

## Editorials

# Black Institution In Crisis

In 1956, at the urging of the Oblate Sisters, a Catholic Order of black nuns based in the Baltimore, Maryland, area, the Bishop of North Carolina authorized the construction of Our Lady of Consolation Catholic Elementary School. As might be expected, in those days of segregation, the school was established to serve black Catholics and others in the black community.

Many black Charlotteans and a few whites, too, received their initial, formal education at Our Lady over these past 31 years. Now, faced with unconfirmed reports that for the past five years the school has operated on borrowed money from the Catholic Diocese of Charlotte, there is growing concern about the future of this landmark black institution.

The problem arises from a Catholic Diocese of Charlotte report that they can no longer afford to provide a subsidy to the school when there is no foreseeable way that the debt can be repaid. Furthermore, Our Lady of Consolation Parish lacks surplus funds to aid and assist the school. In November, 1986, the Diocese announced plans to eliminate the seventh and eighth grades beginning with the next school year. However, Our Lady's Home-School Association was led to believe that such grade reductions were the result of assumed declining enrollments in those

grades. While not happy with the decision, the Association, nevertheless, accepted it gracefully. It was therefore with a degree of shock and dismay that the Association learned last week, for the first time, that grades fourth through sixth would also be eliminated next year.

Hearing also for the first time, was that the debt owed by the school to the Diocese was the primary reason for eliminating these additional grades. This latter issue has been particularly upsetting to those close to Our Lady of Consolation School because no prior notice or information had been provided by the Diocese to the school's administration, the Home-School Association, or anyone else connected with the school.

The Diocese has suggested that students in or advancing to those grades to be cut should transfer to the Assumption School on East Independence Blvd. Some Association members view both moves as a first step toward closing another school in the black community.

If you have concerns about this issue, contact Mr. Reginald Dixon, vice president, Our Lady of Consolation Home-School Association, through the school to help keep Our Lady a viable educational entity in our community.

# Affirmative Action Retreat

In a New York Times article, Robert Tuttle, director of Presidential Personnel in the Reagan administration, is quoted as saying, "This administration is opposed to the numbers game in any way, shape or form. It would be demeaning to people who come into the government to say there was any kind of quota. It would be an insult to every woman and minority." Mr. Tuttle's statement was an attempt to defend the Reagan administration's record in the hiring of blacks personnel in senior level positions.

Data from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) shows that the number of black personnel in senior level positions declined from 44 in 1980 to only 20 in 1986. Senior level positions are defined by OPM to include Cabinet officers, their deputies and assistant secretaries involved in implementing administration policies. The 44 positions held by blacks in 1980 in the last Jimmy Carter year represented 9.5% of all such positions but today they only hold 20, or 4.5%.

White House staff have noted that there

were two criteria for selecting presidential appointees - "competence and commitment to the President and his policies." Previous Democratic Party administrations have used similar criteria. However, Carter's sensitivity to the racism that lingers in America influenced him to have an affirmative action program.

In commenting on this declining representation of the nation's largest minority group at the highest levels of the federal government, some Republicans claim that the problem is "ideological" in that Reagan and his top brass simply don't trust blacks or women. While this is undoubtedly true, Francis Guess, a black Republican on the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, gives probably the most accurate answer to the question when he said, "Moderate black Republicans (conservatives are too few in number) don't want to be associated with the administration as it is now viewed within the black community. It is viewed as hostile to the hopes, desires, and aspirations of blacks," and we agree.

# Jim's God Of Materialism

Jim Bakker's resignation from his position as the powerful and extravagant leader of PTL - "Praise the Lord" should have come as no surprise to anyone. Extravagant in his assumptions about what he claims God had planned for his life were evident by his equally extravagant love of materialism.

This emphasis on materialism was the

core of the dream that consumed Jim and Tammy Bakker. In his quest of the god of materialism, Jim and Tammy Bakker ignored the teachings of the one they claimed as their Savior, Jesus Christ, who said, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal."

# Alexander Responds

As President of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg County Branch of the NAACP during the past four years, I felt that it is my responsibility to reply to the allegations and innuendo contained in the remarks of individuals used as sources for The Charlotte Post articles on the local chapter. It is sad that such a small percentage of the membership of the Charlotte branch by saying negative things, while claiming to be doing so "for the good of the organization" has been able to receive more column inches than the NAACP's sponsorship of - two bus loads of anti-hate-group-demonstrators to the historic Cumming, Georgia, march; our position on the death of Maurice Kendall at the hands of security guards; our opposition to Klan and other hate group activity in Charlotte; our sponsorship of the Mecklenburg County leg of the NAACP's cross country "March for Human Dignity"; or our position on the constitutional rights of Bob Walton. All of these things are more important to the community than the desire of individuals frustrated by their lack of support within the local NAACP, to rewrite history. It is long past time to set the record straight.

### THE BRANCH ELECTION

In a letter received by the national office on December 30, 1986, Paul Recard raised several questions concerning the conduct of the December election. A full reply to his allegations was filed with the national office on January 13, 1987. In that reply I requested that the national office rule on two constitutional questions in reference to his complaint: 1) Was the complaint timely filed? 2) Did the complaint have the necessary number of signatures of branch members



Kelly Alexander Jr.

in order for it to be considered? During the week of January 16, General Frazier called and requested a conference with me. She indicated that she wanted to discuss something important in reference to the election. At our conference General asked how vice presidents were selected by the nominating committee? General said that she should have been selected as Vice President over those elected because she was obviously the best choice. Her qualifications for the position were so outstanding, that it was practically impossible for the committee not to have selected her.

A few days later I received a letter dated January 16, which rehashed much of our earlier conversation and alleged that the nominating committee had not acted in the best interest of the branch by producing a slate of officers that did not include her as a vice president. (NOTE: The committee did include her on the slate for a seat on the executive committee.) Since her letter simply restated her earlier position, I did not reply to it. Nor did I share it with the branch, thinking it to be a personal communication.

See Kelly On Page 3A

# As I See It

## Educating Black America

By Gerald C. Johnson



Gerald

Education for Black Americans or shall I say the lack thereof has reached a state of crisis. Less and less of our Black youngsters are getting the academic preparation to become successful participants in our society. Here are some alarming facts about the education of Black America nationally:

1. More than 40% of Black students in predominantly Black urban school districts will drop out of school.
2. Poor students are four times more likely to drop out of school than students from more affluent backgrounds.
3. The number of Black students repeating grades during the period from 1977 to 1983 rose from 23.8% to 30.8%.
4. Black high schools students are twice as likely to be 1 grade level behind in school and three times as likely to be three grade levels as compared to white students.
5. More than half of all Black youth without an high school diploma are unemployed.

Locally the Charlotte Mecklenburg School System has its own alarming statistics:

1. Only 504 Black students are enrolled among the 7,469 students enrolled in the Academically gifted program.
2. More than 50% of all students enrolled as emotionally handicapped are Black.
3. More than 66% of all students enrolled as mentally handicapped are black.
4. More than 50% of students said to be learning disabled are Black.
5. 25% of enrolled Black

ninth graders will drop out of school before graduation.

These statistics point out that a large proportion of Black youth are destined to become welfare statistics. As our society continues to become more technologically advanced, education becomes increasingly more important. With government funds being drastically cut back, fewer programs are available to help the already behind Black youth to catch up.

It would be easy to start pointing fingers and try and place the blame somewhere. But this would not help the situation. The key point here is to recognize that a serious problem does exist and to begin to mobilize the community to attack the problem.

To this end, the Charlotte Mecklenburg Urban League has created a Task Force to combat this alarming situation. As part of the National Urban League's Education Initiative Project, the local chapter will put into action a five year campaign that can make a difference in the future of our community. To guarantee the success of the local campaign, Mrs. Barbara Davis was chosen chairperson of the task force.

The task force will look at ways to assist in helping our youth get the proper tools, guidance, and motivation to have a chance of making it in today's educational environment. However, the task force is only acting as a spearhead for this effort. The success of the campaign will require the entire community's involvement. Every aspect of our community has to be mo-

bilized to give a concentrated effort at saving our kids. Adult involvement will be the key. If we as adults show a genuine interest in the welfare of our kids, then our kids will respond.

This means that we must give academics a high billing just as we do athletics. We must go back to the extended family approach to dealing with our kids. An adult should show up at parent teacher conferences to let the teachers know that as a community we are interested in our kids' welfare, even if we aren't the parents. We must educate the parents to the importance of their involvement with the schools and their kids' education.

Our kids must begin to get the message that a test score is just as important to us as a game score. This means that we must show up in numbers for parent-teacher conferences as we do for football and basketball games.

This effort will be a tremendous responsibility on our community. But I can think of no responsibility of greater importance than saving our kids. Our future as a community depends on it. I personally believe that our future as a nation depends on it. Hence, when the task force solicits your help, volunteer whatever service you can provide. Do it for our kids' sake.

AS I SEE IT  
Every Week In The  
Charlotte Post

### Miller Says:

# Government Should Ease Plight Of American Farmer

By Sherman N. Little  
Special To The Post

The numerous dead citrus trees visible for miles while driving along Florida's Turnpike north of Orlando is a disquieting experience. Few farmers are seen replacing them. Are they mere relics of a bygone epoch of prosperity on America's farms?

I began to appreciate the plight of the American family farmer from a young Nebraska couple. The husband had said that fellows his age (27 years old) who bought farms were forced into bankruptcy because of the high prices for farm equipment and/or land coupled with a collapse of the farm market. This chap works as an employee on a major farm (5,000 plus acres).

High mental stress was etched on this young man's face as he revealed his father's plight in the midst of the current economic crisis in America's farms. He said his father now runs a little carpentry business where he does contract work for the farmers. Since these farmers have no money to purchase his services, this small carpentry business has fallen on dire



Sherman

straits.

According to this lad, his father is in a quandary because he is in his 50s with no other skills. This young chap says he tries to help his father when ever he can. I felt sorry for this young fellow because he seemed to age five years just talking about his father's trials and tribulations.

My sorrow later turned to anger as I recounted the solace I had gotten admiring the huge corn fields while driving across Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. I had also gotten a false sense of farm prosperity from the site of small oil well pumps, which looked like giant grasshoppers, dotting the farm land on

drives from Texarkana, Arkansas, to Shreveport, Louisiana.

The farmer is one of America's greatest assets. We must not take foolhardy chances with America's future food supply by ignoring our family farmers during their times of crisis. Is food rationing portended for our grandchildren because we sit idle or only make token gestures while our family farms disintegrate?

There are those who will argue that we have subsidized our farmers too long. These same people might contend that government manipulation of farm prices has created this current crisis on the farm. I say to these people that government and business must work together for the common prosperity of America.

Furthermore, if we can exploit creative means to find money for aid to the Nicaraguan Contras, surely can stop the economic carnage on America's family farms. If we can bail out large corporations, why cannot we help America's family farmers? Are not farm jobs important enough to preserve?

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