

BLACK HISTORY

Youth Means Responsibility

Brandon Williams
Staff Writer

On January 23, 1991 Winston-Salem State University was privileged to hear a great speaker and advocate of higher education. The speaker was Dr. Virginia Newell. Dr. Virginia Newell was a one-time chairperson of Mathematics and Computer Science, she is currently an alderman for Winston-Salem.

The students and faculty welcomed Dr. Newell in room 228 for a 10:00 a.m. assembly. She spoke on the shortcomings of the North Carolina school system and how it can be improved.

Dr. Newell focused on the poor economic level of African-Americans, and made reference to the fact that education was withheld from African-Americans. She said, "Every African American should know how libraries were closed to the black population." Dr. Newell said every young African-American should know of men such as W.E.B. DuBois. She added that it should be required of the students to read "The Souls of Black Folk" by W.E.B. DuBois, and how he excelled in education, including a Ph.D. from Harvard University.

Dr. Newell stated, "We need to find out why there is a large number of Black men incarcerated today," and "why there are more Black males incarcerated or on parole than in universities." She pointed out that this generation must confront the forces of racism and oppression, and continue to strengthen people of all colors."

Dr. Newell asked how many in the audience will move up the national or international scene, and attempt to tackle the problems that beset humanity. She added that along with obtaining financial wealth, we as African-Americans must still be committed to serving our brothers and sisters. She said "Individually we have little, collectively we have much."

In ending her speech, Dr. Newell challenged students here at Winston-Salem State University to obtain knowledge from the library that is not given in the classroom, the same library that was not open to us thirty years ago. Dr. Newell ended by challenging the young African-American students to challenge their minds, and asked a question that can only be answered by young African Americans of today: "Where do we go from here?"

African-Americans Told to Bear MLK Torch

January 15th has been set aside as the day to celebrate the birth of a great American, Dr. Martin Luther King. Not only is this day set aside to celebrate King's birthday, it also is a day set aside for study, struggle and preparation for the victory to come. It is a day set aside for measuring ourselves and America against the terrible yardstick of King's hope. It is not enough to celebrate King; it is necessary also to vindicate him by letting his light shine in our lives.

We must remember our past. Many of us have lost our memory, and most youth have no memory at all. "We must give our children memories of the past stony road we trod and the bitter chastening rod felt in the days when hope was farfetched. We must remember, because if we fail to remember, we cannot see the past in the present, recognize it for what it is, and prepare ourselves to avoid the perils of the past. "Those who ignore and are ignorant of the past are doomed to repeat the worst of it (Journal of Negro History, Fall 85, Vol.5)."

Dr. King dreamed of a nation where people would not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the color of their character. Where do we stand? Are blacks as a race satisfied with their progress? If we would be honest with ourselves, I am sure the answer would be no for the black race as a whole. Coretta Scott King said, "One of the reasons for some of the political setbacks has been lack of unity within the black community. We have more elected officials, more educational opportunities and more access to public accommodations, but less unity that we had during the civil rights movement. If we remain divided, we will surely suffer future defeats." (Jet, May 8, 1989).

I could discuss the problem in depth; however, I prefer to discuss some possible solutions. Dr. Martin Luther King stated, "In the process of gaining our rightful place, we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plain of dignity and discipline. We must all learn to live together as brothers, or we will perish together as fools." (Ebony, Jan., 1986).

Douglas Wilder, the black governor

of Virginia, said that blacks should rely on discipline, education and responsibility and not on social programs to improve themselves. Governor Wilder also said, "I see a desecration of the English language with 'rap and rhyme.' We need to be able to communicate fluently; therefore, the communication skills of our students need to be improved." (Roanoke Times, Feb. 2, 1986). Jackie Joyner-Kersey, two-time Olympic gold medalist, said that "What it takes to succeed on any field is dedication, determination and desire. My mother always told me that I could accomplish anything if I had the three D's." (Jet, Dec. 5, 1988, p. 40). Martin Luther King also emphasized for blacks to never give up. King stated, "If you can't fly, run. If you can't run, walk. If you can't walk, crawl, but by all means keep moving. If the inexpressible cruelties of slavery could not extinguish our existence, the opposition we face now will surely fail."

Dr. King also stated, "The individual Negro must hold on to the thing that has made him great: his spiritual genius." (Ebony, Jan., 1986). Dr. Jawanza Kunjufu, author and lecturer said, "Cars and clothes will last a moment. A good education and good relationship with God will last a lifetime." (Jet, Dec. 5, 1988, p. 40).

What is the answer to the social problems today (including the Gulf War)? The answer is to depend on God. Education and motivation are important. The 3 D's that Jackie Joyner-Kersey mentioned are important. However, the ultimate solution to the social problems today is to turn back to God and pray. In the efforts to achieve material gains, let's always put God first. Matthew 6:33 says, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all things shall be added unto you." Yes, this land does have problems. We all want our soldiers to return from the Gulf War safely. Thank God for the mighty weapons that the United States has; however, superiority in military strength is not the final solution. We all must join together in these trying times and pray for God's help. II Chronicles 7:14 says, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble

Martin Luther King, Jr. pictured here gave life serving others. We remember his sacrifice during Black History Month.



Pastor J.C. Hash

themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

The greatest way that we can honor Martin Luther King is for all of us to pray and turn to God. I know that it is hard thinking about our soldiers in war. My advice to all of you is to not depend on man totally for your assurance, but depend on God. II Peter 5:7 says, "Casting all your cares upon him, for he careth for you." Psalm 23:4, "Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and they staff they comfort me."

Let's be wise. Our best weapon for social problems and war is not to depend totally on our strength. Remember, whatever battle you are fighting, depend on God and then you can understand what II Chronicles 20:15 says, "The battle is not your's, but God's." My prayers are with you.

Pastor, J.C. Hash
St. Peter's Church

