

Forum

Muhammad Ali, Jesse Jackson Used strong, redemptive mottoes to win big

The greatness of Muhammad Ali and Jesse Jackson is not fully appreciated today, but eventually history will praise them not only for what they have done but for the new horizons raised by their responses to their problems as black Americans.

success.

What are the differences?

Whereas Ali rejected Christianity and became a Muslim, Jackson embraced Christianity — the creed of his target audience — and became its advocate and minister.

Each used three simple words

And whereas Ali refused to be



MINORITY REPORT

By JAMES E. ALSBROOK, Ph.D.

to shield himself from the blizzard of negativism black Americans face, and to unlock mental prisons that could have frustrated them just as these prisons frustrated millions of blacks.

You already know these words. Ali's three liberating words are "I'm the greatest!" Jackson's three liberating words are "I am somebody!"

Both men realized the urgent need to reject the dominant, pervasive and discouraging messages by which they and other black people are bombarded second by second by the larger society. Both know about the double standards black people always face.

But one big difference separates them from the masses of blacks: they did not accept or believe the degrading, humiliating messages and signals delivered by segregation, discrimination, intimidation and a dominating climate of white superiority. They simply did not accept the negative messages from a society that forced other blacks into hopelessness, shame, self-hatred, and other anti-social feelings that bring on anti-social behavior.

Ali and Jackson are the same, but yet they are different. They are the same in that they know pride, confidence and hard work bring

inducted into the U.S. Army and challenged draft laws and other rulings he thought degrading, Jackson obeyed all laws, except in civil rights protests, and has used the political system to enhance himself and gain political power and millions of followers.

And whereas Jackson accepts the idea of a white-faced Jesus and the white-faced Santa Claus, Ali objects to both and, along with his Muslim friends, he claims that these two white role models and authority figures have been used to perpetuate feelings of inferiority among blacks because blacks cannot identify racially with whites.

But Jackson has built on an existing structure — the religious beliefs of millions of blacks who were stripped or robbed of whatever religion they brought from Africa. These Africans enslaved in America, however were able to find some comfort while believing in a better hereafter through Jesus as an escape from the injustice and humiliation of slavery.

The nature and severity of the slaves' problems and their long-lasting damages were shown by Dr. Kenneth Clark, the famed psychologist who produced the doll experiments with black children

Thurgood Marshall used to win the 1954 school desegregation ruling in the U.S. Supreme Court.

Dr. Clark found, essentially, that black children attending segregated schools and living in a segregating, discriminating America picked white dolls over black dolls as prettier, more intelligent and more desirable simply because they were white and represented white people. Psychological damage to the black children was extensive, causing them to experience a wrong and unjustified feeling of inferiority and the white children to experience a wrong and unjustified feeling of superiority.

Jackson and Ali knew black people well enough to understand that they suffered from the same feelings and problems the tested children had. The children and many black adults in the segregated American society are victimized by a mindset that cripples their mental and emotional processes and prevents them from functioning at full potential.

Both Ali and Jackson overcame this problem and their success shows it.

Some thought Ali was bragging when he said "I'm the greatest," but a little bragging goes a long way when it builds confidence and helps counteract negative messages that have crippled blacks for centuries.

When Jackson asks his black audiences to repeat "I am somebody," he is really asking people to have confidence in themselves, to walk and talk with pride and dignity and to break through the negative mindset that has imprisoned so many black people who feel hopelessness, despair, failure and depression.

Jackson and Ali are absolutely correct. Please listen to all three of the words each speaks.

You are really better and more competent than you think you are!

Helping Haitians

The inspiration of Katherine Dunham

At the wisdom of age 82, Katherine Dunham continues to provide effective leadership and inspiration for millions of persons throughout the world for the cause of justice and human dignity. For more than four weeks, this strong African-American woman has sacrificed and risked her own life to protest the inhuman and immoral treatment of Haitian refugees by the government of the United States.

Katherine Dunham has refused to eat until the United States changes its current policy of "forced repatriation" of Haitian refugees from the United States back to the repressive situation in Haiti. The bold determination of Dunham has won the prayerful admiration of millions. She has helped to keep the national and international spotlight on the plight of thousands of Haitian refugees who are still being mistreated terribly by the Bush Administration.

From her hospital bed in St. Mary's Hospital in East St. Louis, Illinois, Dunham wrote to President Bush appealing for an end to the inhumanity toward the Haitian refugees, she stated, "I find the most recent decisions regarding Haitian refugees shocking. Please believe me, Mr. President, those returned will receive no welcome. Having lived in Haiti sporadically for over fifty years, I find Haiti too valuable to ignore or allow to disintegrate."

Dunham, who is a world-renowned dancer and teacher, is a living legend. It seems that Katherine Dunham is now willing to risk death in order to wake up this nation to confront the ongoing tragedy of our Haitian sisters and brothers.

Will the African-American community respond to the challenge of one of the "mothers of the freedom movement?" Will the mil-

lions of persons of good conscience in this nation stand up with Dunham and others to demand justice for Haitians?

We thank sister Dunham for her courage and for her sacrifice. At a time when there are many who are seeking out leadership models, we thank sister

parts of the world are praying for you and stand behind you all the way."

Dick Gregory journeyed to East St. Louis to show support for Dunham's fast and protest. Local and federal authorities, however, did not like the fact that brother Gregory was in town and immedi-



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By BENJAMIN F. CHAVIS JR.

Dunham for her consistent leadership for over six decades. Dunham's life exemplifies the best of African tradition: persistent struggle for the freedom of all.

Several days ago, we visited with Katherine Dunham in St. Mary's Hospital. Although she had not eaten food for many days, her spirit was strong and vibrant. In fact, we were impressed with her keen sense of moral and social responsibility as well as a profound commitment and understanding of African heritage amidst the pressures of protracted struggle.

Standing at the side of Dunham's bed was her physician, Dr. Lee Blount Jr., who has been one of the physicians that has rendered decades of service to the African liberation movement here and abroad. As we talked in and greeted sister Dunham, she smiled and said, "I hope you are not coming to tell me to stop fasting!" And of course we said, "Oh no ... We are here to support you and to tell you that millions of sisters and brothers throughout the nation, in Haiti and in other

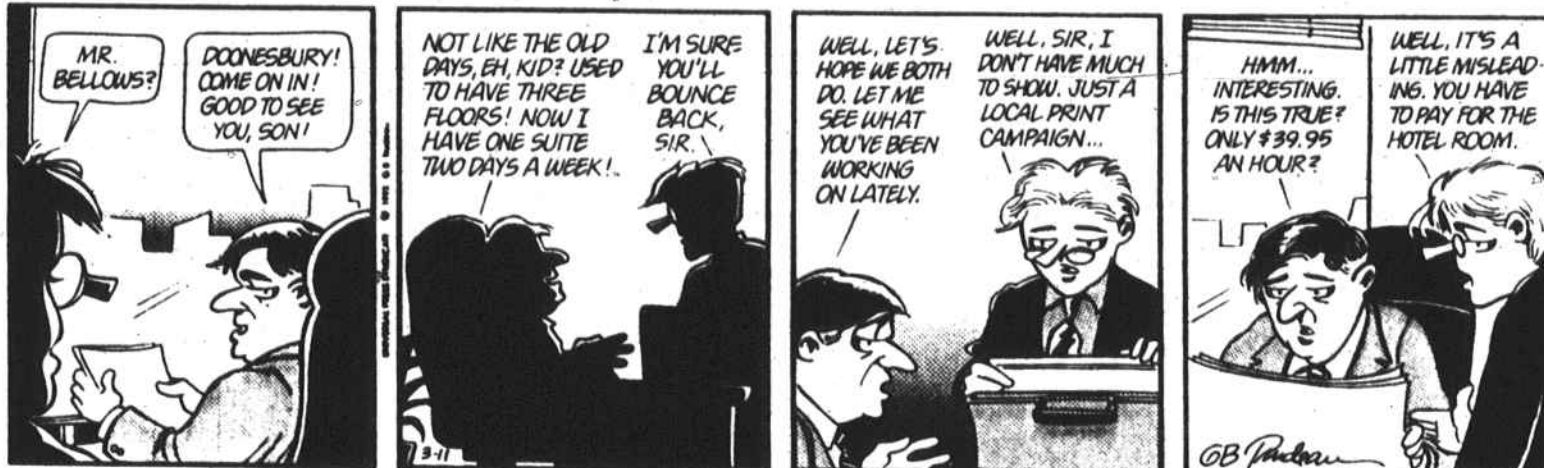
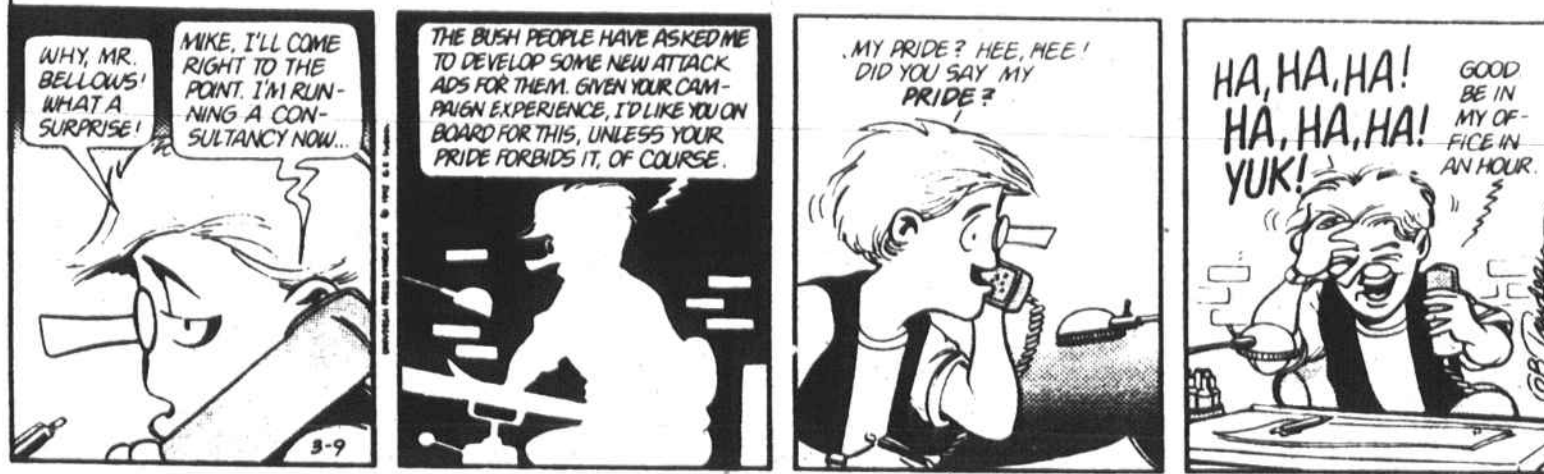
ately arrested him for "demonstrating" at a federal building. Once Gregory was released, he was subsequently re-arrested twice to "harass" him out of town.

Katherine Dunham remains a dedicated freedom fighter. The effort to see that justice is done on behalf of Haitian refugees deserves the involvement of millions. Sister Dunham is making her contributions at great personal risk at the age of 82. We must not let Dunham make this important challenge alone. Let us with one united voice and joint action demand justice for Haitian refugees.

We recommend that everyone take the time to do the following immediately: (1) Telegram President Bush calling for stronger action by the United States to help restore the legitimate democratically elected government of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and to stop forced repatriation of Haitian refugees until President Aristide is restored back to office in Haiti; and (2) contact members of the U.S. Congress to authorize support for the Organization of American States (OAS) to oversee activities in Haiti to ensure the return of democracy to Haiti.

Doonesbury

BY G.B. TRUDEAU



Parents

Here is another way to teach your child the value of money. Have him or her sign up as a **Chronicle Hawker** (ages 10 - 16)

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