

Minister: Blacks should learn love

By JOSH FUNK
Senior Reporter

Black love is an oxymoron, says a black Baptist minister and author.

The two words don't make sense with each other because black means denigrated and love means liberated, the Rev. Osagyefo Sekou said in a workshop about Generation X without Malcolm on Friday.

Sekou, a minister from St. Louis, raised the question of what it means to be black in America; he looked into the troubled past, and he encouraged black students to fight for their futures.

"To find out why we exist we must answer four questions: Who am I, am I really what I am, am I everything I ought to be, and did I lie along the way?"

But to answer those questions, blacks must deal with the past, he said.

"The slave ship is a metaphor for the transformation of black people (from a proud tradition) to

denigration," Sekou said.

"But we can find illumination in the darkness of our past."

Sexism, racism and class discrimination are deeply rooted in American history, he said.

"None of us fit the stark definition of black," Sekou said. "By definition the whites here can't be white because they are a minority."

"We must see beyond race and gender to the message."

In history black people have much to be angry with, he said, and that anger is voiced in music like today's gangsta rap.

"The DJ is the high priest of the party; the lyrics are scripture and the club a sanctuary," Sekou said.

Education is a liberating act, but it is also a struggle for blacks.

"Remember that you fought like hell to get where you are," Sekou said.

Everyone, he said, ultimately must decide what is most important: "What are you willing to die for?"

Success is in networking

Speakers: Seek administrative resources

By BRIAN CARLSON
Senior Reporter

Because black students often face difficult adjustments on predominantly white campuses, they should build relationships and know their rights, workshop speakers said Saturday.

In a workshop called "Facilitating the Empowerment of Students," three speakers said black students can enhance their success by "networking": cultivating relationships with black faculty members and understanding processes for filing complaints.

"You have the responsibility to know everything you can about accessing your rights in an educational system," said Lawrence Lee of the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights.

Ernest Middleton, director of minority affairs at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, said students can slip through the cracks if they don't seek resources such as the office of minority student

affairs, the office of affirmative action, minority student organizations and minority faculty.

"You can always determine those staff that are interested in your success," he said.

Students also should know how to file complaints when they experience racism, he said.

Anna Thomas, a graduate student in education at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, said as an undergraduate she objected to a professor's comments.

She struggled to make her complaint heard amid university bureaucracy, she said. But with persistence and contact with the school's minority affairs administrators, she helped bring her complaint to the professor's attention.

"Be prepared for the war, not just the battle," she said.

Student participants shared some of the struggles minorities faced on their campuses.

Leviticus Za'mien, an officer for the Black Student Alliance at the University of Colorado at Boulder, said his school was seek-

ing to scale back its multicultural affairs department.

When he asked how to protest this decision, Lee said it would take persistence.

"You have to be willing to stand fast and stay the course," he said. "It's not easy to file a complaint or bring charges against a large institution."

Lee said it was more effective to work within the system, using the influence of minority student groups and faculty, than to organize radical protests — such as occupying the administration building, as Za'mien suggested.

"Taking extreme measures sounds good; it sounds nostalgic," Lee said. "But let me tell you, it doesn't work."

But in an interview, Za'mien said his group had held meetings with administrators to protest racial incidents on campus and had mostly become mired in bureaucracy.

"I'm more on the extreme side," he said. "I don't think the system works."

Columnist: Black, white workers face historical economic division

By TODD ANDERSON
Assignment Reporter

Even though black Americans have been free of slavery for more than 100 years, their struggle for economic equality has not yet ended, Julianne Malveaux said Friday.

Malveaux, a syndicated columnist and frequent lecturer, led a workshop on economics at the Cornhusker Hotel during the Big 12 Conference on Black Student Government.

Black Americans have been economically successful, Malveaux said, but laws and regulations have often been created to limit growth.

"Whenever we amass wealth, the rules of the game change," she said.

Historically, Malveaux said, skilled workers have not been allowed to own the tools of their trade. Black property was often stolen or destroyed.

After time, skilled workers were relegated to lower-paying, unskilled jobs,

"Our best relative power is in the labor market. When we are organized, our wages are better."

JULIANNE MALVEAUX
columnist and lecturer

Malveaux said.

That movement has created an economic division among blacks as well as a large pay difference between whites and blacks, she said.

In addition, Malveaux said, black Americans are ambivalent to making money because of religious and cultural biases, which leads them to pursue careers that do not create capital.

The key to filling the gap between poor and rich, she said, is well-thought-out planning.

"Our best relative power is in the labor market," she said. "When we are

organized, our wages are better."

Also, black Americans have power as consumers.

Boycotts should be narrowly defined, Malveaux said, and leaders need to indicate what specific goal they have in mind.

Defined planning and education will help persuade participants to continue, despite the economic conveniences that might arise from a boycott, she said.

"You need to look at the long haul and keep your eye on the prize," she said.

Speaker: Reinvest in society

By JESSICA FARGEN
Assignment Reporter

George Fraser's father had a dream for him: a good education and a good job.

But Fraser, national speaker and founder of SuccessSource, told his sons he wanted that and more from them.

"You need to get a job and create a job," Fraser said.

The only way black people could add to the nation's 621,000 black-owned businesses, Fraser told participants Friday, was to start networking by giving to each other, instead of just receiving for themselves.

Fraser defined networking as identifying and building relationships to share information and opportunities.

"It's all about relationships, brothers and sisters — the key to effective networking."

Fraser is the author of several books, including "Success Runs in Our Race: The Complete Guide to

Effective Networking in the African American Community."

He said trading business cards with someone and then asking them for a job was not networking — it was begging.

"You can't take out of a bank what you haven't put into it," he said. "If you have nothing, it's because you are giving nothing."

Instead of earning money for themselves, he said, black people should earn money and then reinvest it into the community.

He asked the audience, "Are you tithing to the community? Are you giving back to the community?"

But before black people will have the money to give back, they need to change their current spending habits, he said.

"The money we have is invested poorly in interest payments, homes we can't afford, BMWs and Mercedes we shouldn't be riding in and Tommy Hilfiger, Nike and Anne Klein," he said.

He said black people could fix this "economic illiteracy" by join-

ing the 5 percent of black people who own stocks and bonds.

Black people have "an army of potential" to create wealth and jobs, which "raises up the poor." And now, Fraser said, is the time to use that army.

Black history has been stalled since the civil rights movements of the 1960s, he said. Blacks need to revive progress by networking and giving back.

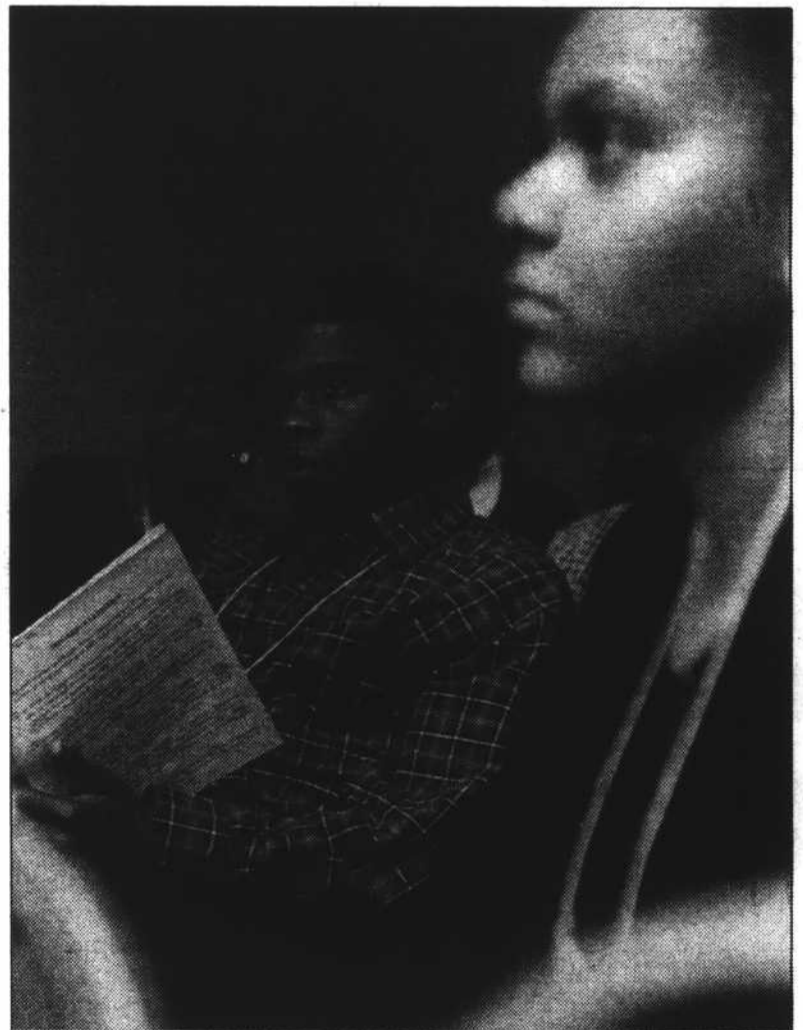
Several students at the conference said Fraser's theme coincided with the theme of the 21st annual conference — "Black Love ... Restoring the Essence of the Black Family."

Angelique Freeman, a junior at Metropolitan State College in Denver, said Fraser's ideas about giving to relationships made sense.

"I could really get in touch with him that way — you only get if you give out of the kindness of your heart."

Fraser said his formula for life was based on giving.

"You give to get to give."



CHRISTOPHER OUTLAW from St. Ambrose University in Davenport, Iowa, was shocked after finding out the number of blacks infected by the HIV virus every year. "HIV Prevention in the African American Community" was one of more than 20 workshops at the conference.

Students: Multiracial people need acceptance

By BRAD DAVIS
Senior Reporter

Though Friday's workshop was titled "The Tragic Mulatto," participants said mulattos were anything but tragic.

For too long, participants said, multiracial people have been forced to choose one race to identify themselves.

Myths that mulattos are "sell-outs" if they choose one race over another must end, most of the audience agreed.

Michelle Ludeman, a junior at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, said social standards make multiracial people deny part of their ethnic heritage.

"Why should I have to (choose one race)?" she said. "If I choose, I'm giving into what society wants me to do."

The effects of historical discrimination still linger today, said Linn Posey, a student from Macalester College in St. Paul, Minn.

"People put me in a box," Posey, a light-skinned biracial student said. "People put me in a white box, but I think you have to be proud of all of you."

Anna Thomas, a University of Missouri-Kansas City graduate student who led the workshop with Ludeman, said changing peoples' attitudes about mulattos would allow multiracial people to celebrate all their heritage.

"If you're secure in yourself, it doesn't matter how other people choose to identify themselves," Thomas said.

"It's important to always maintain your heritage. We're all one country, but we're not all one ethnicity."