

# Editorials

## The Challenge From Dr. King

"The black revolution is much more than a struggle for the rights of Negroes. It is forcing America to face all its interrelated flaws—racism, poverty, militarism, and materialism."

—Martin Luther King Jr.

January 20, 1986 will be a landmark first observance of the national holiday honoring the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. As the first black American so honored, King joins a select group of one other American—George Washington—honored with a national holiday by law.

As important as they are, when we look beyond the pomp and ceremonial trappings of the King holiday, we must ask ourselves what does it all mean to each of us individually and collectively? It means first and foremost, as Dr. King had repeatedly suggested, that each person is largely responsible for his or her own freedom.

Writing in EBONY's (January, 1986) special issue on "The Living King," historian Lerone Bennett Jr. states eloquently that "the crucial point... is that this is NOT a holiday for rest and frivolity and play. This is a day 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... the only question before us in this holiday season is what are we doing and what are we prepared to do to ensure that King did not dream and die in vain?"

It is in how we have and are responding to Mr. Bennett's statement that we reflect our respect and admiration of King the man and King the legend.

In more pointed terms, the King holiday should remind us that while Martin Luther King gave his life so that we might seek any job, rest in any hotel, vote in any election, aspire to any public office, live in any neighborhood, and command personal respect, we need to be asking ourselves what are we doing and what do we plan to do to make these freedoms realities?

It can only be in how we study and struggle individually and collectively to remold black American values, both secular and spiritual, about education, family life, attitudes about sex, faith in God, the work ethic and personal integrity that we show respect for the true meaning of the

holiday honoring Dr. Martin Luther King.

Less we forget our desire to blot out the painful realization that far too many black youth are leaving our schools and colleges ill-prepared to meet the challenges of a competitive society; that over 50 percent of all black babies currently born in the nation are born out of wedlock; that after 20 years of denying it, we now have to admit that the institution of the black family is in a state of discord; that there continues an abundance of political apathy in spite of substantial gains in the election of blacks to public office; and that sports participation by black youth is not in the proper priority order of life's needs.

It was the continuing concern with these and similar issues that Dr. King told 600 graduates of Charlotte's six black high schools and over 8,000 other people in May 1963 that "doors not open to your parents are opening to you. The challenge is to be ready to enter the doors as they open. Don't set out to do just a good Negro job, but be able to compete with people of all races."

We hope and pray that those 8,600 Charlotteans, wherever they may now be, and the thousands of others who have had the privilege to hear or read Dr. King's writings have heeded well his call for black Americans to seek their personal freedom by having a closer walk with their God, by developing positive attitudes of self-respect and self-love through developing and utilizing their God-given talents and a character of integrity and honesty.

Such development is increasingly important when we realize that while President Reagan signed the legislation making Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday a national holiday, his administration has been busy dismantling many of the hard fought civil rights gains that Martin Luther King Jr. died for. This is symptomatic of yet too much of America. That is, there are still too many white people who would say, "Yes, give the blacks a holiday for their fallen leader so they can celebrate in a fashion of pomp and ceremony but when day is done, their gains will be no greater." It is for this reason that Lerone Bennett Jr. says King's birthday is a time to remind us of the need for study and struggle until the victory over racism and hatred is won.

## NCAA Hypocrisy

At the NCAA Division I annual meeting in New Orleans this week, a roll call vote of 206 to 94 adopted a so-called compromise amendment on academic standards for freshmen athletes. The amendment calls for using a combination of high school grade point averages and college entrance test scores to determine player eligibility. The compromise was to delay for two years an amendment passed in 1983 that would require athletes to have a minimum high school grade point average of 2.0, or C, and a Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) score of 700.

Many of the predominantly black colleges oppose the original amendment

charging that the SAT is racially and culturally biased against blacks.

We don't think black schools need worry about the original amendment, call Proposition 48, ever becoming a reality. By this we don't mean to imply that the predominantly white institutions are sympathetic to the needs of black youth. As these institutions are reminded that in the four years that Patrick Ewing played basketball at Georgetown University, the University made a profit of over \$12 million. Before 1983 rolls around, another compromise amendment will surface because the real name of the game is making money even for institutions of higher learning.



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1929-1968

Remember

## Is Teen Pregnancy A Modern Problem?

Each year, over a quarter million unwed teen-agers bear children. For a young mother, having a child can mean a lifetime of poverty and welfare dependency.

Is teen pregnancy a modern program or have the consequences and views changed over the years? Pioneer women married at 16 and had their first child slightly after that—families rejoiced. In the less distant past, a pregnant female in high school was expected to end her schooling, marry the father and settle down. Or she could arrange for an abortion or adoption.

In the 1980s they claim that a girl must acquire enough schooling to be able to earn a living and postpone marriage until the 20s. However, few are likely to postpone love, romance and sex. It is an exceptional young male or female who has not had sexual intercourse prior to age 20. Eight in 10 young males and seven in 10 young females report having sexual intercourse while in their teens.

The result in that increased activity: more teenage females get pregnant each year and at least



Sabrina Johnson

four in 10 will experience pregnancy prior to age 20. About half of the pregnancies end in abortion and of those who have the child, few marry and fewer give up the child for adoption.

The costs to society and its pockets are high—almost intolerably high:

—Babies born to teens are twice as likely to die in infancy than babies born to older mothers.

—Those that do survive are more likely to have developmental problems and decreased learning expectations.

—Teen mothers are less likely to complete high school thus their earning

capacity is severely limited.

The result of this is a cost of approximately \$8 billion annually to the taxpayers for maintaining the mothers and children.

Hands wave over the tragedy but no solution has been found and communication with children about sex is limited and seldom discusses the consequences of irresponsible pre-marital sex.

The state of Wisconsin believes it may have found an answer. Its new law funds sex education in school, pregnancy counseling and an adoption center and a campaign to discourage teen sex. The new law goes one step beyond the previous one which is attracting national interest: it can require grandparents—the parents of the teens' mother and father—to help support a grandchild until its parents reach age 18, get married or join the military. For the first time, some grandparents will be forced to foot the bill for their children's irresponsibility.

The grandparents' liability clause will be given a three-year trial and demands a fair test.

A new threat to the wallets of parents of teens may force them to speak frankly with the teens about sex and its responsibility or continue to let others keep their hands in their pockets and not talk or converse freely about sex.

What the Wisconsin law seems to be screaming is that teens must take the responsibility for their actions and if they do not the parent must. Once a child is born to a male and female—young or old—it is the parents' responsibility to care for and provide for that child. The burden should not fall wholly on the state.

Thousands of economists have pointed out that society is, in effect, paying single women to have babies. It seems the easiest way to make a living is precreation and lots of teens are choosing that option. No previous experience required, no educational requirement and no applications to fill out.

If the Wisconsin law works, it will reduce the number of abortions by reducing the number of pregnancies by increasing parental action. And thus relieve taxpayers of part of the burden of supporting the babies of unwed teens.

The Wisconsin law in its present form may not be correct for all states but is a viable option in the chaotic world of financing teen mothers and children.

Miller Says:

## You Can Turn Dollars Over In The Black Community

By Sherman N. Miller  
Special To The Post

Whenever I hear blacks whining over black America's failure to turn over its money in the black community, I am troubled by who will assume the responsibility for changing black America's Dollar Egression Index.

I recently got a hint that I can do a lot to help solve this black dollar egression problem when I missed a flight in Memphis, TN. I pulled into this black-operated FINA service station to call my travel agency to be rebooked on a new flight. Once my flight plans were secure, my stomach reminded me that it was dinner time.

For no special reason, I was overcome by a hankering for some soul food. But this was my first visit to Memphis so I had no idea where to go to satisfy my craving.

Wood, the service station manager, suggested that I visit a delicatessen owned by a black chap called Bishop located within a few blocks from where I was. He told me to tell Bishop that he had sent me.

The food at Bishop's deli



Sherman N. Miller

was good although I was not accustomed to eating in a deli. Since Wood had helped me, I returned to his service station to fill my rental car's gas tank.

I came to appreciate this experience on a subsequent trip to Columbus, OH. My airplane was late leaving Philadelphia, PA, so when I reached my grandmother's home and we went out for dinner, we found ourselves running all around Columbus trying to find an open restaurant. Finally Grandmother Bessie Adams suggested that we take our business to the black community.

We dined at the "Mt. Vernon Avenue - Marble Gang." According to our waiter, Kenneth Blackwell,

the Marble Gang is a gathering place that is frequented by Columbus' upwardly mobile blacks. He said that the restaurant's specialty is barbecued ribs, and whites often come in to purchase these ribs. I chose the ribs and found them to be excellent.

I instinctively began to assess the Marble Gang as being a restaurant to which to bring customers for business entertainment. I did a "clothes sniff test" on my suit sleeves. Not smelling the scent of tobacco, I felt confident that my customers would not feel they had been taken to a smoke-filled bar. I checked the walls and tables for cleanliness. Finally I looked to see if any "ladies of the evening" were present. Everything was of mainstream standards, so I concluded that the Marble Gang was a good place to entertain customers.

After this satisfying experience at the Marble Gang, I looked for a black restaurant in Atlanta. Some friends who live in the city told me about Pascal's restaurant. This restaurant is famous for its fried chicken. I had their fried chicken

dinner and found it was very good. Unfortunately, I believe Pascal's location will not appeal to some white customers.

In summary, corporate blacks and black professionals control huge sums of money in their normal course of doing business. I think these mainstream blacks can show black America how to turn over dollars in the black community. These mainstream blacks need only utilize mainstream calibre black-owned retail outlets, hotels and restaurants whenever it makes good business sense.

I hope that the publishers of prestigious black American magazines such as Ebony, Black Enterprise, and Essence will recognize the importance of developing national business directories of black-owned restaurants, retail stores, and hotels. These national black business directories can offer corporate and professional blacks and mainstream corporate America the opportunity to direct new money into the black community which should maintain existing jobs and generate many new ones.

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