

A Series: THE BLACK FAMILY AND THE CHALLENGES OF THE 80's

PART II: THE BLACK FAMILY — OUR HISTORY (Continued)

Acknowledging the importance of the resurgence of the family to American and particularly Black American society, and in keeping with the recent Proclamation by the Clark County Board of Commissioners designating the 1980's to be the "Decade of the Family," the Las Vegas SENTINEL-VOICE continues this series of articles by MAUDRA JONES on "THE BLACK FAMILY AND THE CHALLENGES OF THE 80's." In offering this special series, we salute the Black Family during this "DECADE OF THE FAMILY." We dedicate the series, with love and appreciation, to the families of America and hope that our readers will be inspired to promote and develop opportunities for strengthening the institution of the family in all areas of community life.

By Maudra Jones

Maudra Jones, who has served educational institution and community organizations in the field of Human Resources Development for over 30 years is Regional Director of the National Association of Family and the Religious Community.



Maudra Jones

ACTION PLAN FOR THIS WEEK:

We pledge, individually and/or collectively, to establish a plan for making the study of Black History a continuous part of our family life.

SOME SUGGESTED READINGS:

1. "Before the Mayflower" and "Wade in the Water: A History of the Negro in America," by Lerone Bennett.
2. "Black Foremothers", edited by Gwendolyn Brooks.
3. "The Selected Writings of W.E.B. Du Bois", edited by Walter Wilson.
4. "From Slavery to Freedom", by John Hope Franklin.
5. "Roots", by Alex Haley.
6. "There is a River: The Black Struggle for Freedom in America," by Vincent Harding".
7. "The Negro Pilgrimage in America," by C. Eric Lincoln.
8. "The Black Book-A Pictorial History of the Black Experience," edited by Toni Morrison.
9. "Jubilee", by Margaret Walker.
10. "Black Families in White America," by Andrew Billingsley.

We have a journey to take and little time; we have ships to name and crews.

THE BLACK BOOK



...A Journey that is a Triumph of the Human Spirit

"A man understands his history when he understands that history does not permit men the luxury of escaping their inheritance; when he understands that he is not only responsible for his own acts but also for the meaning those acts take on in a certain social context; when he understands that he is not only what he has done but what his parents have done; when he understands that history requires him to answer not only for his own life but also for the lives of men and women and children who share his situation and his destiny." Lerone Bennett

lost by people who cannot make a moment And yet, can waste years. Robert Montgomery

Finally, if we are to be strong and positive about ourselves as human beings, and if we are to accept our families as precious and viable institutions, we must respect the traditions left by our ancestors. These are the traditions — the values in our culture which made our grandmothers strong and can produce the same results for us in 1983 — a personal relationship with God; a diligent study of the Bible; a sense of our history; self-esteem; respect for each other and a feeling of self worth. As Black families in America, we are challenged to accept the personal responsibility for using our history to free the spiritual and creative power within us, so that we can transform history and become awakened to a new vision of humanity.

In All of us there is a hunger, marrow-deep, to know our heritage - to know who we are and where we have come from. Without this enriching knowledge, there is a hollow yearning. No matter what our attainments in life, there is still a vacuum, an emptiness, and the most disquieting loneliness.

Alex Haley

(TO BE CONTINUED NEXT WEEK)

In this moving statement on the significance of understanding history, Lerone Bennett reinforces the need for us to search for the meanings in our history. It is through the meanings that we can find a new vision of humanity — a vision which holds on to that which has been good and which discards that which has not worked. On this level, we are challenged to "institutionalize" our history by making Black History concrete and alive in our daily experiences. We must surround ourselves and our children with the symbols of our rich heritage. We must begin now to build (or add to) our home libraries, a collection of important books on Black history and culture. We and our children need to be "secure in the knowledge of our cultural past, so that we can move confidently into our own future."

In this increasingly complex age of high technology and mounting socio-economic ills, the Black family will be continuously facing new issues, new challenges and new opportunities. As for the present, Dr. Bowden writes: "The Black family, in spite of its past and/or present liabilities, is still alive and strong ... the Black family has continued to love, to inspire those on drugs, to rescue its wandering and to continue the upward mobility of its majority ... the Black man and the Black woman have lived nobly in the 'face of the wind' as they have been pitted against one another, flaunted between the races, and ridiculed and castigated before their young. The Black family chooses the pressures and insults of society over the easier route of disowning its 'less fortunate' members and often attempts in heroic ways to mend its wounded."

With faith and optimism, I wholeheartedly join the Bowdens, the Daniels, the Hardings, the Bennetts and others who believe that the decade of the 80's represents a privileged moment in history.

There are no fragments so precious as those of time And none so heedlessly

County of Clark, Las Vegas, Nevada
Office of the Board
of County Commissioners

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, the family is recognized as the primary building block for the community, the nation and mankind, and deserves our whole hearted support; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was dedicated to the betterment of the "family of mankind" and the principles of love, peace, and human dignity; and

WHEREAS, the National Association of Family and Religious Community is joining with the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Committee of Las Vegas to commemorate the birth of Dr. King; and

WHEREAS, these organizations have consistently supported the goals of Dr. King and have sought to improve the role and image of the family in society.

NOW, THEREFORE, WE, the Commissioners of the County of Clark, do hereby express our appreciation for the work that these organizations are contributing on behalf of the family; and

DO PROCLAIM the 1980's to be the

"DECADE OF THE FAMILY"

and do urge all people to support and strengthen their families.

THALIA M. DONDERO
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MANUEL CORTEZ
R.J. "DICK" RONZONE

JACK R. PETITTI
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BRUCE L. WOODBURY

Attest:
Loretta Bowman
WOODROW WILSON, Commissioner
County Clerk, Loretta Bowman