

Helping Students Appreciate the Contributions of

MINORITIES

Do you know:

1.) Who was awarded a Nobel peace Prize in 1950 for mediating an Arab-Israeli dispute over Palestine?

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2.) Who was the first person killed in the American Revolution?

3.) Who was appointed U.S. Supreme Court Justice by President Lyndon B. Johnson?

4.) Who was the first Adventist to be given the spirit of prophecy?

5.) Who was the first woman sent by any denomination as a missionary to India?*

Did you know that all these individuals were black? Did you also know that many textbooks omit the contributions of minorities, which leads to distortions and false concepts about their judgement and abilities? As Seventh-day Adventist Christians, we believe that God created all human beings in His image and that the plan of Salva-

*As you read this article, look for the answers to the "Do You Know" questions.

tion is offered to all people. Therefore, we should be leaders in resolving racial and social conflicts. But how do we share these beliefs with our children?

Whether they plan to or not, teachers influence the attitudes and conduct of children. They have the opportunity to improve the self-esteem and confidence of minority children and promote a climate of understanding and mutual respect between all groups of children. Through the teacher's example and teaching, children can learn to eliminate stereotyped thinking.

One way to help children understand how important people are to one another is to include the contributions of minorities in our

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schools' curricula. Blacks, Hispanics, Indians, and Orientals are referred to as minorities. The contributions of blacks are the focus of this article, but teachers can use the same methods to integrate the contributions of other minorities as well.

Currently in the U.S. we celebrate one month each year as Black History Month. However, this time-limited approach will not suffice to help children understand and appreciate the many contributions that blacks have made to American culture and history. Their contributions to American life range from literature, music, and poetry to the sciences, religion, and politics. They have been explorers, inventors, and educators.

The influence and presence of

blacks in church history also are missing from textbooks. The contributions of blacks in SDA history should be integrated into the curriculum and correlated with secular black history.

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This article will give special attention to ways to integrate black history into the social-studies curriculum. Recommendations given will facilitate an ongoing study of black history and heritage. Suggestions are divided into three levels: primary, intermediate, and upper grades and secondary.

Primary

Social studies on the primary level usually focuses on the family and community. It emphasizes the roles, responsibilities, and relationships of individuals and groups to one another. As the curriculum emphasizes the family, present stories about famous blacks and the influence of the family on their achievements. Marian Anderson, a famous black contralto singer; Thurgood Marshall, Supreme Court Justice; and Langston Hughes, famous poet, are a few individuals that can be included. Tell the children about African fam-

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ilar choices?

Obviously, one cannot expect a ready solution for every decision of life. We can, however, discover some general principles for action. Just as we can see God's hand in the story of Hezekiah and Sennacherib, so we can have confidence that He will help us solve our problems today.

It does not have to be true, as one wag has said, that the only thing we learn from history is that we do not learn anything from history. One of the great theological lessons of the Bible is that there is a mighty God who acts. He has acted in the past—in the time of Abraham and Moses and Isaiah—and He still acts today. He is not an absentee landlord who abandoned this planet when His chosen people failed Him. He is still present today in the person of His Son Jesus Christ and in the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Stories Inspire Confidence

The scriptural stories that describe His intervention in the

Sennacherib says that he shut Hezekiah up in Jerusalem like a bird in a cage.

affairs of human beings help reinforce our confidence in His power and loving care. Ellen White updated this lesson from history when she stated, "we have nothing to fear for the future except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us in the past."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 31.

The same God of Isaiah and Hezekiah to whom Ellen White refers, the same God whose grace we have experienced in the past, still stands ready and willing to lead us in our choices in life today. His will may not always be easily perceived when these choices face us, but we may trust Him for His leadership and lordship of our lives even when the path may appear dark before us, as it did to Hezekiah. □

*All texts in this article are taken from the Revised Standard Version.

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ilies long ago. Help them understand what it would have been like to be a child in Africa. Compare the families in Africa with families today, and relate the discussion to what it means to be a member of the family of God.

While studying about schools, have the children learn about blacks who had an influence on the education of Negroes. Mary McLeod Bethune and her devotion to black education offers insights into this area. Paul Laurence Dunbar, a poet and writer of short stories, has had several schools named in his honor. Have students identify, and if possible, visit monuments and museums in honor of blacks.

As you study the community, teach the children about African rural communities. Compare these to the community where the children live. Talk about blacks who have made contributions to the community. Henry Blair, a slave who was an inventor; and George Washington Carver, who discovered many uses for the peanut, worked in the rural community. Dr. Charles Drew, a surgeon who developed a way to preserve blood plasma; Garrett Morgan, inventor

of the automatic stoplight; and Jan E. Matzlinger, inventor of a machine to put a whole shoe together, all made contributions to the community of their day that continue to benefit us today.

As you teach, emphasize God's ideal for His children, and that we should love one another as He loves us. Let the children know that Jesus will return for all His children, "red and yellow, black and white, all are precious in His sight."

Intermediate Level

Social studies on the intermediate level usually focuses on states, regions, and nations. The emphasis on people as members of wider communities—in cities, nations, and around the world—provides an opportunity to correlate black heritage with the textbook. Study of the African continent, its art, music, religions, and village life of yesterday and today fits well into the study of geography and nations. Students can be asked to read about Africa, locate West African countries such as Ghana, Mali, and Songhay on a map, and give oral or written reports. These activities help children to understand the environment from which slaves were taken. Countries prominent in the news today may also be selected for study.

As sections of the United States come under study, ask the students to research the contributions of blacks from that region. Ask them to write a biological sketch, time line of events, and to locate on a map each person's home state. Some examples are listed below:

EAST

- Frederick Douglass Orator, abolitionist.
- Harriet Tubman Moses of her people.
- Crispus Attucks First to die in the American Revolution.
- W. E. B. Du Bois Author and historian. Founder of the Niagara Movement. Led the battle for full equality.
- Dr. Daniel Hale Williams First successful heart surgeon.
- Garrett A. Morgan Inventor of the automatic stoplight.
- Sojourner Truth Former slave, champion of abolition, women's and religious rights.

SOUTH

- Booker T. Washington Leading black in the U.S. 1895-1915.
- Norbut Rillieux Invented a vacuum cup that revolutionized the refining of sugar.
- George Washington Carver Scientist, agriculturist. Developed many uses for peanut, soybean, and sweet potato.
- Percy Julian Produced sterol from the soybean.
- James Weldon Johnson Teacher, lawyer, author, lyricist. Wrote the Negro national anthem, "Lift Every Voice and Sing."

Help children to understand that a difference in cultures does not represent a difference in abilities. God is the Giver of wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all" (James 1:5 NIV).† God enabled an oppressed people to make significant accomplishments and to fight for freedom.

Upper Grades and Secondary Level

Social studies in the upper grades and academy level generally focuses on the Eastern Hemisphere—Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Europe, as well as American history. As the students study the different countries and cultures, help them recognize the importance of each and its contributions to American history. Include the contributions of blacks in every period of American history.

Many students—and some teachers—do not know that blacks were involved in Old- and New-World explorations. Estevanico (Little Stephen) led the exploration into Arizona and New Mexico. Nuflo de Olano helped Balboa discover the Pacific Ocean with 30 other blacks. Pedro Alonso Nino was a pilot on one of Columbus's ships that discovered America. Jean Baptiste Point DuSable came with the French explorers and was the first settler in Chicago. Matthew A. Henson accompanied Robert Peary when he reached the North Pole.

As you study the colonial period, try to approach the issue of slavery from the divine perspective. Have students find Bible texts that present God's view. Ask them to describe similarities and differences between the Children of Israel's bondage in Egypt and slavery.

Blacks also contributed to the American War of Independence. Include in the study of this period Crispus Attucks, a black and the first to die in the American Revolution. Black patriots who should be mentioned include Peter Salem, a hero at Bunker Hill; Barzillar Lew; and Salem Poor. Other significant blacks from this period include Caesar Terrant, who piloted the *stead*, a double agent spying for the

Virginia-based vessel, the *Patriot*; Pompey, a spy who helped the colonial forces; and James Armi-

Integrating black history into the social-studies program requires a deliberate effort and commitment by teachers.

Americans. Ask class members to write biographical sketches on these people and present them to the class.

Help students learn about the contributions of blacks during the post-Revolutionary period as well. Benjamin Banneker, a black mathematician and astronomer also helped plan the city of Washington, D.C.; and Phyliss Wheatley, an internationally known poet, are but a few.

To broaden students' insights into religious history, describe the presence and influence of blacks during the Millerite Movement. Louis B. Reynolds in his book, *We Have Tomorrow*, identifies three Millerite preachers of African descent: Charles Bowles, John W. Lewis, and William E. Foy. Delbert Baker pro-

vides an in-depth study of Foy, the first Adventist to be given the spirit of prophecy, in his book *The Unknown Prophet*.

Reports about the contributions of blacks during the developmental years of the SDA Church could combine social studies and denominational history. Reynolds' book is an excellent source for such reports.

When classes study the Civil War and Reconstruction period, ask students to report on Mrs. White's views of slavery and war. During the study of Reconstruction, have students report on Edson White's creative approach to preaching the Third Angel's Message to the black population in the South. Students can also research the evolution and growth of black churches and schools. Their study should include Henry Lowe, the first convert of African descent; and Mr. and Mrs. John F. Allison, the first black American church members.

As social studies moves into the 20th century, the curriculum should include modern black contributions. Have students learn about Robert C. Weaver, the first black U.S. Cabinet member; Dr. Ralph J. Bunche, the first black to receive the Nobel Peace Prize for helping world peace; and other renowned black achievers.

Blacks have also made significant contributions to the 20th-century SDA Church. Anna Knight was the first woman sent to be a missionary nurse in India. Eugenia Cartwright Cunningham influenced the lives of many young black students. G. E. Peters, an educator, writer, and evangelist, was the first black field secretary at the General Conference. Evangelistic efforts by H. W. Kibble, F. S. Keitts, C. E. Mosely, and E. E. Cleveland helped spread the message.

In current events classes have students update the influence and presence of blacks in secular and religious activities. They should be able to identify the achievements of Jesse Jackson, a black Democratic presidential candidate; L. Douglas Wilder, lieutenant governor of Virginia; Doug Williams, the first black quarterback to play in the Super Bowl; as well as other famous

blacks. Recognition should also be given to the influence of blacks in the church, including C. E. Bradford, C. L. Brooks, and Henry Wright.

The Challenge

Integrating black history into the

Books for Primary Children

- A Name to Remember*, by Pearl Boatwright. Brief account of the life of Marian Anderson.
- Color Me Broken*, by Lucille H. Giles. Johnson, 1965. Coloring book with 21 full-page pictures of black Americans.
- Sweet Potato Pie*, by G. T. Walker. Brief account of the life of Mary McLeod Bethune.
- George Washington Carver*, by Samuel and Beryl Epstein. Ages 7-10.
- The Dream Keeper and Other Poems*, by Langston Hughes. Ages 8-11.
- The Child's Story of the Negro*, by Jane Dabney Shackelford. Grades 2-5.

Books for Intermediate Children

- A Weed Is a Flower*, by Alik. Prentice-Hall, 1965. The life of George Washington Carver.
- Booker T. Washington*, by Lillie G. Patterson. Garrard, 1962. Story of the educator and founder of Tuskegee Institute.
- Crispus Attacks*, by Dharathula H. Millender. Bobbs-Merrill, 1965. "Childhood of Famous Americans" Series.
- Frederick Douglass*, by Lillie Patterson. Garrard, 1965. A short but interesting account of America's outstanding orator and abolitionist.
- Freedom Train: The Story of Harriet Tubman*, by Dorothy Sterling. Doubleday, 1954. An exciting account of the life of the "Moses of her people."
- Martin Luther King: The Peaceful Warrior*, by Ed Clayton. Prentice-Hall, 1966. Youth of Dr. King, and account of the Montgomery bus boycott, civil-rights activities, march on Washington, and the winning of the Nobel Peace Prize.

Books for Elementary and High School Students

- Booker T. Washington*, Shirley Graham. Messner, 1955. His lifelong struggle to win first an education for himself, and then schools for his people.
- Famous American Negro Poets*, by Charlemae Rollins. Dodd, 1965. Lives of 12 black poets, from Jupiter Hammon of the 18th century to contemporary Gwendolyn Brooks.
- Great Negroes Past and Present*, by Russell L. Adams. Afro-Am., 1963. One hundred fifty-six biographical sketches, arranged into 13 categories.
- James Weldon Johnson*, by Ophelia S. Egypt. Crowell, 1974. Covers the most important aspects in the life of this writer.
- Lift Every Voice*, by Dorothy Sterling and Benjamin Quarles. Doubleday, 1965. The lives of W. E. B. Du Bois, scholar, teacher, and author; Mary Church Terrell, pioneer for peace, equality, and women's rights; Booker T. Washington, founder of Tuskegee Institute; and James Weldon Johnson, teacher, lawyer, poet, author, and diplomat.
- Martin Luther King*, by Margaret Boone-Jones. Childrens Press, 1983. The high points of Dr. King's life.
- Matthew A. Henson*, by Charles Graves. Putnam, 1971. This easy-to-read biography is devoted largely to Henson's long association with the arctic explorer, Peary.
- Picture Life of Jesse Jackson*, by Warren Halliburton. Watts, 1972. The easy text and photographs make this appealing to young readers.
- W. E. B. Du Bois: A Biography*, by Virginia Hamilton. Crowell, 1972. An objective approach to a controversial figure, through his writings and activities.

social-studies program requires a deliberate effort and commitment by teachers. Students must learn that through diversity there is to be unity and acceptance. As you teach, model and nurture attitudes of respect and understanding. Pray for wisdom and guidance as you accept and teach that "Ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). □

†From *Holy Bible: New International Version*. Copyright © 1978 by the New York International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers. Italics supplied.

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TURNING STUDENTS ON TO COMMUNITY SERVICE

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contends that mandatory service can dampen students' altruistic spirit and sap the program's vitality.

In spite of the disagreements about mandatory service, several major education groups, including the Education Commission of the States and the National Association of Secondary School Principals, endorse the *idea* of student service. While few states have developed policies or guidelines for such programs, all but 11 have provisions permitting local school systems to offer academic credit for community service.

Where Should They Serve?

Do Adventist academies and colleges have a responsibility to instill the importance of community service in students? Or should we limit SDA student service to work within the church? Jesus went about doing good to all who had need, regardless of the religious party to which they belonged or their status in society. His love was freely given to the "outsiders" of His time, not merely to His disciples. This suggests that Adventist Christians today should meet the needs of their communities simply because in a special way God is in those who are suffering. "Inasmuch as ye have done it to the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me," Jesus said in Matthew 25.

The student-missionary program at the college level has made a significant contribution. But very few students get involved. Those who do talk about how their lives were changed. However, students don't have to go to a foreign country to experience the blessings of such service. They can perform many services right in their local communities. Most local and county governments have a volunteer bureau or a central office where one can discover what opportunities for service exist within the community. This type of service would help our schools feel a part of the local community and move our students out of their insulated environment.

How to Start

How does a school establish a community-service program? First, those seeking to begin such an endeavor should make sure that it has the full backing of the school board, superintendent, and the principal. If the program is to succeed, strong enthusiastic support is necessary. Some promotion may be needed to convince certain faculty members that worthwhile learning can take place outside their classrooms. Unless they understand and support the program, it is unlikely to succeed.

Depending on the size of the school, one or more coordinators need to be appointed. Most pro-