

# Point of View

## To Be Equal

# THE CLASS OF 2000

by John E. Jacob

The entire work force of the year 2000 is alive right now and given the swift pace of technological change, government and industry had better make sure that it has the education, skills, and training to ensure America's economic survival.

And that is doubly important for black people, whose futures depend on achieving educational excellence.

The bottom line message for the black community is that the kids just entering school will be in the high school graduating class of the year 2000.

If current patterns hold, a fourth of them won't stay in school long enough to get a high school diploma, and another fourth will graduate without the skills required to hold entry level jobs. And many who go on to college will not have the credentials required by a high tech economy.

Black economic survival depends on changing those patterns, so that today's first graders stay in school and graduate with the knowledge and skills that equip them for the jobs of the future.

That is behind today's emphasis on education by virtually every black organization and community group, especially since the National Urban League kicked off its Education Initiative aimed at bringing black educational

achievement to parity with national standards.

Fortunately, the private sector is also involved in improving minority education. A number of major corporations, foundations, and individual philanthropists are helping the cause of black educational excellence. They range from the extraordinary gift of \$20 million to historically black Spelman College by the Bill Cosby family to the new Scholarship Builder program of the Merrill Lynch Foundation.



John E. Jacob

That program, announced in November, is an imaginative way to ensure that at least some kids get full financial scholarships for college or advanced training while inspiring others to strive for success and encouraging other corporations to become involved.

The program benefits 25 first grade children in each of the 10 cities—250 inner-city students in the "Class of 2000." The National Urban League and its affiliates in the ten cities worked with

school officials to select the schools and the students. The Merrill Lynch Foundation will make annual contributions on the children's behalf into a special investment account over the next 16 years.

On graduating from high school, those youngsters will be assured of college or vocational training or, if they decide to take full-time jobs or enter military service, they'll get a one-time stipend.

The League will administer the program, providing mentoring and counseling for each of the youngsters throughout their school ca-

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reers, and will work with the schools and parents to encourage continued participation.

The kids were selected to ensure a proper mix of inner city first-graders at schools that exhibited effective learning programs, sending a message to educators that the better their schools are, the better chance they have to attract outside resources and interest.

ScholarshipBuilder is unique in that it starts in the first grade — early enough to make a big difference.

It should be a model for other companies to take the long view and invest in the nation's future.

NNPA FEATURE

## COPING

by

Dr. Charles W. Faulkner



### "I Have the Crack Crazies"

Last week, "Junior," from Baltimore asked me if it would be O.K. to use crack just one time. Just for an experiment. He wasn't going to use it anymore, after that. I told him how crack can addict him after using it just once.

The high that you get from crack is beautiful. Wonderful. Out of this world. You have never experienced this kind of thrill. This beautiful feeling. But it only lasts for about 20 minutes. And then it drops you into an emotional hole. You feel like hell. You feel 10 times worse than you did before you use it. How can this happen after using it for just one time? I don't know how. I just know that it makes you feel good, then it kicks your butt. You can feel sick, depressed, angry, short-tempered, even violent.

So, you have to use crack *again* just to feel normal. Each time you use crack,

the high is not as good as the first time and you have to use *more* of it to get the *same* high. When you come down from the high, all of the problems that you had before you used crack seem worse.

So, you have to stay high all day, every day, if you don't want the problems to depress you. That could cost you \$100 to \$1,000 each day that you have the "Crack Crazies."

You might steal from your mother, father, wife, husband, even your children's piggy bank in order to get enough money to *stay high all day*. What do you do if you don't have a job that pays big bread?

You begin to shoplift, burglarize, mug . . . anything to get high. Then you start mixing other drugs with crack. How about crack PCP, and marijuana, in one cigarette, at the same time. Sounds exciting, doesn't it?

Can you afford to buy all of those drugs, every day?

What about your education? What about your rent? What about your family? What about your health? What about your mind? Everything just goes to hell. The only thing that counts is getting high. And staying high. So what if you are a crook. A filthy, sick individual who has lost contact with reality and has lost many of your brain cells (to PCP)?

Yeah, Junior it doesn't look good, does it? But the decision is yours. Maybe if you say "no way," to crack, I'll read about great things that you have accomplished after you finish high school (maybe college) and get a fine job. If you "experiment" with crack, maybe I'll see you on the street, maybe in a gutter, five years from today. I'll say, "Hey, look, there's Junior. He has the crack Crazies."

United Church of Christ

## Commission for Racial Justice CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

by Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

### THE WAR ON DRUGS?

There is no community left in the United States that has not been negatively impacted by the escalating and devastating presence of drugs. The illegal drug trade has become a multi-billion dollar industry and the end does not appear to be in sight. Tens of thousands of persons have already been killed or have died of drug overdose. There is a national epidemic and the illegal use of drugs has become a major national crisis.

President Reagan and in

particular Vice president George Bush have recently praised themselves for the administration's so-called "War on Drugs." Yet in many African American, Latino American and other victimized communities the efforts of the Reagan-Bush strategy to prevent drug abuse have failed miserably. During this year many federal programs concerning drug rehabilitation as well as prevention have been cut. It is only when a sensational case is portrayed in the national

media or when law enforcement officers are killed in the line of duty is there a public outcry "something must be done now."

Rather than going to war on the forces that produce, transport and distribute drugs throughout the United States, the Reagan-Bush policy has classically been a policy of blaming the victims for their victimization.

New York City Police Commissioner Benjamin Ward has now ordered that all uniformed police officers on patrol duty are to begin wearing bulletproof vest in all times.

"Therefore, honour and love your Race. Be yourselves as God intended you to be or he would not have made you thus. We cannot improve upon his plan. If you are not yourself, if you surrender your personality, you have nothing left to give the world."

Edward Wilmot Blyden  
1832 - 1912  
Caribbean



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