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Change was the theme for President Barack Obama's campaign. Change resonated with people of all nationalities in America. Change resonated throughout the world. In order for President Obama's message to become reality, WE must change - change the way we think and most importantly change the way we educate our children, especially Urban Males.

Consider the facts:

- 70% of Urban Males fail to graduate from high school.
- 1/3 of Urban Males will do time in prison.
- 72% of Urban Males are raised alone by their single moms.
- The suicide rate for Urban Males has increased drastically since 1980.

The election of an African-American president will not change these staggering facts, unless we change too. You can walk through the North End of Hartford and see a church almost every 20 steps, and yet the worst violence in the city occurs in the midst of all these churches. Connecticut is the richest state in America, the city of Hartford is the insurance capital of the world, and yet the per capita income for a Hartford resident is amongst the lowest in the nation. Isn't it ironic - richest state, insurance capital of the world, and yet some of the poorest people in the nation.

These are not indictments against any pastor, church or elected official. My point is this: just because we have an abundance of churches, just because we live in the richest state in America, just because Hartford is the insurance capital of the world and just because President Obama is African-American, does not mean there will be change for African-Americans, that is unless we make change.

Do not be lulled into a false sense of security. You will not get a new promotion, nor will you make more money or be treated any differently at your job, now that we have an African-American president. Keep in mind that there will be many people who want to see the first African-American president fail. If we are to help President Obama succeed, we must help ourselves.

One week prior the election of President Obama, a Hartford Courant columnist reported the comments of a Manchester educator. The educator made reference to her belief that black and brown boys were hard to educate because they were "rambunctious" and often late bloomers. These are the people that we have entrusted to educate our Urban Males.

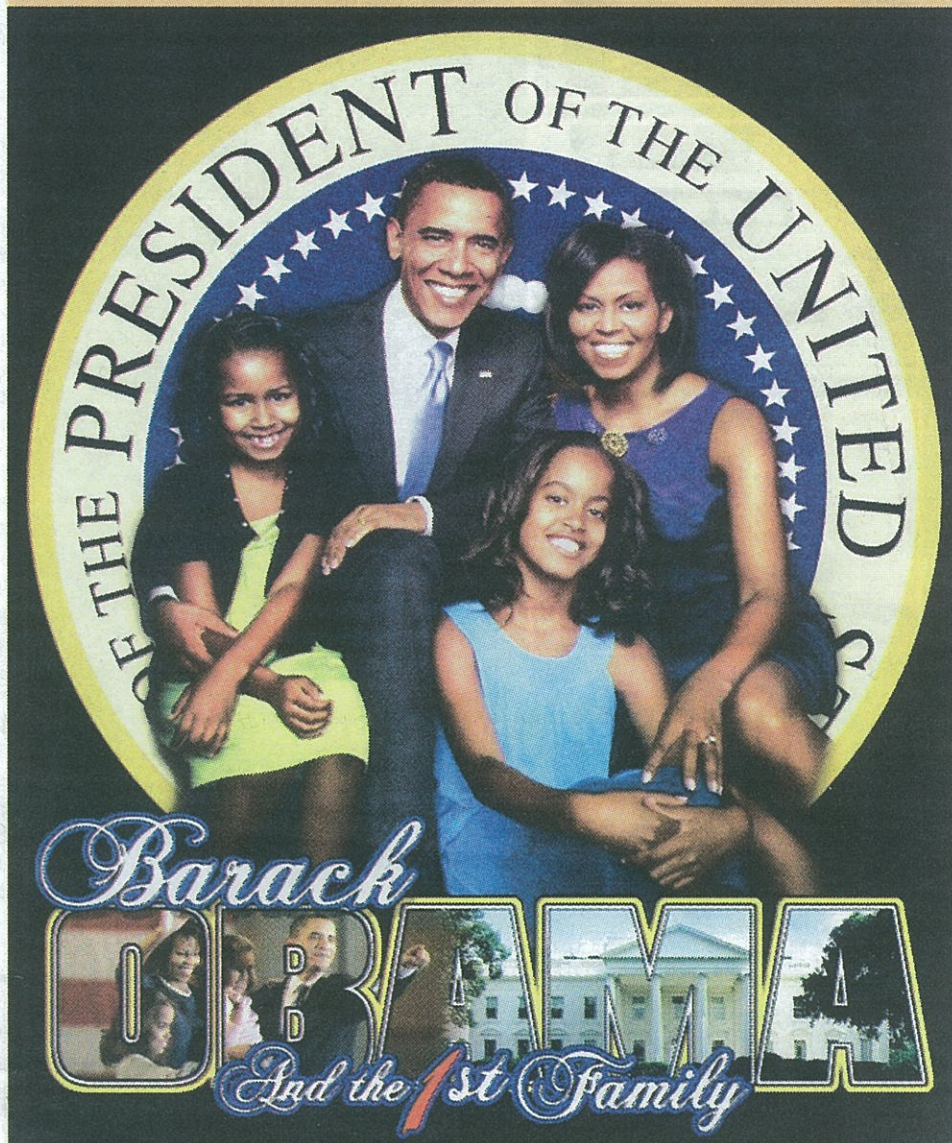
We must take these young men back and prepare them to compete in what is surely a global economy now. We must take responsibility for their failures and educate them in schools that address their specific needs. There is an old African proverb: *Change in the grandchild begins with the grandfather - Badiliko kwa mjukuu uanze na babu.* Now that we have elected our first African-American president, what will we do?

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