

THREE THINGS WE EACH CAN DO TO FURTHER CIVIL RIGHTS

During a Q-and-A session following his Feb. 23 lecture at Soka University of America, Calabasas, Julian Bond, chairman of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, answered the question “What are three things each of us can do to further civil rights?”

“This is the most difficult question and one that I am often asked,” Mr. Bond began. “Whatever your interest, there are many organizations and activities that you can get involved in. The key is to participate! Get involved in some way with civil rights or human rights or environmental rights or equal rights. There is an organization for everyone.”

Mr. Bond then mentioned these three suggestions:

1) Help stop offensive humor about ethnic groups.

When someone starts to tell a joke about Jews or blacks or any ethnic group, stop them before they tell the joke. Let them know, whatever the joke is, you find it offensive and would rather they did not repeat the joke.

2) Seek equal representation in your community.

The next time that you pass a construction site for a publicly funded project in your community, take a look at the construction workers and the builders and architects. If they do not represent the ethnic balance of your community, then you should lodge a complaint with your city. That building is being funded by your tax dollars; equal opportunity should be provided.

3) Get to know someone unlike yourself.

It is easy to talk with or know people who are like you. But as you challenge yourself to meet and engage with others who do not look like you or think like you, then you challenge barriers. You will make new relationships that will create change.