



AFRICAN HERITAGE SUNDAY

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Sunday, February 12, 2012

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I. Introduction

African Heritage Sunday on the African American church calendar provides churches and congregations with opportunities to expand their knowledge of the African Continent, acknowledge the cultural contributions of Africa to current African American life, and expose our children to a vast cultural reservoir that extends from the beginnings of human existence to now.

African Heritage Sunday also provides us with an opportunity to correct historical inaccuracies about Africa and African Americans. Through annual explorations of African culture and celebrations of African life, black Christians are able to build community, make connections, and find answers to the myriad questions couched within the diversities of African history, the

African American experience in this country, and the underpinnings of western Christian orthodoxy.

Africa is diverse and complex not only because it is one of the largest continents in the world, but also because it is filled with many different peoples, languages, dialects, artistic and cultural traditions, various climatic and geographic regions, significant natural resources, and many different family and government structures. It also has many different religious and spiritual traditions. As Africa has stretched forth into the Diasporas of the western world, many of those diversities and complexities have been fused with those of other cultures, nations, and continents. All of that diversity and complexity is available for our exploration during African Heritage Sunday.

II. Historical Background

A. The African Continent

Africa is not a country. Africa is a Continent. It is currently composed of 53 countries, more than any other continent.¹ A "continent" is "one of the principle land masses of the earth, usually regarded as including Africa, Antarctica, Asia, Australia, Europe, North America, and South America."² Africa is the second largest and second most populated continent in the world, second only to the Continent of Asia.³ Africa is approximately four times the size of the United States of America.⁴ The Continent of Africa is linguistically diverse, with more than 1500–2000 African languages.⁵ Geographically, Africa is located in the eastern hemisphere, south of the Mediterranean, and it adjoins Asia on the northeast.⁶

Over the centuries, many of the countries within the African Continent have had name and/or size changes. Many of those changes resulted from warfare, colonization, environmental changes, annexations, de-annexations, etc.

B. Definitions and Etymologies

The term "heritage," according to the Online Etymology Dictionary, has the following meaning and root history: heritage: "that which may be inherited," from O.Fr. iritage, eritage, geritage, from heriter "inherit," from L.L. hereditare, ultimately from L. heres (gen. heredis) "heir"..."⁷ The term "heritage," as defined by Webster's Online Dictionary means: "something transmitted by or acquired from a predecessor." Thus, the words "African heritage" means that which is transmitted by or acquired from Africa or an African predecessor.

Therefore, references to our African cultural heritage, by necessity, refer to the traditions, customs, practices, behaviors, and artistic expressions that have been transmitted to us by, or that

we have acquired from, our African ancestors. In short, those references refer to the bequeathed African culture that we have inherited through our DNA and collective memories. That culture on the one hand sets us apart from all other peoples; and, on the other hand, enables us to successfully negotiate our new world experiences. In many instances, it has been our “saving grace.”

III. The Early View

Notwithstanding its various languages, the cohesiveness of African families, substantiated and complex political, social, and economic systems, and its long-standing history of achievements in the arts (e.g., music, dance, jewelry-making, metal , stone, ivory and wood carving and sculpture, macramé, weaving and tapestries, etc.), several early scholars argued forcefully that “...nothing existed in Africa that approached civilization...”⁸

Other students of Africa argued that, although Africa was a place of some measureable amount of civilization, Africans in the Diaspora did not retain any substantial elements of their African culture. Under this view, the vast majority of the African’s africanisms were lost during his/her journey to the New World and during the acculturative process in that new place.⁹ This view of cultural “de-evolution” was also fostered by the prominent black sociologist E. Franklin Frazier.¹⁰

Holders of that view gave no credible examples where this type of de-acculturation had occurred with any other people from any other nation or culture. In some instances, that view amounted to just bad scholarship. In other instances, it was no more than a subtle, racist attempt to justify an underlying belief that Africa was bereft of a substantial culture, mainly because Africans were black.

These early examples of poor and racist scholarship have long since been debunked by mounds of more modern and extensive research.¹¹ The current question that is being debated by scholars is not whether “any” of our African culture survived until today, but how much of it survived. Some scholars believe much of the African way of life has been retained by Africans in the Diaspora.¹²

IV. Loving Africa Means We Love Ourselves – The Words of Malcolm X

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AG797bvnlv8>

V. African Cultural Legacies

While different peoples within various countries of Africa for hundreds of years have recorded, in different forms, aspects of their life and culture, there is general agreement among scholars that African peoples for centuries have orally transmitted their culture, traditions, practices, and customs from generation to generation. It is also done through dance, music, and other art forms.¹³

To some extent, one can find a continuation of that oral tradition in the customs, practices, traditions, and cultures of African Americans. Examples can often be found in aspects of modern African American life: hip hop, blues, Gospel music, spirituals, rap, Christian call and response songs, work songs, jazz, folktales, rhymes, freedom songs, storytelling, proverbs, jokes, oral history, fairy tales, and sermons. This oral legacy, to some extent, is unique to African peoples. In many instances, a paramount pride is taken when the oral tradition is well invoked. Even educated black preachers, ones who are very skilled at proclamation, often embrace this oral art form. When it is done well, whether in the pulpit, choir loft, living room, or on the stage or street corner, the response by black listeners is almost always rapturous. A kinship emerges between the exhorter and listener—sometimes to the point where they actually talk back to each other, even during live theater performances. In a few instances, I have even seen this phenomenon played out at funerals and in movie houses.

A. African Proverbs: Gifts of an Oral Culture

African proverbs are an example that fit neatly into the African oral tradition. The following proverbs are familiar to many Africans and to many African Americans. These proverbs can be easily inserted in the morning worship program on African Heritage Sunday:

- **Don't set sail using someone else's star.**
Meaning: Just because someone has been successful at doing something does not mean you will be successful at doing the same thing.
- **The best way to eat an elephant in your path is cut him up in little pieces.**
Meaning: The best way to solve a problem is to solve it bit by bit.
- **A sugar cane is sweetest at the joint.**
Meaning: What seems to be hard to achieve in real life is often the best.
- **He who does not know one thing knows another.**
Meaning: No one knows everything, but everyone knows something.
- **It takes a whole village to raise a child.**

Meaning: Everyone in a community should be responsible for helping to raise a child.

- **Rain does not fall on one roof alone.**

Meaning: Trouble comes to everyone at one time or another.

- **After a foolish deed comes remorse.**

Meaning: After you have done something foolish, you feel sorry for doing it.

- **A roaring lion kills no game.**

Meaning: You cannot gain anything by sitting around talking about it. You must get up and work for it.

- **Restless feet may walk into a snake pit.**

Meaning: It is easy for a person to get into trouble when he or she is not busy doing something.

- **Knowledge is like a garden: If it is not cultivated, it cannot be harvested.**

Meaning: If you do not use the knowledge that you have, you cannot expect to gain anything from it.

- **Do not look where you fell, but where you slipped.**

Meaning: Don't look at your mistakes; look at what caused you to make the mistakes.

- **Only a fool tests the depth of water with both feet.**

Meaning: it is not wise to jump into a situation before thinking about it.

- **Wherever a man goes to dwell, his character goes with him.**

Meaning: Your character follows you wherever you go.

- **Life is like a shadow and a mist; it passes quickly by, and is no more.**

Meaning: Life is short.

- **If you offend, ask for a pardon; If offended forgive.**

Meaning: If you upset someone, apologize to him or her. If someone upsets you, forgive him or her.¹⁴

B. African American Proverbs: Sayings We've All Heard

African Americans, after coming (initially, some Africans came to this country as free men and women) or being brought to this country, continued their cultural tradition of reciting and handing down proverbs to their relatives, friends, neighbors, and others. No doubt many of those proverbs or sayings retained strong African influences. Others most likely were borrowed from other cultures and peoples with whom they interacted, and if necessary were adapted for their own use.

This process continues today. The following proverbs or sayings are ones that I have heard recited by elders in my family, African American neighbors, friends, schoolmates, and members of various African American communities in different parts of the country. These proverbs or sayings are probably familiar to most African Americans. These proverbs may also be easily inserted into church bulletins, on African Heritage Sunday:

- **A hard head leads to a soft behind.**
Meaning: Disobedience usually leads to pain.
- **A closed mouth doesn't get fed.**
Meaning: It is impossible to get what you want if you don't speak up for yourself.
- **You can't get blood out of a turnip.**
Meaning: What I don't have, you can't get.
- **Blood is thicker than water.**
Meaning: Family always supports family in conflicts with non-family.
- **You can get more flies with honey than you can with vinegar.**
Meaning: Niceness will take you much further in life than will meanness.
- **Grind your bones before you bury them.**
Meaning: Release your offender before you seek forgiveness, or get rid of your grudges before you seek forgiveness. Then, you can't go back and pick up your hurt feelings or grudges again. Once released, they are gone forever.
- **You are too poor-a-cow to kick so high.**
Meaning: You are likely to take a serious fall if you try to fly above your capabilities.
- **Keep on traveling; there's a man up the road waiting for you.**
Meaning: Wisdom will overtake you in your foolishness, and when it does you will be in for a big letdown.

- **Everything sweet isn't good.**

Meaning: Too much of anything is usually bad for you, and some things are disguised as good but are actually bad.

- **A crowing hen comes to no good end.**

Meaning: Boasting and bragging are unnatural and can cause trouble to befall you.

C. Storytelling: A Personal Remembrance



I grew up in Mississippi, a place where people told stories. My grandfather, father, uncles, and many of my male neighbors, teachers, and friends told stories. On a good day, even the women told stories, especially when they were canning, quilting, or rendering fat and making cracklings. Even preachers would insert stories in their sermons, sometimes having nothing to do with their text. It was usually done to break the ice or to solicit laughter from the congregation.

Growing up, I heard classic folktales, epic poems, poetry, hunting stories, fishing stories, planting stories, harvesting stories, ghost stories, and rainy day stories. Some were sad. Others were scary—so scary I sometimes couldn't sleep once the storytelling was over. My father was a first-rate storyteller. By the end of his stories, he would have all of us on the edge of our seats, either in laughter or fear. But most stories and tales were funny.

I began writing and telling my own stories when I was about twelve or thirteen years old. Before telling any of them to the seasoned adult storytellers, I practiced on my brothers and sisters and my friends. Often, however, my paternal grandmother had a willing ear. She loved to recite poetry, so I was often her listening ear. She in turn listened to my stories.

This early exposure to the oral tradition of storytelling ultimately led me to take storytelling and writing classes. And I later began to perform some of my stories on stage. Most of my stories spring from my childhood and my own life experiences. Others are based on my interactions with others, readings, dreams, and my imagination.

The story that follows was written after I had a conversation with a close friend about a small, rural community in Texas. I call it, “Here Comes Sin.”¹⁵

HERE COMES SIN

It was late Monday afternoon. Mama and I had spent the earlier part of the day—from early morning until around noon—picking peas, tomatoes, cucumbers, okra, and yellow squash in the family garden. We quit right at mid-day, just before the sun became unbearable. Between the two of us, we had about four bushels of peas, a half bushel of yellow squash, a peck of cucumbers, two bushels of tomatoes, and a bushel and a half of okra.

On our way out of the garden, Mama pointed to a large watermelon and told me: “Get that one baby, let’s take it with us.” I quickly snapped the melon from its vine and picked it up with both hands. When we reached the house, Mama made room in the ice box and I gently sat the watermelon inside the box, so it would be nice and cold, in no time.

Mama washed up first. Then, I followed. For lunch, Mama fixed a cucumber salad and bacon and tomato sandwiches. I pulled several lemons from the tree in the front yard, squeezed the juice from them, and Mama made a large picture of lemonade that contained twisted sprigs of fresh mint from her herb garden.

After lunch, Mama began preparations for supper. She cut up a small bowl of yellow squash and placed it in the ice box. She then shelled a mess of peas and put them on a low eye on the back of the stove. She also took two of the largest, vine-ripened tomatoes and a batch of okra and washed them. Mama’s okra and tomato succotash was the best this side of Texas.

From the freezer, Mama took a neatly, paper-wrapped bundle of chicken—four pieces—that were left from Sunday’s dinner. Daddy always ate two pieces of chicken—the breast and wing. Mama and I each ate one piece. I didn’t tell Mama, but I was praying that she would make smothered chicken for dinner. It was my favorite. She must have read my mind, because Mama looked at me and said: “We’re having your favorite tonight, smothered chicken.” I said: “Really!! Ooh, Mama, thanks!!”

Around three o'clock that afternoon, Miss Mounger—she was one of our neighbors and Mama's best friend—came to help Mama shell the peas and prepare the other vegetables for canning. This was a ritual that most of the ladies in our community followed—they always helped each other with their canning.

During the fall, they did the same thing with their quilting, and again at hog-killing time. Except for some exchanges of vegetables, quilt scraps, or pieces of fresh hog meat, there was no pay involved—no money ever exchanged hands. These were just down home country folk helping one another to live from day to day and from season to season.

Mama and Miss Mounger usually performed their pea-shelling duties on our front porch, once the sun had gone past the front yard. From that vantage point, they could see everything within eyesight and hear everything within earshot—every child, car, and passerby. They could write a book about the happenings in our little town of Berry Hill. Those two ladies didn't miss a thing. Mama and Miss Mounger had been talking and laughing for nearly an hour about church and community gossip, when Mama spied Miss Rosalie walking in our direction. Speaking under her breath, after making a quick, unnoticeable half turn of her head towards Miss Mounger, Mama said: "Child, here comes Sin."

Miss Mounger, without missing a beat, said: "Where she going now? It's a little early for her type of work. It ain't even dark yet."

Then, Mama and Ms. Mounger chuckled in a low, knowing sort-of-way. Of course, I remained quiet. Miss Rosalie was too far away to hear them. But, they didn't say another word, until Miss Rosalie was approaching our house.

Mama was the first to speak: "Hi, girl. Ain't too hot for you out there?" Miss Rosalie responded: "No, ma'm. How y'all doing?"

Miss Mounger chimed in: "We fine—Just shelling a few peas. Girl, don't get too hot in that sun. Folk are falling out with sun strokes every day. I swear I won't be able to pick you up." The three of them laughed.

Then, Mama said: "Yeah, Child, you want a glass of cold water—Might help you with that heat?"

Miss Rosalie responded, "No ma'm. I'll be alright. I won't be out here too long. Y'all have good day." Like verbal Siamese twins, Mama and Miss Mounger said: "You too." With that, Miss Rosalie continued her walk up the road, with her hips sashayin' and talking to both sides of the road at the same time.

As soon as Miss Rosalie was safely out of sight, Mama said: “Whose husband is she going to service now? It’s just an absolute shame.” Miss Mounger added: “Yeah, she’s a menace to society. Just think—she’s carrying on like that, with all these chillun and young folk ‘round here. Who needs that kind of carrying on?” Mama said: “That’s right; the police just ain’t doing their job.”

Miss Mounger responded quickly: “Child that might the problem—they might be doing too much of a job; or, having too much of a job done. You can bet Sin is doing her job. She probably got the police in her pocket too. Sin ain’t no fool. She knows what she doing. You can look at her eyes and tell she’s a smooth operator. She ain’t walking in this heat for her health.”

Mama laughed so hard her belly started rolling and shaking up and down. I thought she was going to roll right off the front porch.

When I was just about ready to run and catch her, Mama stood up and said, “Girl you crazy as they come, but you know you ain’t telling nothing but the eternal truth. Do you want a glass of cold lemonade?” Miss Mounger said: “That would be nice right about now.” Mama put her pan of peas in her chair and went into the house to get the lemonade.

Mama came back with two large glasses of lemonade, one for Miss Mounger and one for me. Then she went back into the kitchen to get a glass for herself. When she returned, she took her seat and continued shelling peas.

A little later, Miss Rosalie came walking back down the road in our direction. This time, Miss Mounger saw her first and said: “Child, here comes Sin. That was quick. She got a bag in her hand—looks like a big bag. That girl sure knows how to barter.”

Squinting in the direction of Miss Rosalie, Mama said: “Quiet, child, before you make me hurt myself. But, you right, that bag is pretty big. I wonder what’s in it.”

Miss Rosalie was walking faster, this time. She was almost directly in front of the house when Mama took a swallow of her lemonade and I yelled out: “Miss Sin, Mama wanna know what’s in your bag.”

Miss Mounger’s eyes almost popped right out of her head, her mouth fell wide open, and she almost fainted straightway. Miss Rosalie stopped dead in her tracks, with a big smile on her face, her hips still giggling for an extra measure.

With her peas flying in one direction and her lemonade in another, Mama jumped out of her chair so fast, I thought lightening had struck her. She grabbed me by the back of my neck and threw me through the front screen door. I screamed like a scalded dog.

Mama said: “Boy, you know that ain’t that woman’s name. You just too grown for any good.” I said: “But, Mama, that’s what you and Miss Mounger just called her.” Mama was furious. Her eyes were bulging like a fat bull frog that had overeaten.

Then Mama started walking towards me—partly to see if I was dead and partly to exact further vengeance. She stared at me through the large hole in the screen door. But, now, she looked like a Texas Brahma bull, with fire coming out of its nose. I was shell-shocked or should I say thrown-through-a-screen-door shocked.

She said, “You need to know when to shut your mouth—you too grown to be an eight year old child. I told you ‘bout jumping into grown folk’s business. You wait ‘til your daddy get home, we ain’t heard the last of this.”

Miss Rosalie was still standing there grinning and watching things fall apart.

With downcast eyes and complete shame, Mama turned to Miss Rosalie and said: “I’m sorry Rosalie. These chillun these days are just too grown for they own skin. Can I get you a glass of cold lemonade? Why don’t you come on in and rest your feet.”

Even with my whole body aching, I knew that was strange. I thought Mama had completely lost her mind. Mama couldn’t stand Miss Rosalie. But here she was inviting her into our house. I couldn’t imagine what daddy was going to say when he heard this.

Miss Rosalie, now completely in charge of the situation, said with an air of superiority: “No thanks. I got to get home and cook this steak and shrimp for my supper. But, thanks anyway. Maybe another time, if you don’t mind? Besides, you look like you got your hands full.”

Pointing to Miss Mounger, Miss Rosalie asked, “Is she all right? Maybe she needs some cold lemonade.”

Then, Miss Rosalie pressed her way toward home, her hips swaying like she was ringing out a fresh load of wet laundry. Mama was totally humiliated. Miss Mounger sat up and began shaking her head, as if she had lost her best friend. She didn’t say another word.

As soon as Miss Rosalie was down the road a little, Mama stepped off the porch and broke the largest limb she could find on the lemon tree and began walking back towards the front door,

behind which I was standing. As she approached the door, with the cadence of an Army Drill Sergeant, I trembled with fear and thought to myself: “Lord, here comes Sin.”

VI. Funerals and Weddings: Connections to the Mother Land

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k58LBsYT-xs>

Ysaye Barnwell of the group, Sweet Honey In the Rock, speaks on the video below about preparing for our deaths and our funerals. She and members of the group then sing the song titled, “When I die.” A verse of the song is given below the video.

“Take me swift to Heaven,
Singing, “hallelujia!”
Take me swift to Heaven
In the nighttime;
Seat me ‘mid the lilies,
Crown me with the roses,
And let white robed angels
Sing me, Hallelujia.”¹⁶

Funerals and weddings are major rituals in African American communities. In both instances, even the poorest families scramble to bury their loved one in first class fashion and make sure their daughters have weddings that rival current-day television weddings. Often families pay exorbitant prices for caskets, funeral flower cars, stretch limos, standing flowers, and coffin sprays that are discarded as soon as their loved one’s body is lowered into his or her grave. In many instances, this is done even though lower-cost funerals are available.

African Funeral

A wedding of an Xhosa couple in South Africa



African American funeral



An African American wedding



Similar efforts are extended and expended on the wedding side: expensive bridal gowns, wedding rings, numerous bridesmaids, groomsmen, and members of the wedding party. There are also hotel stays for the wedding party, limos, rehearsal dinners, pre-wedding parties, post-wedding feasts, honeymoons, and cruises to faraway places, all coordinated by professional wedding planners.

Funeral and wedding rituals have always been important to black people—both in Africa and in the United States. Even during slavery many couples found respectful ways to bury their dead and endearing ways to ritualize their love relationships; although, in most instances, slave marriages were not recognized by law. Some of the African American preoccupation with these rituals may have roots in African culture. It is possible that it was and is more than a manifestation of American cultural excesses.

African scholars have written about African funeral rites. The evidence indicates that all over the Continent funeral rites were and are elaborate. “The funeral was the climax of life, and costly and extensive rituals were sacred obligations of the survivors.”¹⁷ This scholarly reporting creates a possible connection between current-day African American funeral rituals and those of African cultures. This may be part of our African heritage.

VII. African Heritage Sunday Activity Suggestions

There are numerous ways to celebrate **African Heritage Sunday**. Whatever methods chosen should be ones that: (a) highlight the relevance of Africa for modern-day Western churches; (b) spotlight the umbilical connection between Africa and its progeny in the Western hemisphere, including African Americans; and (c) further educate the sons and daughters of Africa in the diasporas about the African Continent and its vast diversity. The following activity suggestions are offered for consideration:

a. Flags of Africa Pageant and Program

Select a diverse group of church and community members (children, teens, young adults, elders, veterans, the disabled, those who use wheelchairs, members of the LGBT community, the blind, the deaf, etc). Dress each person in a costume representing a different African nation (choose as many nations as desired). Each person should also carry the flag of the African nation he or she represents. The marchers should enter the church sanctuary, auditorium, or area of assembly with their flags hoisted. As each person enters, an announcer should announce each representative, giving the nation he or she represents, the area of Africa (north, south, east, west, or central) where the particular nation is located, and the primary language or dialect spoken by its people. Entertainment may include various types of African dance, music, drumming, and storytelling. After the **Flags of Africa Pageant and Program** is completed, foods representing the different African nations could be served. Detailed written information about Africa generally, including a map of the African continent, and each African nation included in the **Flags of Africa Pageant and Program** should be made available to the congregation, and participants and the entire program should be videotaped and made available to the congregation and participants.

b. Sabbath or Sunday School Africa Lesson

Have each class select a different nation of the Continent of Africa and discover and learn as much as possible about that nation: location, languages, history, cultural traits, natural resources, current economic conditions, contributions to the world, references to it in the Bible, etc.

c. African Storytelling Night

Select professional and amateur storytellers, including members of the congregation, and sponsor an African Storytelling Night. Choose African stories that are age- and gender-appropriate and have them performed for different audiences in the church.

d. African Dance and Music Festival

Including children, teens, young adults, the elderly, the disabled, and members of the LGBT community, sponsor an African Dance and Music Festival. All types of African dance should be included. All kinds of African and African American music should be also included (e.g., bush, Caribbean, central and south American, with African influences, African and African American hip hop, gospel, blues, etc.). The goal of the festival is to highlight the music and dance of Africa and to show how the dance and music of Africa have impacted specific areas of the broader world. In short, show how those areas have been influenced by Africans in the Diasporas as Africa has stretched forth her hands.

e. Africa Current Events Night

Highlight some of the major issues now faced by Africa: AIDS, famine, drought, contaminated drinking water and lack of clean water, loss of land to multi-national agricultural corporations, war, female genital mutilation, terrorism, failure to educate females; relationships with the United States, Russia, Europe and China; etc. **Invite African history teachers, scholars, and specialists, including native Africans,** to conduct a seminar that addresses major issues faced by the continent of Africa. Potential solutions to identify problems should be discussed, along with suggestions regarding how your church and community can help. **Offer existing examples from other churches across the country who are doing work in Africa today.**

Each of the afore-mentioned activities could have a broad impact if they are paired with or enhanced by current technology: (a) Internet streaming of the program; (b) placing the program on your church website and asking others to place it on their website; and (c) using local radio and television stations to advertise the event and show segments of the program after it occurs, including public broadcasting and educational TV stations and college TV stations.

VIII. Songs That Speak to the Moment

Throughout this unit the aim has been to show the bond that has always existed and continues to exist between Mother Africa and its people in the Diaspora. The following three songs are given to further drive home this point.

The Bond of Love¹⁸

We are one in the bond of love. We are one in the bond of love; We have joined our spirit with the Spirit of God. We are one in the bond of love.

Let us sing now, everyone, Let us feel His love begun; Let us join our hands that the world will know we are one in the bond of love.

Siyahamba/We Are Marching in the Light of God¹⁹

Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos', We are marching in the light of God,
Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos', We are marching in the light of God,
Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos', We are marching the light of God,
Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwen-, We are marching in the light of God,
Khanyen' kwenkhos', The light of God,
Siyahamba, hamba, We are marching, marching,
Siyahamba, hamba We are marching, marching,
Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwen-, We are marching in the light of,
Khanyen' kwenkhos', The light of God,
Siyahamba, hamba, We are marching, marching,
Siyahamba, hamba, We are marching, marching
Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos We are marching in the light of God.”

Blest Be the Tie That Binds²⁰

Blest be the tie that binds Our hearts in Christian love; The fellowship of kindred minds Is like to that above.

Before our Father's throne We pour our ardent prayers; Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one, Our comforts and our cares.

We share each other's woes, Each other's burdens bear; And often for each other flows The sympathizing tear.

Notes

1. Online location: <http://www.infoplease.com/askeds/countries-africa.html> accessed 29 October 2011
2. Online location: <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/continent> accessed 29 October 2011

3. Online location:

[http://wiki.answers.com/Q/Is the largest continent Asia and the second largest conti...](http://wiki.answers.com/Q/Is_the_largest_continent_Asia_and_the_second_largest_conti...)
accessed 29 October 2011

4. Online location: <http://www.ahsd25.k12il.us/curriculum/africa/map.htya> accessed 29 October 2011

5. Online location: http://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/africa_languages.htm accessed 29 October 2011

6. Online location: <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/africa> accessed 29 October 2011

7. Online Etymology Dictionary:

http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?allowed_in_frame=O&search=Heritage&searchm
accessed 29 October 2011

8. Franklin, John Hope and Alfred A. Moss Jr. From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans. 1947. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005. p. 30.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid, pp. 30–31.

12. Ibid., pp. 30–32.

13. Ibid., p. 28.

14. Online location: http://www.educationworld.com/a_tsl/TM/WS_african-proverbs.shtml
accessed 29 October 2011

15. Wheeler, Ralph. “Here Comes Sin.” © 2011

16. Johnson, Fenton. “Singing Hallelujia.” Ed. Henry L. Gates, Jr. and Nellie Y. McKay. The Norton Anthology of African American Literature. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997. pp. 925-926

17. From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans, p. 26.

18. "The Bond of Love." African American Heritage Hymnal. Chicago, IL: GIA Publications, 2001. #521

19. Online location: <http://ingeb.org/spiritua/siyahamb.html> accessed 29 October 2011

20. "Blest Be the Tie That Binds." African American Heritage Hymnal. #341