

POSITIVELY BLACK

The still small voice

By Junious Ricardo Stanton
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Most African-American homes contain at least one Bible and it is the one book the majority of our people can get their hands on in short notice. This being the case, I will use it to introduce a great truth that can enhance the quality of our lives immeasurably. Find a Bible and turn to I Kings Chapter 19. Read verses 11 and 12 in the Old Testament. Believe it or not, these two verses contain an important lesson for modern living. To set the stage, the text centers around Elijah, a man who was used by infinite wisdom to gain a great victory over Ahab, Jezebel and the prophets of Baal. Queen Jezebel was furious at being shown up and sent word that she would kill him. Elijah became fearful and despondent. He felt lonely, unappreciated and deserted.

The Creator provided for Elijah, kept him safe, fed him, nurtured him and allowed him to regain his strength, courage, direction and purpose.

Elijah was then instructed to stand on the mount of Horeb to prepare to meet the Holy One. He did so. A great wind arose, so fierce it tore the rocks. But God was not in the wind. Next came an earthquake, followed by a fire but God was not in the earthquake nor the fire. Then came a still small voice.

Elijah heard it and within that still small voice communed with God.

Too often we limit Omneity to the narrow confines of our theology, our expectations, and our cultural and personal

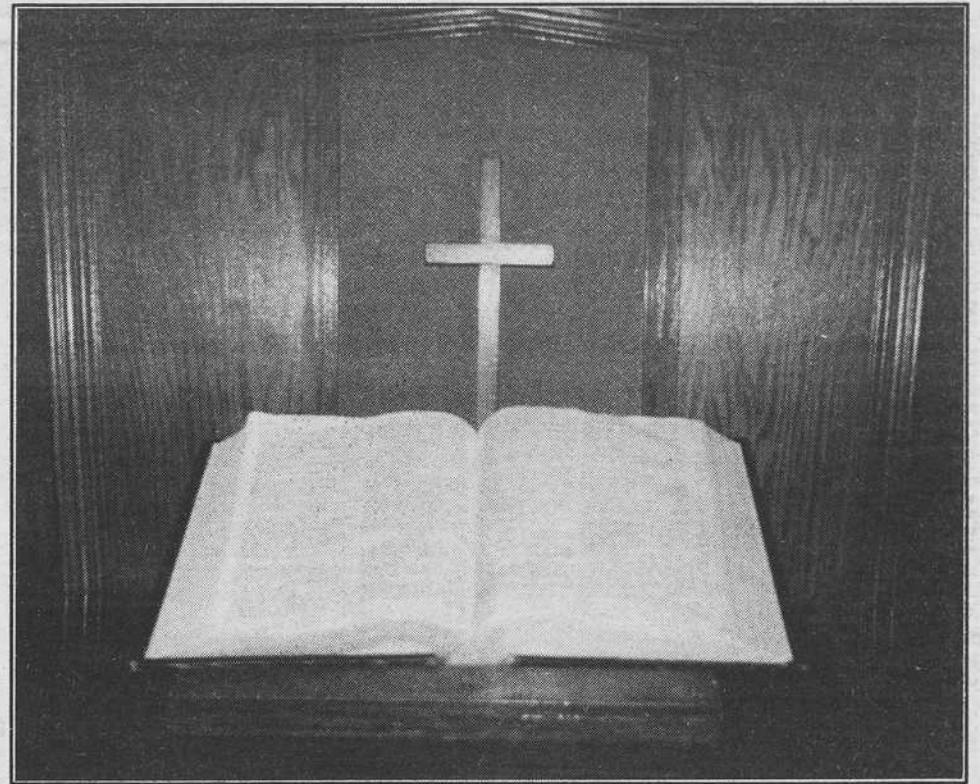
experiences. Africans in America have been decultured, detribalized and conditioned to think in left brain, Eurocentric, materialistic terms. Like the Europeans, we make a distinction between the mundane and the spiritual. In traditional African societies there is no such dichotomy. African people (those who retain their African spirituality) realize that we can have access and contact with the spirit world. Africans understood divinity permeates all things and that there are lessons and messages to be learned in nature, in social interaction, prayer and meditation.

Now western science tells us we live in a virtual sea of energy and vibration. It permeates our being but is beyond the awareness of our five senses. African people have known that for eons. We need to expand our awareness into the realm of the extrasensory. We must understand that omneity is always active in our lives. We need to know that God does his/her best work in the stillness and quiet! The Sun shines in silence, the grass grows in quietude, healing takes place in the stillness. We can't hear our cells multiplying and growing because the process is noiseless. All this is the work of divine intelligence. Winds and hurricanes make noise, but we can commune with infinite wisdom in the silence. Rejuvenation and regeneration are silent processes.

Yes, we can get information from others. Yes, there are times when external direction reassurance, validation and

guidance are necessary and welcome. But the primary direction comes from within during the times we are attuned to that still small voice of intuition. No problem is too large or too small to escape the attention of omneity. Another biblical text says, "So faithful the Lord is in all he does, so gracious in all his dealings. The Lord draws near to every man that calls upon him, will he but call upon him with a true heart. Utter but the wish, you that fear the Lord and he will grant it, will hear the cry and bring aid..." Psalms 144:18-20 (Knox translation) [The Hebrews were a male dominated patriarchal society. Most references to their god were in the masculine form. Africans on the other hand, understand there are both masculine and feminine aspects to all things.]

Where does this voice come from? It comes from within us. This is totally consistent with the reality that the "Kingdom of God is within you." (Luke 17:20). You don't have to go to a church, temple, mosque or pagoda to experience divine guidance. You don't have to be a member of a particular denomination, sect or religion to contact God. All it takes is a sincere heart, an open mind and faith. The next time there is turmoil, anxiety and agitation swirling all around you, get quite and listen for the still small voice of wisdom. Learn to differentiate the voice of intuition from the chatter and clutter in your mind. Separate it from your ego, trust it and heed its direction. As another text says, "be still and know (experience) I Am God."



The Bible's Old Testament offers good advice for modern living, Stanton says.

Photo by Savoy/LVS-Voice

Jets

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Unfortunately, neither usually does anything to improve the 'hood'.

What are we to do with these places? Suggestions have included tearing down old tenements, replacing them with more modern facilities, relocating into various locations (scattered-site housing).

All of these options are met with debate and criticism. Conservatives feel welfare recipients are undeserving of new housing with the rationale that if they really wanted it, they would get out and work for it. Scattered-site housing is an idea everyone approves of, as long as it is not in their neighborhood.

The residents of our nation's

projects are a lost tribe of people. No one wants them and they have nowhere to go. We look upon their residences as eyesores and make extra efforts to avoid them.

The people in these areas have created their own culture. Songs occasionally hit the charts such as "First of the Month," which emphasizes the excitement of receiving a welfare check. Clinics and birth control centers are placed inside or nearby to provide easy access to young mothers and their children, instead of churches and creative outlets. Substandard confectioneries and liquor stores, which are the only ones around, are in walking distance. An entire independent existence can be found in the perimeter of these residential villages.

Next time you drive by one

of these places, don't turn your head. Live in the reality that we have created for our environment. Look at the residents and wonder about what they do all day. Notice the children playing in the street and dirt and anticipate their future. Watch the young men sitting on and around their fancy cars and imagine how they survive.

Look at the pregnant teenagers and see through her eyes who her role models are. It may not be you or your relatives that you see, but somehow or another, we all contribute to their well being and state of mind. Then go home and look in the mirror, be thankful for what you have, and realize it could have been you.

Sylvia Perry is editor of The Jacksonville Free Press

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