

Kerner

(Continued from Page 1)

taxes up and services down, first-class jails and second-class schools."

Amidst euphoria over the candidacies of Sens. Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton, social ills based on racial disparities are still among the most vivid reminders of how far America has not come in 40 years.

"There is a new America emerging who are willing to cross the color line to vote. Men voting for women and Whites voting for Blacks. That's a good thing. But, the structural inequality between Blacks, Whites and Browns is still quite evident," said Jackson. The challenge is to invest in healing the breach and closing the gap. You can change from George Washington Boulevard to Martin Luther King Boulevard. But without investments, you won't have houses. ...Barack's candidacy is so exciting and it means so much to us. But, to close the educational gap, the healthcare gap, the business gap, the jobs gap, it will require a commitment of investment."

Wade Henderson, president and CEO of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, agrees, pointing to current events that most vividly depict the estranged societies.

"The mortgage foreclosure debacle is just the latest example of racially-tinged inequality, in this instance, resulting in the greatest single loss of wealth by African-Americans and Latinos ever recorded, [some \$213 billion]. The recent downward adjustment in crack cocaine sentencing by the Federal Sentencing Commission suggests that thousands of African-Americans previ-

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ously sentenced under the old regime were the victims of unequal justice," Henderson said.

He too particularly sees the Obama candidacy as a sign of hope. But, only with action.

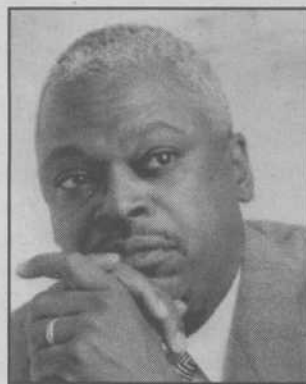
"While race continues to be salient factors in American life, persistent poverty has become the most significant barrier to real opportunity," he said. "Only by reducing and ultimately eradicating long-term poverty can we really reverse the predictions of the Kerner Commission's Report."

While racial disparities remain clear, some believe that the Kerner prophecy on race separation has become more clouded by economic class separations.

"Blacks are on the bottom, but the disparities in the income are now multiracial," said Rev. Joseph Lowery, civil rights icon and co-founder of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

"A small group of White elitist people now control more than 80 percent of the wealth. And we're in a situation where a handful of people have more than they will ever need, while masses of people have less than they always need."

He adds, "The privileged



groups are growing proportionately smaller. Those who are discriminated against and comprise the bulk of the masses are growing proportionately larger. So, the disparities are increasing in the country and Black folks remain on the bottom."

Lowery views the Obama candidacy as a good sign that a new era has begun in which people will look beyond race in voting for viable candidates. However, for the moment, the historic candidacy is limited to that conclusion, he said.

"We'll have to wait and see whether it's reflected in the economic cycles."

Two weeks ago, a remark by Michelle Obama, the wife of the presidential candidate, made headlines. She told a Milwaukee, Wis., audience, "For the first time in my adult life, I am really proud of my country. Not just because Barack is doing well, but I think people are hungry for change."

Though some misunderstood the remark, many African-Americans simply empathized. Myrlie Evers-Williams, former NAACP chair and the widow of the late civil rights leader Medgar Evers, believes Michelle Obama's statement illustrates the accuracy of the Kerner prediction.

"I have said practically

the same thing so many times over the years," Evers-Williams said. "And people who are criticizing her just don't understand the experience that we have had and have gone through, a fight like hell to make our country what it should be, but not feeling fully appreciated. ...And to work without ceasing to change things to where all of us will feel like true Americans."

Obama's candidacy is now among the few times that Evers-Williams says she has felt proud of America.

"I never thought that I would live to see this day," she said. "I never thought that we would get this close."

But, she also concludes that without a plan and action, nothing will change, and the prophecy of the Kerner Report will remain alive. "We still cannot fall into an attitude of 'we have made it.' We cannot afford to embrace an attitude of 'everything is okay.' There is a vigilance that we must have on a daily basis," Evers-Williams said.

"Not just for this election,

but with an ongoing built-in attitude that we must know what the issues are. We must know who the elected officials are. Once they are elected, we must be sure that they are accountable to us. There's no rest, and there should not be. There should not be a period of rest where we assume that everything is all right and we have made it in this country. Some have grown tired of hearing me quote the old saying, 'Freedom is not free,' but it's true. We must nurture it on a daily basis."

Your Horoscope Says... Feb. 28 - Mar. 5

ARIES

Reconsider a business offer, it might be a good one. You've got time, so sit down and weigh the pros and cons. Doing it alone is not best. Make a phone call. Talk to someone who knows you well. Get an objective opinion.

Soul Affirmation: I graciously anticipate joy, and this gives me the ability to give.

Lucky Numbers: 13, 31, 40

TAURUS

Your intuition is very high this week. You see where things are going even before they start. This will keep you from making false moves. Be careful not to let your suspicions keep you from making the moves that are definitely called for.

Soul Affirmation: My mood is created by the company I keep.

Lucky Numbers: 18, 44, 51

GEMINI

Beware of financial pitfalls. Your thinking on money matters is not as clear as it could be this week. Someone will try to catch you off guard. This week your luck turns for the better, so spend it with the one you love — or want to love!

Soul Affirmation: A slowing of pace is just what I need this week.

Lucky Numbers: 3, 41, 49

CANCER

Your mate has a sweet surprise. He or she might be a little timid about revealing it unless you present a very receptive mood. Choose your words carefully. You will receive good news about a loan or financial investment.

Soul Affirmation: I look to distant horizons to find truth this week.

Lucky Numbers: 1, 14, 16

LEO

You and your mate should start saving for a joint project. It will make you feel closer to each other. It'll give you something with which to bind the relationship. Otherwise you might feel that you are drifting apart.

Soul Affirmation: Self confidence is the key to my success this week.

Lucky Numbers: 17, 37, 45

VIRGO

Challenges will be ever present for you this week. Work at it calmly knowing that you are getting some things out of the way. Tackle tasks using your famous self-control rather than your passion. Use your passion on the weekends. Let loose! Be free!

Soul Affirmation: The sunlight of my spirit shines in the land beyond the horizon.

Lucky Numbers: 23, 34, 43

LIBRA

Harmonious communications are part of your charm, and you'll get far this week by speaking your word in an easy-going way. You'll find that your domestic arrangements are very comfortable to you.

Soul Affirmation: I let my words reveal the not-so-hidden truth about my being.

Lucky Numbers: 7, 9, 12

SCORPIO

This week is a good week to get in touch with your emotional self. You will respond well to what people close to you will ask from you. Your loved ones will appreciate your kindness when they find out how highly sensitive you are to their needs.

Soul Affirmation: My life itself is my greatest creation.

Lucky Numbers: 8, 19, 54

SAGITTARIUS

You know what you want, and you have the ability to make it happen. Step into action at work this week, and you will get a lot done. You can get what you want without being too demanding. Enjoy the time you have with your family. True rewards come from those who are related to you by blood.

Soul Affirmation: Truth is revealed in the smallest grain of sand.

Lucky Numbers: 2, 4, 6

CAPRICORN

Live this week with an adventurer's spirit. Trade in the comfortable for the exciting; the reliable for intriguing; the familiar for the new. Perhaps a change of scenery will get you started. You will rediscover feelings that you have denied yourself for a while.

Soul Affirmation: Communication is a skeleton key that fits many doors.

Lucky Numbers: 10, 11, 13

AQUARIUS

If you've just made a power move in your work life or love life, you couldn't have timed it any better. There will be a new level of appreciation and admiration for your leadership and forcefulness.

Soul Affirmation: I work hard to combat envy this week.

Lucky Numbers: 15, 30, 38

PISCES

You've made your point. Now wait. Wait for the feedback about the impact it had on the people around you. Be careful of those who don't celebrate with you. They feel the impact and are resisting the positive effects.

Soul Affirmation: Before goodness can come, I must expect goodness.

Lucky Numbers: 5, 20, 24

March

(Continued from Page 4)

ered several points of a 14-point list of policy recommendations, which focuses on issues in areas including education, healthcare, housing, wages, immigration, the environment, the death penalty, and the war in Iraq.

Demonstrators were also encouraged to vote. "If we believe today that life must be better for them (children), we have to start making it better," said Guilford County Commissioner Carolyn Coleman.

Robyn Kinney, a sophomore at N.C. Central University (NCCU) in Durham, and member of the school's

NAACP chapter, said she supports the 14-point agenda and believes historically Black colleges and universities should receive the same amount of state funding as other state-supported schools.

"Other state-supported schools receive more funding than we do, and I don't think that's fair," said Kinney.

James E. Williams, a 75-year-old Raleigh resident said he has been "fighting for a really long time."

He was involved with the Civil Rights Movement, served in the U.S. Air Force for little more than 20 years and is currently part of the

Teamster's Union in Raleigh. The areas he's heavily concerned about include job opportunities and education.

The marchers walked 1.5 miles from Chavis Park to the front of the State Legislative building where representatives of partner organizations addressed the remainder of the 14-points.

State Rep. Alma Adams addressed the crowd.

"There's no other important work that we ought to be doing but the work for the people," referring to the N.C. General Assembly.

Jeanna Covington writes for the Carolina Peacemaker.