

Goler Memorial

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churches, providing the churches' members and others with what they need the most.

Green Leaf Christian Church in Goldsboro, Washington Metropolitan Church in Washington, St. Luke Christian Church in Princeville and Salem Baptist Church in Tarboro are the beneficiaries of Goler's efforts.

For more than a month now, Lartey has led a contingent of Goler members on delivery runs to the devastated towns. Trucks are usually rented by Goler and packed with supplies every two weeks for the trips, Lartey said.

Lartey said the hurricane left similar types of devastation in each town - decaying houses, washed-out businesses and downtown. But the needs of the residents in each town are not similar, in fact, they vary greatly.

"In Tarboro they told us they really needed food, so we collected food. ... In Princeville they need household items like brooms and mops," Lartey said.

Lartey added that the church in Goldsboro reports that money is the biggest need of the people there, while money and food are needed in Washington.

Goler has responded to each town's needs with swiftness, according to the pastor.

"All I had to do was tell them

what I needed," Lartey said with a satisfying smile. "The response of the members has been overwhelming."

The adopted churches have also worked out a unique system for distributing the items once they arrive in the towns. Victims of the flood have complained that often, donated supplies sit in warehouses for days before they are distributed to those who need them.

The warehouse and distribution centers are "middle men" that the adopted churches would rather not deal with, Lartey said.

"We give the supplies directly to the people who need them," he said.

When a Goler truck is set to arrive in a particular town, the pastor and staff at the church inform locals of the truck's expected arrival time, and people who need supplies come and take them from the truck.

Up until this point, Goler has carried on the effort with no outside help, except a few corporate sponsors like SMSI and local churches like Goler Metropolitan AME Zion Church.

But as the church embarks on its final delivery drop, it's urging everyone to lend a hand.

The last campaign will be one of the most important, Lartey said. Goler is collecting furniture, items that are needed across the board in all areas affected by Floyd. While state and government agencies have provided makeshift housing villages for many victims of the hurricane,

many people have had to find creative ways to furnish their temporary dwellings.

"We want to take at least two or three truck-loads of furniture down with us," Lartey said. "That's what they need, as well as pots, pans, spoons, knives and other household items."

Lartey says his congregation will continue to monitor the eastern churches on into the new year. He also has a grand vision for the new millennium. He wants churches across the city to be as ready and apt as the National Guard when it comes to helping those in need. He talks excitedly about setting up a local food bank where food and supplies can be stored and then disbursed in the event of a natural tragedy like Floyd.

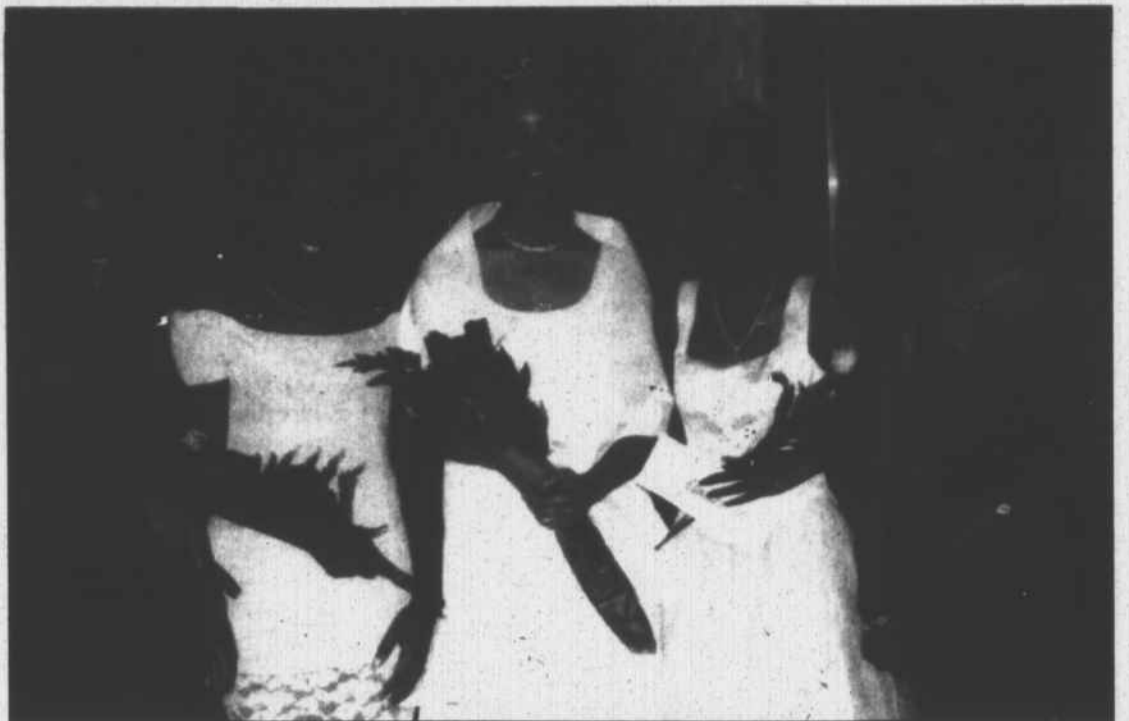
As he talks about the power churches can and do wield, Lartey returns to the topic of faith and the role it's playing in getting Princeville and other towns back on their feet.

One of Lartey's favorite stories is about the pastor at St. Luke, who told someone that the only insurance policy the church held was the one held by God.

"Someone asked him whether he had insurance coverage and he said, 'I'm not covered, but I'm covered,'" Lartey said with a smile.

Those who want to donate furniture can call Goler at 724-9411. The church will pick up furniture from homes a few days before the trip to

Fashion with flair



Ebony Fashion Fair Queen Crowned. Left to right: D'antwannette Felder, Parkland High School; Shakirra Campbell, East Forsyth; Jasmine Nicole Jackson, Reynolds High School, scholarship winner; Oluwunmi Ariyo, Parkland, runner-up winner; Sacha Beachem, Glenn High School.



Urban League Guild Ebony Fashion Fair Program Participants. Left to right: Martha Jones, vice president; Joan Cardwell, publicity chairman; Alberta McMillian, EFF general chair; queen Jasmine Jackson; Velma H. Friend, guild president; Gloria Frazier, scholarship chair; "D" Smith, Urban League CEO/president.

Black agenda

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"There is a concern that charter schools can be used to some degree to funnel money and resources from the public schools. As a result the school boards can say we don't need to fund education because the students are not there. It also can be seen as a way to re-segregate public schools."

"Make sure that the technology are in these schools that are called low-performing schools," Womble said. "Most of these schools are inner-city schools. Most of those are heavily African American."

"(Increase) the number of professionals in these schools - from principals, to guidance counselors, to support staff, teachers, specialized staff. (Make) sure the money, resources and personnel are there to educate and train our children at these schools that are ... heavily racially identifiable."

UNITY
"We must do more networking with each other," Womble said.

"We also emphasized we must be more sensitive, caring in helping the masses, rather than helping a few of us. All of us must feel the pain. Jesse (Jackson) made this comment: Whenever a dog bites somebody in Alabama it used to be we would feel the pain in North Carolina. We have to go back to that kind of interconnectedness. We can't remain isolated. What happens to one African American affects us all."

RESTORING VOTING RIGHTS

"Restoring the voting rights of people who have been convicted of crimes and have paid their debts to society."

CENSUS 2000
Ensure that there is an accurate head count.

(Millions of federal dollars are allocated based on census findings. Census Bureau officials estimate that more than 130,000 people in North Carolina were not counted in 1990, which may have cost the state \$68.8 million in federal aid.

(A poll, conducted by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, found that 40 percent of black men and 41 percent of black women were not aware of the census, which begins in April 2000. The poll found that more blacks in the South than any other region say they have no knowledge of the census.)

Hurricane victims in Eastern North Carolina "are so scattered and so devastated it's going to be extra hard" to count them, said Womble, who fears the state will lose money and representation as a result.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

• Provide assistance for the the historic black town of Princeville, N.C., which was ravaged by Hurricane Floyd. "We're trying to see it is rebuilt and become viable again," Womble said.

"The first revolution that came about by those four students sitting down in Greensboro was about civil rights," Womble said. "We must now have an economic revolution. There is a wealth of money in the private sector. There is a wealth of money in the pension programs, in teachers pensions and municipal pensions. Some have millions and millions of dollars and are not investing in the African American community. We are investing in those pensions. (There) is a lot of private money among pension plans and corporations and large conglomerates and large industrial entities. Heretofore we've been fighting our battles on public money - federal, state or city - when we're (largely ignoring) private money that is much bigger than the public money. ... We're going to have to go after some of the private money."

"We have to start owning things rather than being consumers," Womble said. "We're going to have to be owners and proprietors and start up businesses. We're going to have to support each other in our businesses."

HEALTH CARE
• Ensure support for infant mortality, AIDS, nutrition, prostate cancer and "making sure that everybody has access to some kind of health care delivery service," Womble said.

REPRESENTATION

• Appoint African Americans to vacancies on the U.S. Supreme Court. Increase the number of minority law clerks who serve U.S. Supreme Court justices. Confirm African Americans who have been nominated for federal judgeships.

• Work for more African American representation in all levels of government - federal, state and local. "We don't have any African American (U.S.) senators," Womble said.

And several cities that used to have African American mayors no longer do.

Womble said developing an African American agenda is important in the 2000 elections.

"We can't just get out and say I'm going to support this person. ... We're going to have to maximize (our efforts) and (we) need to support (candidates) who will support our agenda. (We can say to candidates:) We have a program. We have an agenda. How are you responding to our concerns? And here they are. That has not been that way in the past."

"A lot of the African American community is torn over the two (Democratic) candidates we have,

Bradley and Gore," said Bonham, secretary of the Ministers Conference of Winston-Salem and pastor of Pitts Memorial Baptist Church. "We want to be sure regardless of who wins, African Americans will bring something to the agenda."

Bonham said some other issues important to African Americans include:

- Access to capital.
- Telecom - "We're five years into a technological revolution and African Americans are not in the forefront."

- Affirmative action.
- Increasing the voter turnout.

Having a national African American agenda, Bonham said, "not only gives us clout but helps us improve quality of life for African Americans and everybody."

"We see politics as who gets what and how," he added. "When they (candidates) come to us we (will) propose this is what we want."

Moseley-Braun

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In effect, they tell us that scrutiny of the personal life of public officials has no place in the public arena.

This is nonsense. Helms can provide the perfect forum to determine whether Moseley-Braun is morally and legally fit to serve as ambassador to New Zealand.

As journalist-historian Ronald Brownstein noted: "Establishing legitimacy is arguably the most delicate task politicians in democratic societies face. In monarchies, the legitimacy of government derives from heaven or tradition; in dictatorships, power makes

the very question moot. But in democratic societies, the social basis of governmental authority is constantly shifting and must be constantly affirmed."

Get it?

Our faith in the ethics and judgment of our elected leaders is the foundation upon which our very system of government rests. A politician's personal judgments are not arbitrary, if for no other reason than that our leaders hold our trust in their hands. Should they neglect that trust, the lifeblood of our democracy drains away like water through open fingers.

Armstrong Williams is a nationally syndicated columnist.

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