

RELIGION

ALTERNATIVES

The Season of Depression (A Black History Testimony)

BY M. ISAACS

Whether we like it, accept it or dwell deeply in it, depression is a way of life for a great number of people; especially Blacks. Blacks are a race of people who have suffered possible clinical depression and "the blues" for years upon years. For most people these gloomy "blue" feelings pass and life eventually goes on, better and more productive. This is usually so for Black people, who have no hope that these feelings and causes will pass; but instead place their hope in their faith in God, that things will be better, not especially for them, but for their children.

It is amazing and shocking that there are other races that see Blacks as happy, free of concerns and cares, simply because Blacks do not openly complain, or on a whole, seek clinical counseling from "supposed experts". It is widely believed that

most Blacks are too simple-minded for depression to affect them. Blacks, being stoic by nature, suffer and to some degree overcome; or they bear as their "life" burden; the insomnia, the fatigue, the forced separations from loved ones, irritability, difficulty concentrating and thoughts of suicide. Blacks have found a truth based in/on God's Word, that peace and worth and personal fulfillment is not found outside of themselves. In ignorance, some believe Blacks foolish because they laugh, rejoice, and are happy in their afflictions; never understanding "That the trials of our faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried by fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." 1 Peter 1:7.

Looking into the history of slavery, we find the Black Slave pray-

ing, helping each other, hiding each other, protecting each other and their children and singing God's praises, giving thanks for the little they possessed, believing that as long as there is life in the body, there is a reason for hope in the future. Blacks realized

separation from family members (never to see them again); they held fast to their beliefs that "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." Reve-

lutions 14:13. Because my great Grandmother could not read, she listened avidly to others who could read the Bible; then she composed songs from the Bible stories she had heard and sang them to her children and grandchildren; and we continue to sing these story songs to our children,---"Sampson & Delilah," "Baby Moses," "Lot and the Pillar of Salt," "Little David," "Paul & Silas," etc.. We also leaned, at her knee, to ask God for everything we needed and to wait upon the Lord and to expect an answer. Memorizing Scripture was expected of Black children and we were never allowed to eat any food, no matter how meager the meal, without offering thanks to God and repeating our Bible verse. Good Black Parents leave an inheritance to their children, not always in finances, but in their teachings to gear God and keep His commandments; in the evidence of their trust and faith in God; and in the evidence apparent through many years, "that this loving and faithful, never changing God, does and will answer the prayers of the faithful." Proverbs 12:27.

There were no private Physicians,

no licensed Psychologist, no Psychiatrist for the slave or for those freedmen in later generations of Blacks, nor for some of us even now, because of limited income, distrust, and racism. Blacks have managed to keep body and soul together and preserved the heritage of faith and trust in God, that has increased, instead of decreased, the Black population; (even though many succumbed, freely or by force, to planned genocide by some citizens of our supposedly God fearing nation). This is a faith that has sustained Blacks through job losses, serious illnesses, wars, difficult relationships, dysfunctional childhoods, lynchings, drugs, gangs, justified and unjustified imprisonments and etc.. When Blacks dwell on these things they have only to recall their Ancestor's Motto: This too shall pass. "God sees all and He will repay, saith the Lord."

“Because my great Grandmother could not read, she listened avidly to others who could read the Bible”

that, as a race of people, they were God's children and that He had/had something better in store for them, thereby eliminating the cause for always feeling down and depressed.

Though Blacks, throughout the years of slavery, faced death and/or

lations 14:13.

Because my great Grandmother could not read, she listened avidly to others who could read the Bible; then she composed songs from the Bible stories she had heard and sang them to her children and grandchildren; and

"Ave Maria" Gala Concert Choir

Portland, Oregon...Former conductors and singers will be in attendance as the Portland Symphonic Choir, under the direction of Bruce Browne, celebrates its 50th anniversary with a Gala Concert that will feature the world premiere of a commissioned work by Portland composer Bryan Johanson March 23-24 at the First United Methodist Church.

Browne will conduct the Johanson work titled "Ave Maria," Schumann's "Prelude for Voices," and works by Barber, Pary and

Argenta. Former conductors Frank Holman and David Wilson will take the podium for works by Copland and Vaughn-Williams respectively; and assistant director Emmanuel McGladrey will conduct Britten. The Portland Symphonic Choir's founder and first conductor, Robert Zimmerman will be an honored guest. Gala activities will include a silent auction. The Portland Symphonic Girlchoir, under the direction of Roberta Jackson, as well as choir alumnae from the past 50 years will also perform.

Performances are scheduled for Saturday, March 23, at 8 p.m., and Sunday March 24, at 4 p.m. at the First United Methodist Church located at 1838 S.W. Jefferson St. in Portland. There will be no pre-concert lecture.

General admission tickets are \$14 for adults and \$12 for children and may be purchased at all Fred Meyer FASTIX outlets, or charged by phone at 503-224-8499. For more information, call the Portland Symphonic Choir business office at 503-224-1217.

Ministries Receive Grants

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon has received two grants from The Oregon Community Foundation.

The first grant, in the amount of \$5,000, is for the general support of Clare House, a facility of EMO's Addictions Recovery Association. This grant is made possible through the Jerry and Corrine Nothman Fund.

The Addictions Recovery Association serves pregnant women and women with small children. To date, 91 babies have been born drug-free through the program.

The second grant, for support of Hopewell House, is for \$250 and comes through the Warner Family Fund. Hopewell House, EMO's hospice program, is recognized nationwide as a model for compassionate and dignified care for the gravely and terminally ill.

The Oregon Community Foundation, established in 1973, manages charitable funds given individuals, families, and businesses to enhance and support the quality of life in their communities. Today, the Founda-

tion's endowment consists of 310 funds with combined assets of \$132 million.

The Foundation makes grants through an application process that involves local citizens in the review and evaluation of requests for funds.

Pre-application materials are available through the Foundation's Portland office. Individuals or businesses interested in establishing a fund may contact the Portland office at 621 S.W. Morrison St., Suite 725, Portland, OR 97205.

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In Remembrance of
Reverend G.L. Black
On Friday, March 1
Family, Friends and Loved ones
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On this date, keep this thought in mind
as Rev. Black is, we will one day be.
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"Jerusalem, Then And Now"

The city of Jerusalem has played an important role in world history and stands at the hub of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. March 2-5 at Portland State University, a touring documentary photo exhibit and a series of lectures, under the combined title "Jerusalem, Then and Now," will explore the heritage which these three religions share and highlight why this treasured city plays a central role in the quest for peace in the region. For information call 725-4074 or 226-7807.

"Jerusalem, as one of the holiest cities in the world, continues to dominate many spheres, including peace negotiations in the middle east," says Jon Mandaville, professor of history and director of PSU's Middle East Studies Center. "This preeminence has influenced art, archaeology and architecture, and sometime it has clouded visions and complicated negotiations. In presenting "Jerusalem, Then and Now" we hope to provide accurate images and analysis of the city, underscoring for Portland audiences its historical and contemporary significance."

North Portland Bible College

4905 N. Vancouver Ave., Portland, OR 97217 288/2919

Spring Term Class Schedule, 1996
March 25 - June 6

Mondays: OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY III
(Isaiah - Malachi)
Pastor James Coleman

ROMANS (Bible Study Elective)
Dr. Jim Williams

WORLD MISSION III (Cultural Perspective)
Elizabeth Nance

Tuesdays: NEW TESTAMENT SURVEY III
(Hebrews - Revelation)
Elizabeth Nance

STRENGTHENING THE SINGLE PARENT FAMILY
Kathleen Watkins

Equipping The Saints I, (Continuation)
Greg and Ginger Hicks

Thursdays: INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY
Dean Michael Lindsey

HOMILETICS (Sermon Preparation)
Pastor T. Allen Bethel

UNDERSTANDING ISLAM AND MOSLEMS
Richard Elkins

Tuition: Still only \$75. per course; \$5. discount before Mar. 29.
PRE-REGISTRATION, by phone, 288-2919, or in person



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