

BY PRESTON N. WILLIAMS

## Criteria for Decision-Making for Social Ethics in the Black Community

Since Joseph Washington's attack on Martin Luther King's ethic of non-violence, black religious scholars have been seeking a new social ethic for the black community. Some, like Joseph Washington, have attempted to discover a more militant social ethic within the context of the Christian faith. Some, like J. Deotis Roberts, appear to be more concerned with an ethic stressing, as did King, social justice and reconciliation but with no conspicuous stress upon non-violence. Some, like James Cone and Albert Cleage, have attempted to construct within Christianity, a black communal or nationalistic ethic whose final locus of authority rests within a doctrinally defined black community. In spite of these and other attempts, there has been as yet no agreement reached concerning a new orientation other than the willingness of most blacks to accept, together with women, Latins, and Africans, the suitability of the phrase, 'Liberation' or 'Theology of Liberation.' The imperative need for a new point of departure cannot be underestimated. The paralysis of S.C.L.C., the melting away of the National Committee of Black Churchmen, and the inability of PUSH to secure a shove-off from the black community indicates the need for a new ethical perspective on the social goals of black persons. As a black social ethicist, I bear a peculiar responsibility to address myself to this problem and while I am not yet prepared to set forth in a definitive manner a possible new focus for social action, I do want to suggest some moral decision procedures to be followed by those who seek to provide guidance for black social action. My suggestions then are not strategies for social change, but rather ethical criteria that should be used to test any strategy felt to be viable. In a period when crusades for racial justice are non-existent it might appear to be unwise to concern oneself with ethical guidelines rather than new techniques for motivation or consciousness-raising among blacks and whites. I offer only one reason for my concern, namely my conviction that the black community has not yet developed an adequate set of criteria by which to measure the many proposals for and results of social intervention and social reconstruction that constantly take place in the black community. Although there has been much rhetoric about the need for such criteria, few have undertaken the task of seriously setting forth their decision-making procedures. My essay is intended to repair in part that omission. It can, however, do only a portion of what needs to be done. A fully adequate

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statement would have to address itself to both the internal and external requirements for healthy, black communal life. In this paper I shall only speak about what is needed in order to improve the health and integrity of the black community and not what the black community needs to contribute to the transformation of American society or what transformation needs to take place in American society.

These issues as well as the necessity of strategies for black social action are of crucial importance. Moreover, strategies and issues are interdependent. Alas, one man cannot do all things.

I begin, therefore, with a statement about decision procedures, with the hope that a modest contribution to an admittedly large and complex problem will neither obscure the larger issues nor fail to contribute to possible solutions. The criteria which I believe to be necessary for health and integrity within the black community and which at the same time are supportive of social change calculated to remove racism and to promote social justice are: (1) universalism, (2) enlightened self-interest, (3) tolerance, (4) freedom of choice, (5) mutuality, (6) distinctions between what the community has a right to claim and the form associated with implementation of that claim, and (7) enlargement of justice. The criteria are not intended to be exhaustive. I do wish to argue that they are essential. The first two criteria deal with the relationship of the black community to the larger human community; the next three with internal matters in the black community itself; and the last two are procedural rules of thumb for sorting out conflicts arising from the utilization of these criteria.

### **The Black Community and the Larger Human Community**

W.E.B. DuBois in his volume, *The Gift of Black Talk* has written:

"The democracy established in America in the eighteenth century was not, and was not designed to be, a democracy of the masses of men and it was thus singularly easy for people to fail to see the incongruity of democracy and slavery. It was the Negro himself who forced the consideration of this incongruity, who made the modern world at least consider if not wholly accept the idea of a democracy including men of all races and colors."

Implicit, if not explicit, in this assertion of DuBois is that universalism is one of the gifts of black folk to America and the world. What is important here is not who discovered universalism or who best practiced it, but rather its place in the social thought of black Americans. DuBois' assertion that blacks, precisely because they had been discriminated against and excluded from the human and political family, have come to value universalism. Democracy or the commonwealth of persons and nations is to include on an equal basis all races and colors. As stated by DuBois, the idea has its genesis in the enlargement of the notions contained in the founding documents of this nation and the French Enlightenment. Another source of the value was the Judaeo-Christian tradition. The motto of the African Methodist Episcopal Church em-

bodies this conviction — 'God our Father, Christ our Redeemer, Man our Brother' — and Benjamin T. Tanner's explanation of the word 'African' makes clear that the intended force of the name was primarily doctrinal, and only secondarily national. The first black denomination was established according to Bishop Tanner because of the black man's desire for liberation and his willingness to be classed as heterodox if that were necessary in order for him to affirm his liberty. Nonetheless, Tanner affirmed blacks sought to include all those who spoke the broad language of humanity as well as its 'Negro dialect.' The black church thus was established to affirm the oneness of mankind and the Negroes' participation in that oneness. To be sure, ambiguities existed in the practical carrying out of this policy. It was difficult to be a black but universal church in a slave nation, yet the intention of the founders was never completely forgotten. Indeed, so strong was and is this allegiance to universalism, that among black secular and religious individuals almost every protest against Christianity as a religion suitable for black persons arose from a belief in universalism.

It would not be difficult for one to document this allegiance to universalism among blacks. Alexander Crummell, Francis J. Grimké, Adam Clayton Powell, Marcus Garvey, Benjamin Mays, Howard Thurman, George D. Kelsey, Daddy Grace, Father Devine, Martin King, and Malcolm X, are but a few on the long list of its supporters. Few, if any, would engage in the deliberate obfuscation of the motif as has been done by James Cone and Albert Cleage. Unless one desires to make a clear break with black history and religious tradition, a social ethic for blacks must be rooted in universalism and inclusiveness. A full argument for universalism and a refined definition of its meaning must await another essay because it demands discussion of the relation of universals and particulars as well as the nature of a pluralistic society. Suffice it to say that most black visions of a racially and socially just community stem from the desire on the part of blacks to be counted as equal, fully person and citizen, in the human family and to have all others similarly counted. With the exception of Malcolm X, whose rejection of Christianity and democracy as practiced in America led him to Islam and Mecca, the notion of universalism is rooted in Christianity, the Enlightenment, and the founding documents of this nation. Islamic monotheism does support universalism and the concept could be made compatible with African concepts of God. Exclusivistic and ethnic definitions of the human community have always been rejected by the majority of black Americans and should, I would assert, continue to be shunned. A black social ethic needs always to make this point clearly and unequivocally.

A second criteria for measuring the adequacy of a social ethic for blacks is 'enlightened self-interest.' In setting forth the importance of universalism I have already touched upon the significance of enlightened self-interest. Universalism can be easily and wisely espoused by blacks because it is supportive of their claim to be fully equal and the right of

others to be treated fairly and impartially. No privileged or preferred status is sought, only the consistent application of human rights to all persons. As long then as blacks are excluded from their full share of rights and duties as persons and citizens, universalism can serve both as an ethical constraint and a cry for justice for blacks.

Even if it be true, however, that black Americans stand ultimately on the side of justice and righteousness, this is seldom perceived as true or conceded to be true by others in those concrete situations demanding ethical choice and decision. Indeed, the white racism present in America lays the burden of proof always on the black man. Blacks must establish for some whites the fact that other whites have treated them unjustly. No clearer proof of this can be found than in respect to the function of law and justice itself. Rights constitutionally acknowledged to be due to blacks are not granted and the courts and laws of the land are biased in favor of whites. Blacks need therefore, a means of convincing the white majority of the wisdom of placing truth and justice above white solidarity, i.e., a racism which is both structural and attitudinal in nature. As a group and as individuals, blacks must then employ enlightened self-interest. This is the proper rubric under which blacks should undertake the advocacy of black causes in the face of massive white resistance to fair treatment of blacks. The two conditions that make a policy of enlightened self-interest indispensable are the high visibility of the black American and the defective nature of the universals affirmed by the dominant white society.

What distinguishes blacks in America is above all else their skin color. As long as Americans have eyes they shall be able to distinguish white Americans from black Americans and treat them in ascribed ways. Although it is true that skin color is a highly inadequate indicator of class or race and that some blacks will always be able to pass either as whites or as members of a more acceptable non-white group, the fact still remains that the large majority of blacks can be easily identified by skin color alone. This singular fact will make for continued systematic discrimination against the black American and will be used as the basis of justifying racist behavior as right and proper. I can see no end to discrimination against blacks as a group and the persistence of this discrimination makes it necessary for blacks to act as a group and not merely as individuals. This group or class interest should take the form of enlightened self interest, i.e., group action when necessary should always be determined by rationally justifiable means and toward rationally chosen goals. By any means necessary is an unwise ethical injunction because it makes ethics too much a matter of power politics and gamesmanship. As a slogan, by any means necessary, it may be suitable for church and political meetings or rapping sessions on the street corner, but it is certainly not the proper basis upon which to request a person to commit fully his life and property. Blacks need to acquire the habit of reflecting rationally about the nature of the good they seek.

They need to weigh short and long term consequences of their acts and deeds. They need to evaluate more thoroughly the brothers and sisters to whom they entrust their community's well-being as well as 'the man' and 'Ms. Ann.' The high visibility of the black man makes group action necessary, but no group action should be undertaken solely because it has been advocated by some black person or group. Every suggested group action should be subject to justification in the public forum. Appeals to group loyalty should never be made a substitute for group thought.

Enlightened self-interest employed as a criterion for testing a social ethic for blacks would ensure continued group action by blacks to end discrimination while insisting that such action also be in the service of the common good. Over time this method of procedure would reduce the ad hoc, random, and impulsive nature of much black effort at community building and would encourage program building on top of other programs thus providing cumulative approaches to goals and problems.

Just as high visibility makes the black American an easy and continuing target of discrimination, it is also responsible for a great deal of self-deception on the part of whites. Professed color-blindness and description of white-black relations in terms of class and other non-racial categories does not hide the fact that society is extremely sensitive to racial statistics. Census, IQ, crime, health, income and practically all other statistics are kept according to race and are extensively employed for justifying white discrimination against black persons.

Although it is easily demonstrated that whites as a group experience today, as well as yesteryear, gains from denial of equal justice to blacks, no "American dilemma" exists in fact. What is evident is that even those groups which should be most sensitive to blacks oppose the claim of blacks and allege that blacks are where they are in the society because they are present-oriented or are not suitably prepared for higher positions of responsibility. Affirmative action on behalf of blacks always provides a counter-claim by a white individual or group more justly rewarded by the society. Protesting in the name of 'non-discrimination' and 'achievement' they undertake essentially racist actions, i.e., actions which have the consequence of continuing the white racism endemic in the society.

While it would be unfair to accuse any individual or group of racism simply because they are white, it nonetheless remains true that the majority of white Americans do give implicit consent to and quite frequently pursue actively, policies designed to continue racism in housing, education, health care, and legal justice as well as employment. While professing to be objective and impartial, white Americans by intention and by inadvertence victimize their black fellow citizens. Just as the dominance of Protestant Christianity, in and of itself, led to injustice toward Roman Catholics and Jews, so too does white majority rule lead to injustice toward black Americans even where whites are sympa-

thetic. Unfortunately for blacks, there is no force similar to secularism and disestablishment acting to transform the 'old order' and such transformation forces as reason, science, and justice are themselves the captives of white racism. The distortion of universals by racism is a practice begun in colonial America when as Winthrop D. Jordan indicates whites distorted every universal in science, religion, and government in such fashion as to produce a legitimation of 'white superiority' and 'black inferiority.'

This practice still prevails today and is protected by our refusal to treat white racism as a casual factor in our social malaise. As Pierre van den Berghe indicates, America began as and continues largely today as, a 'herrenfolk' democracy, i.e., a democracy intended for whites alone and not for all citizens. Although the 13th, 14th and 15th amendment to the Constitution in theory made blacks full citizens of the democracy, they were kept everywhere separate and unequal and today social and behavioral scientists as well as the general population declare them to be at the same instance in time 'more equal and inferior' (Michael Novak) and 'less equal and inferior' (E. C. Banfield) and 'less equal and fated to be so by nature and culture' (R. J. Herrnstein). The majority status of whites have permitted them to deceive themselves into mistaking power and self-interest for justice and truth.

The reaction of whites to the color of blacks, either their attempt to make it the mark of inferiority or their desire to wish it away, has led to one single consequence, white solidarity and group action against blacks. The first group of whites, for example, acted to prevent the enforcement of the 1954 school desegregation decision, while the second group acted to prevent the establishment of open enrollment type programs which would provide the black youth with an opportunity to remove the deficiencies of his education in the lower grades. While there is an important difference in degree in the action of these whites, the consequence for blacks is the same, inferior education. At a later instance, this consequence will be utilized to establish some intrinsic lack in the black person — present-orientedness, intellectual inferiority, or insatiable craving for special treatment. Neither group of whites gives much thought to the gains and bonuses it daily receives from its victimization of the black community. Since whites do not act effectively to destroy racism, blacks must themselves act. Enlightened self-interest is then an indispensable aspect of a social ethic for black persons.

Enlightened self-interest has been present in the black community from the beginning. Even during slavery, its presence could be seen in the effort of blacks to establish mutual aid societies, churches, schools, fraternal associations, and burial societies. After slavery it was advocated by such diverse men as Henry McNeill Turner, Alexander Curmmell, W.E.B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington. The radical conservatism of Marcus Garvey and the radical leftism of A. Philip Randolph employed it as a slogan. The black masses in every period have looked for

it in their leaders and the leaders themselves have always felt 'advancing the race' was an obligation that could never be completely set aside. Youth who today proclaim its discovery as a newly minted coin are only pointing to that which is ubiquitous in black life. They, like I, seek by so pointing to underline the need for greater reflection upon 'enlightened.'

What is it that blacks want is a question frequently put by whites, but it is also a question that blacks need to put to themselves. Granted that blacks must as a group act to protect their 'self-interest,' what is that self-interest that needs protection? Does it deal with bread and butter issues, with culture and pride with both or with something not embraced by those concerns. A social ethic intended for consumption by a total community needs to be specific about that self-interest and it needs to be able to defend its selection as both wise and good. The massiveness of white solidarity that dooms the black person to be always a highly visible minority requires that blacks be extremely 'enlightened' about their self-interest. Conflicts with blacks over these matters need to be resolved through reason and by means of discretion. Goals need to be defined as clearly as circumstances permit and pursued with diligence and care. In addition, no action should be undertaken which is simply an emotional or vindictive response to white solidarity. Blacks like other groups in the society need to ascertain what are their legitimate group needs and what are the proper means for seeking to fulfill those needs. Unlike some others, they should, I would urge, develop those interests in congruence with the best interests of the society as a whole.

Since I am speaking about group self-expression by blacks it is prudent to state explicitly that I am not suggesting some form of 'nation building' or any other specific program. What I am urging is the need for the black community as a community to find ways of analyzing proposals advocating 'nation building' or any other strategy designed to improve the condition of black people. Two ingredients that should be embodied in an acceptable proposal are universalism and enlightened self-interest.

#### Within the Black Community

A third criterion that should be met by any social ethic for black empowerment is tolerance. The word is not one that is especially appealing to me because it carries with it quite often the connotation of lowest common denominator. This is not my intention. What I want to convey is the necessity of pluralism within as well as without the black community. In recent years blacks have fought vigorously to avoid what many blacks felt to be complete assimilation into conventional middle-class American styles of behavior and thought. White America was to abandon normative definitions of 'American' and permit blacks as well as other ethnic groups to maintain their own distinctive cultural patterns. Associated with this has been a desire for a monolithic black

community. Every would-be liberator called every other black to stop thinking and accept his conception of blackness, his definition of the community and his revolutionary program. Diversity was to prevail without, unity was to exist within. Where unity could not be achieved by persuasion, it was to be established by coercion. Cadres arose in many communities to represent the people and give power to the people. Those blacks who did not fit the new and constantly changing definition of the people were excluded from the black community. On one day, integrationist and black bourgeoisie would exclude some blacks from their community; on the next day, black militants and radicals would ostracize some blacks from their community. The obsession with unity in black protest and community resulted in the attribution of freedom and liberty to the dominant white society as a desirable end and the establishment of submission and conformity as hallmarks of black communal life. From this flowed further impoverishment of black community.

I deem tolerance necessary as an element in a black social ethic because pluralism is needed within as well as without the black community. Neither blacks or whites should use black persons as means rather than ends. Not only must blacks possess dignity and respect in the larger society, they need also to possess it within the black community. The rich diversity of life styles possessed by black persons needs to be permitted freedom of expression unhampered by someone else's definition of blackness. The multitude of groups existing within the black community need to have a fair opportunity to be heard and evaluated by their fellow blacks. The black community then must be liberated from within as well as without if unity and consensus is to emerge. Black oppressors cannot be permitted to take over even before the white oppressor has fully departed.

Another reason for my advocacy of tolerance as an element of any adequate social ethic for blacks is my conviction that in the future there will be even greater diversity among blacks than there has been in the past. The many changes since 1950 in segregation practices, education, employment, radical politics, and relationships to Africa have profoundly affected the black community. Despite all the talk of, and on occasion practice of, separation, the black community is now more open to the larger community than ever before. One not only eats downtown in the 'five and ten cents' store, one works there as a clerk and supervisor. In many communities the Negro school has disappeared as a bond of cohesion among blacks and cries of nation-time come from black students and faculty on white campuses that are more remote in distance and thought to the black community.

In addition, the types of vocations and professions opened to blacks have expanded and a large number of new skills and resources have been made available to the community. The generalist — public school teacher, lawyer, preacher, general practitioner in medicine — have been



supplemented by an ever increasing number of specialists. Together with expanded employment opportunities and income, this has led to the creation of new elites and friction between old and new elites. Moreover, the countless interventions resulting from the revision of opportunity systems has meant an enlargement of the political dimension of black life. New resources required additional allocators, but the exceeding scarcity of the added resources resulted in sometimes fierce and bitter political encounters. Confrontations between black and black were as numerous as those between black and white. In any event, power distribution in the black community underwent radical changes and with these changes came conflict and alienation as well as harmony and cooperation. Perhaps greater in significance than all these functional changes was the insistent demand that the community change the basis of its identity in order to take into account new perceptions of its past in America, its relation to the black peoples of Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and its responsibilities for promoting revolution among all oppressed peoples. The burden change has placed upon the black community has not been properly assessed by militant or integrationist, black or Negro. This failure has led to false expectations concerning the abilities of persons to respond and to unwarranted intensification of the ideological character of the appeal. What needs to be seen more clearly is that the black community is indeed reconstituting itself, but is doing so because of new inputs and opportunities that have made dysfunctional former institutions and practices. While it may be true that many decisions must be made today and not tomorrow, it seems both wise and prudent to me that all options be heard. The preoccupation with unity tends to truncate this process by seeking to build community on old models and images of black life rather than seeking to anticipate what patterns of cohesion might best fit the evolving new community. While some groups like the Black Panthers did build with a completely new model for black life as their blueprint, their lack of support among blacks indicates that they have leaped too quickly over the past legacy of black life and experience. Although they had the wisdom not to seek to recapture and hold the past, they lacked the insight needed to recognize the real dynamics at work in the black community. I advocate tolerance as a characteristic of a black social ethic because it will encourage special interest groups within the black community to listen to the conceptions of unity held by others. This will lead to a unity in diversity. Cohesion will or can be present but it will be tenuous enough to provide freedom to most aspects of a highly differentiated black community. Divergence and variety will be permitted in black life and pluralism and openness will be demanded in relationships between black and black as well as between black and non-black.

A concern for freedom of choice is implicit in our belief that tolerance is a necessary aspect of any black social ethic. Freedom of choice must be explicitly set forth, however, because it enunciates an individual

right and because it has been historically one of the hallmarks of the black man's quest for freedom. Once again, I think it is imperative to underscore its requiredness for life in the black community as well as in the larger society. The internal as well as external significance of freedom of choice must be asserted because, as indicated above, some in the black community have sought to determine the nature of life for all blacks. Some blacks have argued that the necessities of survival or the requirements for all-out warfare against whites demanded that blacks surrender their personal freedom of choice in order to support group causes.

Prior to the Civil Rights Revolution this problem would not have arisen because the walls of the black ghetto were not porous. A crisis of identity was unthinkable because the larger society defined precisely who blacks were and acted to enforce that definition. A rigid code of racial etiquette caused many a black to internalize their hatred when in the presence of whites. Only in the black community did individuals have the opportunity to express themselves and that freedom was exercised with almost complete abandon. With the Civil Rights Revolution, however, came increased freedom for blacks and with the Black Power Revolt came a new racial etiquette. Freedom of choice in the larger society was expanded and freedom of expression increased. At the same time, within the black community, freedom of choice and freedom of expression were contracted, except perhaps for the lower classes whose style of life came to be considered 'the black life style.' This writer believes, however, that the emergence of a larger number of local community groups with relatively fixed conceptions of black life resulted in a reduction of personal freedom of choice even for the masses. Much of the new authoritarianism was justified in the name of struggle for survival, pursuit of self-determination, or quest for black power. Revolution and insurrection demanded a surrender of freedom of choice in order that black solidarity could confront and conquer white solidarity. If blacks were to decide upon complete and total warfare with whites, then perhaps freedom of choice would have to be a casualty of that war. This is not what blacks have elected, however, to do. Even the most militant and most separation-minded blacks have sought and maintained alliances with whites. The final goal appears to be the refashioning of the black community so that it wears no longer a badge of inferiority and is determined by black dreams rather than 'the American dream.' Whites are enlisted only in an effort to secure resources to win a contest with other blacks. Whites are not so much conquered as manipulated so that one black party might prevail over another black party. While this is no doubt better than having only whites manipulate blacks and having black community created according to white plans, it nonetheless falls short of what is most ideal. As a goal, it certainly does not warrant some blacks surrendering their freedom to choose. Indeed, the highly partisan and political nature of the entire scheme requires that

blacks be free to choose in order that each individual can decide who shall influence him. Freedom of choice is needed to check the will to power, the avarice and greed of blacks as well as whites and to insure the fact that black persons are treated with dignity and respect. I have no doubt but that this criterion will result in the slowing down of the plans of some would-be liberators. I can only hope that it will not be detrimental to the best aspirations of the total black community. The risk involved in clinging to freedom of choice is not great because without freedom of choice liberty is exchanged for benign black paternalism or incompetent black dictatorship. Until blacks are ready to grant full freedom to each other, they cannot be liberated. Communalism, togetherness, and unity will not produce wholesome and just community life if freedom of choice is withdrawn. On the other hand, I want to state explicitly that I am not arguing for 'individualism' or for blacks 'doing their own thing.' A social ethic demands that persons care about something other than themselves. I am seeking to state what a person interested in a healthy and wholesome black community needs to affirm as an indispensable aspect of a social ethic for black persons. The withholding of freedom of choice will lead to the continuation of conditions that have historically permitted black policy kings, cult leaders, and others shades to exploit black people. The concern to break the cycle of exploitation by black charlatans as well as white oppressors and to create conditions where persons can become mature, leads one to endorse freedom of choice as an indispensable criterion for a social ethic for black persons. To be sure there will always be those times when one will regret the decisions made by other individuals, groups, or the community, but that is a small price to pay in order that all blacks might have the right to be a person and to live in an open democratic community. No other mark of emancipation from self-hatred is more significant than the willingness of blacks to permit their fellow blacks to define their own blackness. Whether it be the NAACP seeking out good reliable Negroes, Elijah Muhammed seeking loyal followers of Islam, or black militants seeking true believers and revolutionaries, the acid test is their willingness to permit other blacks to say "no" as well as "yes" to their program and goals for the black community.

An institution which shares a great responsibility for conditioning blacks to accept something less than full freedom of choice is the black church and the black preachers who have treated their congregations in an authoritarian and paternalistic manner. The Black Muslims are the most conspicuous present day example of this type of church, but the style is well rooted in the Baptist, Methodist, and cult churches. It is, indeed, the prototypical black church style. The fact that black preachers serve in many secular as well as religious capacities has enabled this style of leadership to become general in the black community. Blacks must never forget that one aspect of the charismatic leader's power is the ability to hold enormous power over the minds and wills of individuals

such that manipulation of persons can be easily consummated or that persons can be easily preserved in dependency relations. It cannot be denied that this has been practiced by many a black churchman and that part of the glamor of the black pulpit and church continues to be this opportunity to so dominate and control the lives of individuals. The emotionalism felt by many to be the most characteristic feature of black religious life, if not black life in general, can contribute to this practice of manipulation by reducing significantly the rational factors that should be present in judgment and decision-making especially in community matters. The temptation to misuse this power is increased not lessened by the conviction that one stands on the side of God, or that God has chosen us of all the people of the world, or that this movement, this strategy is God-ordained to deliver Blacks and all oppressed people from their oppression. Such inspired prophets and groups tend to be extremely dogmatic and highly sensitive to criticism. Since the black community has both a policy that encourages authoritarianism and individuals and groups that practice it, one safeguard that should be employed in every social ethic is the stimulation and nurturing of freedom of choice.

Mutuality is also in our thinking a requisite for a black social ethic. It is the form of love most suitable for inclusion in a community action program. It both answers the black cry that blacks love blacks and it describes that love in an ethically acceptable form. Blacks among themselves have always deplored the lack of sufficient cooperativeness in their community, but until the black power revolt, that lack was not described primarily in terms of the imperative to love fellow blacks. This description of the need for greater cooperation among blacks in terms of love is due both to the legacy of Martin King and the domestic metaphors adopted by the black power movement. The former's personalism and the latter movement's stress upon brotherhood and sisterhood have resulted in the belief that affectionate love should exist among all blacks. As an ideal I am not in disagreement with King's hope that blacks love everybody or the black power desire that blacks love blacks. I do feel, however, that it is not advisable that a social ethic be measured by its ability to encourage affectionate love among its adherents. This type of love is not necessary either to promote greater cooperation among blacks or to rid blacks of self-hatred. While blacks should be affectionate persons, what is needed is not affection but consideration for the other's integrity and respect for the other's rights, liberty, and dignity. Blacks need not be involved with each other in an emotional, intense, or intimate way in order to recognize the need of positive interaction. Indeed, if such were needed, the thirty million black Americans could never look forward to a mass protest involving a significant proportion of the black community. What blacks do need and what every social ethic should embody is a conscious, affirmative respect and regard for each and every individual. Mutuality suggests that proper considera-

tion for the other that will negate self-hatred and make possible greater cooperation between competing elites, opposing classes, and odd strangers within the black community.

#### Procedural Rules

My stress upon the variety and differences to be found in black life and experience has caused me to stress criteria such as freedom of choice and tolerance which provide for unity in diversity. Mutuality will also contribute to unity and strengthen cohesion by causing black persons to give equal consideration to all others. Another criterion is needed, however, to help insure the reduction of tensions and conflict. An adequate social ethic for the black community must be capable of distinguishing between what the community has a right to claim and the form associated with the implementation of that claim. Any one of a number of past protest activities might be used to illustrate this need. I shall attempt to make it clear by a brief reference to my own criteria and to the Black Manifesto.

Considered formally one might easily and properly conclude that universalism always takes precedence over enlightened self-interest. Yet in any concrete situation it does make sense to inquire whether blacks should pursue an abstract universal or a concrete claim dictated by self-interest. I describe the universal as abstract because its realization will be remote in time and possible only if and to the degree that white solidarity is broken. In the light of such a decision I would advocate that one seek to ascertain what is one's actual duty as opposed to what appears to be one's formal obligation. If one uses the Black Manifesto as an illustration one might have proceeded as follows. The central issue raised by James Forman's confrontation with the white liberal establishment was reparations. Although reaction to reparations as an ethical obligation was sharp and divergent there exists little ground upon which an ethicist can reject the notion that restitution is required for a wrong or injury done another. The claim of the black community is ethically justified. Reparations are due for a wrong that has been done by white America. Nonetheless, blacks might on a number of grounds oppose Foreman's program as a proposal to be implemented by the black community. Some might argue that the goals of the Manifesto were not those of the black community, but a leftist elite, or that the reparations were not sufficient for the injury done, or that the money should not be paid by the churches nor given to the Black Economic Development Conference, or that a reparations program should provide not only for blacks, but for all wronged persons in our society. Others might argue for the more historic approach to reparations, preferential hiring or affirmative action. The actual response that blacks and whites took to Foreman's demands did embrace all these considerations and more. As it should have, the response to Foreman's demands became very complex.

In such a context a decision-making procedure needs to help unravel the complexity and refuse to become a part of simplistic solutions. My decision-making procedure does that by insisting that a distinction be made between the claim, which I judge to be valid, and the form associated with the implementation of that claim. If whites are culpable then the obligation to make clear the various ways in which the claim can be satisfied is an obligation of the black community. The advocates of the several options have a duty to publicly state the several courses of action available to the black community. The Black Manifesto is thus one of a number of means by which the reparations claim can be satisfied. Black persons more fully informed of what is being advocated on their behalf can freely choose that form of implementation that is most congruent with the community's goals and aspirations. Knowing more fully the complexities of the issue they can learn to tolerate the decisions of blacks who disagree with them about the manner in which the claim is implemented. In addition, the discussion concerning which form of implementation to choose would provide a forum for developing genuine mutuality and deciding would make clear whether and on what grounds universalism should be prior to enlightened self-interest or vice-versa. My procedure would surrender then the desire for monolithic unity in order to secure greater knowledge and understanding of the issues involved and in the effort to preserve individual and communal freedom in decision-making. In every situation moreover, the judgment would be corrigible in respect both to the correctness or the incorrectness of the claim and the means which would be employed to implement it.

A final criteria that should be applied in any decision-making procedure is the ethic's potential for enhancing social justice. Stated in the language of just war theory, a black social ethic should embody a reasonable hope of success before it is adopted by the larger community. It is unwise and unfair to urge blacks not to undertake any action until they are sure of winning. Their minority status, white racism, and white solidarity has meant, and no doubt will continue to mean, that blacks are always more sure of losing than winning. Nonetheless, the main concern of every black social ethic should be the liberation of all black and oppressed persons. Black social ethics should seek racial and social justice as well as the improvement of the quality of individual life. Any program recommended on the basis of its ability not to win should be rejected unless the sponsor can indicate what shall be its benefit and cost to the black community and how shall it contribute to ultimate success for black causes. It would be irresponsible and unethical for blacks to seek the deterioration of life in their or the larger community. As a consequence, risks should be limited to those that promise a reasonable hope of success. While it would be legitimate to count 'symbolic victories' as in some sense a success, it would be desirable to know in advance what 'symbolic victories' or latent rewards might be expected from a particular set of activities. Given the scarcity of

resources and power in the black community and the difficulty faced in ameliorating race relations, every decision-making procedure in respect to a black social ethic should embody a concern for reasonable success in enhancing social justice. Only policies and programs that promise reasonable success in the creation of a new social order should be adopted.

Although I have spoken almost exclusively in terms of success under this heading of enhancing social justice, my major concern is justice. I am relying upon the other criteria to sort out just from unjust proposals. Here I am adding one other consideration, the just proposal must be a viable proposal. It must possess the possibility of enactment, of success. If it does not then the black community should not be requested to use some of its meager resources in order to seriously consider and perhaps attempt its implementation. Since one can never know in advance what might succeed, I am insisting upon positive calculations of the chances for reasonable success rather than negative assertions — "What could the concept of 'winning' possibly mean."

This paper began with a brief reference to the many programs which have been initiated in the black community during recent years and the inability of those programs to incite the black community to action. It is our belief that some of these programs have failed because of inherent weaknesses and that in other instances individuals have not acted due to genuine perplexities about what they should do as moral as well as black persons. It is our hope that the criterion suggested above will aid both the social change agent and the individual actor to make more appropriate responses to the grave issues confronting them and the black community.

