

EDITORIAL

Editorial Articles Do Not Necessarily
Reflect Or Represent The Views Of
The Portland Observer

The 5/2/96 JaxFax discussed the recent "Frontline" biography of Rev. Jackson.

Now the related book, *Jesse: The Life and Pilgrimage of Jesse Jackson*, is out. It was written by Marshall Frady, who grew up in South Carolina only a few miles--but another world--from Jackson, and who has previously authored respected books on Billy Graham and George Wallace.

The book is no puff piece; neither is it a hatchet job. JaxFax disagrees with many of Frady's observations. But JaxFax also notes that Frady does attempt to place Rev. Jackson's life in its proper context within Dr. King's tradition, and it is JaxFax's opinion that some of Frady's observations in *Jesse* are worth highlighting, since they are likely to be overlooked by the keepers of the conventional wisdom, as they rewrite history in their own images. More next week, along with redistricting analysis. Emphasis to Frady quotes below added:

- "...few have managed to rise quite so high from so far outside the main society of America."
- "...it's fair to say that none of the other notable populist tribunes preceding Jackson--not Bryan, not Long, and surely not Ross Perot--had ever journeyed from so far outside."
- "Jackson may in fact be the most

NATIONAL RAINBOW COALITION

Pilgrimage: Part II

original figure, all things considered, ever to have reached such an importance in the nation's civic life."

• "Jackson differed strikingly from every other past presidential contender who had arrived at anything like a similar consequence in that he was embarked not so much on a political enterprise as a sort of political evangelism--one deriving from the essentially religious social vision that had animated King. He readily acknowledged, 'What I'm doing is carrying the moral vision of the civil rights movement into the context of conventional politics.'"

• "But in a more important respect than oratory did Jackson seem to fashion himself directly out of King. With that swift and ready facility evidenced at the seminary for absorbing whole the ideas of others that illuminated and gave body to intuitions from his own experience,

Jackson assumed as his own lifetime's vision King's radical, gospel, moral metaphysic...

"[King] became most of all captivated by Gandhi and his expansion of Thoreau's principle of individual passive resistance into the massive, patient, nonviolent resistance of a whole subject people, which would exert a moral force that could purge a society of its overt brutalities by imposing impossible inconveniences not only to its agencies of authority but to the conscience of its rulers. Thus, King propounded, the universal moral verities evoked by the civil rights movement could, beyond delivering blacks finally into full citizenship, 'also redeem the soul of America.'"

• "Jackson happened to join King, in fact, just as King was escalating his mission into that of a prophet to the conscience of the entire national

community...In his prophetic witness, King wound up pitting himself against the very spirit of the age in America."

• "In his eventual massive national activation of the black voting rights won by King in Selma, in his perpetuation of King's vision in the nation's life, in his ascent to become an almost totemic figure for America's black community, he [Jackson] would indeed prove to be probably King's most notable legatee."

• "It was one of those addresses of Jackson's that once moved cultural essayist Stanley Crouch to declare him a 'moral poet' who 'can reach levels of such lyricism that the body politic itself seems some sort of poem still being born in heroic proportions.'"

• "Another longtime Jackson observer declares, 'There's no way to begin to really understand Jesse Jackson without getting out on the road with him. Watch him among those people, all sorts of people out there across the country. That's where he comes into his true reality. And that's still his possibility, make no doubt about it, can still be his future, too.'"

• "...a note was delivered to [Jackson] in his hotel room from [Andrew] Young: 'You make me proud and humble when I hear you speak. Martin would be proud, too. You have my full endorsement as the moral voice of our time.'"

Civil Rights Journal: More Church Fires

BY BERNICE POWELL JACKSON

It was good to see some of the pastors again, kind of like a reunion. It was bad that there were new faces in the crowd -- new pastors whose churches had been burned. New stories of devastation, of community pain.

We all gathered in the Nation's Capital to meet with federal government officials about the church burnings, which are now happening weekly across the nation. Indeed, in the one week before there were three fires reported -- in Alabama, in North Carolina and in Texas.

The pastors told their stories to Attorney General Janet Reno and Secretary of the Treasury Robert Rubin and their staffs. They told how not only had their churches been burned, many to the ground, but many of them had received threats as well. They told of how many of them, victims of white supremacists trying to establish a modern-day reign of terror, were also victims of harassment by the federal government officials sent to investigate. They told how they had been asked to take polygraph tests, how church records

had been subpoenaed, how a 17-year old church member had been taken out of her classroom and interrogated until she was in tears and other members taken off their jobs to be questioned.

The pastors told the stories of how local authorities had failed to follow through on investigations. They told of how local investigators had started with the assumption that these were not hate crimes, despite the evidence.

The pastors told the stories of their own pain at losing their church buildings. "I lost my mother and my sister, but I've never felt the kind of pain I felt the night one of my members called and said the church was on fire," said Rev. Donaldson of Tennessee.

But, they also told the stories of their members being strong in their faith and committed to re-building no matter what. Indeed, one pastor told President Clinton before his radio broadcast that his church had not burned, only the church building had, because the church is in the hearts of the people.

The pastors demanded that these fires be given top priority by the

federal government. They asked that the harassment of them and their members be stopped. They asked that the government recognize that these are not isolated acts of drunken teenagers, but that officials would recognize that most of these fires are the racist acts of domestic terrorists. Then they asked for protection for churches so that the destruction might be stopped.

To President Clinton's credit, he did respond personally and went to the dedication of the New Mt. Zion AME Church in Greeleyville, SC and used his moral authority as President to call for an end to these crimes. South Carolina is the state with the most burnings and as Rose Johnson of the Center for Democratic Renewal has said, "we need to call a state of emergency in South Carolina."

African American churches are the oldest institutions in the black community and are centers not only for spiritual nourishment but also for economic development and community revival. Thus, these fires are attacks on houses of God and nerve centers of the black community. They are the cowardly acts of evil people determined to turn back the clock

and terrorize the black folks living in these mostly rural areas.

Many of the pastors expressed their fears that this country is losing its moral ground and they worried that continued burnings will force their communities to provide protection for themselves. Let us pray that this will not be so. Let communities speak out against these horrible acts. Let us all work to make sure that the fires stop, the harassment ends and the churches are re-built. Let us begin today.

(You can write to President Clinton, Attorney General Janet Reno and Treasury Secretary Rubin and ask that these investigations be given priority and that the pastors and church members not be harassed by investigators.)

You can write to the Governors of the states where the fires have occurred. You can give money by sending it to the National Council of Churches, Church World Service, 475 Riverside Dr., NY, NY 10115. You can help re-build Alabama churches by contacting Washington Friends Workcamps at 1225 Geranium St., NW, Washington, DC 20012.)

perspectives

Can A Land Of Church Burnings Survive As A Civilized Society?

Many readers of the Portland Observer were in agreement with last week's comment here that the "...terrible threat to the very fabric of our society (church burnings), could well have been constrained by a timely intervention had the big corporate media assigned just half the resources they devoted to the O.J. Simpson trail."

But certainly it has not been just the media which has failed in sounding a timely alarm to alert the nation

that a conspiratorial mischief was afoot--fully as serious as the murderous, brown-shirted conspiracy that Hitler and his nazis thrust upon an unbelieving and uncomprehending world. And once again, there seems the possibility that major religious denominations may not heed the danger in time.

Several of our readers were quite agitated in their appraisal of a gigantic Southern Baptist Convention which did not "utter a mumbled word or official comment" concerning the rash of attacks on the most fundamental icons of Christianity, its churches. Another voiced bitter disappointment that Rev. Billy Graham had not mounted his pulpit to launch as series of impassioned denunciations of these racist attacks against his Lord's places of worship.

It was noted, however, that the Southern Baptist Convention did launch a determined attack on the Disney organization whose corporate conduct appeared to be "threatening the family values and social fabric of our nation," e.g. extending health benefits to unmarried partners of the same sex. It certainly seems that in the realm of national priorities this organization might have given at least equal status to the wholesale torching of churches in eight states.

And what else seems missing lately? That famed southern passion for brilliant oratory and stirring rhetoric in the halls of congress--a vigorous denouncement of church-burning apparently is not a suitable vehicle for "fiery" speech-making and declamatory excellence. However, the Associated Press does

inform us, "GOP House Leader Rips Clinton Over Response To Church Fires." Rep. Dick Army described President Clinton's visit to a South Carolina church as "just another political move -- a photo op."

This comment was made as the House Judiciary Committee advanced measure HR 3525 permitting federal prosecutors to intervene, even if the "damage" was nothing more than a derogatory comment or a symbol

spray-painted on religious property. I took note that Senator Arney remarked that Assistant Attorney General Deval Patrick (black) showed a "seeming lack of interest" in the passage of 'The Church Arson Prevention Act of 1996' (passed by voice vote).

Along with several astounded callers I found my-self in agreement with the senator. We had all seen Patrick's pitiful performance, courtesy of CNN. The man was tentative, uncertain, and seemed not to perceive a problem at all. When asked about a possible "racist conspiracy" the young black lawyer reacted almost in terror, headedly denying there was any evidence of that possibility.

Patrick adopted the same defensive mode when congressmen asked was there a problem with certain federal law enforcement agencies, given the recent publicity in respect to infiltration by hate organization and the distribution of racist literature at some meetings. The Assistant Attorney General was adamant in his denial that there could be a problem. His fear of "those folks" (or of his job) seemed almost palpable. Patrick's performance was frightening in itself.

It is unfortunate that Patrick would not directly answer such related questions as put to him by Rev. Mac Charles Jones of the National Council of Churches. It is even more unfortunate that the continued exploitation of the O.J. Simpson/Brown tragedy by such blatant hustlers as the "Rivera Live" show will continue to create racial divisiveness and mistrust. It is past time that the networks looked beyond the 'bottom line' and began seeing the big picture: the survival of our nation as a decent, civilized society.



By
Professor
McKinley
Burt



Letter To The Editor

Send your letters to the Editor to:
Editor, PO Box 3137, Portland, OR 97208

Notes to a Son from a Father

Yours in the struggle, Rodney D. Coates Director of Black World Studies Associate Professor of Sociology Miami University Oxford, Ohio 45056, 513-529-1235 email: coatesrd@casmail.muohio.edu

My father died some time ago, but often I recall our conversations and his love. Let me share some of them with you now.

Notes to a Son from a Father Rodney Coates/96:

My son, soon you will be a man, and I would be remiss of my responsibilities if I were not to give you the advice given to me by my dad. Now I know that much of what I say now will seem of no use, old hat, and just plain meddling. But I love you my son and know that I am just doing the best I can.

My son, know that you come from God, that I am just a short term custodian. You are a blessing, for all that is created is good--my God don't make no junk. I have tried to guide you, not reshape you into my own image. For you are of the future and I represent the past, my vision is blurred through my own sorrow. I love you son, so listen and learn of my mistakes.

Father you speak of sorrow, tell me of that pain.

Son, both sorrow and joy come from the same stream of life, yet from different fountains. Fill your cup equally from both, let your cup of sorrow be mingled with joy, and your joy be mingled with sorrow. To drink exclusively of one or the other only leads to despair. For to drink only of joy leads to pride and egoism, whereas a cup of only sorrow produces much frustration and anger. So from both fountains fill your cup so that your joy will be tempered with sorrow and your sorrow tempered with joy. And thus learn humility my son.

But father, if I am blessed why should I humble myself.

My son, because you are blessed much will be asked of you. Without humility you will forget the source of your blessing and consequently of your strength. While you came by your mother and me, you are not of us. You belong to the Eternal One from which all life derives. Wisdom comes with humility, while defeat the curse of vanity.

But father, why are we despised.

My son, to be Black is not a curse although at times it can be very uncomfortable. There are those who will hate, abuse, accuse, misuse and confuse you regarding who and what you are. You are and must continue to be strong to avoid the destruction

planned. Remember, if indeed you were inferior they would not have to maintain racism to keep you down. If indeed our people were inferior why did they cross treacherous sea and force us here.

Father speak to me of wisdom and knowledge.

Wisdom and knowledge, my son, are twin sisters that jealously guard their secrets. One is lost without the other. Wisdom without knowledge is idle banter, knowledge without wisdom is foolishness. The more you learn, the more you find that you don't know. The wiser you become, the more wisdom is needed. Wisdom comes from conversations with elders, whereas knowledge comes from observations of life.

Knowledge without the consol of the wise leads to destruction, wisdom which forsakes knowledge finds a similar fate. The beginning of wisdom and knowledge is a journey which begins in the inner most parts of your soul and ends with the exploration of Eternity and Infinity. It is a journey you will never complete, but one which you will pursue for all of thy life.

Father - speak to me of sex and love.

Oh my son, sex and love are often confused yet are mutually exclusive. Many seeking love settle for sex.

The momentary pleasures of the foolish. Mutual masturbation of the weak, mutual obsessions of the spiritually dead. Love is the fulfillment of life, the essence of creation and the justification of being. Love is forever, sex is temporary. Love is forgiving, sex is condemnation. Love is unconditional, sex is conditional. Love is eternal, sex is temporary.

Father and what of life and death.

Life and death represent a circle without end. They both feed upon the other, giving meaning to each through their very existence. We come to appreciate life only through death, and through appreciation of death helps us understand life. We are here but for a brief moment, our bodies serve to convey us from one point to another. Whether that life is bountiful or wasted depends upon our knowledge of this relationship.

Father tell me more.

I will my son, but now I must sleep soon we will talk again.

UMOJA

Only when lions have historians will hunters cease being heroes.

--African Proverb

Without struggle there is no progress.

--Frederick Douglass

The most potent weapon of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed.

--Steven Biko

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