

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

## PART VII - OUR CHILDREN... THE QUEST FOR EXCELLENCE - A QUEST FOR TRUTH

by Maudra Jones

*"What is the service of the love of the truth to the truth of the love? It is the conviction that everything that is of value to God gets nournished best in a community of people who demonstrate daily their value to each other."*

Dr. Donald W. Shriver, Jr.  
President, Union Theological Seminary  
New York, 1976

Having decided to engage in some reflection and introspection about the more than thirty "conversations" initiated in this series, I was led to repeat Dr. Shriver's poignant question. Because it serves to best describe the context out of which these "conversations" have emerged, it is presented here for your closer investigation of the meanings it may hold for you. In a sense, I am reaching for your indulgence and asking you to think with me in examining some of the thoughts in our discussions during the year.

Let me hasten to say that I do not presume that all of the discussions in the series have held the same meaning for every reader—surely the meaning will vary with the experiences that each reader brings to the information shared.

For some, the "conversations" might serve to reaffirm their own perceptions and convictions, even actions—while for others, they might serve to open new avenues of thought and consideration (they have served in both ways for me—helping me to "look at old problems in new ways").

Still, there will be others whose mind-sets and experiences may produce differing views from these expressed in the "conversations."

Also, we must consider those factors which make up one's experiences; for instance, we will find varying degrees of awareness, Blackness, motivation, love, hate, bitterness, complacency, concern, spirituality, commitment, apathy, fear, contentment, selfishness, dedication, involvement, etc.

Ultimately, the question for us becomes: What do we value the most?

Finally, whatever response or action might result from any discussion of the contemporary issues affecting Black families in this decade, we must all be willing to "test" our responses and actions against the inevitable truths which bera directly on the final judgment—in all matters requiring

our serious thought and action.

Explore with me now some of the thoughts which evolved in our former discussions. Let us search, together, for the common base of truth and reality. Moreover, let



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us begin to identify with the issues raised on some very concrete levels that represent specific actions that we are already taking or that we can begin to take in meeting the challenges before us.

On reflecting—

• If I were asked what I believe to be the single most important issue confronting the Black family in today's society, I would respond: It is the need to rebuild and strengthen torn-down family units—to re-evaluate and re-establish the spiritual and moral relationships within our immediate and extended families, wherever these relationships are found to be weakened or falling off.

• "Today, the role of the Black family is more important than it has ever been. There are more elements in our society dedicated to the weakening and destruction of the family than there has ever been. Economic depression, social and political upheaval, unemployment, delinquency, drugs, crime are but a few of the devisive forces. The general moral laxity, lack of honesty and integrity, the dog-eat-dog quality of our lifestyle all add to the negative side of the ledger... For these and many more reasons, it is absolutely imperative that the Black family regroup, close ranks and reaffirm love, unity and togetherness that has sustained us thus far, and will continue to sustain and keep us as long as the traditional Christian Black American family survives."

Dr. Lovenger Bowden, Graduate Professor  
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• In order to meet the challenges of the changing needs and the changing face of our families, our children and our communities, there must be a serious, determined and consistent effort to return the Black family tradition to the status it once held in all our families—nurturing and preserving such traditions as:

- intensive home training of our young
- respect for elders and each other
- compassionate sharing and expressing love, loyalty, trust, pride
- praying together at home
- reading and studying the Bible together
- reverence at mealtime
- attending church as a family
- planning and sharing leisure activities as a family
- working, planning and building the future together
- reaching out and embracing other families

### LEST WE FORGET

"It has not been merely Federal laws, Federal programs, integration, and civil rights movements that have kept Black Americans moving onward and upward toward human dignity and full citizenship; just as much, it has been the strength, love and unity of the Black family—the blood, sweat, tears, prayers and sacrifices of our beautiful Black parents—struggling against all odds... doubling up and doing without... families separated by geographic distances, but united in spirit and cooperation and unbreakable tradition..."

Dr. Lovenger Bowden

What are your thoughts? Can you find a common base of truth and reality in the foregoing statements? What are you now doing to meet the challenges—what can you do?

(To be continued)

the gift of life is the very power to existence. It is the joy of being. It is a privilege so sacred and so breathtaking it is almost beyond the power of words to reveal. LIFE IS TO BE LIVED. That is its greatest expression. A life of love and harmony and beauty is immeasurable. Beauty is life's glory. Youth is life's reality, joy is life's language. Praise is life's eternal flow.

by Pastor A.J. Thompson

# Church

## PRAISES FROM VICTORY MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

*"The law of the spirit of life has made me free from the law of sin and death."* Rom. 8:2

In this one verse of scripture there are three laws; The law of spirit of

life, the law of sin, the law of death.

In this study let us look at the law of life. What is life? Life is the quality that distinguishes a vital functional being from a

dead body or inanimate matter. The state of an organism characterized by capacity of mechanism, growth, reaction to stimuli or reproduction. That gift from God that brings one into conscious existence. That is to say, I am alive and know it. A tree is alive but cannot verbally express it. Nevertheless, the life I now have is terminal; for it has death in it. For I am dying while I live. For I am aging and aging is dying a little at a time. The life in God is zoie "Greek." That's life with death in it. Life in scripture is light. Darkness is death. In God there is light, in Him there is no darkness at all. I John 1:5. This is the life offered us through faith in Jesus Christ. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son,

that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." (zoie) John 3:16. This is the life offered Adam in the Garden of Eden with all its fullness. This privilege Adam lost in sin. Then God gave us Jesus Christ who lived completely in the will (law) of God to redeem this privilege that is now ours. "I am the true vine and you are the branches." John 15:1. The life of the vine is expressed through the branches. When one is in Jesus Christ (saved) the life of Christ (zoie) flows through him just as the life of the vine does through the branches. "And this is life eternal that they might know thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou has sent."

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