

EDITORIALS & COMMENTS

Pageant Offers Leadership Lessons

An estimated 70 million Americans are believed to have watched the Miss America Pageant last Saturday evening. Ironically, interest in this year's pageant with its high moral and decency standards has been generated by the controversies surrounding the defrocking of Vanessa Williams for having posed nude in lesbian scenes. Yet, in spite of this more parents appear to want their daughters to compete in the Miss America contest than ever before.

Without a doubt the Miss America Pageant is the queen of all beauty pageants; it is a major social national tradition; and across the nation, it involves nearly 750,000 beauty contests and 80,000 contestants competing to be the 51 finalists. The non-profit pageant pays out in scholarships each year over \$4 million.

While the pageant maintains its great popularity, controversy surrounding it preceded the Vanessa Williams nudity affair. Some argue that the pageant is silly and destructive and exploits women. These critics claim that women, only the young, are judged by what they look like, that is, their physical features, not by who they are as people and what their talents are. This argument seems hardly valid since Miss America is at best only a beauty contest and nothing more.

Undoubtedly, the pageant's biggest flaw is that until a few years ago black women were not allowed to participate. This fact no doubt, too, added to interest in the Vanessa Williams affair. Obviously, blacks were pleased when the racial barriers were removed from the pageant and elated with great pride when a black was named Miss America for 1984 followed by a black first runner-up.

Following the release of the September issue of Penthouse magazine with the nude lesbian scenes, Vanessa Williams said she'd been exploited by a white photographer. That turns out to be a lie since the November and January issues of Penthouse are expected to show even more revealing and explicit lesbian scenes of photos taken in the photographer's apartment, not his studio. We agree with Tony Brown's comment that "It is hard to believe that this is the once-in-a-lifetime mistake that Williams has claimed and blamed on her 'curiosity.'"

Porn Pictures

The photographer who took the original pictures, Bob Guccione, claims, "Vanessa Williams was a fraud on the America people - a fraud certainly on her own people." Since Mr. Guccione was the person who gained financially from the porn pictures it is hard to accept his word on anything. However, we find it equally hard to not agree with his conclusion that Ms. Williams was and is a fraud. We take this position because all Miss America contestants are required to sign an agreement indicating that they have not been involved in any kind of questionable activities that might reflect negatively on the pageant. Obviously, Ms. Williams signed the agreement fully aware of her own questionable activities.

It is for this reason, too, that we are deeply concerned about published reports that Essence magazine will present "a written bouquet" to Ms. Williams in its October issue where the editor argues the ethic that condemned her.

Essence Editor-in-Chief, Susan Taylor, tells Ms. Williams that she has stumbled, "but you did not violate the society's ethics."

This society's ethics violated you. You were...lambasted for posing nude." Then Ms. Taylor veers off by asking "that in this country nudity is a disgrace and racism isn't?" This is an example of the absence of

responsible leadership if Ms. Taylor, as an opinion maker and one in a position to influence her readers, is implying that lesbian nude scenes is innocent nudity.

Furthermore, we fail to see any relationship between nudity and racism.

Black Heroine?

First, racism is clearly a disgrace in this country. Secondly, for Ms. Taylor to suggest that Vanessa Williams is a victim of "society's ethics" or that she is a black heroine struggling against the evils of America, is an insult to black womanhood.

Tony Brown expressed this point in his "comments" article in The Charlotte Post last week when he said, "To show support for Williams as a victim of racism, ignores lesbian live scenes as well as her rejection of her role as a black woman and role model for black people."

On both of these points black people in positions of leadership such as Ms. Taylor of Essence magazine must not be duped into thinking that we as black people can do no wrong and that we must defend and support the actions of a black person simply because he or she is black.

Any condoning of Vanessa Williams' behavior sets an extremely bad example for young black girls and implies that we don't need any sense of values as guides for our behavior. For too long now some blacks have used their blackness within the context

of past overt racism as an excuse for doing what they know is not morally right, offering less than quality performance on a job, and giving black youth the impression that crying racism will get them through life.

Black leadership at every level and in whatever form must demand and demonstrate good judgment, high moral standards, a sense of fair play, a commitment to the work ethic, a willingness to accept

constructive criticism, and a faith in Almighty God. Without these characteristics, black people cannot expect nor will they deserve a fair share of the higher quality of American life.

From Capitol Hill

Republicans Must Get Off The Christian Kick

By Alfreda L. Madison
Special To The Post

"Dear Christian Leaders: President Reagan has made an unwavering commitment to the traditional values which I know you share. Join with us to help assure that those in your ministry will have a voice in the upcoming election - a voice that will surely help the reelection of President Reagan and Vice President Bush. As leaders under God's authority, we cannot afford to resign ourselves to idle neutrality in an election that will confirm or silence the President." This is a quote from a letter that has been sent to churches by Senator Paul Laxalt, President Reagan's campaign manager.

A picture of President Reagan was included in the letter with several of his quotes: "Of the many influences that have shaped the United States of America into a distinctive nation and people, none may be said to be more fundamental and enduring than the Bible. I believe no challenge is more important to the character of America than restoring the right to life to all human beings."

This letter characterizes Republican leaders as having been ordained by God and President Reagan being the titular head of the party as God's anointed ruler.

Mr. Reagan needs to explain the part of the Bible that influences the GOP. How can he explain that those who desired to attend the lunch where he and Vice President Bush appeared paid \$1,000 and the \$10,000 contributions were given special convention privileges and they will be invited to the White House for a special meeting with the President? Have these ordained and anointed



Alfreda L. Madison by God read the Bible story of the widow's mite? Are they following the example of the rich man who only let the poor man receive crumbs that fell from his table, while leaving cure for his sores to the lickings of the dogs?

This heralded Christian Administration reduced inflation by increasing unemployment, adding to the below poverty roll, and cutting health benefits, in spite of the spiraling health cost. At the same time it has continually increased defense spending. The Air Force Times reported that in FY '83 the U.S. arms sales were \$18.3 billion. This fattened the coffers of the rich military equipment manufacturers. Air Force Times further said that \$17 billion, annually, will provide adequate food, water, education, health and housing for everyone in the world. This would restore life to human beings.

This Christian hierarchy boasts of working for world peace through a military strength sufficient to kill everyone on earth several times over. Where does the Bible say kill? It does emphasize "Thou shalt not



Republicans Versus Democrats?

By Sabrina Johnson

In the first part of this two part article many social issues were addressed. Both political viewpoints were and are given equal exposure to each individual problem or situation. This week the writer will attempt to do the same.

What is the whole purpose of the articles? Basically speaking - an informed voter is a responsive voter. But back to the point at hand - here are other issues important to all Americans who have taken their places in the spotlight.

-Intelligence Gathering
The Republicans will continue to strengthen the intelligence services. The Democrats made no mention of the subject.

-Arms Control
Republicans are aware of the fact that the Soviet Union is violating arms control agreements - it has doubt that the Party will be willing and able to negotiate and comply with new agreements in a spirit of good faith (on both sides). Democrats favor a unilateral moratorium on the testing and-or deployment of severe nuclear



Sabrina

Second in series

weapons in hopes that it will lead to negotiations of a comprehensive, verifiable, and mutual freeze on the testing and production of all nuclear weapons.

-"Star Wars" Space Defense

Republicans stand united with the President's hopes that American engineers and scientists can develop the technology and hardware to make nuclear war obsolete. Democrats feel they must oppose an arms race where the sky is the limit.

-Military Power
The Republican Party plans to keep peace by keeping the United States stronger than any potential adversary. The Party plans to do everything necessary to

insure the freedom of the U.S. in case of conflict.

Democrats believe while it is true national security is a top priority - the way to insure this is to freeze and reverse the arms race and not pursue phantom nuclear superiority.

-Nuclear Freeze
Republicans plan to seek ways of insuring substantial reductions in nuclear weapons as opposed to freezing nuclear weapons at their present danger levels.

-U.S. Soviet Relations
Republicans want stable and peaceful relations with the USSR and believe they are possible and desirable. However, they do depend upon the credibility of U.S. strength and determination. Democrats believe that U.S. and USSR security can only be strengthened by serious cooperation and negotiation.

-Middle East
Republicans are allies in the defense of freedom and the root of their policy remains in more than three decades of moral and strategic relationships with Israel. Democrats believe Israel is an important strategic point for the U.S. and feel the U.S. must enter into meaningful cooperation strategically.

-Central America
Republicans: The security and freedom of Central America is crucial to U.S. security and freedom. El Salvador is nearer to Texas than Texas is to the New England area, this meaning the U.S. cannot be indifferent to its fate. Democrats are determined to stop widening, militarizing and Americanizing the conflict. A Democratic President would be dedicated to stopping the violence and finding a political solution.

-Financial Disclosure
Republicans will continue to support full disclosure by all high officials of the government and candidates in positions of public trust.

-Environmental Protection
Republicans made no mention. Democrats support revitalizing the Environmental Protection Agency.

-Toxic Waste
Republican Party supports a strong effort to control and clean up toxic wastes. Democrats are committed to dramatically increasing super-fund resources.

-Department of Energy
Republicans want to terminate the department. Democrats made no mention of the issue.

tion which they took an oath to uphold.

Just recently, Larry Speakes, Press Secretary, said President Reagan wants Federal judges who are committed to his conservative philosophy. Senator Paul Trible, one of these authorized leaders, expressed the same idea in a letter to a bar association, when asking to submit names for a judge position. Trible also said that the candidate must have considerable trial experience, and yet he had, less than a month before, sponsored Wilkinson for a judgeship who had never tried a case.

Has God ordained such weak, mixed-up leaders who ignore the mandates of the people who elected them to carry out the Constitution which they swore on the Bible to uphold? Their constituents expect them to see that the Courts remain independent of a President's philosophy in deciding issues, instead make decisions based on their constitutionality.

Republicans must get off the Christian trick.

Peace Events

Events centering on the theme of "Peace" are planned by the YWCA in early October.

A "Peace Coffee" is set for Monday, October 1, from 9-10:30 a.m. at the Uptown Center. "There is no agenda, the purpose is to share concerns about the issue of peace," said Donna Arrington, who with Leslie Sladky will lead the discussion. There is no charge.

October 5 and 12, from 7-9 p.m. at the Park Road Center there will be forums highlighted by two films, "The Last Epidemic" and "No Frames, No Boundaries" Cost is \$5.

The Charlotte Post
North Carolina's Fastest Growing Weekly
704-376-0496
"The People's Newspaper"
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Bill Johnson Editor, Pub. Bernard Reeves Gen. Mgr. Fran Bradley Adv. Mgr. Dannette Gaither Of. Mgr.
Published Every Thursday By The Charlotte Post Publishing Company, Inc. Main Office: 1531 S. Camden Road Charlotte, N.C. 28203
Second Class Postage Paid at Charlotte
Member, National Newspaper Publishers' Association North Carolina Black Publishers Association
National Advertising Representative: Amalgamated Publishers, Inc.
One Year Subscription Rate One Year - \$17.76 Payable In Advance