



"Man must cease attributing his problems to his environment, and learn again to exercise his will—his personal responsibility in the realm of faith and morals."

—Albert Schweitzer

03-Dec-04

Vision of America's Future?

A storm broke over Charlotte on Thursday, but not the kind that brings wind and rain. A political storm, brewing for years under the surface, erupted when County Commissioner Bill James fired off an email to 1,200 recipients concerning the rising problems within Mecklenburg County. Had he left it at that, James' email would have just been another missive from a perennially cranky conservative commissioner. However, James had the audacity and the political stupidity to point the finger of blame at the urban black community in Charlotte. Bill James is white.

In the offending paragraph, he wrote:

Most people know why CMS [Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools] can't teach kids within the urban black community. They live in a moral sewer with parents who lack the desire to act properly. That immorality impacts negatively the lives of these children and creates an environment where education is considered "acting white" and lack of education is a "plus" in their world.

Oh, boy.

Expectedly, the black community here in the Queen City has publicly branded James as a racist and demanded his resignation. He has been soundly condemned by local radio, television, and newspapers as insensitive, outrageous, a crackpot, out of touch, an egomaniac, drawing attention to himself (again), and many other similar names and descriptions. Even most of his Republican colleagues have shaken their heads, tsked, and put their condemnation of his sentiments on the record. James has retorted with, "If Bill Cosby can say it, so can I."

Yet, important figures in the black community—albeit a minority of them—have, while condemning his outspokenness, have agreed that urban blacks are plagued with problems of crime, gangs, illegitimacy, unemployment, drugs, and apathy, particularly in terms of education. One Baptist minister, a black man, voiced his agreement on a local morning radio show, saying that he believed that all of these problems had their roots in the rampant fatherlessness among African-Americans, citing a statistic that three-quarters of babies born to black women are illegitimate. He called upon the churches, schools, governments, and communities to band together to demand responsibility from black men.

Lost in the heat of the racial divide is reality. These problems do exist, and they need to be dealt with to avoid greater problems down the road. However, every special-interest group involved has its turf to defend and will not back down if it means diminishing or losing its funding and influence (for instance, the school system, NAACP, social services, etc.). The churches have little affect on morality due to their compromise with biblical standards. Local government, dependent in many ways on federal monies designated to "fix" these problems, has a vested interest in perpetuating them, not to mention the political power they hold as a result of pandering to minorities. And, like the rest of the country, the black community itself is terribly divided religiously, politically, and culturally. No solution will meet with across-the-board approval.

The urban black community is not alone. Similar problems are already affecting Latinos and whites across the nation due to their members' involvement in and acceptance of the attitudes and immorality inherent in the

pop culture, which has been heavily influenced by the liberal, secular claptrap that has produced this crisis among urban blacks. And because no one will accept the draconian solutions that are necessary to solve this dilemma, it will continue to spread to other groups. In other words, it is coming to a community near you.

The Baptist minister is on the right track; young men and boys have to be taught personal responsibility—and not just males, but females too. People have to learn from an early age that their actions always produce consequences. As the apostle Paul writes in [Galatians 6:7-8](#), "Do not be deceived, [God](#) is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life." To put it into practical terms, if a person behaves responsibly, good results will follow, but if he behaves irresponsibly, he can expect grief.

This principle *always* applies. And the only way it will work to solve this problem is if individuals resolve both to live by it and teach their children to live by it as well.

I am not holding my breath (see [II Timothy 3:1-5](#) to understand why)—and I am an optimist.

- Richard T. Ritenbaugh

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[Self-Government and Responsibility \(Part One\)](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

A major distinguishing characteristic of mankind is his free moral agency, presenting him with choices and the right to make decisions. We need free moral agency to be transformed into God's image. The volition to do right has to come from the core of our character or nature. Paradoxically, the way to maximum freedom is to yield to God's way of doing things. Unless one has the Spirit of God, he cannot exercise the necessary internal control to be

subject to the government of God. Even though the church is not the government of God (John 18:36; I Corinthians 15:50), we need to respect the ministry as well as lay members, being subject to one another (I Corinthians 11:1). The operation of God's government absolutely depends upon each person governing himself, never going beyond the parameters of the authority God has given him.

From the Archives: Featured Article

[The Sovereignty of God and Human Responsibility: Part Eleven](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

God's sovereignty and free moral agency set up a seeming paradox. John Ritenbaugh shows just how much choice we have under God's sovereign rule.

If you would like to subscribe to the C.G.G. Weekly newsletter, please visit our [Email Subscriptions page](#).
