

CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

BEWARE OF CHILDREN'S SELF-DENIAL

In the 1940's, Dr. Kenneth Clark and his wife, Mamie Clark, revealed some very disturbing findings. In landmark studies they found that most Black children, when asked to identify with a Black doll, would refuse to do so. The children would often become emotional, sometimes even running from the room, rather than identify with a doll they considered "bad." The results of the Clark studies helped bring about the 1954 Supreme Court school desegregation decision.

Now, almost 50 years later, their tests have been replicated in two recent studies. The results of these new studies tell us that, unfortunately, African American children still have a negative perception of themselves. But the tests also tell us something even more significant — that we can reverse this negative self-image through concerted efforts in the home, in the schools, and in the churches.

In studies done by Dr. Darlene Powell-Hopson and by Dr. Sharon McNicholl, Black dolls were still overwhelmingly rejected by both Black and white pre-school children. In other words, Black and white children, even as young as three and four years old, have already learned the lessons taught by this society that Black is "bad" and white is "good."

In Dr. Powell-Hopson's study, when children were asked to choose the doll that "looks good" and that "you want to be with," a majority of both Black children and white children chose the

white doll. In a follow-up study by Dr. McNicholl, children both in New York and Trinidad were tested. Amazingly, she found similar results. Even in the Caribbean nation of Trinidad, three-quarters of the Black children chose the white doll over the Black doll.

Both studies point to the immense influence of the media on our children. As Dr. Powell-Hopson said when she questioned her, "Society has a powerful impact on children's perception of themselves and others. In the media — and particularly on television — in books and in movies, the people our children perceive as beautiful and in positions of power are generally white." The same is true throughout the world. As Dr. McNicholl added, "The media in Trinidad is highly European and North American. The same TV programs shown in the United States are also shown in Trinidad. The white actors of 'Dynasty' are better known and more accessible to the children of Trinidad than their own political

leaders."

But, yet, there is also hope. For the studies show that when the doctors intervened and validated the worth of the 'Black dolls, the attitudes of the children changed. Dr. Powell-Hopson's intervention strategy proved to be successful in increasing the percentage of children who then chose Black dolls. And this after a test which lasted only 40 minutes. Imagine what could be done over a more extended period of time! In our next commentary we will discuss more fully the kind of cultural reinforcement we should instill in our children.

We must move to counter the denigration of African American culture and worth that our children see around them every day. And it can be done. African American children, particularly, must see — in their homes, in their schools, in their churches — people who look like them, people who are contributors to society. To do otherwise is to continue the psychological destruction of our children.

WESTSIDE SCHOOL REUNION PLANNED

A reunion of all teachers and students who were at the Old Westside Elementary School located at West Washington Avenue and North "D" Street between the time the school opened in 1922 and when it closed its doors in 1967 is being planned, according to Betty O. Henderson, coordinator of the affair.

When the Old Westside Elementary School formally opened its doors prior to World War II, it was one of only two elementary schools in the city of Las Vegas. The other was the Fifth Street Elementary School, located on South Fifth Street, what is now the Clark County Election Department and other Clark County administra-

tive offices and facilities. When the school first opened it had only four classrooms and a part-time principal. It was later expanded to thirteen rooms in 1947, when the first four Black teachers in the entire state of Nevada were hired to teach in the Old Westside Elementary School.

A reunion organization meeting is scheduled for Saturday, October 3, at 2321 Jensen Avenue at 7:00 P.M. All persons interested in assisting with the reunion planning are asked to please contact Betty O. Henderson at 649-7070 or H.P. Fitzgerald at 648-0039. The date, place and time of the reunion will be announced in this newspaper at a later date.

1000 Attend ASCAC Conference in Aswan, Egypt

by Dr. Jacob Carruthers and Dr. Conrad W. Worrill

CHICAGO — One thousand persons of African descent, most from the United States, came face to face with their glorious heritage, embraced their vibrant present and took a bold stride into their bright future when they attended the 4th annual conference of the Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations (ASCAC) July, 1987. Aswan, Egypt, where the conference was held July 8-10, is a city in upper (southern) Egypt. Its population is predominately "Nubian," which means that in terms of physical characteristics it resembles the African American population of the United States.

The reaction of Aswan's Nubians and ASCAC's African Americans to each other created the atmosphere of a great homecoming celebration. Many of the Nubians proclaimed the ASCAC members as "Nubian Americans." Some of the ASCAC members donned Nubian dress and gratefully accepted the hospitality and enjoyed the warmth of the Nubian homes.

Aswan, like several other Egyptian cities and towns, is situated amidst the temples and tombs which were built thousands of years ago by the ancestors of the Nubians who are descendants of the original inhabitants of the Nile Valley. These temples and tombs, many with vibrant color portraits still visible, attest to the race and ethnicity of the authors/originators of the greatest civilization of antiquity. The ASCAC members saw for themselves that the builders of the tombs and temples bore images that attested to the kinship that binds the contemporary African Americans and Nubians to the ancient Egyptians.

It was in this family atmosphere that the ASCAC conference proceeded. The confer-



Dr. Jacob Carruthers, President of ASCAC and Dr. Maulana Karenga, 1st Vice President convening historical July 1987 ASCAC Conference in Aswan, Egypt.

ence was addressed by ASCAC president, Dr. Jacob H. Carruthers and Dr. John Henrik Clarke, chairman of ASCAC's Council of Elders formally convened the conference. Dr. Rosaline Jeffries, chairperson of ASCAC's Creative Production committee; Dr. Na'im Akbar, a member of the ASCAC Board of Directors; and Dr. Yosef ben-Jochannan, author/lecturer and veteran study tour director also delivered major addresses.

Major papers were presented by Dr. Maulana Karenga, first vice-president of ASCAC; Dr. Joye Hardiman, member of ASCAC's Executive committee; and Roosevelt Roberts of Chicago's Kemetic Institute. Four commission reports outlined the ASCAC agenda for the next 10 years. The reports were given by Dr. Asa Hilliard, chair of the Education commission and ASCAC second Vice-President; Dr. Anderson Thompson, chair of the Research commission; Dr. Hardiman, co-chair of the Creative Production commission; and Dr. Karenga, chair of the Spiritual Development commission. Other reports were made by the presidents of the five ASCAC regions; Harold Dicks, Eastern region; Sababu Shabaka, Mid-Atlantic region; Marion McClinton, Midwestern region; Larry Williams, Southern region; and Jitahadi Imar, Western region.

Presentations were also made by Dr. Richard King of the Fanon Research and Development Center also a member of ASCAC's Board of Directors; Dr. Leonard Jeffries, ASCAC Secretary; Dr. Gaylene Parrault of Atlantic Jr. College; Rekhety Wimbety, Kemetic Institute; Dr. Addie Brown, Los Angeles; Rev. Daima Clark, Association of Africans and African-Americans and a member of the ASCAC board of directors; and Nzinga Ratibisha, ASCAC Treasurer.

Awards for outstanding contributions to the ASCAC mission were presented to Dr. Clarke, Dr. ben-Jochannan, Dr. Karenga, Dr. Holsey member of the ASCAC Council of Elders and Carol A. Moses, administrative assistant to the present. The Eastern region also received an award as an ASCAC unit which set an exemplary model in carrying forth the ASCAC agenda. Rounding out the conference was a captivating cultural presentation by the Queens of the Nile, an African fashion exhibition directed by Ingrid Thomas Anderson of Los Angeles. The volunteer performers were recruited from the conferees.

The conference was complemented by a 10 day study tour which included visits to all of the major archaeological sights in Egypt and the Cairo National Museum, as

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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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