

THE VIEWS OF THE WRITER'S ARE NOT ALWAYS THOSE OF THE PAPER'S

'You're A Part Of The Solution, Or You're A Part Of The Problem'

THE ROY WILKINS
COLUMN

All Religions Stress Peace

Luke's verses of exaltation on the birth of Jesus Christ are fairly bursting with joy: "And she... wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for him in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour which is Christ the Lord."

In Matthew's account the devil is King Herod. He schemes to slay the child in the manger. Matthew has him saying to the wise men, "go and search diligently for the young child, and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also."

But one of the three wise men, who was black, not only suspected Herod, but communicated his fears to his companions. They followed the star and, says Matthew, "rejoiced with exceeding great joy" when they came to the stable. They presented the babe with "gold and frankincense and myrrh." Herod, of course, had to do something to prove his villainy. He had all the children two years old and under in Bethlehem slain.

In Luke's version, without the plotting of Herod, is a majesty that rings out in every heart: "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will toward men."

Where is the peace that was promised on that Christmas 1,973

years ago? The cruelties visited by men upon each other have become less crude, but no less deadly. We no longer disembowel men in battle. Death does not strike by the broadsword or the battle axe. It comes out of the sky via missiles launched 200 miles away by impersonal computers. Or from an airplane, raining death from above at twice the speed of sound.

Once an army consisted of fighting men. Today men and women and children, not equipped for warfare, are shot down. Every noncombatant is a potential hostage in the warped minds of those who dare not wear their colors or their armor in public. Unashamedly they use unctuous words which say to a helpless world: "This is the way we fight, not the good fight but the fight with terror and submachine guns

and oil." A child in Hoisington, Kansas is without heat because strangers she has never seen have decided, in their warmth and luxury, that she and 500 million like her shall be cold.

The Moslems do not have Jesus Christ, but they have Allah. All the great religions have their holy writings. All teach about peace on earth, good will toward men. Not hatred and blackmail.

Perhaps man has gone too far down the way of the transgressor. Perhaps, with the brief ritualistic time he gives to religion and with the empty monuments erected to his beliefs he knows nothing else.

It may be that Mark's capsule picture of John the Baptist, in his opening chapter, is still the model of the reverent humble spirit that lets love in, not just at Christmas time, but for a lifetime lifestyle: "There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose."

No Conflict Seen Between
Middle Class, Poor BlacksBy ALFRED BAKER LEWIS
(A Guest Editorial)

Too often we hear from people who ought to know better, in articles and speeches reported in the mass media, that the civil rights movement is slowing down. It is being argued there is a growing disillusionment among civil rights workers because the advantages of the gains made in civil rights legislation and court decisions, won mainly by the political pressure and legal work of the NAACP, are not reflected in the economic conditions of poor blacks in the ghettos.

Sometimes it is even claimed that the ghetto Negroes are envious of the more affluent Negroes who have made economic gains, in jobs and education for example, from civil rights legislation; and that the affluent Negroes want to separate themselves in turn from the disadvantaged ghetto blacks.

However, there are important factors which are helping to counteract that situation in so far as it exists. Most members of the NAACP, and a few others, mainly Negro trade unionists, recognize that the struggles against racial discrimination and against economic exploitation are very closely intertwined. They can best be fought by cooperation between black and white organizations and individuals.

The NAACP, for example, has added to its program of civil rights legislation for the racially underprivileged, support for economic legislation for the financially underprivileged. These measures include better social security, particularly government health insurance to provide part of

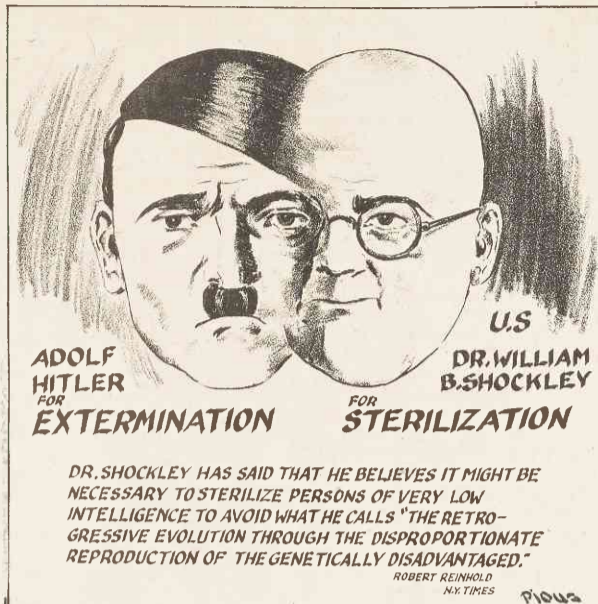
their pay plus medical and hospital care for those who cannot work because of illness or non-industrial accidents, higher and more inclusive Federal minimum wage legislation especially the effort made by Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm to bring domestic workers under the protection of Federal labor legislation. (A bill which Nixon vetoed.)

The NAACP also supports the right of unions which do not discriminate to get recognition by a labor board election instead of having to strike for it, more public low rent housing, more nearly adequate public welfare relief, and more money for food stamps to help the diet of the poor. All these measures help poor whites as well as poor Negroes, although Negroes suffer from poverty more in proportion than do whites.

There is ground for belief that poor whites will join with poor blacks in an effort to get these measures adopted; and in a common political effort both groups will get to understand each other better, and racial antagonism will erode with this greater understanding.

There is no conflict here between more affluent members of the black middle class and poor Negroes, since black doctors, dentists, lawyers, and ministers depend overwhelmingly on poor Negroes for their patients, clients, and congregations. The same is true of black teachers and professors, although to a lesser extent because of some real progress which has been made in school integration among faculty as well as students.

BLACKS SHOULD NOT IGNORE HIM



TO BE EQUAL

by Vernon E. Jordan, Jr.

'Black Experience' Helps
In Current Energy Crisis

The lights are dimmer this year, the electric decorations muted, and the thermostats turned down. Middle America's Christmas is colder this year, maybe the coldest yet.

It was cold too, for the Christ child in the barn at Bethlehem. The Holy Family was told there was no room at the inn, all doors were closed, and the comforts of that time, small as they seem to us in the twentieth century, were denied.

But they survived their adversity. And with a lot less complaining than we hear today, Jesus survived to bring his message of peace on earth and goodwill to all mankind, a message we still strive to fulfill.

Black people too, have survived in the face of adversity. What for so many middle class Americans is the coldest Christmas in memory is for the bulk of black people who are poor, who live in urban ghettos or rural poverty pockets, just another hard Christmas, cold but mellow in the warmth of family and friends.

For we have been honed on hardship and steeped in adversity. Many Americans will shiver for the first time this winter because of the energy crisis, but black folk know what it is to be cold, to be hungry, to be without enough fuel, food and work.

When the President tells us to lower thermostats to 68 degrees, he speaks also to black folk who never had heat and whose winters were spent indoors in overcoats, papering empty window panes with cardboard.

When the Congress tells us we can't drive faster than 55 miles an hour, it is also talking to black folk who could never afford a car, or whose family car had to be coaxed and wheeled into doing thirty on a pock-marked country road.

We will hurt, but we'll survive. Life has always been hard for black people in America. The economy and American democracy have not been as good to us as to other people. Not enough of us enjoy the affluent life; few of us have known warm Christmases. The stock market's nose-dive won't destroy any black fortunes. Black people didn't go through

open windows during the Depression and our progress since then hasn't been so great as to send us through them when the expected recession hits.

But it will be hard. Many people will be laid off from work at a time of skyrocketing prices, profits and unemployment. The man on the street won't understand why. He's already wondering what the energy crisis is all about -- he wants to know who's profiting from it, why it happened, and why he's the one that's got to bear the burden.

It's a national crisis and this Christmas all sorts of top-level committees and commissions will be working on it. As usual, there won't be any black people involved. Our role seems to be to suffer the effects, not to man the action committees to solve the crisis.

But it would be a good idea to have some blacks up there with the high-powered oil men and government officials. A few representatives from rural Georgia or Chicago's Southside could tell the experts what it's like to be without heat. They might have some tips to give to affluent Americans who have to make do with a minimum for the first time in their lives.

For black folk there's nothing much new about this current crisis. But as experts in the art of survival, we can be thankful for the uniqueness of the black experience that will see us through this rough period. We have always had to make do with less, and know the positives of not relying on luxuries.

So this cold Christmas we give thanks for our continued survival and ask that we continue to have the strength to fight for our rights, to fight for our fair share of the rewards of this society that has so long excluded us, and seek the blessings of faith and hope in our renewed struggle. For us this is still the season of good tidings to mankind, the season to rejoice in what we have and pledge ourselves to seek what we have not, the season to bask in the warmth of our strengths and our aspirations.

THE
POINTER

by Albert A. Campbell

Let's Reassess
Values In '74

As the new year approaches, I can't help thinking of the many reasons I personally have to be thankful. And as I look around, I also have to count my blessings for those which I am not always aware of...even when I selfishly deny their existence.

Because of my good fortunes, I am often compelled to reach out and lend a helping hand to some one else who might be less fortunate than I. I do it not with any hope of praise or special recognition, but remembering that at some point in time we all need a helping hand.

Helping others unselfishly is just one of the many ways of acknowledging our own good fortunes as well as a reminder from which we came.

Not long ago, I happened to be talking to a friend who expressed a deep concern for a renewing of aiding and assisting others. His concern was mainly concentrated on members of the Black community. But not because of any unconcern of all people, but because of a most apparent and definite need.

As the conversation progressed, it became more apparent to me that some of the damages, we, Black people, do to our own selves, are intentionally or unintentionally. Most of the harm is done to persons we have at one time been very close to, or some one who has never done us any harm nor even have the potential or intent. Additionally, the injustices we inflict upon others is not always by commission but often omission.

This then falls under the area of forgetting others when we have somehow reached whatever it is we worked for. For some reason, Blacks have adopted the ideas that we

are not our brothers keeper, or I worked harder for what I have and I owe nobody anything. We immediately forget that at one time we too needed help, and like any other normal person, who sought it. Suddenly, after we attain our goal, we decide that no one else is worthy of our help.

Our concern for others no longer exist. We actually are no longer aware of the existence of our fellow human beings...most especially their problems.

The problems of others are either too small to bother with, or we completely discredit them by attempting to minimize their significance. Regardless of how pressing a situation might be to someone else, we have a tendency to belittle it.

As my friend said, Blacks can no longer turn our backs to other Blacks. We must be ready

to assist when there is a need, because all humans are worthy, even if some don't appear to be.

When looking back at the conditions of many Blacks, I can't help wondering what roles other Blacks played in helping to create those conditions. So often, we are our own worst enemy.

Looking at various conditions throughout this community alone, I can easily see where Blacks can be responsible for many of the deplorable situations other Blacks are now encountering. In most cases, somewhere

along the line assistance was not granted when it was required. Today, in 1973, when Blacks are supposed to be making large advances, we are in some cases worst off than ever before; and because we failed to reach out a helping hand.

Is it too much to ask to reassess our values and begin aiding? Afterall, we pattern our lives after some people, why not imitate those who help their own?

This new year is a good time to start.

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Published Every Wednesday
By Tri-Ad Publications, Inc.
Mail Subscription Rate \$6.00 per year,
Payable In Advance (Add 4% N. C. Sales Tax)
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