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# The OG Perspective

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## Missed Opportunities *with special introduction*

By Larry Higginbottom, Founder/CEO-The Osiris Group

*On Tuesday, November 4<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 p.m. (EST), CNN declared that Barack Obama had just surpassed the 270 Electoral College delegates needed to become the next President of these United States of America. As tears of joy flowed down the cheeks of millions of Americans and millions abroad, my thoughts turned to the millions of our people, who continue to struggle, despite living at a time such as this... The thought which came to me was "missed opportunity". I wrote an article about this idea a year ago and I thought it would be appropriate to have it run again. What the Obama's victory means to me is having access to opportunity; you can become what you want to. But if you are waiting on a social program to get you out of poverty, it is never going to happen. You, as the individual, must seize the opportunity to create the life you desire, America is moving away from a society based on race and skin color to a society which is based on skills. What can you do?*



President Elect Barack Obama

### Missed Opportunities

(Originally published Sept. 2007)

In the last several years I have had the opportunity to travel and see how other people of African descent are living. Two simple words keeps returning to my mind when I compare the opportunities African-Americans have in this country compared to opportunities available to our brothers and sisters who reside in the Caribbean and Africa:

### Missed Opportunities.

I have been blessed to have visited Jamaica, Trinidad, Barbados, St. Kitt... and this past summer I was able to visit Ghana with my

family, thanks to the Black Social Workers. What an eye opening experience... I strongly encourage all African-Americans to take the trip back to where it all began, mother Africa.

(continued on page 2)



<http://www.osirisgroup.org>  
<http://www.osirisinstitute.com>

## Missed Opportunities by Larry Higginbottom



(continued from front)

*“What has become very clear from my travels in the last five years is, before you can capitalize on an opportunity, you first must be able to recognize one when you see it.”*

*-Larry Higginbottom*



From the moments I first began to travel I realized that Africa- Americans were being taught wrongly. We are not being instructed that despite all of the wrong doing White America had subjected us to, the fact remains we live in a country where if you invest in your self-development, you can remove yourself from poverty. We live in a country where there is vertical mobility. This is our country and it is ours due to our birth-right. Instead we are sold on receiving public assistance, hand-outs and free turkeys. We are not sold on becoming highly skilled or marketable, on how we can control our own financial destiny. Instead we are being directed to become dependant on city, state or federal government programs.

What has become very clear from my travels in the last five years is, before you can capitalize on an opportunity, you first must be able to recognize one when you see it. So many African-Americans today have been helped through social programs, they are now permanently blinded from recognizing opportunities.

Our visit to Ghana happen to coincide with the country celebrating fifty years of independence from British rule. We stayed in the capital city of Ghana, named Accra, but for me I was instantly transported back in time to my childhood in Mississippi, Alabama and Tennessee. Although there were modern buildings, most of the dwell-

ings in the capital city consisted of two or three room shacks with tin roofs, no indoor plumbing, no electricity, dirt roads, farm animals roaming freely, over-crowded living conditions and many idle adults.

Our visit to Ghana also took place during their school break. However, instead of these children resting, they were out selling arts and crafts trying to earn next semester's tui-



tion payment. What was really interesting to see (which really reminded me of my childhood experience) the Ghanaians, like my parent's generation who left the South in search of better opportunity, they were accustomed to making things happen. Because there was no safety net to depend on, if you did not create an opportunity for yourself, there would be no opportunity. What happened that has caused so many African Americans to become psychologically comfortable receiving help from city, state or federal government?

Perhaps this is an extreme example of misplaced good intentions. The sad truth is when you do for a

person or a people the things they must, and should do for themselves, essentially you disable them...you make them a slave to you.

There has never been a better time to be an African-American in America than right now. First of all, thanks to our parents, grandparents and the millions of unknown blacks, the institution of Jim Crow Segregation was destroyed. As African-Americans living in America today, we are not confronted with that evil. Secondly, in a society where people get rewarded and compensated based on their skill base, African-Americans should be at the top of the leader board.

Not to dismiss the fact that we were denied access for so long, but why are so many of us not highly skilled? I think Harriet Tubman said it best when she was asked about how many slaves had she freed. Harriet commented that, "I could have freed thousands more, but they had become slaves". The late historian Carter G. Woodson, who wrote the classical novel, *Mis-education of the Negro* put it this way: "When you control a man's mind you don't have to worry about his actions. You do not have to tell him not to stand here or go yonder. He will automatically find his proper place and stay in it. You do not need to send him to the back door. He will go without being told. In fact, if there is no back door, he will cut one for his special benefit." A person who has become a slave of another will never recognize opportunities.

## Is It Us Or Is It Them? Lamont Thomas, Family Mentor-The Osiris Group

Is it us or them... As a family mentor, I travel around communities both in and outside of Boston and I often encounter black males that are not working or doing things that are against the law to provide for their families. It makes me wonder what it is that challenges my fellow black males who have trouble providing stability for our families. We too often blame white America for our inability to take care of our children. Our children did not ask to come here and be put through some of the things that we put them through. We can no longer be absent in their lives and instead we must be the role models that our children so desperately need.

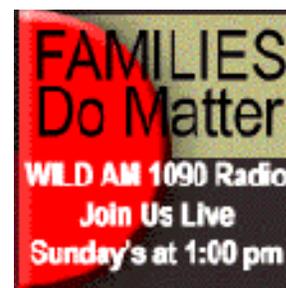
As a young child growing up in Roxbury I remember that negativity was always available...whether it was the guy at Dudley station committing robberies or the individuals that selling poison (drugs) to each other...these were the guys myself and many other brothers had to look up to, or so we

thought. Today, I see these same brothers, and when I have conversations with them, those who are not so strung out that they recognize me, they tell me stories how white America will not allow them to get a job because they have committed crimes and their CORI situation is messed up. Now in some cases that might be true, but let's stop for a second and take a second look...I have to ask these same brothers, when we were children when did white America come to the projects and say, "You can't and won't have anything!" Of course, that never happened. We all choose our paths good or bad...the same brothers who are strung out on the corner today, could have taken the opportunity to make more positive choices. The truth is if those brothers would have compared the amount of time that they were spending on the streets, to the actual monies they made, they would have realized that they were making less than minimum wage. That

point alone would be enough motivation to go out and find a job. It pains me as a Roxbury resident to see the things that are going on in the neighborhood. We as black males need to take our education more seriously...if we are in school then we are not in Dudley doing who knows what, to who knows who. We also need to take fatherhood a lot more seriously. So many times we are big men when we are in the bedroom, but really not men at all when it comes to being fathers to our children.

It reminds me of a lesson one of the positive older men from my childhood taught me...he asked me, "Lamont you never had a father right?" My answer was no...like many of the males where I grew up I also had a absent father. He said to me, "Now you know what not to do to your own kids when you have them." As black males, we have to get out of the mind frame that white America is stopping us from taking care of our business. White America is not

stopping us from succeeding. That's garbage. We need to find a way to love ourselves and stop making excuses for every problem that occurs in our lives. It's not about white and black, it's about you.



## A Great Day in 2048 by Harry Harding, Family Mentor-The Osiris Group



After the honeymoon, it will still be a great day, watching Barack Obama carry out his duties as President of the United States. I feel for the Republican Party and the so-called conservatives in the country. Their candidate lost... like witnessing a bloody boxing match, you have to sympathize with the opponent lying on the mat. As much joy as it would bring me personally to laugh in the faces of Sean Hannity and Rush Limbaugh, the fact that they will have to refer to

Barack as President Obama for the next four years is enough penance for me. The truth is, I actually like John McCain. His campaign was scattered and unappealing but I respect the man's grit and his story is singular, for sure. Furthermore to McCain's credit, for the first time since I have been able to cast a ballot, I did not believe I was choosing between two candidates whom I could care less about, Democrat and Republican alike. Admittedly, I was fixated on the 2008 election like never before in my life, and I credit that to both candidates. At the

end of the day, in many ways, McCain was swimming upstream. Representing an incumbent party that has little to no goodwill with the vast majority of Americans, McCain's journey to victory was improbable...even versus an average Democrat. But, ultimately, what sealed the defeat for McCain was the juggernaut on the opposition...the antipathy of average, the most dynamic political figure of modern times just happened to be on the other ticket. **(continued on back)**

## Inspirational Words of the Month

**“Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.” - Barack Obama**

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**Larry Higginbottom**  
CEO/Founder  
The Osiris Group

The Osiris Group has a current membership which consists of Family Clinicians and Family Mentors who are able to service more than one hundred (100) families per month. Osiris Group members specialize in reunification and stabilization of the family unit. Mentors and Clinicians coach children and parents techniques in behavior modeling, advocacy and support, seeking community linkage, relationship building, social skills, job searching and other self-development methods that enhance whole life skills. Our flexible team can structure its schedule to accommodate each family. All team members reside within the communities served and can respond immediately to a family in crisis. We have an open referral process, encouraging recommendations from social workers, group and residential homes. Coverage options range from Sunday to Sunday for three months to year-round comprehensive services. Have questions? Contact us today!

## A Great Day in 2048 by Harry Harding, Family Mentor-The OG

continued from pg. 3

The issues are important, too and looking forward, the effect this election will have on the economy, foreign and domestic affairs remains to be seen. But regardless of the enormous expectations, President-Elect Obama will never satisfy the right-wing nor will he appease many conservative pockets of the nation. The sentiment from many of these circles is that Obama's election is nothing more

than a historic case study of affirmative action-an idea that is both maddening and depressing. Nonetheless, my sympathy for the Republican base and it's following is limited. Obama's win is good for their children and their children's children. Barack Obama's election has relevance far beyond one or two presidential terms. Won't it be a great day in November 2048, when Americans are standing in even longer lines waiting to cast their ballot for president and the

candidates include a Republican Hispanic woman and an Asian Democrat? Or perhaps an Italian candidate will inspire the nation to suspend partisan lines to elect an Independent. It will be a great day in 2048, because our children and grandchildren will be voting based on the strength of the candidate and not on the basis of race. It will be a great day because Obama's election, the election of the first Black President, will be old news.

### The OG Perspective

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