

# From The Pulpit

by Rev. Donald M. Clark

## THE SACRAMENT OF BEAUTY

Text: "And the Lord planted a Garden eastward in Eden." Gen. 2:8.

"LET THE beauty of the Lord our God be upon us." Ps. 90:17.

In nothing is God more prodigal than in His love of beauty; in nothing more prophetic.

The "Power, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness" also makes for beauty; and in the final ethic the two are one. The Great Soul of the world is the enemy of ugliness and the friend and lover of the beautiful.

The response of man to the beauty of nature awoke almost with the waking of his soul, and it was allied with faith. By a sure instinct, the earliest thinkers divined that beauty is a mediator between flesh and spirit, a path to God, a gate opening into the true and the good.

HERE IS the sign of promise for humanity, like the rainbow after the rain. Love of beauty bespeaks that in man which saves him from the all-devouring flood of mortality. It sets him apart from the beast, as a dweller in the realm of spiritual ends.

Why is the world so beautiful? Why do flowers bloom, like stars of the earth shining at our feet? Why do birds sing?

What is the spell which music casts over us, evoking we know not what memories and dreams?

Why such an "overplus of value," as someone has named it, beyond the needs of utility and the wildest fancy of poetry?...

Why is it that beauty is allied not only with every one of our physical senses, but still more with that in us akin to Love?

THESE QUESTIONS go very deep, and he who tries to answer them learns that beauty has meanings that lie near to the heart of life. Assuredly it is more than mere decoration, more than the vane upon the wood, more than a purple patch upon an old garment.

It is something profoundly inwrought into the fiber of things--not truth, nor wisdom nor love, but "the rose on the lips of truth, the light in the eyes of wisdom"; the glow in the heart of love--a revelation of an ineffable refinement, a redeeming spirituality at the heart of the world.

What is beauty? What can it be but an unveiling of the Eternal, a sacrament of the love of God whose presence makes the kindly earth "a living Church of ancient joy"?

IT IS AN offering of Divine Grace, inviting man to lend his soul to the beauty of holiness and to live his life in the holiness of beauty.

(To be continued next week.)



REV. D. M. CLARK

## NAACP Youth In Action



NAACP YOUTH BRANCH members from left Leo Kline, Doris Bess, Wendell Cosey and Cleo Kline make plans for upcoming party.

The Youth Branch of local NAACP Chapter will host a "Record Hop Waistline Party", Friday, July 28, 8-11 p.m. at Kit Carson Elementary School, 1735 N. 'D' St. The teen-age group of community and civic workers invites all teen-agers to enjoy this event with them. Admission price is one cent per inch measurement of girls' waist and boys' chest. Refreshments will be served.

The local Youth Branch plans to become one of the most active and dynamic teen-age organizations in Las Vegas. They ask the interest and the support of the community to the degree of contribution of time and talent of community members to help them reach their goals and become an effective and meaning organization.

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## Church On Black Power

DE KALB, III. - (NPI)--The recent Rock River Methodist annual conference produced a new interpretation of the term "black power" giving it a positive stance and Christian relationship. It affirmed "the appropriateness of clergy and lay efforts to join and support the Negro in his quest for the power to confront the powers which oppose him; and the goals for which this power will be used. When rightly interpreted 'black power' is a movement which is basically a nonviolent quest of the Negro to secure economic and political power."



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# ALTAR CALL

BY EMORY G. DAVIS, D. D.  
NEGRO PRESS INTERNATIONAL

## "UNTO THE CHURCH"

"To the angel of the church in Philadelphia ...I know what you doing," so wrote a spiritual refugee some centuries ago on an island called Patmos. Today, there are some "angels" in Philadelphia who are indeed doing something about the 'open door' that is before them.

When President Johnson went to Philadelphia to sign the Teacher Corps (\$910 million) bill, he visited two of the Opportunities Industrialization Centers founded by the Rev. Leon H. Sullivan, a Negro Baptist minister. This was a glowing tribute paid to an "angel" of the church by the Nation's chief executive.

I RECALL Rev. Sullivan's beginning efforts. He sent materials on his project to other ministers throughout the country, hoping they would do as he did. Perhaps some tried and failed. Most, undoubtedly, never tried. Let's hope others tried and succeeded.

A few days before this event, I received a great letter from "the Church in Philadelphia" specifically Jones Tabernacle AME--informing me of their "open door" policy to gang-bangers, operating since 1947. This came in response to one of my columns raising the issue of whether or not the doors of the churches were open FOR gangs--the victims of the ghetto apathy.

Recreation Director John J. Green writes, "True some of them continue on along the path of crime and anti-social behavior, but I am happy to report that most of them, in spite of our complex society of today, are decent, law-abiding citizens and I feel that they are so because Jones Tabernacle AME church opened their facilities to all."

THESE ARE the ways the institutional church of today can become relevant; by being involved with those who need the basic skills of reading, writing, and technical training; by being involved with those yet salvageable boys and girls who need a meaningful identity and foundation for productive survival.

The approbation and promise, made by the first century prophet, is relevant today for the church in Philadelphia, New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Atlanta, or any and all of our cities. The Altar of Promise is open to those churches who will help fulfill the unrealized promise of thousands of dark-skinned youth.

What John wrote on Patmos is pertinent to those churches of this century that become Altars of Promise: "I will keep you safe in the time of testing that is going to come upon the whole world...keep hold of what you have so that no one may deprive you of your crown... I will write on him who is victorious the name of my God and the name of the city of my God--the new Jerusalem."

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