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Martin Luther King holiday

With the reelection of President Reagan by a large margin and the seemingly rightward drift of the nation, many people seem to be disheartened and discouraged about the future of black progress and civil rights in America. That is why the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Holiday is very important.

The holiday, which begins officially in 1986 should be a source of inspiration to all people of goodwill who believe in a just society. The man himself struggled against violence, hate and a traditional acceptance of black oppression.

Dr. King fought against legally sanctioned oppression and with resolve and a mass movement, he and his colleagues overturned social practices that were thought to be divinely sanctioned by the enemies of black progress.

The movement that lobbied and demonstrated for the passage of the Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Bill did so during an increasingly right wing era and against the wishes of an arch conservative president. By following the example that King set, they were able to bring about a holiday that many thought was beyond possibility.

Dr. King triumphed against the odds and his day is a triumph against the residue of racism that continues to exist in the Congress. Therefore his birthday should be a time for renewing one's commitment to a just society. It should stand as an inspiration to those despairing over the alleged victory of the conservative element.

The clock can not be turned back as conservatives are finding in their efforts to eliminate the gains made in the previous two decades and Dr. King's inspirational life showed that the clock of human progress can not be stopped.

Latchkey hotline

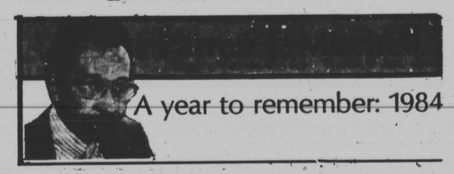
The problems of latchkey kids, children who are home alone after school until a parent comes home, have become a great concern recently. The children often suffer from fear, boredom and loneliness while they are alone.

It is estimated that there are over 40,000 such children in Baltimore City who range in age from six to 13. Approximately 17 centers were set up around the city using community centers, recreation centers, schools and churches with the help of about 200 volunteers through the Mayor's Office Latckey Program.

This week, the mayor announced that Kidsline, a joint project of the Mayor's office and the Community College of Baltimore has been established. The telephone line is staffed by volunteers from the college who earn credits for working the phone.

The phoneline will provide emergency assistance, homework assistance and a friendly voice for a lonely frightened child. The phoneline is not a substitute for a center where young people can be safe and among other people, but until the deplorable daycare situation is rectified this phoneline could be a vital link for a frightened child at home.

The phoneline is a stopgap measure, but a significant increase in latchkey centers is the real solution.



A year to remember: 1984

Many black Americans will remember the year 1984 as one which brought many achievements. We witnessed a perennial bill become public law which designates January 20, 1986 as the first observance of the federal legal holiday honoring Martin Luther King, Jr.; we saw the first black American astronaut travel into space; we watched a black woman stroll down the runway to become the first black Miss America; a black American presidential candidate put together a rainbow coalition to focus national attention on the plight of the disenfranchised and the significance of minority participation in the electoral process; a black American won four gold medals at the Olympic games in Los Angeles; and we saw a black man win the Nobel Peace Prize for his peaceful struggle against the oppressive apartheid system of racial segregation in racist South Africa.

Nineteen eighty-four was not a year of total bliss however. We were distressed when we saw 9.9 million black Americans — nearly 36 percent of the black population — fall below the poverty level; we listened to dismal reports that black Americans suffered unemployment levels twice and sometimes three times that of whites last year; we heard the disconsolate stories about our black colleges and universities encountering severe financial difficulties in the wake of malicious budget cuts; and the American (white) voter told black people that it is no longer sympathetic to the needs of the poor and disadvantaged as they overwhelmingly elected a president who has made it a priority to discharge the federal government of its moral obligation of compassion and caring for those less fortunate members of our society.

In Congress, the issues which dominated the late stages of the 98th Congress will likely surface again on the new agenda for the 99th. Budget deficits in the $200 billion range are expected to be the subject of much debate early in the session as well as: defense spending; funding for the controversial MX missile; resumption of aid to Contras in Nicaragua and domestic spending cuts. Additionally, support is mounting for increased famine relief for starving nations of Africa and, escalating pressure from me and other like-minded members of Congress for U.S. sanctions against the racist minority government in South Africa will keep the national focus on the apartheid policies of the Botha regime.

In Baltimore during the weeks just prior to the new year, I listened as black people poured out their hearts . . . young black woman and men, employees of corporations who are frustrated and angered over the racist climate which denies them upward mobility in those corporations. . . . the unemployed who threatened "just to give up or have given up", Black businesspersons shaken over their abandonment or non-utilization by city; state; and the federal government. I have heard the hurt and the pride, the frustration and the determination.

Some of those I listened to wanted to retreat into a kind of spiritual neutrality. They would avoid confronting wrong, turn away from injustice and stay clear of the struggle. For such persons and for those of fierce commitment to black America, I have dedicated my New Year's card:

CREDO 85

To encounter wrong and flee
Is the greater wrong
To hear the lie and not condemn it
Makes silence the larger lie
To see injustice and close your eyes
Is an unjust thing
To know hatred and not act to dispel it
Sustains the hate
Wrong; lies; injustice; hate
Are enemies to humanity
You are the warrior to save humanity

COMMENTARY:

Chatting with Castro

By Gus Savage

Shortly after 5 am on Thursday, Dec. 13, I arrived in Havana, Cuba, the first stop on my 10-day, fact-finding mission to Cuba and the troubled, small Central American nations of Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala.

Havana is a modern city of some two million industrious and friendly Spanish-speaking people. It winds along the northwestern coast of Cuba, only about a hundred miles south of Miami, Florida. Blessed with a bright, ideal climate, Havana lies on the southern shore of the Gulf of Mexico, close to where the Gulf quietly joins the Atlantic Ocean.

Once a bustling, international resort, and commercial center, it is the capital of the only Communist nation in the Western hemisphere.

Cuba is the largest island in the Caribbean Sea, almost 800 miles long, from east to west, though only 125 miles across at its widest, north to south point. The population of Cuba approaches 10 million, about three times that of Chicago.

Approximately one-fourth of the nation's inhabitants are direct descendants to African slaves, one-third of white-Spanish origin, and the remainder of racially mixed origin. However, compared with the United States, race has little or no significance.

While I noticed few Blacks among the political and military hierarchy, at a huge steel mill and foundry I visited on the second day of my stay on the island, half or more of the management and supervisory personnel whom I met were black. Additionally, among students and in the streets, social distinctions based upon race were not apparent.

As for its one-party form of government, Cuba is ruled by a highly disciplined Communist Party, under a popularly adopted constitution. To the extent that there is legislative power, it is rested in popularly elected national and local assemblies. Executive power belongs to a council of ministers.

This council, as well as the Party and national assembly, is headed by the President, the charismatic and brilliant Marxist-Leninist, Fidel Castro, heroic leader of Cuba's socialist revolution which propelled him into power in 1959.

I first met and chatted with Castro the Friday night following my arrival in Havana, at a grand official reception for the visiting president of Ethiopia, who, incidentally, sincerely invited me to visit his drought-plagued country. The next day, Saturday, I was granted a more than two-hour private audience with Castro, where we discussed many aspects of his country's internal development, as well as the areas of conflict with the United States.

Although I had heard many stories about Castro's brilliance and charm, I was not fully prepared for the extent of his relaxed and confident manner, apparently undiminished despite the terrible pressures of the past 25 years. However, regardless of Castro's courage and commitment to his socialist revolution, I left the meeting convinced that the Cuban president genuinely desires improved relations with the United States and is willing to take the lead in bringing this about.

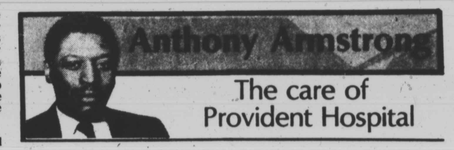
My conviction is supported by the excitement created in Havana over the agreement concluded on the day after my arrival between the United States and Cuba. As many readers probably know, the agreement provides that Cuba will accept the return of 2,746 of the some 125,000 Cubans it permitted to leave for the United States in 1980, on the basis of a one - shot acceptance by the Carter administration.

The United States now wishes to expel the returnees because they are considered to be convicted criminals, mental patients and other hard-core social misfits who normally would be excluded under our immigration laws. However, in a one-hour, 40-minute radio and television speech on the day of the agreement, Castro painstakenly and vehemently denied that the proposed returnees were as described by the United States.

The agreement further provides that the United States will begin accepting Cuban immigrants normally, up to 20,000 per year from now on, plus 3,000 political refugees in 1985.

The significance of the agreement is that, first of all, an official agreement negotiated between the two countries is a big step towards easing tensions. Also, it provides the Cuban government with a safety valve for those who wish to leave, many of whom are incurably profit-oriented and drawn by the lures and promises of America's capitalistic society.

Incidentally, Castro made a point in his speech of crediting Rev. Jesse Jackson, by name, with crucially contributing to the initiation of the negotiations. During Rev. Jackson's visit to Cuba last June, some will recall, he helped persuade Castro not to wait until the presidential election was over before entering the negotiations, insisting they would not become an issue in the campaign.



Anthony Armstrong

The care of Provident Hospital

In the famous diplomatic treatise On the Manner of Negotiating With Princes, two diplomats, one French the other Polish, were discussing the relative quality of their respective governments' diplomatic corps. The Polish diplomat spoke in very negative tones about the generally poor quality of his Polish colleagues. Where-upon the French diplomat, one Francois Callieres, answered back; "We have our fools in the French diplomatic ranks too, the only difference is we don't export them."

In the Provident Hospital mess, now coming to light, it appears that foolishness, if not fools themselves, is again being exported. The result of this latest "trip" into the land of stupidity is already the loss of hundreds of jobs that are vitally important to those workers who now find their incomes stopped, the public humiliation and the loss of community confidence in Provident Hospital, the almost certain reduction in the care given to patients at the hospital, crippling and mounting burdens on the hospital's very limited financial resources and, quite possibly, the total and permanent demise of the ninety year old institution. And all because a majority of the board of directors of the hospital; a board, like any other board, that is charged with the ultimate accountability and continuance of the institution, will not act responsibly to decide who will run the hospital.

Rather than act responsibly, the board of directors seems willing to let Provident Hospital die. Why? What kind of petty ego serving reasons could these people be working with that would allow them to let the whole "ship sink", just to protect one doctor? I'll tell you what kind: it's the same kind of "this is my power base and before I'll give it up I'll destroy it for everyone else" mentality that has placed other black institutions like Morgan State University and the NAACP on the chopping block. Provident Hospital's enemies are not The University of Maryland Hospital or the state legislature; Provident Hospital's enemies are the goons on its own board of directors.

An example of the kind of thing going on at Provident Hospital is illustrated by an incident that occurred last year. A local organization, that has given hundreds of thousands of dollars to local hospitals for equipment purchases, wanted to give Provident twenty five thousand dollars toward the purchase of, what Provident officials said was a badly needed piece of high - tech equipment. The money, in the form of a cashier's check, was to be handed to an official of the hospital at a ceremony that was to be held before news reporters, cameras and ceremony guests. When the date arrived everything was in place and ready: the check for twenty five thousand dollars, the reporters and cameras and, the guest. The only thing that was missing was the official (Dr. Oakley Saunders) a few days later, at a social function: I asked him why he or no one else from Provident was on hand to accept the twenty five thousand dollar check. He looked at me, in the manner of an embarrassed kid and said, "I forgot." Now, how do you forget twenty five thousand dollars.

Provident Hospital has had more administrators recently then a numbers writer has slips of paper. All have left the hospital because they were not able, or, I should say not allowed, to do the job they were hired to do. I ask you: how is anyone going to do a job when every time he attempts to do it he is undermined by the "fair haired doctor" of the board? It's a vicious cycle. The board of Provident seems to be saying to Dr. Saunders, "If you don't tell anyone we're screwing-up, we won't tell anyone you're screwing-up". In the mean time Provident Hospital and the community it serves is being screwed royally.

These silly little people, who won't change one little provision in the hospital's by-laws that allows one doctor almost dictatorial control over hospital operations, think that the state of Maryland will again come along and bail Provident out of its current mess. They theorized that Provident is so important that the powers that be, in state government, can't afford the political sting of appearing to have not come to Provident's aid - again. With this in mind, they believe they can continue to act in any manner that satisfies their needs for power and visibility, because the state won't let them fall.

Folks, it is the very people who are charged with the care of Provident Hospital who have conspired to make the hospital so sick.

Tony Brown's Comments

Black scared music

Dr. Wyatt Tee Walker has emerged as the newest and brightest authority on America's only original music — Black Sacred Music.

If you don't believe me, get a copy of his latest book, "Somebody's Calling My Name." In it, he presents abundant evidence to substantiate how the legacy of Africans on these shores have been presented in this country's music.

On a typical Sunday morning, Dr. Walker, (he has an earned Ph.D.) holds forth as the Reverend Wyatt Tee Walker at the Canaan Baptist Church in Harlem. With one of the best choirs in the country, he and his music director Gene Cooper light up New York with a singing history of Black America.

Dr Walker's book can be ordered from him at Canaan Baptist Church, 132 West 116th Street, New York, NY 10026.

"Somebody's Calling My Name" describes how the music of the Black religious experience served as an indispensable support for the establishment, growth and continuity of the Black Church. The Black Church is also clearly indentified as the institution of domi-

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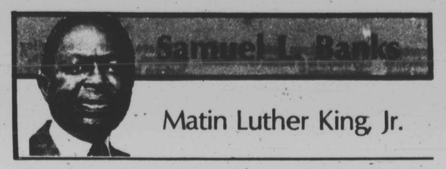


Samuel L. Banks

Matin Luther King, Jr.

If he had not been brutally assassinated in Memphis, TN. on April 4, 1968, leading a dispossessed and ignored group of sanitary workers, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. would be fifty-six (56) years old on Tuesday, January 15, 1985. Our nation and the world are diminished enormously by his untimely and tragic death. However, to the very end, Dr. King was bold, insistent and assiduous in standing for love, hope and social justice.

Dr. King was reared as a boy in a home environment in Atlanta, GA. that fostered love, a cohesive and unifying sense of community and encouraged self-esteem and lofty personal and group achievement. In the early years of his involvement in the struggle for civil and human rights he had occasion to comment on his beloved and highly revered parents: "My mother, as the daughter of a successful minister, had grown up in comparative comfort. She had been sent to the best available school and college and had, in general, been protected from the worst blights of discrimination. But my father, a sharecropper's son, had met its brutalities at first hand, and had begun to strike back at an early age. I remember riding with him one day in my childhood when he accidentally drove past a stop sign. A policeman pulled up to the car and said, 'All right, boy, pull over and let me see your license.' Then, pointing to me, 'This is a boy. I'm a man, and until you call me one, I will not listen to you.' The policeman was so shocked that he wrote the ticket up nervously and left the scene as quickly as possible. With this heritage, it is not surprising that I (i.e., Dr. King) had...learned to abhor segregation, considering it both rationally inexplicable and morally unjustifiable."

Dr. King, in short, came from a loving and caring background. His total life exemplified an unusual capacity to meet hate and adversities with love and satyagraha or soul force. The extraordinary fact of Dr. King's life was that his love was not static visionary or theoretical, but kinetic, direct and palpable. It was an active love that would have him affirm that "There is little hope for us until we become toughminded enough to break loose from the shackles of prejudice, half-truths, and downright ignorance."

As Dr. King loved, he, too, worked untiringly to achieve a society of equity, justice and fairness. His monumental and sacrificial efforts in concert with Roy Wilkins, Asa Philip Randolph, Clarence M. Mitchell, Jr., Dr. Dorothy Height, Vernon Jordan, John E. Jacob, Fannie Hamer, Benjamin Hooks, among others, led to the passage of the 1964, 1965 and 1968 Civil Rights laws. These laws, to be sure, changed the socio-economic, political and educational landscape for black, Hispanic and poor Americans. An aura of hope, albeit ephemeral and fleeting, suffused excluded black, Hispanic and poor Americans Dr. King gave potent, thoughtful and eloquent expression to the snese of renewed hope in black America: "I think the greatest victory of this period was...something internal. The real victory was what this period did to the psyche of the black man. The greatness of this period was that we armed ourselves with dignity and self-respect. The greatness of this period was that we straightened our backs up. And a man can't ride your back unless it's bent."

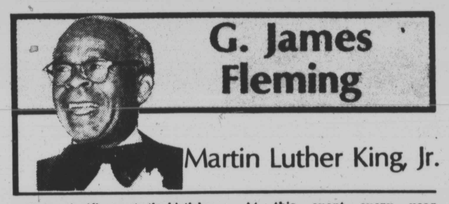
Dr. King's forceful and unyielding advocacy of the love ethnic demanded that a man or woman straightened his/her back up in struggle for a just and caring society. It, too, is a compelling and urgent challenge for all of us: STAND UP AND BE COUNTED.

In this sense, black Americans, especially black middle and upper income citizens, must bestir themselves in community activities and educational endeavors to help the masses of our people. I have been particularly amused by the number of calls and notes I have received regarding my recent statement and column urging a five (5) year moratorium on bridge and circus activities (viz., parties, rock concerts, bridge parties, etc.).

Money for such activities should be diverted to developing food and clothing banks, political war chests and supporting black businesses. Failure to act will have frightful consequences for black America.

The unceasing affirmation and leadership of Congressman John Conyers, former Congresswoman Kate Hall, Stevie Wonder and other resolute believers in Dr. King's universal hopes and dreams have led to Dr. King's Birthday being recognized as a national holiday on January 15, 1986.

Each of us, seventeen (17) years after Dr. King's death, possesses the ability to strike a unique blow for freedom and social justice in his memory in our individual communities through political action and support of black organizations and businesses. THE TIME FOR ACTION IS AT HAND.



G. James Fleming

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Giving significance to the birthday anniversary of Martin Luther King, Jr., is a challenge that is being met only spottily in most communities, even in those states where the birthday of the late and revered leader is now a legal holiday.

A "day off" from school or work is not enough, unless some dramatic programming also takes place to recall the life and works of the guiding spirit of the Montgomery bus boycott and the voice of "I Have a Dream."

What Martin Luther King, Jr., stood for, and the message he left to be carried forward, are too important and essential to the nation to be forgotten. And, if they are not remembered on his birthday, it is safe to say that they will not be remembered at other times.

In too many places—including schools and colleges, churches and synagogues, in homes and in community centers, and in legislative halls—only very passing attention, or no attention at all, is paid to January 15, the birthdate of one who stirred the world. The man, too, who galvanized black Americans into a unity they had not achieved in generations.

But, Martin Luther King's memory is not significant to Blacks only. His life and times—and his memory—should be meaningful to members of all brands of religions, of all races and nationalities, and of most philosophies. He should be honored and memorialized with all those other figures of history who have stood for universal brotherhood, for freedom and justice to all, and for love and peace instead of hatred and warfare.

Greater Baltimore has won a place for itself with its Martin Luther King Birthday Breakfast, attended annually by over 1,500 of the representative citizens of the area, under the auspices of the YMCA of Central Maryland.

At this event every year business, labor, government and social and civic organizations join hands in presenting a thoughtful and provocative speaker—in the Martin Luther King, Jr. manner. Happily, the media have given wide coverage to the happenings on this occasion.

Richmond, Va., has recognized Martin Luther King Week with a series of workshops, seminars and other programs, carried through churches and schools in several neighborhoods and through Virginia Union University.

In Atlanta, Ga., home of Dr. King and location of the assassinated hero's tomb, the Martin Luther King Center sponsors, all the year, a similar and exhaustive series of seminars and workshops, all coming to a climax in many special programs in the city during the week of his birthday.

All these are but a drop in the bucket. There is room for much more in personal and institutional dedication and commitment to the ideals of the man who patterned his life after Mahatma GANDHI, THE MAN WHO EARNED THE Nobel Peace Prize.

There is fear that next year when the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr., becomes a national holiday, by Act of Congress, that "the day off" will turn out to be just that a "day off", with little thought of its significance. The holiday will be the thing; the man and his life and sacrifices less so.

We make a plea that, especially children everywhere be enlightened as to who Martin Luther King, Jr., was and his impact on this nation and most parts of the world; his impact especially on the Black people of his native land, the United States of America. Needed is indoctrination.

"I Have a Dream" and "We Shall Overcome" should not be forgotten and lost in holiday frivolities, or even in just earning time-and-a-half.

—AFRO SURVEY—

What are your memories of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Ralph Thompson

Calvin Stewart

Morris Street

Joseph Fox

This week the question to the man and woman in the street was, "What are some of your personal memories of Dr. Martin L. King, Jr.?"

Ralph Thompson, 55, TV technician, "I remember how he turned everything around in the South. I can remember hearing him preach. I heard him about three or four times. He was straight to the point, and he kept you interested. He wasn't a hooper or yeller, but very refined. I loved him."

Calvin Stewart, 56, unemployed, "He was a great man. I was in Memphis, TN when he came there. I was visiting at the time. In fact, we stayed at the same hotel. I kind of admired the man for his courage."

Morris Street, 66, retired, "I am from the South, and I remember and know well the discrimination experienced there. There was segregated everything, including bathrooms. Dr. King helped to get rid of that discrimination. I think right now young people are destroying the progress he has made. If only they had followed his instruction, we would be so much more advanced."

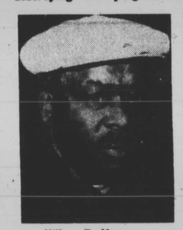
Joseph Fox, 78, retired, "The man fought hard for black people. I could not even go in restaurants in downtown Baltimore, and he came here and played a major role in getting me and others into them. I remember it so well. I could not go into the Read's Drugstore in Highlandtown. When King visited, I think in 1954, things changed. I and other blacks could go in. Oh, I just strutted into that Read's real proud-like. The owner refused to wait on me, and I told him to call and check to see if he'd better serve me. He called somewhere and came right back and served me."

Wilson Redfearn, 57, cement finisher, "Everything King did was personal to me. Whatever he said affected me. Even when I did not understand what he was saying right then, you understood later. I learned a lot from the man."

Faith Anderson, 52, unemployed, "I remember when he got black people riding buses in the South. I felt real good. I kind of was afraid at the time he would be killed, and he was. I saw it coming. My husband was serving in the National Guard when the riots broke out after his death."

Rosalee Ivory, 64, retired, "He stood for what he believed in, and he must be respected for that. Most of all, I remember he stood for non-violence. When he died it hurt. I had loved the man, felt real deeply for him. I was distantly involved with everything he did. I idolized him. He was somebody I remembered as not caring whether he died or not for his cause. He even knew he'd be killed, but it did not stop his pressing for his demand for change. That's the man I remember. That is how personal his life was to me."

Peggy Ivery, 27, nurse's assistant, "I was little. I can remember my mother going through a lot of changes. I can remember her feeling his death was important enough to explain."

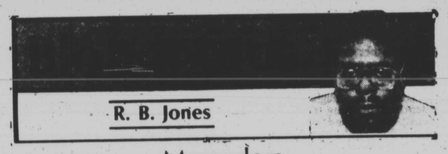


Wilson Redfearn

Faith Anderson

Rosalee Ivory

Peggy Ivory



R. B. Jones

Marauders

There is a rage inside of me that I can not quell. It is with me every time I leave the house and venture into the streets and it is fueled by the countless atrocities that occur in the black community perpetrated by street criminals.

They prey on the young and the old. They steal the shoes off people's feet and they often steal a part of some rape victim's soul and far too frequently they steal someone's existence for the sake of an NBA jacket or some other trifle.

They are the young gun—toting marauders who often make a trip to curb a life and death proposition. They cause all of us to view each other with fear and suspicion.

I am well aware of all the sociological and psychological explanations for why they are the way they are. I am a product of the sixties, a time of glorification of the "street brothers" exemplified by the Black Panther Party.

Despite my exposure to ghetto culture and neighborhood association with many young men who have become caught in the correctional system, I cannot intellectually and emotionally identify with the thugs that terrify the black community.

Their numbers are small but their impact is great because the crimes they commit are more serious heinous than those of previous generations of street criminals. Where once killing a victim was a last resort, it is now almost a formality to some hoodlums.

My infrequent trips to the court house and bits and pieces of overheard conversation give some insight into the problem. I have heard young men in the streets talk about "capping someone with the breezy air 'of someone discussing a baseball game.

I have heard parents and other relatives of repeat offenders denying incontrovertible evidence of the guilt of their sons and nephews. I once heard the mother of a young man who had been arrested for rape seven or eight times and convicted three times say that she could not believe her son would rape anyone because he has a girlfriend.

I have heard relatives of career thugs saying how terrible the police have treated their precious darling while he was in custody while not even shedding a crocodile tear for the many victims.

The problems of crime and violence in the streets cannot be solved by the black community alone, but neither can the problem be solved without the active participation of the black community.

One way we can alleviate some of the problem is to refuse to give aid and comfort to those who commit acts of violence against our community. Violence among criminals fighting over turf is one thing. Violence against someone for wearing an NBA jacket is another.

Those who prey on the community should be shunned even if they are a blood relative. They must be isolated. They should also identified as a marauder and delivered to the police whenever possible.

I recognize the inequities of the criminal justice system, but I also recognize the suffering of an elderly woman who has been knocked to the ground and dragged in an effort by a thug to get her purse. Rhetoric about the evils of the system will not return a stolen social security check or heal an injured elderly body.

Until there is an alternative system to deal with criminals, the present system will have to be utilized.

The black community must also move to recapture the values that made us think of ourselves as a people and not just a collection of individuals.

It seems that the more we entered the mainstream culture of this society, the more we adopted its more negative aspects. The black family is more splintered than ever; we are more suicidal than at any point in our history and even the humanity of the black soldier: which was legendary in previous wars was, tarnished in Viet Nam as many black soldiers participated in atrocities.

Human life has become cheapened in the black community. It seems that one of the poisened fruits of absorbing American culture for blacks has been the adoption of attitudes by some of our young men that killing is a mundane activity. Black people in this country were victims of that mind set for centuries and now far too many of us have adopted it.

—Tony Brown

Continued from Page 1

nant influence in the life experiences of Black Americans.

Rev. Walker describes music as one of the three major support systems for Black Church members. The other two are preaching and praying. Tracing the relationship between tribal rhythms and gospel, Dr. Walker underscores the African influence in the music of the Black religious experience. He traces the progressive development of the music of the Black religious experience from its African ancestry to modern day Christianity.

The oral tradition of our African ancestry carried over into our life in the United States. Cultural traditions created dependency on oral transmission for news and information. Often thisoral communication was more fondly embraced in a rhythmic or musical cadence. Spirituals were created and refined in the slaves' religious and social statements.

The music of the Black religious experience has also played an integral role in the general socio-economic development of Black Americans. With forces of the Black Church consistently at the center of the social struggle, so too has the music of the Black religious experience been there.

Dr. Walker says, "The African Spiritual form influenced the meter music, which in turn colored the use of Euro-American hymns by Black Christians. The language of the two musical types was borrowed from the dominant society and revamped musically to suit the religious need of the Black community."