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Countdown to Washington D.C.!!

by Eric Ture Muhammad
and Askia Muhammad

WASHINGTON—As planning for the Oct. 16 Million Family March enters the home stretch, 200 national march organizers met with the Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan, convenor of the march, and a Congressional Black Caucus march task force kicked into high gear.

The representatives of Local and State Organizing Committees met with Min. Farrakhan at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel to give march progress reports and hear from the leader of the Nation of Islam.

"It is a great honor for me to be able to look into your faces and see the commitment that I see, to make this event not only significant in our family life, but significant in the life of this nation with a great potential significance throughout the globe," said Min. Farrakhan, who gave an inspiring vision for the march.

Prefacing his remarks with scripture, Min. Farrakhan said America's present leadership lacks the vision to stop the country's moral and spiritual ruin. They have also failed to realize the importance of family and its value to society, he added.

Min. Farrakhan is convening the gathering on the fifth anniversary

of the Million Man March to call families back to God, highlight the need for strong families, and launch a movement that will have social and political consequences—especially as year 2000 presidential elections loom.

Working on march planning are local activists, religious leaders, professionals, politicians, media and entertainment giants.

Since its first meeting in August, the National Organizing Committee has more than doubled in size and enthusiasm.

"These meetings are like a homecoming week for me," commented Atlanta local organizing committee co-chair Leonard Kalonji Tate. "It is also very inspirational and competitive, because after hearing the progress around the nation, it makes us want to accomplish so much more," he said.

Aside from chartering buses, Mr. Tate said the Atlanta LOC has intensified its work around voter education, registration and getting

the word out for the march.

The Million Family March, Inc., has produced a public policy agenda, which offers solutions to pressing issues, ranging from the need for greater moral and spiritual development, to economic strategies to resurrect urban areas. The National Agenda covers seven broad public policy categories.

Committee members came from across the country, from as far west as Colorado, as far south as Mis-

issippi and all along the east coast.

Plotting travel plans and bus routes, getting endorsements from city and state governments, rallying civic organizations and labor groups, sponsoring voter registration drives, promoting march paraphernalia and distributing the National Agenda has kept organizers busy.

The national committee, which is predominantly Black, includes Native American, Asian and white participants, as part of Min. Farrakhan's call for all families to join the march effort. He has noted that though Black, Latinos and Native Americans share a great amount of suffering, the family crisis cuts across racial and class lines.

God allowed Blacks to undergo enormous suffering as part of a special process, Min. Farrakhan said. "You have undergone what no member of the human family has ever undergone, but not without a purpose. It was the purpose of God that you be purified, cleansed and fit into the corner of that which is called the kingdom of God," he said.

"What I want on that Mall on that day is to give the world a picture of what the Kingdom of God looks like when people of all races, hues and colors under a universal government of peace can relate to each other as God intends."

"This was an extremely positive meeting and we are even more energized from hearing the reports of what others are doing around the country," said Faye Williams, co-chair of the Local Organizing Committee in Washington and president of Natural Health Options. According to preliminary transportation reports, an estimated 10,000 buses are expected to arrive between Oct. 14 and early morning Oct. 16.

"I think that the greater inspiration now is instead of involving just the men as in 1995, we are involving the entire human family. Min. Farrakhan's explanation, as to why we are doing that, is just wonderful and very motivating to me. To

see the Minister now calling for this all around the world to involve everyone. I think will get a great, positive response," she predicted.

With diversity across racial, class, theological and ideological lines, the march organizing committee has the potential "to transform the political system by practicing the principle of coalition building and by affirming a God-centered, spirit-filled, mass movement for social transformation and empowerment," added Min. Benjamin F. Muhammad, MFM national director.

"If we can convert the Million Family March into, potentially, a million-plus registered voters, not only the husband and wife involved, but (children) over 18 that participate, get them registered and get them to vote, it will be the creation of a strong, very strong, political participation-type force," said Rep. Earl Hilliard (D-Ala.), who chairs the Congressional Black Caucus Million Family Task Force. One congressional staffer has been participating in planning meeting sessions since last October, and individual members are working directly with local organizers in their home districts.

Two days before the meeting with national organizers, Min. Farrakhan appeared at a private CBC gathering at the invitation of CBC Chair Rep. James E. Clyburn (D-S.C.) and Rep. Hilliard. The Minister, accompanied by his wife Mother Khadijah, Supreme Captain Mustapha Farrakhan and Nation of Islam Chief of Protocol Claudette Marie Muhammad, also met privately with Rep. Hilliard.

The lawmakers will play a significant coordinating role, especially on the West Steps of the U.S. Capitol, where the Million Man March took place, Oct. 16, 1995. The CBC is helping with the planning and coordination of the Million Family March, with members scheduled to speak, and experts helping with planning, logistics and technical needs. In addition to the Capitol steps, this year's march will feature two additional stages where programs will originate: at the Lincoln Memorial, and on the Ellipse, behind the White House.

The CBC is also involved in trying to get financial resources and sponsors for the various events that are associated with the march, according to Rep. Hilliard, who sees the gathering as "extremely important" to the year 2000 political strat-



Million Family March.....Shown above is the Brother's of the Final Call Ministry as they prepare for the upcoming march on Washington D.C. scheduled for October 16, 2000. The Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan has managed to mobilize brothers and sisters across the country to bring families together. For more information on the Million Family March contact your local Mosque. In Greenville contact Mosque #25 located on Martin Luther King Drive.

Staff photo by Jim Rouse

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Reparations scam hits Black elderly

by Saeed Shabazz
Staff Writer

African American slaves, but this is a cruel deception against senior citizens who don't deserve this kind of trick to be played on them," she said.

Alderman Tillman received overwhelming support earlier this year from members of the Chicago City Council for her resolution in support of reparations.

Ms. Tillman's spokesperson, Robin Brown, told *The Final Call* that the Alderman's office has been inundated with calls inquiring about the flyer which claims that Blacks born before 1928 are due \$5,000 from a settlement of the slave reparations act.

Alderman Tillman has sent letters for an urgent meeting with Illinois Attorney General Jim Ryan and Cook County States Attorney Richard Devine to see what can be done to stop those responsible. Ms. Brown said.

"Our first reaction was to issue a warning," said Mr. Teague, adding that the Arkansas attorney general has been in touch

Continued on page 9

Approximately three weeks ago, on a Sunday morning, hundreds of Black seniors attending church in Little Rock, Ark., found a flyer on their car windshield. According to Michael Teague, spokesman for the Arkansas state attorney general's office, the flyers exclaimed that "slave reparations" money was available, but personal information, like a social security number, had to be provided.

Mr. Teague called the scam a "cruel hoax," but noted that the office of Attorney General Mark Pryor is not surprised that someone is using reparations to lure senior citizens. "It is widely known that reparations is a hot item with African Americans, so it is ripe for a scam," he said.

Also calling the reparations scam a cruel hoax is Chicago Alderman Dorothy Tillman. "People know we're working hard to get reparations for the descendants of



Cornerstone Missionary Baptist Honor Congregation.....Last Saturday at the Hilton Hotel. Cornerstone Missionary Baptist Church celebrated by honoring the members who worked diligently during Hurricane Floyd. Shown above posing with Pastor Sidney Locke, Bro. Jones, Bro. Joe High and others.

Photo by Jim Rouse

Don't Forget To Vote On Nov. 7th



Time to get out the vote..... Congresswoman Eva Clayton, who is running for re-election, is shown with supporters at a local restaurant. Congresswoman Clayton encourages everyone to vote on Nov. 7, 2000. This year is very important for black folks to vote in strong numbers. Pictured left to right is Addie Everett, Shaw University graduate, City Council, Mayor Pro tem, Mildred Council of Greenville, Dr. Gray, Pastor of Triumph MBC, Congresswoman Eva Clayton, ECU Medical Schools, Dr. Meggett and in the background is Construction Giant, Bro. Lanier, Senator Frank Balance and others.

Staff photo by Jim Rouse

From the Desk of Mrs. Beatrice Maye



The Book of Genesis says, "and the Lord God said" "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him". And so, made he a woman".

She is valuable for three reasons:

First, she is a warm body in bed. I don't refer to sexual activity, though that is important. But I refer to something that is, if possible, even more primitive: human contact. A baby lying in its crib doesn't want conversation or a gold ring. He wants to be held and patted. Adults need that physical contact also. They need to cuddle together for warmth and comfort in an indifferent or cold world.

Second, conversation is also important. The primary purpose of conversation is not to convey information. Its purpose is to say, "I'm here, and I know that you are here".

Third, the woman serves the man's need to be needed. If no one needs you, what good are you? This gives you self-esteem to meet the world every day. This relationship is reciprocal.

Boys need fathers to learn how to be men. Men have underestimated their own importance in raising healthy and competent sons and daughters. Through his actions and words, a father can have an immeasurable impact on the life of his or her child.

Some qualities necessary are love, the greatest commodity, to be there for the family, to be a pillar of strength, a seeker of truth, a provider, someone who loves his wife and encourages his child to strive

for the best, and to settle for nothing less, instilling the wrong values, stress the values of hard work, honesty and respect for others, loyalty, responsibility and perseverance.

Perhaps the most important lesson men today can learn from the great fathers of yesteryear is that fatherhood is not a popularity contest, but perhaps is the most rewarding experience any man can have.

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5. A first class woman is a woman of good understanding. (1 Samuel 24:3)

Repeat this statement: "I am holy, honorable, gracious, virtuous and a woman of good understanding. I am going to be all that God wants me to be".

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SHORTCHANGED: Black Democrat Suffers as Officials Back White Independent

By ROBERT MOORE
Sentinel Wire Services

PART TWO

(NNPA)—John Boyd, a 34-year-old Virginia Democrat recruited to run against veteran Rep. Virgil Goode, is by most accounts an attractive candidate for public office.

He's young, ambitious, and nationally known as the head of a trade group that stood up to government discrimination against black farmers. He's running in a Democratic stronghold, against an opponent who took office as a Democrat, then abandoned the party to become an Independent. Boyd won heady praise from Democratic leaders who realize that a victory would bolster party efforts to regain control of the House of Representatives in November.

At least, that is how it would seem now, on the heels of the Democratic Party Convention in Los Angeles. In reality, Boyd cannot make a viable bid in Virginia's 5th Congressional District race. He has only \$5,000 on hand—and none of it has come from the Democratic Party. His anemic campaign account is a paltry 2 percent of the \$250,000 that Goode has amassed so far.

"Truth is, without some serious campaign finance reforms, a 'nobody' has a snowball's chance ... of beating an opponent that is well-financed," said Boyd, president of the National Black Farmers Association.

As much as any political campaign this year, Boyd's cash-strapped run symbolizes the importance that campaign finance reform holds for minority candidates and voters. Unable to raise the thousands of dollars needed even the most qualified black candidates find themselves unable to mount a credible campaign.

Simply put, in politics it is money, not skill or qualifications that counts.

"It is no longer a democracy, but a plutocracy," said Sheila Krumholz of the Center for Responsive Politics, a campaign finance watchdog group in Washington, D.C.

The "plutocracy" has left many black candidates like Boyd, and consequently many black voters, out of the loop of political power. Cash Strapped Financially speaking, most mi-

nority candidates are closer to John Boyd, with a few thousand dollars in their campaign coffers. And that is largely because they have to rely on grassroots efforts—door-to-door campaigning and passing the hat in churches.

"Their campaigns are as grassroots as it gets," said Hillary Shelton, the NAACP's Washington lobbyist. "These are the kinds of campaigns where people at the grocery store or their friends in the congregations in the church are writing them a check, a small check. This is the campaigning that really does personify what we think is best about grassroots-driven candidates." Shelton may be right. But it does not often add up to victory, particularly when the black grassroots candidate finds himself or herself running against a well-financed white opponent.

Left for Dead

Boyd has learned that the hard way.

Boyd's run for Congress began on a positive note. In January, Virginia 5th Congressional District Representative Virgil Goode announced that he was abandoning the Democratic Party because of ideological differences. Goode had often voted with Republicans and was one of the few Democrats who called for the impeachment of President Bill Clinton over the Monica Lewinsky scandal. Democrats immediately promised to make Goode pay.

Enter John Boyd.

Boyd seemed an ideal challenger for Goode, fresh off a successful campaign that made the U.S. Department of Agriculture acknowledge that it had discriminated against black farmers and agree to pay a multi-million dollar settlement. In May, Boyd won the party nomination in front of 210 5th District Democrats under a gleaming banner that said "Boyd for Congress 2000." Boyd gave a rousing acceptance speech that seemed to bring tears to the eyes of many delegates. He called for an inclusive Democratic Party. He pledged his support for gun safety and tobacco farmers while strengthening rural America and bringing new jobs to the district, in addition to protecting the environment and Social Security. Even Jim Seaver, Goode's former chief of staff, who resigned

after his boss's defection, endorsed Boyd.

"The district is ready for a congressman that recognizes and works

Boyd told party delegates. "I'm totally against that. Today, I'm planting a seed. ... I'm planting a seed of prosperity. I'm planting a seed of

campaign seems to have lost momentum. For one, many Democratic Party officials in the 5th District continued to support Virgil Goode even after his defection from the party. When party officials met recently at a picnic to rally support for the party's statewide and U.S. Senate races, Boyd wasn't mentioned. One official said the failure to mention Boyd's campaign against Goode was an oversight. The state Democratic Party says it's solidly behind Boyd's campaign. It doesn't show.

Federal Election Commission data analyzed by the NNPA shows that Boyd has raised just \$4,300 for his campaign. Political experts say it takes at least \$600,000 to even be competitive. Goode, on the other hand, despite his defection, continues to raise money.

In fact, Goode has raised more in the 2000 election than he did in his run for office in 1998. He has even picked up financial support from conservative groups normally affiliated with the Republican Party. It is unclear whether Boyd can count on the deep pockets of special interests groups that normally give to Democratic candidates, like labor unions. Boyd has received just one PAC contribution, a \$2,500 donation contribution from the United Food and Commercial Workers Union. The national Democratic

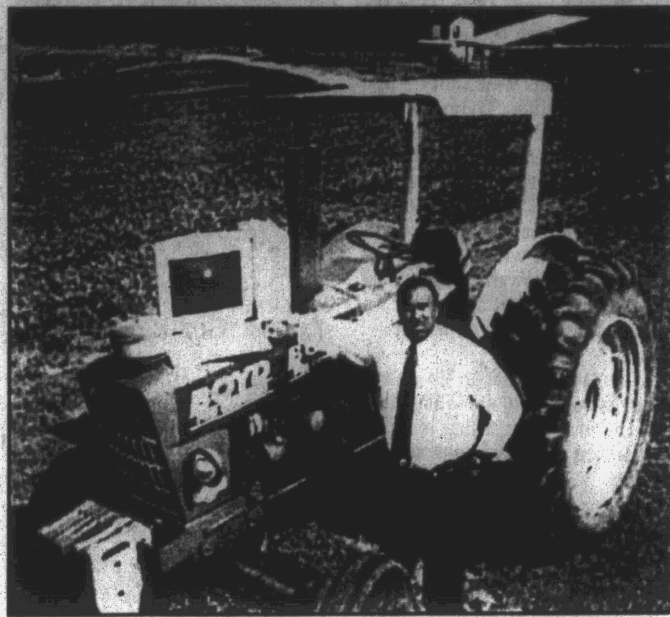
Party has not contributed to his campaign, even though the party is desperately trying to regain control of Congress. "Our goal is to find and support challengers regardless of race and ethnicity," said Erik Smith, a spokesman for the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, the party's fundraising arm for House and Senate races.

Smith said it would be much closer to Election Day before the committee begins to dole out financial support. That Boyd does not have the party's financial support surprises him.

Given that party officials in Virginia vow to pay back Rep. Goode for abandoning the Democrats, "I expected some support early on," Boyd said.

Despite the lack of support, though, Boyd said he is committed to winning the race against Goode. He said that going into the final months of the campaign, he expects tireless door-to-door campaigning will begin to produce financial results for his campaign. "In the end, I will win this race with the aid of my constituents and not the Democratic Party," he said.

(Shortchanged was produced by the NNPA Foundation's NorthStar Investigative Reporting Program with funding from the J. Roderick MacArthur Foundation.)



SHORTCHANGED?—John Boyd, a 34-year-old Virginia Democrat recruited to run against veteran Rep. Virgil Goode, cannot make a viable bid in Virginia's 5th Congressional District race. He has only \$5,000 on hand—and none of it has come from the Democratic Party.

for the needs of the people," Seaver said. "We can't afford more of the same." "Virgil Goode and the Grand Old Party—the GOP—want to keep the rich rich and the poor poor."

victory," Boyd said to deafening applause. "Tomorrow that seed is growing."

Where's the Party? Just three months later, Boyd's

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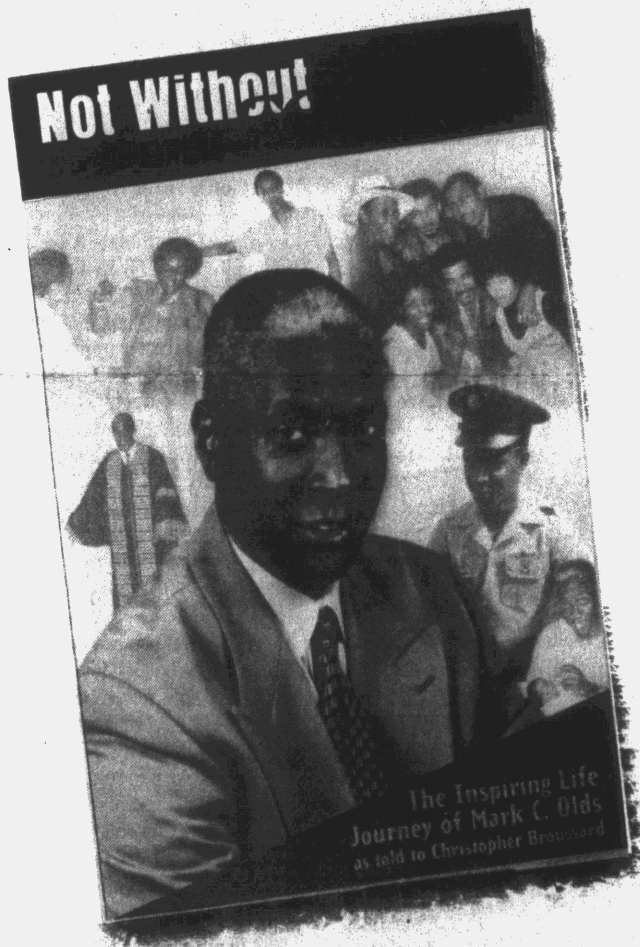
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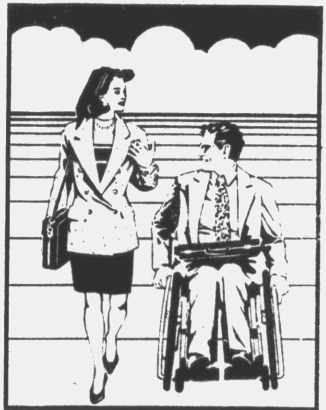
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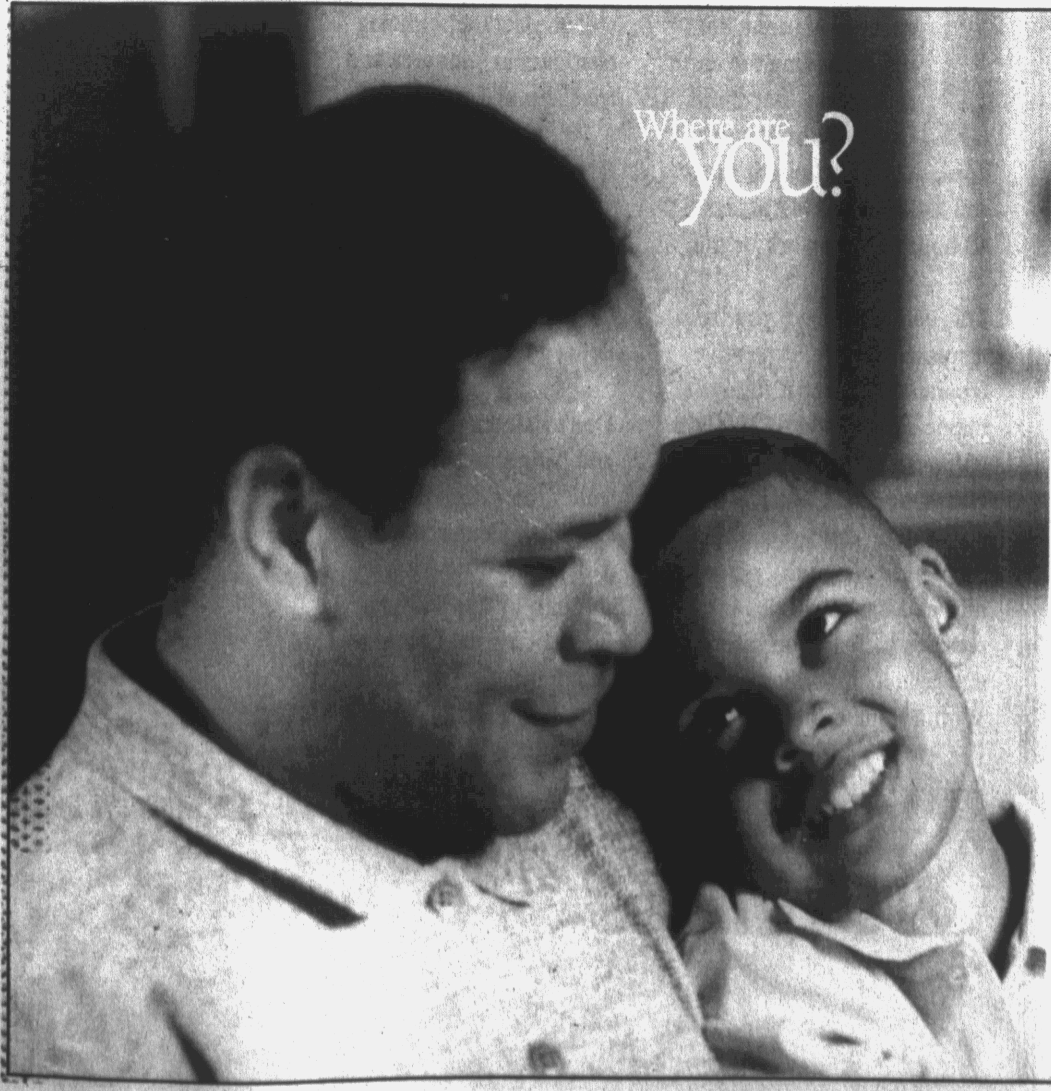
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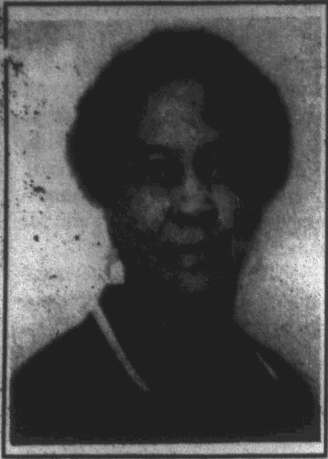
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Suejette A. Jones

TITHES, OFFERINGS AND COLLECTIONS

People who all their lives have been dunned for money are rapidly coming to believe that a great deal of the preaching and teaching and ministering is done for revenue--if not for revenue only or chiefly, at least for revenue in a considerable measure.

Not only do the scriptures imply that the majority of the Lord's faithful will be of the poor of this world, but our observation and experience show us the same--that there are not many rich, not many great, not many noble, but "chiefly the poor of this world, rich in faith." Some of Lord's faithful are attending meetings where Truth is advocated and they feel a sense of relief in the absence of the worldly, money-grabbing spirit, and that they are more thoroughly convinced that it has been Love, for the Lord and for his Truth and his flock, that has inspired the efforts made to bring the Truth within their reach.

We wonder why our Lord did not in some degree caution the poor widow that she had done more than her duty; that if she had only two mites she should have kept them both, or at least one of them, for her own necessities. Had it been anyone else than the Lord or one of the apostles who noted this transaction and commended it, without expressing a word of caution in connection with it, we would have felt perfectly free to have added that word of caution. Very few people need to be cautioned along the line of self-preservation or against giving all of their living; but the Lord would make up to them in some manner for which would be considered their "over-generosity."

The Lord has placed no law upon his people in respect to their benevolence but has left the matter open to those who have consecrated their all to Him which is measured by their conduct, their sacrifices, and their self-denials. One might ask: "To what extent should I give of my time, my influence, and my money to the Lord?" The answer is, if

you have made a full consecration of yourself and have become a New Creature in Christ, you have nothing to give. You have already given all that you have back to the Lord. If you kept anything back, then you did not make a full consecration and have not fully accepted of the Lord.

If you are in doubt about the use of your talents (time, influence, money, etc.) to the best of your ability, ask of God who giveth His wisdom freely to him that asketh. Guided by this wisdom from above, in proportion as your love for the Lord grows day by day, you

gold and silver are His, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. He really needs none of our efforts, none of our money; but because it will be to our advantage, and assist in our development, He permits his work to be in such a condition that it will have need of all the efforts and all the means which they will use to glorify Him. The money questions should be left, so far as possible (and perhaps altogether) out of consideration in the general meetings of the Church. The Spirit of the Lord instead should be cultivated, and dwell within us--anxious to do his share toward meeting, not only the current expenses of the church--rent, mortgage, perhaps, or other expenses, but anxious to do what he can in respect to extending of the light which is blessing his own soul, and to others who yet sit in darkness.

THE COLOR OF WATER (A Black Man's Tribute to His White Mother)

by James Mc Bride

In a compelling tribute to his white mother, James McBride looks into the face of Ruthie McBride Jordan to uncover his own identity--and finds that he is a much the grandchild of an itinerant Jewish rabbi as the child of the all-black Red Hook Projects and that his mother had shared this truth with him decades earlier when she explained that God's spirit is the "color of

water." As a boy in Brooklyn's Red Hook projects, James McBride knew his mother was different. But when he asked about it, she'd simply say, "I'm light-skinned." Later he wondered if he was different, too, and asked his mother if he was black of white. "You're a human being," she snapped. "Educate yourself or you'll be a nobody!" And when James asked what color God was, she said "God is the color of water".... As an adult, McBride finally persuaded his mother to tell her story--the story of a rabbi's daughter, born in Poland and raised in the South, who fled to Harlem, married a black man, founded a Baptist church and put twelve children through college. The Color of Water is James McBride's tribute to his remarkable, eccentric, determined mother--and an eloquent exploration of what family really means.

Note: This novel was first published in 1996 and has been a national bestseller and a choice of the Book-of-the-Month Club. Dr. Dennis McBride, who

is currently State Health Director for North Carolina, is James McBride's brother.

Rap gets a bad rap

by Lee Hubbard
—Guest Columnist—

(NNPA)—Over the years, rap music has been blamed for just about everything.

Politicians have blamed rap music for violence and police shootings. Musicians have blamed the genre for diluting the talent of up and coming musicians. And recently a group of Black leaders in New York have blamed rap music for the Central Park sexual assaults at the Puerto Rican Day parade.

But now someone out of the Ivory Tower at Harvard University is blaming rap music for the drop in test scores among Black students. According to a recent story in the *Boston Herald*, Dr. Ronald Ferguson, a professor at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government, believes there is a possible connection between the rise in hip hop (rap) music, and the dropping of reading and math test scores among Black youth. He said that just when Black students began to draw near the same performance level of white students on national tests, their scores begin to drop.

"There was tremendous progress in the 1980s in reading and math scores for Black youth," said Professor Ferguson. "Sometime between 1988 and 1990 the progress stops."

While various factors played a role in the drop in test scores, Ferguson was struck by the coincidence with the rise of hip-hop music's popularity. He said the teens might have started spending more time listening to rap music or watching it performed on television and less time reading.

"I see a shift in time-use patterns among Black youth to this new music produced by hip-hop culture."

Professor Ferguson points to a survey in 1988, 40 percent of Black students questioned said they regularly read for pleasure. That dropped to just 14 percent by 1992. While it would be easy to point to rap music as the number one problem in the decline of test scores, as Ferguson does, this self-serving analysis is deeply flawed.

I bought my first rap record in 1980, when I was nine-years-old and by the early to mid-1980s rap music was fully embraced by the youth within the Black community in America. In the years Ferguson uses to make his claim that test scores dropped, he is right to note that rap music was making an upsurge, but it wasn't doing this with Black audiences.

It was doing it with white audiences.

"Every time someone wants to get some sort of attention, they start blaming rap," said Davey D, a hip-hop intellectual, and the founder of daveyd.com, a hip-hop news-site.

Davey D notes that the timeline in which Ferguson uses to talk about rap music and the decline in Black test scores, the music was going through its positive Afrocentric phase. During this time period, rap groups like Public Enemy, Eric B & Rakim, Poor Righteous Teachers, and Boogie Down Productions, were rapping about getting an education, and having "knowledge of self" and knowing who you are.

Based on this, one could make the argument that the Black test scores should have been higher. The decline in Black test scores, points to something else other than rap music, but intellectuals in today's time tend to look at it as an easy scapegoat, instead of looking underneath to get at the problem.

"I understand how someone can see this," said Erica Arnold, a writer for the *Source* magazine, the magazine of hip-hop and its culture. "But you have to look at the larger picture of what is happening to young people in the last few years."

Arnold is right. You have to look at areas such as the rise in latch key kids, who have to raise themselves, as parents are at work. To the rise in drugs, especially the crack cocaine revolution, which destroyed the atmosphere in many urban communities. To teachers with low expectations in deteriorating public schools, who don't push students to achieve, to the breakdown within the Black community, and family structure in this community, which may have the most consequence on test scores.

Music does influence people, and there are some fools that do foolish things and blame it on music. But just as there are negatives, there are some positives. Hip hop culture and rap is being used by some educators to bring back students in the classroom who haven't been motivated to learn, and to bridge the educational divide.

Ferguson hits on the right tune, when he says that more leisure reading needs to be encouraged to bring up reading and English scores. But pinning bad test scores on rap doesn't make sense. In fact, it gives rap a rap it doesn't deserve.

(Lee Hubbard can be reached by e-mail at superle@hotmail.com. He writes on urban and national issues for several publications.)

Reparations

Cont. from front page

with authorities in North Carolina and other states, but would not comment on what other states are involved.

"We have been aware of the letter, which was circulated about a month ago in the Jackson, Mississippi area," said activist Hannibal Afrik, national co-chairman of N'COBRA, a national reparations activist group.

Speaking by phone from his Port Gibson, Miss., home, Mr. Afrik said the scam "will help to accelerate" the reparations movement. "I think this is just the beginning of the get rich schemes, which will surround reparations as we move down the road," he said. "This also means that reparations is something real in people's minds. There is a groundswell of discussion now, specially with groups that did not support reparations earlier.

"We also need to realize that this scam could possibly involve people who want to disrupt our unity," he offered.

Agreeing with Mr. Afrik is Dr. Imari Obadele, Ph.D., a member of the Republic of New Africa and board member emeritus of N'COBRA.

"If you understand the history of Black movements in this coun-

try, then it is not far fetched to contemplate the possibility that there is a move afoot to give some Black people the idea that slave reparations is a scam," said Dr. Obadele, a political science professor at Prairie View A&M college in Texas.

"Let us not forget the history of the government and COINTELPRO. If we are foolish enough as a people to believe that the government will sit idly by and let us receive any reparations for slavery, and not try to disrupt the movement ... then we are doomed," he said.

No matter who is asked to comment on the recent scam, the operative response is "the Black community must be vigilant."

"Beware of those who claim they are able to obtain money for reparations compensation," reads a press release from the office of Michigan Congressman John Conyers, Jr. (D).

Rep. Conyers is the sponsor of H. R. 40, The Reparations Study Bill, which has been before the legislative body for several decades.

"I want to issue a warning to all who may have been contacted by individuals or agencies who make claims about reparations. The Federal Government has no process in place at this time to process reparations claims for African descendants, notwithstanding the legitimacy of said claims," the congressman said.

WOOW

Cont. from front page

egy of CBC members. A successful march "would help us energize the voters in (our) districts. But more important than that, it will help us arouse an awareness of registering to vote," he explained.

The march takes place just three weeks before the general election in this country, and organizers will have deputy registrars throughout the crowd, so that those who are not registered to vote can get registered, if not in time for this election, for future elections, Mr. Hilliard said.

Min. Farrakhan has emphasized his goal goes beyond the short-term political issues involved in the upcoming election, and toward creating a powerful political "force."

"We must produce a popular force that is spiritual, that is moral, that is politically mature, and economically mature, so that it can become a tangible factor of power that can no longer be denied by those who manipulate power," the Muslim leader told national organizers.

"Because the real power is not with people we vote in. The real power is those that manipulate the

people that we vote in. Unless we can deal with the manipulators in this country, we can forget about justice rolling down like a mighty stream and all that kind of talk. That will always be talk," he said.

"We can proclaim liberty, but it has to come from a force coming up from the people who are

wise, who are mobilized, who are organized, who are politicized," Min. Farrakhan said.

Min. Farrakhan also held a working session with the MFM program committee, including National Council of Negro Women Chairman Emeritus Dorothy I. Height, Mrs. Cora Masters Barry and Rev. Barbara Skinner. That same day Min. Farrakhan and Min. Benjamin convened an additional working session with the technical and legal teams, before rushing to the airport to travel across country to join entertainers promoting the march in Los Angeles.

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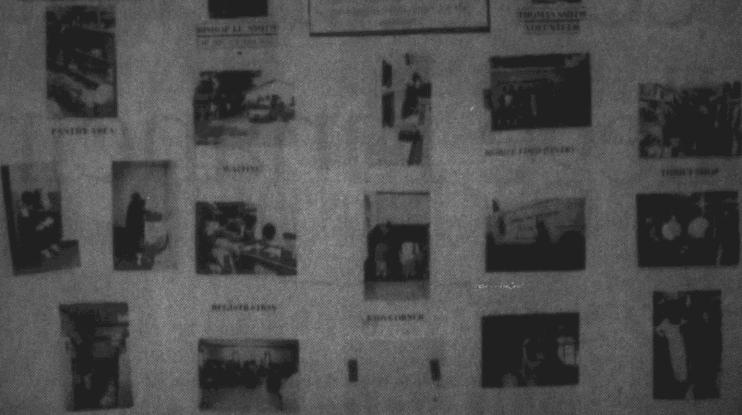
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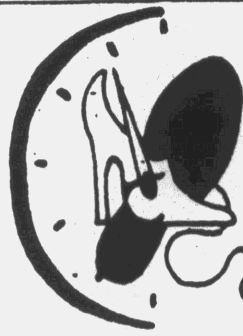


First Born Church Giving and Caring... Grimesland, NC is blessed to have a mayor who is supportive of her community. Shown at the First Born Community Development Center, Mayor Battle, Bishop James Smith and lovely wife. Below is Bishop Smith son and daughters and other community citizens taking a moment to pause for the camera of the 'M' Voice Newspaper. The First Born Community Development Center is rooted deep in it's founding faith community. This center turns no one away. Staff photo



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Graduation from a recognized college or university with a degree in environmental engineering or public administration and at least five years experience of increasing responsibility with a municipal public works operation. Experience in the areas of personnel management, budget administration, and equipment purchase/management is critical. Valid drivers license required.

Salary range: \$66,180.80 - 69,804.80 - \$88,408.00 depending upon qualifications and experience. Competitive benefits package provided.

Apply by 5:00 p.m., Friday, October 27, 2000, to the City of Greenville, Human Resources Department, 201 Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, P.O. Box 7207, Greenville, N.C. 27835-7207.

Resume' will NOT be accepted in lieu of city application. If you are out of the area, please contact 252-329-4492 for an application package.



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City of Greenville

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Women and minorities are encouraged to apply.

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DRUG TASK FORCE AGENT

A Five County Narcotics Task Force in northeast North Carolina is seeking applicants for undercover agents. Applicants must possess the highest degree of integrity, be certified in NC as law enforcement officials. Experience in narcotics enforcement and/or financial investigations is preferred. Applicants must also be willing to undergo background investigations including psychological, financial and polygraph testing. Positions include random drug testing. Agents will be responsible for the enforcement of the NC Controlled Substances Act and the Criminal General Statutes of North Carolina. Salary depends on qualifications. A completed Sheriff's Education and Training Standards Commission from F-3 is to be received by Keith Roach, PO Box 308, Williamston, NC 27892 no later than 5:00pm Monday, October 23, 2000. The Narcotics Task Force is an equal opportunity employer. Minority applicants are especially encouraged.

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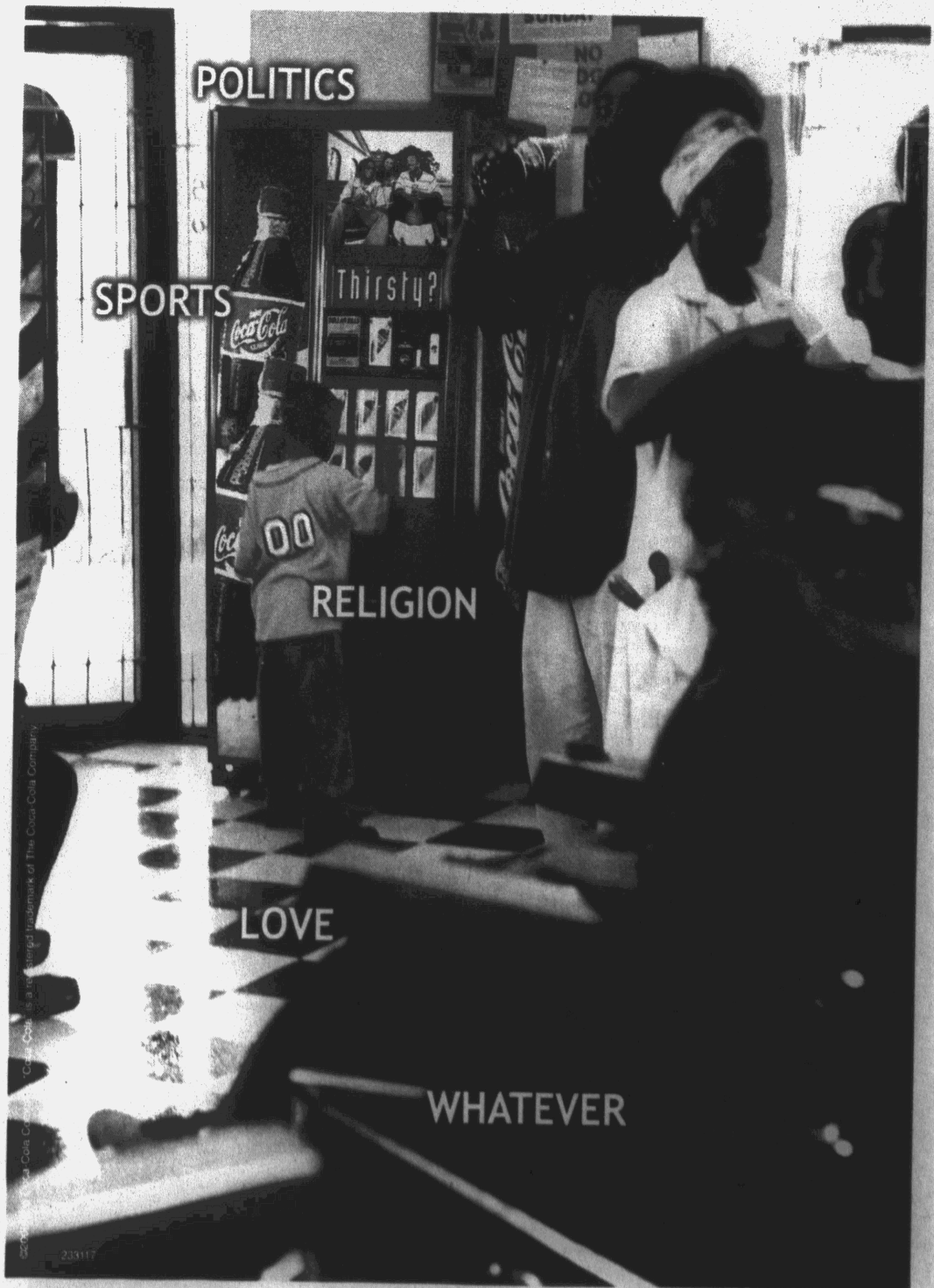
Sealed proposals for single prime bids will be received until 2:00p.m. Tuesday, October 31, 2000 at the Belhaven Town Council Chambers 213 East Main Street, Belhaven, N.C. for the construction of the new Belhaven Public Library, at which time and place Bids will be opened and read. The project includes demolition of the existing building, a new 3600 SF wood frame facility, and a small parking lot. **THE PROJECT BEING BID IS A NEW PROJECT, NOT A RE-BID.**

Complete plans and specifications for this project can be obtained from EDA, Ltd. 201 West 1st Street, Suite 202, Greenville NC 27858, 252-758-3138 (phone), 758-0553 (fax), during normal office hours after October 6, 2000 and are available for examination at Construction Market Data Plan Room, 2300 Rexwood Drive, Suite 130, Raleigh, NC 27607, Associated General Contractors Plan Room, c/o McGee Reprographics, 801 Dickinson Avenue, Greenville, NC 27834, and ECC Plan Room 3422 Neuse Road, Kinston, NC 28501.

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THE 7th ANNUAL BLACK BUSINESS EXPO
Nov. 4th & 5th, 2000 - 9am - 7pm
The Willis Bldg. Greenville, NC



Slave Cabin Opens to Public, Provides New Look at Harsh Slave Life

By LEEF SMITH
The Washington Post

CHANTILLY, Va. (AP)—Overgrown with brambles and grass, South Road lay forgotten for almost 200 years, its purpose decaying along with the slave cabins that once lined it during the early part of the 19th century. The road might have remained a historical footnote on the neatly

manicured grounds of Sully Plantation had archaeologists and historians not rediscovered it 15 years ago, realizing it presented a rare opportunity to depict what slave life may have been like in Fairfax County.

A reconstructed South Road and a replica of a slave cabin were recently opened to the public, providing visitors to Sully with a new look at the harsh conditions slaves faced

as they worked to support one of Northern Virginia's most lavish estates.

In a society that still roils with racial tensions, historical interpretations—particularly those involving slavery—are a delicate business. A program of reenactments unveiled last year at Colonial Williamsburg so upset some visitors that they tried to attack the actors portraying slave owners; de-

briefing sessions were instituted to calm crying children.

For that reason, officials at Sully and the Fairfax County Park Authority, which has operated the plan-

their own. Historical balance is the key, she said.

If the guides "sound like they're whitewashing Washington, we have to clean it up and make it sound like

Esther McCullough was one of the first to visit at the recent opening, raising her hand several times to discuss slave life with interpreter Noreen McCann.



Gold Medal Winner..... The citizens of North Carolina lead their own olympics in each city in NC. Retired principal and educator Francis Mebane is shown being congratulated by Rev. James Snuggs, and Pitt County NAACP Director Gaskon Monk. Father Mebane is proud of the gold medal he received from Senior Olympics. He is wearing it around his neck.

Photo by Jim Rouse



Mt Hermon Lodge..... Shown above are Brothers from Wilson, NC who took the first step in becoming Mason's along with Bros Kimble, Williams and Rev Evans who are already Full Mason's. Pictured from left to right - Derrick English, Shawn Williams, Wm. Elbert Hawkins, Mike Campbell, Eddie Hawkins, Kimble Williams Karl Holliday, Past Master: James Phelps, Charlie Barrett and Rev. Evans

Photo: Jim Rouse



A LOOK BACK—A slave cabin was recently opened to the public, providing visitors with a new look at the harsh conditions slaves faced as they worked to support one of Northern Virginia's most lavish estates.—D.W. HOWELL PHOTO

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THE BOTTOM LINE

Keith Cooper

The Presidential contest between Vice-President Al Gore and Texas Governor George W. Bush is of crucial importance in many ways. This election will determine if this nation reverts to the gloom and doom days of division, racial strife, and economic stagnation or moves forward progressively. George W. Bush, as president, would be disastrous to America.

Governor Bush reminds too many people of his father, who proved to be both a liar and a joke. After he broke his promise not to support new taxes, President Bush lost credibility, even among many Republicans. In 1992, he was even called "Chicken George" because of his reluctance to debate Clinton, a JFK-style "slasher" debater. It appears that the phrase, "like father, like son," describes George W., who despises the debate format of the bipartisan Commission on Presidential Debates.

Does George W. have the acumen, stamina and strength of character to defeat Gore, another "slasher" debater awaiting an opportu-

nity to devour George W., who seemingly is hiding behind a bush?

Why do so many people question Bush's intelligence and basic recall abilities? Why does Bush have a difficult time recalling names of presidents of key countries around the world? Bush's lack of smarts reminds me of his father's Vice - President, Dan Quayle, who had difficulty spelling "potato." Quayle, by the way, became the butt of jokes on late night shows. In an August 24 - 25 Newsweek poll, 81% of the respondents believe Gore is "intelligent and well informed" compared to 72% for Bush. Other major polls, like an NBC poll on August 3rd, reflect the aforesaid statistics. Typically, when the economy is strong, that's bad news for presidential challengers. Although too many blacks are falling through the cracks, this nation has the lowest combination of unemployment and inflation in a generation. Gore's boss, the Honorable President Clinton, paved the way for a record number of black millionaires and home ownerships.

BLACK EXPO 2000



AS FOR ME AND MY HOUSE..... Shown above, Mother Swinson and Family as they give honor to whom honor is due, her husband and Pastor, Rev. Swinson the Pastor of Mills Chapel Church in Black Jack, NC

photo by Faith Maye

THE 7th ANNUAL BLACK BUSINESS EXPO

Nov. 4th & 5th, 2000 - 9am - 7pm
The Willis Bldg. Greenville, NC



Pictured above..... Singing to the glory of GOD, the Hassell Gospel Singers were in fine form when they came out to support the appreciation service for Pastor Swinson. photo by Faith Maye

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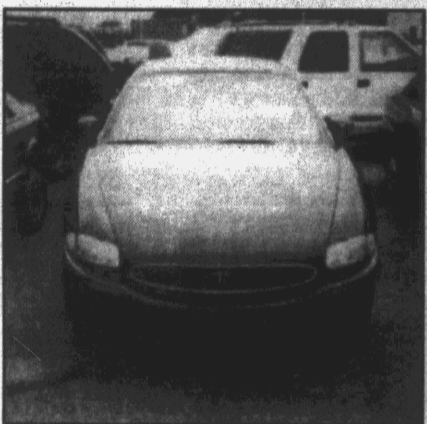
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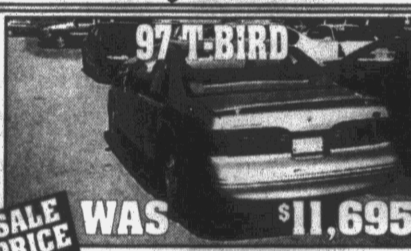


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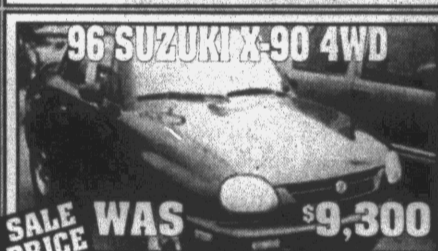


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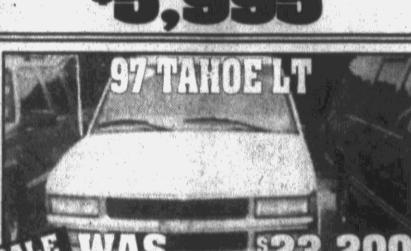
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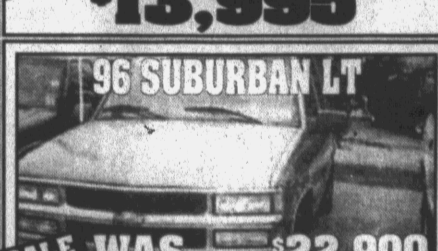
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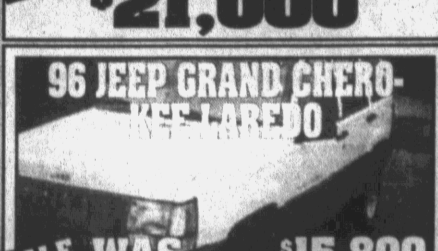
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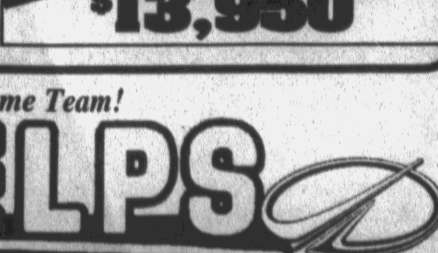
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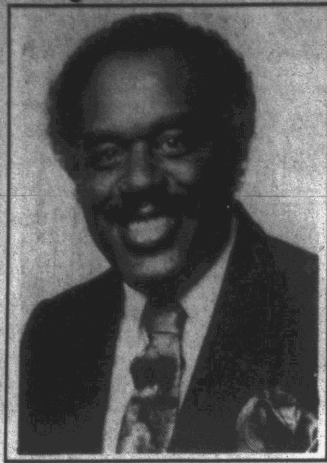
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Spiritual Thoughts



Dr. George Hawkins

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ:

It is apparent to those of us who do battle against the kingdom of darkness on a regular basis that there are a lot of strongholds that need to be pulled down. Ideally, this should be a combined effort of the body of Christ. Unfortunately, a large portion of God's people are not ready to join such an effort even if they wanted to. Their own spiritual lives would hinder them in doing so. A campaign to bring down demonic strongholds will not be accomplished with slogans, clever programs, or even spiritual techniques.

Time and time again Christians have had good intentions, yet they have made little impact on our society to change it. In fact, this nation is becoming more and more ungodly. When it comes to the major issues of the day, the Christian voice is being ignored and even ridiculed. Christians are

sage that Christians are the enemy. We are portrayed as extremists.

God has called us to go out into the world and bring about change. We are supposed to be change-makers; salt and light in a world of darkness. How have the majority of Christians responded? They have gone about business as usual. Satan has been very successful in diverting us from the path that God has laid out before us. God's people have become self-centered and self-indulgent in their lifestyles. Christ has called us to take up our cross daily, but his voice has been drowned out by the multitude of enticements that surround us. Many are satisfied to carry the name of Christ and live like the rest of the world. They are content with the world as it is and for others the task of changing the world is overwhelming. I'm glad the disciples did not think like that.

Repentance

Frankly, we will not make an impact for Christ in this world unless we change! This is foundational. God's people need to take an objective inventory of their lives and start repenting. Yes, we repented when we gave our hearts to God. But that was only the beginning of what should have become a life lived in an attitude of repentance. All of us need to open our eyes and recognize what we have become. We need to see how we have been grieving the Holy Spirit by the way we are living. We cannot think about change in our lives and hope our good intentions will be acceptable. There must be a change that is radical if we are to be in God's will.

The Holy Spirit desires to work in

clear what it will take to bring healing to our land.

"If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land. 2 Chronicles 7:14."

If we want to see God move in our lives and in the lives of others, there must be repentance that starts with us. God's words to Israel through Ezekiel could just as well be addressed to the church today. "Therefore I will judge you. O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin." Ezekiel 18:30.

Jesus' revelation to John includes some very sobering words to God's people. As he addressed the church in Ephesus and acknowledged some fruit to be good, a word of rebuke was also given accompanied by a warning. "But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. Remember then from what you have fallen; REPENT, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent." Revelation 2:4-5.

God is already beginning to shake and sift and even bring temporal judgment upon the body of Christ (Peter 4:17). He will fulfill His eternal plan no matter what it takes. He will prepare a people to be the bride of Christ.

What is true repentance? It is being sorry for grieving God by the way you live. It is a desire to turn

from your sins without any regrets and take a new path that pleases God.

(2 Cor.7:9-10). We cannot be praying as many unmarried people pray, "Lord change my spouse so that our marriage will be better." No, we must be praying, "Lord, start with me and change me."

Change will rarely take place unless we are willing for it to begin with ourselves.

Satan will always seek to convince us that everything is fine in our lives. There is no need to be overly concerned about our condition because there are a lot of people who are in much worse spiritual shape than ourselves. This is how many rationalize away the need for repentance in their own lives. They permit pride and self-righteousness to take root. Lack of repentance has been the major reason why so many Christians have gone into bondage in one form or the other. To be continued...



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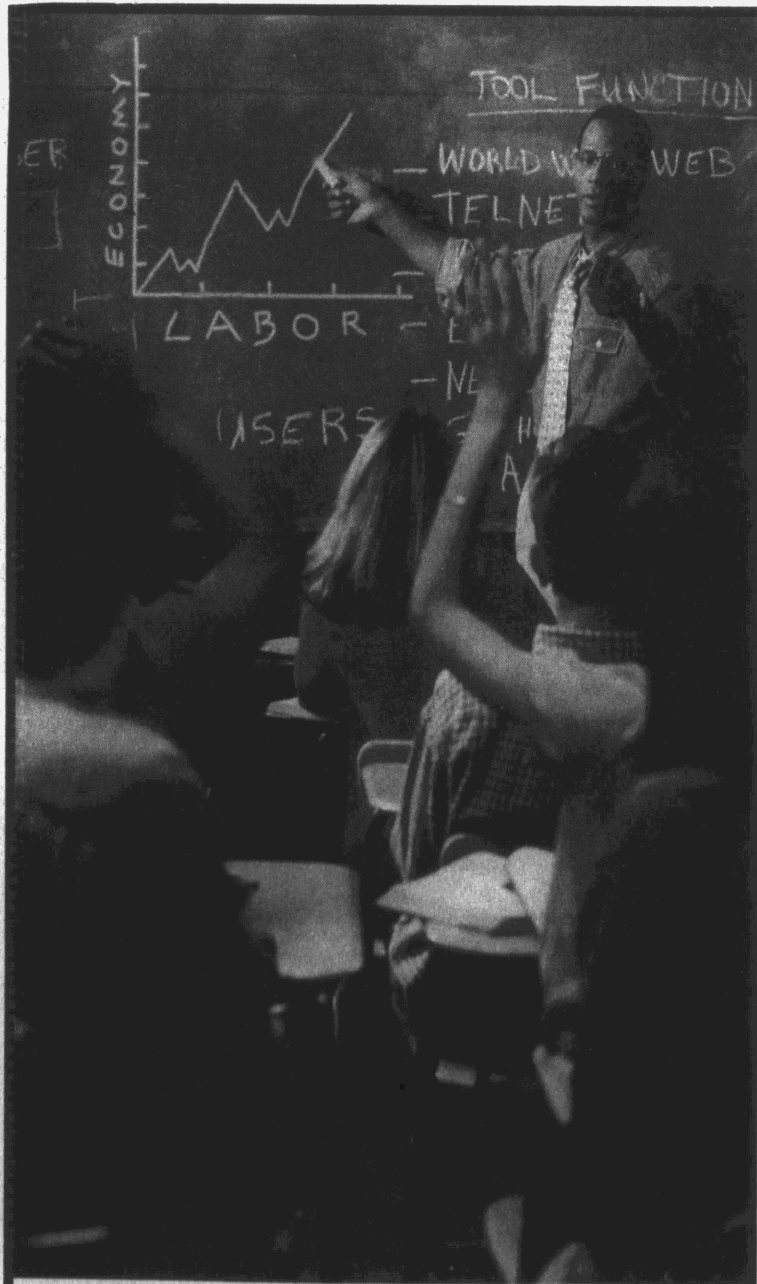
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Uniting The Family - The Million Family March



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KLEAVER'S KLIPPINGS

The Stupid Things We Think About Our Skin Pigmentation

By JIM CLEAVER

A couple of weeks ago, a young (18-19 year old) black mother became embroiled in a vicious argument about the skin color of her children. She adamantly insisted that she wanted "light skinned children" and that her children were just too dark.

This all took place on one of those nonsensical daytime talk shows that seem to cater to unlearned, uneducated, and otherwise unprepared black females. From time to time, there are non-blacks on the show, but the most expressive are the young black women.

For some strange reason, when all of this was going on, I remembered the original movie, "Imitation of Life," when Louise Beavers, the mother, was questioned about the father of her apparently half-white daughter. Her reply was, "He was a light complexioned colored man."

There is something truly sad when a mother is more concerned with the skin color of her child than she is with the well-being of the offspring.

Several years ago, a father who had just become aware his son carried the sickle cell trait, was discussing the matter with a group of alleged close friends.

One well-educated black female shook her head and then commented, "I'm glad I have enough white blood in my veins so I don't have to worry about anything like that."

My late and highly respected friend, A.S. Doc Young used to say we are convinced the white man's ice is colder. Which is to say that if it is white, it is good, if it is black, then it is no good.

In another time, kids use to say "If you're white, you're right. If you're yellow, you're mellow. If you're brown, stick around. But if you're black, git back—way back. Incidentally, it was not just the kids

who said that. A lot of adults subscribed to that theory also.

In an episode of "City of Angels" last season, some writer had the intestinal fortitude to approach this subject head on. There was a character, a so-called intelligent black man, who needed surgery. He was insistent however, that the surgeon be white. He didn't feel that black doctors are as good as white doctors and he demanded a white surgeon. The only surgeon available who fit the bill was a crotchety old man in retirement.

Once he saw the white doctor, he was happy. The problem was the old man botched the job almost immediately and the black surgeon had to clean up the mess and save the man's life.

We need to stop this madness about being concerned with the color of the skin. It means absolutely nothing. In the old days, light-skinned blacks were usually the offspring of "the mass" and out of some perverse sense of caring or tacit acknowledgment, they became the house slaves.

The fact that they were lighter in

color didn't make them any smarter and certainly no better than the rest. The same thing holds true today. It doesn't matter what the color is. What matters are the ability and the willingness to forge ahead.

The notion was put into the heads of black people 200 years ago for the sole purpose of keeping the slaves from uniting around a common cause. We have not generally had the gumption to ignore and keep on going forward. To watch this young black woman on the TV show was almost physically sickening. This was major bone of contention.

Some years ago, a light-skinned mother met her son's girlfriend. She wore a Phi Beta Kappa key and had been accepted at several graduate schools. She was unquestionably attractive in every way. The problem was that she was extremely dark.

After the son took his girlfriend home, he hurried back to his house where his mother awaited. Seeking his mother's approval, he asked, "Well, how did you like her?"

His mother smiled and said, "She seems like a very nice girl, but she

is so dark. Have you thought about what your children would look like?" The son was crest-fallen and hurt beyond words, but he could not show it. The times dictated that he at least consider his mother's feelings and the romance was shot to hell.

This is all stupidity and a failure to see who and what we are without the validation of white America.

If we took away the play stations and some of the other video games from our kids and substituted books and materials that would give them a sense of who they are and what they have to face in the future much of this madness would not prevail.

As we have written time and again, racism is alive and well in this country and it will not disappear simply because we wish it so. One of the harsh realities of life is that if there is a series of racial incidents, it really won't matter if you are yellow, brown or black. By and large, we are all easily identifiable.

If we look at the scale, we will see that some of the accomplished African Americans did not and do not have light skin. Firebrand Con-

gresswoman Maxine Waters will not ever be mistaken for white. Nor will Vernon Jordan, one of the most powerful men on the Washington political scene. Paul Robeson would never have been called a mulatto. Barbara Jordan, Louis Gossett Jr., Gen. Colin Powell, could never pass the litmus test. There are too many others to even attempt to name. But you get the picture.

It is time that we put aside such petty things as skin color, "good" hair, whose mother or father was white or Hispanic and recognize that none of this matters in the overall scheme of things.

If we are going to succeed, then it will have to be on our own merit and the only way we can get there is by preparing our children to meet the challenge. They need a lot more than hip-hop and rappers and all the rest of the madness that seems to have permeated our society.

It has been done by some, but not nearly enough. The competition is strong and it is going to get stronger. The last thing we need to worry about is the skin color of our children.

HUTCHINSON: CONTINUED FROM A-6

Proposition 38 is a half-baked, ill conceived measure wildly out of step with even the standard voucher plans floated by conservative Republicans. These plans apply only to students, mostly the poor, blacks and Latinos, in failing public schools. Proposition 38 gives money to any and everyone, including Bill Gates children.

Still, the big question is how to better improve the failing L.A. public schools that trap and anger so many black and Latino parents and provide fertile ground for the black Proposition 38 backers. There are five things that must be done. The first is to publicly acknowledge that the most segregated schools in L.A. County are the L.A. city schools. The L.A. Unified School District should initiate an emergency crash program to upgrade the texts and facilities, purchase more computers, and to place the highest caliber teachers, counselors, and administrators possible at these schools. This also means that the United Teachers of Los Angeles must actively work to enforce strict professional standards that hold teachers at these schools accountable for the performance of their students.

The second is to bury the myth that students in public schools can't or won't learn. Generations of black and Latino students attended mostly segregated schools in South Central Los Angeles. Yet many managed to graduate, go on to college, and become successful in business and the professions. They were taught by teachers who were dedicated and determined that they achieve in their studies. These teachers expected and demanded that their students perform up to the same level as white students. They challenged the students to learn, set specific goals, demanded their full participation in classroom work, and gave them positive and continual direction and reinforcement. Many teachers and administrators at these schools also devised innovative learning methods that raised reading, math test scores, and achievement levels.

The third is for black and Latino educators, businesspersons and professionals to sponsor conferences in which they provide parents with learning tips and materials to help them improve the study habits of their children. They can also expand the economic and professional opportunities for poor students by creating and endowing programs that provide educational scholarships, career counseling, job and training skills programs, and computer training.

The fourth is to eliminate the obscene disparities in public funding. Current state funding formulas guarantee that well-to-do, mostly white suburban school districts get a bigger share of state education funds than poor, inner city schools. This funding gap guarantees a two-tiered public education system in which poor schools do not receive adequate funds to pay for up-to-date texts, computer equipment, the physical maintenance of the facilities, and higher teacher salaries.

The last is to understand that educational excellence can't be attained in segregated schools, or private schools too despite what the black ministers who back Proposition 38 claim, unless parents do their part. This means they must attend parent-teacher conferences, monitor their children's classroom and homework assignments, join and get actively involved with the PTA's and parent-advisory councils at their local schools.

Restoring excellence at grossly underperforming schools in black and Latino areas is a goal that everyone wants to achieve. It will take hard work, renewed dedication, and total commitment to equal funding for inner city public schools. It will not take a fraudulent and destructive voucher initiative such as Proposition 38.

(Earl Ofari Hutchinson is the author of The Disappearance of Black Leadership. He can be heard on KPFK Radio, 90.7 FM, Tuesdays, 7-8 p.m.)



URBAN PERSPECTIVE

Davis Guts Juvenile Justice Legislation

By LARRY AUBRY

The Schiff-Cardenas Crime Prevention Act of 2000 (AB2885) passed the State Assembly by a vote of 75 to 0 and the State Senate by 36 to 0. Still, "liberal," centrist Gov. Gray Davis deleted all of the \$121.3 million for juvenile justice prevention and intervention programs designed to reduce the recidivism rate for juveniles currently under the jurisdiction of county probation departments. Since youth crime, as well as the criminalization of youth, are of increasing interest, especially in the African American and Latino communities, the governor's action is all the more reprehensible.

The Chicano Employees Association was a major supporter of the Schiff-Cardenas Crime Prevention Act. The Association's response to Davis' deleting the program funds contains conceptual and practical rationale for strong juvenile crime prevention and intervention strategies. The Chicano Employees Association's response is instructive; it illuminates important underlying issues. Excerpts from the association's response are presented herein:

Gov. Davis' deletion of program funds in the Schiff-Cardenas betrays the trust of the Latino and African American communities. These programs were designed to effectively work with at-risk minors at an early age to discourage them from joining gangs, encourage them to stay in school and to provide them with educational and recreational programs to help motivate them not to commit additional crimes. A major goal of the time-tested programs is to help juveniles stay away from gangs and criminal activities when their incarceration is completed and they return to their communities.

Davis deleted the \$121.3 million for juvenile programs despite overwhelming bipartisan support in the State Legislature for the bill. The bill also has strong support from African American and Latino organizations, law enforcement officials and unions representing rank and file police, sheriffs, probation department employees and municipal employee associations throughout the state.

The governor's deletion of funds for juvenile crime prevention programs will have a significant negative impact on at-risk, predominantly

minority youth, by not funding or under-funding programs that have demonstrated their success with juveniles. It will also have a negative impact on youth within the probation system in Los Angeles County and other counties because of insufficient funding of programs needed to divert these minors from committing new crimes.

Los Angeles County could have received approximately \$34 million for juvenile programs provided for in AB2885. Davis claimed that he wanted proven programs in order to release \$71 million for juvenile programs. However, he is also insisting as a price for the \$71 million that the legislature allocate millions of dollars for boot camps run by the National Guard. Staffing boot camps with minimally trained or untrained non-law enforcement staff to guard minors (who are overwhelmingly minority) is not sound public policy.

Because research has not demonstrated that juvenile boot camps run by the National Guard are effective in reducing juvenile crime or in rehabilitating the juveniles under their jurisdiction, the legislature rejected Davis' proposal. Also, it is important to note that Davis' claim of wanting to fund juvenile programs with a proven success rate is not persuasive because in May Davis rejected requests from Assemblyman Tony Cardenas that would have added \$475 million to the state budget to fund well-established, proven juvenile crime diversion and gang prevention programs administered by law enforcement agencies, probation departments and community-based organizations.

The governor's action hurts proven, successful programs that would have helped to substantially reduce the number of minors entering or returning to the juvenile justice system. The programs range from approximately \$1,000 per juvenile for at risk minors to \$20,000 per juvenile for the intensive Repeat Offender Prevention Project. This program, according to a 12-month evaluation found the participants improved their grades, reduced drug use and exhibited a 33 percent decrease in law violations compared to minors receiving traditional probation supervision.

Since it currently costs about \$40,000 annually to house a minor in an institution, these types of programs are substantially less expen-

sive. Experts estimate that diverting one high risk youth from a life of crime can potentially save the government from \$1 million to over \$2 million over the life of the minor. There is also substantial research showing that the earlier at-risk minors are provided intervention and prevention services, the greater the chance of diverting them from becoming chronic offenders.

More importantly, these programs have demonstrated a reduction in crime. The \$121.3 million contained in AB2885 would have provided for the hiring of more law enforcement officers and probation personnel and also provided necessary funding to permit community-based organizations to hire more staff so that they and law enforcement and probation departments could implement more early intervention, recidivism-reduction programs.

Clearly, the result would have been less crime, fewer victims and more minors becoming productive members of their communities. Obviously, funding these programs would have also resulted in substantial savings in taxpayers dollar.

With a huge mega-billion surplus available, Davis essentially told the African American and Latino communities that the future of their at-risk minor, as well as the fate of their youth now in the Juvenile justice system, is not a priority for him. In Los Angeles County, youth under the jurisdiction of the Los Angeles County Probation Department are over 80 percent African American and Latino. Davis' lack of support for programs for at-risk minors and minors already within the criminal justice system appears to be substantially the same as of his predecessor, Gov. Pete Wilson.

It is especially tragic that the strong spirit of bi-partisanship that was developing over ways to fund effective programs for at-risk youth and those already within the criminal justice system was rebuffed by our governor. The Chicano Employees' Association's response to Davis' action ends with the following quote from a syndicated columnist:

"His critics can do whatever they can do, but they'll never persuade Davis to accept something that he believes poses any political risk, on crime, no matter how scant it may be. That's the way he is."

By A. ASADULLAH SAMAD

BETWEEN THE LINES

Tiger and the Williams Sisters: Flipside of a Long, Hot Summer



Generally, summer is the slowest time of the year for sports lovers.

Particularly, "TV" sports lovers, who loathe watching that melodramatic mix of baseball, golf and tennis on Saturday and Sunday afternoons—which can be as exciting as watching grass grow, or estimating the net time your dog will move from that one spot he's been laying in all day. Hell, on any "normal" summer sports weekend—given the choice of watching tennis or golf, or going shopping with the wife and kids, it's "Honey, load up car."

Not this summer.

An interesting phenomena took place in the midst of a sports period usually reserved for "whites only." Black athletes, in their sparsely few numbers, dominated "the summer sports" like no time in recent history. Unprecedented winning streaks by Tiger Woods, as well as Venus and Serena Williams created "Michael Jordan-like" interest in tennis and golf. Not only because they brought the attention of black people to their respective games, but because all of America watched. While sports commentary is generally not my thing, there is a socio-political element to this dynamic

that really was a flipside of the success of these young talents.

People watched, not necessarily to see them win (African Americans did, of course), but to see them lose. And when they didn't, they got "talked about," until the following week when there was another opportunity to vindicate "the whiteness" of these sports. And when they couldn't, it was almost ridiculous how some of the commentators "playa-hated" those young people. They'd congratulate on one hand, then playa-hate on the next.

It was a long, hot summer.

Watching Tiger win the British Open, then the PGA Championship, then the NEC Championship was like watching cliff hanging episodes of a good "whodunit." You never knew who was going to be the next victim, but you knew somehow, Tiger was going to be in the mix. And you knew that the public was going to tune in, and tune in they did. Every time Tiger Woods plays in a tournament, television ratings double. And every time he's leading on Saturday or Sunday, they quadruple.

You know you have something hot when you can get black people to stay in the house on Sunday afternoons in the summertime. On some Sundays, Tiger outdrew the

NBA playoffs. Tiger won so much and won so easily, it created a "Tiger backlash." They essentially got sick of him winning.

Other players and TV commentators started talking about the Tiger was winning "too much." That courses needed to be "Tiger-proofed" to give the rest of the field a chance. In what sport can you win too much? Jack Nicklaus was the long hitter and most dominating player in golf for 25 years, but they never talked about changing the sport or the courses for him. But Tiger wins more majors than Jack and Arnold Palmer, together, won in their first 100 tournaments, and the integrity of the game must be protected.

Is there a socio-political aspect to that rationalization? I would say so. Tiger's won more money in his four years on the tour than all of the professional players, past and present, except Davis Love III, have won in their careers. Winning the PGA and NEC back-to-back netted him almost \$2 million (actually \$1.9 mil) in two weeks. One of the those weeks, the media started playing up the possibility of a "letdown." Tiger won at Firestone, one of the hardest courses in the nation, by playing 21 over par. Played the last three holes in the dark, and birdied the 18th

hole. Then he played the last two days with the flu, gave a clinic for youth the next morning, then flew to Palm Desert and played a "made for TV" match play exhibition for a million dollars. Playing while sick, he still lead most of the match and lost by one stroke. You'd thought they'd just beat him in the Super Bowl or something. After the summer Tiger had, they'd take "a win" any way they could get it. Even if it didn't count for anything.

Watching the socio-political aspects of the Williams sisters' success was just as intriguing.

Watching the sisters playing each other in the Wimbledon semifinals had a cruel aspect to it, but that's the nature of competition—somebody has to lose. But watching Venus win it all, then watching the sisters win the Doubles Championship, leave Wimbledon and each go on separate streaks of their own, was a pure treat. In fact, as a doubles team, they haven't lost in any tournaments they've played in, which caused a controversy when Olympic tennis coach, Billie Jean King, selected them to play together in Sydney. Why?

King passed over the No. 1 doubles player in the world, but she was only number one because the sisters had played enough tourna-

ments as a pair to be ranked. The doubles player challenged the decision, went to arbitration and lost. Imagine if one of us had challenged a coach's decision. We'd be "black-balled" from the sport. Just one of those things where some people feel they're "entitled" to go, in spite of the choices made. Certainly a socio-political aspect of tennis politics we rarely see.

Both sisters had been suffering from injuries, and both weren't expected to do well in the majors. But now that they're winning, nobody can stop talking about them,—good or bad. No matter how either of them play, commentators constantly find fault with their games. And they somehow seem to get penalized because there's two of them. Their opponents have to play one, then play the other. And when Serena was confident enough to say, "Beating one of us is hard enough, but beating both of us is near impossible," people thought tennis protocol was somehow broken. Now with 100 mile an hour serves and both peaking at the right time, John "Crazy-A***" McEnroe wants to play one or both of the Williams sisters to prove that "a good male college player or a ranked senior player" could beat them. Now Martina Hingis is No. 1 in the world,

he hasn't talked about playing her. Lindsey Davenport, all six feet plus of her, is No. 2 in the world (with a 100 mph serve also), and he hasn't talked about playing her. But he has this burning desire to prove that the Williams sisters are not as good as everyone are making them out to be. Think there might be a socio-political aspect to this type of twisted rationalization? I think so.

The Williams sisters are good, and the last time an "over the hill" male talked about whippin' up on a women tennis player, he got his old a** kicked. Mind you, McEnroe is talking "pay per view" for the chance to take this whippin'. And I'd pay for it. It wouldn't change my view of the Williams sisters one bit. And as for Tiger and his Cablinasian self, believe me when I say the only part they see is the "bl" part. Still we celebrate his dominance as if it was our own because we "know his family" and we know where he comes from. So do they. It might not be Compton like the Williams sisters, but it might as well be—given he plays a game that prides its tradition, one being its lack of color. So they're gonna be "playa-hating" for a while. We should thank them for making boring summer spectator sports watchable. Here's to many more long, hot summers.

THE CHURCH ANNIVERSARY OF 'CORNERSTONE MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH'

