

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

## Part V- Family and Community

*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

In its broadest definition, the term "community" will be viewed as people and processes for this discussion. The concept of community which I have embraced, was provided by Dr. Beverly Robinson, who described the process as one which "brings people together into closer unity" or that of "coming together in unity." Whatever the process or title used to describe community, i.e., American community, Christian community, Black community, business community, etc., you will find at the heart of it the human community, thus, the family. While characteristics of

Black community life in America may vary according to time, place and circumstance, the Spirit of community whenever expressed, is indeed an expression of African traditions. We will find in our history, those patterns of African life that were deeply rooted with kin and community - and highly functional for the social, economic and psychological life of the people. Family life and community life, then, were at the center of society - strong and viable.

We will also find that a strong and dominant place in both family and community was held by the men in the family - contrary to reports of a female dominated



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household. Along with its strong capacity for loving, caring, protecting and surviving, the family was identified as an economic, religious and political unit. John Hope Franklin saw the family at the very basis of economic and

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political life in Africa.

Uprooted from this history of family and community life and often separated from family and heritage during slavery, the Black family persevered, endured and continues the struggle to insure

the survival of its people. Early accounts of what Vincent Harding termed the "resurrection" of community life, identify Black ministers and churchmen in the 1820's at the forefront of efforts to develop social and political organizations within the Black communities. The Scriptures were prominent throughout major efforts to gain freedom - reaffirming the relationship between family and community in home and church. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr's concept of community is described by one writer in his vision of the "Beloved Community" citing that in Dr. King's thoughts, the

Kingdom of God and the Beloved Community were the same - yet another witness to our spirituality as Black people. The Bible, according to observers, was central to Dr. King's work and to his understanding of the

human community. Throughout our history we find proof that the "spirit of community" is directly tied to family and church.

The African sayings, "Man is man - in - community - motho ke motho ka batho man is man through other people" and "Because I am, we are" can be translated to the wisdom of Dr. King when he spoke of "all life being interrelated and what affects one of us, affects all of us."

Given the differences in social status of Black families, we are all affected by the social forces of the larger society - flowing in the "river of struggle". What Lerone Bennett described as an immediate and urgent task, almost a decade ago, becomes a very real challenge for Black families in the "soul-searching" decade of the 80's - and that is the creation of "Unity in the Black Community". Bennett defines unity as a "STATE OF COLLECTIVE GRACE AND COMMUNAL AVAILABILITY WHICH PERMITS A GROUP TO BRING TO BEAR SUFFICIENT FORCE AT

DESIGNATED POINTS TO MAINTAIN OR ADVANCE ITS INTERESTS." BENNETT CAUTIONS US, HOWEVER, AS HE CONTINUES: "But it is necessary at the outset to make a distinction between ideal unity, which has never existed anywhere, and operational unity which permits a group to act in concert..."

In seeking such operational unity to meet the challenges of the 80's, our task is to build that "state of collective grace", despite any differences over strategies or tactics, or relationships, etc., that will make it possible for all resources in the Black community to agree on GOALS and to ACT TOGETHER in the interests of all Black people.

### ACTION PLAN OF THE WEEK:

At home, church, organization meetings, etc., discuss and analyze the challenge to seek operational unity in our community. Send your ideas and suggestions to the SENTINEL-VOICE, c/o Maudra Jones.

## Church

### PRAISES FROM VICTORY MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

St. John 1:1

#### ON TRUE CHRISTIANITY...

In this season of the church, the heart of true Christianity is revealed. According to both the old and new testament, Zach. 9:9 and is witnessed by all four synoptic Gospels. Matt. 21: 1-11, Mark 11:1-10, Luke 19:29-38 and John 12:12-19. It is known theologically as the triumphant entrance. It is at this time that Jesus Christ is acclaimed by the multitude and the prophecy to be King. It was not so much a triumphant entrance as it is sacrificial; and yet according to Paul's writing to the

Colossians 2:14-19 the Lord is triumphant.

According to the four gospels the parade ended at the church. First with Jesus in tears, LK. 19:41 and second a cleansing of the corruption from the temple; Lk. 19:45-48; afterwards to set in order the truth of the living God. The people shedding their garments and waving of the palm branches have two very important spiritual types. The garment shedding is a type of putting off the old man of sin, to put on the new man Christ. The palm leaf grows in

the shape of a 'v', spiritually this is a type of Victory. Through conversion we are cut off from the wild to be grafted into the tame, and to take part in the life of the root, according to Romans 11:24,25. It is the beginning of the 10th to 40th day test of the Lamb of God.

#### THE RESURRECTION:

That Jesus rose from the dead and is now alive, the scriptures bear abundant proof, with innumerable live witnesses. There are at least 15 recorded appearances of the Lord

after the resurrection. Matt. 27 Mark 16, Lk. 24, John 20; in these there are 10 appearances. Then to the apostle Paul on the Damascus road and in Corinth on the ship to Rome and then to John on the isle of Patmos. The unique thing about the resurrection of Jesus Christ is that He is not really the first person to rise from the dead. Moses raised the dead in Num. 12, Elisha raised the dead and Elijah raised the dead according to II Kings. Jesus is reported to have raised the dead at the least on three dif-

ferent occasions; the widow of Nain's son, Jairus' daughter, and Lazarus. And yet, Easter declares that Jesus is the firstfruits of the dead, according to the scriptures. The puzzle is found in that the many people that were raised from the dead-died again, but Jesus is the first to rise from the dead that dieth no more.

According to Rev. 1:18, 'I am he that was dead and behold I am alive forevermore. Amen, and have the keys to hell and death.' So the Lord is not only

alive but is alive FOREVERMORE!!! We are the branches and he is the vine.

PASTOR A. J. THOMPSON

### We've Moved

Las Vegas Sentinel-Voice has moved its offices to a new location at 1201 South Eastern Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada 89104 - 702/383-4030.