

T RINITARIAN . . . You Should Know!

Blue Island physician uses his Christian faith in his profession

A plaque on his office wall says it all for Dr. Ansel T. Johnson. "Where there is no vision, the people perish . . ." Proverbs 29:18, is a focal point at the optometrist's Blue Island office and in his life. Johnson is the only optometrist featured in Black Enterprise Magazine's August issue as one of the top 101 African American physicians. He said the quote emphasizes the connection between his Christian faith and his profession. "To me," he said "they are one and the same." "My relationship with God and belief in Jesus is the center of my life and what I do professionally flows from there," said the Richton Park resident. He also said he was humbled to be included in Black Enterprise's Top 101 because "there are a lot of good doctors out there." The magazine consulted organizations, including the American Medical Association, for nominees. Now 42, Johnson started The Vision Salon Adult and Pediatric Comprehensive Eye Care in 1990. He currently sees patients ranging from infants to senior citizens. Fluent in Spanish, he also said his clients and staff are ethnically diverse.

In addition to office visits, he travels to see homebound patients. Many are seniors; some are developmentally disabled. "They are so appreciative. I can't take care of as many of them as I would like to."

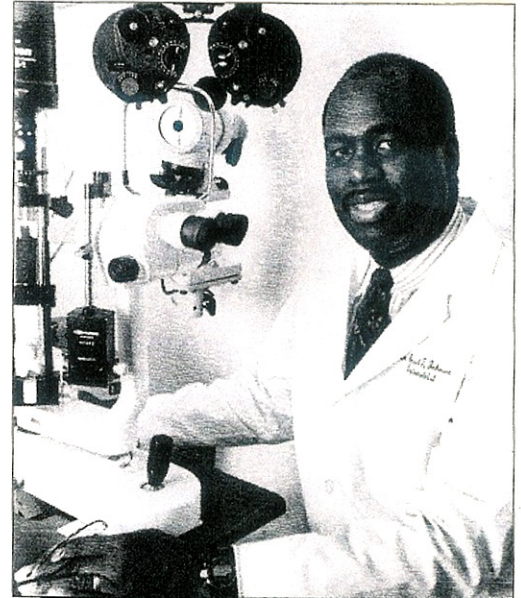
Johnson explains, as an optometrist, he is kind of a general practitioner for the eye, doing just about everything short of surgery. Although he treats a variety of eye problems, he has a particular interest in two areas: pediatrics and glaucoma. "Some studies estimate 25 percent to 30 percent of children in any classroom have a vision-related problem," he said, adding even children with 20/20 vision can still have these problems.

For example, headaches, short attention span, and continually blinking can be symptoms of a binocular vision problem. They may be treated with glasses, vision therapy or both.

As for glaucoma, Dr. Johnson, says it is five to six times more prevalent in the African American community and is usually diagnosed at a more advanced stage due to the

lack of proper eye care, access, and education.

Johnson works with his church, Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago, on various health fair-covering a range of vision problems and issues.



Dr. Ansel Johnson, Optometrist

In addition, he serves as co-chairman of the Minority Alumni Association of his alma mater, Illinois Wesleyan University.

Family is important to this husband and father of two. He credits his parents as his early inspiration and for emphasizing education. While still at Dwight D. Eisenhower High School in Blue Island, he knew he wanted to be some type of doctor because, "I always had an interest in science and I like people."

Johnson says he gets personal satisfaction from his practice, and his relationships with patients are important to him. "A lot of my patients share the struggles in their lives with me. I've prayed with my patients." He also believes it is important for doctors to allow time to answer patients' questions. "If you can't ask your doctor questions, you need another doctor. For example, some people don't even know why they are taking medication. That's an atrocity." He encourages younger patients to pursue knowledge as well. He tells the youngsters who make the honor roll to bring in their report cards. If they like, he will put their picture on "Dr. J's All Stars Board"