The Black Church Is Beautiful

A HISTORY, A WITNESS, A CONTINUING MISSION

Lesson 3

When Faith Built Institutions

From Survival to Structure: How Faith, Freedom, and Education Shaped a People



First African Baptist Church
Savannah, GA (1773)



Free African Society
Philadelphia, PA (1787)



Mother Bethel AME Church
Philadelphia, PA (1794)



Cheyney University
America's Oldest HBCU (1837)

Lesson 3: Faith Built Institutions

Objectives

- This lesson will explore how the black church built schools, communities, social service centers, and freedom movements.
- We will practice the principle of biblical hermeneutics to interpret Scripture faithfully, construct a sound biblical argument, and apply that argument to the historical and contemporary witness of the Black Church.

1. **Interpretation**- What does the biblical text say, and what did it mean in its original context?
2. **Argumentation**- How do we develop and support a theological claim using Scripture?
3. **Application**- How does our interpretation inform the mission, ministry, and institutional witness of the Black Church today?

Lesson 3: Faith Built Institutions

Question

Is the Black Church simply a response to the institution of slavery and discrimination, or is it also a corrective witness against a distorted expression of Christianity that has aligned itself with empire?

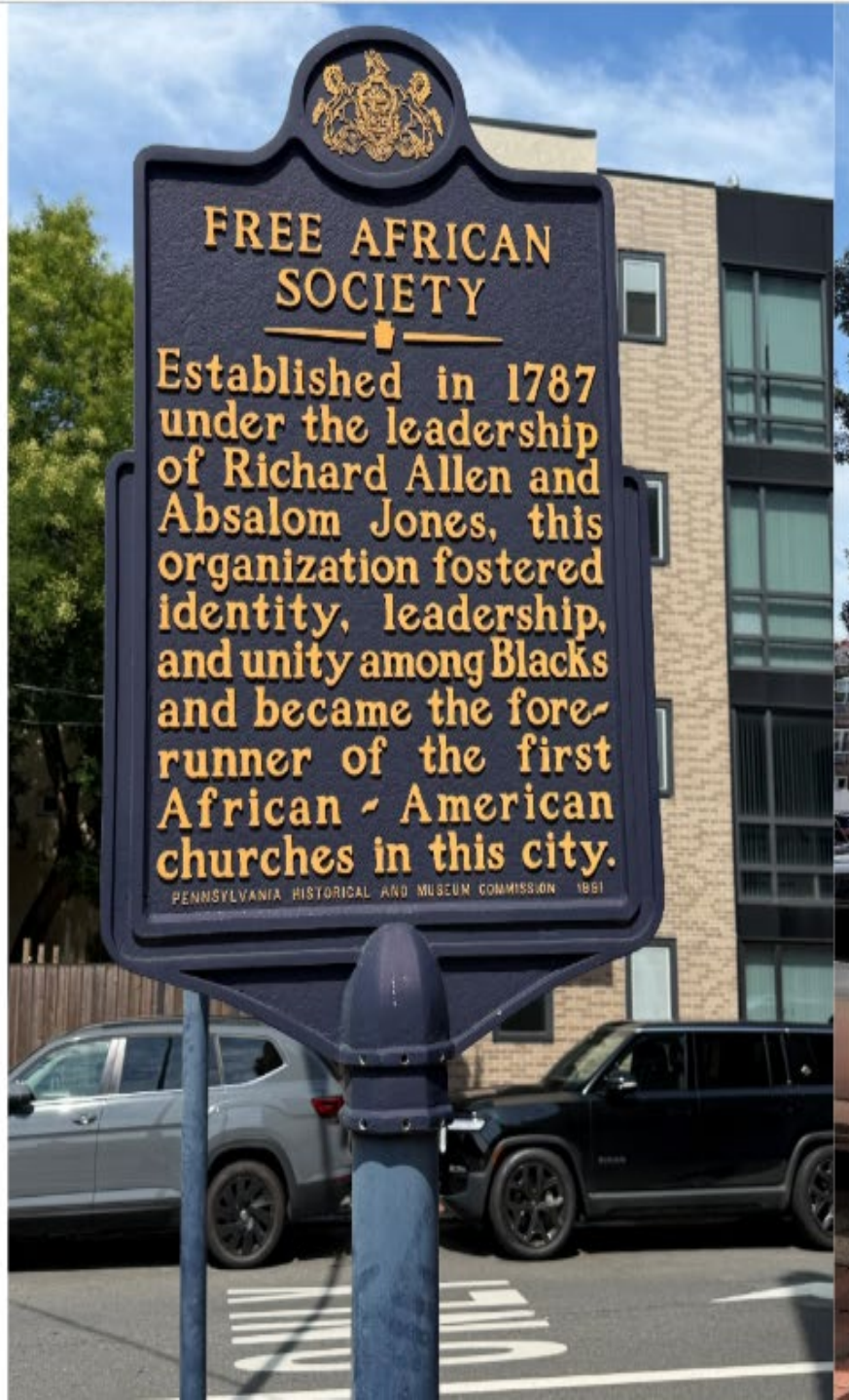
Directions: We will now practice biblical hermeneutics. You will develop a biblically sound response to this question based on the biblical evidence in this passage. Do not use your opinion in this response. Your response must be based on the explicit textual evidence of the passage. You will explain how it is to be interpreted (historically, first, and to our present times) and how it must be applied. Feel free to use other passages in your response, but you must use the one in bold below.

Question

Does the church have a biblical responsibility to develop institutions and organize resources to address the material needs of its community?

Read Acts 6:1-7


NON SIBI, SED ALIIS
GEORGIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
First African Baptist Church
First African Baptist Church (FABC) traces its roots to 1773 and the organization of a congregation at nearby Brampton Plantation by Rev. George Leile. Under the leadership of Rev. Andrew C. Marshall (3rd pastor), the congregation obtained this property. Constructed of Savannah Grey brick by congregants, both free and enslaved, the current building was completed in 1859. Rev. Emanuel K. Love (6th pastor), an advocate for African-American education and civil rights, was instrumental in establishing today's Savannah State University. Rev. Dr. Ralph Mark Gilbert (13th pastor) was a prominent leader of the NAACP and the revival of the Savannah chapter in the 1940s. U.S. Representative Adam Clayton Powell of Harlem and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. are among the noteworthy speakers hosted here. FABC is one of the oldest continuously operating African-American churches in North America.
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FREE AFRICAN SOCIETY
Established in 1787 under the leadership of Richard Allen and Absalom Jones, this organization fostered identity, leadership, and unity among Blacks and became the fore-runner of the first African - American churches in this city.
PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL AND MUSEUM COMMISSION 1951




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