

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

"OUR MORAL CHARACTER IS WROUGHT OUT BY CHOOSING THE RIGHT WHEN WE ARE OFFERED THE WRONG. IT IS NEITHER POSSIBLE NOR DESIRABLE TO CREATE A CONDITION IN WHICH THE HUMAN SOUL WILL NOT HAVE TO STRUGGLE WITH TEMPTATION...."

WALTER RAUSCHENBUSCH

Walter Rauschenbusch, one of the noted prophets of the "social gospel," shared deep insights on the subject of

morality in the popular edition of "Christianity and the Social Crisis." When I was introduced to Robert D. Cross' 1964

edition of this book some years ago, little did I realize that I might have the opportunity to share the wisdom of this sage at a time in our history in which we need his "light." Not only is there wisdom in his words, there is sincere love and caring for all of humanity.

His discourse on "The Tainting of the Moral Atmosphere" spells out the conditions and consequences of such an atmosphere. Following the above quotation, Rauschenbusch continued: "... there are conditions in which evil is so dominant and its attraction so deadly and irresistible, that no wise man will want to expose himself or his children to such odds." He suggests that even if we are fortunate to escape any of the direct consequences, the fact of living in an atmosphere of immorality does not increase our capacity to resist the "diseases" it produces. He calls attention to the fact that we cannot conceal from ourselves that in some directions the temptations of modern life are so harmful that the strong as well as the weak are collapsing all about us with sickening frequency.

Let us look for a moment at the record. In recent history, we have had a president of the United States who was the principle character in the Watergate scandal of the 1970's, resulting in his resignation from office. Since that time numerous individuals of high standing have "fallen from grace" because of acts of fraud, sexual perversion, ex-

tortion, etc. During a recent International News Report on Channel 10, KLVX-TV, Mr. Snow of Great Britain cited the number of government officials charged with immoral acts or acts of misconduct in the



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current administration, saying, such incidents would be considered "a monumental scandal in any other country."

The phrase "crime in the suites" has become an everyday, matter-of-fact accepted order of our times. And more often than not, the criminals on this level are exonerated from punishment — and, in some cases, go on to become famous authors, etc. as a result of their crimes. While in one news report, we hear about the "revolving Door" criminal system in this country, in another more recent report, we hear that the song of the late Robert Kennedy, Jr., when arrested on heroin charges, was given a two-year probation to work off his sentence in human services. My first reaction was: "What might happen if more criminals were given that same option? The probability is that we would

have fewer criminals and we would accomplish a great deal more in this country for the good of humanity. For sure, we would be closer to realizing the ideals of justice and equality. A discussion about how our young people are responding to the matter should prove quite revealing. I was reminded

Dramatizing what one writer called the "crisis of industrialism," Rauschenbusch wrote:

"Competitive commerce exalts selfishness to the dignity of a moral principle — it pits men against one another in a game in which there is no mercy... it makes Ishmaels of our best men and teaches them that

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that Rauschenbusch also said that in an immoral atmosphere, "poverty and luxury alike exhaust the will and degenerate human material... both create idleness, vagrant habits, the dislike of self-restraint, and the inclination to indulge in passing emotions." He makes the point that the young adult, in the most yielding (or plastic) time of his development, is immersed in an industrial life which largely tends to counteract and neutralize Christian teaching and training. Competitive industry and commerce, he said, "are based on selfishness as the dominant instinct and duty, just as Christianity is based on love."

Can we deny that in our American system, the pressures of business drive even the clean, kindly and religious men and women to stoop to methods of deceit and covetousness because that is the way our society teaches us to survive and prosper? Can we deny that such actions give an evil turn to our lives?

their hand must be against every man, since every man's hand is against them. It makes men who are the gentlest and kindest friends and neighbors relentless in their efforts to survive in the business world."

Have you ever stopped to think of how Japan succeeded in becoming a leading industrial nation — even after Hiroshima? The record will show that Japan has a system of business which "respects the divine and respects people." It is not difficult to find the contrast.

Now then, is there any wonder why most of our children view the world as a hostile surrounding? Our children are trying the best they know how to "survive" in the "mess" we adults have created for them. Our children did not write the constitution; they didn't create the American society; they don't control government or business; they can't be blamed for "A Nation at Risk" or a failing economy or the prevailing injustices or inequities in our society. Our children are doing the best they can with what we adults give them — at home, at church, at school, in the work place and, not the least of all, the "grand values" we demonstrate in our daily lives.

If we don't choose the right when we are offered the wrong, can we honestly expect more of our children?

(To be continued)

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Winners' names and slogans will appear on the marquee during

National Library Week, Apr. 9-14. All entries become the property of the Clark County Library District.

The theme for 1984 is "Knowledge is Real Power." Use your powers of creative thinking and enter the contest!