

Violence Cannot Stop Ideas

By Vernon E.
Jordan, Jr.

This is my first column since someone shot me in the back, May 29. The past three months have been spent in hospitals — not my idea of the ideal summer vacation.

My enforced absence from speaking and writing was temporary, despite the intentions of the twisted mind that pulled the trigger of a deer rifle loaded with dum-dum bullets.

In the coming weeks, I'll be back to dealing with the issues that affect all Americans and especially with those of vital concern to America's poor people, black people and deprived people.

Violence can never win in the battle of ideas. All people in leadership positions know that someone, deformed by racism, irrational hatred and contempt for the humanity of those who

hold different views, may be lurking in the bushes.

But ideas and movements will never be stopped with bullets. The civil rights movement went on after Martin Luther King, Jr. was murdered.

And shooting me didn't stop the Urban League Movement. If anything, the staff and volunteers of the Urban League redoubled their efforts to provide services and advocacy for the people who count on them.

The civil rights movement will go on with full vigor until equality is won, no matter what happens to any of the individuals who occupy leadership positions.

My own experience has left me with renewed commitment to speak out and to fight against violence, oppression and racism in our society.

When your life is miraculously spared,



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you have a heightened sense of the meaning of your work and beliefs, a conviction that you must make the best possible use of your remaining days.

And when you find literally thousands of people demonstrating their concern about you and their belief in your ideas, that is added incentive to go on fighting the good fight.

I was moved by the outpouring of concern for me by so many people I had never met, but who cared. Their cards and letters, wires, thoughts and prayers helped me pull through.

Readers of this column know I have often condemned the selfishness of so many people in our society. But I always believed in the core of decency that pervades our society, side by side with the selfishness.

I saw a lot of that decency in my hospital stay. I was cheered by the kindness of so many people who wrote to tell of how their lives had been changed by something the Urban League accomplished, or of how they were praying for my recovery.

Often, people wrote to say they strongly disagreed with my views but were horrified by the attack on me and hoped I would soon be differing with them again.

The day doesn't have enough minutes for me to personally thank all of those many well-wishers. But I hope some at least are reading this column and will accept my published thanks for

their thoughts and their thoughtfulness.

This column is far too short to thank the many people directly involved in enabling me to survive and to recover my health. So many doctors, nurses and hospital workers were unstinting in their loving care.

I've personally thanked most of them, but thanks can never fully convey the gratitude my family and I feel to those whose life's work is to save lives and to care for all the ill.

Whether through application of skilled use of sophisticated medical technologies, or whether through preparing the meals, doing the laundry, or cleaning the floors, the people who work in our health care system are involved in life-saving and life-giving activity and their work should be recognized as among the most important in our society.

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from page 4

"Working in Las Vegas is almost totally different than anywhere else," Grays said, "because so many people come here from so many different places. I'd say 40 percent of them 'hear' with their eyes. By that, I mean that if you aren't

visually interesting or exciting — forget it."

Audiences are changing, they both believe — and, probably, for the better, because people today are being "oriented" to a wider range of music so they enjoy a wider range.

"We're getting more people now who like more types of music," Grays said. "It used to

be that black people liked only black music. Country people liked country music. However, that is all changing."

Allbert added that "we've been oriented to a wider range because we are all 'victims' of the media. A lot of it stems from the record companies because what they feel is popular is what they send out."

Allbert, who is originally from Nashville and has been living in Las Vegas for 12 years, added that the trend in music is again shifting — this time away from disco as the No. 1 favorite.

Leading the way right now in the big cities like Los Angeles, New York and San Francisco is the so-called new wave, which Allbert calls "an offshoot of the '50s and '60s music. It isn't that big here yet, but it will be."

Disco, though considered by many to be on the way out, actually has joined American music on a permanent basis, Allbert feels, "but it may not be called disco in the

(See Royal page 23)

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