

# OPINION/ FORUM

## THE CHRONICLE

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Photo by Kevin Walker  
 Mary Jordan is helped off a charter bus Sunday as she arrives for a food distribution program at Agape Faith Church in Clemmons.

## OUR THANKSGIVING PRAYER

We are certain that no one needs to be reminded that on this Thanksgiving much is needed in the way of prayer. These are tumultuous times. Everywhere you turn, there is turmoil, crisis and sadness. The economic climate is stormy at best. Ordinary people of modest means are suffering. Many among us are having problems meeting even the most basic of needs.

Our government seems to only be concerned with bailing out the ones who are responsible for this mess in the first place. That is why we are emphasizing prayer above all else this Thanksgiving.

When you consider that big companies are receiving billions of dollars to keep their companies afloat using taxpayers' money, how do you reconcile them prospering and the rest of us suffering? Consider also the fact that many of these companies are receiving money that they have said they do not need.

It is going to take a lot of praying to affect the situation. Some folks do not believe in the power of prayer. For those of you who do, we ask that you to pray for the sick, the poor, the needy and those who have mortgages that they cannot meet. Pray for those who have children to feed but cannot find jobs.

We need also to pray for those who are sitting high and looking low. They need help too. They need to understand how ungodly it is for them to continue to reap benefits while everybody else is bleeding. How much does one require to be whole? Does it take a company billions of dollars of profit to be successful? Do executives need to make in excess of \$50 million for an annual salary and then get a couple million in bonuses in order to consider themselves wealthy? We need to pray for them.

Even in our suffering, though, we need to give. We need to be in a sharing mode this Thanksgiving. After all, if we are healthy and in our right minds—we have reason to be thankful. If we have a warm place to sleep at night, we have reason to be thankful. If we have but one good meal to eat a day, we have reason to be thankful. Let us thank God for the many blessings that we have and pray that He will touch the hearts and souls of those that have plenty but are too callous to share.

Let us pray for President-elect Barack Obama. As this country's first African American President, he faces the most difficult time in American history. He certainly needs prayer. His job is difficult even in the best of times. Now that it is the worst of times, we know his critics will judge him harshly and constantly. Let us commit to praying that God will lead his thoughts, words and actions.

## An Olive Branch for Jesse Jackson

**Julianne Malveaux**  
 Guest Columnist

When the 2008 contest for the Democratic nomination for President got heated, New York Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton threw all kinds of wild accusations at President-elect Barack Obama.

He wasn't fit, he wasn't ready, and she didn't know whether he was a Muslim or not. Time heals all wounds, and now Sen. Clinton is poised to be Secretary of State. The fact that she campaigned enthusiastically for Obama didn't hurt her chances to be the third most powerful person in government, and the appointment suggests that Obama is serious when he says he wants to surround himself with the best and brightest minds in our nation.

Sen. Joe Lieberman campaigned against Obama, so enthusiastically supporting fellow senator John McCain that he hoped to get the vice-presidential nod that Sarah Palin ended up with. Elected as an independent, he has been allowed to maintain his seniority as a Democrat, and even a committee chair, despite his acts of disloyalty to the Democratic Party.

President-elect Obama could signal that he wants Lieberman punished by stripping him of his committee chair, but he has not done so. Disloyal Lieberman has had to pay no consequences at all for his behavior.

Meanwhile, the Rev. Jesse Jackson made some ugly comments when he was off-mike at Fox News back in July. He was roundly, and justifiably, criticized for his remarks by an array of people, including his son, Congressman Jesse Jackson Jr.

From all outward appearance, Rev. Jackson seems to be



persona non grata to the Obama team. So while Clinton, Lieberman, and even McCain have been forgiven for their campaign behavior, there appears to be no forgiveness for Jackson.

The elder statesman continues to lead Rainbow/PUSH and continues to make a difference on issues of social and economic justice. He has not let the cold shoulder from the Obama team slow or stop him, but it is clear that he would welcome the opportunity to spend a few minutes with President-elect Obama. And why not? Jackson has rubbed elbows with Wall Street giants through his annual Wall Street Project conference, and understands some of the fundamentals behind this current economic meltdown.

Further, his reach is broad—from Wall Street to Main Street to the 'hood. The President-elect could benefit from Rev. Jackson's insight, just as he has benefited from the insights of Senator John McCain.

During the campaign, it is understandable that Obama would not meet with Jackson

for fear of being considered "too black" or "too left". After all, the Jackson wing of the Democratic Party is unapologetically left of center. Now, the campaign is over, Obama has been elected, and he has said he will be the president of all of America.

He has reassured the right wing by meeting with John McCain. Why not reassure the black left by meeting with Rev. Jesse Jackson?

The Black left was in full force at the State of the Black World Conference in New Orleans this weekend. But for a family emergency, Rev. Jackson would have been there. Rev. Al Sharpton was also scheduled to speak. Minister Louis Farrakhan was on the program for Sunday.

Organized by Dr. Ron Daniels, the gathering drew the Urban League's Mark Morial and the Congressional Black Caucus's Dr. Elsie Scott, the University of Maryland's Dr. Ron Walters, among others. I participated in the opening town hall meeting led by talk radio hosts Bev Smith and Mark Thompson.

While Revs. Jackson and Sharpton were missed, there was rich conversation about the state of the civil rights movement, and the responsiveness that President-elect Obama will have to the African-American community.

While the President-elect is meeting with this group and that, hearing from this or the leader, it is important for him to maintain an open door to the civil rights community.

And it is important for him to be open to meeting with among others, Rev. Jesse Jackson. Such a meeting would signal respect, magnanimity and the open spirit that has welcomed Clinton and Lieberman to the Obama team. While the success of the Obama administration does not depend on a meeting with Rev. Jackson, it sends an important signal to a sector of our nation that supported this President elect. Why not reach out to Rev. Jackson and, by extension, to the Black left?

Dr. Julianne Malveaux, famed economist, is president of Bennett College for Women

## Reading is the Ultimate Gift

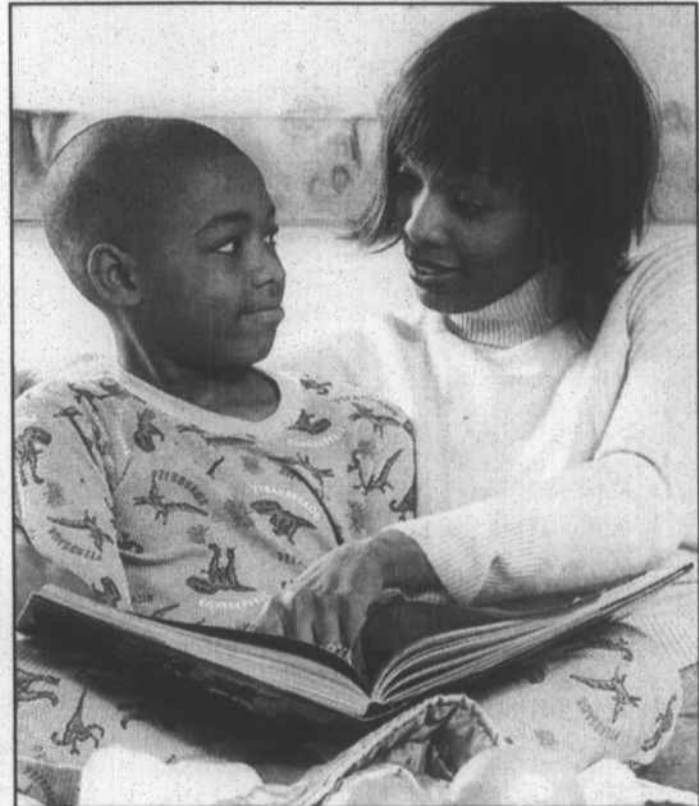
**George Curry**  
 Guest Columnist

Of the many things I have to be thankful for this Thanksgiving, one is a gift given to me in childhood—a love for reading. I was reminded of this special gift two weeks ago when I accompanied my 6-year-old granddaughter, Neyah Angeliqwe Curry, and her parents to a parent-teacher conference at her school.

We carefully reviewed each comment on Neyah's report card and talked about what her parents, Edward and Nikki, could do to strengthen her skills. Then, Nikki surprised me by removing a book from the shelf, giving it to Neyah and saying, "Neyah, show Pa Pa how you can read." I placed Neyah on my lap and she read the book almost flawlessly. I was so proud as I cheered her on. "My granddaughter can read," I said repeatedly. "My baby can read." My happiness was rooted in the knowledge of how reading empowers people.

Reading has always been a big deal in my family. In spite of growing up in public housing with parents who never completed high school—or, maybe because of it—reading was emphasized in our Alabama home.

I can't remember a time when we didn't have The Tuscaloosa News delivered to our home. Everyone would try to read it before my stepfather, William H. Polk, because he read everything in the paper. I do mean everything. William went to the 5th grade and was perhaps the smartest person I have ever met. He watched NBC network news, called the Huntley-Brinkley Report, every weekday. Mama tried to



get us to eat together as a family, but if the news came on, William dashed to the TV.

All three of my younger sisters—Charlotte, Chris and Sue—were avid readers as well. In fact, when we'd gather around the dinner table, we'd often discuss issues in the news. One day, Sue, who was about 8 or 9 years old at the time, joined in the discussion with an item of her own. Startled, one of us asked, "Sue, how did you know that?" She replied, "I read it in the paper."

Because I am the oldest of the four children, I experienced Charlotte reading "Chicken Little" in the first grade. She'd run around the house proclaiming, "The sky is falling, the sky is falling."

One day, Mrs. Maude Whatley, her grade school principal, walked into Miss Johnnie Anderson's classroom and heard Charlotte read about the sky falling. With my mother's permission, Charlotte was skipped to the second grade.

Two things sparked my love for reading even more than The Tuscaloosa News. William subscribed to the Pittsburgh Courier, the premier Black newspaper in the country. He and Mr. Jimmy McMath, his close friend who also lived in McKenzie Court, would always discuss the contents of each issue. I was mesmerized with their conversations, often going back to the paper to read any article I had overlooked.

To appreciate the profound impact the paper had on me, it's helpful to remember that in the segregated South—and in many parts of the North—the only time African-Americans appeared in the newspaper was if they were entertainers, athletes or were suspected of committing a crime.

The Pittsburgh Courier presented all aspects of our lives. I remember developing a love for Black history, in part, because of the column written by J.A. Rodgers. Growing up in Alabama, I had heard far too

much about Booker T. Washington and very little about W.E.B. DuBois, who quickly became my hero. In fact, my son Edward's full name is Edward DuBois Curry. My newly-discovered Black newspaper gave me an ample supply of DuBois, William Monroe Trotter, Ida B. Wells and so many other towering figures.

It was the combination of The Pittsburgh Courier, my love for reading and writing and the encouragement of my parents and teachers that propelled me into the field of journalism. That was pivotal because I had received a different message from the White daily that did not hire any African-American journalists at the time.

One of the things I remember most about The Tuscaloosa News was that its classified ads were segregated. There was a "colored section" that advertised for "colored bus boys" and a separate section for others, such as White women seeking "White Christian Roommates."

In my youth, I filed a complaint with the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights but they refused to do anything about those ads. But thank God The Tuscaloosa News had changed and even recently endorsed Barack Obama over John McCain.

My granddaughter Neyah will grow up in a markedly different world than I did. And because she has already developed a love for reading at 6 years old, she has one of the greatest gifts one can ever receive.

George E. Curry, former editor-in-chief of Emerge magazine and the NNPA News Service, is a keynote speaker, moderator, and media coach. He can be reached through his Web site [www.georgecurry.com](http://www.georgecurry.com).