

# EDITORIAL / OPINION

## GUEST EDITORIAL: "Your Vote Counts!"

"Contemporary American homelessness is an outrage, a national scandal." This is the conclusion recently reached by the Committee on Health Care for Homeless People of the National Academy of Sciences. Congress had asked the Academy of Sciences to issue a report on the current condition of the homeless in the United States. At a time when too many people are still unclear about the importance of the upcoming presidential election, the crisis of the homeless as a result of Reagan-Bush policies should be of paramount concern of all voters.

The 242-page report issued by the National Academy of Sciences is entitled "Homelessness, Health and Human Needs." The members of the committee that issued the report are the leading experts in the fields of public health, human services and social science. Dr. Bruce C. Vladeck, president of the United Hospital Fund of New York, chaired the committee. Dr. Vladeck stated "We felt continuously uneasy because of our inability to state the most basic recommendation: homelessness in the United States is an inexcusable disgrace and must be eliminated."

In this nation of wealth the expanding crisis of the homeless is indicative of misplaced priorities by the Reagan-Bush administration. There was a tone of anger, which is uncharacteristic, in the report on the homeless by the National Academy of Sciences. The reason why the experts on health care in some of the leading hospitals and academic institutions across the nation are angry is because of the perceived insensitivity on the part of the federal government toward the homeless.

It is estimated that presently on any given night, there are at least

100,000 children throughout the nation who are homeless. In fact the report found that children are the fastest growing group among the homeless. The report stated, "The growing phenomenon of homeless children is nothing short of a national disgrace that must be treated with the urgency such a situation demands."

In 1988 there are approximately 750,000 who are homeless in the United States, many of whom are from the African-American and Latino-American communities. There is also a large percentage of white Americans who are homeless. The report predicted that within the next year, if current government policies do not change, there will be 1.3 to 2 million persons in the ranks of the homeless.

The Reagan-Bush administration since 1981 has cut funding drastically for emergency support for the homeless, including resources for health care, food stamps and emergency shelter. This is in addition to cutting new housing programs for low and middle income families. It appears that Mr. Reagan and Mr. Bush not only do not care about the homeless but are also determined to increase their suffering.

Dr. Vladeck concluded, "we can no longer sit as spectators to the elderly homeless dying of hypothermia, to the children with blighted futures poisoned by the lead in rat-infested dilapidated welfare hotels, to women raped, to old men beaten and robbed of their few possessions, and to people dying on the streets with catastrophic illnesses." The time has come for us to end this national disgrace. We will all have an opportunity on November 8, 1988 to vote for a different administration. The plight of the homeless as well as the future of the nation is at stake.

### Prisoner Charges ILL Treatment

Dear Editor:

On Oct. 1, 1988, 28 women inmates at O.W.C.C. staged a demonstration (sit-in) in the prison yard. Around 6:15 p.m., the prison's tactic team was called in to remove us. Upon their arrival, we were threatened with bodily harm and was told that if we didn't lay face down on the ground, we would be shot!

Now, we may have broken a rule or two, but that was the point of the peaceful demonstration: to draw attention to our problems so that the general public would have a better understanding of the crisis that existed inside the women's prison. Before the demonstration took place, the institution was heading toward a full scale riot.

So far, prison officials have refused to pay attention to our problems and that is why we are asking the community to support our cause. Below is a list of some

of the problems we women prisoners face.

We are requesting: (1) to have a clean and proper living space; (2) to have better medical attention (3) to receive better and adequate dental attention (4) to have in-house rehabilitation just to name a few.

In the segregation unit, the situation is this: women are given 1 toothbrush/toothpaste, 1 small comb, 1 desk, 1 chair, 1 bottom bunk, 1 top bunk, 1 pillow, 1 styrofoam cup, a roll of toilet paper, 1 bottle of shampoo, 1 bra (1st week), 1 nightgown, 1 pair of thongs, 1 pair of tennis shoes, 1 bath robe, 1 pair of scrubs or coveralls. The cell is 8 ft. by 10 ft.

Please consider helping me and the 27 other women here. We need your support. For more information, please write: Claudett Hammick #0795, 2605 State Street, Salem, Oregon 97310.

Thank You, Claudett Hammick



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

### Bring Black Officer Back To North Precinct

Dear Editor:

With members of the "White Community" and City Administrators always so perplexed as to where they are going to find qualified Blacks to help the N/NE neighborhoods fulfill its goal of self-determination—I was surprised that Lieutenant Charles Moose was transferred out of our precinct. With his academic background and qualifications I would think that this would be an ideal spot for Lt. Moose.

Like other parents I am afraid of gang activity (I have two teenage sons); but I am equally afraid of 'mistakes' and 'overreactions' of the white officers that serve here. Recently my twelve year old son (he has never been in any kind of trouble) was thrown to the ground and searched for no other reason than the color of his skin. One school in Portland has specifically called in Black students to warn them that they would be suspended for wearing red or blue.

Let us remember that South Africa too has "reasons" for its suspension of civil rights based on skin color.

Although I believe Lt. Moose would take gang activity very seriously, I do not believe he

would permit flagrant violations of individuals' constitutional rights to run rampant through the precinct.

I hope our other African-American officers will understand that even though their boss is white, they are the only hope that our children (and ourselves) have that whatever the incident, the police will not lose sight of our humanity. (Recall, if you will, the elderly Black woman who did not want to leave her house and was shot and killed rather than talked to and reasoned with by "fearful" white officers.) These Black officers are often our only link with the American precept. That we are innocent until proven guilty.

We all have seen many of N/NE Portland's "qualified" Black leaders flocking to major cities around the country where their talents are appreciated. It would seem that City Administrators who claim to be proponents of affirmative action, and who say they support self-determination and Black leaders for Black people, would welcome the opportunity for Lt. Charles Moose to serve in the N/NE Portland area.

Sincerely Yours, Elisa Clay  
Friends of S.O.S.

### Reflections of Transition ...

Dear Editor:

As you may recall, I first became acquainted with the African-American community of Portland during a two part interview with the Portland Observer. The interview concerned itself with the illegal and abusive conditions at the Oregon State Penitentiary. Regrettably, these conditions still exist. However, I face a much greater obstacle—"Transition" back into the African-American community."

I have been out of prison for six months and much has happened. With the loss of my ever-loving mother Mrs. Noeline Rhone on March 31, 1988 to cancer, coupled with the loss of my stepfather, Mr. Ted R. Rhone Sr., on Sept. 14, 1988, the transition of re-entering the community has been almost impossible. Why?

Last Thursday, a messenger came by to deliver some papers that stated that our home would be auctioned off on Jan. 31, 1989. Since my mother and stepfather isn't here to handle this matter, I must attempt to do it. Also, trying to find a job when you have a criminal record is like trying to find a needle in a haystack. Fighting to stay out of illegal drug activity without the support and love

of your mother and father is even harder.

The point I wish to share with the community is two-fold. (1) When a Black prisoner is released from prison, he/she truly need the love, support and patience of family, friends, and love ones. Such support will help each and every prisoner, upon release, to make a positive transition back into his/her community. (2) For people like myself who has no one to provide love, support, understanding and patience, the chances of a successful transition is almost impossible.

My message is: if there are mothers and fathers who have sons and daughters in prison, write to them! Ask them what their plans are. Offer your support. Do whatever you can to help them make a successful transition.

I am writing because African-American prisoners must begin to take responsibility for their actions and their behavior. They must begin to open up lines of communication with the community and make positive contributions whenever and wherever they can. Please pray for my success.

Sincerely, John D. Leftridge III

### Black Prisoner Apologizes To Community

Dear Editor:

I am Stanley E. Holmes. We met at the Uhuru Sa Sa meeting on the night of Oct. 8 of this year.

I would first like to thank you for attending our meeting. Secondly, I would like to express my deepest appreciation for your most needed presentation. Finally, I would like to extend an apology to our African-American community for the injustice caused by the negative consequences of my past behavior.

I have now been incarcerated for 9 years for three counts of robbery and attempted murder. I have grown from this experience. I now totally understand how my irresponsible behavior has affected my community, society and the victims. Recognizing the consequences of my past behavior now and the effects that it may have caused the victims were distressful and painful. I hope deeply

from my African heart that there is no long term fears or mental anguish. Since my incarceration, I have acquired by Bachelor's degree in psychology and social science.

I now recognize that knowledge is a master of science and no dishonesty or conceit whatsoever is permissible. What is required from me as an African-American male is honesty and modesty. My immediate goal is to give back to my African-American community by obtaining employment in the field of youth counseling upon my release. Already I have developed various projects in hopes of deterring our high risk youth from becoming involved in criminal activities.

Please share with the community, my apology.

Sincerely, Stanley E. Holmes

## CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL



### Bishop Barbara Harris Makes History

by Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

We have often explained that the best way to celebrate African-American history is to continue to make history. For the first time in world history, a woman has been elected bishop in the Episcopal Church. The Rev. Barbara C. Harris, an African-American Episcopal priest and social activist, was recently elected Suffragan Bishop of the Diocese of Massachusetts, the nation's largest Episcopal diocese.

A native of Philadelphia, Penn., Rev. Harris has been a long time participant and leader in the struggle for justice and freedom in the United States and throughout the world. At her election in Boston, Rev. Harris stated that she will continue to offer her "gifts as a Black woman and as a woman priest" in service to the Church and to the cause of justice. Rev. Harris commented, "Moreover, I would bring a sensitivity to the needs of different kinds of people including racial and ethnic communities, women, the incarcerated, the poor and the oppressed."

I remember meeting the Rev. Barbara Harris at a conference sponsored by the Episcopal Publishing Company. What impressed me most about Rev. Harris was her candid sense of moral responsibility combined with her unique agility as a committed social activist. In particular Rev. Harris has acquired many years of experienced in helping to promote prison reform in the state of Pennsylvania and in other regions of the nation. We need more church leaders to follow the ex-

ample of Rev. Harris in the areas of prison reform and criminal justice.

The election of Bishop Harris is a victory for all women. In too many places throughout the world and in the United States women are still victimized by the sin of sexism. We take note that the Episcopal Church, after centuries of struggle and debate, has taken an important step forward in history. It is our hope that all church denominations and religious bodies will become institutions where women will enjoy equal justice, respect, status and support.

Already in the wake of the election of Bishop Harris, the winds of negative reaction are beginning to blow. The Rev. Eddy Stride, who is the chairperson of an organization of conservatives and traditionalists of the Church of England which the Episcopal Church is affiliated, sees Bishop Harris' leadership as "a very serious challenge to many in the Church." Some traditionalists who oppose the ordination of women as bishops attempts to make the argument that because the Christian ministry has primarily been male dominated for nearly 2,000 years then there should not be a change.

We agree that Bishop Harris' leadership will be a "very serious challenge to many in the Church." We believe that this is a necessary and positive challenge to the entire history of the negativity of sexism and racism in the life of the church universal. We congratulate and salute Bishop Barbara C. Harris for her leadership and for her continued commitment.

### Proposed EPA Pesticide Rules Reflect 'Environmental Racism' Charges UCC

In its proposed new rules to protect agricultural workers from pesticides, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has used inadequate information as an excuse to adopt "minimum" standards that put business cost "burdens" ahead of farm workers' health.

This standpoint was taken by the United Church of Christ's Commission for Racial Justice in comments filed here today in a rulemaking proceeding of the EPA.

Labeling the EPA's posture toward the predominantly Hispanic farm worker population "environmental racism," Commission executive director the Rev. Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr. charges: "Farm workers would probably get more protection if they were placed on the endangered species list."

In other statutes adopted during the last 18 years, if the risk to people has been uncertain the EPA's approach "has always been to adopt options protective of human health," the national church agency's comments point out. "Here (given an uncertainty where EPA admits that poisonings are underreported, increasing, and do not reflect chronic effects) the Agency consistently takes the approach which is least 'burdensome' to business interests."

Also, while admitting to insufficient data on toxins and their effects on farm workers, the EPA "has proposed almost no substantial research to remedy this deficiency," the Commission noted.

Such attitudes stem from a "lack of commitment ... to issues related to farm worker protection," the comments contend. The EPA perception is that "farm workers ... possess little political influence in this country," the church agency claimed. "If the EPA told a middle-class white community that it would be too 'burdensome' to provide information about how lawn chemicals may affect exposed children, the Agency would be facing Congressional investigations the next day."

Reflecting this stance, asserted the Commission for Racial Justice—which issued the first comprehensive national study on racial patterns associated with the location of hazardous waste sites—is a lack of minority employees placed by the EPA in decision-making positions. Hispanic-Americans make up only 1% of substantive policy-making positions in the Agency, the comments observe.

The church body criticized the rules additionally for:

- "The notable absence of a comprehensive compliance standard, resulting in virtually no enforcement" in the past and an absence of "additional resources" for enforcement of the new regulations.
- "Inadequate" reporting and recordkeeping requirements.
- Soft rules on warnings and information about pesticides provided to workers and medical practitioners, plus vaguely-worded emergency procedures.
- Narrow rules on who is tested regularly and a lack of special rules to cover children.
- Assumptions about washing procedures that are not sensitive to farm workers' living conditions.
- The fact that the standards are inadequate to correct uneven protection among states.
- The lack of "meaningful risk assessment" in EPA decisions.

"EPA appears to be using the concept of 'minimum' standards to adopt standards which are also inadequate," the Commission declared. "This goes beyond the specific issues raised by the rules themselves, as it is clear that the necessary funds, personnel and program support to properly formulate, implement and enforce farm worker pesticide protection rules is neither available nor forthcoming in the foreseeable future."

"If this represents the sum total of farm worker protection after seven years of study and effort, farm workers could not hope to see adequate protection until the middle of the next century," the church agency warned.

The 1.7 million member United Church of Christ is a 1957 union of the Congregational Christian Churches and the Evangelical and Reformed Church. The Commission for Racial Justice is the denomination's national civil rights agency.

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## Western Oregon State College

To all to whom these Letters shall come, greeting:  
The State Board of Higher Education, by virtue of the authority in it vested, and on recommendation of the College Faculty, has conferred on

Stanley Eugene Holmes

the degree of  
Bachelor of Science in Psychology

with all the Rights and Privileges appertaining to that degree.



In testimony whereof we have subscribed our names and impressed the seal of the College on this diploma at Astoria, Oregon, June eleventh, nineteen hundred and eighty-eight

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