

OPINION

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Renewed Vigor for Civil Rights Young activists inspire

BY CARL P. WALLACE

Has the Joshua Generation's civil-rights movement begun?

More than 50,000 people protested and marched in Jena, Louisiana over the disparate judicial treatment of the six students known as the "Jena 6."

People came from as far as Alaska to join hands in the singing words of the old spiritual song "Free at last. Free at last. Thank God almighty we are free at last."

Throughout this nation thousands and thousands peacefully marched, reminiscent of the civil-rights marches of the '60s. Fists were raised in the "black power" salute. Strangers shared food, water and stories. Stories of how it used to be. Stories of how they marched with King. Stories of the struggle. Maybe, maybe it has begun.

The tools of the Joshua Generation are out there. The cry to march, protest and pray is being heard.

When the cameras panned the crowds on that day all could see the massive number of young people there in a town almost four hours from New Orleans. Young people from colleges and high schools from all parts of America were there. "Baggy pants, sagging pants, parts of underwear showing - didn't they look beautiful?"

The young people were not only singing,

"We shall overcome" they also sang the impromptu rap songs. Rap songs us ole folks don't want to hear. They conjured up songs of Kanye, Ja Z, Ludicris and Mary B. The music was pumped up too loud and we ole folks somehow enjoyed what was sung. Maybe the spirits of our ancestors were there in Jena and throughout this nation remembering that it was the young that led us to the Promised Land.

Maybe, maybe it has begun.

I must ask the question though, how in the world did all these people show up? I did not see the call to come on TV. I did not read in the newspaper weeks in advance to fly into Baton Rouge, reserve a room in the Holiday Inn and rent a car from Avis. My pastor did not do a three part series on "No Justice No Jesus." How in the world did all these people

show up? They used the tools of the Joshua Generation.

The internet, YouTube, and radio personalities Michael Baisden, Steve Harvey and Tom Joyner sent out the tribal drums to come. A group of sisters in Cleveland called us to come. Flyers printed and handed out, not by mimeograph machines but by computers, sent the word out. To my utter amazement, my 89-year-old Godmother received a text message on her phone.

The tools of the Joshua Generation are out there. The cry to march, protest and pray is being heard. "Let freedom ring. From every mountaintop to every molehill..." - "No justice! No peace! No Justice! No peace! Free the Jena 6."

Maybe, just maybe it has begun.

Carl P. Wallace is Minister for Special Projects with the United Church of Christ.

Targeting Gun Violence

With citizens, law enforcement working together

BY JUDGE GREG MATHIS

Guns kill nearly 30,000 Americans every year. Unfortunately, it appears firearm deaths won't decrease any time soon with incidents of gun-related deaths, including suicide, on the rise.

The Chicago-based Joyce Foundation, as part of an ongoing effort to end gun violence, recently partnered with The International Association of Chiefs of Police and issued a report that provides recom-



mendations for reducing gun violence.

With so many Americans dying senselessly each year at the hands of guns, it is time for the U.S. government to take real action to end the violence. This report points us in that direction with fairly simple recommendations, including requiring that all gun sales take place through federally licensed dealers; restoring funding to crime fight-

ing programs and mandating that private citizens safely store firearms.

Simple in theory, the proposals would require a coordinated effort between federal and local governments, law enforcement and the community to actually make a difference. Without the necessary funding to fully realize these ideas, the plan just falls flat. With proper support, crime fighting programs co-designed by community members - law enforcement and citizens working together - can be put in place around the country.

We all want to keep our families safe. Yet, year after year, more Americans die at the hands of guns.

In some neighborhoods, such a program would have police officers patrolling beats on foot, familiarizing themselves with residents and 'hot spots' for crime. In other areas, it would involve working with community organizations to encourage residents to report and or turn in unregistered/illegal firearms. The possibilities are endless, but only with adequate funding.

Government must also get stiff on gun laws. Instead of bowing to the powerful pro-gun lobby, which spends millions

each year to make sure lawmakers support their interests, Washington must consider the safety of the American public. Gun sales should be highly regulated and easily tracked. Individuals with a violent past should not be allowed to purchase guns.

Penalties for those who are caught with them should be stiff.

Most Americans support gun laws that make sense. We all want to keep our families safe. Yet, year after year, more Americans die at the hands of

guns.

It is time that this country puts its resources behind a sound firearm prevention plan. Joyce Foundation and IACP have laid the groundwork. Now it is time for the federal government to build upon that and develop a strategy that can be implemented on a national level.

Judge Greg Mathis is national vice president of Rainbow PUSH and a national board member of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

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Abandoning America's Promise

Congress spends for war but not children

BY U.S. REP.

CAROLYN C. KILPATRICK

The failure to override President Bush's veto of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) abandons America's promise to afford every citizen life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

When the wealthiest nation prioritizes excessive spending on a morally and fiscally bankrupt war in Iraq while the neediest children go without health

insurance, we have forfeited our commitment to America.

According to a recent CBS News poll, 81 percent of Americans endorse this bipartisan legislation that would have preserved coverage for six million children currently covered by CHIP, extended coverage to nearly four million uninsured children, as well as ensured dental cover-



age and mental health parity.

This fully funded bill would have allocated \$100 million in grants for new outreach activities to states, local governments, schools, community-based organizations, and safety-net providers."

The Bible teaches us that a new day will dawn when the 'last will become first and the first will be last.' Congress and

President Bush have banished our children and the underserved to the back of the line. We can and must do better.

The Congressional Black Caucus, 43 Members from 21 states, representing 40 million Americans, is resolute in our position to ensure health care for 10 million children and to protect the overall health and wellness of our most vulnerable citizens.

Congresswoman Carolyn C. Kilpatrick, D-Mich., is chairwoman of the Congressional Black Caucus.

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Letter to the Editor

Right Investment

Mayor Potter's decision to help establish a Day Laborer Center makes me feel very proud of being a Portlander.

The Mayor and the majority of the Council members understand that is the right thing to do. Portland is a city where concern, compassion, and common sense are used daily to find answers to the various problems that affect our city.

The creation of a Day Laborer Center clearly is the right thing to do not only because it will make our community safer by providing a secure, clean and organized location for the contracting process between employers and day laborers, or because it will reduce abuse by unscrupulous employers, but because day laborers are part of our community, they work hard and pay taxes and deserve, like every other citizen of our great city, a safe and secure place to look for work.

Day laborers provide a service to our city and by doing so they are contributing to the growth and the betterment of Portland and surrounding areas. I applaud and support Mayor Potter's decision to help establish a Day Laborer Center because it is the right investment for Portland.

Felipe Lora
Southwest Portland

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