

The February CFAMC Devotional Page

February is Black History Month, and as I consider that, there are three Black women that have just become part of that history—or, as they used to say, they now “belong to the ages.” The three are Whitney Houston, Henrietta Marie Horace, and Pearlle B. Jones. The first name you of course know; the second two I will acquaint you with, briefly.

Henrietta Marie Horace was my first music teacher, when I was a very small child in my church’s Vacation Bible School, and my friend. She never had any children of her own, but she influenced three generations of young Black musicians to do what she had done—dedicate their musical gifts totally to the Lord’s service, and to study His Word as seriously as they studied their music. She was a powerful spinto soprano of great beauty who could have made it on any stage; she passed that up to glorify the Lord with her voice until age 88, when she finally retired from the church choir. She recorded her first album, “Praising My Lord in Song,” at age 86, and that really was the story of her life. I had the honor of being the pianist and arranger for that album, and I will forever count that as one of the great privileges of my life. She passed peacefully on February 12...and the Lord must be smiling, to hear that voice perfected (not that it was far off, even in her late eighties, for He preserved it) for His pleasure forever. I look forward to the day that all of you shall hear her...that will be a great treat, I assure you!

Pearlie B. Jones was my first Sunday School teacher. She also had no children of her own, and in addition never married, but she introduced five generations of very little ones to the gentle patience of God. She was 71 when I was born, and it is a big deal for a woman that age to have a class full of really little ones to look after. Now she was having no nonsense; her cane is a joke to her nieces, nephews, and her Sunday School students to this day. She had the power to make life very hard for any child who crossed her...but she never needed to use it. She was gentle but firm, and it was enough...in the same way that our God, though He has power enough to wipe us out when we persist in our disobedient ways, keeps on loving us and teaching us and disciplining us in measure until we mature and know enough to do better. Because of how she was, we little ones could understand what God was like...she is one of the people who helped me to realize that “If God is like this, I want to be part of His family” when I was only four years old. I have been a Christian for 27 years, partially because of the influence of Sis. Jones. Sis. Jones passed peacefully at the age of 101, on February 19, 2012. She too was a singer—a contralto to Sis. Horace’s soprano—and her favorite song was “He Looked Beyond My Faults and Saw My Needs.” That is one of the reasons, I, a contralto, have come to sing that song as well...

About Whitney Houston, what shall I say? How she lived and how she died—the testimony of her life—is public record. She was richer and more famous than Sis. Horace and Sis. Jones ever dreamed of being—but! In eternity they have a different definition of “stardom”...

Daniel 12:3 – “And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.”

In the midst of my great grief, in the wake of losing two people so close to me, I reaffirm my commitment to achieving God’s definition of “stardom,” to carrying on the legacy of my two early teachers, a legacy that will remain when the only history that will matter is how we fit into “HIS-story” of His redeeming us out of every tongue, tribe, and nation, when we shall all sing His praise down through the ages without end, long past all the reasons for separation and dissension we must endure down here. I hope that you will join me in this—God has more for us than the world, the flesh, and devil can ever provide, and will empower us to do all that He asks of us to do. To be shut up to His idea of glory and stardom—it is so much more than enough, for all eternity!