



Franklin G. Scott, Jr. photo

Kim Carter and Leone Rachel study the works of Persis Jennings and J. Howard Johnson at the Seventh Annual African Art Exhibit, which opened Feb. 6 in the Art Gallery at Johnson Hall. The event was one of many to celebrate Black History Month on campus.

Commentary:

Black people divided by social status, wealth

by Kelvin Walston

Black people, why do we not understand our differences? We will disagree on many topics. We will agree on many topics. But why do we allow our differences to disrupt the peace and love between us?

My religion may be this. Your religion may be that. There are various types of religions. What is religion? Religion is a systematic approach to find your purpose and live peacefully with yourself. Why do we allow our religious beliefs to divide us?

Division is prevalent within the black community here and abroad. If an individual possesses wealth and another individual does not, that should not divide us. But social class status keeps us divided. If you're in the so-called "rich class," and I'm in the so-called "poor class," why do we allow money to divide us from one another?

If I am unable to read and write and you are capable, teach me. Why should we allow ourselves to be divided because of fundamental basics? Remember, we are divided because of our personal beliefs. If we are not able to place our different beliefs aside so we can focus on our common beliefs, then we continue to be dis-unified.

If my religion is this and your religion is that, we should focus on the commonalities of both religions. Once we focus on our commonalities, we can understand each other's religion

and respect it. Instead of arguing whose religion is the best, we should discuss the best commonalities within both religions to liberate black people.

Monetary possession is the root of all evil. If you, a brother/sister, are wealthy, please do not disassociate yourself from me because I'm poor. Please take the energy and time so that I can become wealthy.

Please don't criticize me because I'm not rich and wealthy. Do not allow your wealth to divide you from your brother and sister. I do not understand why you are insisting that I am the lesser person because I am not wealthy like yourself.

If I can't read and write, please don't chastise me. Please show me how to read and write. If I can't speak correct grammar, please do not disassociate yourself from me. If you can speak correct grammar, I plead, please teach me now. Remember, Black People, we possess many different talents and gifts. If you're in a good position to teach another to become successful, please do so.

If your religions are different, focus on the commonalities. If you're wealthy, develop a systematic program to teach others to become successful like yourself. If I am unable to read and write, please teach me how or guide me to a library and help me learn. Each one: teach one. Unified.

King praised for efforts to change the human heart

by Angela Burrus

"People called him an African-American and a dreamer, but before Martin Luther King Jr. was a dreamer or a civil rights leader, he was a believer—a Christian," said the Rev. Ricky Banks, at the Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Assembly on Jan. 18.

Banks, pastor of Stephens Baptist Church, was the guest speaker for the program, held inside of the Pasquotank County Courthouse. About fifty faculty members, staff and students walked from ECSU, through a cold, drizzling rain, to attend the program.

Banks spoke of King's efforts to change the hearts of mankind through redemption.

"King's mission is that the world would repent," he said. "If mankind changes his heart and repents, then everyone would have to treat everybody else the same."

Banks also focused on King's strength and sacrifices in accomplishing his dream.

"King had the ability to awake from his sleep in order to make his dream a reality," said Banks. "He had to forsake his family and many luxuries just to make sure he carried out his dream without waiting for anyone. Not only did he not wait for anyone, he was on the frontline of the battlefield."

Banks said that King's spiritual insight helped him through most of his trials and tribulations.

"In the midst of vicious dogs, water hoses, enemies and prison, King never backed down," said Banks. "He knew if God was for him, than that was more than the whole world against him."

Banks also discussed how racial prejudices still exist today. He described his experience at a local restau-

rant when a family of a different race was served appetizers prior to their meal while the people at his table "were served nothing." When Banks approached the manager to ask if the restaurant had a problem serving African-American customers, the manager offered his family a free lunch. Banks, however, refused the manager's offer, declaring that people can not settle for "a free lunch" anymore.

Banks ended his speech by expressing how important it is for local dreamers to come "to the frontline of the battlefield" in order to make Elizabeth City worth living in.

"If our hearts are right, if our minds are right, if our attitudes are right, then Elizabeth City will be right," Banks said.

Others at the assembly praised the achievements of the slain civil rights leader at the assembly.

ECSU Chancellor Dr. Mickey Burnim described King as a "giant" and "a man of great courage who saw it as taking more courage to love your enemies and to turn the other cheek."

Mayor Rick Gardner spoke of the success of King's non-violent strategy and encouraged the audience to take action if they wanted to improve the community.

Elizabeth City Councilman Jimmy Sutton said he was impressed by the turnout of students who participated in the march despite the rain and cold weather.

"It says that tomorrow, you people will be where we are today," said Sutton.

The program honoring the slain civil rights leader was moderated by Elizabeth City councilman A.C. Robinson Jr. The event ended with song and prayer.

POETRY

One Love

When one says one love I want
to say soul
for my three hemispheres
body soul and spirit
come to love my heart like a
dream
My woman for we are as one
I see through her bosom and it
captivates

my sense of oneness
our love revolutionizes me
love to pain, of my love
soft and dirty
from the tribe of Africa
the cradle of civilization
let me suck of your milk
one love, one love

Atiba Wiggins