

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

... SEARCHING FOR SOLUTIONS

"Our history joins with that common hopeful element in all histories of human struggle for community and calls each of us to develop our great hidden capacities to dream, to imagine a new American society, to become full participants in its creation, bursting with our courage and hope the barriers of all political, economic and social institutions that now hold us in bondage to our worst selves."

Dr. Vincent Harding

When we address the issues of the human spirit, in our search for solutions, we are then able to "connect" with those forces of the "river" that propelled the great men and women in our history who forged paths to be victories of their times—the same victories that have taken us beyond the dark days of slavery and unjust laws. LEST WE FORGET.

For Harding, to be faithful to the soul of the river meant putting his readers in touch with the spirit of the struggle and hope of our people—the human spirit that is conveyed by the Frederick

Douglass', the Harriet Tubmans, the Sojourner Truths, the W.E.B. DuBois', et al. In writing about our history, Harding felt it was not only essential to convey the spirit of the struggle of our people, but equally, to convey the spirit of laughter and despair, of fear, determination and sacrifice. That is how, he says, we can remain faithful to the soul of the "river" and its people.

For Harding, to keep faith with a people means being in touch with them and their feelings, recognizing how many of their feelings are our own. He describes

his work in writing as "simply carrying on a tradition, trying to write and to live the story of our struggle, creating a his-



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tory that has already created me, seeking to keep the faith." He tells us that the only way he could do that with any integrity was to be faithful to his own deepest impulses, visions and concerns. In so doing, Harding raises questions and suggests insights that grew out of his knowledge of the past and his acknowledgement of the present reality—the present actuality. At the same time, he said, he had to nurture his own spirit, so

that he could recognize the changes that were taking place within him in the continuing passage toward his development as a "whole being." So must we, if we are to connect with the vision of a new humanity—if we are to find meaning,

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coherence and purpose in our lives.

Harding helps us to reaffirm that we are indeed a chosen people—we in the river of struggle; and, further, that our destination takes us far beyond ourselves to a new transformed humanity, a new humanized society. This is our gift from God—if we would only accept it and use it.

That is what Harding meant when he said, "We are the essential force... we are the vision." That is what Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. meant when he said "... our struggle for truth and justice would

redeem the soul of America." That is what Jesse Jackson means, today, when he says, "... I am not a politician, I am a prophet on a political mission." These are all the meanings in Harding's prophetic words. He believes and persists

in his belief that at the heart of our long struggle is a "profoundly human quest for transformation, a constantly evolving movement toward personal integrity and toward new social structures filled with justice, equity and compassion."

Can't we see that these are all qualities and characteristics of the "river"? We as Black Americans have never written laws to exclude other peoples from the freedoms of pursuing life, liberty, happiness and justice. We as Black people have not denied other people the right to participate in our institutions, our churches, our schools and our businesses. Think about it.

Our "river" is a river of love, compassion, faith, hope, and courage with moral and spiritual groundings. Anyone who doesn't know that (or feel that sense of the river) is "marching to a different drummer"—responding to a different

force in society.

As Harding reflected on the current problems of our times and of our lives, he wrote: "... I am concerned about the one force that can stop the river: the self-destructiveness and despair that overwhelms us when we no longer know our course, no longer remember our origins."

The river, Beloved, is indeed OUR river by ancestral heritage; and we should care, as does Harding, about its past and its ultimate destination. We, too, can take the history of our people as a "sign of all human possibility." We, too, must see the way we have come, the chains we have broken and the visions we have held on to standing out as an invitation to all people to join the river that "moves toward a freedom that liberates the whole person and humanizes the entire society, pressing us beyond race, class, and nationality..."

Our history will help us to order and organize the solutions to today's pressing problems in our homes, churches, schools, communities, cities, counties, states, our nation and the world.

Our history holds the spirit of courage and hope needed to burst the barriers of injustice, powerlessness, unemployment, drugs, illiteracy, poverty, hate, greed, guilt and fear.

Our history is us. Do we know who we are?
(To Be Continued)

CHURCH MOTHER OF THE WEEK

MOTHER FRANCIS HARRIS HAS A GOOD PERSPECTIVE

"I am a missionary, a church mother and an evangelist. I do some of everything in the church, such as teaching, praying, singing and bringing the message, teach Sunday School—all of it," was the joyful message passed on to the Las Vegas Sentinel-Voice the other day when interviewing Mid-City Furniture Church Mother of the Week, Francis Harris from the Gateway to Heaven Church Of God In Christ (COGIC), 1425 Balzar Ave., and pastored by Elder Nathan Harris, her husband.

Born in Tallalah, La., 63 years ago, Mother Harris moved to Las Vegas during 1942 to join some members of the family. She is the mother of four boys and three girls. Two of the children are in Alaska—a son

and daughter. The son, Thomas, works on the pipeline while her daughter, Susie, "runs a grocery store in Fairbanks with her husband." The latter are planning to buy 80 acres of land for future development.

The Harris' proudly claim 13 grandchildren.

Mother Harris does not claim, however, a good singing voice. "I can carry a tune," she said. "I do no solo work—they would be so low they would not be able to hear me," she joked.

Her principal hobby is fishing. This past Wednesday she and her husband did not fare well in their 18-hour outing—she caught four fish (little old crappies), while her husband caught only one. Her niece and nephew, however, caught 140 or more.

Each week, Mid-City Furniture, 501 N. Main, salutes the area CHURCH MOTHERS. On the Sunday following such recognition of the Church Mother in the Las Vegas Sentinel-Voice, Mid-City Furniture also presents a gift to the honoree at the church.

Let's hear from you about your CHURCH MOTHER. Just call the Las Vegas Sentinel-Voice at 383-4030 and give us the details. We will do the rest.



Francis Harris

SARAH ALLEN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CREDIT UNION



CHANGE OF ADDRESS NOTICE

We will continue with business at the new location, 926 W. Owens in the Nucleus Plaza Shopping Center.