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National Crisis, Local Crisis

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National Crisis, Local Crisis

I have lived for 75 years. That means I have observed and experienced many cycles of America and its black citizens. Growing up in wonderful, but segregated North Omaha, blacks were poor but comforted by the love within our community for each other, our neighbors, classmates, our community and our family. We were not allowed to go downtown and freely go to the movies, but we had our own, the Ritz Theater. We were not allowed to go to inside, sit and enjoy Joe Tess Fish, so we got take out. We were not allowed to swim in the wonderful pool and recreation area at Peony Park, so what we had Kellom swimming pool, water hoses and sometime fire hydrants. We were not welcome in Benson or Florence or parts west, but we had our beloved near north side. We had our own newspapers, the Omaha Star and the Guide printing the good news about ourselves. We had our own entertainment centers; Allen's Showcase, the Dreamland and Carnation Ballroom, and the Blue Room. We had Black owned businesses up and down 24th Street: Black owned drug stores with Black pharmacists, the Ritz Cab Company, and Carver Savings and Loan. There were historic churches of all denominations. There were youth development programs: the YMCA, YWCA, Blackburn Center and community and sports programs all over. Logan Fontenelle were beautiful and wonderful public homes with well-kept grounds and playgrounds for kids. The Police were the Klan, figuratively and in some cases literally, I could go on and on. We were discriminated and segregated and disrespected but we were together. We had great culture, great church, great commerce, and great people.

We were economically isolated, educationally discouraged, and highly under-employed. Then we made a major mistake. We wanted to integrate. We wanted to be white. We wanted to emulate. Subconsciously we felt that if we did integrate then things would be alright, we would be treated with respect and we would be able to bridge the social and economic gaps. We were wrong we should have fought for desegregation, not integration.

We did integrate, but we had to fight for and lose our lives just to have our civil and voting rights. We integrated and watered down our culture and sense of self, we made a mistake. Instead of being **integrated** we are now being manipulated.

A few of us have escaped, but our community by-in-large is poverty stricken and still economically segregated. Our youth have no respect for us because we made the mistake and now they are living with it.

National Crisis. Local Crisis. White police seem not to understand that Black Lives Matter. Black people don't seem to know the Black Votes Matter. Good talk will not break the cycle.

I call for a local and national dialogue with action plans for economic inclusion. I call for a local and national plan to vote. Plain and simple; economic inclusion will stop the cycle, stall the crisis, isolate the criminals and return north Omaha and the nation to the glorious past. Voting will further our best interest. Without these initiatives, we will continue to kill each other. Jesus will weep, and we will lose the leverage of the vote.

*To review previous Black Votes Matter column articles visit **Omahastar.com**. Or **prestonlovejr.com**. Preston love can be reached at **prestonlovejr@gmail.com***

