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New Orleans

Data

News Weekly

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UNCF Masked Ball Highlights

Data Zone Page 7

March 19 - March 25, 2016 50th Year Volume 47 www.ladatanews.com


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Semper Fi!
(Always Faithful!)

Two New Orleans Veterans of a Segregated U.S. Marine Corps Awarded Congressional Gold Medal

Page 2



Newsmaker

OPSB Votes in Changes for Student Funding

Page 4

State & Local

Prosperity or Piety: Should the Church Teach Wealth?



Page 5

Two New Orleans Veterans of a Segregated U.S. Marine Corps Awarded Congressional Gold Medal



92 year old Martin Davis (left) and Francis Rochon, Jr. were awarded the Congressional Gold Medal in honor of their service during World War II. Rochon received the honor posthumously with his wife, Gloria Davis Rochon (right) accepting the award on his behalf.

By Blair Lyons
Data News Weekly Contributor

In honor of their service during World War II, Francis D. Rochon, Jr. and Martin J. Davis Jr. were awarded the Congressional Gold Medal on Saturday, March 12th. Rochon received the Honor Posthumously,

which was presented to his family. The award is determined by the United States Congress to persons who have impacted American history and culture. The ceremony was held at the American Legion Post 64 Hall in Gretna, LA. in Mel Ott Park.
Davis and Rochon received their military training at the segregated facilities at Camp Montford Point, a fa-

cility at Camp LeJeune, North Carolina, that was well-known for its rigorous training. Roughly 20,000 Black soldiers trained at the camp from 1942 to 1949 when President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued an Executive Order in 1941 that allowed Blacks to be recruited to enter the Marine Corps. The training paid off as Davis was certified as an Expert Rifleman and Chemical War-

Cover Story, Continued
on next page.

INSIDE DATA	
Cover Story	2
Newsmaker	4
State & Local News . . .	5
Book Review	6
Data Zone	7
Commentary	8
Opinion	9
In The Spirit	10
National News	11

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Cover Story, Continued from previous page.



Congressional Gold Medal Awardee Martin Davis and Gloria Davis Rochon on behalf of her late husband Francis Rochon, Jr. who received the honor Posthumously.



The Montford Point Marines fought two wars, one abroad and one at home. While they fought for freedom overseas, they returned home to a nation that was separate and unequal. Breaking through racial barriers, they transformed the face of the Marine Corps. Photo: montfordpointmarines.com

fare Specialist. Davis was deployed to islands in the Pacific, such as the Marshall and Marinas Islands and the Island of Guam. Rochon served overseas in the South Pacific as a Light Anti-Aircraft Control Man.

With an estimated 100 attendees consisting of friends, family and special guests of the two veterans, the ceremony was beautifully executed, said Joe Rochon, one of three sons of Francis Rochon.

"It was like having pieces of a puzzle, and in assembling that puzzle, every piece needs to work out the way it does," Rochon said. "The way the ceremony played out, it was beautiful, like a masterpiece, a painting," he said.

The ceremony started with a 30-minute concert by the American Legion Post 64 Band which was followed by a Color Guard Unit from the New Orleans Military and Maritime Academy. Among the many in attendance were Congressman Cedric Rich-

mond, D-LA, along with two representatives for the National World War II Museum in New Orleans: Kimberly Guise, a Curator, and William Detweiler, a Consultant to the Museum for Military and Veteran Affairs.

Both Martin Davis and Francis Rochon were lifelong residents of the City of New Orleans. They both grew up in the seventh ward and both graduated from McDonough #35 High School. When Rochon graduated from high school in 1942, he enlisted in the Marines the same year, his son said. Davis was drafted before finishing high school and enlisted in the Marines in 1943, said Rochon of his Uncle Martin Davis. When Davis was asked why he joined the Marines he said, "I liked their uniforms."

Rochon received an Honorable Discharge on December 21, 1945 and Davis received an Honorable Discharge close to six months later, finally being able to complete high

school. Once home, Rochon married Gloria Davis, sister to Martin Davis in February, 1946 and had three sons. Davis met the love of his life and future wife, Dolores Miller while attending night business school in the late 1950s, his

son said. They married in 1958 and had four children, Patricia, Martin, Patrick and Mark.

Unfortunately, Francis Rochon passed away in 1999 after being hospitalized for pneumonia and congestive heart failure at the age

of 74. His wife, Gloria Davis Rochon accepted the award on his behalf and Martin Davis accepted his award at the age of 92. The special event closed with a reception where attendees enjoyed a variety of both American and Filipino Cuisine.

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Orleans Parish School Board Votes for Major Change in Student Funding

Data News Staff Edited Report

On Tuesday, the Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB) adopted a resolution authorizing OPSB Superintendent of Schools Dr. Henderson Lewis Jr. to implement a unified, locally-developed funding formula that equitably funds services for students with the greatest needs across traditional and charter schools, pursuant to his authority as the treasurer of the OPSB and as provided for under state law. The board unanimously voted in favor of the resolution.

Lewis said the board's action was a recognition that public education is headed toward a unified, locally-governed system of schools.

"We are working with all Or-



OPSB Superintendent of Schools Dr. Henderson Lewis Jr.

leans public schools, the leaders of the Recovery School District, and our own OPSB school leaders to develop solutions to some of our most urgent needs. Over the last several months, this process has yielded productive conversations and healthy debate over school funding for a future model portfolio school district," Lewis said. "It has required considerable time, understanding and compromise among all committee participants, and the OPSB extends our sincerest thanks for their efforts. I am grateful for the OPSB's decision and excited about this next step in unifying our schools under local governance. We have a lot to be proud of today."

OPSB President Seth Bloom said the working group laid the ground-

work for the board's decision authorizing Lewis to implement an equitable student funding formula.

"The working group conducted extensive research and held frequent meetings with OPSB, the Recovery School District and schools under the jurisdiction of each district. It is one of many steps we will take to continue building a unified, equitable system of public schools, one that promotes academic excellence and opportunity for every student in Orleans Parish."

For more information, visit www.opsb.us.

Dr. Henderson Lewis, Jr., OPSB Superintendent says the board's action was a recognition that public education is headed toward a unified, locally-governed system of schools.

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Two Local Finalists in Ford Freedom Unsung Award

Data News Staff Edited Report

Ford Motor Company and Tom Joyner Foundation to Honor Ordinary Heroes

Ford Motor Company and the Tom Joyner Foundation announced today the finalists for the Ford Freedom Unsung award, a national campaign honoring the outstanding achievements of ordinary people performing extraordinary work in the African American community.

The public now has the opportunity to vote for one lucky grand prize winner. Read about each unsung hero's noteworthy accomplishments and vote for your favorite at <http://fantasticvoyage.blackamericaweb.com/ford-freedom-unsung/>.



The winner of the Ford Freedom Unsung Award will be announced on the Tom Joyner Morning Show (TJMS), and will receive a trip for two aboard the 2016 Tom Joyner Fantastic Voyage.

2016 Ford Freedom Unsung Hero Finalists

- Charles Belk, Los Angeles, CA
- Stephanie Bureau, Baton Rouge, LA
- Candace Devaney, Lawrenceville, GA
- Rosalind Evers, Conyers, GA
- Keesha Ferebee, Chesapeake, VA
- Felecia Frazier, Desoto, TX
- Sylvester Lee, Belleville, IL
- Ray Palmer, Kenner, LA
- Nikita Rose, Lakewood, CA
- James Washington, Montgomery, AL

The winner will be announced on the Tom Joyner Morning Show (TJMS), and will receive a trip for two aboard the 2016 Tom Joyner Fantastic Voyage. Voters must reside in the United States and be 21 years of age or older.

Stay tuned to TJMS for details and deadlines. Follow the online conversation using #FordFreedomUnsung, #BlackAmericaWeb and #FantasticVoyage16.

Regional Transit Authority Approves Service Enhancements

The Regional Transit Authority (RTA) Board of Commissioners has approved \$4.4 million in transit service improvements. These improvements, which will be implemented on April 17, 2016, include earlier start times and 24-hour service on many routes used by commuters to access employment centers, education facilities, and medical care.

Benefits for New Orleans riders include:

Improved early morning commutes with service beginning at 5:00 a.m. on 23 routes

More hours of service with the addition of a 24-hour bus service schedule on 9 routes

Riders who live in the city's outlying neighborhoods will receive better transit access to their local neighborhoods - particularly neigh-

borhoods in St. Bernard, Gentilly, the 9th ward and New Orleans East

A brand-new Airport Express route will be added. This route will be coordinated with airport and construction employees' shift times. The route will connect a loop between Elk & Cleveland, Union Passenger Terminal (U.P.T.) and the Airport's North Terminal. Standard express fare of \$1.50 applies. Jazzy Passes and GoMobile tickets are also accepted.

Better timing on transfers and greater connectivity to the businesses, schools and hospitals throughout New Orleans.

Additional buses on select routes to minimize delays and improve on-time performance.

"The Regional Transit Authority's decision to make nearly \$5 million in transit service enhance-

ments is great for the people of New Orleans. Since 2014, I have worked to advance New Orleans' public transportation environment and have pushed the RTA to return service to pre-Katrina levels. Today, the RTA is moving in the right direction by making smart enhancements in critical service areas. I am particularly excited that the enhancements will increase bus frequency, lengthen service hours for existing routes, and create a new Airport Express route to serve our city's workforce. These changes will significantly increase transportation options for residents and workers traveling to and from neighborhoods that are frequently underserved," said District "D" Councilmember Jared C. Brossett, Chair of the Council Transportation and Aviation Committee.

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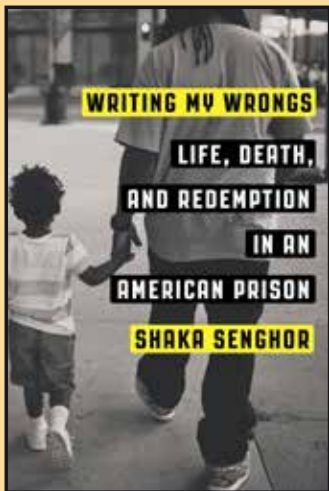


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Writing My Wrongs

Life, Death, and Redemption in an American Prison



**“Writing My Wrongs:
Life, Death, and
Redemption in an
American Prison”**

by Shaka Senghor

c.2016, Convergent Books

\$26.00 / \$35.00 Canada

269 pages

By The Bookworm Sez

Data News Weekly Guest Columnist

You can't judge a book by its cover.

Even so, we do it all the time: we see someone's outside and think we know what's inside. We base it on his looks, or his youthful indiscretions – things, as in the new book “Writing My Wrongs” by Shaka Senghor, that he may deeply regret.

Little James White wanted to be a doctor when he grew up.

Enveloped by the love of his parents, he was secure in the idea that he could maintain his honors status and do good for people in his Detroit community. But then his parents split, reconciled, and split again; his mother took her frustrations out on him and she kicked him out of her house.

Jay was just “a little boy” of fourteen then, but it didn't take long for someone to offer him a job selling cocaine at five dollars a “rock.” He started earning big money, wearing cool clothes, getting

girls, smoking crack.

By seventeen, he'd been in trouble with the law and had been given many second chances. By eighteen, he'd been shot in the leg and foot.

By nineteen, he was in prison for shooting another man, killing him.

In his first six

weeks in County Jail, Jay saw it all: rape, robbery, beat-downs, murder. He learned the “law of the jungle” and knew that he could never let small disrespects slide. It was a whole new world, but a sentence of up to forty-two years for firearm possession and murder put him in another universe.

Years later, transferred to various prisons within the state and carrying a new name and a new assault charge, Shaka Senghor promised himself repeatedly that he would change, only to have it beaten back by prison life and the deep anger and guilt he carried. Finally, mid-way through a four-and-a-half year stint in ad-seg, he “took a long and painful look” at himself and equipped his cell “like a classroom,” reconnecting with the Black history he loved and the religious studies he craved.

“But the real changes,” he says, “came when I started keeping a journal.”

I'm glad he did that. You will be, too, once you've started “Writing My Wrongs,” but don't think for a minute that this is an easy book to read.

One expects passages of brutality in a book about prison, but author Shaka Senghor takes it a step beyond, to something of nightmares or movies. That he was moved from prison to prison makes the chaos even keener; prisoners, says Senghor, sometimes lose track of time and readers could be forgiven for the same. Enter the maelstrom from the safety of your sofa, in fact, and the ending of this book – Senghor's hard-won redemption and afterlife – will remind you that you've been holding your breath awhile.

“Writing My Wrongs” may be right for a certain kind of book group. For sure, it's something every young person should absolutely read. It's uplifting, triumphant to the skies and, once you start it, you'll be sorry to reach its back cover.

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Masked Elegance

New Orleans Shows Out at the UNCF Mayor's Masked Ball

Photos by Glenn Summers

The UNCF's New Orleans area office and New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu hosted the Annual UNCF Mayor's Masked Ball on Saturday, March 12, at the Hyatt Regency New Orleans. The event was emceed by Kevin Frazier, co-host of "Entertainment Tonight" and WDSU co-anchor Camille Whitworth and featured stellar performances from Chaka Khan and New Orleans' own, Davell Crawford. New Orleans philanthropist William "Bill" Goldring was presented with the 2016 UNCF Masked Award. For more on this event, please visit www.ladatanews.com



Davell Crawford



Chaka Khan

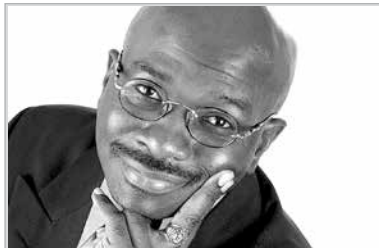


Norman Francis, Leah Chase and Mayor Mitch Landrieu



Visit www.ladatanews.com for more photos from these events

Flint Residents Deserve Better than This



Armstrong Williams
NNPA News Wire
Columnist

As the proud owner of NBC 25 in Flint, Michigan, it is important for us to understand the community and to become a part of it as much as we can. As a station owner, we have the ability to elevate the needs and concerns of the downtrodden, hold those in power accountable and showcase the resilience of Flint, and it's a responsibility that we don't take lightly.

We read about the water crisis facing Flint and the failure of the people in power and were appalled. It was the failure of government that abandoned the most vulnerable, leaving them with many unanswered questions. I even added my perspective on the crisis. But that wasn't enough; I wanted to feel the emotions on the ground, to under-

stand the crisis through first-hand experience because too often in reporting, the people are ignored for political spin. And after our day in Flint, we can tell you that the personal resilience of the people of Flint is highly under-reported.

When we first arrived on Monday morning February 29, we went straight to city hall where many were there in search of answers. It was at the counter for free water filters that we met a young, single mother, who is also a student, and her young daughter. The mother relayed to us a story about how her daughter had elevated levels of lead. She was at a loss for what to do, but she knew she had to get the water filters for her daughter. She was worried about her daughter's future, what it would look like, and what could she do as a mother to improve her daughter's chances? We had no answers, but we did have empathy, and we genuinely cared, and it was obvious that the mother appreciated that someone wanted to hear her story. My heart goes out to her and her daughter, and reminded me that this is not a temporary crisis, but one whose

effect will reverberate throughout Flint for a generation if not more.

City hall was littered with people who wanted their stories heard. There were women there who had done their own research into the crisis and dug up documents that proved officials knew about the dangers of the lead levels long before the public. All of the people we met in city hall wanted answers, but more importantly, they were there to try as best as they knew how to help the community they love. This is how we started to love the people of Flint.

From city hall, we went to a firehouse where the National Guard was stationed handing out clean water to residents. The men and women of the National Guard were standing outside on a cold, damp day handing out cases and cases of water to anyone who drove up. They did not complain about the weather, or the heavy lifting, or about being on their feet all day. They were there for the community. We watched and even participated in loading the water into cars. We spoke to as many of the drivers as possible. We wanted to hear their

stories. Most came daily to pick up multiple cases of water. Many had children who they worried about; most did not have the money to move away. It was after speaking to so many drivers that we came to understand why the National Guard did not complain about being outside in the freezing cold— they were the lucky ones.

After spending time with people at the firehouse, we wanted to see firsthand the living conditions of the city, where 40 percent of the population lives below the poverty line. It was there that we saw what seemed like abandoned houses on every block. A couple of people welcomed our team into their homes. There we heard and saw firsthand what it was like not to be able to take hot baths, or drink water from the tap. We saw cases upon cases of water stacked up everywhere the eye could see. We heard tales about how it took hours to fill up baths with enough clean hot water so they could clean themselves. A hot bath, something we take for granted, was so precious to them. They also relayed to us how many of their neighbors did not own cars,

so they could not go to the fire stations to pick up the water. Instead, the community pitched in. Those with cars drove those without cars, or just picked up a couple of extra cases for the elderly or infirmed.

After witnessing the strength of the people, we headed to a town hall my WEYI NBC25 Flint station was hosting. We had elected officials, doctors, and professors all gathered to talk with the community about the water crisis. The goal was to bring together the community so the citizens could have their voices heard and so the people could learn what they could do to help. So many of the people we encountered wanted to help, but were unable to due to lack of guidance and a lack of answers about what would actually help.

At the town hall, the passion surrounding the crisis was evident. The auditorium was nearly packed and from the first question, it was evident that the residents were sick of excuses and wanted to action. There was blame enough to go around but instead of blame the

**Commentary, Continued
on page 11.**

You Have to Understand Why “Diamond” and “Silk” Support Trump



Bill Fletcher, Jr.
NNPA Columnist

I saw it on Facebook. These two Black women at a Trump rally expressing their support for “The Donald.” I realized, once again, that there is a certain type of emotional naiveté that I possess when it comes to our people. I assume that in light of the history of White supremacy which we have experi-

enced for several hundred years, including indentured servitude, slavery, Jim Crow segregation, and de facto segregation, not to mention the ideological demonization of our people at the hands of an assortment of characters, that we can look a racist in the eyes and know their stand.

I found myself staring at these two Black women backing Trump and I realized that I felt the same emotions about the candidacy of Dr. Ben Carson. How is it, I have asked, for a Black person to utter some of the most ridiculous statements known to humanity? It is only when I have calmed down that I remind myself that not only are we, as a people, far from monolithic, but

that—despite our history—there is a very conservative, if not outright reactionary minority among Black Americans that are actually convinced that we—ourselves—are the problem or that there is some other racial/ethnic/religious group, e.g., Latinos; Muslims, who can take some of the racist heat away from us that we have experienced for so very long.

It is not simply self-hatred that we are facing. In some respects, that would be easy to address. It is that there are people who honestly believe, for whatever reason, that their personal future or our collective future resides in conforming to the worst caricatures that White America has of us. They seem to be-

lieve that by joining in on the pile-on against Latinos and Muslims, for instance, that we will somehow become accepted as “real” Americans.”

It will never happen. Some Black folks tried that after 9/11. It does not work. We are still hated. It is the revelation that the Adolph Caesar character has at both the beginning and end of the classic film “A Soldier’s Story,” i.e., the ‘game’ has been rigged and masses of Whites still hate us, even when we get on our knees and do everything that they ask.

Donald Trump called for the execution of five Black men who were accused in the Central Park brutal rape of a white woman in 1989, only

for them to be exonerated. Trump calls for excluding and expelling Mexicans for allegedly bringing crime to the U.S., as if no other ethnic group has ever been or is associated with crime. Trump calls for banning Muslims from entering the U.S. for allegedly bringing terrorism despite the fact that most terrorist attacks since 9/11 have been carried out by white supremacists.

What am I missing? Is there any reason to take anyone who supports Trump with any degree of seriousness? I think not.

Bill Fletcher, Jr. is a talk-show host, writer and activist. Follow him on Twitter, Facebook and at www.billfletcherjr.com.

Letter In Support of City Councilmember Susan Guidry's Resolution on Youth Transfer

Crime in New Orleans is a cancer eating away at the fabric of our community, and we are all its victims. Many factors are to blame and, given the size and dimension of the problem, solving crime is a seemingly insurmountable task. In the ten years since Katrina, however, we as a city are enacting positive change rather than accepting the status quo. The Orleans Parish District Attorney Leon Cannizzaro's (DA) policy on youth transfers is one such area where we can make a change that will reduce crime and strengthen our city.

A recent report by the Southern Poverty Law Center found that the DA's Office is referring 80% of children accused of certain statutorily specified crimes to adult criminal court, which is more than twice that of the parish with the second highest rate. The report, *More Harm Than Good*, details how "Cannizzaro's use of default transfer is unfair

and ineffective - it fails to protect public safety, conserve public dollars, or respond appropriately to juvenile crime."

This is an alarming public safety concern. Simply put, processing children as adults worsens criminal behavior. Overwhelming research and data, both local and national, demonstrates that children processed through the juvenile system are far less likely to recidivate. When children are processed through the adult system, they often receive the same penalties they would have in the juvenile system, but they are denied the rehabilitative services that can make all the difference in altering the trajectories of their lives.

Undoubtedly, the youth in question are charged with serious crimes, and there are real victims and families suffering as a result of their actions. Making victims whole is an important and necessary part of the justice system, and that is not in question. Many children in the

system are also suffering as victims of crimes. This is not an excuse. However, the cycle of violence must end somewhere, and we will not achieve safety in our communities until we address all the factors that contribute to crime. We cannot prevent future victims and heal our children unless we are making informed decisions about how each child can best be rehabilitated.

Of course there will be instances where, even with a careful screening process in place, the juvenile system will not be deemed the appropriate place for prosecution. The proposed resolution, which we support, allows for the legal fact that murders, rapes, and aggravated kidnapping are automatically transferred to adult court and even beyond that, that some children whom the DA has discretion to transfer will in fact be transferred. The concern, at this moment, is that the juvenile system is being ruled out at rates that are far too high for the safety

of our youth, our community, and anyone who visits or loves the City of New Orleans. It's also one of the reasons why the percentage of youth involved with the justice system in New Orleans is so racially disparate.

Recognizing the problem with the DA's youth transfer policy, Councilmember Susan Guidry, the Chair of the City Council's Criminal Justice Committee, introduced a resolution asking the DA to more carefully screen the youth he seeks to transfer to adult court, rather than transferring most of them by default, as well as to report to the Council on data regarding these transfers. The resolution seeks a common sense process and enables us to make data-driven decisions in the future that better serve public safety and justice.

We, the undersigned, support the City Council's effort to address this problematic policy, and urge the DA to consider the circumstances of each child's life in addi-

tion to the facts of each case. Judges already do this for 14 year olds under state law, and the DA should do the same with children who are 15 and 16 years old.

Sincerely,

Urban League of Greater New Orleans
Louisiana Center for Children's Rights
Voice of the Ex-Offender, Norris Henderson
Institute for Women and Ethnic Studies
Rev. Dwight Webster, PhD, Senior
Pastor, Christian Unity Baptist Church
Jesuit Social Research Institute/
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BreakOUT!

Data News Weekly is Hiring

Data News Weekly Newspaper, The People's Paper, is hiring for two positions in our New Orleans Office.

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Prosperity or Piety

Should the Church Teach Wealth?



By Prinsey Walker
Data News Weekly
Columnist

They are the names behind “prosperity” teachings in Christianity today: Creflo Dollar, Ben Tankard, Jewel Tankard, and T.D. Jakes. But as Christians reflect during the Lent season before Easter, they often sacrifice worldly pleasures instead of asking for more. Prosperity gospel, particularly in Black evangelical churches, has not been without controversy. Many be-

lievers say they believe God want’s the best for them, but they are not sure how much is enough.

“[Prosperity gospel] is in direct conflict with the Gospel of Jesus Christ,” said Father Maurice Nutt, the Director of the Institute for Black Catholic Studies at Xavier University. Catholicism, in particular, emphasizes a Christian life based on modesty, and nuns and priests take a vow of poverty.

“It’s heresy to say that if you simply name it and claim it you will be wealthy,” Nutt said. “To the contrary, scripture urges us to ‘But first seek the Kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you.’ Prosperity gospel, Nutt said, reverses the emphasis. The blessings, Nutt explained, are from the righteous virtues from God, and



not the “things” that God blesses the believer with.

The prosperity message also asks Christians to go further than just the tithe, which is one-tenth of an individual’s earning. Prosperity pastors encourage church members to sow a special offering, called a “seed” that would yield a significant financial return to the believer. Prosperity preachers, as they are called, also live lavish lifestyles. They say it is a testimony of God’s blessings to them.

T.D. Jakes, the Pastor of The Potter’s House in Dallas, Texas coined the popular phrase during his television broadcasts “Get Ready, get ready, get ready!” The phrase motivates his congregation to believe they will receive a significant return for their offerings. Ben and Jewel Tankard, the Pastors of Destiny Center Church in Murfreesboro, Tenn. had their own reality series called “Thicker than Water” on Bravo, that highlighted their extravagant lifestyle. Creflo Dollar of World Changers Church International in College Park, Geor-

gia, drew criticism in 2014 when he asked members of his church to donate \$300 to pay for a \$65 million dollar jet to support his travels for the ministry.

The prosperity gospel has some worrying that it sends the wrong message about the Christian lifestyle. “Christ came to deliver us from sin and bring us joy and happiness,” said Father Etido Jerome, who directs Campus Ministries at Xavier University. “True happiness cannot be found in material wealth, which is what prosperity gospel teaches.”

Christian leaders, of all denominations, should find alternative ways to spread the Gospel, Jerome said. “Creflo Dollar did not need a private jet to reach the four corners of the world,” Jerome said. “We have Internet and Missionaries. God is already in these four corners of the world.”

The rise of mega-churches where prosperity gospel is taught also puts off some young Christians at a time when more young Americans are saying they are not

religious.

“[Prosperity gospel is] definitely a gimmick,” said Tim Morris, a 27-year-old New Orleans native. “Yes, God wants us to be prosperous, but we’re blessed according to his vision as long as we’re faithful to him. No man can change that. It’s all a bunch of blasphemy if you ask me,” Morris said.

Some young believers say they see some value to the teachings. It allows believers to recognize that everything they receive comes from God and belongs to God.

“The Bible says everything we have in life belongs to God,” said Garrett Buras, a Sophomore at Southeastern Louisiana University. “By giving one-tenth of our income to him, we are putting our faith totally in him, and by having faith in him, he will bless us,” said Buras, who is from Chalmette, LA.

Christians tithed traditionally so that their earnings can assist the work of the church. “In ancient tradition, [Christians] gave tithes to their pastor to help the poor. Now, I am starting to wonder where the tithing money goes, and what the pastors are doing with the money,” Jerome said.

Jerome believed that there is nothing wrong with a pastor being wealthy as long as they were using the money they received from their congregation to spread the Gospel. “If God blesses pastors with wealth, and they are using it for the right reason, and give money to help people, there is no problem,” Jerome said. “The people who go to these churches are poor, yet their pastors are wealthy. Christ preached the Gospel to meet the needs of the poor,” he said.



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Black and Hispanic Press Join Forces on Capitol Hill

Groups to Advocate for Inclusive Government Advertising Spending

The National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) and the National Association of Hispanic Publications (NAHP) have joined together to form a national strategic alliance. We are pleased to assemble on the West Front of the U. S. Capitol on Friday, March 11, 2016 at 9:30 AM and to be joined by Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC).

The NNPA, the leading non-partisan trade association of the more than 205 African American-owned community newspapers throughout the United States, along with the NAHP, a non-partisan trade advocacy organization representing the nation's leading Spanish-language publications, have a combined total reach of over 43 million readers per week across the United States.

"With close to 97 million African Americans and Hispanics in the U.S. today, representing 33% of the total population, this consumer segment demands attention," said Martha Montoya, VP of the NAHP. "The buying power of the African-



NNPA President Benjamin Chavis speaks outside of the U.S. Capitol during a joint press conference between NNPA and NAHP. The press conference was attended by Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-Wash., D.C.) (far left). (Freddie Allen/AMG/NNPA)

American and Hispanic communities, currently at over \$2.3 trillion combined, continues to outpace the national average."

"This historic media alliance is a gigantic step for our two organizations," said Dr. Benjamin Chavis, President and CEO of the NNPA. "We believe our working together has tremendous potential mutual benefits in today's marketplace. We

are grateful that Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton will ask the General Accounting Office (GAO) to conduct a timely research and to issue a report on advertising contracting and subcontracting with African American and Hispanic American-owned newspapers and media companies by all federal agencies. We salute and appreciate Congresswoman Norton's leadership and service to our communities."

"This task force also marks a historic partnership between the NNPA and NAHP, the nation's most influential publishing organizations that are currently led by women. Martha and I have a shared vision and commitment to empower our communities by strengthening the voices of the media we serve," said NNPA Chair Denise Rolark Barnes.

The NNPA and the NAHP will also launch a massive nonpartisan national Get-Out-The-Vote (GOTV) campaign for the remainder of 2016 to increase civic participation in our mutual communities.

Commentary, Continued from page 8.

citizens wanted answers. The time for political buck-passing was over; the time for answers was now. There was a couple of occasions where emotions rose to a fevered pitch and for good reasons. After being in Flint for nearly twelve hours digging into the issue, I found myself getting upset. I saw the pain and suffering the residents were enduring, and at the town hall, I experienced the hopelessness they felt. No one had answers. No one could tell the residents when the crisis would be resolved, how the city was going to deal with the long-term health issues, when they would be able to drink the water, or when the pipes were going to be replaced.

The hour and a half town hall allowed us to hear every side of the issue. When we walked in we expected we would have a better feeling about the crisis facing the residents, but sadly we felt worse. There was nothing we could do at the moment to help, other than listen to the citizens and give them a platform. But we could not change the pipes, we couldn't fix all of their problems and no one on the stage could either.

The people of Flint deserve better. The elected officials need to stop seeking blame and start seeking solutions. They need to act now, because the people of Flint cannot wait any longer. The government failed them when it created the crisis and is failing now with their lack of response.

After we left the town hall, we came to one conclusion—the people of Flint are resilient, their elected officials are not, but that isn't stopping the citizens of Flint from trying to save their community.

Read snippets from Armstrong Williams' new book titled, "Reawakening Virtues," at RightSideWire.com. Join the discussion live at 6pm-8pm and 4am-6am EST on Sirius/XM Urban View 126. Join the Armstrong Williams fan page on Facebook and Twitter at @arightside.

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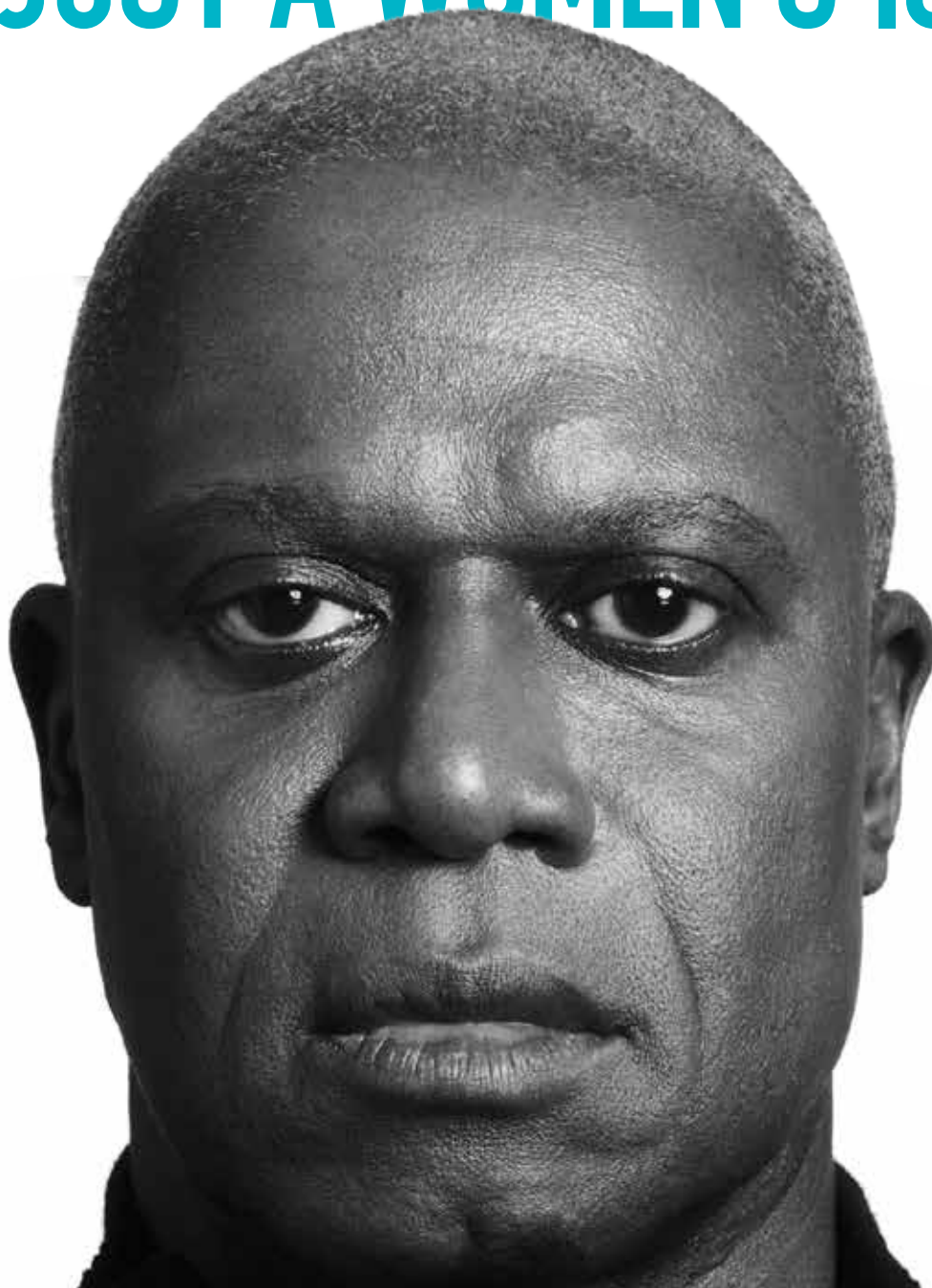
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