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Seeing Our Divine Potential Through the Lenses of Historically Black Colleges and Universities

A Commentary by Jason Curry



The eighteenth chapter of the gospel according to St. Luke is indisputable evidence of God's love for humanity. In this particular passage of scripture, we are presented with a picture in which Jesus the Christ encounters a man who does not possess the ability to see. The man could not see, but he wanted to see for the text says he shouted "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" It was at that moment, that Jesus reached down with power in his hands and compassion in his heart and restored the sight of the man in need. Jesus said: "Received your sight; your faith has saved you." The text says that the blind man immediately regained his sight and followed Jesus and glorifying God.

Scholars have argued that the idea of "blindness" mentioned in the text is not only a reference to physical blindness, it is also symbolic of our human tendency to ignore or overlook

the potential, relevance and influence of God. For example, as a graduate of a Historically Black College, I would submit that HBCU's are relevant because they help African-American students to "see" and realize their divine potential. There are many people who assert that HBCU's have outlived their relevance; however, many of the African-American leaders of our nation are and have been graduates of HBCU's. On occasion, I remind students that God has brought them to Fisk University so that the cobwebs of ignorance might be removed, so that the dust of discouragement might be blown away, and so that the ignorance of indifference might not blind them to the miraculous power of God and the needs of those whom we call our neighbor. Yes, I believe that God wants them to "see" like James Weldon Johnson, who through divine inspiration penned the majestic verses

of the Black National Anthem. Yes, his eloquence ensured that this generation and generations yet unborn might know that God is the reason that we as a people have made it thus far. See like Nikki Giovanni, whose brilliant literary contributions in poetry and fiction have shaped the thought of both American and African-American thinkers. See like Aaron Douglas, a masterful painter who brilliance given form on canvas remains unrivaled even among the world's best artistic expressions of the African-American experience. See like John Hope Franklin who majestic passage down the corridors of this nation's history has enabled humanity to read a sacred history so that we might know our triumphs and our tragedy's as a people. As Black History Month comes to a close, we give thanks HBCU's, for they are still in the business of helping people to see.

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