

Individual atonement can heal hearts

By Minister Robert Muhammad
SPECIAL TO THE POST

Throughout the world, people are suffering needlessly. The poor and disenfranchised are at the mercy of the politically and economically powerful. Racism, classism and sexism are destroying social systems throughout. Acts of genocide, fratricide and suicide are committed each second of each day. Man is openly rebellious to the desire and will of Allah (God). The entire world is out of order. All segments are in need of a divine healing.

A proper, complete and divine healing cannot be achieved until a qualified physician diagnoses the malady that is afflicting the host. In ages past, the great, beneficent and merciful Creator has sent messengers with great healing powers to cure the very people who were to be assisted by the man of God, rebelled and assisted in sentencing the potential saviour to death.

The above type of behavior indicates that, historically people for the most part, have preferred to partake in a lifestyle that is rebellious rather than to submit to the law and will of Allah. Today's society is no different. Whatever the Creator has decreed as being immoral, indecent and harmful, the powers that be

have sanctioned and backed as being all right. Unfortunately, the people of today wilfully choose society's self-serving corruption of God's laws as being all right as well. This wilful desire to disobey Allah indicates that the people are contaminated.



Muhammad

The disease of individuals and society that afflict the world today, through they are made manifest physically, their treatment must be spiritual. It is important that we remember the words of Jesus. "For as a man thinketh in his heart so is he." This is a restatement of the adage, "You are what you eat." If we partake of diets that are nutritionally deficient, our bodies and actions will give indications of this. If we ingest spiritual poison into the heart, then we will manifest that poison through our actions on and interactions with society.

The Apostle Paul wrote of a circumcision of the heart. Man's heart must undergo preparation to allow the spirit of God to enter into it and flow freely. In the church we sang the song titled, "Open up your heart and let Jesus Come In." Naturally the man called Jesus cannot enter into the small chambered organ in

the chest. However, the truth imparted by Jesus, and the principles that received from the Father, and subsequently delivered in pure fashion to man, can enter. The Honorable Elijah Muhammad taught us that Jesus is synonymous with justice. When we open our hearts to Jesus we are allowing ourselves to be filled with the spirit of justice.

To receive the spirit of justice, the vessel that is to contain justice must be properly prepared. Man's body is a vessel that is created in the image and likeness of God. Yet, in its current wretched state it is unable to receive the full power of God. The vessel (body) must undergo changes that will allow it not only to contain the power of God but to properly serve as a condition that provides the power of God to others.

On Oct. 16, 1997, the Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan is inviting all of humanity to join in the observance of the second anniversary of the Million Man March. This is not to be a day of fun, frolic or pleasure. This is to be a day of introspection and reflection and atonement. The process of atonement is vital in preparing the body (vessel) so that it may receive the spirit of justice.

MINISTER ROBERT MUHAMMAD is leader of the Nation of Islam in Charlotte.

Letters to The Post

Equal status is the solution to bias

There seems to be a belief afoot if persons of different ethnicities attend each others church a dialogue may occur resulting in a realization of what they have in common and thus engender better ethnic relations.

Many have come to accept as true the belief prejudice thrives in isolation and that getting people together will overcome prejudice. But is this really true? Some social scientists doubt the basis of the problem.

Social psychologist Gordon W. Allport was perhaps the foremost researcher of this premise in the 1940s and 1950s. Allport posited if contact is the answer to the problems of prejudice and discrimination then why didn't racial prejudice and discrimination in the American South disappear long ago? One could very well argue that northern racists never had an opportunity to know African-Americans, but in the South African Americans and European Americans have long been in close contact. Many southern European Americans, for example, grew up having much closer relations with African American servant than with their own parents. Certainly in small southern towns the two racial groups had been in close, regular, daily contact for generations. Yet prejudice and discrimination were as rampant in these towns as anywhere else in the United States was. Why?

Allport proposed his answer decades ago in a book titled, "The Nature of Prejudice." Contact won't necessarily make relations between the two groups better, he postulated; often it will make relations worse, depending on the conditions under which that contact occurs.

According to Allport's theory, of contact, prejudice and discrimination will decrease if two groups with equal status (italics added) have contact and will increase or remain high if

it occurs under conditions of status inequality, in which one group is dominant and the other subordinate. He goes on to suggest that this is why it took so long for race

relations to improve in the South. European American merchants had contact only with African American customers, not with African American merchants. European American children had contact primarily with African American servants, not with African American teachers or African American fellow students. Such contracts, served to reinforce European Americans' view of themselves as superior. The inequality of the situation forced African Americans to submit and caused European Americans to perceive them as viewed as uppity and/or militant).

If it is common practice for dating services to ask prospective clients to fill out lengthy questionnaires so a more suitable match may occur. Perhaps there is a message in all of this for churches, mosques, synagogues, and others who are interested in pairing ethnic groups.

Ahmad Daniels
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Lots of smoke, no fire at CBC weekend

By George Wilson
NATIONAL NEWSPAPER
PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

For the past 27 years crowds have gathered in Washington, D.C., for the annual Congressional Black Caucus Legislative Conference. The event is considered by many to be the premiere social happening for African Americans. As in prior years, this time hundreds of African Americans "dressed to the nines" clamored for invitations to the numerous receptions and parties.

The conference did provide those who came with a more conscious agenda an opportunity to participate in a number of issue forums or braintrusts on subjects as diverse as "The Politics of Natural Hair" to a

Galas galore, but African American lawmakers miss point of why they're in office in first place

dialogue between civil rights crusaders and the hip-hop generation. As might be expected, the issue forums that had the biggest names drew the largest crowds. Having forums is a great idea and it provides an opportunity for discussion about issues of importance to those assembled. However, what good does a stirring discussion render if no concrete action follows? These sessions provide an outlet for short-term relief before returning to the status quo. Additionally, the forums take place simultaneously which means that one can

only attend one or two sessions and neither one in its entirety. Perhaps, the organizers could consider a less ambitious format with fewer issues.

Earlier legislative conferences sought to provide the grassroots with the opportunity to feel close to the political process. Unfortunately, this event seems to be heading more in the direction of leaving those who aren't connected on the outside looking in.

For example, a gala was held at Union Station with the price of admission a meager \$500. Entertainment was provided by

the "The Godfather of Soul," James Brown, blues legend Bobby Rush and others. We know that the conference is a fund-raiser, but the price of admission assured the average working person could not be in the audience. Sources indicate that some who were unable or unwilling to pay \$500 availed themselves of computer technology to duplicate the original ticket. The prices to attend the paid events were prohibitive. How are African Americans going to foster unity when we set up economic hurdles that keep groups separated?

The theme of the 27th annual legislative conference was "Leadership Dimensions for the New Millennium." It is my sincere hope that those who consider themselves to be leaders broaden the picture instead of focusing on a small group that in some cases has run out of fresh ideas. The Congressional Black Caucus Legislative Conference is in need of some fine tuning that goes beyond just raising more money. With the future looking bleak for so many, we don't have the luxury of using our financial resources to look like everything is fine, when we know this is not the case.

GEORGE WILSON is Capitol Hill correspondent for the American Urban Radio Network.

The unmentioned triumph of the Little Rock Nine

By Janetta Kearney
THE ARKANSAS STATE PRESS

Last week we commemorated the survival, maturity and prosperity of nine little Black children who on Sept. 25 1957, braved the doors of Central High School in Little Rock, Ark. and desegregated the institution. In marking the occasion, we were really celebrating our strength, durability and resolve and the protection from God, who makes the impossible, possible.

On Sept. 19, a week-long schedule of official events began focusing on Central High School, the city of Little Rock, the Little Rock Nine and remembrance of a crisis 40 years ago.

There was dissension and disagreement among residents as to what the scheduled event meant. Why was it taking place? What were we celebrating? Why put a new face on the city? How much was this party costing and who was paying for

the glitter? True to life itself, all of the nine and others involved from 40 years ago, had a common objective, but dissenting positions.

And so it is. The "other program," as some dubbed the event at Philander Smith College on Sept. 27, was the real celebration with the Little Rock Nine, their families and representatives of the NAACP in attendance.

The event, spearheaded by the African American Coalition by Leta Anthony, was also dubbed "the People's Celebration." It was a place where those from the grassroots community could come together to remember and celebrate the strides achieved since 1957, and the accomplishment of the Nine despite a difficult beginning. "Note that all left Arkansas and returned as successful business adults," said Anthony as we discussed this "celebration."

Anthony stressed the need

for commemoration by all facets of the community. She said that a major focus had been placed on the building, Central High School, which is an inanimate object, and tended to distract from the genuine connection between the Nine, their families, the NAACP, churches and other supporters of desegregation.

Annie Abrams, who participated in planning an event for Central High Museum, Inc., said before the celebrations began that "the community must applaud...the black leadership of Little Rock for ensuring that they are included in this event. It is clear that the celebration of the birthday of Central High School is no more inclusive in its 70th year, than at the beginning. It is also clear that the grassroots community is not an inclusive part of the scheduled celebrations.

"We have had to take this separate and unequal event and produce an inclusive, quality



PHOTO/ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Little Rock Nine endured taunts and violence in 1957.

program for those omitted and left out of the general events," she said.

The Little Rock Nine should be applauded for sharing themselves and their families with the community. They are our heroes and sheroes, our examples and our role models. They

show us what we can accomplish despite a tumultuous beginning, with encouragement from friends, faith in God, hard work and the will to endure to the end.

JANETTA KEARNEY is publisher of the Arkansas State Press.

Money and politics: A good problem to have?



DG
Martin

Campaign finance reform—the issue has jumped in front of us one more time.

Congress is holding hearings on the fund raising abuses of the last election, and it is debating proposed reform legislation. So there it is again. The slimy marriage of money and politics.

We back away from it instinctively. Not because it doesn't concern us. It does. Almost all of us worry that we have lost control of the political process at the national level. Why? To whom? We think we have lost it to those who have or can raise big political bucks. We know something pretty well. Without big money to finance expensive campaigns for national office, prospective candidates seldom become real candi-

dates. Big money, being the critical factor in a successful federal campaign, seems to have a first claim on control. We understand all that.

But we don't know what to do. We don't know how to change things to make them better. And, given the overall success of the American experiment with representative government, we have developed a high tolerance for some of its imperfections — like our system of financing campaigns. Perhaps we are also comforted by our notion that political money doesn't usually "buy" votes on issues before congress. Most of our elected political leaders wouldn't think of "selling out" in that fashion. They know that they would probably go to jail if there were ever a direct link between a contribution and a promise to vote a particular way.

Money usually buys only access — but very friendly access. A big campaign contributor may not be guaranteed a particular

vote, but he knows that he can get in the door to make his case. That access, that time with public decision makers, is a commodity for sale. (It is like a 50-yard line ticket to the Super Bowl. It costs a lot, doesn't guarantee that your team will win, but it gets you right in the middle of the action. Those without the ticket can see it, but only on television.)

Finding a way to finance a healthy, competitive political environment is one of our most important challenges. But it is discouraging. No answer is in sight. But here are a couple thoughts that keep me away from despair.

• Money isn't everything in politics. Notwithstanding the political conventional wisdom, big money doesn't always win political contests. Ideas, political philosophies, and candidates still make a big difference.

Republicans like to think that Bill Clinton and Jim Hunt won

their elections because they raised and spent more money than their opponents.

Democrats like to think that Senator Jesse Helms could have been defeated if he had not had such a campaign war chest. But the truth is that those elections would have turned out the same even if their opponents candidates had spent the same amount of money. If the people want to make a change badly enough, they can always do it — regardless of money.

In the American democracy, money, by itself, wins only if the American electorate retires from the election battle and lets money have the field to itself.

• There is no "silver bullet." No magic answer will cure the problem of money and politics forever.

Money, like water flowing down hill, will always move towards influential politicians no matter what barriers are placed

in the way. So campaign finance reform will be before us as long as we have a representative government that makes important decisions affecting the pocket-books of people with lots of money.

Campaign finance reform is like religious reformation. It has to be ongoing and responsive to the changing ways that people find to get around whatever rules are put in place.

Looking at it this way, the challenge of campaign finance is a positive one — the result of a healthy, lively democracy. Still, it is a tough, troublesome problem that requires action now.

Next week I will share a couple of my ideas for improving the process.

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