

A Report To The Joint Committees On Education Of The North Carolina Legislature

BY A GROUP OF REPRESENTATIVE NEGRO CITIZENS DRAWN FROM VARIOUS PARTS OF NORTH CAROLINA

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Because of the character of the Document below presented before the 1955 General Assembly of North Carolina and its potentially determining influence on the future of the Negro, its historic possibilities, the Carolina Times is publishing it this week instead of its usual editorials.)

This document was prepared by a group of outstanding leaders and influential citizens of the state.

We urge our readers carefully, thoughtfully and prayerfully to examine its contents.)

Ladies and Gentlemen:

We appreciate deeply your generosity in permitting us to express our views with reference to legislation which has been proposed for consideration by the Legislature of North Carolina.

The group which appears before you today is composed of persons, who, in our opinion, are outstanding citizens of North Carolina and who occupy important positions in their respective communities. We are here because of our spontaneous interest in the schools of North Carolina and although we are not an organized body, almost everyone in this group is identified with some major organization or group located in our State. The Grand Master of Free and Accepted Prince Hall Masons, the Executive Secretary of the North Carolina Teachers Association, the President of the General Baptist State Convention, the President of the North Carolina Federation of Women's Clubs, the editors of North Carolina's three Negro weekly newspapers, the North Carolina Correspondent of the Pittsburgh Courier, a member of the State Executive Committee of the Democratic Party, members of the Judiciary and Senatorial Committees of the Party, three Negro members of City Councils in North Carolina and numerous business and labor leaders are in the group which appears before you today.

Our immediate concern has to do with the Senate Bill No. 9 (and House Bill No. 12) — a bill entitled "An Act to Provide for the Enrollment of Pupils in Public Schools." We are also interested in other bills which have been introduced within recent days and which propose to alter the administration of North Carolina's public school system, namely Senate Bill No. 112 (House Bill No. 177) and the Worthington Bill.

Senate Bill No. 9 proposes to place in the hands of city and county boards of education the final authority and responsibility for assignment of pupils to schools within their respective units. The Bill has apparently been introduced as a result of the recommendation contained in the third paragraph of the report submitted on December 30, 1954, by the Governor's Special Advisory Committee on Education. The Committee's report also states that its recommendation was made in view of the decision of the United States Supreme Court, handed down on May 17, 1954 and dealing with racial segregation in the public schools.

We respectfully submit that, in our opinion, the transfer of authority over the enrollment and assignment of pupils, from the State Board of Education to the local units will be harmful to the present system of Public Education in North Carolina, and that the enactment of this and other proposed legislation would not be in keeping with the enlightened position of leadership for which North Carolina has been noted. In like manner, Senate Bill No. 112 proposes to decentralize the authority for operating the public school system. Under Section 115-10 the powers and duties of the State Board of Education are reduced considerably from what

they are at the present time. By the same token, the proposed Section 115-13 describing the duties of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction weakens his position in that he is no longer charged with "The duty of directing the schools or enforcing and construing the school law." Instead, he will be reduced to a public relations officer. Section 115-135 has to do with employment of principals and teachers and provides for mandatory termination of all contracts at the end of 1954-55 school term. This section can become the means of undue pressure upon members of the teaching profession and places them in a position of insecurity which they do not deserve. It is to be hoped that whenever North Carolina makes further changes in the terms of employment of principals and teachers, the Legislature will move in the direction of providing tenure for the thousands of persons who have prepared themselves adequately and have entered upon careers in the teaching profession in North Carolina's public schools.

Approximately one million, or one-fourth of the population of our State, are colored people, most of whom had hoped that North Carolina would take the lead in developing a positive and forthright position leading to integration of the schools in accordance with the Mandate of the United States Supreme Court. We are sure that many white persons in North Carolina have shared our hope in this respect.

Our hope has been grounded in a belief that North Carolina's stalwart citizens and their traditionally wise legislators will always take the path of sound reason on matter affecting the welfare of our state. Thus, our appeal takes the form of an analysis of the consequences of action proposed in bills before the Legislature bearing on the problem of integrating the Public School System. We propose to show that progress of all people in North Carolina has been seriously retarded by the shackles of segregation and that the removal of these shackles through a State policy on integration, firm leadership and a centralized school system will enable us to make great strides of progress, proudly and to the advantage of all citizens. Our views along these lines are organized around three points as follows:

I. The legislation proposed tends to decentralize the authority and responsibility for operating our public schools and thereby to hinder the State Board of Education in its efforts to carry out both state-wide functions assigned to it.

II. Racial segregation in the public schools and in employment is producing a burden which is becoming too heavy for the economy of our State.

III. Enactment of legislation of the type proposed is not in keeping with the best traditions of North Carolina.

I HARMFUL EFFECTS OF DECENTRALIZATION In the outset, we wish to point out that in our opinion,

the proposed legislation affecting the public schools seeks by various means to avoid the execution of the Supreme Court's decision and to slow down or retard the process of integration. The Bills introduced are designed to achieve this end largely by decentralizing the authority for operating the North Carolina public school system. The history of North Carolina, however, reveals that many efforts have been made to deny, or restrict educational opportunities of Negro citizens through legislation or other more subtle means. These efforts, however, have usually backfired when it appeared that they not only limited the opportunities of Negroes but hampered the total progress of our State in industry, economics and education. The history of these efforts is reviewed in A REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR OR NORTH CAROLINA ON THE DECISION OF THE UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT ON MAY 17, 1954 prepared by the Institute of Government of Chapel Hill. This report points out that from time to time our system of public education has suffered because of efforts to close, decentralize or otherwise restrict the efficiency of our schools. Under the system of strong centralized control, we have made significant progress which has been punctuated from time to time by efforts at decentralization. The present legislature, therefore, has the choice of putting its great wisdom to work on the problem of supporting the Supreme Court of the land or falling into the time worn trap of sacrificing efficiency of the schools while shadow boxing with an unfounded fear of school deterioration through recognition of the citizenship rights of one-fourth of the State's population. We appear before you today to urge that you will approach the problem at hand objectively and in the light of what has been accomplished in similar situations elsewhere in the country.

It is our firm belief that the successful integration of the schools involves full integration of the teaching force as well as pupils. In early 1954, the Board of Education of the City of Washington adopted the principle that all teachers would be hired and promoted on the basis of merit and that no references to race would appear on their application forms or on their teaching records. To those who may feel that this could not work in North Carolina, we refer you to integrated schools on Army Posts within our State. Several of these schools employ Negro teachers with satisfactory results. We wish also to call your attention to John Chavis, a fabulous Negro teacher who operated a school patronized by the wealthy white families in North Carolina in ante bellum days. The history of this learned North Carolina Negro is well known to most of us and needs no elaboration here.

We wish also to review briefly some of the problems which our dual system of education has imposed upon North Carolina's efforts to develop an efficient public schools system. Already we find ourselves struggling to carry a burden which exceeds our ability and it is apparent that integration of our schools

must be accomplished for fiscal reasons as well as those of a legal and moral nature. Many recent reports have called attention to the low efficiency with which North Carolina operates its 121 million dollar a year public school system. One such report is that developed in 1947 by the well-seasoned researcher and President-Emeritus of Iowa State College, Raymond Hughes, and his able associate, William Lancelot. Lancelot and Hughes compared the 48 states on the basis of commonly accepted measures of educational ability, educational effort and educational accomplishment. According to these authors, North Carolina ranked 44th among the states on ability to support education, 27th in effort put forth, but 40th in accomplishment. They point out that the State receives a relatively small income for school purposes and has many children to educate; that only nine states devote a larger percentage of income to education, but that the effort goes unrewarded due to too many small schools, too many small school systems, and the dual system within the small system. Thus, North Carolina makes a great financial sacrifice for a relatively small accomplishment.

This low efficiency in the operation of North Carolina schools is reflected again in a recent report of the National Education Association, highlighting education differences among the 48 states. According to this report, North Carolina ranks 45th among the states on median school years completed by the adult population; 43rd on per cent of functional illiterates, persons with less than five years of schooling; 37th on per cent of adult population with college education; 42nd on army rejections due to educational status; 46th on average number of pupils per teacher; 44th on number of school-age children per 1,000 wage-earning adults, 45th on income payments per capita; 44th on income payments per school-age child; 44th on income payments per pupil in average daily attendance; 45th on per cent of school-age children in school; 41st on average value of public school property per pupil; 38th on per cent of persons of voting age voting in the 1952 presidential election and 7th on financial effort made to support schools. Like the Lancelot and Hughes' study, this study clearly indicates that North Carolina puts forth greater financial effort but gets a disappointingly small return on its educational investment.

A third recent report, that of the North Carolina State Education Commission, brought into clear focus the basic causes for low efficiency in the expenditure of educational funds in North Carolina. Authorized by the General Assembly of 1947 "to study all educational problems to the end that a sound overall educational program may be developed in North Carolina," this committee called attention to the waste resulting from small school administrative units. Said the Commission:

"Since a local administrative unit should be sufficiently large to warrant the provision of all essential and desirable administrative and supervisory services, except those provided by the State, local units of school administration which are established in the future should be organized so as to assure in the unit an absolute minimum of 3,500 to 4,000 school population and a desirable minimum of 9,000 to 10,000 school population." This recommendation is in line with the recommendations of informed experts in school organization and finance who propose the 3,500 minimum for school systems and an absolute minimum of 300 pupils for a secondary school. If schools are smaller than this recommended their programs will have to be restricted or else the schools will have to be provided at increased cost. A satisfactorily organized school should have enough pupils to justify at least one teacher per elementary grade and twelve teachers for the high school grades.

That North Carolina does not approach these sound standards of schools is evident in the fact that in 1953, 137 of North Carolina's 172 school administrative units enrolled less than 6,000 pupils and 71 units enrolled less than 3,000 pupils. Moreover, only 73 of the 971 high schools in North Carolina employed twelve or more teachers.

According to the Durham Morning Herald for January 30, Governor Hodges made the following statement as he gave his wholehearted support to the recommendation made by the Commission on Higher Education that a central board be created to direct activities of the state university and colleges: "The time has come to eliminate duplication and waste caused by lack of planning and foresight in higher education circles." Is it not time to eliminate similar waste in the administration of public schools?

The position and recommendations of the State Education Commission, already endorsed by the North Carolina Congress of Parents and Teachers, the North Carolina State Board of Education, The North Carolina Education Association, The North Carolina Farm Bureau, and the North Carolina Federation of Women's Clubs all of whom sponsored the publication of the report of The State Education Commission, are wholeheartedly endorsed by this delegation. The Commission has held that "North Carolina schools, supported by North Carolina citizens, should provide the type of instruction which citizens desire for their children," that "educational opportunity should be equalized for all children throughout the State, regardless of race and regardless of place of residence."

In this respect we call attention to the Supreme Court's decision affirming the principle that equality of educational opportunity cannot be achieved in a segregated school system. Instead of perpetuating and encouraging educational inefficiency through legislative enactments that skirt the real problems of public education in North Carolina: small schools, small administrative units and the dual education systems, all of which will surely be intensified by even small steps toward decentralization of the public school system, this delegation adds its voice to that of thousands of others comprising the United Forces for Education in North Carolina and urge this Assembly to enact legislation "placing on the State Board of Education the responsibility, with the assistance of county committees on reorganization, to make and carry out a plan for determining on a state basis, the number of local administrative units and the number of school attendance areas that (Please turn to Page Seven)

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Great courage is needed for great living. In these times when truth is unpopular we need courage! The truth has been on the run in many places... "Truth crushed to earth will rise again..." Why be afraid to stand for truth? The truth is safe! But a lie is dangerous. In these times of fear, suspicion and hysteria we need the inner

Letter To Editor

The Editor
The Carolina Times
Durham, N. C.
Dear Sir:

I see by the Sunday papers that there is being observed a bicentennial of Evangeline's heartbreaking experiences by "descendants" in Louisiana. The article, written by a Hugh A. Mulligan purports to tell the story of persecutions of Catholics in Canada under their new British masters in 1755.

There is no doubt that Catholics have been persecuted to some degree, in this case as elsewhere. And it has been unfortunate for the individuals who have suffered under such persecutions, which is always altogether unlike the spirit of the lowly and lovely Jesus in whose name are wrought. But as a church organization, the Roman Church really has no ground of complaint when it is occasionally made subject to some degree of persecution, since she is the author of it among so-called Christians. Her occasional persecutions have, very frequently, resorted to it out of a mistaken sense of "righteous indignation" against the persecution and encroachments of the Roman Church itself.

It is a fact, too, that all other churches have gone on record as being opposed, unequivocally, to the practice of any persecution whatever, and have lamented the unwise actions of some few of their constituencies under the heat of passion. BUT THIS IS NOT TRUE OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH! On the contrary, her councils and spokesmen have declared persecution as a righteous instrument in the hand of the church to strengthen the church!

But, I guess we must expect to be fed these maudlin attempts to curry sympathy from those who do not know history. It should not be difficult for us to guess the religious affiliation of an Irish author by the name of Mulligan. Truly yours,
J. J. Walsh

"A Firm Stand Has Thrown Him Out"



Spiritual Insight

"COURAGE"

By Reverend Harold Roland
Pastor, Mount Gilead Baptist Church

"Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of good courage. Josh. 1:9."

Courage is essential for this difficult business of living. It helps us to live in the face of perils, dangers, trials and difficulties with poise and power. The noble souls of the ages have possessed it. It is needed in loyalty, noble living. Men and women who have led humanity along the path of progress had courage. They were towering, mountain-peak characters. Joshua was a man of courage. He needed it to stand with the minority against the majority. Nobody can drift. But courage is demanded to swim against the tide. He who would walk the untired path must have

Great courage is needed for great living. In these times when truth is unpopular we need courage! The truth has been on the run in many places... "Truth crushed to earth will rise again..." Why be afraid to stand for truth? The truth is safe! But a lie is dangerous. In these times of fear, suspicion and hysteria we need the inner

soul strength of courage. Be courageous, Dare to live nobly. A coward is a slave! Free yourself from the enslaving shackles of cowardice. I know two preachers in South Carolina who must take their places among the courageous souls of our times. Why? They stood and won for God and truth in perilous times.

Courage is needed for daily simple living. It is the power to face the simple daily demands. The word courage comes from the word HEART! So to be courageous is simply to have a heart to face the demands of daily living. Many are failing and falling in the face of life's daily demands. Why? They simply lack a heart for daily living. How can I increase my courage for daily living? There is nothing yet found that gives the courage for daily living as a daily habit of meditation, prayer and daily reading of God's word. TRY IT! My Friend, it works! It will give you courage to stand and be victorious. There is a very beautiful passage in Job... "BE STRONG AND OF GOOD COURAGE..."

on their feet..." Stop running away from the daily demands of life. Ask God to give you courage and power to face life just one day at a time.

It takes courage to live for God and righteousness. In the moral struggles of this nation one hundred years ago Harriet Beecher Stowe stands out. And in the great moral struggles of our times there is a little woman with a great soul. There is a little woman who is stout-hearted and courageous—that most courageous woman who was born in Georgia, Lillian Smith. She is the very embodiment of all that is NOBLE AND COURAGEOUS!

Noble living demands courage! It took courage for an Abraham to follow the Holy vision; a Joseph to stand amid the trails and temptations of Egypt; a Nathan to tell David the truth and an Amos to stand at Bethel. Let us shun the ranks of cowards! And take our stand among the noble courageous souls of the ages. "BE STRONG AND OF GOOD COURAGE..."

Life Is Like That

BY H. ALBERT SMITH
Not The Outward Appearance

Several years ago, I sat with a friend of mine, a fellow student, in the Bangor Opera House watching a news reel. The picture of the late Warren Gamaliel Harding, then president of the United States, was flashed upon the screen. My friend obviously impressed by Harding's physical personality remarked with considerable enthusiasm:

"Look at that face, 'Smitty.' There's strength in that face. There's a masterful man, a man worthy of the honor that is his, a man who is a fitting symbol of Anglo-Saxon manhood and masterfulness."

A Contrast
A moment later, Calvin Coolidge, the vice-president, was shown. Beside Warren Harding, Mr. Coolidge did not show to any advantage at all. In fact, it seemed to me that somebody could have done the vice-president a favor by not showing him and Harding simultaneously or almost so.

My friend suddenly became vocal again. He voiced his sentiments in these words: "I don't like him. Look at that chin; it's weak."

Abilities Stressed
Some years later, I heard a prominent government official who had been close both to Harding and Coolidge during their tenure in the White House. This man drew a picture too—a picture of the two men. But his portrait carried no suggestion relative to physical appearance.

He was concerned with the abilities of the two men. His delineation presented a contrast that revealed Coolidge as a towering giant and Harding hardly worthy to be considered as being in the same class with the thinned-face man from Vermont.

Reversed Contrast
I'll remember for a long-time the contrast drawn. That official said that Coolidge could move with his little finger more than Harding could with both hands. Some of us will remember that the administration of Warren Harding brought to America no particular glory or honor. And certain scandals associated with it, such as the Tea-Pot Dome Incident, are realities the Republican Party would like to forget and wish the Democrats would.

St. Chrysostom
Back in the 4th century, there lived a little man who bore the name St. Chrysostom. He was a preacher of such great ability that he drew people by the thousands and was known as the man with the golden mouth. But it is said that this man was so small in stature that he could scarcely look over the pulpit stand behind which he stood to deliver his sermons. It was also said of him that he was so powerful, winsome, and captivating in his eloquence that before he had finished a sermon, he appeared physically to be a giant.
Two Ministers

During my student days, I attended a minister's conference held in the People's Baptist Church in Boston, Massachusetts. Two ministers, the late Dr. Adam Clayton Powell, Sr., then pastor of the Abyssinian Baptist Church, and the Rev. Paul Thompson, then pastoring a small town in the Bay State, were present.

Size Difference
The Rev. Powell in those days was a large man of striking physical proportions and a fog-horn voice which he knew how to use effectively. The conference president introduced the New York minister who briefly spoke.

Following this, Mr. Thompson was introduced. He was a very small man who stood in decided contrast with the Rev. Mr. Powell in every physical characteristic. Of this he seemed conscious as he began by telling his audience that he lacked the size and physical equipment of many preachers, but when ever he came before an audience, before he got through, they knew he had been around.

Had Ability
Whether the dapper, diminutive clergyman made that statement to compensate for an inferiority complex, as a boast, or to offset impressions he thought his predecessor had made, or merely as an humble acknowledgement of confidence in his message, partly humorous, I can't say.

I do not know, however, that his remark was taken in good spirit and provoked general mirth. In fact, the Rev. Thompson was a preacher of considerable ability. He not only had a message but knew how to tell it and combined, with his homiletic ability, spiritual insight, and fluency, unusual historic and dramatic abilities.

Time Limited
During World War I, a small (Please turn to Page Seven)

SATURDAY **The Carolina Times** FEB. 26, 1955

L. E. AUSTIN Publisher
CLATHAN M. ROSS, Editor
H. ALBERT SMITH, Managing Editor M. E. JOHNSON, Business Manager
JESSE COFIELD, Circulation Manager

Published Every Saturday by the UNITED PUBLISHERS, incorporated at 519 E. Pettigrove St. Entered as second class matter at the Post Office at Durham, North Carolina under the Act of March 3, 1879. National Advertising Representatives: Interstate United Newspapers, Member, N.W.P.A.

No guarantee of publication of unsolicited material. Letters to the editor for publication must be signed and confined to 500 words.

Subscription Rates: 10c per copy; Six months, \$2.00; One Year, \$4.00 (Foreign Countries, \$4.00 per year.)