Marriage critical to black families

Continued from page 1A households are more likely to marry, have a higher income as adults and have less births out of wedlock. "Overall, black men benefit from marriage more than women do," said Malone-Colon at the Sept. 12 conference at the Friday Center. The rate of black marriage is at a crisis level, according to statistics from the African American Healthy Marriage.

Initiative In 2003, 68 percent of black births were to unmarried women, compared to 29 percent for whites and 44 percent for Hispanics.

Thelieve we are at a critical moment in the history of people of African-American descent in this country," Malone-Colon said. "One of the most pressing issues we are facing is the breakdown of the black family."

Another myth is that slav-

ery and racism are solely to blame for the current low rates of marriage among blacks.

Alan Inman, who served as national director of the Institute for Responsible Fatherhood, said that mar-riage right after slavery was at a rate higher than it was in the 1970s and '80s. He asked the panel how can blacks raise the issue of racism and give it such an emotional

Ministry helps ex-offenders adjust them to get in the door, when most doors are automatically

shut."
Next up is FAVAR Day on Sept. 30 at the Sugar Creek Park and Recreation Facility. This event is designed to help prepare families mentally and physically for the return of their family members, as well as, how to cope during their absence. For these programs, Jennings is really targeting children
"It's mainly the kids that get hooked up in gangs, start act-

"It's mainly the kids that get-hooked up in gangs, start act-ing up in schools. and are raised in the streets," he said. For more information or to vol-unteer, visit www.favarmin-

good to give spiritual help, but what if someone needs shoes or a biscuit that's when they need physical help, so they won't fall back into what they know, and end up back in trouble."

In addition to working with Mecklenburg for Opportunities of Re-entry Network, or MOORN, to provide clothing, transportation, and food, Jennings coordinated a job fair specifically for exoffenders.

"They don't have to worry about lying about having been in prison," said Jennings," because everyone already knows they have been." It's an opportunity for

FAVAR
Ministries
founder John
Jennings,
(center) with
Geno Dudley
(left) at
Lee'Andre
Carrington at a
job expo
Wednesday at
Grady Cole
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embrace as an issue when there was such a drive of African Americans in the post-bellum South to get married.

Robert Franklin PhD, a professor of social ethics at Emory University in Atlanta, agreed.

"Suddenly, there was this rush to embrace that which had been forbidden," he said. Pastor Melvin Hitchens, author of the book "The Black Family and Marriage, commented on the issue of racism

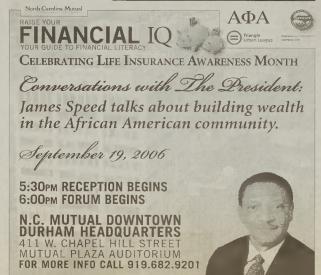
racism
"It's one of the entities that must be looked at, but it can't be used as a scapegoat for the black community not to take ownership of the issue," he said.

For information or to read the study, go to www.healthymar-riageinfo.org.

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