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FCC.

Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche said it: "Nothing great in this world has ever been accomplished without passion."

The German philosopher (1854-1900) whose beliefs are passionately embraced by both liberal and Nazi, sinner and saint, has been dead now for more than 76 years, but he comes vividly to mind today because of Alex Haley and, Roots.

On the Black Journal TV show, Haley, author of that astonishing best-selling novel, the televised version of which was such a recent block-busting success, revealed a side of himself hitherto hidden from the public.

In a candid interview with host-executive producer Tony Brown, Haley revealed the agony he suffered before finally completing the book which took him 12 years of tough and patient research to write.

He told of being aboard a ship, of trying to relive his ancestor, Kunta Kinte's agony; of sweltering in the steaming, fetid hold of the slave ship on the dread middle passage from Kinte's native Juffure, Gambia village, to the shores of America where he was sold like cattle into a slavery.

Yet, the ability to sit down and write those conjured experiences continued to elude Haley. One day, he stood by the ship's railing and thought, how nice it would be if he just climbed over and sank into the welcome arms of the ocean.

"I felt good, almost exhilarated", he said. For that would be the solution to his impasse. No more pressure from impatient publishers and editors, from the host of people he owed money, from family and friends who were depending on him to complete the book on which he had labored so long and of which he felt at that time he was on the verge of failing to complete.

Sanity returned. He started to sweat. His knees grew weak and he got down on all fours, crawling crab-like on deck away from the rail to the middle of the ship. He lay panting on the ship's hold, exhausted, frightened. Later, in his cabin, he collapsed on the bunk, his body wracked by huge paroxysms of sobs. He cried for hours on end, the pain and emotion welling up from deep inside, surging, powerful, relentless, unbearable.

And then a voice, "almost as if it were Kinte's", told him to get up and be about the business of writing the book. The enormous passion had cleansed him. He was ready for constructive action.

From there it was relatively easy. Throughout history, men on the verge of great decisions or enormous accomplishments, have revealed similar experiences. Nietzsche is right.

We all know there are enormous forces outside ourselves of which we have only an inkling of their origins and strengths. True Christians and others of strong religious beliefs most often experience the impact of such forces. Perhaps because we are more sensitive to their existence. We have been touched by God, we say. And, of course, we have been.

I believe Alex Haley was touched by God that day. I do not know his religious beliefs, but there is no doubt that his is an impassioned work, an inspired one, touching as it does the heart-strings of us all.

I suffered with Haley as he talked on that TV show. His pains and anguish became mine. But having the benefit of uninvolved hind sight, I knew that this was just preliminary to the great burst of creative energetic forces breaking loose; that this was God's way of testing him and that Haley would not be, as indeed, he was not, found wanting.

He was resisting in some profound, but unconscious way, doing what he knew he must -- maybe because he sincerely felt momentarily inadequate to the task -- and this resistance had to be confronted before it could be overcome, routed, freeing the artist to do the Lord's work. Hence, Haley's agony that day on ship.

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VOICE EDITORIALS

The Hughes Report



The recent burglary of Westside Churches follows by a few months the burning of our Churches. Why are we suffering these anti-Religious and anti-Society atrocities? Few problems have simple answers and this problem defies an easy answer. The burglary part can be easier understood than the burning - since it could be thought that money is left in the Churches' office. Scruples, respect, nor appreciation of the value of Churches are of little or no concern to the hoodlum who is looking for cash. He either never had or ignored the Sunday School lessons or he never went to Sunday School. His sense of values is so warped that he is nearly a hopeless creature. It is a pitiful situation and much credit must be given to those organizations that are helping boys and girls to see and understand values better. More needs to be done for those of our youth who have not yet reached the frustrated point of believing there is no help or succor for Blacks. Too many blame the Churches for the lack of concern. Are the Churches really doing anything for these Youths? But, back to the burglary. When I was working with the West Las Vegas Economic Development Group I was shocked to learn that only 2 Police men patrol the entire black area on each 8 hour shift. I am sure the Church burners and looters know this. How many of us did? It is most embarrassing to admit that we only respond to problems when they hit us in the head. Everyone has probably heard of the man who was hitting the mule in the head with a hammer. When asked by a passerby why he was hitting the mule in the head he responded "I'm trying to get his attention". When the Churches were getting burned the ministers got together and went to City Hall. It took a problem to get them together, but it did. Hope sprung anew that maybe a ministerial alliance would emerge from this getting together, but no word has come of any alliance. Now that breakins are occurring, it is reasonable to expect another marching in of our ministers to complain and maybe demand better Police protection. Part of the program we developed in the West Las Vegas Economic Development Group (which has been utterly ignored) was a branch or sub-branch of the Police Department. A ministerial alliance could get that done, but we don't even have an alliance. The more than 70 ministers in our area and their flock banded together could wield tremendous influence and do more than all the groups now exist. It is useless to expect businesses or most Blacks to gravitate to the Westside when they are scared. The reputation of the Westside is one of the biggest mis-representations I have ever heard. I was nearly scared to come to the Westside because of what I heard, but my Black came out and said "You too?" I hate to think of the fine people, good churches, excellent library, quality EOB Program, CETA Program, NAACP, etc I would have missed had I decided to stay out of the Westside. I love it. I have my office in the heart of it and nothing gives me more pleasure than teaching the men's Sunday School class at Greater New Jerusalem. At least 95% of my social and business life is on the West side. It is head and shoulders above any Black area I have seen in any city lately. I know that and you know that, but the tourists don't know that and they cannot be expected to come over to find out until we assure them we have good Police protection and they are as safe here as anywhere else in Las Vegas. Four our Churches, our business, our safety as well as economic Development we need better Police protection. Let's go after it.

Education is Power



The Rev. Jesse Jackson, president of People United to Save Humanity (PUSH), was in our city last weekend and spoke to the American Association of School Administrators.

Rev. Jackson has a long and abiding interest in education, and in his speech to the school administrators he reviewed three items that he considered necessary to improve our American schools.

He spoke of the need for equal opportunity in education and stated that most schools still have a way to go to reach that point. He also stated that the second most important item was atmosphere. He told of the fact that mass media has more effect on our youth than the home, church or school. His third item of vital concern was motivation or lack of it in our schools. Motivation, according to Rev. Jackson, will come when students are able to see some reason for their work, or when they see some "light at the end of the tunnel".

Operation PUSH has developed "Ten Commandments for Excellence in Education" which we would like to share with our readers. These are: A public institution must clearly define itself and what it stands for; Adults and the community must take some responsibility for education of children and not leave this responsibility entirely with the schools; If too much time is spent maintaining order, it will be impossible for the schools to achieve academic excellence. Schools must be given some help with the students who are disruptive in school and violates the rights of others; Students must take responsibility for learning without attempting to transfer this responsibility to teachers. Students should stop making excuses and blaming others if they fail to learn; Schools should insist that students assume responsibilities as well as declare their rights, and parents should support this proposition; High expectations must become a desirable goal for both teachers and students. Teachers who are not high performers should be singled out and helped to improve or be dismissed; Students should be required to do things that we as adults know will be beneficial to them; Students should be encouraged to engage in meaningful activities which help to develop a positive self-concept. Many believe that community service should be set up as a requirement for graduation from junior high or high school; We, as parents, should establish at least a two-hour study period at home each night. Some educators believe that the best time for study is between 7:00 and 9:00 P.M. There should be no distractions during this time; Ethics is still an important item in our school system, and a sound ethical climate is necessary for excellence.

Rev. Jesse Jackson has been very active, on a national scale, in trying to upgrade the quality of education for Black children. He is well aware of problems caused by desegregation, and/or attempts at integration. It appears that Operation PUSH is in the process of becoming a vital force for good as regards the education of Black children.

Administrators of our school systems in this country were made aware of many of the problems faced by our Black children in school. If we can provide a meaningful educational atmosphere, a workable equal educational opportunity program and proper motivation, it is very probable that our Black children will be better able to face the future undaunted by educational failure.

The "Ten Commandments of Excellence in Education" as outlined by Rev. Jackson, are musts for the provision of an adequate educational program for our children.