RISE UP AND CALL THEIR NAMES

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NARRATOR: In 1998 a group set out on a faith journey to Africa. They were black, white, brown, and yellow. They prayed at slave sites, mosques, and small farms. They hoped to heal slavery's legacy. But first they had to confront themselves. Would faith alone be enough to get them through?

LAURA "SOUL" BROWN DIARY: Dear Diary: Today I set forth on a year's journey to reclaim my ancestry, restore my hope and spirit, challenge the restrictions and conformity of life and to awaken and develop my spiritual self. This is an ancestral calling. Monks praying, drums beating, dancing

AARON JONES: The opening ceremony was probably one of the most beautiful events ever.

INGRID ASKEW: The Pagoda had never looked more regal and beautiful. And everything was decorated so beautifully.

AARON JONES: To have hundreds of people kind of sit up in front of this huge, spherical structure, dedicated to peace, you know with the Buddhist monks and their alter set up in front, with the reds and the golds.

INGRID ASKEW: I've never been a joiner of any organized religion. And I came to Buddhism after meeting Sister Clare Carter and Katashoni, my two teachers, and visiting the Peace Pagoda, and looking at what this order stands for, and how it is not judgmental, how it celebrates and honors every religion, how it honors and celebrates humanity.

INGRID ASKEW: I got such a sense of respect. And–and as an African American, that means a lot.

NARRATOR: Ingrid Askew was like many other African Americans at the end of the Twentieth Century who found themselves at a spiritual crossroads. INGRID They searched for meaning to their lives and for new forms of spiritual expression. Some returned to traditional African religions. Many joined the ever increasing numbers at the mosque. And even more squeezed into pews at mega churches around the country.

JAMES H. CONE: We are searching for meaning that's why we have all these different expressions of faith' spirituality. We grow up with TV, and with movies, and and with a world that is global at our fingertips. The Internet and all -- It's not easy to navigate yourself through that world. And a simple affirmation of

traditional faith is not sufficient to help people to cope with the complexities of the world in which they live.

NARRATOR: Those like Ingrid, looked for alternative ways to express their faith. In the Spring of 1993, Ingrid met with Sister Clare Carter, her Buddhist teacher, to discuss organizing a pilgrimage that would use their Buddhist tradition.

SISTER CLARE CARTER: The name of this order is Nipponzan Myohoji. It originated in Japan**.** And the basic practice of this order, is walking and beating a prayer drum and chanting this prayer, Nam-myo ho-renge-kyo, anywhere in the world for peace.

INGRID ASKEW: We sat the entire day and evening talking about the possibilities**.** What if we were to get a group of African Americans, or people of African descent, and people of European descent, together to walk the history of slavery?

SISTER CLARE CARTER: And I thought walking, in the case of the history of the enslavement of African people in the Americas, if we walk this history, at least for white people, this is a– I mean, the truth shall make us free, you know.

INGRID ASKEW: The idea was to begin a process of healing the wounds of slavery, looking at racism, which is the legacy of slavery.

NARRATOR: Ingrid and Sister Clare Carter spent five years organizing the pilgrimage. They knew that a pilgrimage would attract white activists, *but this pilgrimage* was to focus on the *African ancestors*, and so they hoped that black people would come. They did. Each with their own faith mission.

AARON JONES: To offer prayers. I think that was the most important thing, to offer prayers for our ancestors, for ourselves, for our future and our children, so that we can begin the process of healing, of reversing this pattern of oppression and injustice that has permeated the world for, you know, 400 years, arguably a couple thousand years, depending on how you want to look at it. And to do all this through a prayerful walk.

LAURA "SOUL" BROWN: What fascinated me was the fact that the journey was focused on healing, that it was going to look at the story of African people in terms of their enslavement and the wounds that they had suffered both during slavery and after, the legacy of this history (racism, oppression) and the pain that many of us African Americans still hold to today. And I felt very much a part of that experience and needing to go through that kind of recovery and healing work.

RAINA ASKEW: I wasn't sure I wanted to go at first because my mother's worked on so many projects and I've seen them and you know I was young and I

was ready to hang out and oh, my mom's leaving for a year and I get to be on my own and whatever. And then I started to see like the importance and mainly this project that my mother was doing the importance that I needed to go.

INGRID ASKEW: And she says, “And this is going to be the most incredible part of my education.” She says, “College will be here when I return.” So that made me very, very happy.

RAINA ASKEW: I thought it was going to be a fun trip. I was going to travel and you know take on the world type of thing. But the world took me on.

NARRATOR: On May 30, 1998, at the opening ceremony in Leverett, those gathered were black, white, brown and yellow. They were teachers and artists, while others were students and businessmen. They were Buddhist, Catholic, and Baptist, as diverse as America, committed to the journey from Massachusetts to the African continent. Bound together by a single Spiritual mission, they vowed to retrace the tragic history of slavery and to pray for the souls of the ancestors, in Hopes of beginning a healing.

CORNEL WEST: This is as much about transformation on the inside as it is on the outside. But we know they go hand in hand. So I’ll simply say to the marchers when you march, you are marching not just for millions and millions gone, but we are marching for children unborn. It’s for the future that we’re connecting this past, present and this future by trying to keep track of the unjustified suffering and the unnecessary misery, the unwarranted pain that’s still out there.

CORNEL WEST: And it took tremendous courage and acts of commitment to engage in that pilgrimage, to walk**.** They wanted to make a statement, they wanted to bear witness and one way of doing that is to accent the past that has been denied.

LAURA “SOUL” BROWN: We would wake up around 6:00 a.m., an altar was set up generally in the front of the sleep space. And before the alter would be set, the group of monks who were leading this walk, with the elder monk in the center. And the monks would begin every morning at 6 a.m. chanting Nam myo ho renge kyo, and beating the drum in rhythm to that chant. And they would chant for 20 to 30 minutes, to start off the morning. The chant also worked to get all of the rest of us up and into morning prayer. And so you could tell when like folks were like really chilling like a long while, because those monks would get real fervent. They would be banging them drums real hard, and the chants would grow and grow and grow. And it’s like, okay, you all need to get up and get into this prayer.

LAURA “SOUL” BROWN: And generally, from there we’d have breakfast, and after breakfast, set out on the road.

TOUR GUIDE AT AUCTION BLOCK: Before buying a slave the potential owner would check the slave's health, stamina and disposition…

AARON JONES: When we would visit various sites of historic significance, we would form a circle and have prayer. The Buddhists would do their prayer, people would contribute an individual prayer, songs, what have you.

RAINA ASKEW: We also had like flyers and we were like this is what we're doing, this is about us, these are our ancestors, and this is who we are.

INGRID ASKEW: They saw people of European descent, and they saw all the Asian people, the Asian friends, and the monks, and we had friends from South America and from Central America, and Native Americans. And it was amazing.

LOUISE DUNLAP DUNLAP: The transformation is not easy to see. You don't change minds right away, but there are changes in your own heart as you walk. And there are changes around you and the people you meet around you. People see things differently. People are encouraged by it.

NARRATOR: About Forty people set out on the journey. Along the way their numbers rose and fell, but the core group continued. They walked fifteen to twenty five miles a day. The psychological pain of visiting so many slave sites stirred Deep racial tensions within the group.

RAINA ASKEW: Just imagine living with 75 people. We sleep together, we go to the bathroom together, we shower together, we do everything together**.** Within my first week…everyone's you know little issues stuck their heads, that they had that they all brought, or that we all brought with us.

MAN: This is heavy stuff. Believe me, it's heavy. And if we haven't got our own stuff together, then the rest – the whole group is just shot, it's gone.

AARON JONES: There were people very blatantly, they were asking other European Americans, other white folks, "Why are you here? Really, why are you here? This is about Africans. This is about African ancestry, this is about the history of slavery, why are you here?"

LOUISE DUNLAP: Well, in some ways I thought it was less important for white people to go than for black people to go because the history is more painful and because I knew that white people would get in the way of black people exploring their history. But at the same time, I think the biggest difficulty in dealing with racism in this country and healing the legacy of slavery, the biggest difficulty is that white folks don't get involved with it.

INGRID ASKEW: It was like a roller coaster ride sometimes it really really was. And one minute we're embracing each other at a site of suffering, and the next morning you know 'I don't want you to come near me.'

RAINA ASKEW: We would have these caucuses. There was the black caucus, the white caucus. Then we would have these group meetings that went on for hours.

WOMAN: We talk a lot about the roll of white people on this pilgrimage as far as what you're here for and about white people really acknowledging…

RAINA ASKEW: We discuss issues of race and racism and there are just a lot of clashes. And I don't know if it had – well, I do know – I was going to say I don't know if it had so much to do with ethnicity and race, but I take that back. It did.

LAURA "SOUL" BROWN DIARY: Dear Diary: Our circles challenge us to meet one another, eye-to-eye, face-to-face. To listen with our ears and open our hearts. In the circle, we share stories, shed tears, scream and shout. At times, its coils are so tight we're ready to snap. At others, they're so loose they could come undone. But, no matter, the circles keep on spinning, binding us as one.

NARRATOR*:* The small group of African American Pilgrims felt compelled to bind together when they reached New York's Financial District.

NARRATOR: In 1991, excavation to build a new skycraper unearthed ancient human remains. Experts discovered the land had been the site of an African burial ground. Here in the midst of Wall Street the black pilgrims Found their voices.

TOUR GUIDE: When we talk about slavery, a lot of times people say oh slaves this, slaves that, and I often ask them: Who are you talking about when you say the slaves? Because in this country we automatically assume you are talking about one group of people: black people, African people. And clearly we know our history does not begin with enslavement. We have a long rich culture…

RAINA ASKEW: I didn't know that like the whole US economy was based off of the African slave trade and that like blew me away and the proof was right there with these, these bones that you know were buried right where I was standing on.

LAURA "SOUL" BROWN: You could just see on the faces of the black people assembled who were part of the journey, that they were being like really, really moved. And–and this was like our first moment—those of us of African American, Caribbean American, Native American descent—that we came together as a body**.** When we came to these locuses of importance to the

history, what we would do is form a circle. And on this particular occasion, those of us who were black formed an inner circle.

AARON JONES: It was very important for us to have that, to have that time and that space, where we could do what we needed to do, where we could feel or pray or sing.

LAURA "SOUL" BROWN: And within that ring we offered our own prayers, our own blessings, made our own messages, let forth our own shouts, screams, cries and wails. And many of us dropped to our knees physically on that earth and just had to feel the connection to the ancestors, feel the soil.

RAINA ASKEW: Then like the next 15 or 20 minutes we were walking across the Brooklyn Bridge.

LAURA "SOUL" BROWN: It was something about coming out of that African burial ground and having that really cathartic experience of letting go and shedding tears, really crying out for this history.

LAURA "SOUL" BROWN: We were no longer kind of background material. Now black people were in the leadership of this journey.

NARRATOR: Fragmented, the pilgrimage continued into Bedford Stuyvasant, a predominantly black neighborhood in Brooklyn. There, they saw how faith can shape a community when they visited Masjid Kahlifah, part of Imam Warith Deen Mohammed's Muslim American Society.

IMAM ADIB RASHID: When I heard that they was coming and I heard what it was about, I welcomed them. I just thought it was excellent. We, as a faith-based people, people who say they believe in God, who need to come together on more issues and concerns like that.

Chanting in Arabic
In the name of Allah most/
Gracious, most merciful./
Praise be to Allah, the cherisher/
and sustainer of all the world./
Most gracious, most merciful./
Ruler of the day of judgement./
Thee do we worship and thine/
aid we seek./
Show us the straight way./
The way of those on whom thous/
hast bestowed thy grace/
those whose portion is not/
wrath and who go not astray./

ABD' ALLAH ADESANYA: Masjid Khalifah has been an anchor in this part of Bedford Stuyvasant for at least three decades in terms of a safe haven for children going in from PS 3, or traveling in the area. Individuals know that there is safety here.

IMAM ADIB RASHID: In the teaching of Prophet Mohammed to have land or property or knowledge or money or anything that God has blessed you with and not use it where you and your family and the community at large can derive benefit from it, we're actually incurring a sin on ourselves. That's Un-Islamic. And that's sort of the teachings I was giving the people.

Allah is great (Allah U Akbar)
Allah is great (Allah U Akbar)
Allah is great(Allah U Akbar)
Allah is great (Allah U Akbar)
Allah is great (Allah U Akbar).

SISTER CLARE CARTER: The spiritual leader –His warmth affected me, and there was something about the–the integrity, the purity of his spirit. And you could feel that he was so connected with the community.

IMAM ADIB RASHID: I would, this is what I would suggest. I would make sure that he cut the time down because…

IMAM ADIB RASHID: Following the traditions of the Prophet Mohammed, one of the first things that he done once he started to build an actual society, an Islamic society, after the Mosque, was a school. And the Prophet Mohammed, encouraged all of his followers to become literate.

STUDENT: We do not believe in two gods or more gods. And we do not believe in idols. We believe in all the divine attributes of Allah. Allah says "say He, Allah, the one and only." Allah the eternal absolute.

LAURA "SOUL" BROWN DIARY: Dear Divine Creation: I am greatly thankful for this day. Once again, the wonder of your shadow and light play upon my mind's eyes and delight my heart. I am attempting to follow the path that you have laid out before me. And as your child I cannot help but recite my favorite Psalm. "Now, faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." - Hebrews 11:01

ABD' ALLAH ADESANYA: These classrooms were ideas, were hopes and dreams and aspirations that have become real and established.

NARRATOR: Along with the elementary school, members at Masjid Khalifa practiced the teachings of the Koran by helping young men find their way in the world.

JOEL BERNARD: In '96, I got into some trouble and I got locked up and I went to prison. So, one day, this brother we was talking about how like what are we going to do when we go home things like that, then we just talking about Islam. And he was just telling me how it just changed his life, you know, it made him a better person and I seened it in him. You know, he was a good brother. He was telling me about Masjid last year.

JOEL BERNARD: I came home on a Friday, like the next following Friday I came here and the Imam introduced me to some brothers, you know, brothers started helping me out so I came here.

IMAM ADIB RASHID: In order for a person to really, um, become successful and not get caught up in recidivism, they need some type of bread and butter help.

JOEL BERNARD: First thing he hooked me up with a job. And he always telling me to stay focused, you know? Just stay strong and stay focused, and that's what I'm doing, trying to do now, stay focused. It's like Islam made me stronger. Islam made me wake up. I'd like to thank God that I woke up. 'Cause if I didn't, no telling where I'd be right now. No telling.

NATSOT: Islam is supposed to prepare you for the best life and the best existence on this earth.

LAURA "SOUL" BROWN: Islam has an important role in Africa. And it has an important role here. And so it was really good to be at that mosque and to share in their prayer for our journey. Allah is great (Allah U Akbar) repeated by congregation.

ABD' ALLAH ADESANYA: Prayer in Arabic

NARRATOR: The pilgrims saw how the power of faith transformed lives. As they continued South, the pilgrims realized having faith in Their Own Mission, could transform Their lives too.

LAURA "SOUL" BROWN: To be able to actually place your feet in the footsteps of the ancestors, to touch the ground that they walked on, the ground**,** the earth, the soil that they worked indeed.

LOUISE DUNLAP: The mall was basically a place where people were bought and sold, and so the pilgrimage processed around the mall calling out the names and that was very powerful.

LAURA "SOUL" BROWN: To visit all of the spaces and places where they lived, the places that they breathed, and where they have continued to grow their legacy through their children.

NARRATOR: To pay homage to that legacy, the pilgrims recorded some of the ancestors' names on a scroll they carried them.

AARON JONES: Obviously it opened my eyes to a lot of realities about the ways in which oppression is pervasive throughout the globe.

AARON JONES: But it also transformed me in showing me how beautiful the human spirit can be.

LOUISE DUNLAP: I cried a lot there. I sobbed a lot. Now I can't tell you what I learned there, but I felt closer to that history and it wasn't something I could talk to the other pilgrims about, much. Everyone had a story. People were discovering painful and emotional things on many levels.

NARRATOR:
With each step the history became more personal. Four months into the journey, the cohesion of the group eroded. Now individually, the pilgrims searched their own souls and Faced their spiritual wounds

LOUISE DUNLAP: I had no idea there was a granite dome in the middle of Georgia, but it's rock, slab granite. It had been a sacred place to native people. All the tribes in the region had had their ceremonies there. It was an intertribal, interfaith spot for people well before Columbus or anyone else. And then when those people were driven out the southern whites took it over and it became a center for the Confederacy and then we had learned it became a center for the Klan after the Civil War and that there were atrocities there.

RAINA ASKEW: To recall all the pain that we were born with and think about what our parents went through and our grandparents went through, to know that my grandfather was a share cropper and to know that he was from Georgia and I can't even imagine, and how many cousins of mine were lynched and just to think about that and I had never thought about that before.

LOUISE DUNLAP: People just kind of went off in their own directions and felt the spirit of the place in their different ways.

INGRID ASKEW: It was all this pain from our personal selves that was starting to surface, because of the things that we were witnessing.

LAURA "SOUL" BROWN: So it wasn't the physical exhaustion after New York that starts to wear, but it's the emotional exhaustion. It's the exhaustion of

looking at this past, looking at what black people have suffered: the lynchings, the enslavement, the disrespect.

RAINA ASKEW: There were the people who honestly wanted to confront the racism that they had. There were people who were just like in total denial. And there were people who were like totally ready to confront it and to deal with that. And the people who were in denial fell off after awhile, and the people who were honestly ready to confront made it to the end.

NARRATOR: The pilgrims walked on with renewed dedication. But now they confronted a new obstacle – they were running out of money. They stopped to rest at the Federation of Southern Cooperatives, an organization that had hosted many a weary traveler. Here, they learned that since slavery, black farmers survived on little money and a lot of faith.

AARON T. HODGE: Slavery's still here, it's just so deep, down and hidden, these black folks in these woods, you know. It's the bottom. And this is where we're at, on the bottom.

REVEREND CHARLESTON: We can go back long years in the sharecropping business. We was young. There were 15 of us sisters and brothers. We growed up crops, sharecropping. We made 39 bales of cotton. And he advanced us like $30 a month for 15 kids, and at the end of the year they took the cotton. And said, if us had of made one more bale, they would have paid out. I never been able to figure that out yet. How 39 bales of cotton wouldn't pay $110 at the end of us getting money out of it.

NARRATOR: The legacy of slavery lives on in the sharecropping system. No matter how much the farmer yields, he is forever indebted to the landowner. But with a spirit of determination and a love for the soil, Reverend Elester Charleston eventually leased land and continued farming.

REVEREND CHARLESTON: We're gonna plant some of it, because we don't want it all to come off at one time. We'll plant some these first two weeks and then we'll wait."

HATTIE CHARLESTON: That's his life. He loves doing it. That was one of the things that brought us together.

HATTIE CHARLESTON: He would help me to see the beauty in the plant growing and the health in eating off the farm. And he would show me that that's the way God had planned for us to make a living, you know, in the first place. That was God's plan.

HATTIE CHARLESTON: And Elister have a way of relating the farm to the word of God that is just amazing**,** magnificent the way he can do that. He can just

show you God's plan -- And everything that grows and lives, he can show you that it's in God's plan.

REVEREND CHARLESTON: It was on a Saturday, December, 1976. And I was on my way to this place to find out what my calling was all about and to find out, what did I have to do. And this is where I remained, here at this big oak tree.

I said, Lord, what is it you want me to do? He said, preach my word. I said, Lord I'm not prepared for that. I don't have what I need to preach your word. He said, But I will teach you that.

REVEREND CHARLESTON: And I bowed down on my knees, and I looked. The cloud was so dark, looked as midnight and I couldn't even see my hand before my face.

REVEREND CHARLESTON: And when I looked up, I said, Lord I don't know what I need to do. He said, preach the word. When I looked up, no darkness, all was daylight and the sun shining so bright.

REVEREND CHARLESTON: Ain't God alright. The rib bones says, oh, brother, don't forget about me. .. I look at my plant and ah, growing green and beautiful. One day, oh, one day, we're all gonna be alright. Ain't God alright.

REVEREND CHARLESTON: And ever since then I've been preaching, teaching, living it, and it's beautiful. It's beautiful, ooo, I wish you could feel what I feel. I just wish you all could feel what I feel.

REVEREND CHARLESTON: God bless you all.

NARRATOR: For more than twenty years he's preached the gospel. Through his ministry and his work with the Federation Reverend Charleston teaches black farmers how to keep their land.

JOHN ZIPPERT: It's important in this story to know that at the turn of the century, 1920, was the high point of black land ownership in this country**.** There were about a million black people engaged in agriculture and they owned fifty million acres of land. By 1960, that had declined to about a hundred thousand people and six million acres, and by the 1990s, it had declined to under twenty thousand people and less than two and a half million acres. And, the Federation would say that black people are losing a thousand acres a day even still today in many communities across the South.

REVEREND CHARLESTON: I feel like I've come this far by faith. Faith is my evidence of the things that I hope for. The evidence of the things not seen. But by faith, I kept working at it.

LAURA "SOUL" BROWN DIARY: Dear Diary: I need these words; I need this remembrance of inconceivable, strife to help me down this unbending highway scorched by the midday sun. I need these tales of hundreds of years of systematic oppression against millions of black bodies. I need these sad work songs to lift me up on my feet and raise my spirit so that I may walk another mile in honor of my heritage and in support of myself.

REVEREND CHARLESTON: Jesus told the disciples, show me your faith. My faith in the farm business, I show what my hands can do by what I think. And that give me the inner strength to learn, to enjoy, to love what I'm doing. And farming is something I do love. Everyday.

NARRATOR: By the time the pilgrims had made it to New Orleans they had been Touched by extraordinary people of faith and Changed by the history they had learned. But they were Exhausted and their money was running out. Their faith was put to the test.

AARON JONES: So we traveled through Cuba and Jamaica and Haiti.

RAINA ASKEW: It's about 5:45 in the morning. We should be leaving today at noon. Some of us have to take the bus. The poor people have to take the bus. and fly to Puerto Rico. That's my burning question every single morning: Where are we sleeping tonight? It's always up in the air but it's fine, it's fine. Gotta love it.

SISTER CLARE CARTER: Once we got out of the United States our energy, our resources, our spirit was not winding down but becoming in a sense kind of depleted.

MYRNA MUNCHUS-BULLOCK: We've already incurred additional expenses expenses: feeding a huge crowd, housing, transportation back and forth. We don't have any more money. We are out of money.

AARON JONES: There was no money in the pilgrimage coffers. We were supposed to be Senegal in Dakar, January 1999 and we had no money to get there. No boat. No money for plane fare.

INGRID ASKEW: We were pretty wiped out. We were wiped out emotionally, physically, and financially. We needed to stop and regroup and think about what it is that we're doing**,** what it is that we need to do to get ourselves to Africa, because that was the whole idea of this pilgrimage, is to take this journey back, all the way to the mother continent.

SISTER CLARE CARTER: We did end up staying, camping out in this place called Pinjones, which was the place that Africans were—we didn't know this

originally—that Africans were brought to during the slavery times. And it–it's infested with these little bugs.

INGRID ASKEW: We were in the middle of one of our intense meetings with the pilgrimage and the meeting was not going well and we had been sitting outside being eaten alive by these little tiny bugs in Puerto Rico. And my daughter, I just watched her get more and more tired and frustrated.

RAINA ASKEW: Mostly I was all over the place and I was feeling sick and homesick and tired and money was like running out.

INGRID ASKEW: I went to bed and when I got in the tent – my daughter and I were sharing the tent – she was crying her heart out and I just held her in my arms and I said you know "What's going on? What's the matter?"

RAINA ASKEW: It was raining and I was wet, I was just like mommy, I want to go home. I think I'm finished. I can't do it anymore.

INGRID ASKEW: I was like, "Baby, I'm sorry. I can't make it easy for you. It's hard, I know. But you have to go all the way, because the day that you committed to this pilgrimage, you didn't just commit on a piece of paper. You didn't just commit to me and all these other people. You didn't just commit to yourself. You committed to your ancestors."

LAURA "SOUL" BROWN: So when the journey's in Puerto Rico for about a month**,** some people are going home to go raise money. Some people are going forward to Africa, prior to the group getting there.

So I remember I was reading often at that time a passage that talked about faith. It talked about the fact that as people of faith things are not promised, but that doesn't mean that you don't have faith.

CORNEL WEST: You can have faith without it being a religious faith. Faith is the notion that somehow you can muster the courage to step out into the unknown and still sustain yourself or being sustained.

JAMES H. CONE: Faith arises to answer for you, a meaning that seemingly escapes you.

CORNEL WEST: So that when we think of faith, there are so many different forms in which faith is manifests, because the opposite of faith is despair.

JAMES H. CONE: So it's a tension that you never get rid of. As soon as you see faith as overcoming the contradiction, then you need a little bit more faith, you know to realize that that pretty soon it's going to emerge again. So faith emerges constantly, coping with the contradictions. And at the same time it's, these

contradictions that challenges faith. Makes it get stronger and stronger, so that you feel you can cope with whatever comes before you.

LAURA "SOUL" BROWN DIARY: Dear Diary, Maybe in these moments we have recommitted to the struggle, the journey. The struggle within ourselves to work through our conditioning and to examine and confront our racism. To give of ourselves to each other and to love beyond all else. Maybe we have rediscovered our good and set aside our fears.

NARRATOR: It would be some time before Soul reached Senegal. After being stalled for a Month, the others found the resources to complete the journey. They were one half their original number. Ingrid and Raina were among them.

NARRATOR: They'd walked for eight months, for more than nineteen Hundred miles, through rain, and heat, and wind, on pavement and through brush. Near the end of their journey, the group was mostly black. They walked on believing that their faith in their mission would prevail.

LOUISE DUNLAP: In the African part of the pilgrimage, African-Americans came more into their own as leadership. Part of it was that Myrna became the prayer leader. The Buddhist prayer, in the morning prayer, kind of, they still chanted for 15 minutes, but then they moved into a circle. Myrna put on the kente cloth and offered a prayer from the African tradition and poured libations. The spiritual balance and the spiritual energy of the pilgrimage had changed dramatically and become more Afro-centric.

NARRATOR: As they reached the island of Goree off the coast of Senegal, the Racial issues between blacks and whites remained unresolved. But their hearts were full with the ancient faith that has sustained black people since the days of slavery – a faith that knows no race, no race, no creed, no color – the faith of the human spirit.

JAMES H. CONE: Faith doesn't just come out of the sky. Faith emerges in the context of a people struggling to find meaning in life. So faith is not a set of doctrines. Faith is a search for meaning.

NARRATOR: A the island of Goree, the pilgrims circled the slave house each wondering how this Journey might End.

SISTER CLARE CARTER: Ingrid had been working to make the ceremony at Goree, and it had really been Ingrid's heart from long long before.

INGRID ASKEW: In the meantime, while they were doing the walk, I was inside the slave house, creating a sacred space. And I'm waiting for the pilgrims to come. And I could hear the voices getting closer, coming back towards the–the–the slave house.

SISTER CLARE CARTER: The front door was unexpectedly locked, so we had to walk around the side to the back. When we got to the back of this slave house, it was this power just started (whew) coming from everywhere.

INGRID ASKEW: And so I went to the door of no return, and I looked outside**.** And it was the most heavenly sight to see all of my pilgrimage family standing out on those rocks with their African brothers and sisters.

RAINA ASKEW: To look up and to see my mother in the door. I just climbed up and she just hugged me.

AARON JONES: And we all, one by one, went back through. Bringing back, with us, the prayers and the symbolically bringing back our ancestors with us to the places from which we were taken.

INGRID ASKEW: And we just celebrated the entire evening, until it was pitch black. We read the names from the scroll. We called those names because we promised that we would call this names in African atmosphere.

RAINA ASKEW: And these were African ancestors' as well as European ancestors.

RAINA ASKEW: Towards the end I remember my mother saying you know is there anyone else who would like to offer a prayer at this time, you know, step forward and at that moment the lights on the island went out.

INGRID ASKEW: And we all just stayed silent. And we said, no, that's the ancestors talking to us, they're saying no. And I really believe they were saying, "Job well done. We don't need to say any more."