



RACISM and the AMSSND Commitments

Racism and Haiti

Did You Know...?

- Haiti was the first free black nation in the western hemisphere. France occupied Haiti as a brutal slave colony until the enslaved people revolted and declared independence in 1804.
 - Though the Haitian Revolution followed the American Revolution by approximately 30 years, the slave uprising was “[viewed as a dangerous contagion](#)” by its neighbors to the north. These fears played out in the media and in politics, and the slaves on Saint-Domingue were regularly depicted as reactionary, if opportunistic, savages.”
 - The United States refused to recognize Haiti diplomatically for fear that the enslaved people underpinning the U.S. economy would be inspired to revolt.
 - The lack of diplomatic recognition of Haiti was [a key factor](#) in its lack of development (due largely to paralyzing debt collection by France as payment for ousted “owners” of enslaved people, combined with trade limitations and no diplomatic standing or allies).
- The Haitian Revolution [sparked a refugee crisis](#).
 - Black refugees often were “feared as agents of rebellion,” and it was not unusual for their ships to be stranded off the coast of the U.S. [In the South](#), black Haitian refugees often were accused of crimes without evidence, many were executed, and enslaved people were accused of collaborating with them.
 - White refugees typically were received more warmly thanks to collections taken up by charities for relief efforts and community members offering lodging.
- [In 1862](#) President Lincoln finally recognized Haiti as an independent nation.
 - He did this in order to set up a colony for free blacks, in hopes that their lives and the union of the U.S. would be better preserved if free blacks left for segregated nations. The colony failed.
- [From 1915-1934](#), the [United States military began an occupation of Haiti](#) that resulted in the deaths of thousands of Haitians and cemented the political impotence of the Haitian government, including the unconstitutional election of a pro-America president.
- At the turn of the 21st century, the [U.S. assisted with a coup](#) against the democratically elected president, Aristide.
- In 2018, the U.S. president called Haiti a “[sh**hole country](#),” questioning why we let “so many” people migrate from there, and suggesting that we should increase immigration from places like Norway. He then moved to terminate the Temporary Protected Status of Haitians seeking refuge in the U.S.

To learn more and take action...

- Visit the website of our partner [Beyond Borders](#)
- Learn more about the [AMSSND/Beyond Borders](#) teaching initiative and water project in Haiti
- Those in the U.S.: [Urge your government to stop deporting Haitians!](#)

For Reflection...

My Testimony

I was born in Brooklyn, New York
I am the only child of an unwed mother
I am the only child of an absent father
I moved to Montreal, Canada when I was four
I was one of less than ten black students in my school
I was the only black child in my neighborhood

When I was seven I was excluded, "don't play with that girl!"
When I was twelve I was threatened, "boat people go back home!"
When I was sixteen I was slighted, "you're pretty for a black girl!"
When I was nineteen I was accused, "you're not black enough!"

As I grew up in Canada, I proudly declared "I am American"
As I served in the US Army, I strongly proclaimed "I am African American"
As I matured in the Mid-West, I confidently asserted "I am Black"
As I watched my country crumble and my people die, I finally understood "I AM HAITIAN!"

My name is Carinne Mompont

This is my testimony,

I AM HAITIAN!

Prayer

Holy Spirit,

You call us "to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke,
to set the oppressed free,
to share food with the hungry and provide the poor wanderer with shelter,
and not to turn away from our own flesh and blood" (*Isaiah 58:6*).

Our Haitian brothers and sisters have been oppressed for too long. Help us to work against the racial undertones of North American interactions with the Haitian people, and to affirm the dignity of our Haitian neighbors.

May our "light break forth like the dawn,"
and may justice and mercy abide in our hearts and our world,
now and forever.

Amen.

