

# Loving YOU Is Right



by James E. Payne

A wise friend reminded me that our forefathers fought a great fight for social reform. While we applaud our forefather's dedication and success in the social changes they accomplished, we must have their same spirit and tenacity to fight for economic reform. We must build up our community, reinvest our dollars earned into our community, and vote for people who support Black economic advancement. We must realize when considering economic reform it will cause confrontation. However, this generation has a responsibility to our forefathers, ourselves and our children to sacrifice our time, talents and resources to economically empower our community.

Banks, Jackson and Hampton wrote a song entitled "If loving you is wrong, I don't want to be right" which gives us some direction with our fight for economic reform. The song deals with a relationship so strong that the singer is willing to go against social customs, family/friends' beliefs and public opinion to be with the one he loves. To change the economic structure in this country, we must have love for our community. We must build businesses in our community, support Black businesses and hold elected officials accountable to economic advancement. Some people will suggest that when we fight to economically empower the African American community, we are sounding racists, promoting segregation, or creating reverse discrimination. As the songwriters say "as long as I got you on my side – I don't care what the people say."

To economically empower our community, we must also re-educate our community. There are many people, including our own, who believe we should buy the White man's ice because,

somehow, his ice is colder than ours. While that thought process seems illogical, there are many people who will pass over qualified Black businesses and professionals to go to less qualified White businesses and professionals. This is not to suggest that we never look to our own community for services and guidance. When it comes to getting our hair care needs, food, or Sunday worship to feed our souls, most of us will stay within our community. However, when we need medical evaluation, legal consultation, or financial guidance, we are no longer concerned if the individual or company is the most qualified, so long as they are white.

How do you know if you also fall into the "white man's ice is colder" philosophy? First, review your check register and credit card statements for the last 90 days and compare how much money you have spent in our community versus other communities. Second, review the Black businesses in our community and see where your money could have been reinvested into qualified Black businesses. This self-critical analysis will be shocking.

Self-empowerment is not some new concept. Every ethnic group in this country does it except for us. Whites self-empowerment is called the good ole' boy system, while the Chinese's system is called Chinatown. The Vietnamese community has the best demonstration of how quickly a community can advance itself by supporting themselves. Our communities are referred to as ghettos or projects and we don't even own the few businesses located in our neighborhoods.

I solicit your support for the *Buy 90 Campaign* so that we can start making economic changes in Southeast Texas.