

A SERIES: THE BLACK FAMILY AND THE CHALLENGES OF THE 80'S

PART VIII — FOR OUR CHILDREN...

THE QUEST FOR TRUTH... OUR BEST LIVING REALITY

by Maudra Jones

"THIS KNOW ALSO, THAT IN THE LAST DAYS PERILOUS TIMES SHALL COME. FOR MEN SHALL BE LOVERS OF THEIR OWN SELVES, COVETOUS, BOASTERS, PROUD, BLASPHEMERS, DISOBEDIENT TO PARENTS, UNTHANKFUL, UNHOLY, WITHOUT NATURAL AFFECTION, TRUCEBEARERS, FALSE ACCUSERS OF THOSE THAT ARE GOOD, TRAITORS, HEADY, HIGHMINDED, LOVERS OF PLEASURES MORE THAN LOVERS OF GOD. 2 TIMOTHY 3:1-4

The case for acknowledging the current moral crisis in our society has been made. And while it

might seem apparent that much of the pain and suffering in our lives bears directly on the



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existing state of moral decline in our society, many of us still remain victims in a vicious cycle of moral decadence that is weakening every structure of societal life — most especially, that of family life. The pervading mood of apathy and indifference to an ever increasing trend of immoral behavior only serves to nourish and give strength to the practices of immorality, as seen in our daily attraction (and in some cases, addiction to) morally-based movies, TV programs, magazines, entertainment, music and other activities.

For some reason, it is an accepted "way of life," often isolated from any spiritual meaning — let alone the affects on our lives and our children's lives. Yet, for others there is a way of life that allows us to consult our deepest values and to demonstrate an allegiance to those values, as seen in our behavior and in our children's behavior.

Sharing his views on how modern man deals with moral values, John W. Gardner wrote: "While some are losing their faith, others are achieving new spiritual insights; while some are

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growing slack and hypocritical in the moral dimensions of their lives, others are bringing a new meaning and vitality to moral striving."

Long before Alvin Toffler warned of the accelerating tide of change that we would all be riding in the 80's, sages like Rauschenbusch, Bonhoeffer, Gardner and others were writing



Maudra Jones

about moral challenges facing our society. While Gardner referred to the changes we were witnessing in the 60's as a "story of dynamism rather than deterioration," he hastened to say that no one can fail to see in the segments of our society, "the dry rot produced by apathy and moral emptiness." He wrote, "Only the blind and complacent could fail to recognize the great tasks of renewal facing us — in government, education, race relations, in urban development, in international affairs, and most of all, in our minds and hearts." "Renewal," he said,

"whether or societies or in individuals, depends in some measure on commitment, conviction, motivation, the values we live by and the

things that give meaning to our lives." His brilliant essay helps us to see the relationship of moral decay and renewal to creativity and the relationship of the individual's capacity for life-long learning to social organization. These are all parts of the same problem — they each depend on the other in

the constant process of change. We must care, we must have the heart and spirit that gives us the capacity for self-renewal, we must share a vision of something worth saving. We must look beyond immorality and the danger of nuclear war and make our best living reality a world of love, hope and peace.

"WE HAVE BEEN THE SILENT WITNESSES OF EVIL DEEDS, MANY STORMS HAVE GONE OVER OUR HEADS. WE HAVE LEARNT THE ART OF DECEPTION AND OF EQUIVOCAL SPEECH. EXPERIENCE HAS MADE US SUSPICIOUS OF OTHERS, AND PREVENTED US FROM BEING OPEN AND FRANK. BITTER CONFLICTS HAVE MADE US WEARY AND CYNICAL. ARE WE STILL SERVICEABLE? IT IS NOT THE GENIUS THAT WE SHALL NEED, NOT THE CYNIC, NOT THE MISANTHROPIST, NOT THE ADROIT TACTICIAN, BUT HONEST, STRAIGHTFORWARD MEN. WILL OUR SPIRITUAL RESERVES PROVE ADEQUATE AND OUR CANDOR WITH OURSELVES REMORSELESS ENOUGH TO ENABLE US TO FIND OUR WAY BACK AGAIN TO SIMPLICITY AND STRAIGHTFORWARDNESS?"

DIETRICH BONHOEFFER

In the final chapter of his book, "Self-Renewal, The Individual and the Innovative Society," Gardner reminds us that the nurturing of values or the slackening of values is an ongoing battle, for good or ill; he states: "... moral order is an attribute of a functional society — a living, changing thing, which is subject to decay and disintegration as well as revitalizing and reinforcement." "Moral order," he admonishes, "is never any better than the gen-

eration that holds it in trust." His final challenge is: "People who believe in something and who stand for something and who understand these truths are best fitted to renew moral authority." Some, he suggests, will consider the task a burdensome responsibility, but others will be "summoned to greatness, as they accept the challenge to renew the moral order."

(To be continued)

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Drug Abuse Task Force To Meet

The Southern Nevada Parent Task Force for the elimination of school-age drug and alcohol abuse will meet at Western High School in the

Little Theater on Thursday, Mar. 8 at 7 p.m. Parents wishing to become involved in these task forces, organized throughout the Las Vegas community, are encouraged to attend.

If you would like more information regarding this meeting, contact Ed Stillian, Juvenile Court, at 649-3611, ext. 276.

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