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50 Yrs. Salute Gospel Music

By VIRGIE W. MURRAY
Religion Editor

(Editor's Note: This is a reprint of the 50th Anniversary Salute to the Rev. James Cleveland, Oct. 29.)

It was a moving tribute to a man who loves gospel music. The man who has devoted almost his entire life to gospel music, was honored at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, Oct. 29.

The Rev. James Cleveland whose love of gospel music goes back to the very early days of his youth, sat quietly and listened to the musical tributes, accolades and other special recognition to him for 50 years in gospel music. The Rev. Cleveland recuperating from throat surgery, was unable to sing, but he appeared on stage.

"I've been rehearsing two words I wanted to say to you. Thank You!" whispered the gospel legend to which he received a standing ovation that seemed to last five minutes or more. It was a fitting tribute to the "King of Gospel."

The Rev. Cleveland, who sings, writes music, directs, arranges and preaches from the heart, has a quality in his work that earned him the titles, "King of Gospel" and "King James."

The strength of the quality was displayed in the performances of the Cleveland Singers, Southern California Community Choir and the Los Angeles Messengers, all organized by the honoree. They offered a medley of songs written, arranged and made popular by the Rev. Cleveland.

The medley included "Without A Song," "Deep Down In My Heart," "Somewhere Around God's throne," "The Lord Is Blessing Me," "Lord Help Me to Hold Out," "Jesus Saves," and others.

Many singers, groups, etc., acknowledged the Rev. Cleveland's influence in their lives. Some told of him writing songs for them and producing albums and even assisting them in auditions and other ways.

The Mighty Clouds of Joy sang its praises to the legendary gospel singer. Others included the Williams Brothers from Mississippi; Annette May Thomas, Cleo Kennedy, Betty Perkins, Daryl Coley, Andre and Sandra Crouch.

The Original Caravans expressed its adoration to the "King of Gospel." The group came together for its long-time friend and lifted their voices in sincerity, as they knew the meaning of the words in the songs they presented.

Many years of working together and the long-time friendship,

produced stellar performances by Shirley Caesar, Albertina Walker, Inez Andrews, Cassetta George, Delores Washington and Dorothy Norwood.

The Hawkins Family, with Edwin and Walter Hawkins and sisters, gave a meaningful tribute. Also Tremaine Hawkins, Billy Preston, the Rev. Thomas Whitfield, Bobby Jones, June Lockhart and others, heaped praises on the honoree.

The Rt. Rev. Charles E. Blake, pastor of West Angeles Church of God in Christ, represented the clergy. Bishop Blake lauded the founder-pastor of the Cornerstone Institutional Baptist Church.

"The Rev. Cleveland had a great affect on the ministers before he organized Cornerstone Institutional Baptist Church. He was preaching for a long time before then, and many preachers were emulating him," revealed Bishop Blake.

He added, "You may be ill now, but I heard you sing, 'I don't feel no ways tired. I've come too far from where I started from. Nobody told me the road would be easy. I don't believe He brought me this far to leave me."

The Board of Directors of the Gospel Music Workshop of America, of which the honoree is the founder-president, presented a gigantic plaque, with engravings of all the songs he recorded and made popular.

Assemblywoman Maxine Waters presented a plaque from the California Assembly. Councilman Robert Farrell, James Cleaver of Supervisor Kenneth Hahn's office and a representative of Mayor Tom Bradley, presented resolutions. The mayor proclaimed Oct. 29 "James Cleveland Day."

Edna Tatum, the announcer for the Rev. Cleveland's radio broadcast, emceed a portion of the salute. She was delightful and interesting as she guided the program.

During the event, Al Hobbs announced that among the gospel deejays across the country, Oct. 28 was "James Cleveland Day." At one point, over 121 radio stations were playing his songs at the same time.

A fitting and moving finale to the Rev. Cleveland's 50 years in gospel music, featured the Southern California Community Choir, Los Angeles Messengers, Cleveland Singers and others, singing the ever popular "Peace Be Still." The song and the man who made it popular received a standing ovation.

It was a beautiful and extraordinary tribute to "King James Cleveland of Gospel."

Schedule

Musical Tribute for the Rev. James Cleveland, is scheduled Friday, Feb. 15, at 7 p.m. at Cornerstone Institutional Baptist Church, 1815 W. Slauson. General services Saturday, Feb. 16, at 11 a.m. at the Fine Auditorium, Jefferson and Royal.

at Greater Cornerstone Institutional Baptist Church. He was happy in the Lord. They closed out the revival Friday and the Lord took him Saturday," continued Dr. Hill.

Dr. T. Larry Kirkland, pastor of Brookins Community AME Church, stated, "The Rev. Cleveland was one of the finest musicians this United States has ever known. He was also a great organizer, and even though he was musically inclined, he was a good preacher, a good organizer and a good entrepreneur.

"He was a top-right business man, who made a marvelous contribution to the church and to the community-at-large in Los Angeles and throughout the nation and world. He made a tremendous impact on people with his style of preaching. The world is mourning his passing," added Dr. Kirkland.

The Rt. Rev. Charles E. Blake, pastor of the West Angeles Church of God in Christ, said, "The Rev. James Cleveland was one of the most significant voices in the field of gospel music this century. His influence will live on for decades to come."

"Even though this is a triumphal home-going, I'm going to miss him terribly. He was a good friend," stated Mrs. Annette May Thomas, the Rev. Cleveland's business manager, personal secretary, administrative assistant and close friend.

Mrs. Thomas added, "He told the congregation 'If I don't see you again and if I don't sing again, I'm a witness to the fact that the Lord answers prayer. He let my voice come back to me this morning.' It was prophetic," added Mrs. Thomas.

religious giant. His work will remain a legacy for all of us until eternity," said Supervisor Kenneth Hahn.

"I am saddened to learn of the death of the Rev. Cleveland. He was a legend who touched millions of lives. His memory and his music will last forever," proclaimed Councilman Nate Holden.

Dr. Cecil L. Murray, pastor First AME Church, said, "The Rev. Cleveland was a turning point in white America's appreciation of Black America's contributions to the world's art. The gospel, spiritual, minstrel, rag-time and jazz, all of these America has contributed to everybody everywhere. Others were exported. James Cleveland was a pioneer."

Mrs. Edna Tatum, the announcer for the Rev. Cleveland and Southern California Community Choir, offered a beautiful tribute to the "King of Gospel." She said, "Just think, he has now been crowned in the New Jerusalem. We are going to miss him, yes, but don't you know that he's waiting for us on the other side.

"Somebody said, 'Why should we cry?' But you know we're crying tears of joy, because while the Rev. Cleveland was here, he blessed our hearts. He inspired us, he taught us, he lifted us, he sustained us and he made ways for us. He was all the element and the ingredients that make up the experience of what gospel music is all about.

"The music of the tired, the poor, the rich, the nobody, the somebody, the everybody, if you really want to know the truth about it, the Rev. Cleveland did what Jesus did, he went about doing good. So many eyes have been dried by his music and so many hearts have

★ WORLD-FAMOUS ★

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"HOW GREAT THOU ART"

THE **HARMONIZING FOUR**

"I WILL TRUST IN THE LORD" "NEAR THE CROSS"

PROF. **CHARLES TAYLOR** SINGERS **ARCO** SINGERS

THE **CONSOLERS** THE **SINGING CRUSADERS**

"EVERY CHRISTIAN MOTHER" "NOW MY LORD"

APOLLO PROGRAM—A copy of the Apollo Theatre's program featuring the young James Cleveland, and the Chimes, is shown above. The program was from a July 1962 performance.

"O Prophet! Surely We have sent Thee as a Witness, and a Bearer of Good News and a Warner. And as an Inviter to Allah by His Permission and as a Light Giving Sun." Holy Quran, Sura 33 v. 45-46

We Must First Be Brothers!

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It is essential for a nation—if they want recognition—to be united and to enjoy self-control and in a country of their own.

We call this independence. Now, we do not have self-education, self-control, or a country—not even some of this earth that we can call our own. We need a superior education or teaching in order to achieve the respect of others who are now enjoying such recognition.

The most essential qualification is the art of practicing that which we need in order to be accepted.

Cleanliness, inwardly and outwardly, is number one on the list. Manners, along with general moral aspects, are second. The so-called American Negroes' warped minds and disrespect of self is one of the main objections of the self-respected societies.

There are no members of an educated and clean self-respecting society who want their society dis-

graced by a member who has ill and disrespecting morals.

The so-called American Negroes (the majority of us) have been reared by southern white people who have the most profound hatred and dislike for us. And, this being true, they have made us (just as they did our fore-parents) a degree below nothing for the last 400 years.

At the same time, they frightened the so-called American Negro slaves to such a degree, they have no hope of ever being recognized authorities among themselves.

They try to please the same white people as did our fathers under servitude and slavery. Whether this 'please' is for or against them, they will do it, because they fear the white man. We must remember that the Bible closes with announcing this fear in Rev. 21:8.

Our people are afraid of the slave-master and his children, afraid to displease them in their dislike of the salvation that has come to the slave, and God (Allah) has not offered the same to them (the slave-master and his children).

The so-called Negro, who tries to please his master, displeases him-



The Honorable Elijah Muhammad
Messenger of Allah

self. He would love to see the Hereafter and live in a kingdom (a government) of peace and security, but he would not like to accept any such glory if this acceptance is not liked by the slavemaster.

Therefore, he suffers the consequence of the slavemaster's children, which is referred to in Rev. 19:20 under the name, beast (clearly symbolized as human beings in Rev. 19:19).

Destruction

Those who refuse (of the so-called Negroes) to accept God (Allah) as their King, and the people of God (Allah) as their brothers and nation, will suffer the destruction of hell-fire with the enemies.

You must wash and be clean as Isaiah 1:16 warns you. Proverbs 30:12 specifies us as a generation not washed. Hebrew 10:22 makes mention that it is necessary that our bodies be washed with pure water to enter into the recognition and respect of God (Allah).

Revelations 1:5 reads in a parable of Jesus, who will wash us inwardly, but from our sins. I want you to remember that this does not mean the Jesus who was here 2,000 years ago.

It means a Jesus at the end of the time. One whom Jesus prophesied God would send under the title of a Comforter (in the Bible) and as Ahmad in the 61st Chapter of the Holy Qur'an.

ELIJAH in MALACHI had to first come and wash and clean up a people and make them self-respecting so that God would accept them in His presence.

So, if we want white or Black to respect us, we must clean and wash ourselves of the filth in and out. No self-respecting nations will accept you as you are today, because of your ill-mannered behavior.

Hurry and join onto your own kind. The time of this world is now at hand!

**Elijah Muhammad
Messenger of Allah
—to you All**

(This article is reprinted from the Jan. 22, 1971 issue of Muhammad Speaks.)

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not because titles are unnecessary, but they become counterproductive if the underpinning, the support for title, is not yet in place. We must have the proper attitude, the proper mental view of the mission of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad. We must understand Allah's (God's) aim and purpose for bringing Elijah Muhammad into the world.

If we indeed want to carry on His work, then we cannot put titles on ourself or "add cubits to our height." We should not exalt ourself so that we who think we know, may mislead others by making ourselves lords and guardians beside Allah for the people. We must first study and qualify ourselves for the position that we may desire to hold. However, we should not even desire these positions. We should desire the fruition of the will of God. And out of and working for the fruition of His will, we grow into a title that is consistent with our own character and the nature of us that makes us unique from our brother and sister. And it is Allah (God) who gave us our uniqueness so it is only Allah (God) who can give us our proper function and title in this Divine work.

It is written in the Holy Qur'an, "You were on the brink of a pit of fire, and Allah saved you from it. And united your hearts, and you became brethren while before you were enemies." This is Allah's grace upon you . . .

The Black people of America are now on the

brink of a pit of fire as this world closes down, and it is our hearts that are separated. It is we who have become enemies of one another due to envy, jealousy, contention, greed, lust for power, prestige, influence, wealth, position and all of the things that make us a non-spiritual, carnal minded people. Allah (God) wants to unite our hearts and make us brethren.

The Bible bears witness to the Qur'an in these words, "We can tell that we have passed from death into life because we love the brotherhood." If we love title, if we love influence, if we love power, and status, more than we love the equality of brotherhood, then we are yet dead and are a part of the dying world that is on the "brink of a pit of fire." However, if we can give up these things the misunderstanding of that which makes one feel greater than his brother and accept to love and work for brotherhood above all, then, we have indeed passed from death into life.

So beloved, Black brothers and sisters, we admonish you to strive no more for title, power, influence, position, of advantage, more than our brother, then let us serve our brother with love and humility and promote the brotherhood of the Blackman here, and throughout the World.

Thank you for reading these few words

Louis Farrakhan (23)
(National Representative) of the Honorable
Elijah Muhammad, the Exalted Christ.