

## OUR VIEW

# Mother to Son

Every year about this time, in celebrations big and small, cultural and ethnic, Americans honor their mothers for Mother's Day. This is a noble and honorable thing to do, for matriarchs, in many cases, are family backbones.

For Mother's Days past, the *Sentinel-Voice* has encouraged readers to go all out and show their moms how much they mean to them. No gift is too pricey, no words too kind, no gestures too nice (or sappy) for your deserving mother. She not only carried you, but nursed you. Raised you and molded you. Taught you and scolded you. Parented you and befriended you. Prayed for you and guided you. And, when necessary, let you loose, free to stand on your own. For that, she deserves thanks.

Single mothers, you deserve extra special kudos (and gifts) for what you do. From 1990 to 2000, the number of single-mother households increased 25 percent between to more than 7.5 million. By chance, circumstance or happenstance, you're flying the parental plane solo; a difficult job, to be sure, perhaps the most difficult job of all. You are your child's be-all and end-all. What an awesome responsibility. And many of you make it look so easy.

Citing research on divorce, a DivorceSource.com story by Kristen Diener makes interesting observations about single women raising boys. Quoting the story:

—"Female-headed households may be an even better environment for boys than households with men."

—"Sons from these families are growing up emotionally stronger, more empathetic, and more well rounded than boys from 'traditional' mother-father families."

—"63 percent of single moms polled stated they believed they were better able to raise 'a well-adjusted son' without a live-in dad."

—"69 percent of successful sons of single mothers asserted they were better off raised by their mom and 'couldn't imagine it any other way.'"

However, the article does cite research presenting an alternate view: "19 percent [of single moms] claimed they were having a rough time of it, and 18 percent admitted to 'throwing in the towel' and sending them back to dad if there was one around."

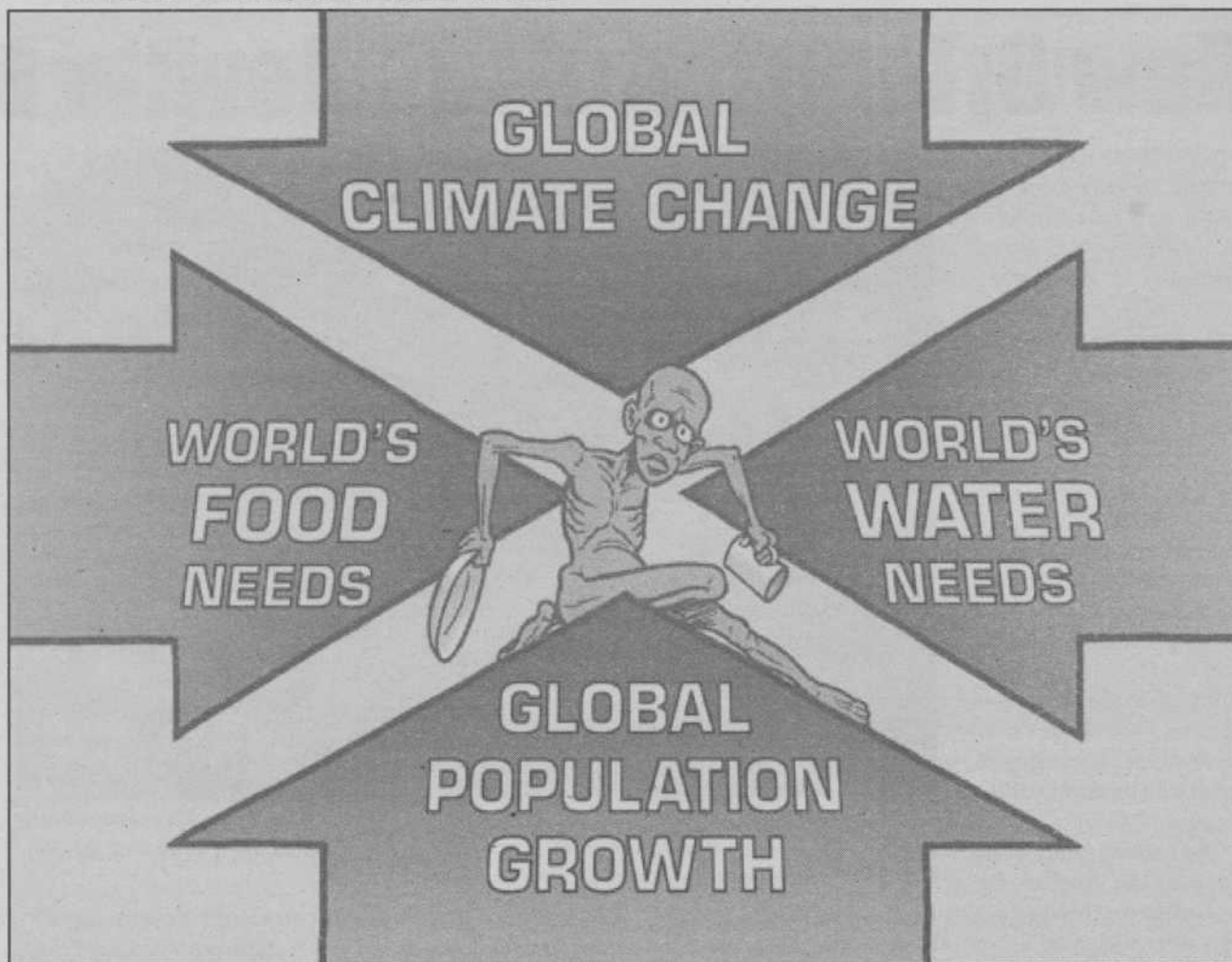
All single women, but particularly the latter group, need to recognize the unique challenges in raising boys. The adage of mothers loving their sons and raising their daughters must be flipped, indeed, has to be flipped to ensure young boys don't wind up statistics. This isn't meant to make your jobs any harder, but to clue you in to the pressures that Black males face. Pressure from educators who confuse behavioral issues with learning disabilities. From people who judge them on their skin color. From coaches who want them to be seen not heard. From employers who doubt their smarts. From racist cops. From society that seeks to emasculate, vilify and criminalize them at every turn. From themselves in the form of gangs. From the criminal injustice system that prizes headlines over fairness and a prison system that warehouses men.

This Mother's Day, mothers, we're asking you to commit to-raising your sons as you do your daughters. We thank you for not giving up because a man isn't doing his job. But we also recommend you go the extra mile. In asking this of you, we also ask this of ourselves. As a community, as a collective, Black America, we owe it to our mothers to help them raise our nation, this nation.

## Get off the bench

The slow trickle of superdelegates getting off the sidelines and into the Democratic presidential nominating contest must be quickened. There's absolutely no legitimate reason—although there are plenty of politically expedient ones—for Democratic Party brass to ride the bench at this crucial time. It's embarrassing.

Look people—and this includes the four uncommitted superdelegates in Nevada; that'd be Sen. Harry Reid, Attorney General Catherine Cortez Masto, Nevada Democratic Party Chairman Sam Lieberman and former County Commissioner Yvonne Atkinson Gates—act like superdelegates. You got the position by virtue of your decision-making ability. Make a decision. Quit worrying about political retribution. After all, you're super, right?



# My motive for Wright breakfast

By Dr. Barbara Reynolds  
Special to *Sentinel-Voice*

As a member of the speakers committee of the National Press Club, upon the invitation of Club President Sylvia Smith, I helped organize the press breakfast that featured Pastor Jeremiah Wright. Since my role—and my motive—have been questioned by some commentators, bloggers, columnists and journalists, I feel I owe my readers an honest answer.

I began suggesting Pastor Jeremiah Wright as a speaker about three years ago when I met him at the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference that was convening in Washington, D.C. At that conference, Sen. Barack Obama was the morning keynote speaker and I was the afternoon keynote speaker. After seeing that Wright and Obama had such powerful, but distinct social justice messages to lift people up, I wondered why the public had not heard more from this conference of which Wright was the founder.

As a minister, I served as a commissioner on the conference's Truth and Justice Hearings on Katrina. Sen. Hillary Clinton testified at the hearings and attacked the Bush administration for its negligence and Sen. Obama also addressed the group in Washington and encouraged its mission. I saw the conference message as a part of the legacy of the



BARBARA REYNOLDS

Black Church that was either being drowned out by the conservative evangelicals or the prosperity preachers.

For two years Wright and the conference took their message to Washington and the National Press Club. Many eloquent and renowned theologians—including Pastors Wright, James Forbes, Freddie Haynes, Cynthia Hale and others spoke. Unfortunately, only one reporter, Hamil Harris of the *Washington Post*, reported it, but there was little other coverage.

Ironically I remember praying that somehow this group directed by Rev. Dr. Iva Carruthers and composed of some of the most dedicated and progressive preachers and theologians in the country would gain more public exposure.

I soon found there is much truth to the old saying, "Be careful what you pray for because God may not come the way you want Him, but when He comes, He is right on time." So when the recent controversy around Wright erupted, Sylvia Smith, the

president of the press club, asked if I could get Wright as a speaker, the man I had been suggesting even before she became president. I was delighted because the Samuel Proctor Conference was again coming to Washington for its legislative conference, and Wright could now bring the social justice message with its promise of equality and inclusion to an international level.

That was my only motivation.

I have been attacked for my role in all this. What is fueling it is because I stated publicly that I voted for Sen. Clinton in the primary as my way of thanking her for how she stood up for the poor when she had a chance. Few have written that I also publicly criticized the senator for not firing Geraldine Ferraro when she insinuated that Sen. Obama was an "affirmative action" presidential candidate. Few have written that

in lectures and sermons I have spoken highly of Sen. Obama and how his message of hope offers a great opportunity to bring a divided nation together.

I believe in the First Amendment. I believe that people of different views should have a voice as citizens. I believe that pastors, preachers and prophets should NOT go to the rulers and politicians and ask permission from them to speak truth to power or to speak the Word that God places in their hearts. If they did that, most of the churches, synagogues and mosques in America would shut down.

As an editorial board member at *USA TODAY* for 13 years, I helped develop the Opinion Page. I was a door opener to let people in, not a doorkeeper to shut people out. I fought hard to bring upon those pages the views of the marginalized, (See Reynolds, Page 9)

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Contributing Writers:  
Shirley Savage  
Lés Pierres Streater  
Kanika Vann

Ramon Savoy, Publisher, Editor-in-Chief  
Don Snook, Graphics  
Ed & Betty Brown, Founders

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