

The Charlotte Post

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Editorials

Fatherhood And Responsibility

By HOYLE H. MARTIN
Editorial Writer

In Matthew, the first book of the New Testament Bible, chapter 6 beginning with verse 9, Jesus, the Great One, is teaching about prayer. He says, "Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." Then Jesus adds, "Give us this day our daily bread." The question has been asked by theologians and laymen alike, why did Jesus suddenly move from an emphasis on the realm and majestic of God the Father to such an earthly subject as bread?

The answer to this question is that anything touched, embraced or mentioned by Jesus or God the Father taken on the characteristic of being within God's realm and is therefore blessed. On the other hand, we mortal souls tend to compartmentalize things as sacred or secular, if anything. With this understanding, we should not wonder why Jesus included food in this the worldwide known "Lord's Prayer."

It is important to remind us, too, that food is mentioned in the "Lord's Prayer" because God placed Adam in the Garden of Eden and "...commanded (him) saying, of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it..." (Gen. 2:16, 17). Thus, God had supplied Adam with all of the life-sustaining needs without even having to work for them. God then created Eve so that Adam would not be alone in the beautiful garden. However, Adam and Eve disobeyed God and ate fruit from the forbidden tree of knowledge. As punishment for this, God took Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden and placed them in an area where they had to work on dusty, dry ground by the sweat of their bodies to grow food to eat. Thus, it is written that modern-day man

must work to provide for his and his family's needs. Unfortunately and tragically, in far too many black households there is no father or other responsible male to help earn money for bread and other essentials of life. Tragically, too, as we approach a day of recognition for fathers, "Father's Day," many youth, particularly those just reaching the age to verbalize, are asking, "where is my daddy?" The lack of an answer to that question is a tragic reality in many black households and is thus changing the traditional meaning of a family - a father, mother, and children - in black communities.

As we approach this Father's Day celebration, we can only hope that some absentee fathers will reassess their family situations by realizing that they have responsibilities to their families, to themselves, and to the Almighty God who made them.

While the fathers to whom this editorial is mostly directed toward will probably never read it, we can only hope that at least through some means they may sense the deep meaning of the following excerpts from the poem, "It's So Nice to Have a Dad Around the House" by Helen Steiner Rice. It reads:

"Dads are special people. No home should be without. For every family will agree they're so nice to have about. ... And they're very necessary in every family plan... Dad reaches out his hand. And you can always count on him To help and understand - And while we do not praise Dad as often as we should, We love him.... (And) it's only fair to emphasize his importance and his worth - for if there were no loving Dads, This would be a loveless earth."

Thus, if you know an absentee father, please read this poem excerpt to him, it just might make a difference in a family where a small child asks, "Where is my daddy?"

Affirmative Action Under Attack

The shadow of Ronald Reagan is, as we have noted before, lingering dangerously over the hard fought civil rights gains of the past 20 years. In particularly, last Monday a 5-4 ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court expanded the right of white men to challenge court-approved affirmative action plans for the specific benefit of racial minorities and women.

In the case in question, the Supreme Court reopened a 1974 Birmingham, Ala., case wherein a group of blacks sued over job bias in the fire department. The case was eventually resolved by the disputing parties and a federal judge issued a consent decree in 1981 approving the agreement. A year later, seven white firefighters challenged the promotion plan in the agreement. While their suit was dismissed, the case was reinstated in 1987. In Monday's action, the high court's majority said that seven white men who were not participants in the original case and agreement had a right to file suit against it as a form of reverse discrimination.

The majority vote by the high court came from the Chief Justice Rehnquist and Justices Byron White, Sandra Day O'Connor, Antonin Scalia and Anthony Kennedy. The last three so named are Reagan appointees. The minority vote, that is, against the prevailing court decision were Justices Harry Blackman, John Paul Stevens, Thurgood Marshall and William Brennan.

The broad-based ruling by the 5-4 conservative majority may have a major impact on affirmative action rulings of the past, and in the words of Justice Stevens, author of the minority view, open "a never-ending stream of litigation and potential liability."

As stated clearly by the Associated Press, this "was the third time this year that the court's conservative majority, which solidified under former President Ronald Reagan, has moved to the right in major civil rights cases;" therefore, we minority people everywhere must be prepared to continue the never-ending struggle for full equality.

Obsessed With Image

From "Don't Become Obsessed With Image," editorial in the New Pittsburgh Courier, March 18, 1989. "...Many black folks and organizations are concerned about the crises facing our community. But some don't fight the negative reality as hard as they fight the overkill media coverage of that reality. It is a case of flip-flopped priorities. When public officials, institutions, or the media are guilty of "calling us names," we rise up with emotion and commitment. And well we should. It's ugly, painful and detrimental to hear a public figure utter a racial slur, or to see a company sell products with anti-black stereotypes...But the reality of violence, drugs and economic underdevelopment is a much worse hell than the media and other name-calling that afflict us...We must spend as much time dealing with the direct killers of our community. All the marches, protests and letter writing are great reducers of image violence. Unless we employ them in the "other battle," they do little to address the underlying cancer..."

Corporate America's Needs Will Fuel The Education Of Minority Students

The United States of America has failed to educate its black and Hispanic children; ergo the nation now finds itself at a competitive disadvantage in the world marketplace. National civil rights organizations attempted to prevent this resource crisis through radical programs like "Affirmation Action" and "Busing." These ideas were merely tainted by the media as forced integration or advancement through mediocrity.

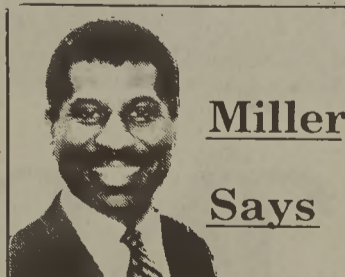
Nevertheless, Affirmative Action is now finding credibility in multinational corporations. Global market forces demand that these multinational corporations learn to use their global human resources to remain competitive in today's world marketplace. Thus corporate affirmative action committees are now pontificating the importance of differences in people.

Yet the question to be addressed in both multinational and domestic corporations today is, "How does one get minorities and women fully integrated into the economic mainstream?"

William Raspberry, a black syndicated columnist for the Washington Post, touched on some recent research about the development stages that blacks and women undergo during their assimilation into the economic mainstream. His comments were made at a lecture sponsored by the Affirmative Action Committee of the Dupont Company.

Raspberry labeled the first stage "naivete." Naivete was attributed only to children.

He called the second stage "acceptance." In this stage blacks and women accept their subordinate roles while white males are thrust into dominant



Miller Says

By Sherman Miller

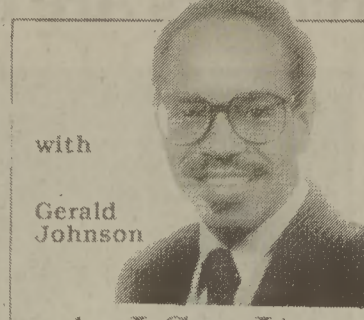
leadership positions. In the third stage, "resistance," blacks and women recognize their lowly lot in life and become resistant. They appear hostile and overly sensitive. Then comes a "redefinition" where blacks and women move beyond their haughty mannerism. The final stage of blacks, and

Three Rs and Racial Balance

Does an integrated school system really work? Yes and no. The problem with a system like the Charlotte Mecklenburg school system is integration appears to be the end to a means - instead of a means to an end. It appears to me that some years ago people felt it was the right thing to do. However, today no one seems to remember why. But, because the system has received national recognition, no one really likes to question it.

But, if the system was so great, why do we have to have minority achievement. Minority achievement is a step towards internally segregating a supposedly integrated system. By setting lower standards for minorities implies lower expectations. Consequently, minorities continue to score lower. What is worse, everybody has a million and one excuses why it's okay. A higher percentage of minority children come from single family homes. A higher percentage of minority children come from poorer environment. Minorities have limited exposure to the world around them. The list goes on.

The problem with this is it perpetuates under achievement. It helps make people feel okay about the plight of minority children. Since we can categorize the problem, we feel better about it. Unfortunately, it



with

Gerald Johnson

As I See It

doesn't cause action to be taken to correct the problem.

Think of it this way. If you were flying in a plane, would you want the pilot to be a top flight airman, or a minority achiever. The standards for a pilot's license doesn't change because of the color of the pilot's skin. Why then should we accept lower standards for anything we attempt. Achievement should be based on certain criteria. That criteria shouldn't fluctuate for any reason. The send a message of inferiority to our kids when we accept programs like minority achievement. It says to them they can't compete with their white counterparts.

Under a true integrated system, all children would compete under the same guidelines. Set the standards high and make them reach.

Along with the failure of programs like minority achievement, the system basically fails for other reasons. Integration causes the system to become reactionary rather than proactive. Integration supercedes education as the top agenda item for administrators and officials, alike. The politics of perception supercedes reasoning based on reality. A lot of poor decisions have been made for the sake of integration instead of education.

The best example I can think of is the rigid racial balance quotas we use for busing. I can think of situations where an all black class can be helpful in the educational process. Children with who have been handicapped by environmental conditions could be grouped together for learning purposes. It would be arguable that unique approaches for reaching certain children with similar backgrounds may lead to classes that are all black. So be it.

Our focus going into the nineties has to be what is best for the education of our kids. We can not afford to let arguments about integration distort the purpose of schools.

Remember, a lot of us got the majority of our education from a predominantly black environment. For all practical purposes, we didn't turn out so bad.

Congressional Democrats In Retreat

Oh, how the mighty have fallen!

At least that is what happened in the House of Representatives during the past few weeks. Just when we thought he would live forever, Claude Pepper died. Speaker Jim Wright and Majority Whip Tony Coelho resigned under pressure.

All of a sudden the core of the Democratic leadership was gone.

Why did it happen? What did we learn?

These are questions that many commentators have raised and tried to answer during the past few weeks.

Honestly, I don't know the answers any better than you do. But, since I got to know all three of them when they came to North Carolina to help my congressional campaign several years ago, I want to think about what they taught us--and what their departures mean.

These three men, and the power they gained, before losing it last week tell us much about what makes Congress work--and what is right and wrong about that great institution.

Each of them drew power from different sources. Wright from his great skills in traditional politics, Coelho from his incredible fundraising talents and Pepper from his unmatched ability to mobilize senior citizens into the nation's largest special interest group.

I confess that I was awed by each of them. I look back with amazement at the way Jim Wright dealt with my request that he help me push my proposals for radical reform of the campaign finance laws to restrict the role of Political Action Committees. You would not have expected Jim Wright, one of the largest recipients of PAC money, to be receptive. But he



D.G. Martin

One-On-One

was careful not to criticize until he had listened carefully. And then he said, as if I had persuaded him, "You are right, things have got to change, we are going to have to do something."

Wright had gained my loyalty by giving my ideas respect. But he had promised me nothing else. At the same time, he had sized up. He knew what I wanted, and had a good idea of what I would give up to get it. Sometime down the road, he might have brokered a deal "that would have helped everybody and not hurt anybody too much."

Wright could have been a great speaker because he had the skill to broker the programs and passions of hundreds of members of Congress--and get everybody something. Some of us don't like that brokering process. It compromises principles. It smells bad.

But it is also the essence of the practical workings of a democracy. When there are people with the skills of Jim Wright in power, the legislative process works. When such people are not in power, the process might smell better, but it often doesn't work. Some people say that the absence of a Jim Wright type person is what is wrong with the North Carolina legislature this year.

If Jim Wright was a listener, Tony Coelho was a talker. His strength was persuasion. He was a salesman, and he made no apologies for trying to talk people into doing what he wanted them to do. When he turned that talent to fundraising, he raised millions of dollars for democratic congressmen and candidates.

Coelho recognized the partnership between big money and politics, and exploited it for all it was worth. He told big money that it could not get along without politicians. He told politicians that they could not get along without big money. Then he brought them together, and by giving them each other gained great power for himself.

Coelho is leaving Congress, but the lessons he taught and the marriages that he made remain.

Claude Pepper had a different kind of power. Not a broker of different interests like Jim Wright or a big money raiser like Coelho, Pepper's power came from his ability to mobilize senior citizens. When Wright and Coelho came to North Carolina, small polite groups of insiders came to see them. When Pepper came, mobs of senior citizens gathered to shout their approval and touch the man.

Wright could give you a part in the process once you got to Congress. Coelho could get you money to run the campaign. But only Pepper could deliver what really counted. He could get you the votes.

So Claude Pepper was a wonderful reminder that democracy still can work. When a lot of little people band together to make a change, they still have more power than all of Jim Wright's political skills and Tony Coelho's big money.

WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?

Let us hear your comments, ideas and opinions. Write to:

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