



RELIGION

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Religion Editor, Portland Observer
P.O. Box 3137
Portland OR 97208

Threats to Freedom



Dr. O. B. Williams, Rev. Ralph Abernathy, and Dr. John Jackson.
Photo by Richard J. Brown

Edited by Nyewusi Askari

EDITOR'S NOTE: On November 18, 1987, the Honorable Rev. Ralph Abernathy was the guest speaker at the Greater Mt. Calvary Church of God in Christ. The Portland Observer is proud to present excerpts from his speech, "The Four Threats to Freedom".

"I need not pause to tell you how delighted I am, and how privileged I am to return to the State of Oregon and to the city of Portland. I will always remember you very fondly and dearly, because you have inspired me on other occasions. I am so glad to be with people I dearly and truly love: Dr. and Mrs. John Jackson, Dr. and Mrs. O. B. Williams, Bishop and Mrs. H. B. Daniels, and so many others I have come to love.

"Martin Luther King was correct when he said that we're all tied together in one common bond of mutuality; and what affects some of us directly, affects all of us indirectly. You see, a threat to justice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere, and you can't be what you ought to be until I am what I should be.

"Let me assure you that charity begins at home and then spreads abroad. And I believe that the first thing we have to do is get ourselves right. We have to free America, because the world is looking at America saying that we cannot hear what you are saying for seeing what you do.

"In America, we are living the life of a hypocrite that preaches one thing and does another. We have to live a life consistent with our teachings. I said to a radio commentator this afternoon, 'I'd rather see a sermon anyday than hear one.' What is wrong with the world today is an absence of love. We don't love anybody. We don't love our neighbors. We don't love our friends. And many people don't love themselves.

"A serious threat to freedom is that awful and crippling disease known as racism. Throughout the United States of America, and I have found abroad and all over the world, there is this crippling problem of racism. We don't love and we don't care for each other beyond our race. We must become color-blind. Surely, I want to see Jesse Jackson become President of the United States of America, not because he is Black, but because he's the most qualified person. He is the person who is concerned about the problems, and he's not afraid to address the problems that are facing America today. That is the reason why, and not because he's Black. We must grow up and kill racism in this nation.

"America must deal with its religious bigotry. We must deal with this old false and unfounded idea that nobody will be saved but in my church! When we get to heaven, if we get there, there will be Baptists, Methodists, Catholics, Jews and everybody who loved the Lord. We ought to learn that lesson and stop hating on the basis of religious bigotry. Jesus said, 'There are other sheep I have that are not of this fold.' You see, I know that I can't see the face of God by hating people simply because they have not come to know Christ.

"We have come a long way in our struggle, and those of you who say we haven't made progress, have no understanding... you have never been denied the right to drink from a water fountain. You have never been denied the right to stay in a hotel or walk through the front door of a hotel. You have never been denied the right to ride an elevator. You have never been denied the right to use a bathroom. You have never been denied the right to sit in a restaurant and had to go around to the back door.

"And now we have state legislatures that are dominated by Black men and women. We have Black mayors in the biggest cities of America. But these positions did not come on a silver platter. Somebody had to die: Black men died, white men died, white women died, and Black women died in order that we may be here this evening. Somebody paid the price. Somebody suffered. Somebody placed their all on the altar."

Rev. Abernathy's trip to Portland was sponsored by the Albina Ministerial Alliance, the American Freedom Coalition and other civic organizations. After his introduction, Rev. Abernathy was presented with a bronze sculpture by world-renowned Portland artist, Lorenzo Ghiglieri. The sculpture, entitled "Commitment To Freedom", was awarded to Rev. Abernathy for his long-standing commitment to freedom.



Rear: Karen Walthenson (Grant HS), Justine Flynn (Jefferson HS), Dieter Ratzlaf (Grant HS), Margaret Richen (Grant HS), Mark St. John (Grant HS), Lisa Walthen (Grant HS), Emma Shook (Grant HS). Front Row: Shannon Williams (Jefferson HS), Linda Bailey (PSU), Dawn Hofstad (PSU).

Audience/Chorus Prepares for December 4 Event

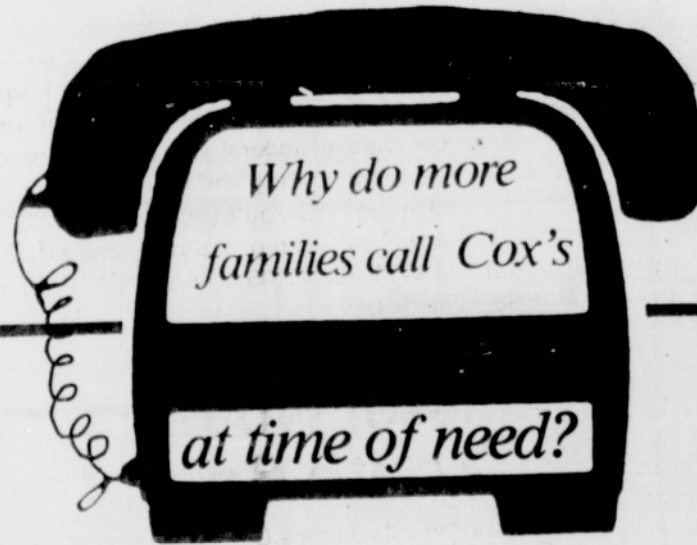
Ten Northeast Portland student musicians will be performing in the Portland Youth Philharmonic's sixth annual presentation of the "Sing-Your-Own Messiah", conducted by Jacob Avshalomov, on Friday, December 4, 1987, in the Civic Auditorium.

Janet Howland, well-known choral director, with Cynthia Rampone as accompanist, led the way in polishing up rusty vocal chords in preparation for the event at a free brush-up session for the audience/chorus that was held Sunday, November 22, at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 1624 N.E. Hancock, Portland. This optional practice session, with scores provided, was open to the public. It is one of six being held throughout the city.

The local students performing in the December 4 audience participation event range in age from 15 to 20 and were among the 264 who auditioned for a spot in this internationally acclaimed orchestra. During its 64 year history this educational organization has trained over 4,000 student musicians and entertained thousands throughout Oregon, the United States, Europe and Japan.

Soup Labels Needed

N.E. Portland Daycare/Bible Club needs your Campbell Soup labels to buy a much-needed van. Please mail labels to: P. McClendon, Box 10575, Portland, OR 97211. Labels will be collected from November, 1987, through February, 1988.



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BY Dr. Edward Ward

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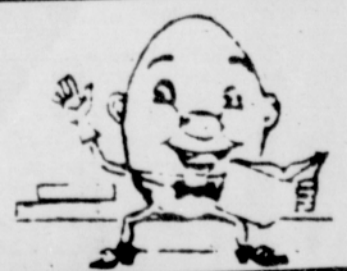
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