

Church

Nations And Their Cities Are People

Our leading Black psychologists and educators have told us that one of the major reasons why the rate of "functional illiteracy" is three times as high among adult Black Americans as it is among others is that the cold, well-calculated and long-term destruction of their personhood during enslavement here in the USA

has never been redressed. People must know they are important — and people must be treated as the most important entity in our society if that society is to grow and "be" its best, as God would will it so.

Thus, in our schools, in our city planning agencies and elsewhere, we must focus initially and ultimately

on the importance of people to themselves and others. Then — and only then — is the context right for our national and local goals to be met.

There is a magnificently instructive story — of crucial significance to all who are planners for or servants of the city — told by the ancient Greek historian Herodotus concerning the Athenian people during the Persian Wars. King Xerxes the Great (519-465 B.C.) and his armies had besieged the Athenian people, enclosing them on three sides. The Athenian people escaped by using their boats and headed by night for a new community which they had been developing in southern Italy.

Then they sent a message to King Xerxes saying in effect that he could have the site of their city. He could have their magnificent buildings and all of their incomparable artifacts. But he could never take or destroy Athens; for we the

people are Athens. We are its glory, its life.

The story makes it abundantly clear that, in the minds of at least these ancient and venerable urbanities, the city was not a geographical area or an intricate set of economic, political, social and religious or other systems, but rather their city was the Athenian people themselves.

In so much of our urban planning today, we tend to seek to satisfy the needs of systems rather than the needs of people. In urban education, for example, we are forever talking about the need for more money to "improve the system." How much it takes specifically to help Johnny to read, to help Mary to count and to help Bonita to translate in her mind what the teacher is saying in English into what it means to her in Spanish is never even placed on the drawing board or programmed into the computers.

Systems ideally are designed to serve people, and more particularly to serve persons, individually, one by one. We may have all kinds of fancy calculators to enable us to figure out complicated numbers quicker almost than one

might say, "Jack Rabbit." But it is the ability to see, to serve, and to care for persons, one by one, that provides our real measure of success for those of us in the field of education.

It is not how many, but whom? Who was it that learned the lesson? Who is it who needs a further helping hand? Who is it that reaches out for us to care . . . just a little bit more than we have been caring . . . if we have been caring at all?

In the case of Black Americans, where actually billions of dollars have been spent on the "how-to-mechanics" of reading and job-related skills, we have seen that this investment has not paid off in the millions of cases where Black

Americans were not pre-instilled with a sense of worth or self-respecting personhood. Our schools simply have consigned Black youngsters to failure . . . and the highly-paid industrial trainers, in far too many instances, have concluded that many Black Americans simply can't be trained.

Toward this end, the leading Black educators and other professionals in AOIP have developed a weekly ego-strengthening and reading-motivational supplement for this and other community-building newspapers. It is called *The ADVANCER*. And, while it is designed primarily for Title I-type classrooms, *The ADVANCER* is an excellent learning tool.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Ministers, Friends, and Co-workers:

Having looked very closely at the conditions in the Black community and the inhabitants of this area, we have seen that many of your children have been in trouble with law enforcement, many are in trouble, and there is the possibility of their getting in trouble.

Therefore, we are making an appeal to all of our people to become actively involved in helping to improve conditions in our community and in any other area where improvement is needed.

Our finding is that economics is at the root of many of our problems -- unemployment being one which leads to drug and other related problems.

Let us come together and solve some of these problems. We need your active participation and your support. Our meetings are held at Grace Immanuel Baptist Church, 805 West Bartlett, each Saturday morning at 9:00 A.M. You are welcome to attend.

Yours in His Service,
Rev. S.P. Parks
President

Church News

Churches are urged to send their services and program announcements, typewritten, to the Las Vegas Sentinel Church Reporter Louise Jordan, c/o Lil Angel Pre-School Plus, 1230 W. Adams, Las Vegas, NV. 89106, or to her in care of The Las Vegas Sentinel-Voice, 1201 S. Eastern Ave., Las Vegas, NV. 89104. Articles must be mailed or delivered to the above locations no later than Monday noon of each week.

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GUEST EVANGELIST ... FOR THE WEEK ...



THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH.

BUT THE GIFT OF GOD IS ETERNAL LIFE.

ROM.6:23

REV. ALBERT M. PARKER JR.

ASSOCIATE MINISTER OF THE VICTORY M.B.C.

SUN. DEC. 8TH THRU FRI. DEC. 13TH TIME: 7:00 P.m. NIGHTLY

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