



Opinion



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Letters to the Editor

Another look at juvenile (in) justice

BY STEPHANIE GOLDEN
NATIONAL SECRETARY TO REV. JESSE JACKSON

Forty-six years after desegregation of our nation's public schools, stating data shows that African American students have suffered disproportionately from suspension, expulsions and corporal punishment in U.S. classrooms. Writes Dr. Leroy Purnell, dean of law at Northern Illinois University: "While the disciplinary process in a public school is not a criminal trial, it is one in which the possible sanctions justifies a significant level of due process protection." In other words: Black kids are being introduced early to a criminal process as jail intervention, rather than education intervention, becomes the norm in American's school discipline process. It is no leap of imagination to surmise that students who are pushed out of schools without an education safety net are more likely to indulge in antisocial behavior, which can lead to arrests and more unwanted pregnancies which can lead to fewer life options.

Because of draconian drug sentencing laws and the nasty residue of the U.S. "war on drug users," 13 percent of black men, compared to just 2 percent of white men, are disenfranchised from the right to vote thanks to a tag of "convicted felon."

Even more disturbing is that nearly one in three African American males in age group 20-29 is under criminal justice supervision on any given day, including being in prisoner jail, on probation or parole. The stats for female inmates, most of whom are also first time, non-violent offenders are equally disturbing.

Today, the 1965 Voting Rights Act cannot protect our youth from losing voting privileges because of felony convictions, not like skin color that disenfranchised their grandfathers two generations before them. Who needs a poll tax, when you've got rap sheets?

A new Columbia University study, "The Color of Justice," now reveals that African American youths are more than twice as likely as their white counterparts to be transferred out of a juvenile justice system and tried as adults. Said the co-author, "the imbalances this study reveals are stark, vast and deeply disturbing," commented Dan Macallair, the associate director of Columbia's Center for Violence Research and prevention. "... There is a double standard: throw kids of color behind bars, but rehabilitate white kids who commit comparable crimes."

It should be noted that in Downer's Grove, IL just last week, Caucasian students twice took a bomb to school and still avoided jail. The judge said he was "troubled... but posed no threat to other students." In Decatur, six boys were expelled for two years, without the option of alternative schooling, because of 16-second first fight. They will be prosecuted this year for their alleged participation. Before of Rev. Jesse Jackson intervened, these boys were kicked into the streets to sink or swim while they served their sentence.

In California, Proposition 21 is another example of draconian juvenile policy attempting to become law. If approved by voters this March, the measure would allow prosecutors, instead of judges, to decide whether a juvenile be tried as an adult for a violent crime. Said Jackson, "It's hard to avoid the conclusion that the U.S. system of punishment isn't about crime or justice, but rather is about social control... The human costs are incalculable. Young people arrested for drugs are brutalized once in jail. Prison becomes their university. Its lessons are not uplifting.

This nation touts itself as being leader among all industrialized counties. It will now lead the world in incarcerations when by Valentine's Day, an estimated two million American will be locked behind bars, 500,000 more than in China. This number of majority black and brown people, join an estimated five million other U.S citizens who are now on probation.

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Dear Editor,
In honor of the upcoming Valentine's Day holiday, I wanted to share with your readers some interesting information I learned from an "instruction manual" of sorts on the subject of love and marriage. I mean, really, what is the secret to love? What is the way to a happy marriage? These are questions that have been asked and answered many times. Some of the answers have been wise, many stupid. Few of them have shown the way to being happy in love and marriage.

The "manual" I studied gave real, down-to-earth, applicable tools to actually use and apply to find the right partner, to create a happy union and improve upon that marriage. It was based on the works of American philosopher and writer, L. Ron Hubbard and depends uniformly upon communication. Here are some of his tips on selecting a partner, and on some causes of conflict:

- What is the "communicating lag" of the individual? When asked a question, how long does it take him or her to register and return (not just talk back, but to actually answer the question presented)? The length of time intervening between the time a question or remark is addressed to a person and the person answers the original question or statement is known as his "communication lag." The fast answer tells of the fast mind. Marital partners who have the same communication lag (meaning their rate of response to questions or remarks address to them is similar) will get along. Where one partner is fast and one is slow, the situation will become unbearable to the fast partner and miserable to the slow one. In the book, Hubbard goes on to describe how a person can decrease this lag and quicken response time, making a happier partnership.

- A "communication line" is the

route along which a communication travels from one person to another. A marriage can go on the rocks when the line between partners is cut or blocked, such as a third person interferes, one person withholds communications from the other, one person cuts communication to the other by "clamming up," one puts unnecessary or painful communication on the line, etc. Jealousy comes about because of the insecurity of the jealous person (the jealousy may or may not have foundation). This person is afraid of hidden communication lines, and will do anything to try to uncover them. The other partner thinks he or she is entitled to have open communication lines with anyone, whereas the jealous marital partner insists that these lines be shut down. The resultant quarrels and disputes can be violent.

- A family that doesn't continue to create itself as a family will cease to exist as a family. Some people believe a marriage or family will hang together through no effort of its own. It won't. You have to realize that a marriage is something you have to create into existence and keep created, and when you stop working at it, it will cease.
- When in doubt, communicate. By studying L. Ron Hubbard's courses in Scientology, my husband and I have gained some very useful and applicable advice, not only for building a very sound marriage, but also for addressing the day to day problems that crop up in a marriage. As a result, we enjoy each others company as much today as the day we met!

Sincerely, Angie DeRouchie

Dear Editor,

Recent news accounts have detailed the plight of homeowners who discover that unused oil tanks are

leaking oil into surrounding soil—even though they thought the problem had been corrected. According to a January 5 article in The Oregonian,

"State officials suspect that hundreds of homeowners face similar problems from contractors looking to make quick money closing residential underground oil tanks." Of the more than 200,000 residential tanks in Oregon, three-fourths have been abandoned and at least half are thought to be leaking oil. According to DEQ officials.

According to new legislation that took effect in October 1999, Oregon law now requires homesellers to have the oil pumped out of any abandoned tank known to be on the property before the property is sold. To help residents comply with retaining a state law and remove the uncertainty and confusion associated with retaining a contractor, NW Natural will refer residential conversion customers to Spencer Environmental for a free oil pump and decommissioning consultation. The offer is good until March 31.

We thought your readers might be interested in knowing more about the danger of leaky tanks and this hassle-free way that they can remove a potential environmental hazard while switching to natural gas—a preferred fuel source due to its decreased costs and increased comfort and reliability. Attached is additional information on the program. We'd be happy to help arrange interviews with representatives from NW Natural, Spencer Environmental and the Oregon DEQ, as well as local homeowners who are taking advantage of this hassle-free way to remove their leaky tanks.

I'll follow up with you shortly; in the meantime you can reach me at 503-248-9468

Nathan Olsen, for NW Natural

Juneteenth's Liberation

There are two hearts
Belonging to two people
They beat as one. Sometimes
They beat out of rhythm. Sometimes
But whether they beat with the beat
together
Or beat like they're following their own
beat
They beat as one.

The Whites pretend the beat's theirs
The Blacks pretend the beat's theirs
Neither would dare admit they want what
the other has
While they stand bunched together on
the banks of the moat of loneliness
The Whites on one bank, the Blacks on
the other
Its still waters keeping the apart,

Yet bonding them together.
They stare at each other. They drool at
each other.
Preaching truth to their souls; I want
what those people have
And all the while the Asians look and
laugh while they sharpen the spear
They're getting ready to drive into their
hearts.



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2.98 lb.
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1.49 to 2.25-oz. Assorted varieties. Limit 5. SAVE up to 65¢ on 5

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