

Point of View

Editorial

Last week the Las Vegas Sentinel-Voice started the first of a three-part series on "OUR CHURCHES, YESTERDAY and TODAY, Part I" and we found the response and reaction overwhelming. There had been considerable response on some of our past issues, but the responses last week's article have been very interesting and numerous.

The Sentinel-Voice office has received 329 phone calls with 302 in favor of the article's contents and only 27 calls against the article. Three of the latter calls were from persons who called a minimum of three times each -- thus reducing that category to only 21 persons who had negative reactions.

Last Friday morning, we were advised that some ministers were meeting to discuss the article. We immediately requested that the Publisher be allowed to meet with those ministers. Rev. S.P. Parks, President of the Ministers Alliance, readily made arrangements for this Publisher to meet with the group. Rev. Willie Davis, President of the Pastors Conference, was also present along with the small group of ministers assembled. We are indebted to the courtesies provided and the excellent manner in which the meeting was held. No one "lost their head" -- no one was "vindictive" -- the conduct of the meeting was exemplary. The issues were discussed and those on each side expressed their opinions. We hope it created a better understanding on the purpose behind this kind of journalism. It was not intended to be slanderous, nor were any of the contents designed to embarrass or intimidate anyone. That is not the object of this publication.

Records will show that the Las Vegas Sentinel-Voice during its six years of existence has been a champion of "church causes." One can immediately recall that during a number of weeks in mid-1980, this paper ran a series on "THE CHURCH -- Foundation of the Community." Starting in March 1982 we developed a weekly series on the "SENTINEL SALUTES THE CHURCHES OF WEST LAS VEGAS." During the early development stages of the MINISTERS ALLIANCE, the SENTINEL was right there to inform the public of its growing pains.

One can readily recall that this paper carried extended weekly series on the CHURCH MOTHERS. There were weekly salutes to the MINISTERS. We pushed hard for weekly church articles relating to schedules of service and articles -- a request that was practically ignored, even though we made personal contact to offer our services. To step up this effort, the Sentinel-Voice even sought out Church Reporters

See EDITORIAL, Page 7

"We did not demand our independence to fight with each other and kill each other, but solely to build our nation in unity, discipline, and respect for all."

Lutumba

To Be Equal

UNTAX THE POOR

By John E. Jacob

It is hard to understand why an affluent nation, supposedly concerned about the widespread poverty in its midst, continues to tax poor people, often at higher rates than wealthier ones.

The tax reform legislation now before the Congress would help end that disastrous social and economic policy. The bill passed by the House would wipe out federal income tax obligations for 6.5 million poor households, and would raise the family income threshold above the poverty line before taxes had to be paid.

In effect, the Congress has an opportunity to do for low income families what it did back in 1981 for wealthy families -- reduce their taxes. The 1981 tax measures did nothing for the poor. With each passing year, low income families pay increasing portions of their meager earnings to the tax man.

Back in 1979, a family of four with earnings at the poverty line paid less than two percent of its income in

taxes. This year that same family will pay 10.4 percent of its income to the federal government.

Put another way, a family at the poverty line will pay \$1,271 in combined income



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and social security payroll taxes. If the final version of the tax reform bill matches the House version, that family would continue to pay Social Security taxes amounting to \$339 -- but it would not pay income tax.

That means the poverty threshold family would have an extra \$872 which would be spent for essentials, since such families are chronically underfed and underhoused. An infusion of that much fresh purchasing power in low income communities

could help revitalize their economies, creating new jobs and new small business.

Simply by ending taxation of low-income families, there would be a big drop in the poverty statistics. It is outrageous to think that many families today are poor only because their

said any tax bill should include such a feature. And the House bill incorporates that. Right now, tax relief for the poor is part of a general tax reform package. But the ultimate fate of any tax reform bill is in doubt.

The Senate bill will be quite different from the one passed by the House. It is

government taxes them so heavily.

Because black and minority families are disproportionately poor, a tax cut would have a major impact on black families, already imperiled because of economic hardships.

A third of all black families are poor. Almost a fourth of black families earn between the poverty line and a level fifty percent above it -- still low income. So the half of all black families that are poor or near-poor would have their income taxes ended or cut heavily.

The President has said he wants to cut taxes for the poor. Congressmen have

likely to include tax cuts for low income families, but no one knows whether the final Senate bill will include lower tax cuts or hedge them in ways that weaken their impact.

The problem lies in bundling long overdue tax relief for the poor with a controversial general tax reform that could wind up being scrapped in the Senate, distorted in Conference, or vetoed in the White House.

If a tax reform bill is not passed this year, then the Congress should pass separate legislation removing federal income taxes on low income families.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor:

I have been both a subscriber and a reader of the Sentinel-Voice for the past year and have watched it grow into a very responsible and sophisticated piece of journalism. However, the article "Our Churches -- Yesterday and Today" prompts me to make some comments.

As one who has taken his citizenship and responsibilities as a citizen seriously, I feel I must share what I feel about the rights and responsibilities that any newspaper has to its community.

The Las Vegas Sentinel-Voice has the same rights and responsibilities as the other newspapers, such as the R.J. and the Sun, meaning that the community has NO right in its attempts

to censor, set-up the paper's editorial rights or dictate what it should or should not print. As long as you print the truth, the truth SHOULD be printed.

Moreover, I have often listened to some of those same ministries...expound from their pulpits saying, "What you do or say in the dark will certainly come to light." Obviously, we all have closets we prefer not to be opened. However, we should attempt to mend our broken ways by not being so tempted by the wrongs that appear before us.

In part, I salute the Las Vegas Sentinel-Voice for such articles. However, in part, I must ask for its writers to be aware of the negative overtones they might stir.

Most of all, remember NOT to print anything from my dark closet. Then surely I

will feel differently about your great newspaper (smile). As has been said BEFORE, "Get the other guy, not me," or, as the ministers say, "DON'T DO AS I DO. DO AS I SAY (no smile)."

Sincerely,
Lee Walker

Dear Editor:

I feel compelled to respond to your April 3rd article in the Las Vegas Sentinel on the subject of the Black Ministers in West Las Vegas.

I know there is another view of the ministers in West Las Vegas that you may not be aware of concerning these men called of God. If I may, I would like to point to one of

these men that I know personally, who is a minister in West Las Vegas and because of his ministry, there is a positive impact on many lives in the Las Vegas area.

His name is Elder Claude H. Parson II, the pastor of

See LETTERS, Page 7

The Las Vegas Sentinel-Voice welcomes expressions of all views from readers. Letters should be kept as brief as possible and are subject to condensation. They must include signature, valid mailing address and telephone number, if any. Pseudonyms and initials will not be used. Because of the volume of mail received, unpublished individual letters cannot be acknowledged. Send to: Letters to the Editor, The Las Vegas Sentinel-Voice, 1201 S. Eastern Ave., Las Vegas, Nevada 89104.

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