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RETURN TO SPIRITUAL VALUES

RELIGION'S MORAL STANDARDS CAN BE A CURE FOR CRIME



Bishop Vinton R. Anderson, presiding bishop of the third district of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, is also chairman of the trustees of Wilberforce University.

By Bishop Vinton R. Anderson

The continuing task of religion in the face of escalating crime must be to coalesce the forces of community to bring a new motivation and coherence to the broken and fragmented lives around us. We should know by now that more programs instituted by purely social and political decisions are not the total answer. For example, when the federal government, three years ago, allocated the sum of \$140 million to eight cities to cut crime by 20 percent, the result was an increase in crime. Awareness of this fact alone should be sufficient to convince us that no amount of theorizing, particularly by a society in which institutional racism has perpetuated double standards, can solve for us the dilemma of Black on Black crime. Admittedly, there have been major efforts to combat crime by well-meaning professionals and others, including the church, but they have too often concentrated on the outward circumstances to the exclusion of the inner person. The viability of religion includes practical steps to improve the person's living conditions or it fails. It does advocate decent housing, employment opportunities, quality schools and safe communities. Religion's direct bearing on crime prevention revolves around its integrity to advocate a moral and ethical standards for the community. It challenges constituted authority to act honestly and with justice toward those it judges, and invades the conscience so as to instruct the individual on matters of right and wrong. The aim of religion is to bring the person to deal with himself, to examine his motives and to develop wholesome attitudes.

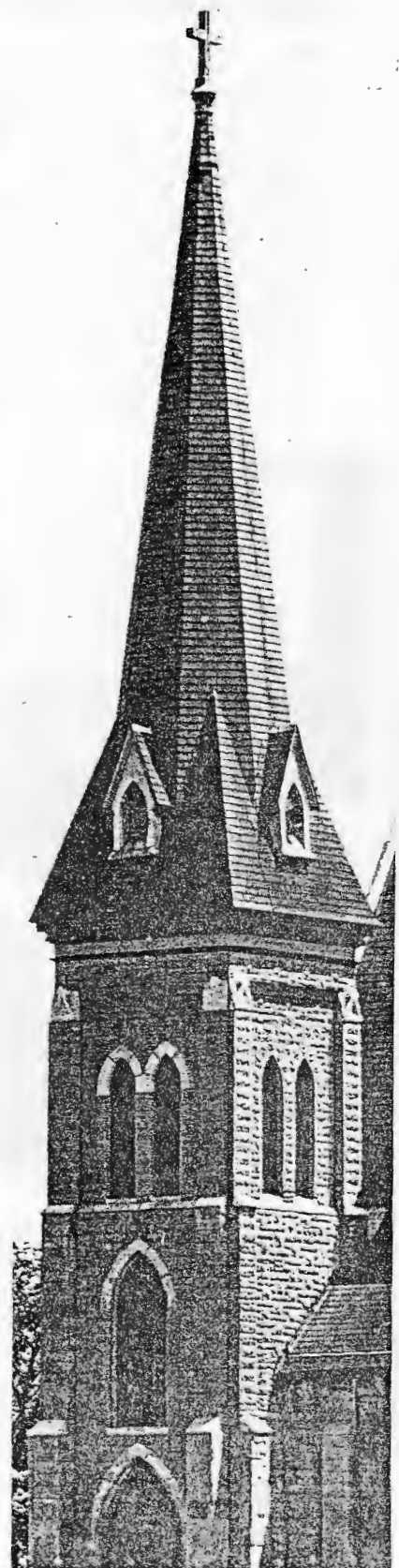
Crime is as old as civilization; and, by whatever means it came into existence, we recognize that there is something in man's nature which leads him to put self first. It is when this self-interest is infected by greed and envy that we forget the principle of "live and let live." We act out our aggressions and seek to displace whatever appears to be in the way of our selfish goals. The result may be a life of prostitution, drug addiction or crime. In the face of our human weaknesses, no matter how demonic, depraved or tragic is the deed, religion offers an alternative to despair and assures that the person can be changed.

To use the term "Black On Black Crime" is to distinguish characteristics from the overall causes and consequences. We admit that

IF WE play the numbers game based on crime statistics in a given community, and then attempt to assess the effectiveness of religion by counting the numerous churches, we are likely to minimize the impact of religion as a deterrent to crime.

On the other hand, one can hardly make such a judgment since the religious heritage of this nation came with the Pilgrims. Whatever the sentiment, we must admit that it is religion that has emphasized the worth and dignity of the human personality. It has consistently taught the Golden Rule, thereby laying the foundation of our present judicial system. Religion set the standards of conduct for society and prescribed the penalty for wrongdoing and acts of violence such as "an eye for an eye." It has also been the compassion of religion that has advocated leniency and the development of more humane methods to deal with those found guilty.

It is important, therefore, that religion not relinquish its influence in determining the direction of the present fight against crime. At the same time, we must guard against putting religion down because the institutional church has often failed to be at the cutting edge of issues surrounding criminal justice and crime prevention.



RETURN TO SPIRITUAL VALUES *Continued*

Black on Black crime for the most part is the plight of a deprived people; but no matter what society inflicts on us, we must be careful that our anger and rage and frustration are not turned on ourselves. Our predicament is not hopeless, because there are religious resources peculiar to Blacks to aid them in working out an agenda which reverses the trend of self-destruction.

First of all, we have a legacy from our fathers and mothers all the way back to tribalism. They discovered who their God was and what He was like while under the whiplash of human bondage and the psychological scourging of the slavemaster. Despite the hypocrisy of their oppressors, they achieved the sense of self-determination and self-development as a key strategy for survival. They knew how to handle suffering in a way which was redemptive and not demeaning. They overrode oppressiveness and rose to prominence always confident of an inner power. They sang of their determination.

"Jordan river, chilly and cold
Chill my body, but not my soul."



Many youths are taught religious values in Sunday School. Here, Rev. Lacy Banks (c.) and Dr. Joseph McGray (standing, r.) teach a class at Chicago's Fellowship Baptist Church.

Their religion should teach us how to overcome and how to accept a positive self-image even when our possessions are meager. For instance, it would not be uncommon in an earlier generation to hear a young person say, "My clothes may be ragged, but they are clean," a restatement of the proverb, "Cleanliness is next to Godliness." Such an attitude indicated a spirit of pride and discouraged the tendency to take what belonged to another.

In our generation these simple concepts are not so easily heeded because the electronic media and other distracting techniques perpetuate the myth that we can all own everything. What we know to be true is that unemployment and exclusion from economic opportunities deny the average Black consumer what should be rightfully his. If being rich is the American dream, many who believe this illusion attempt to beat the system by rejecting the work ethic that says, "Up in the morning, Out on the job, Work like the devil for my pay." Religion insists that there is no easy and quick way to success and riches and must warn people of the ultimate consequences of dishonest scheming. It

must counter-attack the negative forces of the media culture by saturating the Black community with stimuli and concepts which establish new priorities and generate cohesiveness and a spirit of oneness.

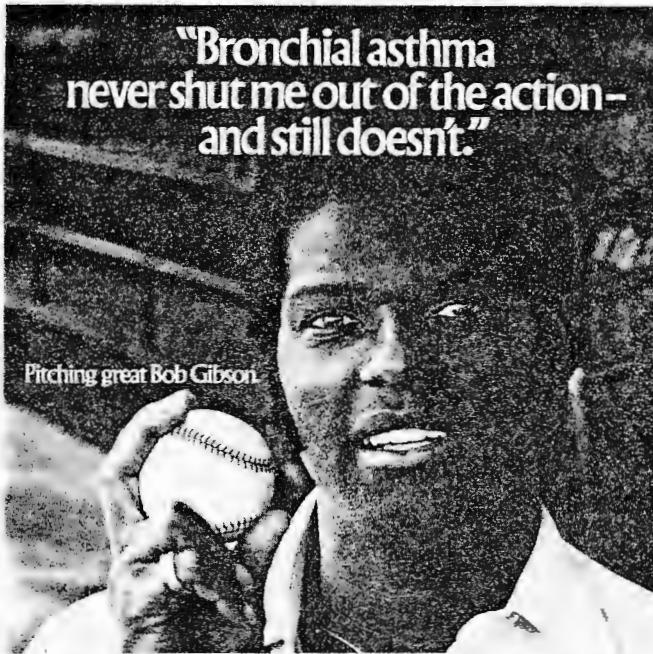
Black on Black crime will be reduced when those who represent religion call into account law enforcement agencies to protect the Black community and to treat it with the same respect and concern that it does the affluent White community where a suspect is quickly brought to trial. The common notion that there is little or no risk in getting caught must be dispelled. The tendency of many law enforcers to act as if in the Black community one is given license to commit unlawful acts is unjust and immoral.

So much is to be said about how Black on Black crime destroys the vitality of the Black community, depreciates businesses and raises costs, increases insurance rates when they are available, spoils the aesthetic and cosmetic appearance with bars, locks and chains, terrorizes the elderly, puts to flight those who can afford to move to an integrated neighborhood, and compounds the grief of an already depressed situation. It is, for instance, a tragic fact that the homicide rate in Harlem is six percent higher than that in New York City as a whole. The trauma

intensifies when one considers that among Blacks the victim is usually a relative or friend.

It is against this background of human desperation and fear that spiritual values, if sincerely applied, will produce healing and reconciliation and liberation to a battered people. Parents, teachers, counselors, and other authority figures who are transmitters of religious values, along with organized religious bodies, must provide examples and models of the good life. Religion is functional only when those who embrace it live out their faith, and are accountable to it for their deeds and life style.

If there is one major emphasis to be made on this whole issue of Black on Black crime, it is that the burden rests greatly upon Black religious institutions which have stood the test of time to guide us out of the maze which is thwarting our progress. This does not by any means ignore the responsibility of other social institutions in Black, as well as White America. We already understand as a people that our great need is power. However, economic power, educational and cul-



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Dr. Charles S. Spivey, pastor of Chicago's Quinn Chapel AME Church, says young people should be encouraged to develop their talents rather than waste them "in the streets." Above, he talks with Carolyn Owens.

RETURN TO SPIRITUAL VALUES *Continued*

tural advantages must go hand in hand with spiritual power, for no people have ever risen beyond their inner resources. When we understand that the whole game of racism and alien forces is to attack the spirit; when we realize that Black crime is basically the result of denigrated spirits; then we will be on our way to solving the problem. The will to survive comes of the spirit; the desire to be more than we are and to help others to become is a spiritual

Continued on Page 142

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RETURN TO SPIRITUAL VALUES *Continued*

legacy. When we allow religion to awaken and increase this endowment, things will change drastically.

Whenever religion has lovingly focused on a beaten down spirit, it has proven that it can be the cure. Consider the case of one young man who was convicted of armed robbery and sent to prison for a long term. While in prison, he came under the influence of caring, religious persons in that community, and consequently took on a new spirit. In a short time, the same caring people helped to get him released from prison, so convincing was his change. Today, he is an ordained minister making his contribution to society.

Again, there is the case of the young man who admitted to being the neighborhood burglar, and, by the time he was out of high school, was on his way to bigger crimes "because he had gotten away with it." He, too, made a complete change as a result of religious teachings. Presently, he has completed college and is doing his part to help others.

As a final example among countless, we cite the case of the woman whose life had become such a shambles that she had become alcoholic and a potential suicide. She had had a religious background, but had allowed a bad marriage and sexual misuse to whip her spirit into dejection. Out of desperation, she rediscovered her faith with the help of religious persons, and eventually earned her degree in social work so that she could assist others like herself. She states that, "The presence of God in my life helped me to go through my traumatic experiences, and having found God, I am now at peace with myself." Her reformation shows that no case is hopeless.

Religion does make a difference in the human spirit, and likewise can serve to reinforce in the Black community relations of trust and respect.



In front of his Chicago storefront church, Rev. James Clark, pastor of Pearly Gate M.B. Church, talks to two neighborhood youths, Frank Nicholas (center), and Tyrone Prear, who are regular members of his church.

WHAT MUST BE DONE

WHEN we started work on this special issue, we knew that Black on Black crime was a critical problem. What we did not know—primarily because no one had presented an up-to-date picture—was the awesome and tragic dimension of the problem. And as we dug beneath the surface and processed statistics and reports from experts and victims, we found ourselves reeling with shock and consternation.

What do you say when you are told that more Blacks were killed by other Blacks in 1977 than were killed by hostile soldiers in Vietnam?

How do you react when you learn that homicide is *the leading cause of death of inner-city Black males 15 to 44*?

What do you do when you discover that most White policemen, prosecutors, judges and even media consider the rape of a Black woman a lesser offense than the rape of a White woman?

What, in a word, is the proper response to a growing menace that threatens the lives and property of almost all Black Americans and the future of Black America?

If you are at all sensitive, and if you are concerned about the future of Black America, and the future of White America, you will probably respond, as we responded, by asking yourself what must be done, as Publisher John H. Johnson says in the Publisher's Statement, "to staunch the flowing blood of the Dream." This, we believe, is the real question—the *only* question—raised by this issue, and we should at least realize that how we answer that question is going to determine, in part, whether thousands of Black people live or die.

There is no need, under the circumstances, for us to argue over different approaches to the problem. The problem is so massive, it affects so many dimensions of our lives and threatens so many of our institutions and values, that there is room here—and work here—for everybody. What is required—and what we call for on the following page—is a national Black policy initiative that integrates different efforts and visions into a comprehensive plan for the entire Black community. That plan must be clear and unequivocal. It must say in simple and sharp language what must be done. It must be backed up by every institution in Black America, and it must embrace, in our opinion, five exigencies.

We need, first of all, a new resolve in Black America that Black on Black Crime will not be tolerated. We need a new understanding, a new family understanding, that there are no greater Uncle Toms anywhere than Black men and women who cut, shoot, stab, rape, rob, maim, mug, murder other Black people. We need a new understanding, a new compact, which says, in so many words, that men and women, Black and White, who sell hard dope to our children are greater enemies to Black progress than all of the active and silent supporters of the Ku Klux Klan.

That, in our opinion, is the first step. **We must, as a community, stop accepting unacceptably high rates of crimes in silence.**

The second step is equally urgent and equally simple. (We do not accept academic jargon which suggests that the problem is "very complicated.") **We must mobilize our power and hold federal, state and municipal officials responsible for the high crime rates in our communities.** We are American citizens. It is the responsibility of American officials to solve the problems of American communities, especially when those problems were created, in large part, by American history and American governments. **We specifically call on the American government to do something immediately about the intolerably high rates of unemployment in Black America.** As Publisher Johnson says in the Publisher's Statement, we are not more criminal than other people: we are simply exposed more often to social conditions that have, in other decades, created abnormally

high rates of crime in the Irish, Italian and other White ethnic communities. And it is time for American public officials to realize that a government that can make work for Black men *inside* prisons *after* they commit crimes but cannot find work for Black men *outside* prisons *before* they commit crimes is a government that cannot retain the respect and affection of its citizens. This is not a matter of concern to Black America alone. For America cannot be made safe for anyone until it is made safe for everyone.

There can be no solution to Black on Black crime without a program of full employment and social and economic justice. As a transitional program leading to these ends, we urge the immediate adoption of a crash program of emergency employment similar to the innovative programs of the Thirties. We specifically recommend a national urban Civilian Conservation Corps program charged with the responsibility of training youths and teaching them social skills while paying them decent wages to clean up and restore our deteriorating urban environments.

At the same time, and for the same reason, **we call for an immediate end to the open market in hard drugs in Black America.** No American government would tolerate such an open market in White communities. We ask the American governments to extend to decent and law-abiding Black Americans the same rights of protection they extend to decent and law-abiding White Americans.

There are other exigencies, including prison reform. It has been established, we think, beyond doubt that the prison system cannot solve this problem for the simple reason that the prison system is a part of the problem. In fact, there is abundant evidence that most prisons are graduate schools in crime where immature offenders receive advanced degrees in criminal techniques while they are drained of almost every ounce of human feeling by dehumanizing conditions and terrified guards who are, more often than not, White men hampered by legacies of racism. The solution here is the creation of a new prison system which, among other things, separates first offenders from hardened criminals. Such a system would recognize the need for more Black guards and for the psychiatric screening and the social training of all guards.

Here, as elsewhere, there is a desperate need for a single standard of justice. And by that, we mean a single standard of patrol in Black and White areas, a single standard of arrest and bail, and a single standard of prosecution and judgment. Because of our history in this country, many, perhaps most, Blacks are hostile to the police and prison systems, oftentimes with good reasons. We believe the police and prison systems are obliged now, because of their record and our history, to bend over backwards to show Blacks and other minorities that they are fair, and that they are working in the best interest of all Americans. As a practical matter, this will require more Blacks and minorities in sensitive positions.

These things must be done, primarily by persons and forces outside the Black community. But there are, finally, some specific things we can and must do for ourselves.

- We must develop a new personal attitude that crime and criminality will not be tolerated in our neighborhoods and our communities.

- We must stop supporting crime by dealing in "hot" merchandise and by shutting our eyes to the victimization of our brothers and sisters. For if someone rips off your brother today, it will only be a matter of time before he gets around to you.

- We must convene citywide conferences to deal with crime in local areas.

- We must develop anti-crime and anti-drug components in every church and community institution. The World Community of Islam in the West and some Black churches have had phenom-



enal success in reclaiming convicts and changing drug addicts. Bishop Vinton R. Anderson speaks to this issue in these pages. We endorse his recommendations.

Beyond all that, deeper than all that, we must return to that family spirit that enabled our ancestors to survive slavery and segregation. There was a time—and it wasn't too long ago—when the Black communities of America were surrounded by circles of

mutual support and sustenance that protected the Black child, no matter how far he wandered, and that condemned the Black violator, no matter how high he rose. We have come to a hard place in our history that calls for the reforging of the shattered links in the circle of solidarity and mutual support. For when all is said and done, the only truly safe place for any of us is in our neighbor's and our brother's and our sister's heart.

A CALL TO ACTION

*Walk together children,
Don't you get weary,
Walk together children,
Don't you get weary.
Oh, talk together children,
Don't you get weary,
There's a great camp meeting
In the Promised Land.*

This song, and the spirit of this song, sustained Black people in slavery and segregation.

The song and the spirit told all Blacks that they were members of the same family of suffering and aspiration.

The song and the spirit told them that they were members of one another and responsible for one another.

And the song and the spirit speak to us today.

For we are threatened by external and internal factors, including the problem of Black on Black crime detailed in this special issue. We believe that this problem and the fundamental causes of this problem—unemployment and racism and injustice—are threats to our existence as a people, and that the time has come for a national campaign of nonviolence *in* the Black community.

We urge leaders and organizations representing all viewpoints to convene citywide conferences to devise ways and means of dealing with the external and internal threats.

We urge local and national groups to begin a national dialogue leading to a national Black conference on Black on Black crime.

Henry L. Aaron
Vice President, Atlanta Braves
Cardiss R. Collins
U.S. Congresswoman and
Chairwoman of Congressional Black Caucus
John M. Conyers Jr.
U.S. Congressman
Chairman, Subcommittee on Crime,
U.S. House of Representatives
Dorothy I. Height
National President
National Council of Negro Women, Inc.
Rev. Benjamin L. Hooks
Executive Director, NAACP

Rev. Jesse L. Jackson
President, Operation PUSH
John H. Johnson
President and Publisher
Johnson Publishing Co., Inc.
Rev. William A. Jones
President, Progressive National Baptist Convention
Vernon E. Jordan Jr.
President, National Urban League
Rev. Joseph E. Lowery
President, Southern Christian Leadership Conference
Rev. Martin Luther King Sr.
Pastor Emeritus, Ebenezer Baptist Church

Wallace Deen Muhammad
President, World Community of Al-Islam in the West
Rt. Rev. H. Thomas Primm
Senior Bishop, General Board of the A.M.E. Church
Rev. James Clark Sams
President, National Baptist Convention of America
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President, National Newspaper Publishers Assn.
Rt. Rev. Herbert Bell Shaw
Senior Bishop, A.M.E. Zion Church
Rev. Leon H. Sullivan
Founder, Chairman of Board
Opportunity Industrialization Centers of America

BACKSTAGE



SOME folk think that a special issue should be a snap. After all, the stories are all on the same general subject, there are experts who can be approached and they can lead you to others. Editors and writers can share research and photographers will have a chance to really dig in and shoot everything they've ever wanted to on a certain subject.

But it doesn't work out that way. There are experts, many of them, but then you find they begin to disagree. Then it turns out that several of the top authorities whom you wish to write first person pieces are tied up or, horrors, they can't write. Staffers develop complexes because they don't have enough space to "really get into this piece" or they find themselves assigned to their second choice—and second choices are much more difficult to do. And then there are some diehards who say, "we never should have done this issue. My suggestion would have been much more pertinent."

But, in the end, everyone comes around, the job does get done and

the magazine finally goes to press. That's when we begin to do a lot of second guessing. We question our judgement in doing one story rather than one we left out. We realize there are areas of the subject that space just didn't allow us to get into. We suddenly discover, too late, that there is a writer who would have been ideal for a certain subject. All we can do is file the name for a possible story later.

But the second guessing does us no good. We have to sink or swim on the product turned out by the entire staff of EBONY and our guest writers. As it is, we feel that this special on "Black On Black Crime" is a good one. We considered the subject several times in the past few years but felt that we were not quite ready to touch it. Now we feel it had to be done—and we did it.

Credit for this issue, from the Publisher's Statement by Editor and Publisher John H. Johnson to the final editorial content on Page 146, has to go to a lot of people in addition to those whose pieces appear under bylines. Executive Editor Herbert Nipson supervised the production of the issue which digs deeply into a subject suggested by Senior Editor Lerone Bennett Jr. Managing Editors Hans J. Massaquoi and Charles L. Sanders, Senior Staff Editor Alex Poinsett, Associate Editor Ronald Howell and Assistant Editors Michele Burgen, Ron Harris, Shawn Lewis and Derek Reveron did a yeoman job of researching and writing the bulk of this issue. Photographers Vandell Cobb, Moneta Sleet Jr., C. Marshall Wilson and Maurice Sorrell did their usual excellent job with the assistance of photo lab technicians John Wheeler and Jerome Smith.

In next month's issue, we will return to our general coverage of what's happening to Black America—from the serious to the frivolous. One story that might run the gamut of interest will be a profile on The Jacksons (above) the still young singing group that came out of Cary, Ind., ten years ago as a cute bunch of youngsters and has become an international giant in the entertainment field. Without strong family control and a family unity that kept them on the straight and narrow, the youngsters could possibly have become subjects for the current issue rather than the September one.



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BLACK ON BLACK CRIME

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BLACK ON BLACK CRIME

I have been a faithful reader of EBONY for many, many years. In fact,

I was a young newsboy who carried the first edition of EBONY years ago in Buffalo, N.Y.

I have never written a letter to the editor before, but after having read the August issue, "Black On Black Crime," I just had to write and say what a superb job of journalism you have done. Nearly faultless from beginning to end; a bitter medicine but one which we Black people so desperately need.

Omaha, Neb.

A. L. GRIFFITH

I have just finished reading from cover to cover the special issue. I must say it has grieved me to the bottom of my soul to learn the sordid but true facts as they were presented in that issue. I once had a conversation with a White co-worker of mine concerning racism and oppression of Blacks in America. When I told her frankly that Whites are responsible for the oppression of colored people, she told me frankly that she feels it's Blacks who oppress other Blacks! I was shocked! I did not want to believe it!

But now I guess the truth will come out that it is really us who cause most of our own suffering. Your articles were magnificent and I feel they should be placed in the hands of, and be read by, every literate person in the U.S. today. Thanks, EBONY. Keep up the excellent work!

FERN POYSER

Brooklyn, N. Y.

"Black On Black Crime" is an historic and profound testimony of the challenges confronting Black America. As a member of the Josephite Fathers and Brothers, a Catholic Society that has served the Black community for more than 100 years, I applaud and pledge support of the goals as outlined. The times call for men of innovation and vision to selflessly give of themselves in service. I pray that all will realize that what affects one ultimately affects us all.

REV. CARL A. FISHER, S.S.J.

Director, Department of Vocations
The Josephite Fathers and Brothers
Baltimore, Md.

I've just finished reading the special issue on Black On Black Crime and would like it known that the State of North Carolina is among the biggest creditors to the system's crime growth here in the South. It has constantly placed young Blacks in prison and released hardened criminals out of the state penitentiaries. I have found it to be true in many cases, for I myself have been dealing with the dehumanizing process the State hands out, and its rules on behavior and external factors can only be programming the confined Black both physically and mentally, thereby making them susceptible to a life of Black on Black crime.

AN INMATE

Division of Prisons

State of North Carolina

Salisbury, N. C.

I would like to thank all who were involved for publishing the Special Issue. I would especially like to thank



In a constantly changing world, we don't.

LETTERS Continued

miscity. We were once princes and princesses of the world, and by our own hands are destroying ourselves. We practice narcissism (self love). We have become our own God idolators in the worst way. We even allowed a simple prayer or acknowledgement of God taken out of the classrooms. The smartest men have not been able to come up with a solution that works. God talks to us through the centuries.

We are no better than Sodom and Gomorrah or the City of Babylon.

Until we come to know who we are, there won't be any peace or prosperity for us. We live and love and believe in lies. For as long as we turn from God Almighty we will see more hideous crimes and perversions than ever known to mankind before. We have patterned ourselves to the heathen way.

CAROL A. MILES
Chicago, Ill.

I commend ENOXY and the editors

for the Black on Black Crime articles in the August issue. The editors got to the true essence of the problems that constitute Black on Black crime. I share the opinion of most of the top officials, organizational heads, doctors, and lawyers about the growing need of the community's support and concern, and the desperate need to change the criminal justice system.

I'm an inmate serving a term of 75 years, and like thousands of other Black inmates throughout this country, I've fallen victim to the unjust and

racist way the justice system is run was shocked that the State of Maryland wasn't mentioned in any of your articles, because it has a high rate of racism in the justice system. I do know whether you are aware of the recent controversy over the decision in which the Appeals Court showed its lack of credibility, fair and honest decisions in the Maryland constitutional law govern this state. The decision an estimated 5,000 people, most Blacks, who had their rights violated under the Hicks Decision. But when the Appeals Court realized how many people it would affect, the Court modified its decision. They used the word "modify," but what they really did was showed how corrupt and racist the justice system is in this state.

It's hard to show respect for the justice system when it shows you so much disrespect for your rights as citizens of this country. It's my opinion that the State of Maryland breeds crime, instead of rehabilitating them. It's a relief to know that we have top officials and other organizations sharing our concern, but until these problems become a reality, and not a dream, we'll have to go on suffering the unjust and racist way the justice system is.

CARROLL E. HANCOCK
Patuxent Institution
State of Maryland

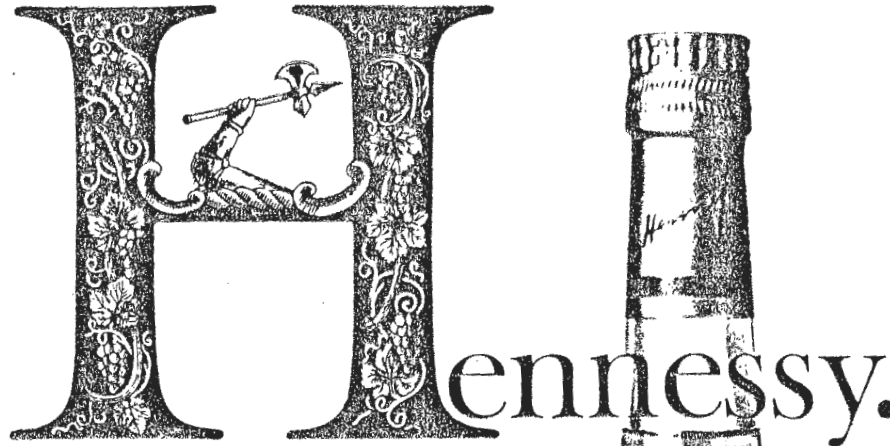
Jessup, Md.

The cure for Black on Black crime is for each Black to cry out to "Lord, thank you for your love. Comfort within me a clean heart. Fill me with understanding. Amen."

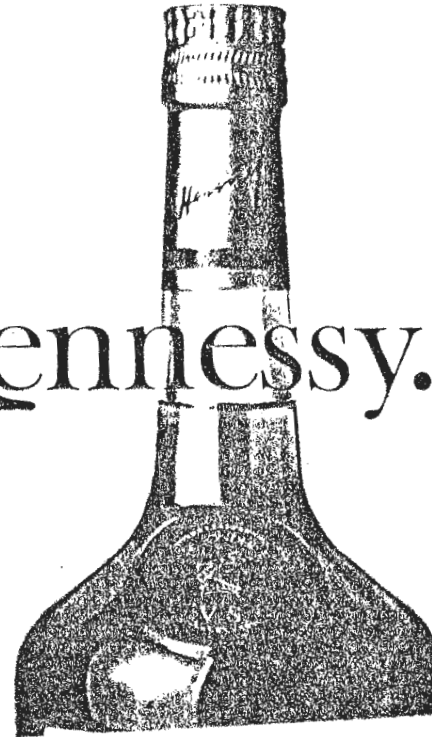
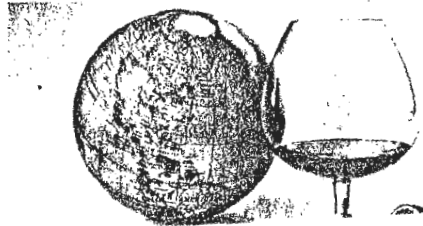
JOHN C. MCGLESTON

Chicago, Ill.

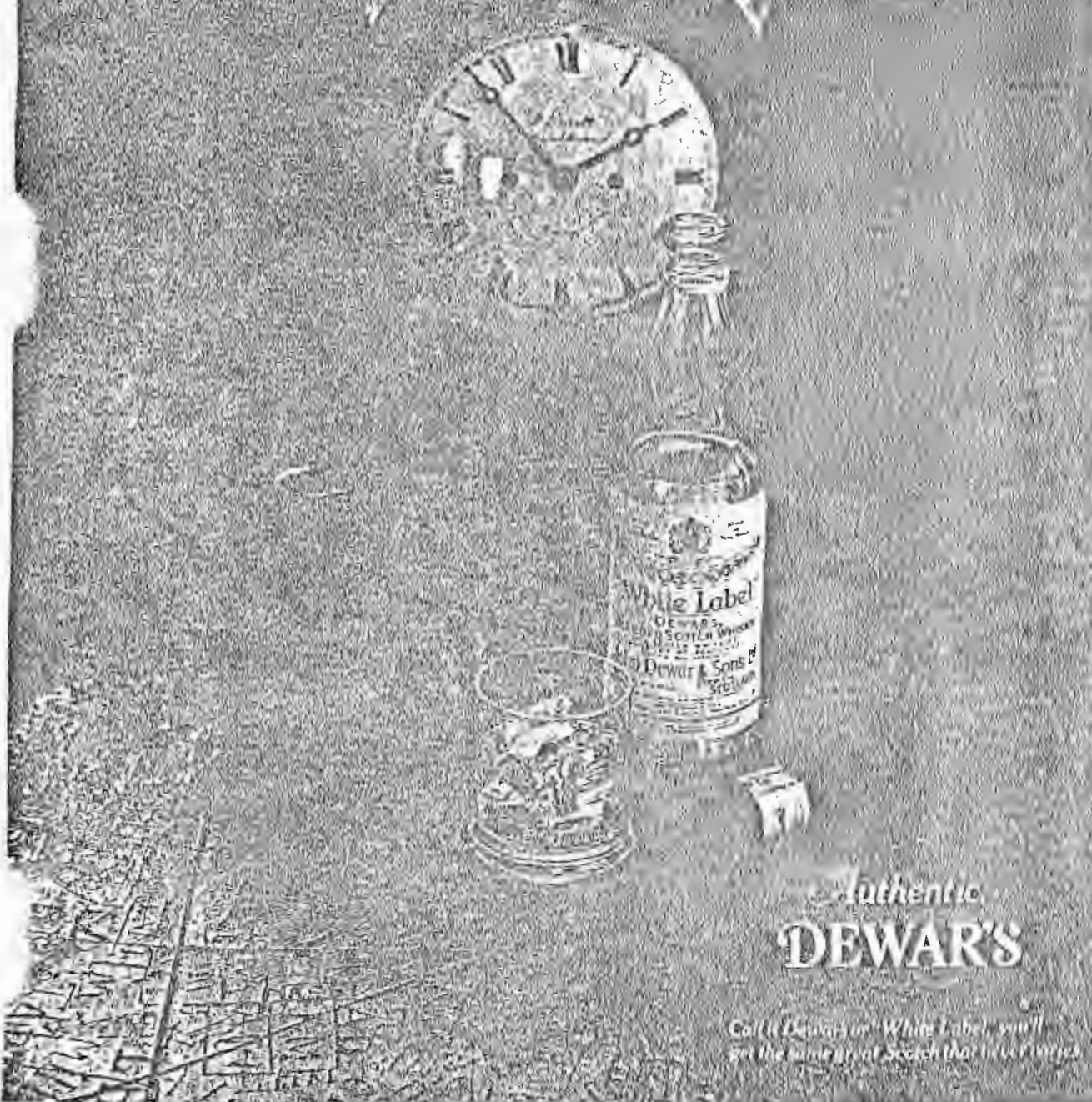
Every August, ENOXY comes up with an informative and interesting special edition and I look forward to seeing it. The issue concerning the problem of Black on Black crime was well put together. However, I find it incredible that in that same issue, on the "Strictly For Laughs" page all the cartoons were about Blacks ripping off Blacks. It seems to me that if



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creditors to the system's crime growth here in the South. It has constantly placed young Blacks in prison and released hardened criminals out of the state penitentiaries. I have found it to be true in many cases, for I myself have been dealing with the dehumanizing process the State hands out, and its rules on behavior and external factors can only be programming the confined Black both physically and mentally, thereby making them susceptible to a life of Black on Black crime.

AN INMATE
Division of Prisons
State of North Carolina

Salisbury, N. C.

I would like to thank all who were involved for publishing the Special Issue. I would especially like to thank Ron Harris for the sad and painful article, "Harlem Tragedy: Death Almost Destroys Family." My heart goes out to Gloria Williams and her family and all those who know them.

CLARENCE H. RICE

Philadelphia, Pa.

The article by Winston E. Moore, "Going Easy On Criminals Encourages Crime," was one that I sincerely agree with. I am glad to know that some of our Black leaders are not afraid to speak out against other Blacks simply because they are Black. The article is one that has been a long time coming and I hope that it will open our eyes to this dilemma. I encourage Mr. Moore to continue to fight. He has more people behind him than he may realize. Until Blacks realize that Mr. Moore is correct, we will continue to have this dual plantation justice system.

ROBERT SPANN

Fayetteville, N. C.

The articles on Black on Black crime were long overdue. I believe that your magazine can serve as a constant reminder with continuing serials to effect

Dress by Bill Blass. Jewelry by Bulgari.

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LETTERS

Continued

the changes that are so desperately needed to give Black children hope. The positive images of the Black communities (entertainers, athletes, business persons, politicians, etc.) must become very vocal. We need more heroes and heroines for our young people. The pimps, the dealers, the muggers must be denounced for their attacks on Blacks and for their talk about "getting over."

"There is no witness so terrible, no accuser so potent, as the conscience that dwells in Every Man's breast"—Polybius.

FRANK CABRAL
Northglenn, Colo.

I found this issue very informative and embarrassing for Blacks in America and it's time for us "middle-class Blacks" to discipline and educate one another. If we as an ethnic group don't start to unite, we as an ethnic group will never be respected and will deteriorate in today's society.

LARRY BANKS
Evanston, Ill.

I agree very strongly with Winston E. Moore on his statement about the "White-controlled dual criminal justice system." Even though I am only 18 years old, I am aware of what Mr. Moore is talking about. I think this situation of the Whites still treating us Blacks like we are still their slaves, but only in a different way, may be what they (Whites) consider the modern way. I think something needs to be

done about this. Whites aren't any better than Blacks. We are all God's people and we all will be judged on Judgment Day by Him no matter what race, color, etc. we are. So let us think about this now while God is giving us the mind and the chance to do it.

S. BATES
Mineral, Va.

We as Black people have for so long let ourselves be degraded. In the '80s we were informed that we would have everything taken away from us—dignity, pride, self-respect, all. Now it's happening and what are we really doing as a whole race? In depression times, our race stayed together (better than now), and we can do it now. I am ready, willing and able to help all Black people. We have to start somewhere, before it's too late. My reason is that I am Black and I care.

JOYCE EVANS
Canton, Ohio

Your special issue hit the target on the bullseye in many aspects of the causes, consequences, and cures for Black on Black crime. Black Americans should take heed of your long-overdue message and work hard together to alleviate the problems that are inflicted upon our race due to this society's social structure.

VERNARD V. WILKERSON
Fort Dix, N.Y.

You cannot excuse Black crime simply in terms of lack of economic opportunities (jobs) and racism. Blacks in this generation are largely on an "individual kick," lacking proper re-

spect for family, elders, institutions. How else can you explain vulgar shouting in the middle of the night in most Black neighborhoods, poor or middle class? Parents allow their children to go out and get mixed up in bad things, and the kids act stupidly "know-it-all," getting into robbery, burglary, drugs (in spite of all the warnings about drugs going on for more than 10 years). The vandalism of Black property by spiteful adults and children alike is indicative of a vast sickness among us. A return to religion might cure it, and a return to hope of progress from our own honest hard toiling. New groups coming to America will do it that way, and when they reach upper heights, an indolent Black might still be on the bottom.

BERT UNDERWOOD
New York, N.Y.

In respect to Black on Black crime, unemployment, welfare, etc., etc., the Soviet Union has a working solution to all these problems, and they are all too willing to share them with us. Be patient.

C. W. ANDERSON, M.D.
Norfolk, Va.

After reading "Going Easy On Criminals Encourages Crime," by Winston E. Moore, I have come to realize another form of Black on Black crime. He wants society to come down on Black men who've been charged with crimes by putting us in prison and throwing away the key. That's like pulling off leaves with the intent of killing the tree. You'll never prevent crime or kill the tree that way. You

must go to the root of the problem. The first question you should find the answer to is, "Why does a person commit crime(s)?" Was he born a dope-dealer? Was he born a mugger? Was he born a thief? "No" is the only reasonable answer to those three questions. So he must've gotten the idea from somebody after he was actually born into this world. The Government is behind the society which produces these people whom Mr. Moore refers to as "punks." I think Mr. Moore would get a reprimand from Martin Luther King Jr. if he were with us today. And that's why I'm taking it upon myself to see that Mr. Moore gets it. Mr. Moore is wrong. What he is saying can only keep us apart as a people.

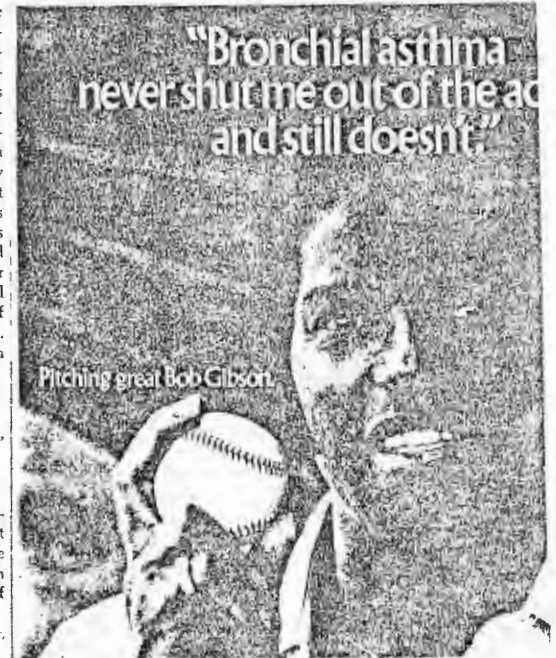
STANLEY SIMMONS
Founder and President,
The New Lifer's Group,
Trenton State Prison
Trenton, N. J.

I want to commend your timely articles on Black On Black Crime, but why must we turn the page and see cartoons depicting the levity of such a critical issue, which the theme of your issue deploras?

S. VILLAREAL
Washington, D. C.

It's not just the environment or sub-standard housing or lack of jobs, no matter how meaningful they may be. We as a people have turned from God. We worship new cars and clothes and the almighty discs and having a good damn time. More and more of us have turned to sexual perversion and pro-

Continued on Next Page



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