A Litany Celebrating Historically Black Colleges and Universities

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**Leader:** Historically Black Colleges and Universities date back to the founding of the Africa Institute in 1837, which we know as Cheyney University, to the establishment of Lincoln University, the first HBCU to grant degrees, and to the African Methodist Episcopal Church’s creation of Wilberforce University, the first school to be owned and operated by Black people.

**People:** Founded to educate the sons and daughters of slaves, God’s grace has allowed Historically Black Colleges and Universities to exceed their original mission.

Leader: Many historically Black colleges and universities pass Christian principles down to their students, teaching them not to “conform to the pattern of this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of their minds.” (Romans 2a) The HBCU culture dictates that students and graduates offer their studies and careers as sacrifices to God for the purpose of uplifting their communities.

**People:** Historically Black Colleges and Universities search for cures to the diseases that plague our people; work to solve problems of injustice; and document the rich history and culture of Africans across the diaspora.

**Leader:** HBCUs transmit the experiences and lessons of Black American history from generation to generation. They instill a sense of connectedness to our homeland and to her people throughout the world.

**People:** HBCUs play an essential role in the life of the Black community by providing education to some who might not otherwise have the opportunity to attend college. Simultaneously, they push excellent students to reach their maximum potential.

**Leader:** Institutions of love and charity like Howard University, Morgan State University, Morehouse and Spelman Colleges, Southern University and Florida A&M University teach us to believe in ourselves, to challenge our minds, and to achieve heights unfathomable to our ancestors.

**People:** Our HBCUs face trying times. There are financial difficulties, challenges of leadership, questions about their purpose, and sophisticated strategies designed for their destruction. We maintain faith that our institutions will continue to survive attacks to their existence.

All: We know that faith requires work. We understand that without HBCUs, we stand to lose repositories for our history and safe spaces for education about our culture. We accept our responsibility to ensure the bright future of historically Black colleges and universities. We commit ourselves to actively supporting these great pillars of the Black community.