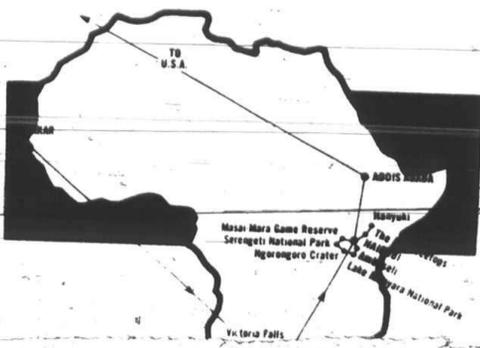


African Spotlight



African Names And Their Meanings

The scoop of African name is often prescribed by the circumstances that led to the name. What does this sentence mean? It means that in Africa, and that means in all parts of Africa, people are named because of some hopes fulfilled, wishes granted, expectations realized, or some longings for inner fulfillment.

The idea of one Supreme God is as natural to Africa as the fact that black people inhabit the most parts of Africa. But this Supreme God has working for him, it is believed, so many other gods who are in daily contact with men and report back to the Supreme God what goes on in the world at the end of each day.

This is not unlike the belief in many Christian religions where angels and saints are said to be nearer to God than men are and where the image of God is often imagined in paintings and drawings. Prayer through these angels and Saints, it is said, gets immediate answer since these intermediaries have direct line of communication with God as men probably do not.

An understanding of this kind of thinking will help in understanding how many African names are arrived at. Any group of people have a way of expressing their hopes and fears in words and many Africans name their children to express just that.

There are limitations to that.

There are certain things that seem to be excluded in arriving at an African name. Names that give direct or indirect implication of pomposity, doing better than others, being the luckiest individual around and being a superman, are not common in Africa since it is believed by many in Africa that man's achievements are to be seen and not to be told. That is, although wealth is important in many parts of Africa, nobody names his child "wealth" because that will give the idea to others that that person is bragging about his wealth to his less fortunate neighbors.

Since happiness is not restricted either to the rich or the poor, many people in Africa name their children happiness, meaning that the arrival of the baby brings happiness to the household.

Parents often name their children after somebody in the family that the child looks like or takes after.

It is believed by many in Africa that relatives are reincarnated in children of the family. It is a belief strong among all segments of African people and many African names reflect this believe. Hence it is common to see children who are named after the grandmother or the grandfather, uncle, aunt, nephews and other distant relatives.

African names are history in a nutshell.

With the advent of Christianity in many parts of Africa, hospitals and health clinic were introduced. This meant that there began to be fewer deaths as a result of childbirth. In gratitude of this phenomenon, many parents named the children who were born alive in these hospitals and clinics to reflect the fact that they owed their lives to the good work of the hospitals and clinics.

For example, there are many people in Africa whose names mean "Europeans help God to bring people alive to this world." The underlining meaning of this name is that having lost about five or six children before the coming of a hospital or a clinic, that the parents are grateful to God and the founders of the hospital.

Another change of this century in African names is the many people who are named after some political leaders.

For example, in many African nations, the leaders of the day have many children named after him. The implication of this way of naming is a wish that the child will grow up to be as important or famous as the leader he is named after.

How can a black American who wishes to take an African name go about it?

There are many steps he can take.

First of all, he must decide in what language he wants his name to be in.

Africa has over 500 different languages.

Then he will decide what he wants his name to mean and then find a speaker of that language and ask that speaker to translate the English wording he has chosen to the language of his choice.

English names do not have African names equivalent.

For example, there is no African name that I know of that is equivalent to Smith or John. Hence to walk to somebody and ask what does my name mean in Africa is at best to ask the impossible.

You do not always have to go through the above ways to pick an African name.

You can simply choose a name that you have heard before and liked it and use the name for yourself.

However, it is advisable to know the meaning of the name so that at least you will know what you are called.

N.E.

Children With Hidden Handicaps

Children with Learning Disabilities are often referred to as the child with the "hidden handicaps"... The symptoms may be so slight they are simply regarded as "lazy" or "spoiled." These children are usually failing in reading, spelling, writing or arithmetic, but the teacher insists he could do the work "if he only try."

Symptoms may be mild, but they may be hyperactive or remargic; aggressive or withdrawn, a superb athlete or completely uncoordinated. However, each teacher will agree that the child is "different." The attention span may be short, certain memory disorders may be present and frequently they will have difficulty in understanding abstract concepts. Seemingly they often lack a basic understanding of their world - such as body image, form and spatial relationships. Experts agree that despite the symptoms, the intelligence is there.

Only in recent years has this problem come to light and these children identified under a myriad of terms, names and descriptions. But no matter what they are called, many will inevitably fail in school and become "dropouts." The most conservative estimates number such young people as 2 or 3 percent of the school population; others run as high as 15 to 20 percent.

WHAT IT IS WHAT CAN BE DONE

CHILDREN WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES CAN BE HELPED THROUGH -

- early and accurate diagnosis;
- recognition of their abilities..
- of the ways in which they can learn- as well as their disabilities;
- establishment of school, health, recreation and other programs to meet the special needs of these children.

The North Carolina Association for children with Learning Disabilities is an organization of interested North Carolina parents, teachers and persons in allied professions who want to see

WHAT YOU CAN DO

that all children have the opportunity to reach their potential, and most especially those children with a Learning Disability.

Associated with the National Association for Children with Learning Disabilities, the North Carolina ACLD is a non-profit organization to aid North Carolina children with learning disabilities of a perceptual, conceptual or co-ordinative nature and-or related problems.

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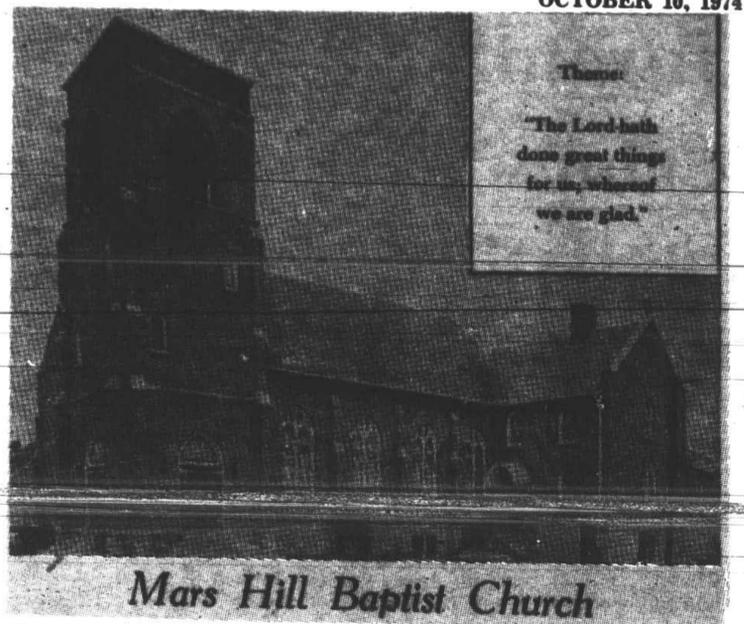


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