

RELIGION

"Rocky Road"

(Paving-Scheduled by Request)

A few years ago, before my rebuild, I found myself seated, at the bar of a neighborhood, local wateringhole. (During those days, I spent most of my time in bars. While sitting there I heard two men talking about their families and lives. They shared with each other, how their life patterns seemed almost identical. The two men had known each other since school days. They had similar hobbies and interests, and both were complaining about their home lives while sucking down drink after drink....

They talked about leaving their families in search of their visions of happiness. They complained about the unreasonable demands they felt their mates were imposing upon them, and just knew, there had to be people, in the world more compatible with them. They even went on a search and thought they had found their longed-for, happiness. They even talked about how happy they thought they were!

They poured all of their energies into their new found visions-of-happiness. They neglected their responsibilities to what they felt were doomed, dull and taxing lives. The results or nature of their new lifestyles manifested so much grief for those around them that they couldn't enjoy their new lives due to guilt. Soon, their outlook on life became bitter, because they still weren't truly happy.

The new visions-of-friends in their lives didn't want to deal with their complex feelings and issues and they left creating a deep Void!

The two men started thinking comparing and talking. They came to the

conclusion that.... no matter what life sucks. So do what you want when you want and when its over its over!

Both men went into deep depressions and more self destructive behaviors. They had placed All their faith in other people and the quest to find them. In other words, they went looking in the wrong sources.

Finally, one of them ran into a long-time old-friend. He told the old-friend "My life is so screwed-up and miserable, I feel like I'm losing my mind!"

At that point, he began weeping uncomforably. The old-friend put his arms around him and told him without hesitation, "you need God in your life. You're gonna be O.K.! We've been buddies a long time and we've been through a lot together and I'm gonna help you get through this! You need to go to church and I'm coming by in the morning to take you. Be ready! You know I'll drag you outta bed, if I have to!"

The next morning, the old friend came by just as he said he would and they went to church. As he sat and listened to the sermon he felt like the minister had custom prepared it just for him. His spirit was still troubled. But for the first time in a long time he could feel hope. He called his friend he had known since school days and told him what he had experienced.

They both started looking towards God for shelter from their Rocky Roads of sin and destruction.

After some nourishment from The Healer. They began to show signs of renewed strength, vigor and true spiritual maturity. They started rebuilding their home lives according to The

Healer's instructions. They had some difficulties. But, each could see a new day. They also noticed...someone had come along and started cleaning and paving and landscaping the rest of what was their Rocky Road. In other words, they began to receive additional Blessings.

Soon, one of them found out that The Healer also gave him a gift. A Spiritual Gift, to be exact.

In fact you could call it, "Super Power!" The two men had finally learned. They had to make the changes in themselves, in order to understand the secrets of acquiring peace within one's self.

They learned about the Evil-one that lurks in and around the hearts of mankind.

But most important they learned they had the power to rule their lives.

Now, the one that learned to tap into his Spiritual Gift, or Superpower to this day is under the careful mentorship of The Healer, and is being transformed into another powerful warrior against Satan. The warrior's only and favorite weapon is Prayer!

All of us are eligible to possess a Spiritual Gift, or Super Power if you will. All we have to do is accept and believe in Jesus Christ the Son of God, Our Father who art in Heaven!

When your life seems out of sorts and your road is rocky, remember this:

Satan - drains what's left of you and then abandons you -- to the side!

God - takes what's left of you and rebuilds you -- from the inside!

A. H. Bradford

Support Group for Well-Spouses

A new support group for persons caring for chronically ill spouses or partners will begin February 4, 1998. The group will meet at First United Methodist Church, at 1838 SW Jefferson in Portland, on the first and third Wednesdays of each month, from 1:00-2:30 PM.

Caregivers are unsung heroes,

sometimes caring for a partner with multiple sclerosis, dementia, parkinson's, stroke complications, or AIDS, for year after year. It can be an isolating, frightening, and stressful experience. The Well-Spouse Caregivers Support Group will provide a non-judgmental environment to share the experience with people

who are in similar situations. Participants will gain knowledge from each other, and guest speakers will be scheduled on relevant topics.

The group is open to anyone in the community, and there is no charge. For more information, contact Cheryl Luce, at (503) 228-3195.

Leave No Child Behind

By HUGH B. PRICE

President National Urban League
If one wants to reduce the incidence of juvenile crime, does it make sense to put young people convicted of - or merely charged with - wrongdoing in jails and prisons with adult offenders?

Children in adult jails are 5 times more likely to be sexually assaulted than those in juvenile facilities. Children in adult jails are 2 times more likely to be assaulted by staff, and are 1.5 times more likely to be attacked with a weapon than children in juvenile facilities. Children in adult jails are 8 times more likely to commit suicide.

And we can add that children in adult jails are far more likely to get from their adult jail mates the kind of "schooling" and "counseling" that will produce more, not less, crime.

Yet, some in Congress want to increase this pernicious practice. They are supporting a bill in the Senate—S. 10, The Violent and Repeat Juvenile Offender Act - that would expand the number of children put in jails and prisons with adults with little or no protection from the adult population. The measure has already passed the House of Representatives, so the danger it presents is real and looming.

Two stalwart advocates for children, Marian Wright Edelman, the

founder and president of the Children's Defense Fund, and Barbara Kelley-Sease, director of the Black Community Crusade for Children, are leading an effort to defeat this ominous measure.

They have set Tuesday, January 28 as the day for a concentrated, visible lobbying effort on Capitol Hill against the bill. Everyone who is concerned about the peace and safety of American society should oppose this bill, either by going to Washington, if possible, or writing their senators.

The danger the bill presents is most starkly apparent in the stunning racial disparities of who goes to jail in America - disparities within the nation's 1.7 million inmate population which this bill would inexorable increase.

According to federal data, the number of white inmates in jails more than doubled between 1978 and 1994, rising from more than 89,000 to nearly 184,000.

But even that worrisome increase was far outstripped in percentage terms by the increases in the jails' Hispanic and black populations: The number of Hispanics shot up from about 16,000 to more than 75,000 and the number of blacks skyrocketed from just over 65,000 to more than 206,000.

These increases have been largely

driven, first, by the draconian drug laws of the '70 and '80 - which many criminal justice experts contend have merely filled up the jails and prisons without denting the trafficking and use of illegal drugs.

And, secondly, they have been driven by the racial bias throughout the criminal justice system that results in blacks and Hispanics getting jail time for the same offenses for which whites are given probation or lesser sentences.

The racial disparity in incarceration of adults is present in the juvenile system, too. African-American and Hispanic-American children are far more likely than white children to be arrested, convicted, and turned over to the adult criminal system.

Although black children constituted about 14 percent of all American children, they make up 50 percent of all children arrested for violent crime, more than 50 percent of those transferred to adult court, and 40 percent of children in custody. As a group, minority children make up 68 percent of the children in public custody facilities, where they outnumber white children 2 to 1.

Thus, African Americans have a special incentive to protest this bill. But, in fact, all of society will suffer from it. America cannot afford - spiritually, socially, and economically - to pretend the crime problem will



Masonic Lodges Making History

Brothers meet after a unity agreement was made between their Grand Lodges. The Prince Hall Masons F & AM from Portland and Masons from Keizer Lodge 219 AF & AM from the Salem area have met together on two occasions. These two historical events took place when members of Keizer Lodge visited Acacia Lodge #6 in Portland and members of the Prince Hall Lodge visited the Keizer Lodge located in Salem.

These meetings were the first time in the history of Masonry in Oregon where these two Masonic groups met together during their regular stated communications.

Sincere friendship and brotherly love during these events was certainly a reflection of Dr. Martin Luther King's dreams.

Concordia University Theatre To Present Godspell

Godspell, the story of the Gospel according to St. Mark set in the 20th century could not be presented at a better time. This year Concordia University's spring production appropriately opens on the third day of lent running through the next weekend with the final matinee being held on March 8 complementing what promises to be another inspiring musical event,

the Concordia Choir and Handbells 2nd annual Lenten Concert at 7:00pm.

Godspell has become a classic in musical theatre tradition because of its memorable tunes like "Day by Day", "Prepare ye the Way", and "All for the Best." The production will include community and student performers including a 4 piece live band.

The performances will be held February 28, March 6, 7, 8, under the direction of Carmela Lanza Weil, the set design is by Gary Cotter, music under the direction of Randy Hodson and choreography by Kathleen Weisbecker.

The Concordia University Theatre is in Concordia University Fine Arts Building, NE 28th and Highland, for tickets call 280-8512.

Free Lenten Concert to be held at St. Michael's

Concordia University Choir and Handbells will be hosting their annual Lenten concert. The Concert will feature music around the theme "Sing, My Tongue, The glorious Battle."

The Choir and Handbell ensembles will offer beloved

Lenten Hymns and spirituals enhanced with readings from Lenten Scriptures.

This Concert presentation will also afford the opportunity for the congregation to join in singing favorite Lenten hymns along with the choir voices and tradi-

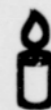
itional musical accompaniment.

There is plenty of lighted parking and there will be a freewill offering.

The free concert will be held at St. Michael's Lutheran Church, NE Dekum, at 29th on March 8, at 7:30.

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Mighty Clouds of Joy -- Vickie Winans Grammy Nominees

NARAS (National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences) has announced its nominations for the 40th annual telecast. CGI Records' The Mighty Clouds Of Joy and Vickie Winans are nominated in the category, Traditional Soul Gospel Album.

The Mighty Clouds Of Joy have received 10 Grammy nominations in their 40-year career as Vickie Winans receives her fourth nomination. The Clouds will receive their fourth Grammy Award with a win this year as Vickie Winans will receive her first. Both have been performers on the show.

The Mighty Clouds Of Joy's Live In Charleston was released in November, 1996 and had a top-ten debut on Billboard's Gospel charts. Vickie's Live In Detroit was released in June, 1997 and has also been a top-ten seller.

The Clouds and Vickie are nomi-

nated against Shirley Caesar, T.D. Jakes, and the Fairfield Four at the 40th Grammy Awards from New York City's Radio City Music Hall - Wednesday, February 25, 1998 at 8:00 p.m. e.s.t. The show will be shown live on CBS-TV to 1.5 billion viewers.