



Education Is Power

By Thomas E. Wilson,
Ph.D.

The senior high school years are those that can be considered as intermediate steps between childhood and maturity. They are commonly characterized by adoption of specific lifestyles, dress and customs. Kelly states that it is the age of "youthful alienation from adult values and generational conflict." He also affirms that for most parents and their children, the high school years are extremely trying years. He contends that this is particularly true when parents have not successfully coped with childraising problems of early, middle, and late childhood. Now they must face disturbing behavior in a context where the growing teenager is able to pursue such behavior with less fear of physical restraint, and at the same time, in ways which mirror the sophistication of the game-playing adult.

This does not necessarily hold true for all high school teenagers. This writer is acquainted with teenagers who are facing the turbulent adolescent years with admirable facility. They seem to feel that the pursuit of disturbing behavior is wrong. Most Black teenagers seem to feel that they can show their early manhood or womanhood in a much more desirable way than participating in disturbing behavior. Many of our Black students are serious minded hard working young people.

Then, wherein do the problems lie that we hear about our Black students? Are the problems curricular in nature? Is an effort being made to gear the curriculum to the needs of the students? Do our teenagers have adequate time at school to receive the kind of help they so desperately need at times? Is there adequate time for release of tensions through some well supervised sports activity? Are Black students still faced with inequities in the treatment of their problems as compared to the treatment of majority students? Could the questions posed above be considered as possible reasons for problems in our high schools? If the answer to the above question is "yes" then it may be that we should take stock of our high schools, their location in reference to the predominately Black areas of town, and also to the kinds of teachers hired to teach in multicultural settings.

We contend that a special kind of teacher is needed to work with our Black students or any teenage student, and that the teachers must be aware of the life styles of the Black, must be empathetic with the Black student who cannot adjust to the middle-class school environment, and must be willing to "go that extra mile" to help this maturing person become the kind of adult that will be useful in our modern day society.

The Black student also has a responsibility. The student should be held responsible for being attentive in class, for contributing to class discussions, for coming to class prepared for the day's assignment, for punctuality, for being "properly dressed," and for behaving in a manner befitting a learner in a learning situation.

It is difficult enough to receive the kind of education needed for coping with life situations when we are at our best. When we perform in any other way other than our best, we negate the efforts of those who are truly trying to help us, namely, our parents, counselors, our sympathetic teachers, etc. This does not mean to imply that we are to sit idly by and allow ourselves to be treated in just any kind of way.

Young Black people must realize that as the age has been lowered for assumption of full citizenship privileges (voting, serving on juries, being elected to office, etc.) the responsibilities have been raised.

We as Black people must become proud of ourselves, of our heritage, of our color, our looks, etc., and realize that God has given us a special survival sense. Let's use it. Education is one way to help us on our way to the goal of full freedom in a democracy.



Benjamin L. Hooks

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One of the things marvelously revealed at the recently held national political convention in New York was the visible, dynamic, articulate and soulful participation of black people. And all this was beamed to the nation via tv. This demonstrates once more what tv can do in terms of smashing myths and presenting people - all kinds - in real-life, interesting, sometimes compelling roles.

It also succinctly revealed, if such was needed, what a terrible loss this country, and in when it does not permit the full participation of all its people in its manifold endeavors.

Most blacks have always stated that black people have an awful lot to offer this country, and indeed have done and are doing just that, and that we don't necessarily have to be called on to deal with those issues that are strictly black in a presentation on the tube. But recognition of this mostly goes unnoticed.

Rep. Barbara Jordan (Texas) who gave a stirring keynote address, is a striking example of what this country has cut itself off from for years. She is the embodiment of what the country has lost in not allowing women full participation in the political process.

Her important presence at that convention plus the integral part she played in it was even more unique in that she is not only a woman, but a black woman.

Throughout this convention, sterling black female leadership figures - Rep. Yvonne Burke, Mrs. Coretta Scott King in addition to Ms. Jordan - and strong black male personages - Rep. Andrew Young (Ga.), a peerless black insider of the Presidential nominee's camp; big-city mayors Coleman Young (Detroit) and Tom Bradley (Los Angeles); Reps. Don Dellums (Calif.) and John Conyers (Mich.); and the venerable Rev. Martin Luther King, Sr. - were the fleshed-out bold reality of our historical dream.

I listened proudly as they covered a wide range of issues and addressed a multitude of causes that in my judgement touch all American citizens - white, black, brown, yellow, red: the inequity in tax rates, the growing deterioration of our

cities, diminishing services, crime in the streets, inadequate police protection, scandal and corruption in high offices sewage-clogged gutters, uncollected garbage, bigotry in home financing (redlining), insufficient welfare and social security support for our poor and indigent citizens, pollution of the environment. We are, in fine, affected by issued that affect all other Americans.

What I am saying is we don't have to talk about just "Black issues" all the time, nor be star athletes or outstanding entertainers to be significant contributors to the ongoing dialogue of issues. Not that we ever intend to shy away from vigorous advocacy of issues which peculiarly affect us because of our blackness. But more and more, given the opportunity to express ourselves, the country is learning that we can make significant contributions to the general welfare and the ongoing progress of this country.

Indeed, if America is ever to realize its historical destiny, it will have to call on all the vast resources of its diverse peoples for their best thinking and best ideas. If we deliberately exclude people and shut them behind a wall, we not only lose the benefits of what they might contribute, but we create hostility and resentment that erupts in violently anti-social behavior that is irrational because the treatment that triggered it is irrational. Desperate people do desperate things.

It is to be hoped that the television networks would notice that from the deep south to the far north, and all across this nation, there were outpourings of expressions of approval of the performances of these black folks at the convention.

It is a fact that there is a great spectrum of American people who are no longer hung up on color if one has something to offer. That is not to say that conservative blacks, or what have you, approved of all the sentiments that were expressed.

As we move on in the vast television field, it seems this is a signal for more blacks to become news anchor persons. All of the cities with significant radio and television stations should have such blacks, even those radio stations which do not necessarily program to blacks or are located in areas where blacks are not a significant percentage of the population.

For the convention proved again, if it needed proving, that blacks can transcend color and race and present dynamic and talented ideas and ideals that can fit into the format of any stations programming.

COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

by Kenyon C. Burke

Education Gains and Self Help

Questions about whether we have made any real progress as a people in America continue to surface in the Bicentennial year. They are often asked by well meaning people who are already convinced that they know the answer.

The list of questions usually include: What happened to the Civil Rights Movement? Did the energy expended and the thrust of the 1960's make a difference? What were the gains, if any? And the often asked but seldom answered positively, "When are they (Blacks) going to help themselves?"

We're proud to note that three recent developments offer a positive response and provide formidable evidence that "things ain't what they use to be" for blacks in America.

The U.S. Census Bureau recently reported that since 1965 the steady growth in the number of blacks enrolled in college continues to rise. Of course, the unexpected drop in 1973 received wide publicity while the subsequent increase in 1974 and 1975 received little attention. Black college enrollment jumped by 20% in 1974 and 16% over the previous years.

According to the census, today nearly one million blacks are in colleges across the nation compared to 274,000 only 10 years ago. In 1965 blacks constituted five percent of all college students but by 1975 they accounted for 10 percent of all college students.

Add to these exciting statistics the fact that

two national black women's organizations recently made contributions totaling \$125,000 to the United Negro College Fund and in addition, have pledged another \$150,000 to be paid in the next two years.

One gift of \$150,000 was made by the Links, Inc. at their annual meeting in Seattle, Washington that brought their total giving to UNCF to \$350,000 in the last four years.

The second gift of \$100,000 by the Alpha Kappa Sorority to the UNCF was announced at their annual meeting in New York City in mid-July this year. As an indication of plans for continued support, the AKA also voted to make their total contribution to UNCF \$125,000 with remaining \$400,000 to be paid in three installments by 1978.

Not only does this news respond to questions about black progress, but it says something about the faith black people have historically placed in education as a means of improving the quality of their lives. It also demonstrates that meaningful self-help efforts are very much a part of the black experience.

Although equality of opportunity has not been fully realized for all citizens alike, it is heartwarming to see that one million black youths, the Links and the AKA's are dramatically investing themselves and their money toward closing the gap of inequality in the Bicentennial year.