



*Worship at the Church of your choice*



**Churches Should Set Economic Example**

By Rodney J. Sumler

The black church has long been the backbone of the Blacks community. With its help, black have had the strength to overcome many obstacles.

From a spiritual standpoint, it has given us the strength to continue on, even in the face of stacked odds and adversity.

However, we as a people have not taken full advantage of the power of the Church. We have looked at it merely in terms of the spiritual framework and have not tackled many of our secular problems with it. This is not negative criticism that so many always direct at the Black church.

Perhaps now, that we see that we can not overcome many of the problems affecting Blacks in any other way, we can work through the church to do so. We can use the inspiring religious leadership of our past as impetus to continue unfaltering forward to freedom.

The freedom that Black people are most in need of is spelled E-C-O-N-O-M-I-C-S. Until we can begin to find solutions for our economic problems, there is no way that we will ever become free.

Why have so many other ethnic groups in the country- Cubans, Jews, Chinese, Japanese, and others- found their way to economic freedom, while we are still looking for our own

economic emancipation? In many instances, our Black churches are teaching Blacks to adhere to the "pie in the sky" philosophy.

Black religious leaders, it should be clear that no one is going to solve our problems for us. It does us no good wasting our time blaming someone else for our problems. Blacks must take responsibility for Blacks-individually and collectively. And the best place for us to start is the church. We must accept self-responsibility and implement self-help programs.

When you look at the Jews, Italians, Greek and other ethnic groups in this country, you notice that they

implemented self-help programs upon their arrival in this country. They didn't formally set up programs, but in their own way, they set up self-help, sharing and caring programs to help their own people first and others later on. Black preachers teach us that clarity begins at home, but they fail to realize that the Black community is our home and unless we take care of that first, we will not have the economic freedom that is so desperately needed.

How can Asian and Hispanics- the new immigrants- come to this country and realize so quickly that the road to economic freedom begins

when they set up and maintain small, independent businesses? The various families set up networks to provide the support and before long, they are successful.

At the same time, blacks continue to fall into the same ruts. Instead of being producers, we are still consumers. We're so busy worrying about the Jones' and hating each other that we fail to see that we're doing nothing to help ourselves.

You could build an argument centering around black-on-black crime, drug abuse, poor housing, inadequate education, teenage pregnancy, unemployment and

underemployment being the major problems affecting the Black community. They are only bi-products of Blacks not having economic freedom. Most of them would not exist in their present form if we created our own businesses and were able to keep more of our money in the Black community.

There is a very good reason you don't see Korean street people, homeless Jews, or Chinese street people-they care for and about each other.

The Black church could very easily be the beacon of hope. It should be the first to help keep Dr. Martin L. King's dream to help

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