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Six million more poor

At the risk of throwing a wet blanket over the optimistically revised economic forecast President Reagan issued just before the Republican National Convention, we think a Census Bureau report to Congress earlier this month bears closer scrutiny.

While the President now says the economy is growing at a faster clip than expected and predicts that by 1989 the federal deficit will be \$100 billion less than most Wall Street analysts foresee, the Census Bureau reports that the national poverty rate reached an all-time high last year, rising to 15.2 percent.

Based on interviews with 62,000 households, the bureau found the ranks of the poor grew by 868,000 from 1982 to 1983, rising from 34.4 million to 35.3 million.

A family of four was considered to live in poverty last year if its income was less than \$10,178.

At a Congressional hearing last November, David Stockman, director of the Office of Management and Budget, said, "I am absolutely confident that the poverty rate is going to decline dramatically in 1983."

But Stockman said he was too busy to appear at this month's Congressional hearing, where the Census Bureau described the poverty figures as "unexpectedly high."

It found the numbers of the poor have increased by six million since 1980, rising in each of the last five years.

Not surprisingly, the poverty rate for blacks was considerably higher than for whites, at 35.7 percent compared to 12.1 percent in 1983.

And while 17.3 percent of white children under the age of six were poor last year, 46.7 percent of black children in that age group lived in poverty conditions.

What is surprising, however, is that the rate of poverty should increase at the same time family income rose by 1.6 percent, mainly because of an improving economy. Poverty normally declines when family income goes up, but that didn't happen last year, another brick in a mounting wall of evidence that the benefits of recovery are being unequally distributed. In other words, as the President's 1981 tax cuts indicated, the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer.

Political swords -- and slogans -- cut both ways and blacks would do well to ask themselves one of the President's favorite questions: are you better off today than you were four years ago?

We think we already know the answer.

Crosswinds

The role of the church

From The Carolina Times.

Today, the black church, long a mainstay institution in the black community, finds itself torn between two roles.

One role is to deal with what some churchmen call "the total person."

That is to say, the church should continue attempting to deal with black America's economic, social and political problems, as well as its religious and moral health.

The other role is to let other institutions -- some existing, some others yet to be developed -- handle most of those problems and leave the church free to address spiritual and moral matters in the black community.

It is a vitally important dilemma that must be forthrightly addressed and handled quickly.

It will not be an easy matter.

Black Americans continue to face profound economic, social and political problems in this country, problems that affect the power of these citizens to master their destinies.

But we suggest that other institutions and organizations should begin addressing those matters, specializing in one area or the other, if necessary. This approach does not suggest that the black church should not also continue its efforts, but rather that it needs support and help.

We believe the black church must accelerate now addressing a number of more fundamental questions.

Some examples include:

- If God has a plan, what is it?
- What is mankind's destiny?
- What is the true gospel of Jesus Christ?

These questions, purely theological in nature, lead almost naturally into other fundamental and practical questions, the answers to which should set a new tone of life for black Americans.

For example:

- What is the human family? Why does it exist? What is its role in helping humans achieve their destiny?
- What is the actual and productive role of man in the family, woman and children?
- How do we teach each other an understanding of our transcendental purpose so that all our energies are devoted to achieving that purpose?

This is not an easy task and the black church should not

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'Up South' and 'Down South'

CLIFTON E. GRAVES JR.
Chronicle Columnist

To be honest, for the Black man in America there is no difference between "Down South" and "Up North." Indeed, everything south of the Canadian border is "Down South" for us. So, really, there is only "Up South" and "Down South" ...

Malik El-Shabazz
(Malcolm X)

Up until, perhaps, 20 to 30 years ago, African-Americans -- in the main -- had been brainwashed to believe that the northern, eastern and western sections of the country offered far more opportunity for economic development and social advancement than the "land of cotton, tobacco and rice."

To be sure, there was (and to some extent still is) a legitimate basis for our families and friends to literally flee from "Down South." Klan terrorism, slave labor, lynchings, and Jim Crow injustice created and sustained an environment so oppressive that it is analogous only to the suffering presently endured by our brethren in apartheid South Africa -- an environ-



Clifton Graves

ment so oppressive that it made the Jewish Holocaust in Nazi Germany seem like a Sunday school picnic!

So, who could blame our brothers, aunts and cousins from picking up their roots in North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Mississippi, Tennessee and Alabama and relocating to the large and not-so-large centers of New York, Washington, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Chicago, Boston, Newark, Camden, Hartford, Bridgeport and, yes, New Haven!

Who could fault our daddies, mamas and uncles for leaving their daddies, mamas

and uncles in the attempt to fashion a "better life" for themselves and their children? The North wasn't heaven, but it damn sure was better than the hell-hole of the pre-1960 South!

Well, as both history and experience have taught us, the North -- the place of "jobs, dignity and opportunity" -- was not the "land of milk and honey" that it was cracked up to be. While each city has its own history of racist intolerance and injustice, generally speaking, the experience of the African-American in the North could be characterized as one of crushed hopes and deferred dreams, a characterization based on the fact that the jobs were not as plentiful, nor the opportunity as great as our folk had been led to believe.

The tremendous influx of thousands of European immigrants (i.e. Irish, Italian, Poles, Germans, etc.), competing for the same jobs and opportunity as black brethren, coupled with the subtle yet pervasive racism already existing above the Mason-Dixon line, resulted in the unsettling and unexpected transforma-

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Epperson must have black votes

By VERNON L. ROBINSON
Guest Columnist

Recently, Congressman Jack Kemp (R-NY) flew into Winston-Salem to campaign for Stuart Epperson, who faces incumbent Steven Neal in this year's Fifth District congressional race. Epperson hopes that Kemp's symbolism is not lost on the black community.

Kemp is the most vocal national Republican leader moving to regain a foothold among black voters. He points out that black Americans switched loyalty to the Democratic Party during the '30s, '40s, '50s and '60s because that party offered jobs, food and hope, while the Republican party of the same period offered little or nothing.

Kemp believes that the tables have turned and that now the Republican Party has the most credible vision for economic justice and opportunity for all Americans, but especially for black Americans.

Based on the assumption that social progress is best

facilitated by an expanding economy, Kemp's initiatives seek to enhance the recovery and bring that recovery to depressed communities. His proposals include the Kemp-Kasten FAST tax reform plan that would allow lower-income families to keep more income (anyone earning \$14,375 or less would pay no

"Indeed, his failure to integrate blacks into decision-making roles as county coordinators and as members of his campaign staff has hurt his ability to communicate effectively with the black community."

tax); the Urban Homesteading Act that would allow public housing tenants to buy their dwellings at 25 percent of market value and to finance mortgages at low rates; and the Kemp-Garcia Enterprise Zone, Employment and Development Act that would provide tax incentives for businesses to expand into economically depressed areas.

The enterprise zone bill, called the most important piece of urban legislation in this century by Congressional

Black Caucus leader Rep. Bill Gray (D-Pa.), has over 260 co-sponsors in the House of Representatives, has Reagan Administration support and has been passed in the Senate twice.

Twenty-six states have enacted their own version of enterprise zones. Even though states can offer a mere frac-

tion of the federal incentives, the result of these efforts have been so promising that the liberal Sabre Foundation has given the Kemp-Garcia bill their enthusiastic support.

Kemp's efforts with this bill and other legislation of concern to black Americans has earned him recognition as the Legislator of the Year by the black-led, national job training organization, Opportunities Industrialization

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Letters

All walks of life featured

To The Editor:

Let me add my congratulations to the many others who wrote celebrating your being named the best black newspaper in the United States.

You're carrying on a great tradition in North Carolina in the notable tracks of the late Louis E. Austin of The Carolina Times in Durham and the Wilmington Journal, edited by Mr. T. C. Jervay in my home-town.

You're not only in the forefront of awareness in the struggle for the rights of black people. In a time in which we're told, all of us, that we don't count if we're not rich and famous by the time we're 25, the Chronicle in widely ranging articles, nurtures all kinds of human beings, telling us we are all worthy, that we all belong to the human race and to each other.

You not only keep us up to date on those who make it in the sports and entertainment world, you also encourage young actors and artists and musicians, you let youths know it is all right for them to become dancers and young musicians know they have as great a right as anyone to make classical music.

You show respect for differing spiritual choices -- in the Muslim and Christian faiths. In the shadow of R.J. Reynolds, you make an open space for outspoken radical voices, and still you give honor to black women and men who make it in the business and political worlds. You exercise courageous conscience without being either narrow or exclusive.

You give life on every page to the real makings of a living democracy. In a Lazarus age, you keep breaking away stones and saying to young and old alike, "Rise! Awaken! Don't lose heart! You're worthy! Come to life! Believe in yourself and in each other!"

I lived in Winston-Salem from late 1948 until 1956 (I made my pen name legal in 1973 on moving to Arizona; when I lived in Winston, I was Bill McGirt). I was taught firsthand how to fight racism in my then-young, white, male, Southern mind by black leaders and members of Local 22. God, how patient and loving those people were with this stubborn, know-it-all white boy.

I read your paper not with just nostalgia for those days, but with respect and hope and joy. You make a healing leaven in the bread of Winston-Salem. I'm grateful to be reading your paper 'way out here in Arizona.

W. H. THOMAS
Arizona

An excellent job

To The Editor:

I am writing to commend Audrey L. Williams on her well-written articles on Winston-Salem State University's Project Upward Bound, which appeared in a recent edition of the Winston-Salem Chronicle.

She did an excellent job with

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