

For Blacks

Dr. J.B. Humphrey Took Firm Stand In Battle For Employment

By Teresa Simmons
Post Managing Editor

Back in the early '60's Rev. Dr. J.B. Humphrey took a firm stand in the battle for employment rights for Blacks in Charlotte. As president of the Charlotte Frontier Association he lead the way for blacks to become bus drivers.

In the 1970's when the church he pastored, First Baptist Church, sought funds to build a new edifice the congregation ran into a different sort of a brick wall...prejudice. Only through prayer and persistence where the members able to complete the present building on Oaklawn Ave.

As an achiever Rev. Humphrey has excelled in just about every aspect of being a minister one can name. He has also achieved in not returning the hate he has faced down through the years as a result of prejudice.

"One must love that person who is prejudiced," Rev. Humphrey explained. "Try to understand what makes him tick. He is a victim of his own circumstances. In some cases children are raised to mis-trust others...those children are not responsible for their attitudes against a particular race. The adult is. Being merciful and compassionate are the keys to life. I have hope for anyone who is prejudiced. I look at myself not as part of the problem, but as part of the solution to the pro-



Dr. J.B. Humphrey
..Led the way for blacks

blem." J.B. Humphrey II grew up in Lumberton N.C. He father was a minister and during his youth he became inspired by the needs he saw around him. "I wanted to help and I knew changes needed to take place." His major in college at Shaw University was Religion with a minor in sociology and history. "Through my studies in sociology I became interested in the wider view of human rela-

tions," Rev. Humphrey stated. By making the big step to become a minister he continued, "I received the insurance of the call by the Lord to serve wherever I was needed."

Thirty-eight years ago God led Rev. Humphrey to become pastor of First Baptist Church - West.

During those years the joyous times for Rev. Humphrey have been the observance of the spiritual, educational and emotional

growth of the many people he has come in contact with.

"I can see the result and impact of the influence I have had on the lives of people. I have seen youth grow up and make good — it simply makes me feel good that I have been a part of their development through my teaching and preaching."

The black preacher's influence has been a tremendous part of the Negro culture. Few can deny that as a child the minister of the church was always a 'big' man. As he loomed in the pulpit he always seemed to be a giant of a man and one whom you were afraid to make a mistake around.

Perhaps it was because deep in your heart you knew your minister was withstanding an endurance test of both God and man.

"One must be sure he or she can endure the involvement. Being a minister is not all assuming but it is strenuous when people look to you as a model. You must live in accordance to the precept you have as a minister of Jesus Christ. You must be a 'living sermon'."

Presently Rev. Humphrey is also the Moderator for the Mecklenburg Gene-

ral Baptist Association. He has held this position for the past 14 years.

Married to the former Mary Elizabeth Pridgeon, a native of Nash County, the couple has one son, James Bradford Humphrey III, and one daughter, Mary Louise Kendricks. They have three grandsons. Mrs. Humphrey is a teacher in the Charlotte Mecklenburg School System.

Rev. Humphrey completed his AB and Master of Divinity at Shaw University. He has also completed further studies at Princeton and Union Seminaries.

Rev. Humphrey received an Honorary Doctorate of Divinity from Shaw Uni-

versity; "Man of Troas" honor from the Lott Carey Convention and several certificates of Merit from Shaw University, the Baptist State Convention, Mecklenburg General Baptist Convention and the NC Conference on Black Studies. A former public school teacher Rev. Humphrey has also taught Extension classes in the Extension Department of Shaw University and in the Department of Christian Education, General Baptist State Convention.

He served as president and/or member of several civic and religious organizations. His hobbies include fishing, conversing and brainstorming with people and traveling.

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