

New Hope Missionary Baptist Church
"THE EYE OF NEW HOPE"
FEBRUARY / MARCH 2024 NEWSLETTER

The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints." (Ephesians 1:18)

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O Lord, we humbly come before You, seeking Your protection over our cherished church property. Grant us the wisdom to take appropriate measures to safeguard our church. Let Your light shine upon this property, making it a beacon of hope for all who enter. As we come together within these walls for unity and fellowship among Your people, pour out Your spirit upon these walls filling every room with Your presence. Guide us, O Lord as we use this property to cultivate discipleship and lead others closer to You. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.



Stewardship Corner

I am a firm believer that everything on earth belongs to God. Our money. Our houses. Our cars. The word of God. Our families. The people we encounter and the facilities in which we worship. God has entrusted us with the stewarding of all these items. For me, stewardship is less about what we give and more about taking care of what we have been given, of all that's entrusted.

How do you define *"entrusted"*? – **ENTRUST**: to charge or invest with a trust or responsibility; to commit something in trust to; confide, as for care, use, or performance. What does "entrust" mean? It means that when something is entrusted to you, you are responsible for it, it's your duty to watch over it, and to care for it. It sounds a lot like Stewardship.

If you're grow up in the church or been involved in it for any period of time, you've heard the term "Stewardship." In almost every case it probably referenced finances or raising money. Financial Stewardship is a critical element of our spiritual lives, as well as the lives of our ministries. To explain what I mean by this term let me break it down into its two root words:

Stewardship isn't just about money and finances; it also refers to the area of and oversight for something belonging to someone else. It's like "entrusted". Do you see the similarities?

Do you really believe that God has entrusted our facilities to us, thus making us the stewards of their care and oversight.? Facility Stewardship isn't just for existing facilities, facility Stewardship starts at the point of dreaming a facility then planning it and building it (*Prayer Garden, Kingdom Life Impact Center, Youth & Young Adult Lounge – "Hawk's Landing" and Fellowship Hall Rehab, Soul Food Bistro & Commissary Kitchen and next Rehab of Admin Office and Sanctuary renovation*). The time, energy and invested in these precursor activities will set the tone if not the costs of a long-term life cycle stewardship initiatives.

Make it your goal to help New Hope be "Intentional Stewards" of what God has entrusted to you.

**Patricia A. Swinney Stewardship
Ministry Leader**



Pastor's Desk

NEW HOPE MINISTRY DELIVERY NARROWING OUR FOCUS

Imagine if you will what things were like for Israel after 40 years of wandering. There is a great possibility that they saw some of the same trees, the same rocks, the same mountains and the same streams over this 40-year span. Traditions were established and they became accustomed to doing things a certain way. Over this forty-year period of wandering there was growth and there were many lessons learned I'm sure. They became fixed in their ways of journeying to the Promised Land. That's what happens sometimes, even in our own lives and religious experiences as we serve the Lord. We establish patterns and traditions that at some point in time were healthy, and we hang on to them because they become so engrained in us. We come to the end of a year facing the New Year and we make resolutions for change and we often are very serious and committed to those resolutions. This year there will be better health, better relationships, better days ahead for sure etc.

As we have been blessed to enter this year there's one thing I will share with you that is of utmost importance and that is our **"ABIDING"** in the Vine individually and as a church. Abiding in the vine includes listening to God as He speaks. I'd like to encourage you to ask God to help us focus on abiding in Him. As we ABIDE we streamline our focus as we recognize and hear God's Word which gives us His direction for us in order that we will not repeat those things of the past that keep us from becoming more fruitful. We don't need to make resolutions and try to project where we want to go but we need to **ABIDE**, listen and move ahead as we surrender all into the hands of God, trusting Him fully as He leads and causes us to become more fruitful. This year I feel strongly that God is leading us Onward and Upward, Planting our feet on Higher Ground. The way that we move Onward and Upward to Higher Ground is by our "Abiding in the Vine."

If we are going to move Onward and Upward allowing the Lord to Plant our feet on higher ground as we desire to go from Good to Great we must "Eliminate what we have done simply out of tradition over the years that at some time might have been healthy but now is not bearing as much fruit. We must recognize this as pruning and refocusing in order for us to do what God has called us to do and that is **(MAKE DISCIPLES)**, to bear fruit but not only fruit, but much fruit. We must do this **INTENTIONALLY** giving our all to move in this direction **FOCUSING** and **DEVELOPING** to do better in order to reach our full potential. We must focus on doing our best at what we can do best in, in order to do what He has called us to do and that is not just bearing fruit in disciple making but much fruit. This may require us to kill some things that are traditions that may have been developed over the years that have helped us to grow in the past but now these same patterns and habits although good back then are no longer as fruitful.

KILL WHAT IS WORKING (John 15)

Jesus in John 15 gives us the parable of the vine, the vinedresser and the branches as an example of what this looks like. As awkward as this may seem it may require God the vine dresser to prune (kill) some of what we feel is working in order to permit the vine (Jesus) to bring forth healthier growth to produce much fruit.

We must fully submit to the vinedresser allowing Him to prune every branch (that is us) in order for us to grow. Eliminate what is working but not producing as it should in order to give birth to what can work better, producing not just fruit but much fruit. This will require us in some ways to move from what we are now doing as we move onward into what is needed to move us upward.

"He cuts off every branch that bears no fruit." (John 15:1-2)

"Just because we have done something in the past doesn't mean we should keep doing it." especially if it's not bearing more fruit.

Our heavenly Father is the gardener, "He prunes every branch that does bear fruit so that it will become more fruitful." Pruning may be the **ABIDING IN THE VINE** spending time with the Lord, listening and allowing Him to speak to us to make healthy choices to eliminate what might have been good programs in order for Him to develop great programs. We must stop spending our resources on mediocre ministry programs that do not yield the harvest that God is seeking today.

As we journey through this year moving onward and upward, continuing our efforts to go from good to great you will hear more and more on **"ABIDING IN THE VINE"** as we seek the Lord. I pray and trust that we will abide together in the vine allowing God to do His great work in us and through us to make us more fruitful. I ask that you join me in praying that we can look forward to moving onward and upward with God doing His great work in us this year as we ask Him to plant our feet on Higher ground moving us onward and upward continuing to go from good to great.

Pastor Freddie Hinson Jr.
Senior Pastor New Hope MBC

The Scope of Church Maintenance and Facility Upgrades

New Hope represents much more than our physical structure. We represent a welcoming place of worship and serve as a focal for our community. Yet, for New Hope to continue meeting these needs, the grounds maintenance and church interior need to be well maintained.

Ground Maintenance: Refers to the upkeep of all property and equipment that belongs to a church. It encompasses every maintenance task required to keep a church and its entire premises functional, safe, and presentable.

- ✓ Keeping the parking lots clean and free of cracks and potholes, playground, lawn mowing, trimming trees and shrubs. Clearing gutters, checking for drainage problems.
- ✓ The church roof plays a key role in preserving the structure's integrity and longevity; check roof felt for wear and tear and signs of water penetration. Sealing of cracks. Periodic touch-up painting. Reapplication of waterproofing materials
- ✓ Using a church security and surveillance system is the key to developing a comprehensive church security plan and maintaining a safe environment, reducing the chance of fire and burglary at our church. Also providing round-the-clock interior and perimeter protection through central station monitoring.

Church Interior: This section comprises the building and every element that makes up the internal space in our church. Some major parts of the interior and maintenance tasks include:

- ✓ Check for signs of dampness and interior walls.
- ✓ Check that all doors and door hardware are in good condition, doors shut firmly, and from any kind of infestation.
- ✓ Upkeep and maintenance of Sanctuary, bathrooms, Admin Office, copier room, conference room, meeting rooms, and nursery. Remove trash, vacuum/sweep floors (we have a hired Janitorial Staff).

This is a very brief overview of each of these categories and the typical maintenance tasks required to keep each component in good condition.

LET'S GIVE THUMBS UP – THANK YOU TO OUR TRUSTEES!

Patricia A. Swinney Stewardship
Ministry Leader



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Beautification Ministry

**“Beautify the House of the Lord”
“Let them make Me a Sanctuary; that I may well among them”**

Exodus 25:8

The Beautification Ministry strives to ensure the church’s appearance remains pleasing and impressive to all who come to worship both members and visitors. We work diligently to ensure that we create and maintain a worship environment of beauty and comfort by providing seasonal decorations, facilities updates, and decorating support to other ministries and events.

Thus far, the Beautification Ministry has completed a total makeover of the Nursery and Conference Room. We have also provided seasonal decorations and decorating support to many events and ministries.

If you are interested in learning more about the Beautification Ministry and the many things we do, please contact Katrina Smallwood, Ministry Leader.



New Hope Life Impact Center



Welcome to New Hope Life Impact Center. At New Hope, we are not inviting you to church, instead we are inviting you to make an **IMPACT!** God wants to change our lives for our benefit and His glory. It's our conviction that God wants our lives better so that we make a greater **IMPACT** in our lives and the lives of those around us. New Hope is a place where people can have encounters with Christ, grow in the community, discover their gifts and be activated to make an **IMPACT** for God's Glory. New Hope is dedicated to leadership development, community impact, and the enrichment of families. New Hope Life Impact Center exists to provide programs that enable people to progress.

Coming this Spring we will house an Industrial Kitchen, banquet space, and support developing menus, planning events, catering for programs and hosting visitors and members at New Hope.

Without a question computers and associated technologies have opened a vast new world to all. On the New Hope Campus – **"Computer Training at New Hope"**. View below pictures of our newly renovated modular, a computer room with 17 set-up computers ready for Computer Training, this coming Spring.

Trustee Fred Johnson, President Trustee Ministry



New Hope's "Prayer Garden"

Our Church Garden is no botanical garden, but it is exactly the peaceful setting you need to be alone to pray and receive God's peace. The Prayer Garden provides a space for church members to pray 27/7. Many people go to local parks or other green spaces to pray. But these are often crowded and loud. It can be hard to find real privacy in parks if you feel the urge to pray aloud or cry. New Hope's Prayer Garden was created and maintained to be a reverent, holy place. Jesus reminded us that we can pray in a closet and God will hear us. We serve a God who can hear our prayers no matter where we are. But sometimes even the closet doesn't seem the most peaceful place. Home may not always be the place a person wants to pray. Introverts may desire a place with more solitude than their home. Nature lovers may desire to be surrounded by flowers and sky.



There are several swing chairs under trees surrounded by flowers, which attract more butterflies and birds. There are plants and trees native to the local area. These plants have adapted to grow in the conditions of Florida local environment, and they don't need to be watered or fertilized. During the fall/winter season there is a fireplace surrounded by wooded chairs.

Upon entering the church campus, look to your right, there is a sign posted regarding the Prayer Garden, inviting passersby to "Sit and pray awhile". During the Spring and Summer hold a prayer vigil in the garden than inside. Some church members may enjoy holding prayer meetings there occasionally and use the Church Garden for Small Group fellowship and other gatherings.

**Patricia A. Swinney Stewardship
Ministry Leader**

Hope Ranch Learning Academy

HOPE Youth Ranch, Inc. - H.O.P.E. – Helping Overcome Past Experiences

Have any naysayers in your life?

HOPE Youth Ranch's founders have an encouraging word for you.

People say that in life there are two certainties: death and taxes. We believe there is a third one, and that is naysayers. Have you ever had a great idea and you know that it will work, only to be confronted by naysayers who try to talk you out of what you need to be doing? You do not need a degree, experience, or even knowledge to be a naysayer. It seems naysaying comes naturally to us all. Funny, though, we are not born that way.

As the Lord called us to bring to fruition the concept of H.O.P.E. Youth Ranch, we ran into many naysayers. "You have no experience." and "You are too loving and caring to make the tough decisions it takes to run the business side of a ministry." Yet, through the process of making a vision into reality, God continued to confirm His promises and provision for our lives. We remember speaking to the licensing coordinator for the Department of Children and Families, as we were putting together the policies and procedures needed to obtain a contract from them for H.O.P.E. Youth Ranch, Inc. we emailed her our policies and described our concept and mission, and her response was, "They will never license you. This business plan has God written all over it, and it has too much Christian content for the state to approve it." But God!

Reflecting over the years and with all the children we have ministered to, it occurred to us that H.O.P.E. Youth Ranch has really been in the business of undoing the negativity that naysayers have produced. So many foster children arrived damaged and broken by them, with their incredible potential diminished, and the hope lost that their lives matter. Thoughts of worthlessness were deeply embedded in their hearts. We encouraged them to dream about their future, asking them what they wanted to be when they grew up, to help them take their eyes off their current situation and dare to dream of a better future.

We have learned, over time, that you can either accept what the naysayers are saying, or you can reject it. The naysayers do not have the power. You have the power to instead, completely obliterate their words, and make what God says about His plans for your life a reality. There will always be naysayers, so we must choose to listen to the voice of God. The voice of God leads, directs, encourages, and opens our eyes to His will.

Never did we imagine when embarking on this journey that a homeless ministry would lead to us becoming foster parents and, later, the opening of a group home for teens in 2004. In 2009 the Lord spoke to us about opening our school to students with learning disabilities and daring to explore the world of Autism. Today there are over 200 students enrolled with many more on our wait list. We continue to dream, and the Lord continues to provide.

In June of 2023 we purchased property on East Road in Hudson, FL across from the Elementary Campus for the future home of the Hope for Tomorrow High School Work Readiness & Living Lab Program.

Hope Ranch Learning Academy

Hope Youth Ranch/Hope Ranch Learning Academy will be reaching a major milestone in April as we celebrate our 20th Anniversary. To our continued amazement, God continues to come through and provide for our every need. Not simply our financial needs, which are the easiest of the needs for Him to meet, but the need of the right words to speak into the lives of hurting adults and children, to truly help them transform from the inside out. We get to see this every day in the lives of our students.

We are so grateful to our brothers and sisters at New Hope for having allowed us to “spread our wings” and grow by leasing space to our school during our transitions. We would not be where we are today without your support.

Dream!

Pastors Jose and Ampy Suarez
Co-Founders of HOPE Youth Ranch, Inc.



Christian Education

The role of Christian education in New Hope Missionary Baptist Church is helping our church fulfill the mandate of the great commission given by Jesus to make disciples. The word disciple in the biblical context means learner. In the Christian church a disciple of Jesus Christ is made profession of faith in the biblical teachings of Jesus Christ. It is our aim that by teaching the biblical scriptures individuals come to saving faith in Jesus Christ and they become His disciples. It is by this teaching that the process of discipleship leads believers on to Biblical Christian Maturity and Godly Spirituality. Scripture gives us the precedent to biblically educate adults and children in spiritual and practical areas of life. The bible doesn't mandate that Christian education must be established in our church, but there are many Biblical principles that can support and provide reason for us to establish institutionalized Christian Education in our fellowship. It is the word of God and the teachings of Jesus that transforms the lives of His followers. The word of God taught under the auspices of the Holy Spirit will impact the lives of all who hear it.

The first time in New Testament scripture that we see a command of biblical Christian Education is found in the Great Commission. Jesus commands His disciples to go and make disciples of all nations. This command involves recruiting disciples and teaching them all that Jesus had taught and spoken to the apostles. As disciples of Jesus, the disciples were called to baptize the new disciples. Both teaching and baptism were done by Jesus. Following the cultural trend, it would be assumed that Jesus' disciples would make disciples by utilizing all that they had learned and gained from their time with Jesus.

Matthew 28:19-20 states, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

As the statement is clear that Jesus desired disciples to be made in the name of the Trinity. He didn't merely want converts. Jesus' desire was for biblically educated individuals to know the word of God and to know Old Testament fulfillment through Jesus Christ. He wanted them to be empowered in understanding and truth in order to walk out the new life that He purchased for them.

Our methodology for making Disciples is through the Christian education Ministry which is made up of Ministers, Deacons, Deaconesses and members of our congregation. Each person plays a role in helping us to accomplish our objective and to hone our focus so that we are achieving all that we can with what we have been given by the Lord. As we journey through 2024 it is our aim to fulfill that which we have been called to do by our Lord. By using that which the Lord has provided us we will this year narrow our focus in our attempt to disciple every member. We strongly encourage every member to become involved in a life group where the word of God will be discussed and where Iron will sharpen iron. This year we will start our Discipleship Bible Study and there we will go even deeper into our study of God's word in order

Christian Education

that He may continue to cleanse us and prune to bring forth not just fruit but much fruit for His glory and our good.

Our Life Groups and varied bible study meeting times will be posted and made available for all to see and prayerfully become a part of the work the Lord is doing in the Life of New Hope to make us more and more into the image of Christ. We look forward to another great year of Spiritual and physical growth and development under the Lord's leadership

Pastor Freddie Hinson Jr.
Senior Pastor New Hope MBC

Christian Education Announcements

Resolving Everyday Conflict - DATE CHANGED

Workshop, March 15th - 16th , Pastor Hinson Lead Facilitator, Biblical Answers for a Common Problem

SUNDAY SERVICE ZOOM

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85285791548?pwd=NFg5YjI2ZThGUWEwaVU2WmVUeG1ZZz09>

MEETING ID: 852 8579 1548

PASSWORD: NHMBC14236

CONTRIBUTION STATEMENTS

Giving statements will be handed out this coming

BETHUNE COOKMAN COLLEGE CHOIR AT PHSC

Join us at the Pasco-Hernando State College Instructional Performing Arts Center for a musical journey through time with the renowned Bethune-Cookman University Concert Chorale! To kick off Black History Month, get immersed in the rich melodies and powerful voices that made the BCU Concert Chorale a symbol of excellence.

Location: 8657 Old Pasco Rd, Wesley Chapel, FL 33544

FREE and open to the public, but you must register

Register @

<https://phsc.edu/about/events/campus/bethune-cookman-university-gospel-chorale-concert>

New WOW Format

New WOW Format – Our Wednesday Night WOW Service format will change. As we are ABIDING IN THE VINE the Lord is pruning in some areas of our ministry so that we can go from bearing just fruit to Much Fruit. We are re-structuring our Wednesday Night Ministry Delivery and narrowing our focus to strengthen our Student Ministry with Life Groups & Relevant Bible Study. Please stay tuned and prayerful that the Lord will allow us to become more fruitful. We are asking if the Lord prompts you and lays it upon your heart to join in and help us Build up and Equip our students as Young Disciples, please contact Pastor Hinson to learn where your gift(s) and support can be used in our churches mission of making young disciples.

Christian Education Announcements

DISCIPLES Bible Study

Starting in February on Wednesday Mornings at 10:00AM. Pastor Hinson will be leading The Disciples Bible study. All are invited to attend at the church if your schedules permit.

Prayer and Care Ministry

The Prayer and Care Ministry is seeking those who can serve on this ministry as intercessors and Prayer Care Ministers. For more information, please contact Mother Francina Telman, Sister Lee Grant & Minister Linda Bunch.

Grief Share Ministry – Deaconess Daisy Swackard

Grief share Ministry will be starting soon. This is a ministry of support to those whose loved ones have transitioned from this life.

There will be a ministry team meeting February 13th at 1:00pm. If you are interested in serving in this ministry, please mark your calendars.

MORNING PRAYER

In Need of Prayer? Join us Monday thru Friday @ 7am for Live Morning Prayer on Facebook. www.facebook.com/newhopehudson

LINE DANCE CLASS

Come join line dancing with Qween Sheila, 6:30pm - 8:30pm for some fun, music, dancing and fellowship. Please wear comfortable clothing and closed toe shoes for safety. \$10 per person

LEADER ANNOUNCEMENTS

All Leader announcements are due every Tuesday to pubcom@newhopembconline.org to be included in the upcoming Sunday bulletin. You may also write it down and place in the Media box in the office. Bulletins are printed on Wednesday so please plan accordingly.

March is Women's History Month

2023 Women's Achievements

2023 could very much be called the year of the woman. There were so many accomplishments and firsts. Anyone with a television, phone, or newspaper read about Beyonce, Taylor or Barbie whose impact on the current culture resonated with our young girls to our older women. The impact of their concerts, and movies caused an economic frenzy of spending of money which helped the country stand off recession. Another trailblazer for 2023 was Claudia Goldin. She became the first solo woman awarded the Nobel Prize in Economics. She also won for studying obstacles women face in obtaining equal pay. Vice President Kamala Harris became the first woman to give a West Point commencement speech in the military academy's 221-year history.

The word for the year of women was "authentic," meaning not false or copied; genuine, real. When women behave authentically, women can thrive-and the world thrives. Condensed version, be yourself and the rest will follow.

Confidence of women in the workplace, home, and finance.

In 2023, women CEOs (finally) outnumbered men, women also led major news outlets. Women are now investing and using wealth management in achieving their money goals. In a recent survey of communities both rural and metro, 86% of women said it is important to make investments that positively impact their homes and family. More women invest in non-profit organizations that backs programs in their communities.

Did you know?

Shirley Caesar, a legendary gospel singer, gained a newfound success with her remix of one of her sermon songs titled Beans, Greens, Potatoes, Tomatoes "You Name It." The song sparked a new audience of younger fans, and is played in the kitchens of restaurants, and is now a jingle for commercials. When she was asked how she felt about it she replied "This is a mind-boggling thing for me. Who would have thought that something like that would have gone viral"

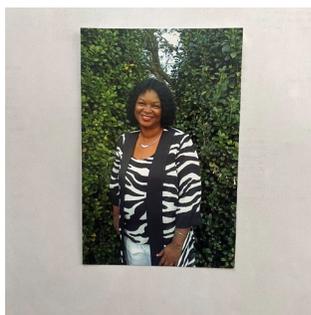
The song was originally recorded in 1988. When our younger generation discovers something new, fresh, and exciting, chances are the roots of it is from our past.

Prominent women of the Bible: Mary of Nazareth, Ruth the Moabite, Mary Magdalene. Matriarchs Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah, Miriam the prophetess, Deborah the Judge and Huldah the prophetess, Abigail, Rahab, and Esther. Can you guess who was the oldest?

March is Women's History Month, it is a time for reflection (2023) and positive energy (2024), and above all, we should strive for peace of mind.

(Answer: Rebecca was 120 years old)

Shirley Booker



Black History Month

Fort Negro/Fort Mose, Seminole Indians

St. John County, FL is a precursor site to the underground railroad demonstrating the resistance to slavery arose decades before abolitionism became organized. Located in Northwest Florida, Franklin County, British Fort (previous name Negro Fort) is a symbol of the strong relationship between runaway slaves and the Seminole Indians.

Many escape slaves from the Carolinas and Georgia to northern FL. At that time under Spanish control and sought and received refuge from the Seminole Indians. In return the runaway slaves would cultivate crops paying one-third of their crops to the Indians. Seminoles welcome the development of Black communities. Knowledgeable in the white man's languages, Black people often functioned as interpreters and intelligence agents for the Seminole community.

In the summer and fall of 1814 near the conclusion of the war of 1812. British Major Edward Nichollas led an expedition to recruit Seminoles and blacks to assist the British fight against America. British soldiers, the Black people, and Indian recruits, constructed a fort five hundred feet from the riverbank on Prospect Bluff which they call British Post. The fort was used as the British headquarters for negotiations between the Black and Indians communities.

In 1815 when the British from the area the fort including its artillery and military supplies were given to the Black people and a few Indians that had moved into it seeking the protection it offered and cultivating successful and profitable plants action around it. The fort became known as "Negro fort" and it served as a beacon of light to restless and rebellious slaves.

In 1816, the American army under the command of Major General Andrew Jackson, (7th President of the U.S.) Read more about Jackson. He constructed Fort Scott on the flint river a few miles from Florida to protect the American border between Georgia and Florida and to destroy Fort Negro which was perceived as a threat to white and to return the blacks to their white owners. In the ensuing warfare an American shell hit within the Fort killing approximately 300 men, women, and children. The few survivors were taken prisoner and turned over to Georgia slaveholders who justified their title to them by saying that their ancestors had owned the ancestors of the prisoners. This "savage and negro war" as Andrew Jackson himself called it, was devised to destroy black towns in Florida. Depriving slaves of bordering state of a refuge, while at the same time bringing the entire Florida province under American rule. In 1818 Jackson ordered Lieutenant James Gadsden to build a new fort which became known as Fort Gadsden upon the site of the old Negro Fort.

British Fort (original Fort Negro is a short distance from state route 65 near Sumatra, FL. The site is open to the public seven days a week from 9:00am – 5:00pm.

Cites: The History of the Bush Meeting; unsung Heroes; Forth Negro, Gadsen Florida; Why God.

Unsung Heroes of the Underground Railroad

The true story of the Underground Railroad is much morally complex and politically diverse than ever. The myth suggests in the book, bound for Canaan, tells the story of men and women long forgotten heroes who invented the black underground in New York City. It tells the story of how the underground gave birth to the country's first racially integrated religiously inspired movement for special change and the human quest for freedom. But the Underground Railroad is no more Black history than it is white history. It is American history. It was the country's first integrated Civil rights movement in which Whites and Blacks worked together taking risks together and saving tens of thousands of lives. Then lift that manly right hand, bold plow-man of the wave its branded palm shall prophecy. Salvation to the Slave

Black History Month

Why did you make me black? Why did you make someone the world would hold back?

Black is the color of dirty clothes, of grimy hands and feet ... Black is the color of darkness, of tired beaten streets... Why did you give me thick lips, a broad nose and kinky hair? Why did you create someone who receives the hated stare? ... Black is the color of the bruised eye when someone gets hurt... Black is the color of darkness, black is the color of dirt. Why is my bone structure so thick, my hips and cheeks so high? Why are my eyes brown and not the color of the sky? Why do people think I'm useless? How come I feel so used? Why do people see my skin and think I should be abused?

Lord, I just don't understand what it is about my skin? Why is it some people want to hate me and not know the person within? Black is what people are labeled when others want to keep them away... Black is the color of shadows cast... Black is the end of the day.

Lord, you know my own people mistreat me, and you know this just ain't right.

They don't like my hair, they don't like my skin, as they say I'm too dark or too light!

Lord, don't you think it's time to make a change? Why don't you redo creation and make everyone the same?

God Reply:

Why did I make you Black? Why did I make you Black? I made you in the color of coal from which beautiful diamonds are formed. I made you in the color of oil, the black gold which keeps people warm.

Your color is the same as the rich dark soil that grows the food you need. Your color is the same as the black stallion and panther, Oh what majestic creatures indeed!

All colors of the heavenly rainbow can be found throughout every nation. When all these colors are blended you become my greatest creation!

Your hair is the texture of lamb's wool, such a beautiful creature is he... I

am the shepherd who watches them, I will **ALWAYS** watch over thee!

You are the color of the midnight sky, I put star glitter in your eyes.

There's a beautiful smile hidden behind your pain. That's why your cheeks are so high!

You are the color of dark clouds from the hurricanes I created in September, I made your lips so full and thick so when you Kiss, they will remember! Your stature is strong, your bone structure thick to withstand the burden of time. The reflection you see in the mirror, that image that looks back, that is **MINE!**

So, get off your knees, look in the mirror and tell me what you see?

I didn't make you in the image of darkness... I made you in the image of **ME!**

Deaconess Daisy Swackard



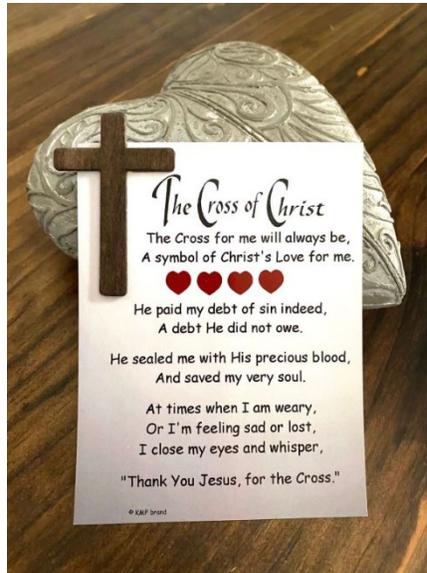
Spotlight On “Christ’s Love for Us”

How Can I Spread the Love of Christ This Valentine’s Day?

Christians can enjoy chocolates and flowers on Valentine’s Day, but they should remember that love is best defined by Jesus’ sacrificial death. On this holiday that focuses on love, we can point people to Christ, the One who loves us the most.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s “How Do I Love Thee?” is one of the most famous love poems in history. Her sonnet starts with words that are now iconic: “How do I love thee? Let me count the way.”

Although this poem conveys her love for her husband, people continue to use the words to express their romantic feelings for others. Browning loved her husband, but nothing can compare with God’s love for us. Scripture says that God demonstrated His love for us by sending His only Son to die for us so that we can receive eternal life by placing our faith in Him (John 3:16).



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