

Be Responsible, Seek Common Ground

By Ricky Weaver
Ink Contributor

The world has gotten too cold. As my pastor would say, "The fire on the altar has gone out." We live in a culture that preaches survival of the fittest, and that it is all about, "Me, Myself and I." Our country's problems are very complex, and it will take a coordinated effort to develop meaningful solutions. Nevertheless, we can't afford to stay uninvolved while the situations in our communities are becoming even more desperate.

Unfortunately, America is not providing a level playing field for many of our children.

Bright, intelligent boys and girls are often being "pushed" along in our school systems without learning the basic skills required for completion of their grade levels. That means they are receiving poor educations. Armed with a poor education in this day and age, access to job opportunities and power is limited.

Guns, drugs and random violence are sicknesses, which are destroying our neighborhoods. When a handgun

can be purchased from virtually any corner in your community, that community has become hazardous to its residents' health.

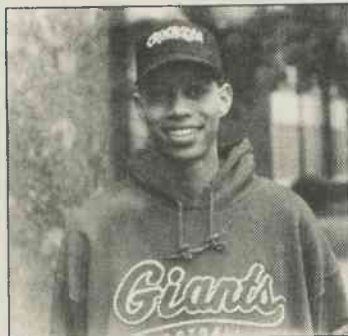
In fact, violence has adversely affected the daily lives of many citizens. That's unforgivable. Brothers and sisters are killing each other in cities all over the country, while our mothers and infants are being cut-down in the cross-fire. We can no longer turn deaf ears to their cries. Action must be taken now.

It's no secret that guns are not made in our neighborhoods. Suppliers and other corrupt individuals are the ones who bring them into our communities and profit from their experience.

The dynamics at work may be compared to the time when 15th century traders introduced guns to the continent of Africa in exchange for slaves. The traders played off rivalries between the nations so that they could obtain the labor needed for development of the New World.

What did Africans get in return? Surely some gained, as they were able to defeat their enemies with their new technological advances. But in the long run, Africa was left

without the strong black males needed to insure the well-being and stability of the continent.



The great kingdoms of Mali and Songhay would never again emerge, and the effects of "divide and conquer" strategy are still being felt today.

Over 400 years later, black-on-black crime is still rampant. The effect it has had is that there are so many of our brothers in jail when they should be in college furthering their education.

Furthermore, the main killer of black males ages 10 to 39 is guns. Thus, history is repeating itself as we speak. Dead or in jail, black males cannot be fathers and husbands providing for their families.

As a people, we need to come together to address this issue, and

others like it, so that our collective consciousness could be raised to identify these external and internal forces at work.

I am convinced my brothers and sisters, that we can overcome the petty grievances that have historically divided us: male vs. female, light-skinned vs. dark-skinned, Greek vs. other Greeks and non-Greeks etc. We need to start by finding common ground.

For example, we should absorb the African principle of *Nia*, or purpose, into our own daily lives.

Devoted to coming up with solutions to empower our communities socially, economically and politically, we wouldn't have any time for what was trivial. Converting self-negating behavior into usable networks with peers is of great importance.

As W.E. B. Dubois' Talented Tenth, it should be our mission to make a positive difference in our communities. It is true that parents should be primary role models to children, but it is also true that kids need other positive role models.

Realistically, parents can't

always be there, especially single mothers whose main concern is to keep food on the table.

In college, we have the opportunity to help youths make positive decisions. That's why we should gain all the knowledge we can so that we can learn; learn so that we can in turn teach. Reaching out and making a difference in just one person could even be saving that person's life.

One African proverb reveals, "The sun does not come twice to wake a man."

It's high noon and too many of us are still sleeping. Leaders such as Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, and Fred Hampton performed the ultimate act of love so that we could be in the positions that we are at now.

If they could give their lives, surely we could treat our fellow brothers and sisters with respect, and also take a stand to uplift where we all made it from. If we don't, then no one else will do it for us. Remember the spirit, and most importantly....Keep the Love! Peace.

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The Necessities of Being an Organ Donor

By Natalie Baucum
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Imagine that one of your family members is in desperate need of a life-sustaining or life-improving organ/tissue transplant, but there is no donation available to keep your loved one alive. Donating body organs/tissues can save a life although another one is being lost.

There is a long waiting list of people in North Carolina as well as other states who need organs/tissues.

You can help save a life by becoming an organ/tissue donor.

There are two ways to designate your desire to be an organ/tissue donor.

One way is to say "Yes" on your Driver's License when the officer asks you if you would like

to be a donor. The other way is to carry an Organ Donor Card from the Carolina Organ Procurement Agency in Durham.

The next step is to tell your family.

It is important that you discuss with your family your desire to donate if you become critically ill.

Frequently, when a family member has been pronounced dead, the next of kin does not know if that person may have wanted to donate any of their

body organs/tissues.

They, then, must decide whether or not that family member would have wanted to

"You can help save a life by becoming an organ/tissue donor."

donate. This is a moral question many of us may face with someone in our family. Unfortunately, this decision is usually made at a very difficult time.

What happens if I decide I

want to donate my organs or tissues? What happens if I decide to donate my family member's organs or tissues?

First of all, signing an Organ Donor Card or having said "Yes" on your Driver's License, does not ensure that you will be an organ/tissue donor.

Your legal next of kin still has the authority to allow your wish. If your next of kin decides that they do not want you to be a donor, then your organs/tissues CANNOT be taken.

What can I donate?

Patients qualify to donate

based on whether they have suffered a cardiac or brain death, age, pre-existing medical conditions and other criteria. Each donor is evaluated on an individual basis.

You can save someone else's life. You never know when that person who needs a life sustaining transplant could be yourself or someone close to you. Take the time to discuss this with your family. Make the decision now. You cannot expect someone to save your life or your loved one's through organ/tissue donation if you are not willing to do the same for them.

•This simply confirms your desire to be a donor.