

Editorials

Spiritual Gifts

"Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea... behold, there came wise men from the east... (and when) they saw the young child with Mary his mother... and worshipped him... they presented him gifts; gold, frankincense and myrrh."

Matt. 2:1, 11

For Christmas, the joy of Christmas is rooted in the birth of Jesus Christ. And the mysterious spirit of generosity - gift-giving - which possesses us at Christmas time is the afterglow of Christ's wonderful birth. Yet, as we exchange material gifts, we too often forget that they should be symbolic of the unmatching gift of God's love for each of us. Little gifts then, that are expressions of our love and devotion to the recipients are in reality symbolic of God's spiritual gifts to us. Undoubtedly, the greatest of these is that "the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ." (Rom. 6:23)

In Managing God's Gift Dolson and Davis note that "the Bible mentions some 30 gifts of the Spirit..." In I Corinthians 13:1-3, Paul names in an ascending order of value seven of the gifts of the Spirit: tongues, prophecy, the understanding of mysteries, knowledge, faith, total sacrifice of goods and martyrdom. In fact Dolson and Davis remind us that "every human being is a 'spiritual gifts manager' for each of us receives at least one spiritual gift (I Cor. 12:7), and most Christians receive several."

I Corinthians 13 - the love chapter - Paul reminds us that without love these spiritual gifts profit us nothing. "As faithful managers and stewards of the gifts God has given us," Dolson and Davis add, "we can accomplish a lot with what we have if we use these gifts in an unselfish, loving way to bless those about us." This is truly what Christmas is all about, indeed this should be the essence of daily living. Thus, if

Christmas is true and real in your heart, you should give little gifts of love each day, even to those who may despise you. "Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirsts, give him drink." (Rom. 12:20)

Dolson and Davis tell us too that in this Christmas, and more importantly each day, that there is a "...need for Christians to become serious about using the gifts God has given them - all of them. Not just money, but time, the tongue, influence - in short, every aspect of life."

Thus, as we move about in this Christmas season, let us not get paralyzed by the materialism of commercial gift-giving because someone has given us something, or get angry because no one reciprocated in turn giving us a gift or placing a heavy financial burden on yourself to purchase an "impressive" gift. Love would be no part of such giving or receiving.

"Spiritual gifts," John Freeman writes, "is a theological term meaning any endowment that comes through the grace of God." (Rom. 1:11). They make possible good works (Eph. 2:10). They are found in ability to speak an unlearned tongue (I Cor. 14:1-33); power to drive out evil spirits (Matt. 8:16; Acts 13:7-12); prophecy (Rom. 12:6); keenness of discernment (wisdom) and knowledge (I Cor. 12:4-8). These gifts are to be sought diligently (I Cor. 12:9), but never at the risk of neglecting the more excellent way of pursuing faith, hope, and love, of which love is the greatest gift (I Cor. 13:13). Finally, everyone is accountable for any and all gifts bestowed upon them (I Peter 4:10; I Cor. 4:7).

Thus, let's put back or keep in place the real meaning of Christmas by disbursing true gifts of the Spirit - the gift of God's everlasting love to all who we may know or have contact with in this Christmas season.

In Denying One, You Deny Yourself

Recent actions by the Botha government of South Africa to place total censorship on the news media is a painful reminder of the major impact of slavery followed by racial segregation upon the American southland and upon its people until as recently as 25 years ago. We are referring in particular to the fact that when white southerners were denying black people their God-given rights it was necessary for them to deny themselves too. This resulted from the need of whites to be preoccupied with laws, duplicated facilities, a rejection of a large percent of the potentially skilled labor force and a misrepresented form of government. In very blunt terms, for whites to keep blacks in the gutter of denial they had

to stay in that same gutter.

Thus, as the P.W. Botha's government seeks to continue to oppress and deny black South Africans their birth right in the most humane ways, he is mounting increasing denials upon the white people he is supposedly protecting from the blacks.

While South Africa is certainly not the only nation in the world, or even on the African continent, without a free press, they have always led the outside world to believe that they strongly favor democracy, black suppression notwithstanding.

Just a glance back at American history and Botha would realize the tragic consequence of his bad decision.

Miller Says:

A Technical Success, But A Marketing Failure

By Sherman N. Miller
Special To The Post

In assessing their chances of winning political office candidates are forced to answer the proverbial question, "Where will I find 50 percent plus 1 vote?" A brief look at the 1986 United States senatorial campaign in the State of Louisiana reveals that the Republican Party strategists can no longer afford to ignore the black vote in their pursuit of victories.

The percentage of the Louisiana black voting age population that is registered to vote doubled (31.1 to 62.5 percent) between 1980-84. Further, blacks made up a healthy 25 percent of all registered Louisiana voters in 1984. There is no doubt that the Rev. Jesse Jackson's 1984 presidential bid ignited the political spirit of the black community.

Louisiana's huge registered black vote is a potential nightmare for political strategists unless they learn how to utilize it or to neutralize it. The Republican Party's low showing in the black community left them but one option, which was to find an honorable endeavor to mask an attack on Louisiana's huge black vote.

A Republican National Committee (RNC) report entitled "The Truth About The Republican Party's Ballot Integrity Program" offers credence to my assertion:



Sherman

"In the last decade, in Louisiana, one U.S. congressman was forced to resign from office (and ended up in prison) when the courts found his campaign guilty of using voter fraud to win the election, and another lost his re-election bid when 35 Democrat election officials in his congressional district were convicted of fraud."

The Republican strategists seized upon this golden opportunity to exploit the issue of voter fraud to diminish the impact of an adverse voter segment in Louisiana. They sent out 350,000 pieces of mail to see how many returns they would get back. These letters were sent out, according to the RNC, "In 53 parishes... to Republicans and white Independents only... In the remaining 11 parishes... it was mailed to black Independents



As I See It

Bring In The Clowns

By Gerald O. Johnson
Special To The Post

For well over a month the Bob Walton story has consumed Charlotte's every waking hour. Hardly a day passes without some mention of Bob or the situation surrounding him these days. The black community is tearing at the seams over the whole thing. I have heard many reasons for supporting his resigning as well as reasons for not supporting it. But when you filter through what's being said, most people fall to varying degrees into two categories.

There are those who feel the situation has been blown out of proportion and though they don't condone his actions, they do support his achievements and contributions on behalf of the black community. These individuals I shall refer to as Black Priders.

Then we have those



Gerald

individuals who stand simply on principle. Right is right, wrong is wrong. They feel Bob was wrong and that's that. These individuals we shall refer to as Black Principlers.

The Priders and the Principlers will never come

to terms on this issue because they view from completely different perspectives. The Priders feel somewhat threatened when the black community is portrayed in a negative light. They will without a doubt circle the wagons when outsiders start painting a negative picture of the community or any of its members.

The Principlers could care less about circling the wagons on negative publicity, unless the publicity was in error. Moreover, they have no sympathy for public officials who they elected to represent those principles who betray those principles.

This community split was predictable. The only way to avoid it would have been for Bob to resign. He has not and he may not. But the whole situation has created some personal, deep concerns. They center on the skewed perspectives of both the Priders and the Principlers.

The Priders in their zest to rally behind black causes (right or wrong) have on occasion foregone any principles. They have forgotten that to be able to get a sound following, they must stand behind more than just pride. If you don't, then no one will take you seriously. Pride without principle will leave you wandering without purpose.

The Principlers in their zeal to stand for something have toned their passive opinions into active demands. They have forgotten how to listen and how to reason. Consequently, through their words and their actions they do irreparable harm to others. Principle without pride will give you purpose but no meaning.

It is apparent to me that until we can focus on issues with both pride and principle - principle and pride, then the bickering and indecisiveness will always be there. The whole situation is reminiscent of these words to a song, "Bring in the clowns. There has to be clowns. Well, maybe they are here."

Deadline Extended

The Kays Gary Humanitarian Award Dinner has been established to honor Mr. Gary, a Charlotte Observer columnist and known humanitarian. The deadline for nominations for this award has been extended to December 31. Send nominations to: Mission Air, Inc., Suite 803, Independence Tower, 4801 E. Independence Blvd., Charlotte, NC 28212.

The nominating committee and Mr. Gary will meet on January 6, and the winner will be announced at the dinner on January 30, 7 p.m., at the Adam's Mark Hotel in Charlotte.

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