

PERISCOPE STUDY GUIDE



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**A Guide for the Study of 175 Years
of Black Presbyterian Ministry**

GUIDE FOR STUDY

A value of possessing and reading Periscope - Black Presbyterianism: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow will be the personal enrichment of the reader and her/his increased knowledge of Black Presbyterians. There is substantial value to be derived from the study of Periscope with other persons who are interested in pursuing history, Black history and the history of Black Presbyterians. The following guide is designed to facilitate, stimulate, motivate further individual or group study.

Periscope may be used in youth organizations, church schools, with communicant - confirmation classes, new members classes, by United Presbyterian Women, United Presbyterian Men, at family night dinners, Lent and Advent study sessions, quoted in sermons and newsletters, placed in libraries and on bulletin boards. It may also be used as resource in developing of church officers and BPU chapters and in orientation of committees of presbyteries. Weekend retreats and camps and conferences may also find Periscope a desired source for study.

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WELCOME TO PERISCOPE!

Black Presbyterians and Black Presbyterianism

1. "Black worshippers from Presbyterian balconies remained Presbyterians." Why? How do you account for this loyalty to the denomination?
2. How do black Presbyterians relate to Blacks in Black denominations? Is their relationship to Blacks in predominantly White denominations different?
3. Some features of Presbyterian polity have special appeal to Black Presbyterians. What are they and why?
4. "Black Presbyterianism has released to the life of the Church a fresh substance and flavor." What is this "fund of blessing," this gift to the Church?
5. Presbyterians have a long and proud history of placing a "high premium on the worth and dignity of persons...." What are some of the current issues for Black Presbyterians that are part of that tradition?

Black Women in the Presbyterian Church

1. Identify elements that make for (a) high involvement of Black Women in the Presbyterian Church, (b) hinder involvement of Black Women.
2. Indicate ways that the Black heroines can be kept alive in the history of the Church.
3. What is the future image, role, opportunities for Black clergwomen in the Presbyterian Church?

The Spirit of Black Presbyterianism

1. Several very influential Black Presbyterians who lived prior to the Civil War are only mentioned by name in this article. What testimony can you offer about their life and witness?
2. Discuss the positive ways that "status" and education can be used for the benefit of the Black community.
3. What are the distinctive gifts of Black Presbyterians to the Black community? to the White community?
4. What are the conditions that keep and will keep Blacks in the Presbyterian Church?
5. What are your dreams for Black Presbyterians, remembering the past and facing the future?

Profiles in Partnership

1. Spend time discussing the questions that are listed in the middle of the article.
2. Consider also the two questions regarding reunion with the Presbyterian Church in the United States.
3. Invite Black executives to visit with your session, congregation or with a particular group in the congregation.

Presbyterian Schools for Black

1. The Church's investment in the education of Blacks from the Civil War period to the present has yielded benefits almost beyond reckoning. Many of them have been of utmost importance. What are they?
2. Do taped interviews with graduates of the parochial schools. There were large Black populations in several Southern states.
3. Why such large growth of Black Presbyterians in North Carolina and South Carolina?

Leadership Profiles

1. What are positive forces available to increase Black leadership? negative forces decreasing Black leadership?
2. Does our congregation have an on-going program for developing potential leadership?
3. What is required of Black Presbyterians, if effective leadership is going to emerge from the ranks?

Blacks Overseas

1. What do you feel motivated Black Presbyterians to serve overseas?
2. What are current factors that cause Blacks to want to serve overseas? that militate against Blacks deciding for overseas service?
3. Invite Black Presbyterians who have served overseas.

The Four Synods - Origins and Significance

1. Outline on a map the areas covered by the four black synods.
2. Collect taped interviews of ministers who served in those synods
3. What needs were met by Black Synods?
4. Are some, all, none of those needs necessary today?
5. How can we offer a positive response to the charge: "Black Presbyterians United (BPU) is a self-segregating body?"

Early Black Congregations

1. Design a "Church of the Month" study of the listed congregations.
2. What were the existing factors or conditions that contributed to the founding of these particular congregations?
3. What are current images of Black Presbyterians?

NOTES

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