Baltimore Afro American

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May we let our light so shine, that it will illuminate that which is good and beautiful and magnify our Father which is in Heaven
(CARL MURPHY, (1889-1967). Editor-Publisher, (1922-1967)

Oh, Thou Who Changeth Not

Christmas, 1973, is already in the process of being recorded by historians as one of "the toughest in memory." Faced with the unprecedented lack of fuel, citizens everywhere are already in a period of "doing without" and everyday life is turning an unknown corner.

History is also recording that this dawn of an era of change unprecedented in the United States, and the world for that matter, is the harbinger: "things will never be the same."

For example, the return in January to Daylight Saving Time will probably make that set-ahead of one hour a regular, forever thing. The shorter, 4-day working week, sure to come into being within a short space of time, may become standard practice. Some business firms feeling the crunch may never rise again.

From today on, the meaning of ties ushers in growing feelings of insecurity, reluctance to turn away from lifelong habits and certain resistance to sliding downward into depression.

But, what a time it is for all this to come crushing down on human beings. At Christmas — many of us are high in Faith, looking to the Birth of Christ as a new beginning. For countless ages Christmas has always brought a glow nothing can completely daunt.

And now this very Spirit of Christmas sustains us all. Regardless of the God we worship, there is always that one Supreme Being who created us all. He changeth not.

Christmas, 1973 therefore witnesses every race and creed all leaning heavily on that eternal faith. As we change darkness into light and despair into self assurance, let the Merry Bells ring. It's Christmas!

Even In 1930

Here is an AFRO story printed 43 years ago, a short story that told it all in the 1930 Depression and tells it now:

Christmas Day! Cables, radio and telegraph hum throughout the night with its story. From the farthest corners of the earth came dispatches telling of a day of happiness, of rejoicing, of feasting. The world, North, South, East and West, put aside for a day its cares, its worries over economic depression and unemployment, to honor the Babe of Bethlehem and the patron saint of children, Santa Claus.

Church bells ring. Families wend their way through the snow to worship, to visit, to spend Christmas Day with loved ones. Santa Claus has been here. The children's laughter comes from every doorway. Many parties show the fortunate have not forgotten the poor. Everyone has a gift from someone. Santa Claus has been here.

All day, we hear "Silent Night" in song, bringing back childhood and memories that still make the heart glad.

Happiness like no other comes on Christmas Day for there's Joy to all the world.

Christmas Resolution

Here's a Yuletide Resolution for the grownups. It's one that should be made before parents even consider jotting down New Year's Resolutions. And, this Resolution should be religiously kept!

Parents, do not take over the children's toys! Repeat it, "I will keep my hands off the children's toys all day on Christmas."

This Resolution will be hard to keep. Mother will just have to fuss with Mary's doll. Dolls are so beautiful and real these days with pretty blue green and white laces to set off the golden brown skin so-soft.

Mom will pretend she is showing Mary how to fluff baby doll's hair into a bush, but she's really remembering when a doll was her fondest wish under the tree.

Dad will have to turn on his son's train, recalling, when he was a child you had to wind the engine up. He'll watch junior's train go over and under bridges, whistle at every stop and back up. Pop didn't have a train like that when he was a kid.

Once he gets his hands on his son's basketball, football or chemistry set, he won't be able to let go.

It isn't fair. The children need a little peace and freedom with their toys on Christmas Day. Let them alone for 24 hours. After all, it's their day. Stand aside and look on wistfully, if you will. Mom can get on the phone or look over the Christmas cards. How about checking the turkey or sorting the gifts?

Dad can watch the games on TV or go take a nap. But let those toys alone. When the kids go back to school and the Christmas fever is over, maybe then you can sneak in and have a moment's return to childhood.

Mrs. Farring's 'Damn It'

Parents and other citizens who attended Thursday night's Baltimore City School Board meeting have a right to be confused by the rhetoric.

Under discussion was the lifting of the ban on Claude Brown's best seller, "Manchild In The Promised Land," which had been removed from school libraries by a minority vote of the board the week before.

At last week's meeting, the same two persons, Dr. W. Eugene Scott and Mrs. Maree Farring, who led in the move to remove the best seller (along with new appointee, Robert Schaefer), continued their campaign.

But fortunately, the majority of the board, in its right senses and by a vote of 6-2, restored the book and took the board out of the book censoring business.

We said at the beginning, parents had a right to be confused by some of the rhetoric.

On the one hand, there was Dr. Scott in a long rambling speech saying among other things, "I would like to thank the AFRO-AMERICAN for the cartoon depicting me being led by the hand by Mrs. Farring. I want my critics to know that it is refreshing to find at least one lady in the city who can still be offended by obscenity, and refuses to brand as great literature all of the garbage that has come our way in the past 10 years. And, in spite of the AFRO-AMERICAN, in spite of the New York Times' best seller list, this book is not a great book . . ."

But on the other hand, parents and interested citizens who listened closely must have been shocked to hear this kind of language from Mrs. Farring, who deplored four letter words in the book.

Hear her, as she discusses her version of how books were purchased in the school system before Superintendent Roland N. Patterson arrived two years ago.

She said in part, "The budget was low, no money for textbooks, no money for pencils and paper, and teachers' aides, no money for this and that, because, damn it, they had already spent the money on these unusual books . . ."

The use of the words, "damn it," by a school board member who condemns other obscenities, is a real shocker.

A parent, Mrs. Omenta Owens, rightfully raised the point when she appeared before the board meeting. She said in her presentation, "I question what is moral, what is immoral, what is obscenity, what is garbage, what is filth? You tell me . . ."

Perhaps the two board members, Dr. Scott, who along with Mrs. Farring, led the fight against what they called filthy literature, can justify the language that is used and approved during a school board meeting.

Are they saying it is all right for school board members or educators to use the language which they would eliminate from the bookshelves, because it is used by a ghetto hero?

In any event, anybody who was present on Thursday would have to be concerned that the school board has reached a new low in its discussion of serious issues, and that its members' ramblings need to be curtailed so that they can get on with the public's business.

Don't Box - In The Poor

Poor people are sweating out the big decisions still to come from Washington concerning the energy crisis. From what they've seen so far, the crisis looks like more bad news for them.

From big, carpeted offices in the nation's capital experts are telling poor people how much fuel they could save by installing more storm doors and windows or by better insulating their homes. Most of them already know how much better off they'd be with those things — but they didn't have the money to get them done.

Just now, they've got problems with how they are going to keep the car running they must operate to get to and from work. If they are able to find gasoline, they have to worry about how much it's going to cost them.

They also have to worry about how the spiraling prices, spurred on by the energy crisis, are going to effect everything else they have to buy on already-short incomes.

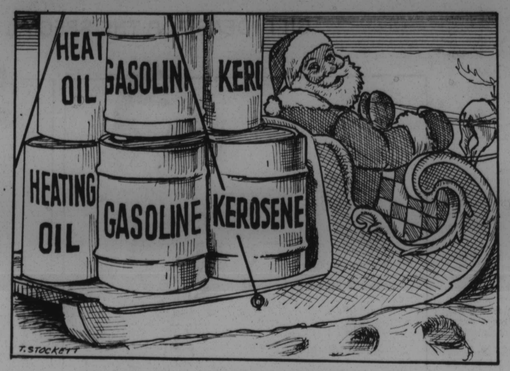
More critical for thousands of them, they have to worry about whether they're going to have a job or whether they are going to be able to find one before the unemployment payments run out.

A Baltimore longshoreman gave an idea this week of the importance of his car. When he checks in to work in the morning he doesn't know if he'll be working on a pier in Baltimore or have to drive out to Locust Point, Canton or elsewhere.

Gasoline and heating oil prices already are at the point of "too high" for many poor people who have just been making ends meet. If they go higher, there are going to be problems in the ghettos of Baltimore and other big cities that the officials in Washington haven't even thought about.

What they've had from the middlemen truckers will look like a picnic if unfair, costly programs are forced on already-hurting families.

Brought Along A Few Extra Goodies For You This Year



A little About A LOT

Monarch Butterflies And Christmas

By Madeline W. Murphy

Christmas is the time of renewal. A time for testing values. To realize the birth of Christ means hope. That the greatest gift is another chance to love and care for each other.

On Dec. 30, 1973, a very dear friend, E. Valeria Murphy, will be honored with a testimonial, as she retires from 6th-Grace Presbyterian Church, Chicago, Ill, as director of Christian Education. She has been a great inspiration to us and children in many ways.

She related the story and showed me the film of the Monarch Butterfly during the early adolescence of our older children. And when the going got tough, we would remember and try, not always successfully, to let them grow. Therefore, this colun is dedicated to "Val," for her patience, love and care, for her wisdom and guidance.

It is fitting at Christmas to remember her. To countless others she also embodies the true Spirit of Christmas.

The swarm of Monarch butterflies in late September, flitting over garden flowers and trees, not only forecasts their death knell as they begin laying eggs for the coming Spring, but also brings to mind the amazing story of metamorphosis and how it relates to adolescence.

From egg to caterpillar, to dormant chrysalis, and finally to a brilliant, flourescent adult insect, seems a clinical picture if one reads about it in a scientific journal. "Well and good," you say, "so that's how it happens." Then you close the book to forget it until the sight of the orange and black delicate tracery attracts your attention the following summer.

But then as one compares the butterfly to human growth, the egg becomes the child in the womb; the caterpillar, the ever-hungry baby; and the dormant chrysalis, the waiting period between childhood and puberty. This puberty is a time when blind obedience gives way to rebellion, independent thought and willful

Mrs. Murphy

choice. When the hovering parenthood of decision making must give way to the emerging need for independence, self-determination on the part of the young adult.

And it is precisely at this time, in the metamorphosis of the butterfly from chrysalis to adulthood, that compares painfully with this stage of adolescence.

In earlier times, when life expectancy was 35, when day to day survival was more hazardous and brutal, when class distinctions were more easily recognized, more stringently divided, adolescence was unheard of. But today that period of life is lengthened to satisfy a shrinking job market, and a burgeoning youth population glutt the market. Thus it extends the custodial relationship between parent and child, and postpones the flight from the nest of young, impatient fledglings.

And within this complex relationship, the time of decision about college and career; about pre-marital sex; about trend tasting—drugs, alcohol, tobacco; about mobility — drivers' licenses, co-ed dorms, apartments, is most pressing.

This is where the struggle of the chrysalis is so similar to youth's, for the Monarch butterfly must force itself out of the hard shell of the protective chrysalis. It crowds growth, it suffocates. The butterfly must move with slow cautious effort, first breaking, with its head, the translucent tip. Slowly it slides upward, still moist from its air-tight enclosure. One quick move, one foreign substance would puncture its gradual evolution, would kill it.

No hand must touch it, no strong wind must shatter it, if it is to enter the world unscathed, undamaged to fulfill the beauty of its finely designed, yet mysterious aeronautical perfection — its destiny to perpetuate the life cycle.

Only the force of its distended belly, the moisture of its body will perform the miracle of its freedom from the constraints of its chrysalis. It must do this by itself.

To watch this struggle, to become involved with its monumental effort is not unlike watching our youth divest themselves of parental restraints — not to force too much of our will upon theirs; our modes of life upon them; our fears, founded or unfounded upon their actions!

Yet, like the Monarch, we can kill their spirit, we can maim their psyches. We can injure them for life, if we help too much, protect too much, force too much; imprison too much, with our management, with: "my way is right!"

How great it is to see the fruits of their lonely struggle as they, like the Monarch, emerge glistening at first, hanging by a thread, not knowing where they'll go, what they'll be; with damp wings, not yet ready to make the first flight.

Then gradually flapping and drying their gorgeous wings, in an ever widening arc, becoming clearer in color and confirmation, they sail forth on their maiden voyage to adulthood.

Now they are confident, it is now time to let them be, in the lesson of their own self-determination, self-confidence, self-assurance, self-reliance.

After all, they did it themselves, and from that struggle they'll continue to make it on their own! For in the final outcome, haven't they only been loaned to us?

Merry Christmas!

EDITOR'S NOTE: On this page last week a make-up goof resulted in two paragraphs relating to the expected election clash between Sen. Clarence M. Mitchell III, D-4th, and Del Hildegardeis Boswell, D-4th, appearing in Mrs. Murphy's column rather than in Dr. Fleming's where they belonged. The AFRO regrets this misplacement and any inconvenience caused readers and any embarrassment that may have resulted to our columnists.

NOW and THEN

Christmas Reminder: Jesus Was A Jew

By G. James Fleming

The Christmas season is a most fitting time to remind ourselves that Jesus Christ was a Jew.

It is so easy to love Jesus but hate or suspect all other Jews. It is so easy to relish in being a Christian, but turn against all of Christ's people, at the least provocation.

These are the thoughts that forced themselves on me, a few days ago in New York City when I saw a bumper sticker with these words:

"We Need Oil, Not Jews"

This slogan, and others of the same kind, is the response of many Americans to the oil crisis. It is the old story of the ages, and modernized by Hitler. Whatever happens, "Blame the Jews."

This kind of anti-Semitism has chased Jews from country to country; or has interned them against their wishes; or has violated their property; or has sacrificed their bodies to concentration camps and bake ovens.

There are many reasons for the oil crisis in the United States, including our national policy and the manipulations of the giant oil producers.

The Arab nations, where oil is located and where it is being denied us, also must share some blame.

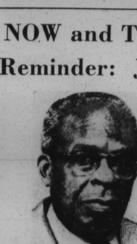
Israel, undoubtedly, must shoulder some responsibility for the point of no return to which the Middle East situation was brought.

But, Israel did not attack first last October; and Israel has been willing to sit down at the peace table, with Arabs, for a long time. Most important, it is not Israel which is keeping oil away from Americans.

As this column has said more than once, we believe history and morality are on the side of Israel's existence as a national home for tormented Jews.

The present Middle East situation calls for diplomatic skill, goodwill and great effort. But it does not need hate — old-fashioned anti-Semitism — rising again.

If we had the power, we would give every Christian, every non-Jew, a special



Dr. Fleming

Christmas present. It would be a reminder that the No. One Christian, the Prince of Peace, the Babe of Bethlehem, the Messiah, is a Jew, and that his followers cannot really say that they love Him while hating all of His kinfolks — the Jews round about them.

Our Christmas tree would have other gifts:

That all concerned in Anne Arundel County find a way to preserve the old Mount Moriah African Methodist Episcopal Church, so that this more than century-old black edifice may be an historic reminder of the life and living of Afro-Americans in Maryland.

That our shooting, knifing "brothers" will find more constructive ways of overcoming their frustrations, thereby giving longer, fruitful life both to their victims and themselves.

Our Christmas presents would also include a big mahogany table, around which black aspirants for the mayoralty of Baltimore would explore whether 1975 is the right year for a black candidate to oppose the very hard-working and popular incumbent, William Donald Schaefer.

A special injection of a success potion to David T. Mason, state commissioner of social services, and Mrs. Maude Smith Harvey, Baltimore commissioner of social services — both "firsts" in their positions.

Many more pills to high school and college students everywhere, that they may come to recognize that nothing beats application and commitment to studies; that studying can be fun; and that no one can "take over" his or her community, his city or his nation without skill, training and education.

Finally, a Christmas wish, and the necessary devices, that every preacher — especially black preachers — will use five minutes each Sunday to tell his congregation how to live more constructively and fruitfully, day by day, on earth.

Some of this sounds "corny" but other voices will be wishing for the big, important things. So, to our readers, do have a warm enough, joyous enough, sharing Christmastide.

Expensive Game

Ever watch that little humming, rotating machine swivel along the wall, quietly photographing every person's movements?

Or did you ever glance up at a huge circular mirror and wonder how it so easily kept an entire store with a dozen aisles all together in its view?

And what about the guards stationed so quietly at the entrances and around cashiers, with a job which is at one and same time one of the most monotonous and one of the most dangerous.

Yet, in spite of all these measures, shoplifting has increased.

Most of the time these persons, when they were caught, were discovered to be either housewives or teenagers.

And curiously, the amount of stolen goods usually amounted to a mere $15 or more.

Now offhand, that might not sound very alarming. But consider the totals.

Think of the thousands upon thousands of dollars which ultimately must be reflected in increased pricing of goods to make up for the stolen profits.

Even worse, consider the consequences.

We speak not of the cost of attorneys or the inconvenience of court appearances or the price of fines or even the aloneness of confinement away from relatives and freedom.

The consequences we refer to include the fact that conviction may mean that you will never be eligible for any civil service post — or let's say, in simpler terms, most jobs.

It may mean convicted persons will be denied entrance to a college.

It would undoubtedly entail failure to pass clearances for scores of posts, honors, awards, jobs and even voting rights.

That is a terribly high price to pay for kicks.

Shoplifting may be easy. It may even, to some persons, be a form of "fun."

But certainly it is, in the long run, a most expensive "game."

Washington

The Middle East

By Parren J. Mitchell
(D-7th District-Maryland)
U.S. House of Representatives

Since I voted against H. R. 11088, I have come under increasing attack from different quarters. An explanation is necessary.

I was asked to vote for a two and a half billion dollar authorization for military aid to the state of Israel. As one who has continually supported legislation to establish an atmosphere in which Israel and its citizens can live without fear of repeated invasion, and as one who has been considered a "dove" on the politics of Southeast Asia and elected on a general peace platform, where do I draw the line?

As one who has been vitally concerned about the well-being of Africa, and who has worked diligently within the Congress to aid Africans in their continuing fight against neo-colonialism and the racist facism of South Africa and Rhodesia, where do I draw the line?

If I vote against military funds to Israel, my Jewish friends will deride me saying that I have sided with the Arab states. If I vote for the bill, my African friends will say, "What's Parren Mitchell doing aiding friends of our enemies?"

Where do I draw the line?

Since I have been in the Congress I have voted for legislation that would help keep intact the integrity of the state of Israel. At the same time, however, I have consistently voted against measures designed to escalate military spending of any kind, and have repeatedly voted to keep this country out of unnecessary military endeavors.

Since the beginning of hostilities in the Middle East, I have been unwavering in my desire to direct American policy toward measures designed to secure peace. As a result of this stance, I have come under attack from some quarters.

When i first entered the Congress in 1971, I pledged to my constituents a continuing effort to end the Vietnam War, to make every attempt possible to break down the now somewhat forgotten military-industrial complex, to work effortlessly for measures aimed at the reduction of the uses of force in international affairs, and to reverse the acknowledged dominance of military concerns in our national priorities.

The objective then, and the continued objective for the Seventh District of Maryland, was to effect the conversion of military and war-related expenditures to peacetime, domestic use. I came to the House of Representatives with this objective for two reasons. The first has to do with the relative deprivation of the Seventh District. The second reason is based on a long held opinion of mine that this country has somehow become warped by a Strangelove-Nixon conception of the world that dictates peace through war, and life through death.

Our most violent, vindictive debates in the Congress have been over legislation designed to improve the quality of human life. Our present Administration has blamed the Congress in a way that no economist would for our current inflation, citing attempts to bring about the conversion I spoke of above, and then has vetoed measures for improving health care delivery, providing better wages to workers and increasing opportunities for small business persons.

Pension reform can wait, FHA authority can be allowed to lapse; but you had better believe that we will be ready to renegotiate with Portugal the Azores Treaty that provides that country with monies and equipment needed to aid in its African colonial wars, or vote monies to Cambodia's puppet government.

To my Jewish friends, I can only say that I believe that there can be peace in the Middle East, and that I do believe in the existence of a Jewish state, a position that an overwhelming majority of Arab states have come to since peace talks began.

But peace in the Middle East and the existence of a Jewish state are not synonymous with war or increasing expenditures time and again for war materials and equipment.

I say it openly and frankly, the bodies of victims of war, be they Egyptian, Israeli or Iraqui, are mute testimonies to the insanity of war and militarism.

On the broad question of the future, direction of this country and our relationship with the rest of the world, I say, "here at home, let's work on improving the living environment and livelihood of all of our countrymen; and just as importantly abroad, let's do indeed give peace a chance."

Perhaps there is no room in this world for idealism, and humanity and peace. I, for one, would like to believe that there is room still for these three.

PAGE OPPOSITE

Baltimore Afro American

Our Readers Say

Readers are invited to submit letters for publication. All letters must be signed, but signature will be omitted if requested. Letters should be no more than 200 words in length. Address them to "Our Readers Say," Baltimore AFRO-AMERICAN, P.O. Box 1857, Baltimore, Maryland 21203.

Bill's Intent Questioned

Dear AFRO:

The League Women Voters of Baltimore City questions the intent of City Council Bill 1063, introduced Oct. 23, 1973, which would repeal the present provisions for the Off-Street Parking Commission and substitute new ones.

One of the changes would expand the commission to 10 members, 6 of whom are city officials (the mayor or his designee, the commissioner of housing and community development, the director of planning, the commissioner of transit and traffic, the director of finance and deputy treasurer) and four "persons interested in the development and establishment of off-street parking facilities, and other matters relating to parking."

The direction of the powers of the commission, specifically subsection (c) (7) "To develop and implement a comprehensive downtown parking facility," would seem to indicate that whatever may be the results of the studies authorized in the other divisions of Sub-SECTION (c), we have already opted for massive downtown parking, with or without a stadium.

If CC 1063 represents the current thinking of the administration, as it probably does, we should guard against the principles here embodied being incorporated in ordinances for this and other commissions.

Each commission should contain members with broad public interests. Since the expertise of city departments should always be available to the boards and commissions, should not public members constitute a majority?

Policy should not be foreshadowed in the ordinance setting up commissions, but should be developed as a result of the fact-finding and deliverative judgment of the commission.

The league questions the balance in the city's check and balance system of government as regards this bill. The powers it would give to the mayor are concerns the public should be made aware of.

MIMI WAXTER
President
MYRA HALE
Chairman, City Government

Another Nominee

Dear AFRO:

The AFRO Annual Honor Roll is a positive program. It serves notice to the community as to whom its leaders are and what these outstanding citizens are doing. This is obviously good for Baltimore as well as the AFRO.

But I do not think the Honor Roll is complete without the name of a very courageous and brave and ambitious woman. Her name is Rachel Mabry.

Who is Rachel Mabry and what has she done? In 1970 Mrs. Mabry was the captain of the team in the entire Edmondson Village area that delivered decisive votes to elect our first black congressman, Parren Mitchell; our first black state's attorney, Milton B. Allen and our first black clerk of a city court, Paul Chester.

She was invaluable as a liaison between the "smoked filled rooms" and the people; and was singularly responsible for pulling the black political cloud out of Edmondson Village — an area which had for so long been a political pushover. To campaigns that were short on green power but long on black, Mrs. Mabry was a blessing because she volunteered her services.

In 1972 Rachel Mabry was again responsible for Congressman Mitchell's success in Edmondson Village because she made it impossible for folks to sit back on their laurels and take his re-election for granted. Again the community got involved and rallied around Mrs. Mabry to re-elect "our" Congressman.

In 1972, as a student at the Maryland Institute of Art, Rachel Mabry conceived the idea of a group exhibit featuring the works of black student artists at the college. The exhibit was held at Mondawmin Mall and was a success thanks to the assistance of Earl Booker. Mrs. Mabry was also responsible for Mondawmin's Easter display in the mall. The display featured a black figure representing Jesus Christ and scenes of the crucifixion and Christ's Resurrection.

Mrs. Mabry is now devoting a great deal of her time to painting and expects to give a show in the spring of 1974.

Rachel Mabry, a valiant lady, has a history of unselfish giving to the community. I think it is about time that we stand up and give her our love and support and all the accolades due her. She deserves to be on the Honor Roll.

PHILIP BROWN

Angered by story

Dear AFRO:

I was very angry when I read your Dec. 15 edition of the AFRO.

On the front page are eight police officers' pictures accused of various crimes, but your reporter (for reasons beyond me), singled out one, Donald B. Harrington, and used your AFRO to convict him of a crime in the minds of your readers, and also to make the Harrington family a household name.

Since all that your reporter knows about D. B. Harrington himself, is what was said by vice squad police, I doubt it very seriously if he is black enough to tell your readers what kind of autos the other seven officers drive, and about their past employment, associates and family's civil status.

For centuries the black communities have been crying for justice, and now comes a reporter who uses his pen, your AFRO, and hear-say evidence to cast dark shadows over the character of a man who has only been indicted, and not convicted of any crime by court of law. I feel that this is doing injustice to Mr. Harrington and his family. This reporter also is doing injustice to your AFRO and AFRO readers.

If this reporter is to continue to report on civil officials' indictments, I wish that he will learn to let it all hang out, and stop convicting one official without a trial, when there are others indicted along with him on the same hear-say evidence.

ROBERT BROWN

Center's Thanks

Dear AFRO:

Often community programs appeal to the news media for coverage of program activities and special events.

Such has been the case of the Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Parents and Children, which has made numerous appeals to your paper for similar services. On each occasion the response to your paper has been met by favorable responses.

We at the center extend our gratitude to you and your City Desk staff for your valuable community service to our center, parents and community.

(Mrs.) IRIS E. ROBINSON
Public Information

Following are remarks given by Dr. Samuel A. Hay at the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners on Thursday, Dec. 13, urging the lifting of the ban on Claude Brown's "Manchild in the Promised Land," for which he received sustained applause.

Dr. Hay is a 36-year-old assistant professor of literature and drama at University of Maryland, Baltimore County and chairman of the Black Caucus Faculty and Staff on African-American Studies Program.

He is a graduate of Bethune-Cookman College, where he earned his B.S. in 1959; Masters' from Johns Hopkins University in 1967 and Ph.D. from Cornell University in 1971.

Dr. Hay did post doctoral studies in African Studies at the University of Ghana; English for the Disadvantaged at Goucher; Psycho Drama at Atlanta University and Summer Repertory at the University of California in Santa Barbara.

By Samuel A. Hay

When Meletus drew up the indictment against Socrates for corrupting the minds of the young and for making their characters worse, Socrates defended himself (1) by questioning Meletus' real motives, (2) by challenging Meletus' definition of morality and (3) by citing precedents to his (Socrates') methods and ideas.

In my defense of Claude Brown's Manchild in the Promised Land as a literary and sociological work worthy of serious study, and in my appeal to the board to restore Manchild to the shelves of the libraries, I will follow Socrates' example.

Socrates was unable to get Meletus to admit to an ulterior motive. But because the announced "corrupting the minds of the young," like this board's "filth" charge, was so ambiguous and all-encompassing, Socrates suspected that his long-time enemy, Meletus, and Meletus' two newfound co-signers (Anytus and Lycon) were not simply out to get Socrates, but, in Socrates' own words, had "merely taken my name as an example."

As previously stated, Socrates did not prove this. And neither can I prove — but I strongly suspect — that Manchild is really not the issue here, that it is but an example.

The issue, I suspect, is a question of the way a segment of the people talks, walks, eats, sleeps, dreams and plays.

That these people's lifestyles, history, and culture differ considerably from the lifestyles, history and culture of the dominant group is one underlining issue.

Coupled with this is the issue of the minority group's struggles to assert the legitimacy of its culture and to gain control over the political and economic institutions that directly affect their lives. Focused on Manchild, the issue is whether an author of the minority culture has the right to use the lifestyles of some of his people to make a statement about their condition and to encourage them to stop certain genocidal practices (for example, drug abuse) forced upon them by some elements of the dominant culture.

Manchild graphically tells the story of gang warriors, pot smokers, pimps, pushers and prostitutes — those whom some consider pariahs of society.

But the telling of the story is not the story.

As ambiguously and repeatedly ruled by the Supreme Court, the right to depict these "filthy" activities hinges upon how the activities are used — whether for sensual gratification alone or some other reason: for example, social reform.

Reading Manchild and being equipped to determine its theme, one could only conclude that Manchild aims for social reform. Any other conclusion proves that the one making the conclusion needs to repeat his high school English courses.

The question, "Couldn't the same appeal or statement be made without using 'filth'" is an interesting one. The answer is simply "Yes." Brown could have written an essay; but he did not choose to.

More importantly, the question itself raises the question that Socrates asks: "What, Meletus, is morality?" "A set of assumptions about good and evil," Meletus could have answered, had he not been so possessed by his hatred of Socrates and had taken the time to exercise his brain as much as he did his mouth.

However, the question needs to be refined for our purposes here. It should be: "Do good and evil, as reflected in Manchild, improve the mind of the student and equip him to contribute to his society?"

To some, the answer is debatable, the reason for our being here. That it is debatable to some simply proves that good and evil are contextual, which is probably the reason for the Supreme Court's decisions.

For example, is it good or evil that Sonny, following the example of Robin Hood (one of your folk heroes), steals a loaf of bread and a dozen eggs to feed his starving friends (pp. 34-35)? Or, is it good or evil that Sonny uses his last five dollars to get a fix for Sugar, his childhood sweetheart, who is on verge of committing suicide (pp. 272-275)?

"Evil," some would too hastily answer. The question, however, requires considerable thought. The student must wrestle with these issues. As he does, he improves his mind. His unhastily drawn answers depend not on the depicted incidents in Manchild or any other book, but on the examples of you, his parents, and on the examples of other influential leaders in his community and his nation — present White House occupants excluded.

The evil, I must conclude, is that the student is never given the problem to solve.

The second part of the question is, "Does Manchild help or hinder the student in his efforts to make a meaningful contribution to others?"

If one comes from a community where the events in Manchild are alien, does his discovery that, for some, the events are a way of life make him a more knowledgeable, sensitive and effective human being?

Brown tells of some Vassar College girls coming to Wiltwyck, a home for delinquent boys, "to teach us things like skiing, music, painting and things like that" (p. 99).

"After a while," Brown continues, "I think they found out that it wasn't working. The guys got used to the girls, and they started treating them like mothers and sisters and that sort of thing. These were guys who cursed out mothers and sisters, and when they started treating these chicks like mothers and sisters, they were cursing them out, too. One cat, Blady, even had enough nerve to slap one of those girls.

Now, everybody knew that perhaps you could curse them out or scream at them, but they also knew that no n——rs were supposed to be slapping any girls from Vassar College. I guess we were supposed to be glad to even be able to say hello to them" (p. 101).

Had these Vassar girls, or any other white liberals, read a book like Manchild, would they have been helped or hindered in their efforts to aid the boys at Wiltwyck?

Socrates' citing precedents to his ideas and methods is useful here only to the extent that it answers this question: "What advantage is there to using vulgar language and obscene situations in order to appeal to blacks to stop certain practices?" (Situations like black men cursing and prostituting black women are indeed obscene).

One answer is that using the known or the lived (regardless of how negative they are) considerably improves one's chances of successfully making a point. All successful writers and leaders know this.

To save man's soul, Christ used the language and the situations that the people used. In his The Oresteia (a graphic portrayal of husband-killing, fornication and matricide — yet a classic), Aeschylus used the situations that the Greeks understood. And so did Shakespeare (Macbeth is no love story), Shaw and Eugene O'Neill. And so do Imamu Amiri Baraka, Chinua Achebe (the respected Nigerian novelist) and Claude Brown.

Most African-Americans not only understand what Manchild is saying, but we appreciate how and why it says it. We understand this literary snapshot detailing a rascal's growth into a man.

We understand the differences between proponent and reporter. We also understand the need to stop reacting to enforced, systematic economic deprivation by seeking temporary respite through dope, prostitution and thievry.

In Manchild, Brown makes this need quite clear. Had he used the language and lifestyles of Roland Park, Homewood or other such areas, perhaps we would not be here appealing for the lifting of the ban. But he did not.

Like thousands before him, Brown wrote from his experience. And if you, the custodians of public education in Baltimore, and if the people of this city think that Manchild is of no social and artistic value because its point is conveyed through language and incidents that happen to offend some sensibilities, then I must say to you what Hugh Tredennick says Socrates might have said when told of his sentence: "What silly children we are." 2

Notes

1. "Socrates' Defense," in Plato: Collected Dialogues, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton, 1969), p. 9.
2. Ibid., p. 3.

IF YOU Ask ME

By Bettye Moss

Christmas, Hospitals and Things: The following is this writer's 1973 version of the Christmas story: —

"Hold on Mary, it won't be too long. They have already asked for the Blue Cross number and the Blue Shield number and where my father was born. Maybe they will come in a few minutes."

"But, Joe, it seems like our baby is going to come any minute. I just don't think I can wait any longer."

"Be patient, Mary, things will be better in a short time."

"I know Joe, but look at the way they are watching us. They are sitting over there talking and eating, and nobody looks like they are taking me upstairs."

"Hush Mary. We have to be patient. After all, it's nearly Christmas."

"Joe, do you think it is because I am er-er-black and you are white, that it is taking them so long?"

"Now, Mary, you know better than that. Hospitals are mercy institutions. They are not worried about what color you are. All they want to do is serve you. That's why they get the money from the federal government, because they serve everybody."

"Joe, you really mean everybody, even when they are poor like we are and all the questions they can ask of who our parents were and where you work, and we don't have any Blue Cross or Blue Shield?"

"Wait, Mary. Here comes the doctor now. What's he saying?"

"I thought he said something about the filthy couple, the black and white ones."

"Oh no, Mary. He wouldn't say anything like that. Come on now. Hold tight on my hand."

"Joe! Joe! My baby is coming! My baby is coming! I can't sit here another minute. I have to give birth to my baby. Joe! Joe!"

"Mary, let me see if I can find a nurse over here, who is not busy sipping eggnog. Maybe she will get a blanket for you and you can lie down."

"Oh, here is one. Come now, let's lie down right here. Maybe they are too busy in the back for us to go there now."

News Item: Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Jones, (Mary) are parents of a 7 lbs. 4 oz. bouncing, baby boy. Baby was born in the lobby of Jerusalem Hospital, U.S.A., at 12:01 a.m., Dec. 25, 1973.

Mother, a beautiful black teenager, was assisted in the birth by her husband, a blue-eyed blond laborer, when hospital personnel were not available.

U. T. Jones, (no relation to the couple), public relations officer of the hospital, told the AFRO, it was "unfortunate" that the baby had to be born in the hospital lobby.

"We draw no color line here," he said, "and we regret it very much."

Asked about why a star appeared over the hospital and there was carol singing in the background, signaling that the baby was somebody special, the spokesman said, "We just don't know, but we heard that it was because the child is the Son of God. We heard them sing, 'Peace on earth, good will to all men.'"

The above Christmas story has of course no relationship to the fact that we spent the last week in a hospital.

From Tuesday until Saturday, this writer was confined to Greater Baltimore Medical Center to have cataracts removed from her left eye.

Greater Baltimore is located in the 6700 block of N. Charles St. It is a modern facility, unique in that it provides patients with private and semi-private rooms only. There are no wards.

Opened in 1967, it is the combination of old Baltimore Eye, Ear and Throat Hospital and the Presbyterian Hospital for Women.

Volunteers supplement the staff, thus providing easy entry into the hospital and convenient care and other services. From what we could observe in the eye section where we were, medical service is excellent. So is the food.

Personnel of both races in the main are sympathetic, kind and helpful.

Typical of those who fall in this category is Mrs. Eliza Cannon of S. Hilton St. She has been a lab technician for the last seven years on the staff of the chief pathologist, Dr. John Adams.

Mrs. Cannon, before entering our room, knocked politely, inquired of the time of the day, and said, "I would like to take your blood." She wearing a stiff white uniform and looked, oh so good!

Cuff Note: Mrs. Cannon and her husband, Arthur, who is a packer with a wholesale firm, have been married 23 years. They attend Shiloh Community Christian Church, where she is on the Steward Board.

Small world: This is the same church we mentioned a column ago, whose choir sang so beautifully at Centennial Methodist Church last month.

Like other hospitals and businesses, Greater Baltimore has its sore spots. You know the kind I mean, people who have chips on their shoulders, and don't mind sharing them with patients.

For example, there was the short young girl with the bush, who banged open the door, and when we inquired, "Don't you knock?" responded smartly, "You are a woman and I am a woman. I guess you have the same thing I have and you know there were no men coming in here to serve the food."

Or, like the short blonde who banged open the door without knocking and when we inquired, "Don't you knock?" responded, "Sometimes we does, sometimes we don't." Ho hum!

More Cuff Note: Prayers please for Mrs. Frances Ashby Tillman, director of the Youth Choir at sharp Street Methodist Church. She is in Room 1319 at Greater Baltimore.

Get well cards to Provident Hospital to Mrs. Maritta H. Daniels, Room 8002A. She is the mother of Samuel T. Daniels, grand master of Maryland masons.

Continued prayers for Mrs. Charles Lee (Mary), who remains ill in Maryland General Hospital, where she has been confined since she suffered a stroke while conducting a funeral in October. She is doing much better.

Mrs. Mae Chamberlain, the clubwoman and teacher, is much better, but still in at her St. Luke's Lane home.

Yule notes: Blacks held in bondage were inspired also to write Christmas carols, although they are seldom heard, except in some of the smaller black churches.

Here are some of the Black-American carols, which tell of the birth of Christ and the people's own hardships they felt while being held in bondage.

Rise Up, Shepherd

There's a star in the East
On Christmas morn.
Rise up, shepherd, and follow!
It'll lead to the place
Where the Saviour's born.
Rise up, shepherd, and follow!
If you take good heed
To the angel's words and
Rise up, shepherd, and follow,
You'll forget your flocks,
You'll forget your herds.
Rise up, shepherd, and follow!
Leave your sheep, leave your lambs,
Rise up, shepherd, and follow!
Leave your ewes, leave your rams,
Rise up shepherd, and follow!
Follow the Star of Bethlehem,
Rise up, shepherd, and follow!

What You Gonna Name That...Baby?

Oh, Mary, what you gonna name
That pretty little baby?
Glory, glory, glory
To the new born King!
Some will call him one thing,
But I think I'll call Him Jesus.
Glory, glory, glory
To the new born King!
Some will call him one thing,
But I think I'll say Emanuel.
Glory, glory, glory
To the new born King!

Go Tell It On The Mountain

Go tell it on the mountain,
Over the hills and everywhere
Go tell it on the mountain
That Jesus Christ is born.
When I was a seeker,
I sought both night and day.
I asked the Lord to help me
And He showed me the way.
He made me a watchman
Upon a city wall.
And if I am a Christian,
I am the least of all.
Go tell it on the mountain,
Over the hills and everywhere;
Go tell it on the mountain,
That Jesus Christ is born.

The Virgin Mary Had A Baby

The Virgin Mary had a baby boy,
The Virgin Mary had a baby boy,
The Virgin Mary had a baby