

Reddy: "People Need Poets"

By Eileen Hanson
Special To The Post

"People need poets. They can't do with us, but they can't do without us. The poet is created by the people because we need him, and people may often dislike him, the poet they have created. They may even put him in jail. They may even stone him to death. But they created him because they needed him." James Baldwin.

T. J. Reddy, one of Charlotte's best-known black poets, has recently published a book of poetry written during the turbulent days of the 1960's, and from behind bars in the 1970's.

"Poems in One-Part Harmony" (Carolina Wren Press, 1980, \$4.00) captures the pain and aspiration of Charlotte's black community as it struggled to free itself from segregation, poverty and the Vietnam War. Reddy writes, "Smallest brother, hands forced into fists pocketed, stuffed in ragged pants, his eyes frozen, sad, weary. He tries to wedge his ears between his shoulders, cold cold."

Reddy will appear on TV and in local bookstores next week to talk about his book and how he views his role as an artist today.

On Wednesday, May 14, Reddy will be on the "Good Morning Carolina" show (Channel 9, 9 a.m.) and at B. Dalton's Bookstore (Charlottetown Mall, 12-2 p.m.). On Thursday, May 15 he will appear on "Forum" (Channel 18, 10:30 a.m.) and at the Charlotte Newsstand (314 S. Tryon, 12-1:30 p.m.).

The 35-year old Savannah, Ga. native came to Charlotte in 1964 to study at Johnson C. Smith. It was a turbulent time, as blacks in the South wrestled to free themselves from a century of segregation and to take hold of the promises of white America.

Reddy quickly involved himself and his art in the struggle, working with youth and welfare recipients, and eventually counseling black youth about the Vietnam War draft.

He confronted "the system" with a bitter pen: "...Welfare; a useless ticket to a broken-down merry-go-round."

After the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. he wrote: "...And with your insights, likewise, I will go on and on, with my creative, reflective sense of liberation. And no matter whatever, whenever, this sense will continue in my poems of freedom."

Poems of freedom continued from behind prison bars, when Reddy, along with James Grant and Charles Parker, were convicted of the 1969 burning of the Lazy-B Stable. The case of the "Charlotte 3" became a celebrated political prisoner case around the world.

From prison Reddy wrote:

"I am a poem in one part harmony above all attempts to imprison me...When I am allowed no way to write, I compose lyrics, songs of life...Lock me away with no way to move Body into yoga, my soul is soothed..."

Judge Frank Snapp branded Reddy a "dangerous man" when he gave him a sentence of 20 years.

But Reddy's friends know him as a gentle, sensitive person, who paints images with words as well as with paint and brush.

As an artist Reddy has never stopped producing, groping, forcing out new frontiers of expression. His paintings have been featured in several N.C. exhibits, his most recent series entitled "Ventures!"

For the last two years he has poured his creative energy into the Performing Arts Guild Ensemble (PAGE), a group of black poets and artists dedicated to performing poetry to develop an appreciation for black heritage and social consciousness in their audiences.

PAGE will perform Saturday, May 10, at Spirit Square at 8 p.m., along with blues musicians Sonny Terry and Brownie McGee, as part of the grand open-



T. J. Reddy
...well-known poet

ing of Performance Place. Looking back on his three years in and out of prison from 1972-1979, Reddy said, "Most of my creative work was produced in prison, under oppressive conditions. Through the experience I developed a spirit of freedom inside my soul. Now I feel a great deal of freedom in production, not controlled or contained."

Reddy feels a poet must be involved with people, in their lives and struggles. "In the 1960's poets talked AT people. Today poets talk WITH the people," he said.

"If poetry is to survive today it must touch the ear of the people, so people can touch it, respond to it, seeing the images the poet paints." And that is why Reddy created PAGE.

The new element in Reddy's poetry today is humor. "I like to grab people with images like 'the garbage at the back door of the White

House.' When folks laugh, they see the possibility for change," he said.

Released from prison on parole last June, but still not "free" from the 1972 burning conviction, Reddy has resumed his life as an artist, husband and father. He is delighted to be again with his wife, Vickey, and their 2½ year old daughter Niambi.

He pours endless hours into rehearsals for PAGE performances, as the young 4-person troupe struggles to tailor its performances for each unique audience.

But Reddy also finds space for himself, a struggle he fought while in prison. He finds time to do yoga, ride his bike, paint and write. He is also studying at CPCC; having gained an M.A. from UNCC during his prison years.

"I don't see myself as a poet per se," he said. "I'm an artist."

During Special Services

Rev. Frederick Price Is Faith CME Guest Speaker

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge..." Hosea 4:6. These are the words of the Bible and one of the most important tasks of a preacher is to minister the word in understanding terms. The guest speaker for Faith CME Church May 14-16 will be Pastor Frederick K. C. Price. He will not only minister the word, but simplify it and put it into practical terms as well.

Services will be held at the church on 457 Wellingford St. nightly at 7:30 p.m., 10 a.m. Thursday and Friday mornings. Special ministry to the sick will be held Friday evening by Pastor Price.

According to the pastor of Faith CME Church, Pastor Robyn Gool, the guest speaker has a unique gift when it comes to delivering the word of God.

"The best way to put it," Pastor Gool began, "is that God has really given him a real talent to make the word of God simple. In delivering the word of God his services are practical - more in line of teaching and pertaining to everyday lives."

Council Seeks Comments

City Council is seeking comments and suggestions on people to fill vacancies.

Two seats will be available on the Civil Service Board. A. J. Thornhill and Rudolph Hendricks, whose terms expire May 15 are both eligible for reappointment.

For the Historic District Commission, W. Crutcher Ross and Nancy Betty are eligible for reappointment. Both of their terms expire on June 30.

Planning Commission members John Broadway



Rev. Frederick K. C. Price
...Dynamic speaker

Pastor Price is not only a dynamic speaker, but is also the founder and pastor of Crenshaw Christian Center in Inglewood, California. The Christian Center now has a rapidly growing membership of over 5,900. Sunday attendance runs over 4,000.

His ministry includes daily radio broadcasts in the Los Angeles area. He also hosts a television program, "Ever Increasing Faith," which may be viewed Friday at 7 p.m. and Sunday at 11 p.m. on Channel 40. Channel 11 also carries the program at 8:30 a.m. Sundays.

Six books have been writ-

ten by Pastor Price; "Six Principals to Strong Faith," "How Faith Works; Is Healing For All?," "Thank God For Everything?," "Faith, Foolishness or Presumption," and "The Holy Spirit - The Missing Ingredient."

He travels extensively throughout the world teaching the Word of faith. He has been a seminar teacher at the Rhema Bible Training Center in Tulsa, Oklahoma. He has been a speaker at Kenneth Hagin's Campmeeting held annually at the coliseum in

Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Pastor Price is married and has three daughters and one son.

The public is cordially invited to hear Pastor Price minister the word of faith at Faith CME Church.

City Rabies Clinic Scheduled

The annual rabies inoculation and license clinics will be held across the city from May 12 through June 30 for those dogs owned by City residents.

These clinics are being coordinated by the Animal Control Division of the City of Charlotte.

City ordinance requires that all dogs over four

months old receive a rabies vaccination and have a current City license tag.

The 1980 City license tag expires June 30, 1980, and pet owners should have current rabies inoculations and 1981 pet licenses for their pets after that date.

A schedule of inoculation clinics is available from Animal Control, 374-2919.

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