Baltimore Afro-American

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School questionnaire

The school questionnaire that was distributed this week concentrating on the area of sexuality among city students was not even in schools before the AFRO received calls of complaint from persons who felt that the questions asked were improper and potentially an invitation for some students to become sexually active when they otherwise would not do so.

Some calls have questioned some of the questions that have been included in terms of asking questions about who comes and goes and sleeps with whom in the student's household. Others are angered by questions about whether a student has had problems with the law.

Some citizens are wary of the questionnaire and wondered why no parents were consulted. One explanation given for the distribution of the questionnaire was the need for information by the school system so that it could provide better services for its pupils especially in the area of reducing the incidence of teenage pregnancy.

This paper supports efforts to reduce the number of teenage pregnancies and it supports an effort to speak to young people in a way that they understand, but misgivings persist about this questionnaire and the process by which it was okayed for distribution in the schools.

Was a cross section of health care professionals and community members consulted and involved in the process and were the parents informed of the questionnaire's intent?

Very few people are advocating prudery, but many in the community have indicated that they have reservations about the questionnaire and school officials should address them promptly.

Provident: gaining strength

Despite the monumental problems Provident Hospital has faced in the last year and a half there seems to be some light at the end of the tunnel.

The state provided a loan to the institution and that apparently was symbolic of its committment to save the hospital, otherwise. The offer was also made to give more if the city would contribute to saving the hospital.

After some hesitation the city has come through and a fundraiser held this week raised at least $100,000. Also, hospital workers from 1199E bit the bullet and took a pay cut to help save the hospital.

The decline of the hospital has stopped and possibly the worst is over for Provident. More state aid is likely, but contributions from the black community are needed.

The hospital needs patients and it needs contributions and it needs people with debts to pay their bills. The workers who sacrificed for the hospital at some point soon need to recoup their wages and benefits so that they alone do not bear the burden of putting the hospital back on its feet.

Provident can see light at the end of the tunnel.

Parren and the EEOC

In your November 9 issue, Representative Parren J. Mitchell inaccurately reported that the Baltimore District Office of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has eliminated the confidentiality of discrimination charges in exchange for voluntary settlement between an employer and employee.

The many inaccuracies presented in Rep. Mitchell's article led me to realize that the Congressman does not have a clear understanding of this Commission's policies. I respectfully offer the facts.

This Commission does not advocate violation of the confidentiality provisions of anti-discrimination law. Such violation by an officer or employee of EEOC carries with it a penalty of fine or imprisonment.

In February, this Commission unanimously adopted a policy to seek a full remedy in each and every case of employment discrimination. The Baltimore District Office and all other EEOC field offices are responsible for implementing this policy.

Essentially, we seek a remedy that requires employers to give victims the jobs they have held but for discrimination, to compensate victims for any loss of earning resulting from discrimination, to notify all employees of their right to be free of discrimination, to stop the discriminatory practice immediately and to ensure similar violations will not occur again.

Mr. Mitchell claims an employer is required to accept only the full remedy "even though the complaint is willing to accept a lesser remedy." Such is not the case.

The Commission's remedies policy is flexible. We encourage the parties to fashion a remedy appropriate to the circumstances. However, we believe the EEOC's previous emphasis on early settlement, with often inadequate investigations into charges of discrimination, resulted in watered-down remedies for charging parties, who were left no better off than if all the laws against employment discrimination had never been passed.

Representative Mitchell further claims that, after unsuccessful conciliations, "the violation case is sent to Washington headquarters, never to be heard from again."

Unlike our predecessors, who often sent victims of discrimination away to hire their own lawyers, this Commission has a policy considering for litigation each and every case of employment discrimination that is not resolved through conciliation. Those cases are sent from our field offices to the General Counsel, who presents litigation recommendations to the Commission. Never heard from again? Consider this:

In Fiscal Year 1985,411 court actions were filed by the EEOC, a number exceeded only once in Commission history during a 12-month fiscal year, in 1981.

In addition, the Commission recovered a record-high $54.1 million in monetary benefits through litigation on behalf of victims of job discrimination during Fiscal 1985, up from $3G.8 million in the previous year.

Contrary to Representative Mitchell's notion that the Commission's policies are "calculated efforts to deny relief from racial discrimination," this Commission's program is one ofcomprehensive, reliable enforcement of the laws against employment discrimination. And we seek the fullest relief possible for victims in every case.

Clarence Thomas
Chairman

Dreaming of a Black Christmas

By Edward Jaison, Jr.

I'm dreaming of a "black Christmas".

Don't be absurd man, you know there ain't no such as a black Christmas.

Why can't there be? Christianity originated in Africa (Alexandria). Christmas is the celebration of the coming of Christ, isn't it?

Yes but still, that song is about a white Christmas and the baby Jesus was white.

The song is about a white Christmas alright and everything else about Christmas seems to be rather white. Mary and Joseph were white, Santa Claus is white and even them little Christmas angels are always white. That still doesn't mean I can't dream of a black Christmas.

But a black Christmas doesn't even sound right.

A big fat white Santa Claus coming down the chimney of a black family doesn't sound right either. A lot of things don't sound right, like an "Easter Bunny" laying eggs. Black people got to come to their senses man and start doing things that make sense, not things they think look or sound right. Most of all, black people need to stop doing things because someone else is doing it.

What has that got to do with a black Christmas?

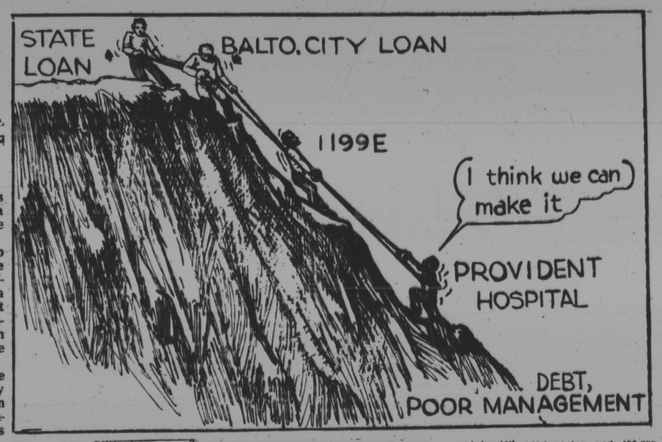
It means we have got to stop making white merchants happy by going in debt for Christmas. Some black people buy so many toys and gifts for Christmas that they don't get out of debt until the following Christmas. White merchants have a "green Christmas" and grin all the way to the bank. They have taken the Christ out of Christmas.

So what can we do? We seem to be hooked now, especially our children.

Are Chinese hooked? Are Jews hooked? They have children too and they don't even celebrate Christmas the same time we do. It's all in the way you start out.

Are you saying we shouldn't celebrate Christmas, man?

Certainly not. I'm merely saying we should only do what we can afford to do for Christmas. What's wrong with one toy or one gift per child and cards to your friends and relatives? After all, "merry" is in the mind and Christmas is only one day a year. Having the kind of Christmas you can afford to have sounds very realistic to me.



Parren J. Mitchell

The abortion smokescreen

Opponents of family planning programs recently attempted to launch an attack on Title X of the U.S. Public Health Service Act. This act constitutes this nation's family planning programs and despite the record of accomplishment, Title X faced it's most serious opposition in 15 years from anti-family planning members of Congress and the public.

Federal law already forbids any abortions from being paid for with Title X funds. However, the purpose of the damaging amendments that were to be offered was to take the law a step further and impose an additional restriction that family planning clinics receiving federal aid could not even inform a client about abortions.

The authors said the amendments purportedly would do nothing more than eliminate any ambiguity about whether Title X funds directly promote or subsidize abortion. I want to make known that any ambiguity that exists only exists in the minds of the authors of the amendments.

It is obvious that these individuals are confused when authors of similar amendments can be quoted regarding Title X as a "welfare program for rich teenagers," when actually eight (8) in ten (10) persons served by Title X programs have incomes below 150 percent of the official poverty level.

The programs in question do not even involve abortion. We all know that family planning clinics have always been prohibited from using Title X funds for abortions.

Even a congressionally authorized review by the General Accounting Office recently reconfirmed that no federally supported family planning clinic provides or recommends abortions. Yet, these individuals are still confused.

The impact and effect of these measures, if they had been adopted, would have been devastating. The proposed terms would render family planning agencies, which include State and local health departments and hospitals as well as clinics run by nonprofit groups, ineligible to receive funds.

It would be an unforgivable act to dismantle this carefully built network that actually prevents hundreds of thousands of abortions every year.

Nationally, these programs are credited with having averted 800,000 unintended pregnancies and 400,000 abortions every year. Moreover, for every dollar spent, $2.70 is saved by other agencies such as Maternal Health; Social Services; Medical Assistance; Women, Infants and Children (WIC); Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC); etc.

Fortunately, these amendments were seen for what they were and the House Appropriations Committee defeated the damaging amendments by a 2-to-1 margin and agreed to maintain current Title X program guidelines.

Later, when Title X came to the Floor of the House for consideration under a continuing resolution, no amendments could be offered because the Rules Committee recommended a modified closed rule which deleted the language in the bill regarding abortion and Title X family planning programs.

Thus, Title X is presently operating under existing program guidelines and no avenue is open for damaging amendments to enter.

I hope it was confusion indeed, rather than an attempt to deny access to service based on class or economic discrimination.

I trust that this was not an attempt to impose a harsher set of judgements on the economically disadvantaged when it follows that those not limited to federally funded programs would still have unrestricted access to advice concerning their legal options.

I pray that these authors are confused rather than using the abortion issue to smokescreen opposition to fundamental civil rights.

For there is greater hope in bringing understanding than there is in eliminating deep-rooted prejudices which surface in political hocus-pocus.

Anthony Armstrong

Last Christmas

Last Christmas our subject, a young girl we'll call Rhonda, got form fitting jeans, a leather coat, perfume, and fifty dollars cash. This year she's getting baby blankets, a bottle warmer, and misery; this year Rhonda is a mother.

The father of her baby sold his leather jacket, some gold chains he owned, and the watch his father gave him, when he graduated from high school. He plans to buy things for the new baby with the eighty-five dollars he got from the sales.

Everyone, in both families, is trying to put the best face on things, this Christmas, but the change wrought by the baby is too great to overcome.

Rhonda's mother has just about stopped crying and her father has begun to speak to the baby's father again but; his parents are dead set on not having their son's life "ruined" by this situation.

The father of the baby, or at least the young man Rhonda says is the father, is being prevented from fully displaying his concern for the situation because his parents insist on "getting a blood test before any commitments, beyond jackets, chains, or watches is made."

Rhonda's parents have taken the position that "if he don't want to own-up to being the father, the hell with him, we'll raise the baby ourselves."

Rhonda cries a lot over the whole situation and, the "father" is simply bewildered.

If this were last Christmas, both Rhonda and, we'll call the on again off again father Trea, would be planning to go to the big Christmas show at Painters Mill, visiting mutual friends and, using the time out of school in long days together, out of sight of her parents and his.

She takes birth control pills, first given to her by her mother, and he assumes she's protected. The times they've made love and she wasn't protected have not been that many and, at such times, and because he cares so much about her, he has practiced coitus interruptus.

It worked most times, although there have been some instances where he just didn't move fast enough, and some where she wouldn't let him up! She's only fifteen and fifteen year old girls have a hard time getting pregnant, so her friend told her.

Trea's mother is furious because a couple of summers ago the same little "strumpet" (Trea's mother's word) was runnin' around tryin' to get Trea's older brother to look at her.

He was too tied-up in his auto mechanic school work, trying to get his certificate before his twenty-first birthday and; because the girl, in his words, "was always up-in every guy's face."

Marco, Trea's brother, is tremendously close to his mother, so is Trea but; all he could see, here of late, was this girl who, he recounts, "gave him sex whenever and, most times, wherever he wanted it."

Sadly, Trea talks about his mother wanting him to get an education and learning to take care of himself, before he had to take care of a child.

He talks about how easy it was for the girl to get pregnant and how he wishes it hadn't happened, and what he would do just to be free again.

Yet, "I'm going to be a man about this, even though mama wants me to take some kind of test, to see if the baby is really mine."

"I've got to take care of the baby, if I don't my friends will all think I'm weak, and I can't stand for that."

So there will be a Christmas for Rhonda and Trea but, the type of Christmas approaching for them is the type he wishes would wait about five or ten years and, she wishes she had more money to pay for.

One thing is for sure, the arrival of the baby has made last Christmas the last one of its kind that either of these young people will ever see.

Unlike a pair purple socks, that you just won't be seen dead wearing, you can't arrange to return the baby. The baby will be here for many, many Christmases to come. Every year, from now on, Trea will have to deal with Rhonda, and she him, whether he likes it or not.

Both sets of grandparents sit there, across the room from each other. His parents, particularly his mother, look, first, at the floor and than at Trea, and then at the girl; she starts to cry, her mother utters, "If only this were last Christmas."

What color is quality?

Black entrepreneurship or preferably African entrepreneurship has to understand one salient point: Quality work will bring our businesses to the forefront—not "buying black."

When we were forced, through segregation to provide the majority of services for our own people; those businesses which provided quality service prevailed, while the "lessors" were generally shunned or fell by the wayside.

Today many of you support some "lessors" simply because they are black.

Many politicians are even making rules to "encourage" US to buy from black "lessors".

Isn't that odd?

Anyone getting into any business should always plan as to what is needed to provide quality service.

If a brother has "half" of a store to compete with "whole" Korean store, the brother should stay out of business. An African or black should never be a lessor*.

QUALITY - Superior or high rank in relation to others.

*means absence of quality.

LAWRENCE OUTLAW

AFRO welcomes letters

The AFRO welcomes letters from its readers. Letters should be brief and must bear the writer's name and address. All letters will be given consideration for publication.

Samuel L. Banks

Christmas 1985: Time for serious reflection & action

It is demonstrably clear as the pristine joys and happy memories of Christmases past descend upon us that 1985 has been a vexatious, troubling and severe year for most black Americans.

Nonetheless, as we prepare for the profound and indestructible meaning of Christmas, 1985, the birth of Jesus Christ in Bethlehem in a lowly and ignominious stable over 1900 years ago, we, black Americans, must summon the spirit and resolve to rejoice over the high human possibilities associated with Christmas.

In short, in spite of the monumental burdens that we bear, locally and nationally, we must dare to gird our hearts and keep our spirts high as we take each day at a time.

The essence of Christmas as evidenced in the remarkable, revolutionary and timeless birth of Jesus in Bethlehem is one of giving and sharing within a framework of love and caring.

As people who have been in "the storm so long," it is imperative for our survival and human dignity that we transcend jealousy and malevolent internecine warfare for the sake of racial cohesion, unity and support for the dispossessed and alienated within our race.

Black Americans who possess educational power, economic affluence and political know-how must be in the vanguard of giving and sharing. The lilting, arresting and irresistible music, appeal and special "magic" of Christmas represent a propitious framework for thoughtful, able and caring black Americans to begin.

The late Dr. Howard Thurman, renowned theologian, author and administrator, captures with potency and poignancy the spirit of caring and sharing in his book, Inward Journey:

"It is a strange freedom to be adrift in the world of men without a sense of anchor anywhere. Always there is the need of mooring, the need for the firm grip on something that is rooted and will not give. The urge to be accountable to someone, to know that beyond the individual himself there is an answer that must be given—this cannot be denied. The deed a man performs must be weighed in a balance held by another's hand. The very spirit of a man tends to panic from the desolation of going nameless up and down the streets of other minds where no solution greets and no friendly recognition makes secure. It is a strange freedom to be adrift in the world of men . . . To be known, to be called by one's name, is to find one's place and hold it against all the hordes of hell. This is to know one's value for one's self alone. It is an honor, an act of one's very own, it is to live a life that is one's very own, it is to bow before an altar that is one's very own. It is a strange feeling to be adrift in a world of men, to act with no accounting, to go nameless up and down the streets of other minds where no salutation greets and no sign is there to mark the place one calls one's own."

The painful and lamentable reality for a disproportionate number of 37 million Black Americans, Christmas, 1985, is one of being "adrift" in the most powerful and prosperous nation in the world.

This grievous condition, given the reactionary and meanspirited socio-economic and political policies of the Reagan Administration and the national malaise and indifference to human and civil rights will prevail, at least, throughout Reagan's term of office.

A concentrated and determined effort must be made at local and state levels to end black impotence and adriftness. The resounding and historic victory of Douglass Wilder in being elected Lt. Governor of Virginia indicates the political possibilities available to black Americans.

There are, to be sure, many issues that require your reflection and action. You need to give thought to how you acquire your share of power and economic sufficiency; your choice of the next Congressman from the Seventh Congressional District;

Your choice for governor; witness for freedom of South Africa; your choice for Attorney General; your choice for mayor of Baltimore; sustaining Provident Hospital;

Your choice for the U.S. Senate from Maryland; support for the NAACP's Jubilee Day; support for the national observance of the national holiday for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on Monday, January 20, 1986.

These issues, among others, should be addressed by you now. In this felicitous and joyous period of the year, the thesis or motif which is recurring in my columns remains urgent and vital: It is time to get serious and move forward. We must forswear perpetual mendicancy and sycophancy and take the leap of faith for our progress, unity and respect as a people.

In this process, we, too, free ourselves for the larger and transcendent task of witnessing for human possibilities, love and caring and sharing. It was the same spirit, I believe, that actuated Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to proclaim triumphantly and movingly on Wednesday, August 28, 1963 from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial:

"And when we allow freedom to ring, when we let it ring from every village and hamlet, from every state and city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children - black men and white man, Jews and Gentiles, Catholics and Protestants — will be able to join hands and to sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual: 'Free at last, free at last; thank God Almighty, we are free at last.'"

In the timeless and luminous hope and boundless promise of the Yuletide season, I convey, in the spirit of the season: Heartiest best wishes for a most Happy Christmas, Kwanzaa and fulfilling New Year.

Tony Brown's Commentary

Locate the enemy

I read an editorial in an Atlanta newspaper that urged the readers to remember that Hosea Williams., a local product, should be given as much credit as Minister Louis Farrakhan for historically emphasizing self-help and economic self-determination.

Of course, the paper is correct. Williams, even when opposed by a more integrationist Atlanta faction, has been out front for years in the charge away from plantation politics and economics.

But why did a black paper ask the readers to choose, in effect between two Black, in their own way, who are working on the problem of psychological dependence and its economic consequences.

And why did an excellent black writer in New York make a similar comparison of four attempts at economic development by four groups of Blacks?

Earl Caldwell wrote in his Daily News column: "The Congressional Black Caucus has another Muslim leader minister, Louis Farrakhan has another. And Tony Brown, producer of the syndicated show Tony Brown's Journal, has yet another. But for now Wood is out in front."

Thomas Wood, head of the Ten/Eight Foundation, has, as Caldwell said in two columns, conceived, and is executing, a well-thought-out economic plan. The Congressional Black Caucus, especially Parren Mitchell and Walter Fauntroy, made economics a black political item.

Farrakhan is drawing thousands to his speeches on POWER and a direct sales force and the Buy Freedom campaign is advocating support for all black economic development efforts and increased sales to all deserving black businesses.

None of us is in competition and none of us is "in front" or behind the other in progress or sincerity. Why continually cast Blacks as competitors— when we are obviously working toward the same goal?

No one black person or organization is going to solve our economic predicament. We'll be lucky if all of the programs combined can wake up one million African-Americans.

And an army of so-called black intellectuals is savaging one another in the name of black leadership. It is a badge of honor in many circles to poke fun at Clarence Pendleton and his "uncle tom" views.

What will be accomplished by attacking a black person's views, when, honestly, none of us had the economic or political ability to so much about what we believe?

The enemy is going uncontested. The results of racism, not racism perse, is the enemy and the problem is that we are not attacking the enemy with plans.

Empty rhetoric, as employed by too many blacks, produces foul air, acrimony and guarantees the perpetuation of the problem, which is our failure to execute.

Therefore, any Black who comes before our community with personal attacks and without a strategy or plan should be known for his lack of sound leadership.

—AFRO SURVEY—

What does Christmas mean to you?

Rev. Willie Ray

Korsheda Douglass

Rev. Cleveland Alexander

This week the question to the man and woman in the street is, "What does Christmas mean to you?"

Korsheda Douglass, student, "Christmas means a time for giving and a time for receiving gifts for love."

Rev. Willie Ray, clergyman, "Personally, Christmas does bring about a sense of awareness that we are brothers and sisters that we lack during the other months of the year. At this season, we should treat each other as human beings."

Rev. Cleveland Alexander, clergyman, "Christmas means a time of year of the Christ event. What it means is God's relationship to man."

Deborah Quickly, fiscal clerk, "Happiness and the enjoyment of giving to others and smiling faces, declarations, and togetherness. Christmas also means spending time with your family and loved one at night."

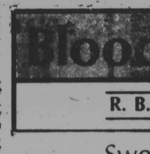
Shabeka Easily, salesperson, "Christmas is spending time with your family watching your kids rush to open the gifts and most of all spend time with your loved ones."

Cornelius Thomas said, "I don't celebrate Christmas because I am a Jehovah's Witness and the holiday is centered around Jesus Christ. Jesus said celebrate his death not his birth."

Shabeka Easily

Cornelius Thomas

Deborah Quickly



R. B. Jones

Sweetness and light

After attending the 7th District Candidates' Speakout held at the Citizens Democratic Action Organization headquarters Tuesday night, something became very clear to me.

This election will be so much for the choosing of a successor to Parren J. Mitchell as it will be to select the closest approximation of Mitchell.

The speakout, which by the way was not held in a locale that could be questioned by champions of Fairness on Calvert St. was attended by Kweisi Mfume and Dwight Fettit. Candidates Augustus Adair and Wendell Phillips were absent and a noncandidate St. George I. B. Cross addressed the meeting.

The format of the speakout was one that depended on written questions submitted from the floor rather than having individuals in the audience stand up and ask a question or recite a prepared statement that could rival a Fidel Castro speech in length and partisanship.

For the life of me I don't know where the written questions emanated from since I arrived early and was never given the opportunity to scrawl a question on a file card. Perhaps, I was doing when the cards were passed out or perhaps there was selective questioning.

The evening was moderated by Billy Murphy who insisted that he was not a candidate for anything although the length and pontifical nature of his remarks left the door open at least in the mind of this observer.

It is still early in the game and all the players have not entered the stage, yet the tone of the campaign has been set. The candidates appear to be trying to be considered the best of a good lot. It's like wrapping oneself in the flag, a ploy that is easy and convenient, but not very substantive.

There are serious questions that have to be answered about the qualifications of the candidates. Are they winners? Not in merely the electoral sense of the legal sense, but in the sense of being able to inspire confidence and action from their constituents? Do they have a vision and a plan for the 7th District and the nation? When they talk about economic empowerment are they talking about enriching that strata of black society that has betrayed us and failed us at critical junctures in history because of benighted self-interest?

Will their economic development schemes enrich the few and leave he majority of the black community struggling to get ahead? Are they thinking collectively about what is best for the majority of black people

There was talk about a sense of hope being restored to the community, and about restoration of our educational system and the elimination of crime, all of it correct and pretty sounding.

What I am looking for in the candidates, whoever they are, is a combination of ideology and program. That also translates into theory and practice. The candidate should know why the schools are decaying and what will make a fundamental difference in the educational system.

Piecemeal solutions that are more cosmetic than concrete will not solve anything and candidate should know and articulate to the constitutents what sacrifices and struggles they have to make to bring about a better society.

I want to hear the candidates explain how they will organize and keep the people in their district involved if they are elected. Too frequently politicians wake people up for an election and then lull them to sleep after the votes are tallied.

A congressional representative in the 7th District is more than a legislator, that person is a leader of the 'movement" in Baltimore and that is a sacred trust.

Rhetorical sweetness and light are fine for testimonial dinners and holiday gatherings, but it is a little dishonest when sweating ambition grasps for power and the prize could spell the realization or ruin of many hopes and dreams.

Commentary:

Listen to America!

By Carolyn L. Bennett

Have you been listening to America In these past two weeks when racism ran riot in Southwest Philadelphia? Were you listening?

I know there have been distractions at Geneva, Malta, Manila, Pretoria, spies and counterspies from Washington to Jerusalem. But were you listening to America—when she reached back to the racism of the early sixties and brought it full force into the streets of "Brotherly Love," where a black man reigns as mayor of this urban, multi-racial metropolis of the eighties

I was listening—when unnamed white terrorists ran riot against an interracial couple, vandalizing their home and causing them to shudder in their resolve; and against a black couple, causing them to run for their lives. I was listening—When the black mayor declared a state of emergency; and when a democratic candidate for the Mississippi Supreme Court Rights Acts of the nineteen sixties. Were you listening to America?

Are you convinced that the spiritual growth of America has progressed not an inch since the days of segregated lunch counters, schools, churches, neighborhoods; Convinced that smoldering fires of racism wait just beneath the surface to burst forth in an atmosphere in which government tears away at fundamental structures of Constitution and Bill of Rights.

Tells the people that black Americans are getting "preferential treatment" in jobs and housing; Paints rosy pictures of prosperity, when poverty seeps in at every level of society, except the level of the truly rich; Is there any wonder that people are confused and angry;

Are you listening to America? Are you listening, America Are you hearing and seeing what's really going on in our land Leaders posturing in high places doing important-sounding things while freer and freer enterprise allow causes mismanaged corporations to rise and fall on a daily basis. Banks and savings and loans fail.

Labor and management keep up a futile fight while industries shut down, labor is farmed out to countries with cheap labor, and goods are imported at higher profits to corporations. Thousands lose their jobs and their standards of living.

Leaders talking big talk on international platforms while a mayor calls a state of emergency, a neighborhood is bombed, Pretorian style—and hundreds are left homeless and running for their lives. America? This too is America. Are you listening?

People confused, frustrated, angry, sensing their way of life thrust away from them by forces over which they have no control, reach back to another era for a scapegoat: the Black American. And for an attitude and condition: Racism against Black Americans. But Black Americans are seeing what's really going on in our land Leaders posturing in high places doing important-sounding things while freer and freer enterprise allow causes mismanaged corporations to rise and fall on a daily basis. Banks and savings and loans fail.

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People confused, frustrated, angry, sensing their way of life thrust away from them by forces over which they have no control, reach back to another era for a scapegoat: the Black American. And for an attitude and condition: Racism against Black Americans. But Black Americans are not the cause of our problems. Nor is racism the cure.

Keep listening, America. And petition the government for resolution of real problems and for redress of justifiable grievances. Don't be fooled by the smoke screen. Keep listening—until you hear America. Dr. Carolyn L. Bennett is a writer and former educator who works in Washington, D.C. and lives in Alexandria, VA.