

Forum

Rest in Peace

"A seed, until it is released, is only the promise of a tree."
— Myles Munroe

How can you "rest in peace" if you never release your potential? How can we, as a community, be satisfied until we use all the resources we have to realize our potential? How can we as an African-American people — a nation within a nation — afford to allow others to determine our future?

The promise of a great community is within our reach, if we only release the greatness we have within.

The thought of what we can accomplish takes on added significance as we celebrate the 30th anniversary of the famous march on Washington and begin planning the second African-American Summit. Are we going to take control of our future or "rest in peace" and depend on others to save us?

Potential is unused success ... latent power ... what you can accomplish that you haven't yet accomplished. Potential is a seed of greatness waiting to be released. It needs watering, nurturing and attention — concentration of power — to fulfill its potential.

In case you have been "resting in peace," know that the alarm is ringing and the wake-up call has been placed. If we don't get up now, we may not have another chance.

It's time to consider the impact of the Hudson Institute report, "Work Force 2000: Work and Workers for the 21st Century." By the year 2000, the majority of new entrants into the workforce will be women and minorities. Not only are the demographics changing, but we are becoming more service-oriented and driven by technology. Very few jobs will be created for those who cannot read, follow directions and use mathematics. How does this relate to our potential?

Well, pick up the paper on any given day and read the police briefings and reports of violence that are robbing us of our potential. We have more young black men entering prison than college. Two out of four black men age 17-24 are either in prison, on parole or probation. Fifty percent! And most without a high school education.

A major segment of African Americans who could make up the majority of new entrants into the workforce by the year 2000 are, instead, in jail — preparing to enter our new jail, undereducated, miseducated or undeveloped. At a time when we should be positioning ourselves to release our potential, the seed is being buried.

Consider an apple seed. Within it is potential, the promise of an apple tree. Until the seed is planted and released, that's all it will be — a promise. When its potential is released, it grows

into an apple tree, which produces apples with seeds to grow more trees to produce more apples.

We are like seeds. For every girl we lose, we lose a woman ... and every boy, a man. A nation within a nation is being lost without bearing the fruit of its potential. We are willing passengers on a journey into the year 2000 where we will be nonparticipants.

GUEST COLUMNIST

By NIGEL ALSTON

We must prepare to be participants and remember the golden rule. He who has the gold, rules! And the "gold" is information and the knowledge to use it.

We continue to bury our potential with black on black crime, an increase in teen pregnancy and hopelessness. Drugs and alcohol seemingly rule the day. Because we are preoccupied with immediate gratification, we will be left out of tomorrow. Our potential to be full participants in society is diminishing daily. We cannot allow the tragedy of our potential to go unreleased.

The second African-American Summit is our seed — the promise of a tree. It is our opportunity to come together to develop our agenda, determine what our priorities are and go to work.

As we prepare for the summit, we can be comforted by two previous successes — legal struggles to end segregation and the Civil Rights Movement. Jeff P. Howard, Ph.D., a psychologist and president of the Efficacy Institute Inc., points out the commonality of these two movements, which I think are applicable today as we develop our agenda: Clear, compelling objectives, mobilization of a broad base of support, clear, operational approaches and a belief in the capacity to achieve the desired results.

According to Howard, there can be no real peace for us or pride in our status as beneficiaries of the previous movements unless we take control. As we watch so many young souls being destroyed before our eyes, "Who will take responsibility? If we do nothing, there will be no meaningful future for us.

In every seed there is a forest, in every fish, a school, in every bird, a flock, in every cow, a herd, in every girl, a woman, in every boy, a man, and in every man, a nation.
— Myles Munroe.

The seed is planted. If we take responsibility for it, we can all "Rest in Peace."

Doonesbury



Losing Our Youths to AIDS

Is it possible that we could lose a generation of our young people in the black community to drugs, violence and AIDS? Yes, it is increasingly possible. Research information indicates that violence is the largest cause of death among black males, and the percentage of blacks in prisons and youth detention centers is astonishing.

Available information indicates that more recently, the number of persons testing HIV-positive for the AIDS virus is growing rapidly. There are current indications nationally that women are becoming infected with the AIDS virus more often than men. Women testing HIV-positive may infect men but also may give birth to babies who will test positive. Between 1991 and 1992, the number of babies born in North Carolina testing positive for the virus increased 42 percent.

In the city of Winston-Salem, when we compare the number of AIDS patients by area, we find 33 percent live in zip code area 27105, and 29 percent live in zip code 27101, while only four percent live in area 27103. The remaining cases are spread out over other areas. If the present trends continue to increase, we could project that one out of five persons will die from violence, and one of five will die from AIDS in the at-risk neighborhoods. It is conceivable that drugs, violence and AIDS could wipe out one-third of the youth in the next 10 years, particularly those who are at risk.

A worse case example can be found in Africa. Kenya has a population where 35 percent of the people test HIV positive for the AIDS virus. This means that the people infected may not be living in 10 years. Consider also the short life span of the children born to the infected mothers.

AIDS is caused by a virus which breaks down the body's immune system, thus rendering the body vulnerable to many germs and infections. The virus remains in the body for years. An infected person may not be aware or show symptoms but is capable of spreading the dis-

ease. After a period of time, the infected person develops full-blown AIDS, becomes very sick and dies.

This disease earlier was prevalent primarily among homosexuals and drug users, who used dirty needles. AIDS is now spreading rapidly in

the heterosexual population. The defense against this disease is abstinence from sexual relations or practicing safe sex, using condoms.

Efforts to convince teen-agers to abstain from sexual relations has proven futile for many. Efforts now by new Surgeon General Dr. Joycelyn Elders and other concerned health professionals and counselors are directed to teaching young people how to save their lives by practicing safe sex.

It is the children who do not get the necessary and proper exposure in family, church and school who are at risk. They stand on the edge of disaster, because they do not have the maturity, discipline, moral value system or will do what is necessary to survive in a society of rules and law. These are the people who may be destroyed by AIDS. Do they deserve to die because they make a few mistakes?

If we would organize a massive public information campaign and information centers to emphasize the danger and the need for serious discipline and self-control, maybe some of our young people at risk could survive for five more years to become mature and knowledgeable enough to be health and productive citizens. Otherwise, many who are 15 years old now will not live to be 25.

If we do not help, by making available our time and educational resources, we will be guilty of the sin of omission. As our late President John F. Kennedy said, and I am sure we all agree, "Here on earth, the work of God must truly be our own."

GUEST COLUMNIST

By J. RAYMOND OLIVER JR.

VOICES FROM THE COMMUNITY

This summer, there have been several clashes between police and residents of the black community. The Chronicle asked city residents how they felt that relations between the police and the black community. Here are their responses:



Alzie Sherard, 39 housewife

"I think the police need to be friendlier toward black people. Sometimes, the police treat people like animals. If they try to be a little kinder to them maybe they won't resist arrest. If they come into the community more, I think blacks would accept them more."



Laurence Henry, 29 assistant manager

"The police and the community need to work together. They should be understanding and try to solve problems in our community. Some police officers live in different areas and are not familiar with the street that we go through."



Eillian Hogg, 37 retired

"The police should be more understanding and try to solve problems in our community. Some police officers live in different areas and are not familiar with the street that we go through."



Willie, 37

"I think that the community and the police need to work together. They should be understanding and try to solve problems in our community. Some police officers live in different areas and are not familiar with the street that we go through."