

RELIGION

Choosing the Journey Of Fatherhood

I am 63-years old, a minister and head of a national organization. I have years of community, political and professional experience too lengthy to describe. Yet I am still growing into the most rewarding and challenging role I have ever chosen to undertake—that of fatherhood. This role is especially challenging because my son has had a drug problem for 18 years.

Every day I think about my son. I no longer have a sense of guilt, but I have asked if I could have done anything differently. My own response to the question is no. I did my best, I did all I could do.

I grew up in a patriarchal, southern family. My father was a good provider and I was that. My children had everything they wanted, but they didn't have me. At one point I had three jobs and the weight of a mistake many men today make—giving things and not giving of themselves. Many times I have said if I had it to do over, I'd make sure they had what they needed and what they needed was me.

While I bear the burden of my child's addiction, that burden has made me a better servant. He has helped me to realize those things that are out of our control as parents I can preach and counsel to people who have similar problems with a greater understanding. I now say we have to allow our children to find their own way; but, not alone, and not without our love and support. My son was blessed to have two parents and a wise mother. She taught me that we were both responsible for a loving and supportive home for all our children. Consequently, my years of experience as a father, husband, and Pastor, confirmed this.

My journey with my children has touched every aspect of my life, including my work as president and CEO of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice. For most of us fatherhood really is a choice. When one makes that choice, he must choose to be responsible for the choices he's made. Fatherhood is being more than one who participates in procreation. It is a deep appreciation for life, a giving of oneself, and helping another individual to grow, to mature, to take on values you feel are important. Fatherhood is from conception to birth to adulthood. And fatherhood is also about a responsibility to make sure that the women in our lives have access to adequate reproductive health care that includes, but is not limited, to access to a safe, affordable abortion.

Fathers need to make sure they

providing our children with a healthy image of a man that is beyond companionship. "Real Men" don't wait for an organization to convince them that they need to be connected to the lives of their babies. "Real Men" do much more than sire children to bolster their self-esteem. The project of the Black Church Initiative are sensitive to the needs of young men and male participation in sexuality education. At the National Black Religious Summit III on Sexuality in Washington, D.C. July 7-9, we invited and encouraged men and boys to be fully aware of the great responsibility they have in all their relationships. We will continue to bring young men in the classrooms at religious institutions who are opened and desirous of conversations about these issues, conversations that are in the presence of peers, clergy, and young women. We are helping to create opportunities for wholesome relationships when both young men and women, youth and elder, have the opportunity to dialogue openly about sexuality in a faith context.

As a father, minister and politically active citizen listening to young people, I stand at the vanguard. I must continue to make sure the assumptions of our youth, especially our young men, are based in reality. I must continue to ensure they have events like the Summit at Howard University School of Divinity, where they can gather to discuss the impact on their lives of unplanned teen pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, domestic violence,

substance abuse and sexuality education. I must work so that there are settings to talk about being strong, being male, being partners, being brothers, being uncles, husbands, friends. These are times to talk about men who make responsible reproductive choices.

Places of worship are appropriate for faith based dialogue about sexuality. Faith communities must continue to open its doors to the youth on their way to manhood, and the substance abuser trying to turn the corner to accept his rightful place as contributing, responsible community members. It must

the connection between spirituality and sexuality, a valuable gift from God. The Summit is another place where those who have been lost and crying in the wilderness, can be found. It is a place to come "to love thyself". It wasn't there for my son, it is, in its third year, however, there for yours.

As for me, this work is an extension of the constantly maturing love I have for my children, and now my grandchildren and the children of the village. Every day I feel blessed that I am a father to all my children, that I'm still on this journey, and that I am faithfully, prayerfully, pro-choice.

Convention To Honor Bishop A. R. Hopkins

The First Jurisdiction of the Church of God In Christ Holy Convocation will convene at 7 p.m., from now thru July 11, at Highland United formerly McKinney Temple COGIC, 1737 N.E. Alberta St., Bishop A.R. Hopkins, Jurisdictional Bishop presiding.

The purposes of the Convention is to honor Bishop A.R. Hopkins, prelate of the First Jurisdiction of the Church of God In Christ in Oregon. He has lead the churches to 54 years of service in the state of Oregon. Prayers with mission work are offered to help

families which makes better homes, communities and churches.

Special guest speakers of Bishop A.R. Hopkins are: Tuesday evening, Evangelist Ron Hill pastor of Love and United COGIC, Los Angeles, Calif.; Wednesday evening, Civic Program speaker, Captain Derrick Forxworth of the Portland Police Department and Friday evening, Bishop T.L. Westbrook, prelate of Washington State.

A freewill offering will be taken and all events are open to the public.

OBITUARY

Yasmin Shamsud-Din

February 2, 1979 - June 27, 1999

FAMILY & FRIENDS

A Celebration for Yasmin was held Saturday, July 3rd at 2:00 P.M. at the Peggy Brooks Building on N. Williams Ave., Portland, Oregon.

Words are what we used most to express ourselves and Yasmin's command of the spoken and written word was a pleasure to witness. Her style and flair was universal in its appeal. The personification of Diva in it's purest form. Yasmin Shamsud-Din, a wildflower of the most precious and beautiful kind in the garden of our lives. We love you 'Min Bean and we will miss you for infinity. Yasmin lives on in her mother Lurlene Nafizah Shamsud-Din; her father Isaac Shamsud-Din; her brothers: William. A.B. Eric, Dawud, Ishaq, Jalil and Jama; her sisters: Christina, Ayasha and Jenisa; her nieces: Britney, Ashley, Dominique, Shantina, Amber, Chaquetta, Akila, Lailani and Jsymyne; her nephews: Dontay, Saleem and David; The Clark Fam-



ily; The Allen Family; The Beasley Family; The Johnson Family and The Edmondson Family. To all of Yasmins extended family and friends, she lives on in you.

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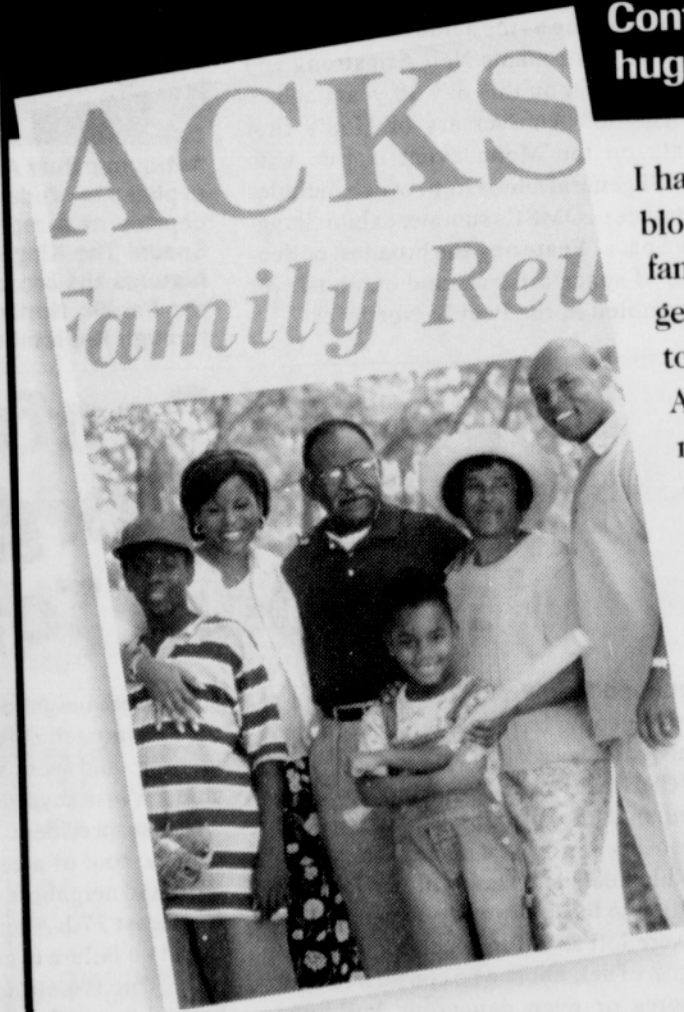


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OBITUARY

In Loving Memory Of

Lewis J. Ball

• Sunrise •
October 7, 1908

• Sunset •
June 30, 1999

Lewis J. Ball was born in Grand Island, Neb. In 1908. Lewis's occupation was that of a Manufactures Representative.

Lewis leaves to cherish is memory:

Christine Burgess, Daughter
Martinez, CA

Phyllis O'Brien, Daughter
Portland, OR