



Benjamin L. Hooks

FCC.

The recent televising of *Roots* by ABC touched me in ways I am still trying to sort out. I have interrupted by discourse on history, to deal with this.

Like most viewers of this amazing series, based on author Alex Haley's best selling book of the same name, I was glued to my set at every opportunity avidly following the unfolding of this compelling drama, a drama that many believe has changed forever television's traditional approach to entertaining programming.

I must say that some parts of it were too painful to bear. I had to walk out of the room on several occasions, stomach knotted, blood churning, temples throbbing. The savagery of slavery portrayed both physical and psychic were epic.

The ravaged toll it took of the human spirit and soul of both the oppressed and the oppressor, was searingly evident in this daring series. In forcing black submission to the intolerable way of life, the white man became inhumanly brutish as he brutalized.

I attended a two-hour preview showing of this series at the National Archives in Washington, dc. at this VIP gathering, I was introduced to several of the stars: Lavar Burton who played the youthful Kunta Kinte, and Ben Vereen, he of the merry smile and jaunty nature who (along with Burton) should win an Emmy for his portrayal of "Chicken George".

On hand also was author Haley, ever surrounded by well wishers and autograph seekers. He is a millionaire today, but says this hardly affects his traditional life style. He is so busy on the college lecture circuit, writing a mini-biography of President Carter and eagerly preparing to write the book on how "he wrote THE BOOK," a project he says he is anticipating very much.

He is, however, overwhelmed by the adulation being heaped on him and shy, unassuming, personable man that he is, still cannot quite adjust himself to his present status of super star.

At the Federal Communications Commission, phone calls from critics have begun to trickle in. As of last week, only two dozen or so had been registered. But they were mostly critical, by both black and whites, who felt that sleeping dogs should be left alone. "What's the good of stirring up all this stuff again?" one woman asked. Several callers object to the *Roots* series on the basis of violence.

School children, black and white, were affected. In some places, observers reported that white kids were especially respectful to their black peers. While, blacks on the other hand, took a more aggressive stance towards the whites.

Some black families reported a member -- the husband or wife or child -- would break down and shout "I hate all white people," after viewing a particularly brutal scene in the series.

But on the balance the series has opened up dialog. Most Americans had only a rudimentary idea of what slavery was really like. It was eye-opening for both black and white young people, and a chilling reminder to adults as well, of man's inhumanity to man.

It is surprising to some that this series was shown at all. But to me, it is not. I seriously believe that a black presence (it so happened to be mine, in this instance) at the FCC, has tended to have a sensitizing effect over a long period of time, which gave the ABC officials courage to say "Why not try it?"

Even ABC, which took this gamble, did not have an inkling that the series would become the blockbuster that it did. We are happy that the network took the chance, and it should receive the thanks and well wishes of all America, for having done so. For we know that because of Haley's efforts and ABC's decision to present the series, America can never again look at its history in the same old way.

And now, I do believe we will be in for sequels: *Roots I*, and *Roots II*, and maybe even *Son of Roots*. I do not know how many black families have begun to name their new-born male children Kunta Kinte, but I imagine the list is lengthening.

VOICE EDITORIALS

The Hughes Report



A HOME-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Blacks have had such poor credit ratings that they have been unable to buy a home. But they can!!! Poor credit ratings have come because they were last hired - first fired and thus had no seniority, and were unable to gain any. The chief tool of the Labor Union has been seniority. Many unions have had grandfather clauses in their contracts which automatically excluded Blacks. The grandfather clause says you can not get in unless your grandfather was in the union or conversely that you are automatically in if your grandfather was in. Variations were made which said your father would suffice for a grandfather. If you were working on a job and new rules said you needed a license, then you would be allowed to continue on the grandfather clause idea. Since Blacks had no grandfather in the union or business that could be grandfathered in Blacks had little or no chance to get union jobs or become plumbers, carpenters, painters, electricians, etc. The only jobs left were given to Blacks and the pay was so poor they could not buy a home. Survival itself was a trying experience. Houses have now reached a median level of \$48,000, so a home is moving farther and farther away. So how can Blacks buy a home. They can - by using a little known (to Blacks) clause in all Veterans Administration and FHA insured homes. This clause states that anyone buying such a home can sell it to anyone who will buy it. So - save up your funds and buy on what is called the Assumption Method. You simply offer the owner so much for his equity and if he accepts it you can take over the payments and the house whether you have good, poor, or even bad credit. Once you complete Escrow you own the house and mortgage and pay the regular monthly payment. Another very special benefit is that the home will have a lower interest rate than you can usually get even with a Tripple AAA Credit Rating. Now you can take pride in ownership, cut your income tax by increasing your deductions since you can deduct the interest and taxes on a long form. But most important is you are now creating an estate, building equity which you can later sell should you want to, but you are now saving money that will grow as your equity builds up, instead of buying for someone else. Economic Development has many forms, and buying a home is Economic Development on a Personal Basis.

The Western High School Trickettes are putting on a Public Dance entitled, "Winter Disco, '77", at the Western High School Student Center. The price is \$1.00 per person. The Dance will be held on Sat., Feb. 26, from 8 until 11:30 P.M. All proceeds will go to the Western High Track Team and help pay for their trip to Riverside for the Riverside Invitational Track Meet. Everyone is welcome.

And finally, did you, dear readers, note the strong spiritual and religious thread that wound through this series? Despite the Hollywood fictionalizing (in part) the theme, inextricably traced the roots of black spirituality from Africa to the founding of the Black Church in America, a church that has been our Rock of Ages in the continuing struggle for our humanity and freedom.

Education is Power



By: Thomas E. Wilson, Ph. D.

For this week's column, we feel that it is necessary to continue the discussion began last week concerning handling the difficult child. Several suggestions were made then, and we feel that more is needed to make our discussion more definitive and complete.

No one knows for sure what it is that makes one child more "impossible" than another. . . Out of six children, five may be a cinch to raise, and one will give the parents fits. All flowers in a garden do not bloom alike. It is the same with children. It may be that difficult children are just more sensitive to happenings around themselves and thus become more vulnerable. This sensitivity may be caused by some organic damage or physical handicap, some of which may be obvious and some may not.

If you have a difficult child, the first thing to do is to be sure that the child has a complete physical checkup and have any organic problems that exist corrected.

If there are no organic problems, or if the child remains hard to handle despite medical attention to any physical deficiencies, one has to find ways to contend with the youngster's unpleasant behavior. The parents have to be realistic. Children cannot be made over, nor can their parents. Don't set impossible goals at great costs to yourselves and try to do the impossible. Don't become anxious and resentful. This usually results in making a bad situation worse. Don't try to do too much. There may be physical or mental limitations that prevent adjustment or improvement beyond a reasonable point. Parents must be careful not to compare their difficult youngster with one who is better endowed physically or mentally. We must be careful that we are not trying to "re-do" the child without regard for his/her basic personality.

We as parents must respect our children's limitations. We must also respect our own. We must be honest with ourselves. Reduce our expectations and reassess our goals to match the limits of our children's capabilities. Go slow. We might ask ourselves these questions: Can we relate to the difficult child without getting too uptight to make rational decisions? Can we control our impatience if our children do not respond immediately the way we want them to? Do we feel comfortable going along with a technique agreed upon by our spouses and ourselves? Are our skins thick enough to shrug off our children's unreasonable attitudes? Do we live by the examples we choose to set for our children's behavior? Can we put up with dirty looks and worse from friends and neighbors without penalizing our children for "offending" them? Have we begun to feel a little less irritable and a bit more understanding toward our children? Are we really ready to try new techniques, not just to help our children, but also for our own peace of mind? Do we really believe that we are better parents than our children's behavior seems to credit us for?

We may not be able to reply "yes" to all of these questions, but if we can say "yes" to half of them, we are already in command and should eventually be successful. By being able to answer "yes" to half of these questions, we already have a fairly good idea of our weaknesses and strengths. Cultivate the qualities we need to deal more easily with our difficult children.

Once we abandon our unrealistic expectations of ourselves and of our children, we automatically raise our tolerance levels. When this is done, we can take our time in trying to bring about permanent change and grow a thick enough skin to absorb the punishment, criticism, and ingratitude that often are the price of parenthood.