

**“It Takes A Village”**  
**Saturday Morning Forum**  
**Operation Push**  
**Guest Speaker: Rev. James T. Meeks**  
**Saturday, October 17, 2009**

Well bless the lord, you may have your seats, praise God for Jonathan Luther Jackson and you know for those of you who come to Push every week every Saturday you know that John has grown right before our eyes hasn't he? Every week I've watched as Jonathan is developing and has developed into one of our most informed and insightful speakers and we thank God for John Jackson. We are still aah wishing Miss Jacqueline Jackson Godspeed as she recuperates was over in Africa and Reverend pushed her off the stage but she's getting better now, and for those of you who think I was serious I wasn't, we are praying for you still Jacqueline Jackson and to our founder and president who you just heard from him we know he's in Atlanta doing great work, we watched him this week do great work at Fenger, for him we wish him God speed. Let's pray, our father and our god we honor you for your love and kindness and great mercy we are teachers and our preachers to help us get some insight into the condition of our schools and of our children and then give us solutions and directions we honor you in Jesus name amen. I also want to thank God for Rev Attorney Jeannette Wilson and Bishop Tavis Grant that we can count on to be on the case. There is a passage of scripture found in the book of Daniel an old testament book, Dan chap 1 verses 3 and 4 and it says "And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes; Children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans." Now you all today all throughout my message I want to say something that a preacher shouldn't say so let me ask you a question, what's the opposite of heaven (audience "hell") tell something that the opposite of heaven is hell, alright hell is what I really want to say but as a preacher I shouldn't say it so when I ask you the opposite of heaven what is it (audience "hell")? I want to talk from the subject educate the best and what's the opposite of heaven? Educate the best and to hell with the rest. You got it? Then tell somebody next to you educate the best and the hell with the rest. Daniel chapter 1 describes the Babylonian captivity of Jerusalem. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon besieged Jerusalem he came in then he captured it and he took the children of Israel as his slaves among the 1<sup>st</sup> order 1<sup>st</sup> decree that Nebuchadnezzar issued was this decree he said go and find go and test certain of the children of Israel and bring me listen now bring me all the good looking kids bring me all the smart kids bring me all the knowledgeable kids bring the kids that have knowledge in science and bring those who have the capacity to learn fast and to catch on quick he said bring them to me and I will educate them in our good schools. You missed it, let's go over it again, the king of Babylon after he captured Jerusalem Nebuchadnezzar came up with a plan I don't know if he made his plan Renaissance 2010 I don't know if he named his plan a race to the top he definitely could not have named his plan leave no child behind and the plan was let's take all the smart kids let's take all of the advanced kids and let's put them in Whitney Young let's take all the smart kids and the knowledgeable kids

and let's put them in Walter Payton let's take the smart kids Jeanette let's take all of the advanced kids and put them in Northside prep let's put all the smart kids and let's get all of the good teachers and let's put them in a magnet school system and let's put all the money and let's put all the resources into that system to educate the smart kids and I'm sure one of the eunuchs was standing their scratching his head I'm sure one of the eunuchs was thinking to himself and he said but king what about the kids that aint pretty what about the brown-skinned children what about the black children what about the kids that aint so smart what about the kid that can't pass yo test what about the kids who don't have an alderman who can get them into Whitney Young what about the kids who don't have an elected official who can call and get them bumped up on the clout list what about all of the other kids since you are creating a school since you got a school for all the smart kids and all of the bright kids what about all the rest of the kids and I hear in my mind king Nebuchadnezzar's reply "the hell with the rest of them." The beating of Fenger High School student Derrion Albert has once again put Chicago in the spotlight just like Blair Holt's death did 2 years ago and everybody was saying what we gon do, what we gon do, just like Yummy Sandiford's death did about 8 years ago, everybody was saying what are we gonna, do and I promise you bishop Grant it'll be somebody else next. The death of 40 public school children every year has people across the nation asking what's wrong with Chicago Public Schools the death of 40 kids a year has everybody wondering what's wrong in Chicago and I just looked at my watch and I've got about 15 minutes and if you don't mind in the next 15 minutes I 'd like to give you my opinion, everybody got an opinion you got an opinion and so I have an opinion too so I would like to tell you what's wrong with cps I'd like to give you my opinion . #1 the Chicago public schools have a gang problem the gang however is not the BDs, the gang is not the GD's the gang is not the Vice Lords and the gang is not the Four Corner Hustlers, the gang is the Chicago Teachers Union, that's the most well-funded, well organized gang in the whole state and what's wrong with this gang what's the gangs problem what's the gangs fault, the fault of the Chicagos (sic) teachers union is that it keeps figuring a way to protect bad teachers. In 2001 the Chicago Sun-Times did a serious on failing teachers in 2006 it was followed up by Education Trust, a think tank out of Washington DC who conducted a similar study. Listen well now black and brown people to what the study concluded – the study concluded, both studies, that in low-income and in black communities in the state of Illinois we have the worst teachers, did you hear what I said in low income and in black communities the teacher quality is the absolute worse, as a matter of fact Education Week in 1999 issued the same report, the report said Jonathan that poor and minority students grade 7 through 12 in Illinois public schools were more likely than their more advantaged peers to have teachers who didn't have a major or a minor in the subject that they were teaching I said po kids, I said black kids, I said kids on the west side and kids on the Southside are more likely to have a teacher who teaching them that don't that never studied the subject that they teaching in. For more than 10 years we have known that black kids and poor kids have the worst teachers, that's when Fenger juniors, the students who are juniors at Fenger now, that's when they were in 1<sup>st</sup> grade. Today 98% of all Fenger juniors are below grade level. Did you hear what I said? 98% of the whole junior class at Fenger is below grade level, that means that 98% of them were below grade level when they were sophomores, that means that 98% of them came to Fenger below grade level, that means that 98% of them were

below grade level in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade that means that 98% of them were below grade level in the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade when we had a chance to fix the problem then. When you keep giving grammar schools the worse teachers in the Black and the Latino communities you are setting kids up for failure. If the teacher standing in front, and don't give me that baloney about the teachers are afraid and that's why -- aint nobody scared of no first grader aint nobody scared of no child in kindergarten aint nobody scared of no second grader, there is no sense no reason under the sun that our elementary schools are staffed with the worst teachers in the system because when the children get to high school and discover that they have no future when they get to high school and discover that they will never go to college when they get to high school and discover that they can't read if you cannot read you cannot reason when you educate some kids and you say to hell with the rest of the kids you turn the kids that you are not educating into savages. It is the system that's turning kids into savages; it is the system that is deliberating not education. Ya'll we better wake up we better stop letting people blame the home and blame the family, I don't care if the momma is a hoe, and the daddy is a pimp and the sister is a crack addict when a kid gets to school the school teacher that's standing in front is supposed to be quailed when a kid gets to school we might not ever be able to fix the home but I'll tell you we doggone show better fix the schools because that's what we can fix. You ought not be penalized with a bad teacher because your momma is a hoe, you ought not be penalized with a bad teacher because your daddy is in jail, when you get to school you ought to have a teacher whose qualified and whose trained to teach you. In 2003, listen to this now, 85,000 parents of Chicago Public School students received letters that their children's teacher was not highly qualified, 85,000, the teachers union should be the 1<sup>st</sup> group to protect their profession by making sure that there's no such thing as an unqualified teacher, and a teacher that can't teach is a oxymoron, there is no such thing as a teacher that can't teach and the union should be the 1<sup>st</sup> one to want to make sure that every teacher who gets in front of a classroom is qualified to teach, yet they know that the worst teachers are on the Southside, the union knows that the worst teachers are on the west side, I am calling on the Chicago teachers union to do an assessment of all Southside and Westside elementary school teachers, make em take a test do an assessment find out if t hey know what they're doing or not and all the teachers that's listing to me rather than getting mad at me rather than being upset with me if you can teach you aint got nothing to worry about, if you could pass the test you aint got nothing to worry about but if you can't teach you got to go, we don't need no teacher standing in front of our kids that can't teach. For everybody whose gon get mad at me and you mad at what I'm saying cause I'm blaming some teachers for not being qualified my grandmomma used to tell me that when you throw a rock in a crowd it's the dog that you hit that bark and the other dogs that you don't hit aint gon bark. The gang, the gang that we need protection from is whoever is giving our kids bad teachers. Talk about safe passage ya'll talk about kids need safe passage, they need safe passage from home to school I beg to differ with you, kids do need safe passage but they need safe passage from elementary school into high school that's where they need safe passage, we need to make sure that eight graders can read at the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level when they graduate from high school that's what we need to make sure of. And whoever keeps protecting bad teachers, do you know that all of these pieces of paper that I hold in my hand are editorials from the sun-times and the tribune that all say what I just said that the worst teachers are on the

Southside and on the Westside in elementary schools. Ya'll we need to break this up, this aint no accident, this didn't happen by accident, this is Nebuchadnezzar principal, educate the best and to hell with the rest. Chicago has the shortest school day, we have the shortest school year, we are in school 40 weeks a year, so you think of a week as 5 days don't ya, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, we are only in school of the 40 weeks 19 of them for 5 days and the union who negotiated this deal along with Chicago public system schools ought to be ashamed so their wondering why kids are savages and in the street and beating one another it's because you aint' teaching em nothing. Next person we need to look at in order to have a good school we need to take a strong look at the person whose in charge of cps and I'm not talking about Ron Huberman, Ron Huberman is a good guy, I like him, he's doing the best he can, I'm not talking about Arne Duncan, I'm not talking about Paul Vallas, I'm talking about Mayor Daley. 1995 July the 1<sup>st</sup> the general assembly gave the mayor control of Chicago public schools, the mayor has the sole authority for running this system, Chicago is the only district in the state that does not have an elected school board, Chicago is the only district in the state that has a king. We're the only ones, now let me go on record before we go off TV of saying this, I like mayor Daley, I have nothing against the mayor I think he's done a good job with Navy Pier, I think he's done a good job with Millennium Park, I think he put his heart into trying to get the Olympics and I think he did a good job, I think he's done a good job fixing up Michigan Avenue, I think he does a good job lighting the Christmas tree, and I think he does a great job leading the St. Patrick's' day parade, I think he's doing an alright job with the police and the fire, I think he's doing a good job with Chicago parks I like his move where he went out at midnight and tore up Meigs Field, I think the mayor is doing a good job with Midway and with O'Hara, I aint' go problem with mayor Daley but as one of my friends would say Boo it's time for you to give those schools up because he's doing a terrible job at running Chicago public schools, it's time for you to give that up. When the mayor was asked in 2003 if it bothered him that poor and minority students faced teachers who didn't have majors or minors in the subject they were teaching he said and I quote not at all. Now when you are not bothered by whether or not a math teacher has a degree in math or whether a science teachers has a degree in science or whether a English teacher has a degree in English it's time for you to go it's time for you to give it up. No wonder our schools are doing so bad the mayor doesn't think that it makes a difference if a math teacher has been trained in math, just like it makes a difference if an electrician, you don't call a plumber when the lights out a plumber will do you need a electrician to fix your lights when the lights are out. No wonder our schools are in a bad condition when a coach or a manager is not getting the job done then the team fires the coach the mayor has been in charge of cps since 1995, since 1995 the white sox have had 3 mangers the cubs have had 5 the bulls have had 8 coaches and the Blackhawks have had 9 , we have a history in Chicago that when a coach aint' working he got to go. We need new leadership at cps our kids need protection alright they need protection from unions' that are protecting bad teachers our k ids need protection alright it's time for the mayor to give that job up, he can't do it, he had 14 years and it's going backwards he had 14 years and it's getting worse our kids need protection alright they need protection from the elected officials who keep protecting this system that's giving our kids bad teachers our kids need protection alright they need

protection from everybody whose decided to educate the best and to say the hell to rest.  
That's who they need protection from.