

Editorials

Schools, Values And Religion

Much has been said and written by rightist or fundamentalist Christians, as they are often called, about the absence of religious or Christian values in our public schools. Most of the media headlines have focused on prayer and Bible study, or the lack of it in the public schools, the teaching of the theory of evolution and the controversy around public school health clinics and their purposes.

We have observed and been reminded recently by Carolyn Sherman in The Washington Post of just how misunderstood and misleading some of the rhetoric related to these issues has become. However, before commenting specifically on Ms. Sherman's viewpoint, let us reflect on a few aspects of American history that are the roots of some of our most cherished values, and are likewise rooted in our nation's Christian heritage.

Therefore, while the public schools may be inhibited or intimidated in some situations by court rulings about religion in the schools in any form, no one can deny the marriage between many of our nation's historically developed values and our religious convictions. For example, in the beginning, the English settlers brought to America their English traditions of representative self-government, civil liberties and certain customs and habits. Then, in response to the primarily frontier environment of America, the early settlers developed a new spirit of individualism, self-reliance, independence, and most of all an optimistic FAITH in the future, a future they could not see nor fully understand. There is no doubt that much of this historic faith arose from a Biblical foundation. The Bible book of Hebrew Chapter 11, verse one states clearly, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." This faith was evidenced too by the fact that by the first Thanksgiving, the bitter cold weather, inadequate shelter, widespread disease and the scarcity of food had killed over half of the women and children. This, the first Thanksgiving, was a day on which the Pilgrims gave thanks to God for the blessing they had received. The event marked the first observance of our present-day Thanksgiving.

There is no doubt that the Pilgrims were mindful of Paul's letter to the Philippians (4:6) where he says, "...in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."

Principle Of Freedom

Two other historic-religious values in our nation's roots arose from the Zenger Case of 1735. John Peter Zenger, a newspaper publisher, was arrested and tried for libel because he had written articles criticizing the governor of New York. The jury acquitted Zenger on the grounds that he had published the truth. Thus, the principle of freedom of the press was established and was later reaffirmed in the Constitution of the United States. Again, the religious or

biblical foundation for these values arising from the Zenger Case are clearly spelled out in words of Jesus Christ who said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Mr. Zenger wrote the truth and became free for it.

These easily found examples of our religious roots, and many others like them, are readily available and clearly show the religious thread that is evident in our nation's history. Thus, whether the public schools point out the religious origins of many of our nation's values or not, a Christian foundation is spread throughout our historic education.

This returns us to Ms. Sherman's commentary. She writes that "any healthy society must nurture some obvious values, especially in schools to survive." Our brief historical examples are a confirmation of Ms. Sherman's commentary. However, Sherman adds, "They're not religious values unless your motivation is religious. Indeed, many of them may be called secular humanism." We strongly disagree with this statement. Regardless of the source of an individual's motivation, no one can separate faith, truth, freedom, and similar values from their religious or Christian roots.

This fact is evident in the values that Ms. Sherman suggests, and we agree should be taught in the public schools. However, what Sherman apparently does not understand is the point we made about the inseparable nature of the characteristics of God from some of our historic roots. Sherman's point is that "the greatest value public schools can teach is that there are values, and that they are worth defending. She suggests four values that both the public schools and parents should be highly supportive of. These values are honesty - no cheating, stealing, lying; courtesy - no knocking people down, vandalism, or failing to respond with attentiveness and respect to others; pursuit of the best or excellence - doing the absolute best you can; and kindness - speaking out with no hesitation to defend the weak and to insist that others do likewise.

Judeo-Christian Roots

Each of these values has strong Judeo-Christian roots. They are mentioned collectively more than 37 times in the Old and New Testaments. Furthermore, numerous other references are made to these terms that further reaffirm their sense of value as the following examples from the Bible:

- Honesty - "Thou shalt not steal," (Gen. 20:15).
- Courtesy - "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house," (Gen. 20:17).
- Pursuit of the best - "But earnestly desire the more valuable spiritual gifts. And I shall show you a still more excellent way," (I Cor. 12:31).
- Kindness - "And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity," (II Peter 1:7).

Miller Says:

Is There A Little Larceny In All Of Us?

By Sherman N. Miller
Special To The Post
Many of my neighbors and my family have shared the dubious honor of replacing one or more stolen bicycles. Some thieves were bold enough to steal bicycles off front porches or even from inside these homes. Many of these were children's bicycles. Does this suggest that America's moral values have changed?

I have always tried to convince myself that parents will not condone their children taking other people's property. But an incident at an amusement park shocked me back into reality.

My younger son and only daughter had rented air mattresses to ride large manmade waves in a giant swimming pool. The intensity of the first wave knocked my daughter off her air mattress and it was washed up onto the side of the pool. A mother watched her children take my daughter's air mattress and said nothing to them.

My wife was not about to let this incident go unchallenged. She noticed that these children did not have



Sherman

mattress rental armbands which the park supplies. She therefore asked the mother if her children had rented air mattresses. This lady admitted that they had not. My wife told our daughter to take her mattress back.

Although this was a minor matter, my wife called my attention to the fact that this lady appeared to have been guarding other mattresses that their children had captured. Hopefully, someone had given the children these new mattresses. Nevertheless, my wife's real concern was that this mother had taught her children to steal.

"THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING ECONOMIC CLOUT IS OBVIOUS. CLOUT IS NOT MAINTAINED WHEN BLACK DOLLARS ARE GOING INTO BUSINESSES THAT PUT THE MONEY INTO THE SUBURBS INSTEAD OF BACK INTO THE BLACK COMMUNITY ECONOMY."

MICHIGAN CHRONICLE



Black's Destiny In Own Hands

As I See It

Should Drugs Be Legalized?

By Gerald O. Johnson
Special To The Post

The drug problem plaguing the country is finally getting the attention it should have received years ago. But the government is slow getting around to things like this. It generally takes 10 million deaths and billions of strung out kids to get some attention. Alas, action is forthcoming as our President declared an all out war against the numero uno menace to our society.

It appears that the strategic plan of attack (from what I can make of it) is to go after the drug sources and drug distributors. This plan is very similar to the war against prohibition and will probably yield similar results. The problem stems from limiting the supply without dampening the demand. This is going to get deep, so try to stay with me please.

Since there is much dinero involved with drug trafficking, eliminating the sources will be virtually impossible. A new source will pop up for every source eliminated. However, the hitting of the sources will put a temporary delay on the supply on the



Gerald street. This temporary supply shortage will create a classic econ 101 situation. With supply down and demand up - prices must go up. When prices on drugs go up, drug addicts need more dinero to feed their habits. Where does the dinero come from? You and me. Crime will have to go up. The addicts will have to hit the streets harder and more often to fund the additional cost of the drugs.

But this isn't the only problem looming with our "War on Drugs." With the prisons being overcrowded,

where are you going to put those arrested from drug crimes? With mucho dinero involved in drug trafficking and poco dinero being paid to drug enforcers, corruption becomes an issue. With our society being a drug culture, how can you possibly control distribution and usage through force. These and other problems make the attempt at getting serious about fighting a drug war more political than practical. Moreover, do you realize the amount of tax dollars not being collected through illegal drug trafficking? There is no way to know how much money is involved in this situation and no one to get tax dollars from.

But think about this. Why are controlled substances such a menace to society? If you eliminate the morality issues and get to the heart of the matter, then the problem to society is the innocent victims of drug-related crimes. Most of the drug-related crimes are associated with the procurement of the substance. Addicts robbing and sometimes killing to get funds to purchase a supply. Pushers committing crimes against addicts because of not paying off. Addicts killing pushers because of bad goods. Suppliers knocking off pushers because of not paying off.

Therefore, to get rid of the major problem associated with drugs, it stands to reason that controlling the procurement process should eliminate a lot of the problems. Hence, legalize all drugs.

By legalizing drugs you have removed the substance from the black market. It will not be profitable to produce and traffic the mess. Cut out the illegal profit and you cut out the source of the problem.

This solution does not address the problems of the addict. However, the solution does provide a means of getting tax dollars from the drug usage. The tax dollars could be used to help fund programs for the addicts.

The solution sounds far fetched and drastic. But the drug problem has reached such an epidemic proportion that it will require a far fetched solution. As far fetched as it may seem now, it will get a serious look when the President's "War on Drugs" meets its Waterloo.

THE CHARLOTTE POST
North Carolina's Fastest Growing Weekly
376-9486
"The People's Newspaper"
108 Years Of Continuous Service
Bill Johnson Publisher Emeritus Gerald Johnson Co-Publisher Bob Johnson Co-Publisher Bernard Reeves Gen. Mgr. Loretta Manago Mng. Editor Jackie Carr Copy Editor Fran Farrer-Bradley Adv. Mgr. Dannette Gaither Office 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
USPS No. 965500 POSTMASTER Send Change of address to Charlotte Post 1531 Camden Rd. Charlotte, N.C. 28203