

SERVICE HAD A WHITE DRESS. NANNIE HELEN BURROUGHS TOLERATED NO EXCUSES AND DID NOT BELIEVE BLACK PEOPLE SHOULD MAKE ANY. "GOD HELPS THOSE WHO HELPS THEMSELVES" AND ANYONE AROUND NANNIE HELEN BURROUGHS HAD TO SHOW INITIATIVE AS WELL AS INTELLIGENCE, DISCIPLINE, HARD WORK, AND WILLINGNESS TO PRACTICE UNTIL SHE OR HE GOT IT RIGHT. SHE WAS "OLD SCHOOL"; THERE WAS ONE STANDARD, NOTHING LESS THAN YOUR BEST. SHE BELIEVED IN OUR RACE---NEGROES WITH A CAPITAL "N"---OUR STRENGTH, OUR STAMINA, OUR ABILITY TO HELP OURSELVES, OUR INTELLECT, OUR CAPACITY TO SPEAK FOR OURSELVES, OUR CAPACITY TO FIGHT FOR OUR FREEDOM, AND OUR FAITH. SHE WAS INSPIRING, EVEN TO A CHILD.

WHEN I LEARNED THAT DR. BETTYE COLLIER-THOMAS HAD ENTITLED HER BOOK USING THE WORDS OF NANNIE HELEN BURROUGHS, WHEN SHE DECLARED IN 1958 THAT THE NEGRO MUST HAVE "JESUS JOBS AND JUSTICE" I FELT I KNEW IN A PERSONAL WAY SOMETHING OF WHAT BOTH WERE SAYING. ...THAT THE MAJORITY OF AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN DID NOT LIVE AN EITHER/OR EXISTENCE---EITHER RELIGIOUS FAITH AND CHURCH SERVICE OR SOCIAL ACTIVISM, POLITICS, AND MEMBERSHIP IN SECULAR ORGANIZATIONS...AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN HAVE LIVED AT THE INTERSECTION OF FAITH, FAMILY, FRIENDSHIPS, CHARITY, SERVICE, PRAGMATISM, POLITICAL ACTION, ABUNDING HOPE, AND THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE.