

Public schools, property values—matters of class not culture

By Theodore Ransaw
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Not too long ago I had a temporary teaching assignment at an inner-city school. Although not predominantly Black, the school had little resources. The custodian had died; no one had filled the position in two weeks. Teachers were forced to pitch in and help once a week by vacuuming, taking out the trash, whatever they had to do to pick up the slack. Not so bad, for two weeks. But this went on for about a month. The school was that short on staff. The school was also short on equipment. One of the special ed pre-k classes was so short on toys, supplies and books that often the children had to share the same toys during playtime.

The students didn't mind; they were young and didn't know the difference.

I found out later that someone had broken into the school and stolen many of the toys. The teacher and aides mostly purchased what toys they did have. What type of person would break in to a school and steal toys from a special kindergarten? Sad. But what was really sad, a few days later, I subbed at a school, not in the inner city, and not predominately minority occupied that had so many resources each student had their own microscope in their classroom. The school also had a full-time substitute teacher, whose only job was to fill in temporarily in case someone got sick.

• Brown vs. Board of Education

Since the landmark Brown vs. Board of Education, there have been many debates whether things have gotten better for minorities. They

haven't. Sonia Nieto, author of "Affirming Diversity: the Sociopolitical Context of Multicultural Education," tells us there is more segregation in American today than in any other time in history. And if you think things are restricted to African-Americans, think again.

When President George Bush was running for president, he spoke at Garfield Elementary in East Los Angeles. The school was made famous by Principal Jaime Escalante, who propelled an unheard of amount of Mexican-American students into college despite lack of resources and equipment. What did soon to be President Bush focus on? Was it the school's track record of getting Mexican-Americans students into college? No, George told the students the "We need people to build our buildings...

people to do the hard physical work of our society." In short, it's okay if you don't go to college. Would George Bush have said that in a non inner-city school?

If you think that I'm against Bush (father or son) you're wrong. I'm not saying I am, I'm not saying I'm not. What I am saying is that there is a huge disparity between inner-city school, mostly made up of minority students, and non-inner city schools made up by mostly non-minority students.

• No child left behind

Every time I hear that phrase, I can't help being reminded of president Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty, and the Fair Housing Act. Intended to give African-Americans equal opportunity in housing ownership and property rentals, the Fair Housing Act seemed promising at first. However, as African-Americans moved into better neighborhoods in the city, Whites moved out. Suburbia was born.

Equal housing for everyone wound up meaning that housing buying opportunity was only equal to those who could afford it. Newer neighborhoods mean newer schools. Older neighborhoods become prime property and money is spent in renovation. It's a matter of class, not culture. In America, new schools get newer supplies, and the older schools in the suburbs get new equip-

ment, not because schools are predominantly Black or not. White people don't mind if there are minorities in their neighborhood, as long they can afford it. As long as the property value doesn't go down, no one seems to mind having a 'Black' neighbor. But since most minorities cannot afford to live in the suburbs, most minorities don't attend the same schools that they do. Simply put, whether you like it or not, whether you think it's fair or not, the better schools are in areas where the property value is higher. The higher the property value, the better the school. That's not racism, that's economics.

• The Millennium Scholarship

A socially stratified country, China invented the exam system. The only way out of a social class was to take an exam for the next level. In a sense, you could 'test' out from one social level to the next. Yes, the test was equal and fair, open to everyone. However, the only way to pass the test was if you knew what was on it. Things are the same in Nevada, look at the Millennium Scholarship. Just as a student can get through high school with A's and B's and can still fail the high school equivalency test, a student can meet the requirements for the Millennium Scholarship, and not be ready for college!

Are there good schools in

the inner city of Las Vegas? Yes. Most of them are private schools. If you look at test scores and property value of the neighborhoods, you'll see a direct correlation between Summerlin, Green Valley, and the Lakes scores and those of the rest of Las Vegas. Not only are those areas more likely to have higher scores and supplies, they are also more likely to have after-school programs, booster clubs for the sports teams, and active PTA's.

Tips for Nevada Parents Support your child's teacher, they'll support your child

Most teachers are good teachers. Believe me when I tell you that people do not become teachers because of the great pay, good working conditions, and support from the administration and community. Most teach because they love it and because they love children.

The PTA is not just for White parents

The next time something happens in school that you don't agree with, do something about it. When was the last time you voted in the school board elections?

Don't let your children leave the classroom at school

Schools only provide materials and instruction; it's up to you to provide the motivation, support and atmosphere to help your child achieve (See Ransaw, Page 17)

Overstreet

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fear of physical harm to enact a foreign policy initiative that goes against our nation's longstanding policy of no preemptive strikes against sovereign nations. The tragedy that is 9/11 caused us to rightly attack those that attacked us, but it also served as an excuse to attack the country of Iraq that posed no threat to the United States of America based on what we all have learned that the excuse was based on a "bunch of lies."

Now with both America and Iraq suffering losses in the ten of thousands, with no end in sight, we have turned longstanding allies into critics and in the process have caused the invasion of Iraq to serve as an aid in the

recruitment of terrorists on a global scale.

Comprising only 4% of the world's population, we have no hope of defeating terrorism without the help of the majority of the other 96%. Our present go-it-alone tactic, is only going to lead to the younger generation having to be uncomfortable at home and fearful of traveling to other countries for decades to come.

Come next Tuesday, November 2, 2004 you will have the choice of traveling the economic and security paths of the past four years that have divided our nation and alienated us in the world community or you can choose different paths to our future as a nation. It's time to put up or shut up.

Curry

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twice since that starting point — in March and April 2004. In nine out of 14 months, the economy has fallen at least 200,000 jobs short of the mark."

The media's penchant for strongly favoring George W. Bush in its reporting — or to portray Bush's lies as "dueling data," as NBC's Norah O'Donnell put it (6/14/04) — is not limited to reporting on employment. The central problem, as Fairness & Accuracy In Reporting (FAIR) noted in a May 20 report titled, "Campaign Double Standards," is that journalists do not hold Bush to the same standards that they require of Kerry.

"While the press corps applies microscopic scrutiny to Kerry's statements, looking for evidence of misstatements or 'flip-flops,' Bush gets little criticism for making false assertions," the report notes. Bush falsely claimed that Saddam Hussein would not allow weapons inspectors into Iraq when, in fact, he did and they remained there until the war was imminent.

"Few reporters ever mentioned this substantive falsehood... most major news sources chose not to bring up Bush's false statement — the New York Times was silent on the issue, as were the nightly

newscasts of ABC, CBS, NBC and PBS."

The report continues, "Bush's record is full of similar untrue statements. His claim that Enron's Ken Lay supported Bush's opponent in his 1994 gubernatorial race, when Lay actually contributed three times as much to Bush (ABC World News Tonight, 1/10/02); his insistence that the White House was not responsible for the 'Mission Accomplished' banner on the U.S.S. Lincoln (New York Times, 10/29/03); his statement in 2002 the economy 'was pulling out of a recession that began before I took office' (when it actually started in March 2001 — Slate, 12/30/02); his assertion in a 2000 debate that in his tax cut plan, "by far the vast majority of the help goes to the people at the bottom end of the economic ladder," when the bottom 50 percent really got roughly 10 percent of the benefits (Extra! 1/2/01); his boast that 'I've been to war' (Associated Press, 1/27/02) — to list just a few."

By now, Bush has figured out that he can lie to the American people anytime he wants to — and most of the time, the news media will not call him on it.

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Walters

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rating was that low.

But what if they do?

In these last few days before the election, I think we should all be reminded of the stakes. When most Black ministers in America look out at their parishioners, they see a flock that is characterized by the urgent needs: the necessity to have a good economy to provide them with decent jobs, to fight poverty, hunger and homelessness. They need to have excellent education and health care, but most of all, this year Blacks are saying that they need a president who will stop the war in Iraq.

In the Joint Center poll, when asked what their main priorities were, the respondents said first, the economy and second the war in Iraq, followed by health care and education.

How then, does a sensitive and accountable minister elevate the issue of gay marriage over these urgent priorities? Even if they have received a few dollars from an administration, they know that will not take care of the full range of their urgent priorities.

Although Black parishioners must listen to the voice of their leadership's moral

authority, they must also remember that the greatest moral teachings of the Bible were applied to feeding the hungry, healing the sick, and caring for those who could not care for themselves. I have always thought that was the major mission of the church.

To me, it's contradictory to dance with the devil — who propagates war and pestilence and death upon a defenseless people — in the name of profit, while supporting him in a cause such as opposing gay marriage, an issue that is, at best, secondary to the life problem of church members.

In fact, it is more than a contradiction, it is a betrayal of those who have gone before, such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who went into politics to enable government to establish a set of moral initiatives that would help to liberate our people. How does elevating gay marriage, to the point that our ministers are driven to support George Bush fulfill that legacy? It doesn't and we all ought to get our head straight about what is really important in this season of life and death choices.

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