

Heroes of the Faith

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HISTORY
MONTH

Zephaniah

Zephaniah was a prophet in the Old Testament. The Bible describes him as the son of Cushi. (Cushi in Hebrew means somebody of Ethiopian descent). This has led many scholars to believe that Zephaniah had African heritage and dark skin.

Among the warnings he shared from God Zephaniah also spoke of God's love for us:

**The LORD your God is with you;
the mighty One will save you.
He will rejoice over you.
You will rest in his love;
he will sing and be joyful
about you."**

Zephaniah 3 v 17



Simon of Cyrene

In Matthew 27 v 32 we read this:

As the soldiers were going out of the city with Jesus, they forced a man from Cyrene, named Simon, to carry the cross for Jesus.

The ruins of Cyrene can be found in modern day Libya in Northern Africa.



Simeon and Lucius

We read about Simeon and Lucius in Acts 13 v 1, they are listed among the prophets and teachers of the church in Antioch.

Simeon was also called Niger, possibly because of his dark skin tone whilst Lucius was from the city of Cyrene just like Simon who carried the cross of Jesus.



The Ethiopian Eunuch

In Acts 8 we see Philip sharing the gospel with a man from Ethiopia. This man would have carried the Good News about Jesus home with him. What a vibrant and diverse church God was creating as the Good News spread throughout the world!

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William J Seymour

May 2nd 1870 – September 28th 1922

William was
born in
Louisiana in the
USA

William sought
a new move of
the Holy Spirit
and believed
that baptism in
the Spirit was
available for all.

William was
part of the
Azusa Street
Revival which
began in 1906
and saw many
people speaking
in tongues and
coming to faith.

“I can say, through the power of the Spirit, that wherever God can get a people that will come together in one accord and one mind in the Word of God, the baptism of the Holy Ghost will fall upon them, like as at Cornelius' house.”



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Jerena Lee

February 11, 1783 – February 3, 1864

Jerena heard God calling her to "Go preach the gospel!" but at that time there were no women preachers in the Methodist Church.

Jerena was born in New Jersey in the USA

Despite opposition Jerena began to preach the gospel, at one time travelling over two thousand miles on foot in just one year!

Jerena was the first African American woman to have an autobiography published in the USA and her story still encourages us today!

"If the man may preach, because the Saviour died for him, why not the woman, seeing he died for her also? Is he not a whole Saviour, instead of half of one?"



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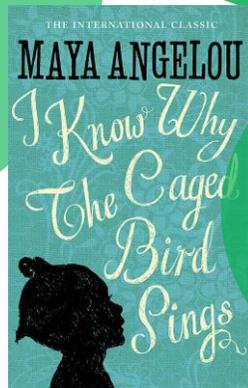
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Maya Angelou

April 4, 1928 – May 28, 2014



Maya was a poet, author and civil rights activist best known for her series of autobiographies including 'I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings'



Maya's writing helped make a way for the voices of many more African American women to be heard and published.

'I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings' has never been out of print since its publication in 1969

"I found that I knew not only that there was God but that I was a child of God, when I understood that, when I comprehended that, more than that, when I internalized that, ingested that, I became courageous."

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Dr Martin Luther King Jr

January 15, 1929 – April 4, 1968

Dr Martin Luther King was born in Georgia, America.

Martin helped organise the Montgomery bus boycott, a protest against racial segregation in the United States.

As a spokesperson for the civil rights movement he continued to campaign for equality throughout his life.

In 1963 a march was organised with between 200,000 and 300,000 people gathering in Washington to call for Jobs and Freedom! It was here that Martin gave his most famous speech.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today.



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Harriet Tubman

March 1822 – March 10th 1913

Harriet was born into slavery but escaped and spent much of her life calling for the abolition of slavery.

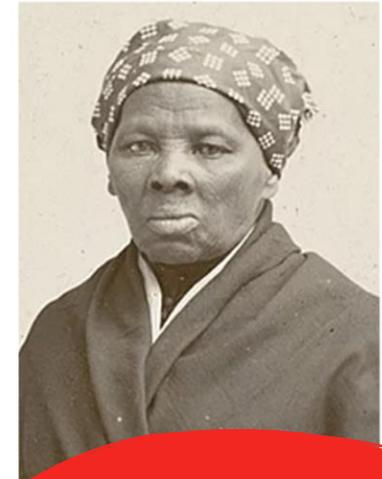
Using a network of activists and safe houses called the 'Underground Railroad' Harriet helped others escape from slavery with their families.

Harriet was given the nickname "Moses" because of her work leading people from slavery into freedom.

Harriet was born in Maryland in the USA.

Harriet served as a scout and spy during the American Civil War and was the first woman to lead a combat assault.

Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world.



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George Washington Carver

1860s – January 5th 1943

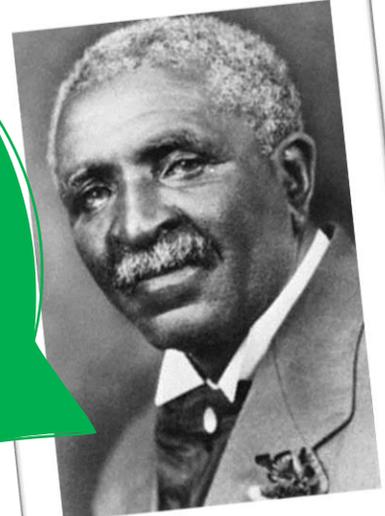
George was born into slavery and later kidnapped and rescued. After the abolition of slavery he sought an education.

In 1891 George began studying for a degree in Agriculture, he was the first black student at Iowa State University.

George explored the many uses of peanuts creating hundreds of peanut products. He also campaigned to improve the lives of farmers.

Why, then should we who believe in Christ be so surprised at what God can do with a willing man in a laboratory?"

George once spoke for nearly two hours on the potential of peanuts! When asked where had learned so much he said, "from the Bible which tells us about the God who made the peanut and showed me what to do with it!"



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Archbishop Desmond Tutu

7th October 1931 - present

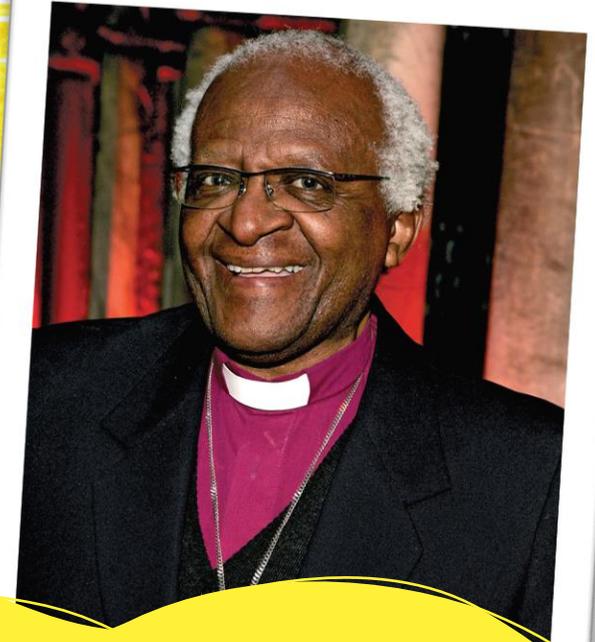
Archbishop Desmond was born in South Africa

Desmond moved to the UK in 1962 to train as a theology teacher at King's College London.

Desmond trained as a teacher in South Africa but unhappy with the racial segregation introduced in schools under apartheid he left teaching and became a priest.

Returning to South Africa Desmond held a number of offices including Bishop of Lesotho and used his position in the church to encourage a racially equal future for South Africa.

Do your little bit of good where you are; it's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world.



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Rev. Rose Hudson–Wilkin

19th January 1961 - present

Rose was born in Jamaica and decided at the age of just 14 that she wanted to train for ordination.

In 1982, Rose travelled to the UK to train as a minister. She was ordained as a priest in 1994.

Rose worked with the Committee on Black Anglican Concern seeking to combat racism in the Church of England.

In 2008 Rose was appointed Chaplain to the Queen.

In 2010 she was appointed Chaplain to the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Rose was the first black woman to hold either post.

I have always believed that faith should be at the heart of public life. I think faith is who we are as a people. It is not a garment that we put on and off depending on the weather.



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Rev. Les Isaac

Les was born in Antigua but moved to the London, UK at a young age.

In 2003 Les helped launch 'Street Pastors', he is also the CEO of the Ascension Trust.

Les was raised in a Christian home but walked away from faith disappointed by experiences of racism.

Les came back to Christianity later in his life when somebody shared the heart of the gospel with him.

In 2012 Les Isaac received an OBE in recognition of the work he has done to foster community cohesion.

