

Q&A ABOUT BLACK HISTORY

WITH

Rev. Willard Bass Jr.

Rev. Willard Bass Jr., Assistant Pastor of Green Street United Methodist Church and Director of IDR Inc.

What is the movie or TV mini-series linked to Black History that has had the greatest impact on your life and why?

The movie "12 Years a Slave" is a reminder of the horrific nature of slavery in the US and what our ancestors endured to just do life during that period of history. It also gives hope in the midst of oppression because it affirms what determination to live can result at the end of a horrible encounter.

What is the book linked to Black History that has had the greatest impact on your life and why?

The Book Marks festival book "I Didn't Know What I Didn't Know" by Dorothy Hampton Marcus and Kaypri. The biography is "a southern white woman's story about race" and the realization that race is a crazy mix of socializations and experiences that when unchecked create a whole of privilege and oppression. But, when one consciously steps into the madness can make a tremendous difference in how just life can be for the oppressor and the oppressed. Dorothy is said to have been "...a leading force in the fight for integration and racial equality."

What is the play or musical linked to Black History that has had the greatest impact on your life and why?

The Black Theater Festival's "Black Nativity" is always a production that lifts out the emotions of belief in a God that transcends the heavens and earth to love and bring justice to all!

What is the song linked to Black History that has had the greatest impact on your life and why?

Marvin Gaye's, "What's Going On" is a classic on the reality life in the US. He calls us to "find ways to love to reality" in the midst of turmoil and pain. There is a higher call for family, parents, children and neighbors alike.

What is the poem linked to Black History that has had the greatest impact on your life and why?

Maya Angelou's "I know Why the Cage Bird Sings," speaks to the plight of women everywhere who struggle to just do life without pain and hurt.

The Chronicle was founded in 1974. What news story linked to Black History in The Chronicle has had the greatest impact on your life and why? Or, what news story linked to Black History in general has had the greatest impact on your life and why?

The Chronicle has been and still is the stalwart of truth in media for our community. It has tried to present the news in unbiased manner for the most part. The most recent story linked to Black History is the MLK Breakfast challenge to the "Racism as America's Berlin Wall." I believe the courage to call out systemic racism and offer a solution that evolves the whole community was and is visionary for the future of our city. Kudos to The Chronicle!



PHOTO BY CHANEL DAVIS

Willard Bass & Dr. George Banks

Rev Bass Bio

Rev. Willard Bass Jr., M. Div. is an ordained minister whose vocation is centered on building authentic communities of equity across racial and ethnic divides in all sectors of the community. He director of the Institute for Dismantling Racism and Assistant Pastor of Green Street United Methodist Church. He has been able to engage the broader community in the work of long-term institutional transformation for social change.

As the Assistant Pastor of Outreach for Green Street United Methodist Church, Bass is currently engaged in a broad range of civic and church activities all focused, in various ways, on building and enhancing community through dismantling racism and other injustices.

Bass founded the Institute for Dismantling Racism (IDR, Inc.) in 2004 as a collaborative with a focus on addressing institutional racism. Bass has had major careers in industry, construction, and as an independent business owner. He turned to higher education, theology and church leadership with a vision of creating an anti-racist multicultural diverse community. He received a Bachelor of Science degree from Fayetteville State University, one of the historically black colleges and universities (HBCU) located in North Carolina.

He has held board positions with several community and religious organizations.

Bass has been married to Shirley Lewis Bass for 33 years. They have three children: Kenya, Willard III and Fumisho.

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