. We refused to stop believing and praising God throughout our years of adversity. Yes, by the grace of God, our community has come a long way, however let us not forget the spiritual strength that kept us throughout our history. The questions we ask ourselves today, how do we return to that communal spiritual strength and tenacity? Will it make a difference in the lives of our youth and ultimately our community? "God of our weary years, God of our silent tears, Thou who has brought us thus far on the way; Thou who has by Thy might, Led us into the light, Keep us forever in the path, we pray..."

Celebrating Black History Month

THE BLACK MALE CHAPLAIN

by Chaplain Rev. Dr. Richard Ross, Redlands, CA

As a black male chaplain writing on the topic of *The Black Male Chaplain*, it only seems proper for me to respectfully approach this broad topic from a historical prospective that pays homage to those who blazed the trail before us in honoring them and in recognizing their contributions and sacrifices during Black History Month.

What is the origin of the word *chaplain*? (Please read the 4th century story of Saint Martin of Tours.) The word chaplain is often defined as a clergyman, minister, or custodian of St. Martin's cloak. However, in modern times the word might be better defined as, a clergy person who ministers and/or attends to what is sacred at various institutions. When did institutions first begin to have Black Male Chaplains? Well, since the Army (14 June 1775) and Navy (13 October 1775) were among the first institutions established in the United States (even before its official date of origin on 04 July 1776), the first chaplain commissioned in the armed forces, during this day and time, was of course a Caucasian male chaplain. However, that being said, slavery took place in America from 1619 (the Jamestown, VA colony) to 1863 (Emancipation Proclamation) when President Abraham Lincoln signed an executive order on 01 January 1863 that declared that all slaves in rebel territory were now free.



Later in 1863, the U.S. Army commissioned its first African-American Chaplain, Henry M. Turner (African Methodist Episcopal or AME). This preceded the first ex-slave volunteers who signed up for what would later become the 1st Regiment, U.S. Colored Troops. On 10 September 1863, President Lincoln would go on to approve Reverend Turner's appointment and first assignment for him to serve as Chaplain, 1st Regiment U.S. Colored Troops. It has been said that following Turner's appointment that 14 other African American Chaplains would go on to serve during the Civil War (12 Apr 1861 – 13 May 1865). With the north's victory over the south, and winds of change already in motion, the 13th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution (passed by Congress on 31 Jan 1865 and ratified on 06 Dec 1865) would later go on to legally outlaw slavery.

Change tends to be slow, and so for many years racial discrimination and segregation still ran rampant in society as well as in the armed forces which is often thought of as a microcosm of society. Therefore, even though they were military members (some highly decorated for their service), African-Americans in the southern states were still subjected to the Jim Crow laws. The black chaplain was not exempt. However, during WWII (1 Sep 1939 – 02 Sep 1945) after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and the well-publicized bravery displayed by black men such as Third-Class Navy Cook, Doris "Dorie" Miller, and driven by the immediate need for manpower after such a devastating attack, the forces would soon be set in motion towards greater social consciousness and racial equality. Visionaries hoped that this would soon bring about the end of segregation in not only the Navy but all of the U.S. Armed Forces which would initiate change for the civilian sector. Bishop N.W. Williams, who served as an Army Captain during WWI and Ecclesiastical Endorser, Bishop R.R. Wright, would go on to successfully encourage a young African Methodist Episcopal Church Pastor named James R. Brown to leave the church and become the Navy's first black chaplain. Chaplain Brown's Active Commissioned Service dates were 26 April 1944 to 30 April 1946. A married man with four children, Chaplain Brown went on to retire in 1976 after 43-years of ministry. After WWII, Executive Order 9981 would officially end segregation in the Armed Forces in 1948.

The second black chaplain in the Navy was Thomas D. Parham, Jr. (United Presbyterian Church), whose Active Commissioned Service dates were December 1944 to August 1946, and January 1951 to his Retirement from the Navy in April 1982. Chaplain Parham, who was also married and had four children, also has the distinction of being the first black officer (as a Chaplain) promoted to the rank of Captain (O-6) in the Navy (FEB 1966). On April 16, 2007, Chaplain Parham (born in Newport News, VA) passed away in Norfolk, VA at the age of 87. The Reverend Dr. Barry C. Black (Seventh Day Adventist), U.S. Senate Chaplain and Retired U.S. Navy Chief of Chaplains (the first black chaplain to serve in both these capacities) delivered his eulogy at a homegoing service held on April 21, 2007 fittingly held at the Little Creek Amphibious Base Chapel in Norfolk, VA.

The National Chaplain Center records that the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) Chaplain Service actually began on 3 March 1865 when President Abraham Lincoln's legislation established the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, which hired its own chaplains before the Department of Veterans Affairs Chaplaincy Service was created. Later, on 02 May 1945, The Reverend Crawford W. Brown (Episcopal church) was selected as the first Chief of Chaplaincy Service (later titled as, Director, National Chaplain Service). However, it was not until December 1974 that the DVA selected its first African-American as Chief of a Chaplain Service (New York, NY). Lastly, on 30 November 2015, an Associate Director since October 1993, Chaplain Michael L. McCoy (National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.) was sworn in as the 18th Director, National Chaplain Service. Chaplain McCoy is the first black chaplain to serve in this capacity.

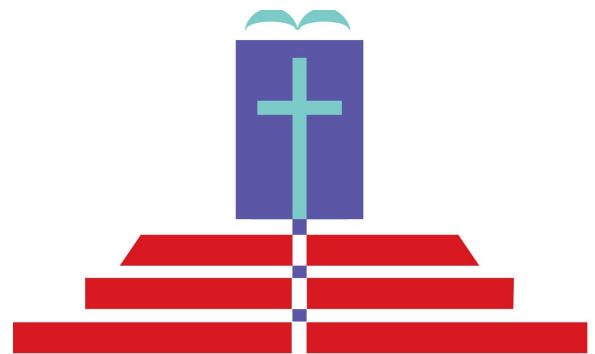
SUNDAY MESSAGE – USE WHAT YOU HAVE

by Chaplain Rev. Dr. Alfray Thomas, Jr.

Have you ever been a person that says: If I had this or that, I would be a *better* person; a *better* singer, mother, father, Christian, co-worker, or chaplain. I confess, I have. If truth be told, I am certain that you have made similar statements or at least one time in your life. As I have grown in my relationship with the Lord, these statements have changed for the better.

So, as we celebrate Black History Month, here is my challenge and encouragement to us according to Matthew 14:13-21. After seeing the crowd following Jesus, His disciples said to Him, "Jesus, send these people home to get their own food to eat. Jesus, practicing unconditional love to His disciples told them, the multitude do not need to go home. Feed them. They said unto Him, we only have 5 loaves of bread and two fishes. Jesus said, bring them to me. After, He told the crowd to sit down on the grass. Jesus took the bread and fishes, blessed and broke both and looked unto the heaven and prayed. God answered His prayers by raining down fragments from heaven so much that He filled an extra 12 baskets full. The story goes on to say that Jesus feed about five thousand men, besides women and children. ***The moral of the story is this:*** Jesus is telling us on this Black History Month, bring to Him all that we have because He can do much with less. In other words, Jesus wants us to use what He has given us and not be concerned with what He has given others.

Never mind if we can't sing like Beyoncé, dance like Bruno Mars or Michael Jackson, act like Denzel Washington, look like Gabrielle Union, or be as rich as Oprah Winfrey. We should never be concerned about what we do not have. If we don't have it, God planned it because we are all different with a specific purpose. We should always thank God for what we do have and make the best of it.



What does it mean to **USE WHAT WE HAVE**. It means to use whatever God has given us **NATURALLY** (2 Pet. 1:3-4), **SPIRITUALLY** (Rom. 12:6-8) without complaining (Phil. 2:14) or comparing (I Cor. 12:1-10) because God has given us everything that pertains to live and godliness.

What do we have? God has given us:

A Mind: *(So we don't have to think like others – we can think independently of others) –* We can use our mind to think correctly about God, self and others. We can train our mind not to compare with others because comparison always brings discontentment. It tells God, “God, I do not like the way you made me, nor the color of my skin, or the place of my birth”. Thoughts not controlled becomes a reality. It is crucial that we use our mind to think correctly. We are made in the image and likeness of God and He loves us. Therefore, we can choose to think in concert with the will of God for our lives.

A Body: *(So we don't have to wish we had another person body – be happy with your own because God made it especially for YOU; if we don't like our body, change or improve the body) –* We must treat our body as the temple of God (maintain proper stewardship over it). We must say to self, “I will not compare my body with someone else's body”. That means, we must discipline our body through exercise, proper diet, sleep, and rest. We only have one body and it should be taken care of because it is where the Holy Spirit dwells.

A Heart : *(So we do not have to have a bad heart because of life or how we have been treated. Because God is love, we can make our heart good instead of the bad hearts we see all around us – full of hate, bitterness, jealousy).* God has given us a heart, and we can choose the kind of heart we want to have. King David was a man after God's own heart. We can glean from his life. After David sin against God and killed Bathsheba's husband (Uriah), he said, Lord create in me a clean heart and renew in me a right spirit. God forgave and He will forgive us.

Gifts, Talents, and Abilities: *(We do not have to wish we had somebody else's gifts, talents and abilities. God has equipped us with our own uniqueness).* We can all glean from each other's strength, good qualities and appreciate them, but never try to be that person. God did not make us to be duplicates, but originals. Therefore, be yourself and thank God for what He has given YOU. Use whatever God has given you and glorify (make Him look good) Him with it. In my conclusion, when we learn to use what God has given us (without being ashamed, embarrassed, or fearful), we can not only make a contribution in the earth, but we can we can make the world, our homes, churches, and VA's a better place. NOW THAT'S GOOD NEWS!!

Inspirational Video <https://youtu.be/6mcY9rBZpow>
with Nick Vujicic

PRAISE AND WORSHIP - AMAZING GRACE

by Chaplain Elder Sherri Headen, Indianapolis, IN

I have sung the hymn Amazing Grace numerous times throughout my life. It is one of the most, if not the most popular hymn sung throughout Christendom. However, it was not until I heard Pastor Wintley Phipps give a presentation and perform Amazing Grace, that it took on an even more in-depth meaning for me.

This hymn was written by John Newton (1725-1807) and published in 1779. John Newton was a Captain that served on slave ships in the trans-Atlantic slave trade and then he experienced spiritual renewal. After his spiritual rebirth, he abandoned the atrocity of slave trading and became a minister of the gospel. I believe he wrote Amazing Grace, in part, as a testament to the remarkable change that had taken place in his heart and mind. He wrote Amazing Grace on the pentatonic scale. In early American history, this scale was known as the "slave scale". Most of the Negro Spirituals are written on the slave scale which is the five notes found only in the black keys on the piano.

Amazing Grace is known as one of the most popular "White Spirituals". These are spirituals written

by white composers on the slave scale.

When I listened to Pastor Wintley Phipps, who is a gospel recording artist and ordained minister, share how he referenced the Library of Congress to learn that whenever you see an authentic sheet of music for Amazing Grace, it will annotate lyrics by John Newton, melody unknown. It is highly probable, that after so many voyages where John Newton could hear the songs of sadness and distress sang, hummed and moaned by the shackled slaves in the belly of the ship, that he may have heard this melody echoing from the shackled beings beneath.

Amazing Grace, may very well be written from the melody of an unknown slave(s). Not only does this hymn have powerful words that remind me of God's grace that forgives me, but it also reminds me of the struggle and plight of my strong ancestors.

Please listen to the youtube video to hear Pastor Phipps' powerful presentation.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qNuQbJst4Lk>

***Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound, That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost but now am found, Was blind, but now, I see.***



GOD'S HIERARCHY OF LOVE

by Chaplain Richard Ross, Loma Linda, CA

Reprint from Guidepost Outreach Publications

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second [commandment] is this: Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these."

Mark 12:30-31 (NIV)

Since his discharge from active duty, Louis, an Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom combat veteran who suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder, unemployment, homelessness and suicidal ideations, had multiple admissions into the acute psychiatric unit. The ward provided opportunities for retreat and reflection into what had become a downward spiral as Louis struggled to cope with the cards dealt him in life. Raised in the church, Louis sometimes found temporary clarity through illegal drugs that divisively opposed his moral and spiritual beliefs.

Surprisingly, among the biggest disappointments in Louis's life were his feelings of abandonment by his family. This lack of self-worth may also be present in other veterans who express feelings of hopelessness, sometimes accompanied by thoughts or ideations of suicide. God's gift through Jesus and The Greatest Commandment is what I refer to as God's Hierarchy (or pyramid) of Love. God's Hierarchy of Love begins with an obedient self-love through what I call God Esteem.

After several visits, prayers, confessions and tears, Louis slowly let go of his past, accepted God's forgiveness and counted himself worthy of love. It was only then that Louis was able to work on restoring his relationship with family, friends and God.

Thought for the day: Relational healing is an inside-up spiritual process.



CO-LABOR WITH OTHERS

by Chaplain Rev. Joe Stephens, Bay Pines, FL

I believe that one of the ways Black Chaplains can get along (co-labor) with others is to become comfortable and authentic with who we are. This starts with being the persons God made us to be which allows us to be the best at what we do. Once we are comfortable with ourselves, we will not compete with our colleagues or anyone else around us who are more talented or have more gifts – that once we understand that God gifted each one of us to demonstrate the love of Christ to others including our co-laborers.

Another avenue for getting along with each other is to recognize that although we live in a pluralistic society with differences in political affiliations, race, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, language, habits, hobbies, disability status and religious affiliations, our theological reflection, rich religious heritage and dialogue about our differences in

faith traditions allows us to partner with one another in caring for the people of God. One of the basic tenants of our faith tradition is to love God and our neighbors, those whom we cross paths with along life's journey. We're called to be hospitable, to invest our time, talents, and treasure for their enrichment.

As Black Chaplains, we have the awesome responsibility to serve collaboratively with cohorts and to demonstrate the love of Christ to those whose faith tradition may be vastly different than our own. Confirming, accepting, and clarifying how we understand our religious traditions and how God is shaping our individual and corporate lives enables us to co-labor and provide truth and meaning for living. In doing so, we rise higher and position our best self for every spiritual blessing that God has in store for us.

Social Media Statement

“TAKING MY COUNTRY BACK”

by Chaplain Rev. Roosevelt Hanna, Tampa, FL

As a child, attending elementary school, in my small predominantly Black town in South Florida, I remember that we'd often hear the song *This Land is Your Land* by Woody Guthrie. My favorite line of that song says, “This land was made for you and me.” It echoes a sentiment that America is a place where diversity is treasured just as much as the very freedom that our nation promotes throughout the world.

When I hear phrases like, “Let’s take our country back!” I chuckle internally, recognizing that this divisive statement is antiquated at best and completely ludicrous. I understand that we have freedom to express ourselves through speech, texts, tweets, etc. It’s a freedom that I value in that it allows me to pontificate on this very subject. That freedom has also allowed people to say hateful and contentious statements while not fully understanding the weightiness of their words. Let’s be honest: Words really can hurt.

The phrase “Let’s take our country back!” harkens to an era of rampant inequality. Slavery, segregation, and the suppression of women’s rights were tools that gave Anglo-American men the upper-hand in America. As equality entered the playing field of America, some Anglo-Americans evolved and accepted the inevitability of change. However, there are still those who grieve for the days of old. Some people still yearn for the “good ole days.” The problem is that those “good ole days” weren’t good for the nation as a whole. Those days represented an ugly chapter in the history of America. This country does not need to be taken back; it needs to be moved forward.

One of my favorite Scriptures is Psalm 24:1, “The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it..”. It reminds me that the Creator, the Grand Architect of the Universe, is the only one capable of claiming land ownership. You and I are caretakers at best. America is a land of joint caretakers. If we are truly a land of immigrants, then divisive rhetoric such as “take our country back” or “go back to Africa” should not be uttered. By the way, “Go back to Africa” is even more absurd. How can someone go back to a place that they have never been before, or let alone was not born there? Most African-Americans living here today were born here; therefore, America is our home! Instead of “taking our country back”, one should contend that we take our country forward. America is constantly evolving, and the richness of our diversity helps us to be the leader of the free world. Taking us back is holding us back from being the bastion of freedom that we claim to be. If we, America, are who we say we are, let’s keep moving forward. Take our country forward. Don’t look back. If taking us back is what you desire, then go ahead and try it. Ask Lot’s wife how that turned out for her.



The earth is the
LORD's, & everything
in it, the world, & all
who live in it.

P s a l m 2 4 : 1

THE BLACK FEMALE CHAPLAIN EXPERIENCE

by Chaplain Rev. Janice Green, Columbia, MO

As I reflect on this past year, as a Black Female Chaplain serving our nations veterans in Columbia, Missouri, I know that God planted me in what I term as fertile ground. I grew up in Northeast Ohio and moving to the Midwest has been an interesting, but delightful adjustment for me. Most of the veterans that I am honored to provide pastoral care for are not of my race and we come from different backgrounds and cultures. This has been a benefit as well as a blessing for me because I have learned there are more similarities between us instead of differences.

Being black, female, and a chaplain is a new experience for some veterans in Columbia, Missouri, because a few of them have never met a Female Chaplain. I have had a few veterans tell me that I am the first Female Chaplain they have met.

There have been only a few times when I felt my presence wasn't wanted because of my skin color. I am grateful for my Clinical Pastoral Education. It prepared me to process my feelings about racism and the discomfort that results from that experience. I have come to terms with Jesus Christ was not always accepted by some that He came to serve. I have learned to accept, not everyone will want what I have to offer. For the most part, I have been accepted and treated with dignity and respect by the veterans, staff, and family members.

I'm grateful to work at a very good VA hospital. The majority of the veterans that I visit provide excellent feedback about the care they receive at the Harry S. Truman VA. The staff that I am privileged to serve alongside is top notch, professional, and they care about our veterans. In the beginning of my career, I continuously heard "when you know one VA, you know one VA". I'm blessed that God planted me at this VA hospital.

I believe the benefit and contributions that I bring is largely due to my life experiences, my diversity, and the ability to be comfortable in who I am, but more importantly, Whom I serve. I give all credit to God for choosing me as His vessel. To be able to serve as a Black, Female, VA Chaplain is a great honor that I don't take lightly. Regardless of age, race, creed, religion, or lack of religion, my position is to treat everyone that I encounter with dignity and respect. I can say that I am proud to be among the elite, a VA chaplain, who is Black and Female.



Harry S. Truman Memorial Veteran's Hospital

by Chaplain Elder Gerard Miller, Prescott, AZ

Knowing that racism truly exist in all walks of life, how do we overcome it and see each other as brothers in sisters in the Body of Christ or as humans created in the image of God? I would like to suggest seven ways – Through:

Being a Good Example - a model of clarity and virtue



WHY YOU SHOULD JOIN THE NBCA

by **Chaplain Rev. LaToya Smith, Waldorf, MD**

Sharing my experience about the importance of being a member of the Department of Veterans Affairs National Black Chaplains Association (DVANBCA) is truly an honor. I can recall being contacted by a VA Chaplain who looked at my LinkedIn account and reviewed some of the accomplishments I listed on my LinkedIn page. When he contacted me, it was as if I had known him for years. He asked if I had a mentor, and when I said no, he suggested that I get one. He asked for a copy my resume and reviewed it with another VA Chaplain. He was so kind and willing to give me positive feedback and constructive criticism on some items I needed to adjust. He then stated I needed to become a part of some type of associations. He then mentioned the National Association of Veterans Affairs Chaplains (NAVAC) and was also very enthusiastic about me becoming a member of the DVANBCA. At that time, I had no idea why. Wow, I do now!

Upon his recommendation, I began to do my research on both association. After reading the mission statement of the DVANBCA, one particular section (...to strengthen the effectiveness of African American chaplains...) touched me so deeply that and I said to myself, "I have to be a part of this, even though I'm not a VA Chaplain, right now!" I knew there was more in the mission statement before and after that, but this section resonated with me. It spoke volumes to me and illuminated my purpose, mission, and goals as a black female chaplain, who so desires to work with and for all veterans in the VA. I love the fact that this association recognizes my race, my gender, my desire for higher education, as well as helping me to grow and develop with the changing times of chaplaincy. Also, I am grateful that it reaches out to other professional allies, which opens a door for me to be a part of this great association.

It is an honor to be a member of the DVANBCA. I strongly believe the objective is to empower, promote, direct, instruct, and guide African American chaplains

(men and women) to be successful in chaplaincy, and to always be aware of our value and worth as African American chaplains. This association has enhanced me. I believe it will continue to develop, shape, mold, and strengthen me as an African American female chaplain.

I thank God for the leadership of the association, whom I had to opportunity to work with directly as a CPE Chaplain Intern at the VA Perry Point Medical Center. I observed the enthusiasm, integrity and pride at that time. I know the same characteristics carried over into this association. I pray that the same way the association reached out to guide me in the right direction, that myself and others may also use out to my fellow African American chaplains, inside and outside of the VA. I am so grateful to be a member of something so great. Psalms 84:7 *"They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God."* KJV

NBCA Mission

The mission of the Department of Veterans Affairs National Black Chaplains Association is to promote the highest level of pastoral care for patients and members of their family and community; to strengthen the effectiveness of African American chaplains; to assist in the recruitment and retention of African-American chaplains, and to foster the education, growth and development of all federally employed chaplains and professional allies.

NBCA provides a nationally recognized clinical certification for qualified members. In 1993 the association entered into a certification validation agreement with the Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC) of Atlanta Georgia, and in 2000 entered into the reciprocity arrangement with the National Association of VA Chaplains (NAVAC), recognizing valid clinical certifications by VA cognate groups.

Join us today! Membership forms available at <https://vablackchaplains.org/join/>

DEALING WITH SEXUAL ABUSE AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT

by Chaplain Rev. Joe Stephens, Bay Pines, FL

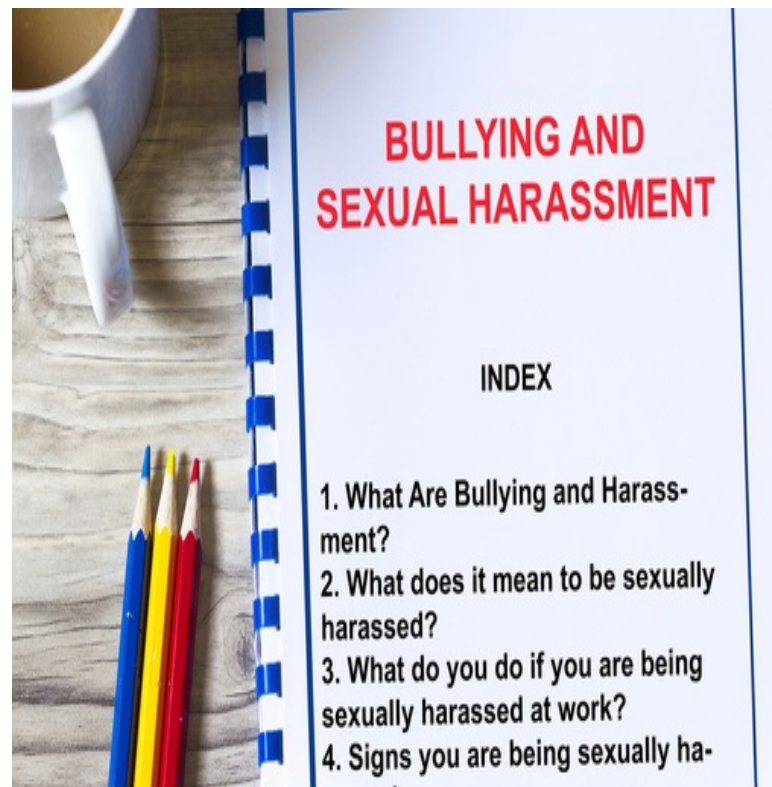
Given the recent announcement of three highly esteemed elected officials, including a civil rights icon, resigning from public office due to sexual immorality, the question arises: How should we as Black chaplains deal with sexual abuse/sexual harassment? This question surfaces because this is not a recent or isolated incident.

In 1993, William Jefferson Clinton was elected to the highest elected office in America and some African Americans celebrated and characterized him as the first African American president. When he was accused of sexual abuse/sexual harassment by Ms. Monica Lewinsky, a White House Intern, many supported him in his wrongdoing. Even after his inappropriate behavior was exposed many blamed the victim.

Do we as Black Chaplains do the same? Maybe not by blaming the victim but by not speaking out against this horrendous behavior. You see, the church is not exempt from this debauchery inside the house of God and many of us know that sexual immorality takes place inside the walls of the church. Some of us know firsthand of a deacon who has inappropriately touched a choir member, or a pastor who has/is sexually harassing one of the administrative staff members. Recognizing the change of trajectory in our country, why is it that many ecclesia leaders remain silent?

I believe the professional and prophetic thing we can do as Black Chaplains to help bring attention to and eradicate this behavior is to refrain from and not participating in this inappropriate behavior and to use our prophetic voice to preach and teach "A Universal Call to Holiness!" All God's people are called to be holy. (Matthew 5:48 AMP). We must also advocate for the victims along with fostering a zero-tolerance environment for those engaging in this atrocious behavior. The Apostle Paul in his letter to the church at Ephesus contends, "But among you, there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of

impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a person is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. Therefore do not be partners with them." (Ephesians 5:3-7, NIV).



A Prayer for Today: Father, I thank You for doing exceedingly and abundantly beyond what we could ever imagine. We lift up to you all those who are suffering, both men and women, with the trauma of sexual abuse and sexual harassment. We pray for healing and restoration. We pray for the offenders that you convict them and bring them to repentance and a place of healing. We ask these blessings in Jesus name. Amen

Two Views

NFL PLAYERS AND THE AMERICAN FLAG - VIEW ONE

by *Chaplain Rev. Roosevelt Hanna, Tampa, FL*

To kneel or not to kneel? That is a question for Black football players to consider when America's National Anthem is sung or played. Over the last two seasons, what started as one man's attempt to bring attention to a social problem, has led to a full-scale debate about showing respect for the American flag. Colin Kaepernick sought to speak out against racial injustices and chose a peaceful form of protest to bring attention to the problem of police brutality in the Black community. For his efforts, he became the most scrutinized backup quarterback in the NFL. But what does that have to do with me, as a Black Chaplain?

As Black Chaplains, we enter the rooms of veterans who often have very strong religious or political views. Some are intensely loyal to the American flag and are not afraid to voice their opinions. I've learned in my experience to publicly hold a position of neutrality when it comes to these kinds of visits. My job is not to debate with a patient, but to walk alongside them and find the connection between their feelings about the flag and how it brings meaning to their lives.

I know some of you may wonder, "Does this writer hold a position?". ABSOLUTELY. I have no problem with NFL players kneeling during the National Anthem. It is their constitutional right, and in my opinion, it is one of the most respectful ways of protesting. Did you know that there have been athletes sitting in protest of the National Anthem for decades? Do you know that there are still people today who burn the flag in public? It's funny how the media is not paying attention to that. But let a Black man in a position of influence take a knee, then he's deemed "unpatriotic." Patriotism, or lack thereof, is not the issue.

The NFL players are protesting racial injustice: Period. This is no assault on the flag or American values. This is about calling systemic racism by its name and working to eradicate it. This goes beyond unarmed Black men being gunned down by the police. I understand that cops have a job to do, but I'm hard-pressed to believe that there are more Blacks committing crimes in America than Whites. How can a race representing 13% of the overall population account for 40% of the prison population? Whites represent nearly 65% of the US population and only approximately 35% of the prison population. As President George W. Bush would say, That's "fuzzy math."

The true reason regarding anger about this issue is that America has a race problem. Sure, many of us Black Americans have attained some measure of success, however, when racism rears its ugly head, ALL Americans have the duty to respond. Ignoring the problem does not make it go away. Meaningful dialogue with our non-Black colleagues is something that we as Black Chaplains can offer. In the meantime, kudos to Colin Kaepernick and the other brave athletes who have taken a stand by taking a knee.



NFL PLAYERS AND THE AMERICAN FLAG - VIEW TWO

by Chaplain Rev. Dr. Forrest Kirk, Muskogee, OK

The respect for the flag controversy has reached a level that it is time to regain perspective. Please digest the following poem by Mr. Charles M. Province, US Army:

*It is the soldier, not the minister who has given us Freedom of Religion
It is the soldier, not the reporter who has given us Freedom of the Press
It is the soldier, not the poet who has given us Freedom of Speech
It is the soldier, not the campus organizer who has given us Freedom to Protest
It is the soldier, not the lawyer who has given us the Right to a Fair Trial
It is the soldier, not the politician who has given us the Right to Vote
It is the soldier who salutes the flag, who serves beneath the flag, and whose coffin is draped by the flag,
who allows the protester to burn the flag.*

This poem summarizes the underlying notion regarding Veterans past and present and others who believe the flag and the national anthem has been disrespected by those who kneel during the singing of the national anthem at a public event.

In a nation where personal freedom is the Constitutional core of its fundamental value system, it appears that less freedom and tolerance is in vogue. Or lately, having one's freedoms dictated to or selected for them by a demigod. Therefore, it appears that the new ethos for many, is "my way or the highway."

Consider this, one who takes an oath regarding their government or military service raises his or her right hand, swears or affirms to support and defend the Constitution of the United States, not the flag nor the national anthem. For example, the enlisted oath which is like other Federal oaths state: "I, _____, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that I will obey the orders of the President of the United States and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to regulations and the Uniform Code of Military Justice."

Veterans have never fought and died for the flag or national anthem, but for the Constitution and the rights therein which protects, among other things, First Amendment Rights as stated below: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

There are several famous pictures and images of service members doing gallant acts with the flag in view, flag draped coffins, and Veterans saluting the flag. However, the flag is a symbol the Constitution is the substance. No army can plant a flag until it is victorious. Planting the flag symbolizes the victory, but the reason for taking the ground comes from projecting the interests of the national leadership. A flag is not an interest or a reason to project power. If an army is defeated the flag will not be planted, but the interests of the nation remain even if the army is unsuccessful in projecting those interests. One should not get the substance and symbol twisted.

Another element in the controversy related to the NFL Football players kneeling in protest rather than standing are the following questions? When did kneeling become disrespectful? Who says kneeling is disrespectful? Why? In every society, government, culture, creed, and religion (past and present) kneeling is a sign of submission. On the battlefield, the defeated are forced to kneel and lay down their arms. Conversely,

standing is an act of defiance (movie: Unbroken). Most men kneel when asking for a woman's hand in marriage, is that disrespectful? Kneeling is also a position of prayer. I will speak for myself, I have complained and protested to God on my knees. I don't believe I am alone in this but, the point is if human beings complain and protest to God, who is the Creator of the universe, why is it a problem for NFL players to exercise their constitutional right to peacefully and respectfully protest the flag? It is paradoxical that in a so-called, self-professed Christian nation, one can openly protest God, make jokes about religion, church, and preachers, but, kneeling is considered disrespectful to the nation, the flag, and its Veterans.

Another element of the controversy is that NFL players are spoiled, rich brats, who are using their celebrity and fame as a platform. Whereas, the true heroes are the Veterans. In addition, most of the protesting football players don't know what it means to wear the uniform, so they should shut up and not disrespect the real heroes. My response is less than 5 percent of the nation population are living Veterans (active, reserve, guard, ex, and retired). So, are 95-percent of Americans (including 45), willing to ignore, suppress, or suspend his or her constitutional rights, because he or she is not a Veteran? From what I can see, the answer appears to be no. In addition, no one should be fooled that rich people don't protest. Rich people protest by where he or she places his or her money. Who gets the job, who gets the business, etc. The old saying, money talks, and ___ walks fits.



Finally, returning to the issue of the flag, the biggest faction offended by the NFL player have their allegiance linked to the Confederate flag. That flag represents a largest active and violent threat to this nation, its flag, and the Constitution. The Confederate flag represents a national insurrection where millions died. If anything offends this nation, the flag, and the Veterans who served, a mutinous act of rebellion should top the list. Ironically, at the same time NFL players were peacefully and respectfully protesting poor policing, a group aligned to the Confederate flag was conducting violent protests on American streets where people were killed and injured. "45" stated that there was blame on both sides. What happened to "America First?" Which flag is the flag of this land? There seems to be confusion in the White House. If the oath of office for all government personnel means anything, then allegiance to the Confederate flag is much more disrespectful to this nation, the flag, and its Veterans than any act of kneeling. Scripture asserts that "one cannot serve two masters."

The flag controversy is an indicator that sin is alive and well and has infiltrated 21st century Christian values, interpretations and concepts. However, this is not new. God's chosen people had the same problem with the Bronze Snakes (Numbers). The symbols were later destroyed because the people began to worship the symbols and the not the God who gave them. Obviously, there is a reason God stated in Exodus 20 that we were not to worship idols/symbols.

I close this by asserting agreement with reasonable policing. However, I want to qualify my stance by stating that my wife, was a police officer, my father-in-law was a police officer shot in the line of duty. I have three brothers-in-law who were police officers. One is a retired New York City cop, one is a retired police lieutenant of the Baton Rouge, La police department, who supervised the police officer that was killed in the line of duty a couple of years back. My other brother-in-law is a retired police captain with the Fort Worth police department. So, I am intimately involved with police, so I understand the difference bad policing and good policing. But, I have no understanding of people pushing an agenda that contradicts the Constitution.

RESTORING PRIDE IN OUR AFRICAN AMERICAN FAMILIES

by Chaplain Rev. Jennifer Dukes, Tuskegee, AL

The African American community is complex. We come to our perspective communities rich in spirituality from different understandings of who our deity is, and the power our God possesses. Some crossed the thresholds of the slave ships with legacies of wealth, royalty, entrepreneurship, and ingenuity. And some were already in the Americas thriving. We are different hues of brown, varying body shapes, heights, and have varying textures of hair on one head. We have the gift of being parents, or participating in the masquerade ceremonies - that tell stories which convey social norms, and expectations of our elders, youth, and leadership. We sing songs that tell the stories of our souls and express our deep laments with the ultimate hope of seeing our God move, and vindicate us. We cherished and nurtured the children in our communities and took care of the elderly. We were disciplined by our neighbors. We understood as children how to be respectful of adults, even if we didn't agree.

However, just as diverse as we are, there is one system that we hold near and dear to our hearts -family! Even though each family system is different, whether our fathers were or weren't present physically, emotionally, and financially; our mothers lived in the north, and our grandmothers/grandfathers and great grandmothers/ great grandfathers, cousins, aunts and uncles raised us back in the south; they had a humungous impact on our lives. There was always a sense of pride about being a person of color. There was a strength that was always demonstrated at home or in the community. Education was always stressed, and not seen as a privilege but as a necessity to advance economically. And we always ate dinner at the kitchen table and talked about the days' events, right, wrong, or indifferent. The kitchen table was where we gleaned wisdom, and heard the stories of how we got over with the help of the divine. And of course, those that grew up in the church, irrespective of denomination, God was always revered, and the Pastor was always held in high regard.



So how do we return to the lessons we gleaned from the "kitchen table?" An easy question, with a hard reality of how much work needs to be done intentionally. Simply, we must learn who our neighbors are. We must regain compassion and empathy for our fellow person. In spite of what may be portrayed on the news about others we must reach out to our neighbor. Despite our religious, political, economic, and educational differences, we must learn to listen to the common threads of our stories, which often include suffering and overcoming. The talented tenth must try, even in our frustration, to teach our sisters and brothers how to fish so their quality of life can improve. We must reclaim our voices and dreams that were lost when we stopped attending and talking in the PTA meetings, Town Hall meetings, and Church conferences, and return to the round table discussions. Let those that come for just a meal, eat, and listen to what is being said, so their hearts can be warmed and stirred up. And let those that come with a willingness to serve them do what they are hard pressed to do in their own way. Let us not be judgmental of the curious and too hard on the zestful person.

As African American Chaplains, our charge is to connect the Institutions to the academies and to the churches of this great land. Those three should always be in conversation with one another. Is this idealistic? Of course, it is. As a Protestant Chaplain, I recite the Lord's prayer... *thy Kingdom come, thy will be done*. How else will the Kingdom of God come if I am not in place to help usher in God's presence? Even though I am one of the vessels who embodies God. How else can I journey with my sister and brother if he or she does not know who I am or where to find me? How else can I advocate for the return of the family if I am not connected to my extended family in the community? How else can I empower those who may feel helpless or hopeless if I do not extend the grace of the table to him or her?

In the 21st Century the face of the African American family has changed. Society has re-imagined family to be what she needs for family to be to meet the still waters of her unmet needs that run deeply across the fabric of her heart and soul. And we must be willing to sit at the embankment and listen to her heart.

CHALLENGES AS BLACK CHAPLAINS

by Chaplain Rev. Dr. Richard Ross, Jr., Redlands, CA



I think that it is probably fair to say that black chaplains, male and female, probably face many of the same challenges as chaplains from other racial and cultural backgrounds. However, it has been well documented that, because we have darker skin or complexions, Black Americans also face an increased likelihood of experiencing racial discrimination and/or institutional racism at some point during their lifetime (if not at various times throughout). In addressing this *elephant in the room* that has likely been a very painful experience for many (including this writer), it is also interesting to note that no occupation is excluded – including clergy persons or chaplains.

Challenges common to all chaplains (as well as many others who are not chaplains) tend to be issues such as the struggle of balancing, work, family/relationships, worship (spiritual fitness), exercise (physical fitness), and making time for *self-care* (getting enough sleep, taking necessary breaks during the workday, eating a balanced diet, taking vacations), which includes keeping up with your own medical and dental appointments etc.

Additionally, outside the workplace in our respective religious communities, chaplains may be called upon to provide assistance and/or support in addressing certain veteran concerns or issues which may include the stigma of mental health and climbing veteran suicide rate (currently estimated to be 22 a day). In this, the challenge might also be in how to best juggling your schedule to make time to actively participate in the VA's (somewhat new) *Community Clergy Training Program (CCTP)* and the challenge of working to make this program available to your local church, temple, synagogue, or other place of worship.

Through the *Mental Health Integration of Chaplain Services (MHICS)* training course (which I completed in 2016), I have become more aware of the challenge of better understanding the importance of being able to document what it is that we do as chaplains, or what happens from a scientific perspective, when we provide various types of spiritual care and counseling to a veteran. Research itself can be challenging and hard work, but can lead to scientific data known as *Evidence-Based Outcomes* that not only validate the importance of the spiritual dimension in holistic healthcare but also highlights the impact of what cannot be seen (spiritual realm) but can often be observed through changes in affect and provided through non-verbal body language and/or verbal remarks from veterans. In this, that challenge is not to become chaplain scientists, but simply to use this tool to allow research to inform or provide scientific data that can often help provide better understanding of what is unseen and largely not fully understood.

This is the challenge of becoming *Research Informed* as chaplains. Why do it? Spiritual Care research can lead to our being able to provide Continuous Improvement of existing spiritual care and counseling methods that promote Spiritual Resiliency and *Human Flourishing* that may help struggling veterans and active duty personnel to get unstuck and moving forward in their goals of therapy. This may also lead to a greater sense of holistic well-being and increased overall satisfaction with the quality of healthcare received. Additionally, through spiritual care application of *Evidence-Based* approaches used by other healthcare disciplines, developing *Research Literacy*, and becoming more *Research Informed* in our interdisciplinary role, chaplains would likely build stronger bridges of understanding and trust between the other healthcare disciplines. This greater understanding and growing rapport could also lead to the challenge of chaplains taking a more vital role in better addressing the many spiritual aspects of the *Dimensional Problem* of known as *Moral Injury*.

Lastly, as a retired Navy Chaplain, former Hospice Chaplain, and current Mental Health Chaplain, I have met several chaplains who have positively influenced the manner in which I lovingly approach my work as a chaplain. One that challenged me and touched my heart was Chaplain Thomas H. McPhatter, D.D., CAPT, CHC, USN (Ret.). In January 1993, Chaplain McPhatter published a book that summarized his lifelong journey of struggles and challenges titled, *Caught In The Middle, A Dichotomy Of An African American Man (They Called Him Troublemaker) - A Historical Autobiography of Leadership*. Chaplain McPhatter (affectionately known to those who knew him best as *Mac*), concludes his 452-page book which chapter forty-six, *Eye on the Prize*, in which he stated that he had been diagnosed with a terminal illness and that his "career as a citizen soldier" was now over.

In concluding his book, Chaplain McPhatter renders his final exhortation (or challenge) by saying "To you who remain, continue the war for justice and peace. Never shirk or dodge a challenge, for the joy is more in the battle than in the victory. In the battle, you never feel alone, but loneliness sometimes accompanies victory, for God does not need victories. He is Victory."

FAVORITE QUOTE

by Chaplain Elder Sherri Headen, Indianapolis, IN

"At the center of non-violence stands the principle of love." - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. I believe our universe is created and designed in the law of love. I believe God is love. The very essence of God's character is love and the original design of this earth, from the time of its creation, was latent with love. Somewhere along the journey through earth's history, a dramatic change took place and the law of love began to share space with the opposite of love. It is as if love entered into controversy with something it did not birth or understand.

As I think about this quote from Dr. King, I am reminded of 1 Corinthians 13: 4-8a where the essence of love is described in human language "Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails...." I long for the day, where love reigns supreme in the heart and mind of every human being. This will be the day, when hatred, malice and violence will be wiped away as an entity in our distant past.

Favorite Recipe

BRUCE'S CAST IRON SKILLET FRIED CORN

by Chaplain Rev. Dr. Linda Bruce, Des Moines, IA

Ingredients

½ cup of Olive Oil
 ½ cup chopped onion
 ½ cup chopped green bell pepper
 ½ cup chopped red bell pepper
 2 tablespoon self-rising flour
 ½ cup of cream or milk
 2 tablespoons of butter
 ½ teaspoon of red pepper (optional)
 8 ears of fresh sweet corn
 Bacon or Ham optional, Cook 5 strips bacon, cut into bite-sized pieces
 Fry bacon pieces until browned.



How to Make It - serves 4 to 6 people

Remove the husks and silks from the corn cobs and rinse well
 Over a bowl, or Bundt cake pan to cut the kernels from about 8 ears of corn.
Tip: Use a Bundt cake pan to cut the corn off cob, place corn in the center, corn fall into the pan
 Cut about 3/4 of the way through the kernels, cutting a few rows at a time.
 Scrape the cobs to get all the milky liquid.
 In a heavy skillet, heat olive oil over medium-low heat.
 Add in all ingredients with the corn except salt, pepper & butter
 Place the corn and liquid in a heavy cast iron hot skillet
 Bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Stirring constantly to prevent scorching cook until juices begin to thicken, or about 15 minutes.
 Reduce heat to low (slow simmer). Add 2 tablespoons of butter Kosher salt and pepper to taste
 Simmer for about 5 more minutes
 Remove from heat and serve immediately. Eat Well! Live Well! Enjoy



The Veteran - The Care Giver - The Family

March 14-17, 2018
Hyatt Regency Hotel
Mission Bay, CA

“You do not want not want to miss this Life Changing Conference.”

Registration On-line

<https://vablackchaplains.org/2018-conference/>



**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
NATIONAL BLACK CHAPLAINS ASSOCIATION, INC.**

Chaplain Marvin L. Mills, Sr., President

**28th Annual Training Conference
March 14-17, 2018**

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE TRAVELER

Program Title: DVA National Black Chaplains Association 28th Training Conference

Theme: “Battle Focused Training: Caring for Veterans, Their Families and Care Givers”

Lodging and Annual Training Conference Location:

Hyatt Regency - Mission Bay

1441 Quivira Road

San Diego, California 92109

Phone: (619) 221 4820 Fax: (619) 221-4841

Program Begins: Wednesday, March 14, 2017 3:00pm (Orientation Tour/Dinner)

Program Ends: Saturday, March 17, 2018 11:30am

Travel Information:

- ▶ Your travel clerk will need to prepare your travel authority.
- ▶ Obtain your travel authority and advance of funds.
- ▶ Obtain a traveler's itinerary worksheet from your travel clerk.
- ▶ Please do not schedule your return flight home less than two hours following the conclusion of the program.

Because of stricter security measures, passengers urged to arrive at the airport at least two (2) hours before their flight due to increased time it may take to get through airline ticketing and security.

Funding: Travel expenses may be funded by each attendee's facility, command, or the attendee.

Registration Fee: \$75.00* (required) (may be reimbursable by station)

Students: \$35.00

Banquet Fee: \$65.00

Executive Board: \$75.00

Membership Fee: \$50.00

Resort Fee: \$29.00 (optional) (may be reimbursable by station)

2 working lunches: \$50.00* (required) (Thursday and Friday)

Orientation Tour \$10.00 (optional, but strongly encouraged)

Registration On-line: <https://vablackchaplains.org/2018-conference/>

You will be able to register online by referencing the VA National Black Chaplains Association web page until 20 February 2018. If you prefer the traditional method of paying by check you may do so but the applicable deadlines need to be honored.

Personal Checks: If not registering online, please complete Registration Form below and make checks payable to “DVA National Black Chaplains Association.” **An online reservation is preferred.**

Mail form and check to:
Chaplain Hayden Goodwin,
5833 Falcon View Lane,
St. Louis, MO 63129.

Make checks payable to
“DVA National Black Chaplains Association.”
Please be sure your name is referenced on the check.

Lodging: A block of rooms with a discount rate is under the name of “National VA Black Chaplains” at the Hyatt Regency Mission Bay, San Diego, California. **Your reservation should be made immediately, especially if you intend to stay outside of the reserved dates (14-17 March).** Arrival date is Wednesday, March 14, 2018 **NLT 2 p.m.** and departure date is March 17, 2018 at 11:30 a.m. The hotel will honor the discount rate two days before and three days after the event based upon availability. Below is the link for making reservations under the contracted room rate.

<https://aws.passkey.com/go/NTLVABLACKCHAPLAINS>

Please note that you must cancel your reservation at least 48 hours in advance if you need to change your plans prior to arrival or your credit card will be billed and you will be responsible for those charges.

Rate for single and double occupancy (if available): \$167.00 plus local taxes and fees

Rate for triple occupancy: \$187.00 plus local taxes and fees

Rate for quadruple occupancy: \$212.00 plus local taxes and fees

The Guest Room Rates are quoted exclusive of applicable state and local taxes (which are currently 10.5% State Sales Tax and City Occupancy Tax, 2% San Diego Tourism Marketing District Assessment, and \$0.55 State of California Tourism Assessment), applicable service fees, and/or Hotel-specific fees in effect at the time of the event.

Optional Resort Fee: The Hotel has a daily resort fee, which is currently \$29.00 per room per night. **This fee is optional at full price for all attendees.** The program provides the following services and amenities to enhance the guest experience: Premium guestroom internet, fitness center access local/800 calls, in-room bottled water (2 per day), 2 hour complimentary bike rentals, value booklet with savings around the property, a bottomless kids-cup, and business center access with free printing, fax, & copies. This fee may be reimbursable by your station.

Check in/out times: Check-in time is 4:00 p.m. Checkout time is 11:00 a.m.

Parking: Discounted overnight self-parking rate is \$20.00 per night.

Ground Transportation: Hotel shuttle service to and from the airport is not available. You can take a taxi or utilize Uber services. Travel time to hotel from airport is approximately 5-10 minutes. Be sure to keep all receipts for reimbursement.

Orientation Tour: This tour is designed to provide a hosted orientation of San Diego and Coronado at a modest fee of \$10.00. Participants will depart at 3 p.m. in front of the Hyatt Regency hotel and transported for dinner and a tour. This is a three to four hour event and the cost must be paid online in advance along with applicable fees. Kindly note: Each participant is responsible for the cost of his or her dinner, which is not reflected in the orientation tour charge. Dinner is projected to be in the range of \$20.00-\$25.00 payable to the restaurant of your choice on the day of the tour.

Dress is business casual. You are encouraged to wear business attire for the Awards Banquet because we will be taking a group picture.

Meals: All meals will be on your own. You may invite additional guests for the annual banquet at a cost of \$65.00 per guest. In order to guarantee space, you will need to provide the name of the guest and provide payment for all meals during online registration. We will have two working lunches on Thursday and Friday, if you have any dietary restrictions please provide information on the online registration form.

Exhibitions: We will have various exhibit stations on Thursday and Friday beginning at 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. We encourage visiting the various exhibit stations during the conference breaks.

Education Credits: Participants may receive contact hours, credits, and continuing education credits for this conference.

Program Questions:

Chaplain Kimberly Willis, Secretary, VA NBCA
Chief of Chaplain Service, Hampton VAMC
Phone: (757) 722-9961 extension 3600
Email: Kimberly.Willis4@va.gov

Travel Questions:

Chaplain Clifton Montgomery, Vice-President, VA NBCA
Chief of Chaplain Service, Houston VAMC
Phone: (713) 794-7200
Email: Clifton.Montgomery@va.gov

Local Chaplain Host:

Chaplain Larry Taylor, Chief of Chaplain Service, San Diego VAMC
Phone: (858) 642-3496
Email: Larry.Taylor@va.gov

Ground Operations:

Chaplain Abdul-Rasheed Muhamad, Clinical Staff Chaplain, San Diego VAMC
Phone: (858) 552-8585
Email: Abdul-Rasheed.Muhammad@va.gov

If you are unable to contact any of the above team,
please contact Chaplain Marvin L Mills
(609) 870-9929 (cell phone)



**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
NATIONAL BLACK CHAPLAINS ASSOCIATION, INC.**

Chaplain Marvin L. Mills, Sr., President

**28th Annual Training Conference
March 14-17, 2018**

REGISTRATION FORM *(for those not utilizing online registration)*

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Telephone Number (work): _____

Cell Phone (strongly encouraged): _____

VA Work Station (if applicable): _____

Choice of Entrée for Lunch: Sealed Salmon _____ -or- Sealed Chicken Breast _____

Any Dietary Restrictions? (Please state restrictions is applicable) _____

Please check which applies:

_____ **Registration Fee: \$75.00* (required)** (may be reimbursable by station)

_____ **Students: \$35.00**

_____ **Banquet Fee: \$65.00**

_____ **Executive Board: \$75.00**

_____ **Membership Fee: \$50.00**

_____ **Resort Fee: \$29.00 (optional)** (may be reimbursable by station)

_____ **2 working lunches: \$50.00* (required)** (Thursday and Friday)

_____ **Orientation Tour \$10.00 (optional, but strongly encouraged)**

Total: _____ **Check #** _____

**Mail form and check to: Chaplain Hayden Goodwin
5833 Falcon View Lane
St. Louis, MO 63129**

Make checks payable to: DVA National Black Chaplains Association."

Please be sure your name is referenced on the check.

Please note: You will receive your receipt of payment and membership card at the conference.