

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

If we are to honestly answer the question of "who we are," we must first be faithful to our reality—the reality of our pilgrimage as a people—the reality that American history is our history—the reality that our history is part of America's history. At the same time, we must be faithful to the new reality—the recognition of that which America has made us, for better or worse.

The important task we must undertake as we "surge with the river" is that of identifying ourselves. Dr. Broadus N. Butler put it plainly in his famous address to the National Business League in 1961. He admonished that our greatest need, in these times, is for "cultural mirrors" that will "magnify ourselves to ourselves in such wise as to enable us to stand foursquare before ourselves clearly and reflectively." He explains, we must come up with social and moral answers about our own self-image before we can use our image to demand

equality in dignity. In essence, we must transform our own myths, which have supported the negative image of our people, before we can transform or transcend our history. Dr. Butler suggests that if we are to move beyond the forces that are at work to stop the surge of the river, we must begin by re-molding, re-creating and re-evaluating our own self-image.

I am reminded of a lecture given by Dr. Archie Hargraves at Union Seminary in New York during the early 70's. (Dr. Hargraves was then head of the Chicago Theological Seminary and is among the prominent Black thinkers and visionaries of our times.) I recall the emotions he aroused when he announced the title of his lecture to a predominantly white audience, most of whom were wealthy ladies from Connecticut. Dr. Hargraves' lecture on "The Abolishment of the Kingdom of Niggerdom" was soul-stirring, to say the least.

It dealt with the historical images of Black people (assumed or imposed) in a journey from the "old nigger" to the "new nigger," citing the 1970's as the decade in which a "new nigger" was emerging to deal with the problems of our society with a "sense of creative integrity"—one



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who is no longer willing to "sit in the back of the bus," but who reasons and searches for the deeper meanings; one who calls forth the power of the human spirit to analyze, synthesize and mobilize.

It was Lerone Bennett, Jr. who since called our attention to the meanings of images in our history. He stated in his

popular Ebony article, "Why Black History Is Important To Us," that "... history is power" and that it not only records action, but it also prepares for action; it is action itself; it, in fact, ACTS. He goes on to say that "history acts because it is the basis of the image which is the ground of our acts." Bennett urges that we must recognize the importance of this fact because it is true that people act out of their

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image and respond to a situation only as that situation has been transformed by the images they carry in their minds. It is, in fact, the ideas that people have of themselves, in a given situation, that leads to their response to that situation. The response, of course, may be positive or negative. The simple fact, as Bennett relates, is that if we want to change a situation, we must change the images people have of them-

selves and of their situation.

There is no question that Dr. Butler's message on the self-image of Black people has meaning for us in 1984. It has meaning in this decade for a number of reasons, not to mention the dynamics of our times. But it especially has meaning, because now, as never before, we have an opportunity to fulfill the prophecy. We must begin, as the resounding voices of our vision-

second look in the mirror of this day must encourage us—unless we have failed to understand the impact of the legal and political work of those pioneering organizations such as the NAACP, the Urban League, CORE and others in the freedom movement. "The third look must sober us to our opportunity and discipline us to the responsibility that the survival of this nation, and maybe western civilization, has been placed in our charge." Jesse Jackson and Minister Louis Farrakhan would no doubt agree.

(To be continued)

The Purpose of Worship

The purpose of worship is not to retire from the secular into the department of the religious, let alone to escape from 'this world' into 'the other world,' but to open oneself to the meeting of the Christ in the common, to that which has the power to penetrate its superficiality and redeem it from its alienation. The function of worship is to make us more sensitive to those depths; to focus, sharpen and deepen our response to the world and to other people beyond the point of proximate concern (of liking, self-interest, limited commitment, etc.) to that of ultimate concern; to purify and correct our loves in the light of Christ's love; and in him to find the grace and power to be the reconciled and reconciling community. Anything that achieves this or assists toward it is Christian worship. Anything that fails to do this is not Christian worship, be it ever so 'religious.'

John A.T. Robinson
in *Honest to God*

will always surround
and protect you—
as over the years,
it will steadily grow.

—Edgar J. Willmott

CHURCH MOTHER OF THE WEEK

MOTHER ESSIE PARKS HONORED FOR HER CHURCH WORK

Each week Mid-City Furniture, 501 North Main, salutes the Church Mothers—selected individuals who contribute heavily of their time and energies to generate a cohesiveness among the membership and the total church programs and activities.

This week's honoree is selected from the Grace Immanuel Baptist Church, 805 Bartlett Avenue, pastored by Rev. Sylvester P. Parks. The CHURCH MOTHER of the week is Essie Parks, the pastor's wife.

The Parks received their calling to Grace Immanuel seven years ago after serving a number of years in Henderson. Since that time they have seen much growth and



Essie Parks

development. They have three children — two sons and one daughter. One son lives in St. Louis while the other resides in Seattle; their daughter is

a Las Vegan.

Mother Essie Parks is a very active church worker. "She leaves no stone unturned," according to Rev. Parks.

"She is involved in just about everything, including counseling work.

Among her many activities are her supervisory work with the Junior Choir, serving on the Mothers Board, involvement in all fund raising activities and singing in the Senior Choir.

Mother Parks is a member of the Las Vegas Chapter, NAACP and works as a cosmetologist at the Cozy Nook Beauty Salon, 1284 Miller Avenue.

Mid City Furniture will send a lovely gift for Mother Parks. It will be presented to her during this Sunday's services.

Incidentally, the church's 7th Anniversary observances will be held June 7, 8 and 10.

Lullaby

Hush, my darling,
don't you cry
I'll always be with you
there by your side
Have no fear of what
tomorrow may bring
Rest and relax,
and to you,
A lullaby I'll sing

So sleep will come swiftly
softer than down,
And the stars
when they appear,
From them I'll make you
a crown.

The moon,
I'll have bathe you
in its gentle glow,
And my love, my darling,