

VF Pro-Negro

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# Teacher Gives Wisdom, Challenge To Negroes

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Someone has said that out of every failure comes something good.

Even Abraham Lincoln had more political failures than he had successes.

Out of the Journal Star's failure to find out what Peoria Negroes think they can do to help themselves, came one reply filled with wisdom and a flaming challenge to the Negro segment of Peoria's population.

It came from Mrs. Maggie Car-

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ter, a veteran of nearly 40 years of teaching on all levels from a rural one-room school in a mining camp in western Kentucky through all the grades to a position as teacher of English at Tuskegee Institute.

**SHE IS NOW** a teacher of exceptional children at Abbott Children's Center, Peoria State Hospital.

Mrs. Carter says, "I hold that education is a panacea for most of the ills that affect mankind," but she goes on to remark that too many people regard this God-given right and privilege as a common place commodity which can be taken or ignored.

She lists six things which colored people need to improve their status in this or any other community. They are:

1. Negroes in Peoria need to re-examine some of their values.
2. The Peoria Negro needs inspiration through overt examples within his own race.
3. The Negro should obtain the best education, thereby making himself available for service and leadership.
4. The Negro must accept high civic and moral standards and disseminate them.
5. The Negro needs to consider education versus legislation.

6. Negroes must have pride in their contributions to democracy.

Mrs. Carter explains that when she came to Peoria in 1947 there was not a single Negro teacher in the entire Peoria system. Today there are several in our elementary system, but not yet one in the high schools.

**LACK OF QUALIFIED** Negro teachers is NOT believed to be the reason for Mrs. Carter points out that when she resigned at Tuskegee, the mathematics department was headed by a native Peorian.

Another person of her acquaint-

ance here has gone to another school to become professor of English after being unable to obtain work here. She has almost completed requirements for a Ph.D.

Mrs. Carter continues, "The Negro must cease thinking of the poor efforts of other races; he must forget that other men get by with inferior work; and he must resolve to do his best every minute of every day."

Then she flings the challenge. "At times it seems as though the Negro is too prone to point to the failings of others, while he remains oblivious of the many

things he might be up and doing to improve his own status."

**ACCORDING TO** her ideas, it need not be repeated that Negroes have been denied too many of their rights for too many years, but she also spotlights the fact that it is just as true that members of the race have failed to exercise and enjoy many rights which are already theirs.

She commends Peoria for its willingness to change out-moded practices for better ones, but she charges the Negro with a responsibility, which should be shouldered by all men, to erase discrimination and make our community a better one.

Religion must assume a more militant role in the betterment of the community, too, she believes, and adds, "In all crises we find that the greatest trouble-makers come from the men who are frustrated because of prejudices, or ignorance or feelings of insecurity."

Such thoughts, then, are the good that can come from the failure of an investigation. It remains for all Peoria citizens to pick up the challenge.