

NEW COALITION NEWS & VIEWS

CONSERVATIVE MULTICULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

Candy Shopping—Rap’s Dehumanizing Message

BY ANTHONY B. BRADLEY

The good thing about the market is that it efficiently provides the goods that people want. The bad thing about the market is that it does the same thing.

That is why it is imperative that a free-market system be nested within a moral culture that is concerned with protecting human dignity and promoting true human flourishing. Much of today’s most popular rap music (departing from rap’s origins) is a cesspool of lyrics glorifying materialism (“bling bling”), presenting distorted caricatures of authentic masculinity, and dehumanizing women.

Contrary to what some may believe, rap is not a genre peculiar to a black subculture. *The Boston Globe* reports that over 70 percent of all rap music purchases are by white suburban youth. Rap and hip hop music overall have a listening audience that is 75 percent non-black.

Reference to women as objects of men’s sexual fulfillment and the glorification of subhuman lifestyles permeate this diverse world of rap music. Artist 50 Cent in a recent number one hit, “Candy Shop,” sings to a woman that he’s going to take her to a candy shop to let her “lick the lolly pop.” He then offers to have random sex with her “in the hotel or in the back of the rental.” When they meet “it’s like a race who can get undressed quicker.”

Noted rap star The Game has a top hit, “This Is How We Do,” boasting that he and his friends “act a fool while we up in da’ club.” The Game longs to find the right girl so he can, in his words, “put my hand up her dress.” Hip hop star Usher enlists the help of Lil’ Jon and Ludacris in the song “Lovers and Friends,” instructing a young woman “to be a

good girl, turn around, and get these whippings, you know you like it like that?”

The music videos accompanying these songs are nothing more than soft porn brought to the world via MTV and BET—all the while sponsored by soft-drink giants like Coca Cola.

Are women not outraged by music that animalizes sex, demeans them, and reduces men to stupidity? As a matter of fact, young women comprise over 54 percent of all urban music purchases. The market that degrades the dignity of women is nevertheless supported by young women.

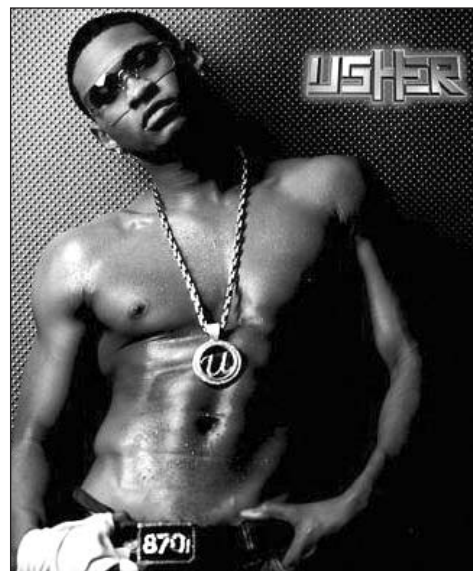
Female rappers share part of the blame. Female hipsters like Fantasia, in the chart-topping song “Baby Mama,” describe the hardships of single-parent hood but never say a word about sexual responsibility. Lil’ Kim in the song “Not

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“Blacks and whites are completely equal in every aspect. ... We are not Africans, but rather Americans, and have the right to live as equal citizens just like whites.”



Robert Sengstacke Abbott for more about Robert S. Abbott, see page 4





LEE H. WALKER
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THE NEW COALITION FOR ECONOMIC & SOCIAL CHANGE

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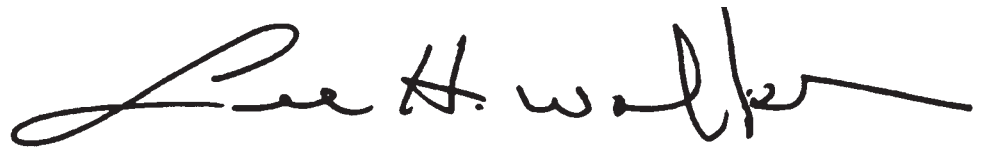
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A Conflict of Vision?

BY LEE H. WALKER

For many years, I've been writing columns and giving speeches about public policy from a black perspective. I pay close attention to what other black commentators say about the issues I address.

I have become increasingly uncomfortable with the way many black journalists and academics treat the subjects they write or speak about. Too many of their messages are inappropriately critical, negative, biased, or based on personal attacks rather than the facts.

"Those of us who write and speak on these issues have a responsibility to provide information, not opinion, about the subjects we address."

Everyone seems to be looking for the next James Baldwin, the next Toni Morrison, the next Dr. Martin Luther King. Whatever happened to informative and objective discussion, being positive and encouraging—without being personally critical?

The Successful Are Attacked

For a long time, Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas was the prime target for this type of attack. Even today, some charge him with not being authentically black.

Audiences encourage this sort of behavior. If a speaker's opening remarks include some inappropriate joke or nasty wisecrack about Justice Thomas, everybody laughs. The ice is broken, the speaker has the audience in the palm of his hand, and everything he says afterwards is taken as gospel.

More recently, Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice have been the critics' targets, and Justice Thomas has gotten a reprieve.

So here you have three of the most successful black persons of our time, known and admired the world over ... and most popular black journalists and academics criticize them. We should be pointing to them as role models, not poster folks for political incorrectness!

An Ideological Thing

As I have been observing this attack-mode trend, I thought at first it was just an anti-black Republican thing. But then came Bill Cosby, a

non-Republican, and the attacks are pointed in his direction.

We often make a point of chastising the non-black world: "All blacks don't look alike" and "all blacks don't think alike," we remind them. And of course that's true. But within our own community, why don't we accept diverse views?

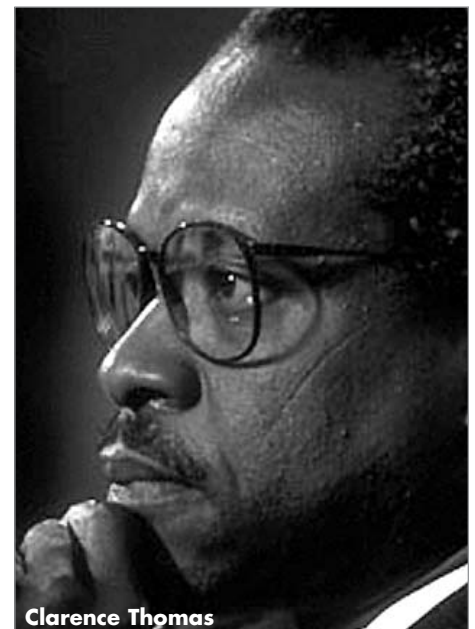
I have since concluded it's not a political, Republican versus Democrat thing. It is an ideological, conservative versus liberal thing.

The old liberal agenda has become the agenda of victimization and low expectations, of not being able to do for ourselves, of not taking responsibility for ourselves. Those

who push the liberal agenda today consider it necessary to intimidate and attack anyone who dares to think or speak outside of the scripted dialogue.

Ironically, the neo-liberals rarely go after the black celebrities who stay within the bounds of the liberal message but embarrass us in other ways. They never went after football hero O.J. Simpson, who was accused of taking the life of

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Clarence Thomas

Black Female Scholar Describes Minorities' Battle for Clean Communities

Dumps and pollution were resisted long before 'environmental justice'

A new work examining resistance to environmental degradation by white ethnic groups in Chicago's industrial Back of the Yards community and African Americans in the Bronzeville community is a first in environmental history.

Packing Them In: An Archaeology of Environmental Racism in Chicago, 1865-1954 (Lexington Books: Lanham, MD, January 2005), by Sylvia Washington, is the first case study in the field to be written by an African-American woman. It traces the roots of the environmental justice movement to before the beginning of the twentieth century.

Washington argues that ethnic and minority communities organized to salvage and improve their urban landscapes long before the modern environmental movement began in 1980 and the white, middle-income environmental movement began in the 1970s. People of color and minorities have always been aware of what's happening to them environmentally and how it might affect their health, Washington contends.

Washington notes that the Tuskegee Institute from its inception ran extension programs such as the "Jessup Wagon" to support rural black

farmers' development of what we now refer to as sustainable communities. She traces the environmental history of the former Chicago packinghouse district called Back of the Yards and the development in the 1940s and 1950s of the "Block Club Movement"—whose slogan was "We Fight Blight"—in Chicago's African-American community of Bronzeville.

Washington worked for nearly two decades as an engineer in the power industry and at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration before becoming the first African-American woman to receive a doctorate in the history of science, technology, and the environment at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland.

Washington was drawn to the environmental justice movement by questions from young African-Americans and working-class white students who took her classes in "science for non-science students." Upon closer examination, Washington found little had been written on the effects of pollution on minorities and other marginalized people.

Packing Them In is the first of three works Lexington Books intends to release by Washington on the subject of environmental justice.

Echoes from the Poison Well: Global Memories of Environmental Injustice, co-authored with noted Australian environmental historian Heather Goodall, will be released at the end of 2005.

In 2006, *The Color of Trees: African-American Struggles for Sustainable Community I — Cleveland, Ohio 1915-1975* will be released. This work reflects on Washington's own experiences growing up in Cleveland and the quest by inner-city blacks for equal treatment in terms of land-use planning and provision of city services.

Packing Them In is available in hardcover (\$60) or in a paperback edition (\$19.95). For more information or to place an order, please call 1-800-462-6420 or visit <http://www.lexingtonbooks.com>.



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Lil' Kim

Tonight" raps about the sexual domination of men. What would Lil' Kim say to Rosa Parks?

"Mrs. Parks, thank you for your courage in the civil-rights struggle, so that black women have a chance to be devaluated and sexualized by all Americans equally?"

Rap music rules the airways in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, San Francisco, Dallas, Philadelphia, Washington, DC, and other major cities. Is it any wonder that sexism and racism "still" exist? With a population of people 13 to 34 years old, of all backgrounds, spending a decade or so digesting the lyrics of animalized thinking and behavior, what else would we expect?

Supply and demand conspire in this evil. Rappers degrade minority women, dehumanize themselves, and promote materialism; white suburban youth and women gobble it up; record companies have no scruples in profiting from the arrangement.

Would Martin Luther King be proud of this? Is this why Harriet Tubman risked her life to lead slaves through the Underground Railroad? The current rap industry owes the civil-rights leaders of the 1950s and 1960s a huge apology. Middle-income suburbanites should be embarrassed.

The hip-hop generation has given rise to a multi-ethnic market of dehumanization that further erodes the fabric of our civil society. Bad rap music will change its content only when Judeo-Christian values concerning God's design for human relationships, sex, and stewardship shape the minds and lives of both the producers and the consumers.

Anthony B. Bradley is a research fellow at the Acton Institute.

Chicago Defender Marks 100th Anniversary

BY LEE H. WALKER

On May 5, 2005, the *Chicago Defender*—the only black daily newspaper in the country—celebrated its 100th anniversary.

On a May evening in 1905, Robert Sengstacke Abbott sold on the streets of Chicago the first copy of his weekly four-page paper, the *Chicago Defender*.

Abbott grew up in Georgia; graduated from the Hampton Normal Agricultural Institute in Hampton, Virginia with a degree in printing; and moved to Chicago in 1897. He worked at odd jobs while attending Kent College of Law, where he earned a law degree in 1898.

Racial discrimination made it virtually impossible for him to earn a living as a printer or a lawyer. Though he found many doors closed to him, Abbott took up the challenge, seeking to open for himself the doors of opportunity.

Not being one to fall back on excuses or claim victimization, Abbott launched the *Defender* and ultimately became one of America's first black millionaires.

Booker T. Washington also graduated from the Hampton Institute, but a myth persists that Abbott and Washington did not work together. That is not true.

Although Washington was 12 years older than Abbott, they were men of like qualities and worked together on common causes. Reprinted below is a letter from Washington to Abbott, which is part of the Booker T. Washington collection at the Library of Congress. A large photo of Washington hangs in the conference room of the *Defender's* offices in Chicago.



December 19, 1913

Tuskegee, Ala.

To Robert Sengstacke Abbott Personal and Confidential

Dear Mr. Abbott:

In addition to what I said to you yesterday, I want to make the following suggestion:

We are pursuing the policy, for the first time so far as we know in the history of any colored institution, to have our strongest successful business men come before our students as lecturers.

This is the policy being pursued by the great universities of the country like the University of Wisconsin, Harvard and others. Carrying out this policy, we have here now at our special invitation Mr. W.A. Wallace, who, as you know, is the successful baker of Chicago. Mr. Wallace is delivering a series of talks to the high class students on his experience as a baker.

As soon as Mr. Wallace returns to Chicago, I want to ask that you have one of your representatives see him and get a good live interview, describing his impressions and experiences at Tuskegee, and if you can put this interview in good shape and send us 200 copies. We shall be glad to pay for them and distribute them in a way that will be of service to your paper; thus you will help and will be helped. We have wasted too much time as a race in spending our time and energy on the non-essentials rather than the essentials of life.

I am glad to see that your paper is taking this sensible view. Another thing we must learn sooner or later is that no matter how much a certain type of white people may promise to do for us in the way of securing "rights," in the last

analysis, we have got to help ourselves.

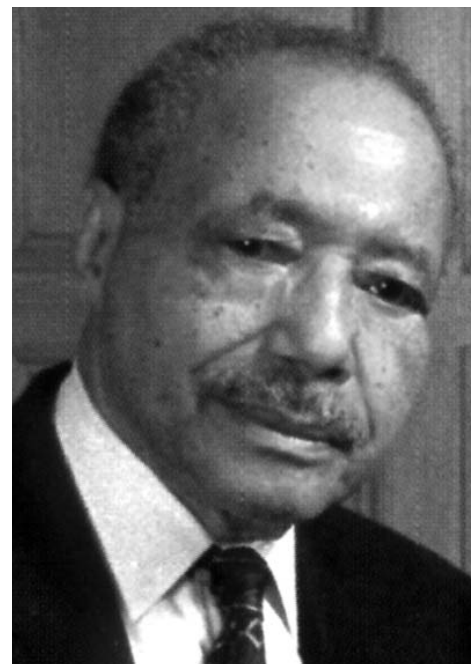
Mr. Wallace will leave here on Sunday evening, stop in Louisville, and reach Chicago Wednesday evening.

Yours very truly,

Booker T. Washington



Chicago Defender



Robert Sengstacke Abbott and nephew John H. Sengstacke

NEW COALITION UPDATE

Walker Helps Defender Celebrate

- On May 5, 2005, the *Chicago Defender*—the only black daily newspaper in the country—celebrated its 100th anniversary. Lee Walker, president of The New Coalition for Economic and Social Change and a Heartland senior fellow, sits on the newspaper's editorial board and attended events celebrating the centennial.
- The April 8-10 issue of the *Defender* printed Walker's column, "A Fresh Look at Dr. Booker T. Washington's Legacy."
- On April 21, Walker's "We Should All Be Proud of Tiger Woods" ran as the newspaper's own lead editorial. Walker writes, "The life lesson here ... is to never stop challenging yourself to do better, and don't measure yourself against someone else. We all have different talents."
- Walker's "A Conflict of Vision?" ran in the May 27-29 edition.
- All of Walker's *Defender* writings are available on the New Coalition Web site at <http://www.newcoalition.org>.

Meetings and Events

■ On April 22, Walker attended a conference hosted by the University of Chicago's School of Social Service Administration, focused on "Social Work and Social Welfare Responses to African American Males." The event's keynote speaker was Lawrence E. Gary, a professor at the School of Social Work at Howard University and author of *Black Men*, published in 1981, a classic work discussing the status of black men in America.

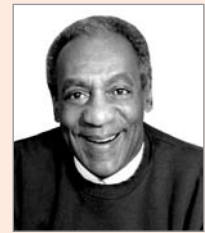


Chief Olusegun Obasanjo

- On April 29-30, Walker attended and addressed the Spring Conference for African-American Journalists of Faith, hosted by the World Journalism Institute at Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia.
- On May 6, Walker attended a by-invitation-only lunch meeting hosted by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations featuring the president of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo. Walker, has been invited to join the council, which aims to further awareness and broaden understanding of international relations and foreign policy and to promote Chicago as an important international center.
- On May 9, Walker met with two high school seniors from Trinity High School in Oak Park, Illinois. In preparation for a debate on affirmative action, the students interviewed Walker to learn why he opposes government-run affirmative action programs.

Media Appearances

- On April 16, Walker appeared on "UpFront with Jesse Jackson" to discuss "The State of Black America." Also appearing were Roland Martin of the *Chicago Defender*, Cliff Kelley of WVON Radio, and Dr. Michele Goodwin of the DePaul University School of Law. The show was re-broadcast on May 7.
- Walker's "Is Bill Cosby a Conservative Black?" was published in the *Chicago Independent Bulletin* in two parts, in the April 28 and May 5 editions.
- On May 21, Walker again appeared on "UpFront with Jesse Jackson," to discuss judges and Senate filibusters, and on May 28 to discuss the anniversary of Bill Cosby speaking out.



Bill Cosby

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Apology: Is This the Next Step?

BY CAROL M. SWAIN

In the April-May issue of *News & Views*, Swain discussed reparations and objections raised to the notion of a national apology for slavery. In this issue, she describes the good that would come from such an apology.

What I envision is a governmental act of apology for slavery, acknowledged in a ceremony that includes black spokespersons offering acceptance and forgiveness.

A national apology need not impute guilt to individual white Americans. Blacks themselves are guilty as well. One rarely discussed issue is the evidence documenting the presence of around 3,000 black American slaveholders. In 1860, one source reported that free blacks held almost 20,000 slaves, and these slaves were not all family members.

Given these facts, it is clear that slavery was a national crime that all our ancestors participated in, including American Indian tribes, such as the Cherokees. I believe that a majority of Americans can be persuaded to support an apology if it is made clear that monetary reparations for slavery are not to follow.



Erin O'Hara

The Power of An Apology

The power of an apology to promote racial healing should not be underestimated. The benefits of apologies have a proven value in social science and legal research.

Vanderbilt University Law Professor Erin O'Hara and Douglas Yarn of Georgia State University have done extensive research on the use of apology in dispute resolution at the trial and pretrial level.



Douglas Yarn

These researchers have found that it matters to people when and how a guilty party says "I am sorry for my actions."

A sincere apology, or lack of one, can make a significant difference in whether people choose to pursue legal remedies in cases where they have been injured by the actions of others. Rather than being simply an empty gesture, an apology can disarm opponents and forestall legal action.

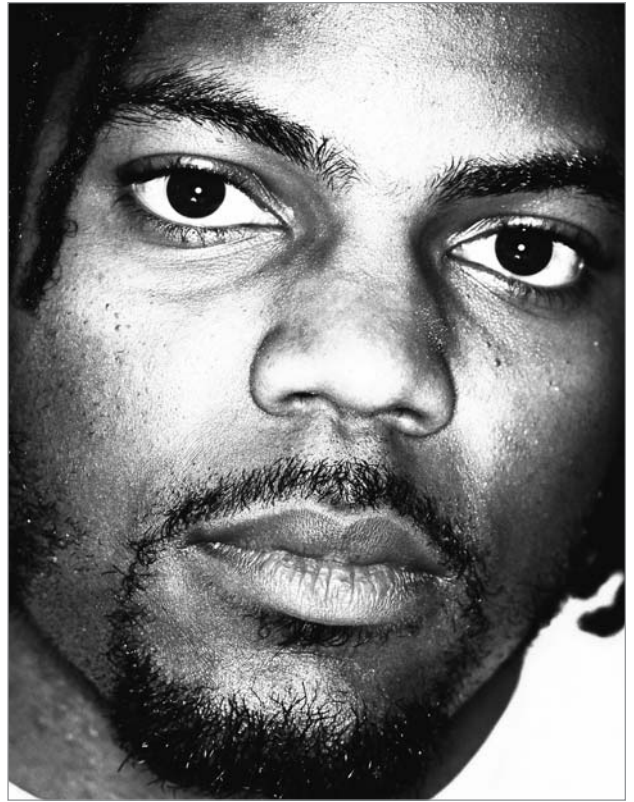
Hatred and resentment are known to be at the root of many health problems. A sincere apology followed by forgiveness has the potential to offer tangible benefits to many embittered African Americans. The immediate benefits would come from releasing anger and resentment towards white Americans. High blood pressure, depression, frustration, and perhaps some cancers can be related to individual attitudes and the stress that follows.

"An apology offers minority leaders an opportunity to take the high road as equal partners interested in the collective good, rather than as supplicants constantly seeking new ways to evoke white guilt."

Precedents for Apology

The United States government should offer the apology, and black Americans should accept it. Already, the lack of an apology for such a heinous act as slavery sets the nation apart from other great nations that have expressed public contrition for past misdeeds.

Consider Germany, a nation that has apologized twice for the suffering caused by its actions. Its first national apology came after WWI when Germany was forced to sign the Treaty of Versailles, accepting responsibility



for losses and damages to the allied governments and for the payment of reparations.

The second apology occurred after WWII, when it accepted responsibility for perpetuating "the worst crimes against humanity." The apology was followed with actual reparations of billions of dollars to Israel and billions in separate payments to Holocaust survivors.

More recently, British Prime Minister Tony Blair apologized for the treatment of the Irish during the potato famine, Pope John Paul II apologized for the sins of the Roman Catholic Church, and Australia apologized to Aborigines.

To its credit, the U.S. government has apologized and paid a token award to Japanese Americans interned in concentration camps during WWII. It also has sought to make amends to American Indians. What, therefore, would be the great harm in acknowledging responsibility for the actions that have harmed black Americans?

Evil, Abominable ... Forgivable?

In one fell swoop, we could forever remove the basis for the accusation that the U.S. government has never apologized for its greatest crime against humanity. Several U.S. presidents, going as far back as John Adams, have referred to slavery as an "evil of colossal magnitude" and an "abominable" action, but none has been willing to apologize on behalf of the nation.

In 1998, President Bill Clinton was roundly

“Because [President George W. Bush] is a born-again Christian and most African Americans are Christians, it becomes more likely that blacks and other Americans would accept his apology.”

criticized for going on what many commentators dubbed an “apology tour” of Africa. Clinton earned the ire of numerous political conservatives for stating, “going back to the time before we were a nation, European Americans received the fruits of the slave trade. And we were wrong in that.”

This past summer [2004], President George W. Bush went on his own African tour but stopped short of apologizing when he visited Goree Island, a holding place known as the point of no return for captured slaves. He condemned slavery as “one of the greatest crimes of history.” Bush stated that, “Small men took on the powers and airs of tyrants and masters. Years of unpunished brutality and bullying and rape produced a dullness and hardness of conscience. Christian men and women became blind to the clearest commands of their faith and added hypocrisy to injustice. My nation’s journey towards justice has not been easy, and it is not over.”

Bush could change history and set the nation on a different course by urging Congress to pass a joint resolution apologizing for slavery. Because he is a born-again Christian and most African Americans are Christians, it becomes more likely that blacks and other Americans would accept his apology.

Most Americans recognize the wrong inherent in the federal government’s forced transportation of American Indians, deportation of Mexican-Americans, and enslavement of blacks. Consequently, they could easily be persuaded that there is nothing wrong and plenty desirable in that same government showing contrition. If a wrong is recognized, is an apology not the next logical step? Bush could improve American race relations by urging Congress to remove from the annals of history the grievance that the nation has not apologized to blacks.

Both Democrats and Republicans have acknowledged serious problems with race relations. But neither party has been capable of formulating a plan of action that could move us beyond a stalemate. Given the recent histories of the two parties, the Republicans would stand to gain the most from such an overture. A carefully worded apology runs little risk of alienating its political base.

The apology would please many of Bush’s Christian supporters. Some denominations—for example, the Southern Baptists—have already issued their own apologies. In the Christian world an unknown number of people believe that black slavery has brought generational curses on the nation. Quoting Proverbs 26:2, a white friend of mine spoke of the need to break the curses caused by the enslavement of my people. “Like a sparrow in its flitting, like a swallow in its flying, so a curse without cause does not alight,” she said.

Although America is rapidly becoming a secular nation, it is not there yet. A majority of Americans still express belief in a common

creator and a brotherhood of man. It forms the core of our Judeo-Christian heritage. America has a Christian president who has vowed to make the “promise of America real for everyone.” A national apology could open the door to forgiveness from African Americans and a release of the nation from real or imagined generational curses.

Time to Make Amends

Under no circumstances should the national apology be met with renewed demands for race-based remedies or for monetary reparations. An apology offers minority leaders an opportunity to take the high road as equal partners interested in the collective good, rather than as supplicants constantly seeking new ways to evoke white guilt.

“The power of an apology to promote racial healing should not be underestimated. The benefits of apologies have a proven value in social science and legal research.”

More than it needs another museum on the National Mall, America needs an open dialogue on race and a new cadre of leaders.

Black communities continue to be plagued with high rates of violent crime, single parenthood, illegitimacy, infant mortality, welfare dependency, and infectious diseases. National, state, and local governments have tried with mixed results to address these conditions.

The solution for America does not lie in racial preference programs, the payment of slave reparations, or the establishment of a National Museum. What is needed is for more African Americans to take responsibility for improving their lives and the lives of their kinfolk mired in hopelessness.

America, despite its flaws, is a land of opportunity. The fates of white Americans and black Americans are intertwined with the fates of other groups. We owe it to each other and we owe it to future generations to make amends for our differences.

Carol M. Swain (swaincm@princeton.edu) is professor of law and political science at Vanderbilt University Law School and founding director of the Veritas Institute for racial justice and reconciliation. She and New Coalition President Lee Walker served together on a Philadelphia Society panel in August 2004 addressing “Black History and Conservative Principles.”



<http://kendrick.colgate.edu>

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his wife. They defend other sports figures who rob and rape, and rappers who glorify drugs and treat women like objects rather than human beings.

“I know from my writing and speaking that there are several issues out there that black commentators need to address. The most important of these is achieving a quality education for our children.”

This conflict of vision is not new. In his 1967 book, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual*, Harold Cruse argues persuasively that “the American left from the 1930s through the 1950s did more harm than good to both the politics and the culture of black Americans.” Things haven’t changed much since then.

Raises Important Issues

The conflict of vision raises some important issues.

- Is there a black agenda—and do we even need one?
- Are there any leaders who can speak appropriately on behalf of the black race—and do we

even need such race-specific leaders any more?

■ Should blacks continue acting as a collective group—and if so, what are the issues we should focus on?

I know from my writing and speaking that there are several major issues out there that black commentators need to address. The most important of these is achieving a quality education for our children.

Although the whole nation recently celebrated the anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, we still have a long way to go. The black-white student achievement gap is not getting better, and the graduation rates for black students aren’t improving much either. This is a national crisis—and it’s a crisis for the race. We can’t keep putting this one under the rug.

There are other issues, too, like Social Security

reform and black-on-black crime and the collapse of morals and ethics in our society. Discussions are happening on these issues everywhere, all the time—and the black community needs to be a part of those discussions.

Black journalists and academics have a duty to inform the community about these and many other issues.

I chose the word “inform” very specifically. Too often, we forget the difference between reporting and editorializing. Those of us who write and speak on these issues have a responsibility to provide information, not opinion, about the subjects we address.

We should not be forcing our audiences to take sides. It is our responsibility to encourage them to learn, to reflect on

the facts and information we give them, and then to develop fully informed opinions of their own.

Lee H. Walker (lwalker@newcoalition.org) is president of The New Coalition for Economic and Social Change.



Condoleezza Rice and Colin Powell



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