



We see the world
through Black eyes

Good advice

Congratulations to Commissioner Charles Jordan, the first elected official to publicly support the Community Coalition for School Integration position.

In his statement to the School Board (ably delivered by Ms. Anna Street) Jordan said the real issue is "how do we integrate our schools while insuring, as the Coalition report states, equity, Quality education, interracial understanding and acceptance, and neighborhood integrity?"

He advised the Board to act quickly, before factions become too entrenched. He recommended that the School Board instruct Superintendent Blanchard to "return to the drawing board and develop a plan that will achieve the objectives of the Coalition's report . . . Granted there may be some logistical problems with the Coalition's strategies. If so, let Dr. Blanchard, given his knowledge of what is and isn't practical or possible, return to you a plan that is solid in all respects."

There are other elected officials who support equity in desegregation. Let them step forward now.

A Christmas Message

The Christmas season has arrived once again and it brings to mind Christ's teachings that all men are brothers -- that all people are neighbors.

This is something that we must remember as we face the year ahead -- a year that is certain to be one of struggle, of conflict of anger.

Urgent issues will be decided -- desegregation of the Portland schools, the use of federal funds as it relates to minorities. A new administration will take over state government. The legislature will deal with taxes again. There will be a school board election. Unemployment and inflation will further exacerbate the situation.

We must remember that honest and sincere people can disagree, that opponents don't have to be vicious. But we must be firm in our commitments and oppose racism where we find it.

We know that in the end the truth will be known and justice will prevail.

The Challenge of the Eighties

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no grade levels exist in their communities. Based on careful calculations, conservatively compiled, the Coalition estimates this figure to be no less than 700 students and perhaps as high as 821. Furthermore, with the extensive recruitment program which entices Black students to transfer by convincing them and their parents that their local schools are inferior, it is quite likely that many Black children would never have left their neighborhood schools without aggressive prodding from school personnel.

No wonder achievement in Albina schools is low; upper grades have been eliminated and students have been transported out; and the best of those who remain are actively recruited under the official contention that they will get a better education elsewhere.

In his response to the Coalition's recommendations, Dr. Blanchard attempted to soothe the souls of those in the Coalition by saying, "Regretably, equity, like justice, is a virtue seldom found in pure form." We regret, as Dr. Blanchard does, that equity does not exist in pure form, but the question should not be "pure" form or no form at all. We feel absolutely certain that equity can be achieved in its lesser forms, and it can be motivated in that direction by a true sense of fairness, a sense of sharing the obligations of community living, and by a will to seek "pure equity," though it may be elusive. What, therefore, does the Coalition propose?

The Virtues of School Pairing

We recommend that the Board of Education implement by September 1980 a plan of school pairing. School pairing involves the combination of one school, which is predominately minority, with one or two schools which are predominately white. Having studied the problem, arguing heatedly over every issue, the Coalition believes now that school pairing best meets the principles

which it has established as most important. The principles to which pairing satisfactorily responds are: 1. That desegregation is the law; 2. That desegregation must be equitable; 3. That Portland desegregation is not equitable; 4. That school integration promotes equal opportunity.

We painstakingly worked our way to the conclusion that school pairing is appropriate and beneficial for Portland, as we became increasingly aware that a voluntary system would not work. It had not worked before 1970 in Portland. And since 1970, it has not been voluntary for increasing numbers of Black children. We found no national example sufficient to convince us that an all-voluntary approach was a viable possibility.

School pairing is equitable. It promotes quality education by forcing the school administration to create model schools with integrated students and staff and parents. It fosters interracial understanding and acceptance. And more than any other technique of effective desegregation, school pairing allows the maintenance of neighborhood integrity.

Therefore, having labored its way to this conclusion, the Coalition recommended to the Board of Education on November 27th that it implement a pairing plan which: 1. Transfers enough whites and minority students to bring its schools into compliance with state guidelines; 2. Involves both white and minority students in an equitable two-way transfer program that keeps neighborhood classmates together; 3. Eliminates the current scattering and isolation of minority students.

After listening very carefully and quite respectfully to Dr. Blanchard's reactions to the pairing recommendation, the Coalition met last Wednesday evening at the King Facility in Northeast Portland. After analyzing his contention that there may be "unsolvable" problems, I can assure you that we are confident in the

quality of our recommendations. We think pairing will work. We think it is advantageous educationally. We think the "logistical" problems related to such a change can be surmounted, if there is a will on the part of the Board of Education to establish an equitable, two-way desegregation program in Portland.

As Friends of Education

It is with great confidence that I say, "I am a friend of public education." I have spent a good deal of time and energy speaking and writing as to my understanding of the requirements for properly preparing this generation of youth for a world rapidly changing. There is no system more important to the health of a free society than education.

As a citizen devoted to improved education, I speak with authority in asserting that the Board of Education has no better friends than those who have committed themselves to the Coalition's purposes. It is important, therefore, to realize that, while our analysis has generated sharp criticism, we are fully mindful of the difficult task which faces the members of the School Board.

The essence of our thrust for change has never been intended as an attack on the integrity of the Board of Education. Rather, our motivation to work toward equitable change in desegregation is drawn from an appreciation for the spirit of public education in America. As the scholar, Diane Ravitch, puts it, "Because education is so bound up with the interest and values of the public, and because these interests and values continually shift over time, educational policy can never be static. It is forever in the process of becoming, forever a subject of proper concern, forever in need of reformation."

This is the spirit in which we have made our recommendations, and this is the spirit of which we are most proud.



Reflection on a Christmas Eve

by N. Fungai Kumbula

I am sitting here today, daydreaming about a Christmas dinner. I can see the turkey -- big, plump, juicy, scrumptious-looking, and the dressing -- mouth-watering. But I also have this nightmare that I am unable to eat the sumptuous feast because I can see a lot of hungry children the length and breadth of this miserable world. I am asking myself: Why is this world so unfair? Why is it that these children never get a chance? Why do some people have so much money they feed their dogs, cats and iguanas better than some families can feed their children?

I am just now reading about the plight of the refugees in Mozambique, Botswana and Zambia. There are almost 300,000 of these displaced people, most of them women and children. They have been dislodged by the fighting in Rhodesia and the upheavals in South Africa. In addition to them, there are also the 500,000 that are forced to live in concentration camps in Rhodesia called "protected villages." For them too, life is a hell on earth.

I hear the Christmas jingles everywhere now: "Peace on Earth. Goodwill to all People" and I ask myself: "What peace? what goodwill?" All the suffering I am looking at now is caused by self-proclaimed good, honest Christians, some of whom attend church regularly. Some of them are even "men of the cloth." After they have come home from preaching the gospel "love thy neighbor," they sit down and pass death sentences on their fellow human beings who only demand the same type of treatment that is accorded their lighter skinned brethren.

Every time I think about it, I get so discouraged because the world is

such a mess. Someday, I too shall take a wife and when I do, I look forward to bringing one or two more souls into this world. But, I can also hear a voice asking me: "Why, when the world is such a mess?" How can I explain to them the difference between love and hate? They will be coming into a world that preaches love but practices hate. How can I explain why some people discriminate against others? Why they cannot go to this or that school, get this or that job?

The more I look at it, the less I like this world, but what can I do? I cannot run away from these problems. The one thing I can do is do my share to clean up the mess. No price is too high, no sacrifice too much if it will bring a smile of joy, a ray of hope to those innocent little ones. They deserve a better chance than we get. Let's give them a break.

Sometimes I think I am nothing but a dreamer. I keep dreaming of a utopia where we can all get an even break. However, I think there is no harm in dreaming. After all, if the ancient Egyptians had not dreamed past all "obstacles," we would never have had the great pyramids or the treasures of "brother" King Tut. Were it not for a dream, Mrs. Rosa Parks would not have given up her seat and Martin Luther King never would have picked up the civil rights call. Much of present-day independent Africa would still be languishing in colonial shackles. The list goes on.

Maybe we can give those children some belated presents after all. Maybe it's a throwback to my childhood, but I always think of Christmas, Kwanza and New Year's as having special significance for

children. After the 2nd of January I will be initiating a clothing drive; that is collecting used, but still durable clothing for the refugees in Southern Africa. Because of the way in which most of them fled the war zones, the only clothes they have are those on their backs. So, if you have some used jeans, shirts, shoes (preferably boots), blankets, dresses that you no longer need, you might consider donating them to the "Southern Africa Refugee Clothing Drive." Until I can set up alternative arrangements, inquiries can be forwarded to me either through the *Portland Observer* or The American Friends Service Committee. Medical supplies such as disposable syringes would also be most welcome.

This is what I have always believed the holiday season to mean: the one occasion in the year when we pause to think of family and friends, neighbors and kin. That old pair of jeans that has been taking up space in the house or the garage for the past two years will probably make a very meaningful present for one not so fortunate kid. It will keep him smiling for a year because, first, it will keep him decently covered and second, it may be the only piece of clothing he will have this year. This would only be the humble beginnings of this magnanimous dream to bring a smile to the face of every child on the face of the earth. There may be hope yet for humanity.

And, on this cheerful note, whether you will be celebrating Kwanza, Christmas, New Year's, or nothing at all: "Happy Holidays." I, for one am thankful for all the friends I have met and made through this column. For all of us, may 1979 be a revolutionary year in all walks of life.

Through the eyes of Mr. W.

by Harold C. Williams

For the last five years Affirmative Action in the State of Oregon has been the gateway for hope for many disadvantaged people. Opportunities were realized for some who never imagined that they would rise to such levels. However, there were some who still did not make it through the gate of hope, and Affirmative Action was not able to lift them over the threshold of hatred, mistrust, pain and disappointment.

Many people have said that there was very little achieved through the efforts of Affirmative Action and the progress was slow, but what does one say to a man that yesterday was starving but today his stomach is full and he has the vigor that is reflected in his health? Do you say he didn't have a meal because steak was not served? Do you say the wagon was not moved because it did not go a mile, only a block? Everything is relevant and the success of Affirmative Action and other efforts like those undertaken in the areas of equal opportunity must be visualized away from the shoulders of a few people but put in vision as the responsibility of the total people.

Black people and other people of color have gained some inroads, but it is not yet enough. Those who have broken into the halls of opportunity must be applauded, supported and pushed to higher grounds, for without allies in the system we would cease to have goals toward opportunity.

The Bakke case began the slowdown on opportunity for Blacks and other minorities, and now we are faced with the Weber case (Weber vs. Kaiser Aluminum) which if upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court will bring a total standstill to the efforts of Affirmative Action and throw the progress of Blacks and other minorities back to the pre-1950's. It is important that Black people become politically astute and pick the persons who will echo the interests of Black people in the legislative bodies of our State and nation.

Though the Black population in Oregon is relatively small, it can make a difference in the political arena. One vote can be as important as 100 with the important issues that are on the rise and facing all people

in today's society. Affirmative Action was one of the voices that gave vision to a people who had been kept out of the way of opportunity. The question now is how many people will make demands on Affirmative Action in the coming years, to speak for the needs of oppressed people. For if the demands are not made it is most assured that nothing will be done.

The year 1979 can be a year of new birth for the unity of Black people, or it can be the rebirth of "divide and conquer" of Black people. The question is, "which will be chosen?" These last five years in the field of Affirmative Action have allowed me an opportunity to touch and hopefully bring a positive change in many people's lives and I thank you, the public, for that opportunity.

January 5, 1979, will be my final day as Director of Affirmative Action for the State of Oregon, but it is not the final day for Affirmative Action. The question now is, "Will we all be for action that is affirmative for Black people?"

Peace and God bless.

Ward earns Peyton Award

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egration -- and called upon to again go before the School Board pointing out the inequities and asking for change. The Coalition was formed in response to the Newman Plan -- a plan that would have transferred Boise and King 1979 graduates out of Jefferson High School. The Coalition researched desegregation efforts in Portland and reached the conclusion that segregation exists, that Blacks carry the burden of desegregation, and that some of the desegregation programs are destructive to Black children. The Coalition has recommended school pairing and nine additional supportive recommendations. Superintendent Robert Blanchard has called the Coalition recommendations "a considerable over reaction" and advised that pairing might be "unsolvable".

Ward believes the Coalition will prevail. "I don't exactly know why, but I have a feeling that the Board will overturn the Superintendent's recommendations and adopt pairing. They don't seem to be very aware of what has been taking place -- they depend on the Superintendent to supply their information and don't get out and ask questions. When they read the Coalition's report and go over the information and the figures

we have provided, I think they will understand what is happening to Black youngsters. Then I think they will adopt our recommendations. We only have one member we can rely on -- who is with us -- Wally Priestley -- but I believe the others will have to be with us when they understand."

Ward's activities have not been restricted to the NAACP and the education issue. He received one of the initial appointments to the Model Cities Citizens' Advisory Committee from Mayor Terry Shunk and remained on the board through the life of the program. He is a member of the boards of directors of the Boys Club of Portland, the Progressive Businessman's Club, Emanuel Hospital and the Royal Esquire Club of Portland. He is a Commissioner of the Metropolitan Human Relations Commission, chairman of the Education Committee.

For the past ten years Ward has been an Employee Representative for the Oregon State Employees Association and will retire at the end of December. Previously he was a state employee with the Oregon State Welfare Department.

The award will be presented on January 23, 1979, at Westminster Presbyterian Church at 1624 N.E.

Hancock, at a noon luncheon. Previous winners are: Tom Sloan, Tektronix; Jack Mills, U.S. National Bank; E. Shelton Hill, Urban League of Portland; A. Lee Henderson, *Portland Observer*; and Mrs. Marie Smith.

Desegregation

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and the state requires no more than 50 per cent minority. It would be simpler to reach a 50/50 ratio and would require less cross-bussing.

The district has not adhered to its own policy in the past. The Fernwood cluster is 26 per cent minority and the Beaumont cluster is 29 per cent minority, yet Irvington and Sabin are over 50 per cent minority and no white students were transferred into them.

Why, when the Coalition is asking the district to carry out its acknowledged affirmative duty, has it suddenly become necessary to be 30 per cent minority?"

Calling the pairing proposal workable, she told the Board, "When you are willing to look at the pairing proposal in the light of these issues, we want to help you work over the details."



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