

Pooling our resources is key to Blacks' wealth

Written by William Reed

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A. Peter Bailey is a man of note and distinction. The Black writer contends that: "Despite strong evidence to the contrary, many Blacks believe with all our hearts and souls that the path to equal rights, equal justice and equal opportunity lies in electing people to political offices." If you don't see the truth in Bailey's statement, it's for sure you won't be inviting him to speak to your church or organization. Others who wanting to engage in stories that empowered and enlightened the Black masses, are booking the self-described Garveyite to tell African-American audiences that they have "been bamboozled" into believing that voting and politics will change their lot in life.

As a speaker, Bailey coaches Blacks to be clear and uncompromising in their lives and goals. He provides a needed dose of reality with an abundance of history and direction. Bailey encourages Blacks' wealth and community-building. "Black people have a powerful weapon we don't effectively use. That weapon is our individual and group economic resources. We spend too much time focusing on electoral politics and not nearly enough on wisely using the trillion dollars that we turnover annually."

Bailey brings stories and insights on Marcus Mosiah Garvey, Jr. to his presentations. Marcus Garvey represents Black self-reliance in America. Garvey is quite a story. He was a staunch proponent of Black nationalism, to which end, he founded and forged the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). Through public speeches and his newspaper *The Negro World*, Garvey became one of the most significant Black leaders of the 20th century. He advanced a philosophy known as Garveyism to inspire economic empowerment among African Americans. Garveyism would eventually inspire others, ranging from the Nation of Islam to the Rastafari movement that proclaims Garvey "a prophet."

Bailey's presentations are inspired by the vision and accomplishments of Garvey, one of the greatest Black leaders in history. Garvey was a role model to Father Divine, Elijah Muhammad and Malcolm X. His legend is based on his leadership toward Blacks' pride and self-determination. Garvey evolved Booker T. Washington's approach toward business and self-reliance, through the UNIA and he directed the largest mass movement among African Americans in history. Garvey's UNIA movement and vision became procedural and conceptual models toward African Americans capitalism ventures.

In his presentations, Bailey makes positive Black history unfold. In the 1920s, it was eye-opening for Blacks across America when Garvey purchased an auditorium in Harlem and proclaimed it "Liberty Hall." From that platform Garvey and the UNIA established 700 branches in 38 states. Garvey's economic impact in America included hundreds of profit-generating UNIA

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businesses across the country; and his never again duplicated campaign that persuaded Black investors to purchase stock in an international shipping line to carry passengers and freight between America, Africa and the West Indies. The Black Star (BSL), incorporated in 1919, was capitalized exclusively by African Americans. The BSL acquired three steam ships, but by 1922, they were lost and the corporation collapsed.

Keynote speakers are integral to any gathering looking to further themselves with knowledge and networking. Black schools, forums and conventions need Bailey and his important motivations toward Black growth. More public attention needs to be directed toward the how and why of Blacks building, owning and controlling our own income producing assets. Bailey can inspire and unify an audience with a common purpose. Brother Bailey's focus on Black community building is something Blacks need to hear nowadays. Bailey says the election of Barack Obama has "proved nothing." A former *Ebony* magazine editor, Bailey points audiences to the fact that, "We spend \$600 billion a year and should be serious about knowing and understanding that with economic power, political power is automatic."

He brings a sense of history to his tales. Bailey served as a pallbearer for Malcolm in 1965. Nowadays, he says "blind devotion" to Obama and local politics prevents African Americans from participating in activity toward the collectivity we need to flex our financial and political muscle effectively.- Email Bailey at apeterb@verizon.net .

William Reed is publisher of "Who's Who in Black Corporate America" and available for projects via the BaileyGroup.org