



Dr. Subash Shah explains some of the intricacies of the national government during a political workshop at Emmanuel Baptist Church (photo by Harden Richards).

Shah tells all about game of politics

By KENNETH RAYMOND
Chronicle Staff Writer

High-ranking political figures do not want average people to understand the complexities of national government so that they can allocate federal funds without opposition, according to Dr. Subash Shah, associate professor of political science at Winston-Salem State University.

Shah made the comments during a political workshop at Emmanuel Baptist Church at 1075 Shalimar Drive. The workshop was sponsored by the church's Board of Christian Education, which also sponsors teaching seminars on Christian ministries.

Politicians welcome the public's ignorance of the governmental process, according to Shah, who has been teaching at WSSU for nine years. He also said that people who do not take the time to understand or become involved in politics should not complain when unpopular decisions are made.

"If you don't want to get involved, then you shouldn't say anything when you can't find a job or the houses in your neighborhood are falling apart," he said. "The people who complain about those things are the ones who don't vote or simply refuse to get involved."

About 51 percent of eligible voters actually vote in the United States compared to 95 percent in Western European countries, according to Shah. He said that if minorities became involved there would be a noticeable change around the country.

"The quality of life would change dramatically," he said. "There would be more jobs, better homes and neighborhoods. They also wouldn't be able to tell people

anything they wanted because the people would be too familiar with how things actually work."

Shah, who attended Kent State University, said he believed that political figures have been worried about average citizens since the establishment of the Constitution.

"Even our founding fathers, who framed the Constitution, were worried about the people becoming involved in government affairs," he said. "It was to their advantage if they didn't."

Shah also said that some government officials did not want any charismatic leadership because it would stir interest in politics. He said that democratic presidential candidate Jesse Jackson had already stimulated too much interest in politics, which is why some efforts have been made to keep him from becoming the democratic nominee.

"Two methods usually used when a person is stirring too much interest in politics," he said. "They'll question his qualifications, then they'll assault his character. He's already been attacked because he's never held a political office and he's hugged PLO chief Yassar Arafat, but none of the attempts have been successful."

Shah said that people do not become familiar with politics because it is too confusing or boring. He also offered a solution to that problem.

"Except for love, most elements found in a love relationship are also found in politics," he said. "When a relationship isn't working out, most people hang in there anyway. It's the perception that creates the interest. If people would see them as identical, then they'd become familiar with it and would use it towards their own benefit."

Shah, who's originally from Tanzania in East Africa, also said that another answer was establishing "watchdog" organizations to monitor and report the actions of elected officials.

He also explained how the voting process worked. He said he believed that if the country used a direct voting system, charismatic leaders would win more often.

"Jackson could definitely beat Bush on popular votes if he became the democratic candidate," he said.

"When Jackson started running for president, I became very interested in politics and I've been following the primaries since then," said 29-year-old Cornelius E. Battle, who attended the workshop. "I've learned a lot about how things are done also."

"I follow the primary results regularly," said 16-year-old Kisha T. Turner. "But I didn't know about the voting system and the impact people could make if they became involved."

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Neighborhood From Page A1

"A lot of fights have broken out near my house," she said. "I think that someone may seriously get hurt."

Community members met with crime prevention unit representatives at United Chapel Baptist Church on 300 W. 25th St. last month to discuss what could be done about the drug problem. The local residents decided to try the drug watch program in their neighborhood.

The residents and police officers gathered at the corner of W. 25th and Cherry Street Monday to witness the posting of a sign which warns drug dealers that the watch program has been established in that area. Captain C.H. Cunningham of the police department encouraged residents to contact them if they see any drug activity.

"We can't handle the problem ourselves," he said. "It's going to take a group effort to make a difference in our neighborhoods."

Two patrolmen and one squad car have been assigned to the area. Sgt. J. A. Berry, who's in charge of that area, said that the police department had received many calls about the drug activity.

"We've gotten a lot of reports on drug transactions and other disturbances such as large groups

standing on corners making noise," he said. "This area does have a lot of problems but the watch program should curb some of it."

The first drug watch program began in the E. 22nd Street area in August. Sgt. Patricia Norris, supervisor of the crime prevention unit, said that it was very effective.

"We made seven arrests on drug possession, picked up drunken drivers, and shut down a drug house," she said. "The program has made a big difference in that area."

Norris also said that the area had not reverted to the way it was.

"They've had a few problems," she said. "But it's not as bad as it used to be."

The drug watch program was suggested by a concerned citizen of East Winston, whom Norris declined to identify. The citizen suggested that the crime prevention unit try focusing on one area for two weeks and watch the results. Norris said that the unit will start other watch programs around the city.

"The key to its success is community involvement," Norris said. "Posting a sign won't scare them away. We need to make some solid arrests and it can only be done with the help of the people who live in these problem areas."