

ROCKY MOUNTAIN CONFERENCE - FEB. 5, 2012

# *Reflections*

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

## 'TELLING HISTORY LIKE IT WAS'

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Here's a biblical verse very few people know exist: "In still another battle with the Philistines at Gob, Elhanan ben-Jaare-oregim of Bethlehem killed Goliath of Gath, whose spear was the size of a weaver's beam" (2 Samuel 21:19). Poor Elhanan unfortunately for him David's propaganda engine skillfully credited the king for the death of the Philistine giant Goliath. Immortalized in scriptures, paintings, plays, and movies, David is the unquestionable slayer of the giant.

Except for this one verse tucked into a series of battle notices, Elhanan is all but expunged from the record. In 1 Chronicles 20:5 Elhanan's role is amended to being the slayer of Goliath's brother. This great warrior, who brought down the feared nemesis of Israel's army, was all but brushed aside by the recorders of history.

There has been a tendency by publishers of US history to brush aside historical contribution by African Americans. Unfortunately, the combined effect of this whitewashing and silencing has been to send the unconscious message that people of color are not among those who shape American community. Absent of solid and able African American historical figures, it has been easy for the few nay-sayers to argue that there is no such thing as a "good black."

Among our personal African American heroes should be:

- > *Nathaniel Alexander who patented the folding chair. Where would our Faith Formation space be without Mr. Alexander's good work?*
- > *Patricia Bath who developed a laser-based device to perform cataract surgery. A blessing to an untold number of our congregants.*
- > *Alfred Cralle who patented the first ice cream scoop. How would our fellowship time suffer without Mr. Cralle's handy device for scooping both ice cream and mashed potatoes?*
- > *Sarah Boone who invented the ironing board as a way to manage ironing sleeves. Every pastor in the pulpit this morning is thankful for Ms. Boon's foresight.*
- > *Lonnie G. Johnson, an engineer who performed spacecraft system design for NASA, and invented the Super Soaker water gun. All those Confirmation Class water wars are courtesy of Dr. Johnson's sense of play.*

Here the scriptures prove our model. By searching out the elusive truth that is tucked away in some unknown corner we can claim a fuller heritage for our nation. A heritage in which we are not ashamed of a person's contribution due to the color of their skin, or their gender, or orientation, or any of a whole long list of things which keep us blind to the content of a person's character.

Interested in submitting your own Reflection for the RMCUCC to use? contact us:

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