Black groups join to form coalition

Members hope to keep dream of King alive

By MICHAEL C. KEHLMEIER
Lantern staff writer

The Columbus public schools, like the rest of the American educational system, is not teaching the basic skills students need to survive and prosper in America, said members of a new Ohio State coalition.

Greg Carter, a senior from Cincinnati and member of the Coalition to Realize the Dream, said this inadequate educational system is the root of oppression in America.

"It keeps the people disinfomed, uneducated and easy to manipulate," Carter said.

The coalition, composed mainly of black student groups, was formed after a speech at Ohio State by the Rev. James L. Bevel at a Martin Luther King Day tribute.

"The coalition was born out of the inspiration that was given to us from Rev. Bevel," Carter said. "Bevel was the organizer, chief administrator and tactician for the whole civil rights movement."

When Bevel spoke, he also made some comments which angered many members of the gay community. He referred to homosexuals as "fornicators" and said homosexuality is a mental illness.

Many students and several letters to the Lantern said Bevel had fascist feelings and his remarks were homophobic and narrow-minded.

Carter said the coalition would let anyone into the organization who would follow its goals regardless of beliefs and lifestyles.

He said the group has three goals: to study the principles of non-violent social change introduced by King; "to strive to overcome lying, stealing, promiscuity, self-centered motivation, and self-destructive activities;" and to work with community leaders and groups to solve social problems with King's principles.

The coalition will concentrate on applying King's principles to public education, Carter said.

"There is no one you can talk to who will tell you there is great and useful
education going on in the public schools, especially in the cities,” he said.

The first step in changing public education is self-education, starting with the principles and tactics of the civil rights movement, Carter said.

The group must then work with community leaders and create a positive solution to the problems in the educational system, Carter said. He said the group will talk to black ministers and black leaders about the coalition’s goals.

The Rev. Harry Bellinger, a Columbus minister, said the coalition should make its position clear when it approaches the black community.

“In Columbus, the ministers are very protective of their turf,” Bellinger said. “Unless you can really explain yourself and get the ministers to identify with your group, many ministers will back off.”

The coalition will talk to the black leaders about changing the curriculum at public schools to include classes which teach students how to start and maintain a business, Carter said.

“If students are taught this, once they graduate from high school, why would they have to go looking for a job? They can start their own business,” Carter said. “We have the potential within our community to educate the children as to how they can be self-sustaining.”

Martha Sandino, a sophomore from Columbus, said teaching students how to run a business could restructure the nation.

“It could undercut this enormous pool of ignorant consumers and cheap labor,” Sandino said. “Students could tell big corporations ‘I don’t have to work for you because I could start my own business.”

Carter and Sandino, founding members of the coalition, are members of Collegiate Association for the Research of the Principle, a student branch of the Unification Church, founded by the Rev. Sun Myung Moon.