

Religious Leaders Must Help to Engage Congregations in Greater Boston's Civic Life

Dear Editor,
I meticulously read cover to cover your first hard copy edition of Boston Haitian Reporter. I have shared it with an Asian colleague who was born in the Caribbean. She liked it and will get some of Marie Edith's pastries. My 14 year old daughter liked Joan Hyppolite's short story, "Dyaspora". She can identify with it.

As someone who has been in the Boston area for almost three decades, I wholeheartedly support this endeavor. Knowing the lack of interest in reading and print materials in the Haitian community, I am hoping it would not be a one or two issue newspaper, like previous publications have been.

My attention was particularly drawn on the reprint of the AP article by Terry Spencer on South Florida's Haitian community. He related the political, social and economic gain in that region which is a posi-

tive aspect. In the other hand, I would like to side with Mr. Marckly Joseph's concerns on those "left behind". An increasing number of Haitians are being "left behind" in the economic and educational advantages that Boston is reputed for.

Mr. Joseph said, "In 10 years, I'm afraid there will be a lot of Haitians in the justice system if nothing is done."

I would like to underscore there will be a lot more Haitians dealing with the legal system in the United States if the future of the Haitian Youth is not addressed and acted upon. Incarcerated Haitians was hardly heard of in the 1970's and most of the 1980's. Something needs to be done. The religious sector can be very influential in redirecting the young Haitian male before the females get implicated with the law. I believe the Haitian ecclesial communities need to start actively engage into the social

issues like many African-American pastors are doing. They are not only in the pulpits, they are working with the schools, law enforcement and other social community agencies. For instance, in Cambridge, the Black Pastors association are engaged in conversation with the school system.

Aside from their work, a church premise is where actively "religious" Haitians spend most of their leisure or free time. I sometimes feel embarrassed making excuses for Haitian parents who don't attend Parent-Teachers, city council or other municipal meetings while many churches

are filled with people on weeknight prayer services. Some schools hold meetings on Sunday nights. But some churches have two services on Sundays which the same parishioners who went in the morning return to.

I don't know if the Haitian ministers are

aware that the perfunctory style of ministry that they are engaging in is not conducive to the 21st Century theology or even the Scriptures if one looks at Marc 16: 15, Matthew 23:23, Matthew 25: 34-46 or Jesus' life in general.

The time has come for protestant and Catholic ministers to start communicating with one another to see how they can use their influence so that Haitians can be actively engaged in the American society by voting, reading, attending town meetings and spending less time in long repetitive prayer meetings. Active prayer and participation in one's community may diminish the number of Haitians who are already involved with the judiciary system in this country.

*-Nekita Lamour
(Nekita Lamour is an educator and essayist who has been active in the civic and religious life of the Haitian community in the Boston area for many years.)*

Her articles had appeared in several educational publications in the Boston area as well as Haitian newspapers and magazines in the U.S and Haiti.)

Top Vatican official says Catholics focus too much on power

The Pilot September 21, 2001
BY CINDY WOODEN

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Ever after 2,000 years, Jesus' modern-day disciples are still arguing over who comes first and who should have power instead of focusing on promoting holiness, said Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger.

"If he (Jesus) came among us today and asked us what we were talking about, we would have to blush and fall silent" like the disciples in the Gospel, said the cardinal, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

Cardinal Ratzinger told the pastoral convention of the Diocese of Aversa, Italy, Sept. 15, that too often ecclesiology — the theology of the church — gets so bogged down in questions of structure that the purpose of the church is overlooked.

Cardinal Ratzinger said the Second Vatican Council's description of the church as "the people of God" was quickly understood by many people as reflecting the "general political linguistic use of the word 'people,' including a Marxist point of view of 'the people' being in opposition to the ruling classes.

The result, he said, was a discussion framed as "a struggle for power."

Boston Haitian Reporter June 2001

7:00-9:00 AM 5:00- AND TUNE INTO THE BEST OF BOSTON'S HAITIAN RADIO SHOWS!

ARTS ENTERTAINMENT