

COMMENTARY

Cities, suburbs must unite to create change

Special to Sentinel-Voice
 The last 20 years or so cities in this nation have been faced with one crisis after another: The flight of the middle class; the abandonment and resegregation of public schools; the movement of jobs from cities to suburbs, a drug and AIDS epidemic; problems with public transportation and the disintegration of housing stock just to name a few.

In the past decade even older, inner-ring suburbs have found themselves confronting similar problems as urban sprawl took hold and more and more people moved further and further away.

In his book, "When Work Disappears," Dr. William Julius Wilson contends that the movement of jobs

combined with deteriorating housing and lack of transportation mean that poor people have been forced out of the labor market.

Wilson points out that a community with poor working people has different dynamics than a community of poor people out of work. A community of workers is more likely to be a functioning, nurturing environment in the midst of the poverty, while a community full of unemployed people has few businesses and services or positive elements.

As middle class people have fled the cities and even older inner ring suburbs in the past decade, searching for safer communities, better schools and less congested and polluted areas in which



to live, it has become increasingly clear that suburbs and cities are in this together. Problems of drugs and violence are present in Littleton and Pearl and Jonesboro just as they are in Denver and South Central Los Angeles and Roxboro. You can run, but you can't hide from the problems of modern-day America.

Now one group of leaders from the faith community around Boston have come

together to explore suburban-urban cooperation. The Cooperative Metropolitan Ministries, an ecumenical group of 58 local churches in the greater Boston area, is working with Wilson to address issues of racial and economic justice which the urban-suburban split have exacerbated.

While the newer suburbs have enjoyed the benefits of the nation's economic boom over the past decade, for

instance, the inner cities continue to see high incidences of joblessness and little or no economic growth.

Yet, the reality is that the suburbs suffer when the central cities are in decline.

For instance, a large, well-trained work force, efficient and less-polluting public transportation, good medical and higher education institutions benefit everyone. They are all needed to compete in the global economic market in which we now live and work.

Cooperative Metropolitan Ministries churches are now holding monthly urban-suburban dinner dialogues with local officials, community and business leaders, academics, the press and community development experts.

Over the next three years, CMM will include all of its member congregations in such discussions and focus on economic justice issues from a metropolitan perspective. Out of these discussions the group hopes to choose two or three areas to focus its advocacy efforts on, such as housing or employment or education.

Building bridges across a chasm which divides cities and suburbs is a sign of hope. More cities, more faith-based organizations, more educational institutions must take that first step to ensure that it happens. More of us must understand that we're all in the same boat now, no matter where we live, no matter what our income, no matter what our color or religion.

Carl Rowan's Commentary

Law enforcement officials must protect society from race-baiters

Special to Sentinel-Voice
 After Buford O. Furrow shot five people at a Jewish community center in Los Angeles and gunned down postal worker Joseph Ito because "he was nonwhite and worked for the federal government," the white supremacist leader of the Idaho-based Aryan Nations said of Furrow: "He was a good soldier."

The bigots within America who hate blacks, Jews, "foreigners," immigrants, Muslims and the federal government are carrying out an unholy war, but it is a war of snipers, isolated shootings and bombings, and one-man forays so far. It may soon become more organized — and worse.

In 1996, I published a book warning that this society was imperiled by white racists who threatened to kill Jews, deport or kill blacks, wage war on unfavorable judges and federal facilities, and eventually provoke a tragic race war. I made the mistake of titling that book, "The Coming Race War in America," thus scaring the hell out of many reviewers and people who branded it "alarmist" without reading it. I cited the 800 or so "militias" and the assorted venomous groups in America that had made as their "bible" a book by William Pierce called "The Turner Diaries," in which the script for the Oklahoma City bombing was set forth in chilling detail.

That book also set forth a plan for the extermination of blacks, Jews and unwanted



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immigrants.

My "alarmist" book is more pertinent, its documentation more chilling today than it was in 1996, because the haters have their war more on track. I am more alarmed now that I have seen Tom Metzger, leader of California's White Aryan Resistance (WAR), declare, "Good hunting, lone wolves" as he calls for a second civil war in exhorting his soldiers to act "in any way you see fit" against immigrants. The "crazy" single killers all have commanders giving orders.

Since 1995, the FBI and other law enforcement agencies have moved against the Viper Militia and other paramilitary groups that were amassing illegal arms and clearly constituted a threat of violence. That provoked a movement away from group actions.

To foil FBI and police infiltrators, as I predicted in my book, the move has been to "lone wolf" and "good soldier" violence, with Internet and telephone message and books by Pierce and other racists setting forth the battle cries and the targets.

The "disciples" and "soldiers" of Butler and Metzger will kill anyone — anyone — they think stands in the way of their Aryan America. Their race war is on. We can waste no time learning more about who they are and where they next plan to strike. And our law enforcement people must act accordingly.

Thomas-Hill debacle case of strange court justice

*Earl Ofari Hutchinson
 Special to Sentinel-Voice*
 If Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas thought he had heard the last of Anita Hill, he was wrong.

The ShowTime docudrama, "Strange Justice" which aired recently again dredged up the dirty allegations of sexual abuse Hill made against Thomas during his sex-charged Supreme Court confirmation hearings in 1991.

When Hill charged Thomas, a prominent Black man, with sexual harassment, he instantly became America's poster boy for sexual misconduct. What should have been a color-free gender issue was hijacked. Sexual harassment and Thomas became eternally linked in the public mind.

After he finished taking the ceremonial oath of office at the court and walked down the marble steps, a small band of protesters booed him and shouted, "Down with the male Supremacist Court."

Two years after his confirmation in 1991, Thomas was back on the sexual hot seat. Hill was still the issue.

In "Strange Justice," two *Wall Street Journal* staff writers, Jane Myers and Jill Abramson, claim that Thomas lied in his testimony to the Senate Judiciary Committee about his sexual conduct. They produced four women who claimed that Thomas was a sexual panderer. Thomas refused to respond. It was still their word against his.

Why did they drag this up more than two years after Thomas's confirmation? The writers claimed the point was to demonstrate that Thomas had betrayed the public's trust and confidence and was not fit to serve on the bench.

Thomas' critics didn't need more unsubstantiated revelations by Hill or her supporters to agree with that. Why didn't Myers and Abramson focus on how the Judiciary Committee suppress testimony that would expose Thomas's duplicity on affirmative action, voting rights, employment discrimination, capital punishment and

abortion rights?

While they were ripping Thomas apart, did they also condemn other White male Senators and congressmen such as Oregon Senator Robert Packwood for their sexual hijinks?

The authors, their publisher, the media and the public fixated on the alleged sexual perversion of a prominent African American. This was indeed strange justice. It revealed the blind spot that many women's activists, civil libertarians and civil rights advocates had on Black men and sex.

David Brock, an investigative reporter for the conservative *American Spectator* magazine, is an unapologetic Thomas supporter. In 1993, he published a book defending the judge. He ticked off the list of prominent White male politicians, celebrities and the military men who had also been accused of sex crimes when he said they were presumed innocent by the press and got "due process" within the legal system while Thomas got neither.

But blasting Thomas for his alleged sexual crimes overshadowed the issues that should have counted the most like his primitive political views. His archaic opinions and votes on abortion, prisoners' rights, voting rights, school prayer and his obsessive defense of the rights and power of corporations, public utilities and states rights has bordered on judicial extremism.

He sees himself as doing God's work. In his crusade to obliterate what is left of affirmative action, he has said, "If I write racism into law, then I am in God's eyes no better than they are."

Thomas should have been relentlessly hammered for his knee-jerk opposition to civil rights and social programs during his years as an appellate judge and as chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. This was the strange justice that African-Americans got from Thomas vs. Hill nearly a decade ago. Since then not much has changed.

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