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HOLIDAYS!  
DRIVE SAFELY"

# The Minority Voice

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## Rice sticks around

by Jamal E. Watson

NEW YORK, NY - Despite the war in Iraq, polls suggest that Secretary of State Colin Powell's popularity among the American public remains strong. The same is true among African-Americans, who favor Powell even as they've collectively denounced the Bush administration and disagree with the war in Iraq.

So when Powell, the country's first African-American Secretary of State, announced that he was resigning from the post - a move that had been long anticipated - it came as an unwelcome news even for some loyal Black Democrats.

"I like him a lot," said Ralph Glover, 34, of Harlem. "I thought he was the conscience of this administration. He understood the issues that African-Americans faced."

Despite Powell's alignment with the Bush administration, Glover, an investment banker who is a Democrat, said that he continued to support Powell because of his public positions on supporting a woman's right to choose and his strong embrace of affirmative action - two issues that have put him at odds with the Bush administration.

"I admire the fact that he did not change his positions," said Glover. "That says a lot about the man."

Donna Brazile, who served as campaign manager for Al Gore's

2000 presidential bid, said that Powell was a "bridge builder and an important voice on issues facing the country and the world."

"He gets an A-plus in my book," said Brazile. "He is a man of valor and a person of character."

Powell's departure opened the way for Bush to appoint his National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice to the post, making her the second African-American to hold the job. She is also the second woman in history to hold the job. President Clinton made history when he appointed Madeline Albright to the position.

"The secretary of state is America's face to the world, and in Dr. Rice the world will see the strength, the grace and the decency of our country," Bush said in announcing to reporters that Rice had been selected to replace Powell.

"During the last four years I've relied on her counsel, benefited from her great experience, and appreciated her sound and steady judgment, and now I'm honored that she has agreed to serve in my Cabinet," Bush added.

Political pundits have credited Bush with appointing minorities to high-profile positions within his administration. Last week he announced that Alberto Gonzales, the White House counsel, would replace Attorney General John Ashcroft when he steps down.

"I think this administration is committed to diversity," said Brazile. "They have shown that, and I hope that the president will continue to reach out not only to Black Republicans and Democrats."

It's unclear how popular Rice is with the overall electorate. Polls suggest, however, that she does not enjoy the same popularity among African-Americans that is granted to Powell.

William Strickland, a professor of political science and African American Studies at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, says that both Powell and Rice have lost their way.

"Powell is just our contemporary Booker T. Washington," said Strickland. "He's out of the loop. They're sending him around the world and he has no credibility."

Criticism of Powell has intensified over the last few years. In 2002, singer Harry Belafonte compared Powell to a plantation slave who moves into the slave owner's house and says only things that will please his master.

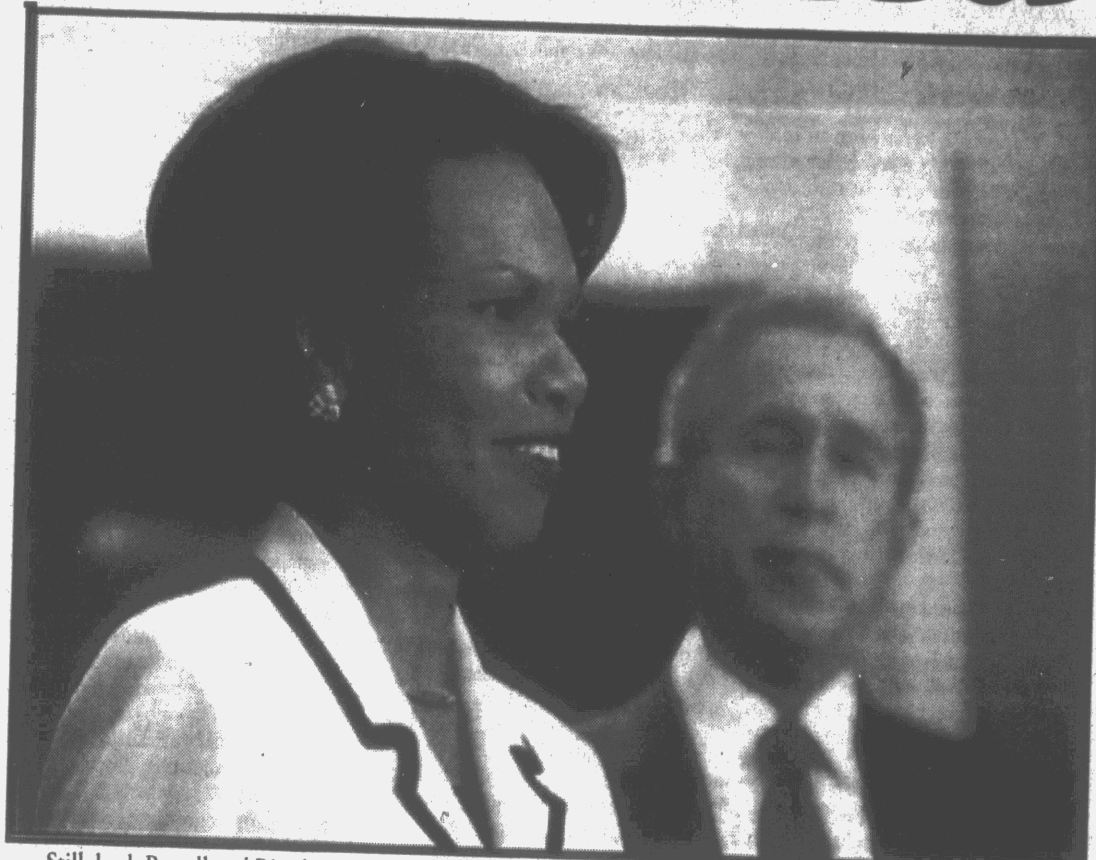
"There's an old saying," Belafonte said in an interview. "In the days of slavery, there were those slaves who lived on the plantation and there were those slaves that lived in the house. You got the privilege of living in the house if you served the master ... exactly the way the master intended to have you serve him."

At the time, Powell called the comments "unfortunate" and said he was "proud to be serving" his nation and his president.

Rice grew up in segregated Birmingham and was exposed to the racial horrors of the South. Four of her classmates were killed in the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church bombing in September 1956.

"I know what it's like to live in segregation. ... I know what it means to have dreams and aspirations when half of your neighbors see you as incapable or uninterested in anything better," Rice said in a speech given early this year at Vanderbilt University.

"I know what it's like to live in an atmosphere of hostility, cold stares, and the threat and the ever-presence of violence ... a threat that sometimes erupted into the real thing."



Still, both Powell and Rice have been faulted by critics for failing to use their positions and access to Bush to push for changes that they see necessary for African-American progress.

"They have advocated positions that have fundamentally been against our interests," said Strickland.

Some speculate that Bush, who will likely make two to three addi-

tional Supreme Court appointments during his second term, will probably appoint the first Hispanic to the court and may appoint a Black woman.

Mr. Watson writes for the Amsterdam News



Above Rev. Willie Joyner is surrounded by his father and brother, along with Rev. Payton (far left) and other ministers who congratulated him on his nomination to the position of Bishop of the South East B Conference of Churches. A lunch and then back to the planning tables to pursue their agenda of up lifting our people to work together and create better and safer communities for young people to live in and grow in... Photo Commentary: Jim Rouse

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### NAACP Head Seeks Meeting with Bush

WASHINGTON - NAACP President and Chief Executive Officer Kweisi Mfume has written a letter to President Bush requesting a meeting to "put aside past differences" and to discuss issues important to African-Americans.

President Bush declined to address the NAACP's annual convention last summer for the fourth straight year and has been a frequent target of criticism from Julian Bond, the organization's board chair.

"I would sincerely request the opportunity to sit down with you when your schedule permits to discuss what we can do to work together to address many of the more serious social problems facing communities across America," Mfume writes in the letter. "If we can find a way without rancor or recrimination to put aside past differences and look toward a future of attempting to work together, I am sure we can work toward an aggressive strategy that will reduce or eliminate many of the scourges that continue to hinder our nation."

Bush has not as of yet answered Mfume's letter.

#### After the Election, Blacks Turn Inward

WASHINGTON - African-Americans should place less emphasis on electoral politics and more focus on economics and other forms of community empowerment, some activists suggest.

"I've always believed that voting has to be done in combination with other things," says Ron Daniels, executive director of the New York-based Center for Constitutional Rights, a non-profit legal and educational organization dedicated to protecting the rights of citizens. "We should mix it with some of the things that we don't like to do that this period will force us to do."

With the high cost of the war in Iraq, a bloated federal deficit that exceeds \$400 billion, Blacks realize that they must increasingly rely on themselves, not the federal government.

## Almost ten percent of young Black men behind bars

by Herb Boyd

NEW YORK, NY - While violent crime and property crime declined last year, there was an alarming increase in the nation's prison population, according to a newly released report.

At the end of last year, there were 1,470,045 men and women in state and federal prisons in the United States. Including the inmates in city and county jails and incarcerated juvenile offenders, the total number of Americans behind bars was 2,212,475 on Dec. 31, 2003, said Allen Beck, chief of corrections statistics for the department's Bureau of Justice Statistics and an author of the report.

The report estimated that 44 percent of state and federal prisoners in 2003 were Black, compared with 35

percent white, 19 percent Latino and 2 percent other races. Clearly, there has been little change over the last decade or so.

Among the more than 1.4 million sentenced inmates at the end of 2003, an estimated 403,165 were Black men between ages 20 and 39.

At the end of 2003, 9.3 percent of Black men between the ages of 25 to 29 were in prison, compared with 2.6 percent of Hispanic men and 1.1 percent of white men in the same age group.

Raymond A. Winbush, director of the Institute for Urban Research at Morgan State University, said that recent numbers of African-American men who are incarcerated should be viewed within the context of the "social conditions that African-American men find

themselves in."

"We fail to connect the dots to the real-world issues of what's going on when it comes to Black men," said Winbush, adding that record levels of unemployment for Black males and racism in sentencing guidelines are contributing factors for the stiff prison sentences that Black men typically face.

Alfred Blumstein, a criminologist at Carnegie Mellon University, told the New York Times that such a high proportion of young Black men behind bars not only has a strong impact on Black families but is, in many ways, self-defeating.

"The criminal justice system is built on deterrence, with being sent to prison supposedly a stigma," he said. "But it's tough to convey a sense of stigma when so many of your friends

and neighbors are similarly stigmatized," Blumstein added.

The report also disclosed that tough sentencing laws led to a growth in the prison population from 522,000 in 1995 to 615,400 in 2002. This increase may be attributed to the draconian Rockefeller drug laws, some activists have contended. With the recent election of David Soares as the District Attorney in Albany, the drug laws will have an active opponent who won on the platform to reform the laws.

In New York, the report noted, there was a 2.8-percent decrease in new inmates, reflecting the continued sharp fall in crime across New York City.

The number of women in state and federal prisons is at an all-time high and growing fast, with the incarceration rate

for females increasing at nearly twice that of men, the report further noted.

In the case of these women, most are arrested for crimes such as prostitution, drug use and writing bad checks. Winbush says that there is a direct correlation between the crimes of Black women "looking to financially support themselves" and their boyfriends or husbands being incarcerated.

U.S. prisons held 101,179 women last year, 3.6 percent more than in 2002, the Justice Department said. It was the first time the nation's women's prison population has topped 100,000.

Overall, men are still far more likely than women to be in jail or prison, and Black men are more likely than any other group to be locked up. At the end of 2003, U.S. prisons held 1,368,866 men, the Bureau of Justice Statistics said. Jamal E. Watson contributed to this report.



100 BLACK MEN HONOREES... Attorney Paul T. Williams (left), president of the One Hundred Black men, Inc., congratulates (from left) Dr. Johnnetta B. Cole, president of Bennett College, baseball legend, Hank Aaron, celebrated defense attorney, entertainer, Willie Gray; actress and singer, Janice Jackson after honoring them on the Jackson on Page 5).

## G-Unit Rapper Young Buck Surrenders



Young Buck performs at the MTV studios on Nov. 13, 2003.

LOS ANGELES - Rapper Young Buck has given himself up to police after being suspected of stabbing a fan at the Vibe Awards, an assault apparently sparked when Buck's musical mentor, Dr. Dre, was punched just before being handed a lifetime achievement award.

The performer is one of the members of 50 Cent's posse G-Unit. He joined the group, replacing original member Tony Yayo who was sentenced to prison for gun possession.

Young Buck was charged with attempted murder and assault with a deadly weapon after stabbing the fan last Monday (Nov. 15) at the awards in Santa Monica.

The 23 year old rapper was released after posting \$500,000 bail. He will face court of December 20.

Buck fled the Santa Monica airport hangar where the awards show was being taped Monday night, police Lt. Frank Fabrega said in a statement. A warrant was being prepared alleging assault with a deadly weapon.

An audience member holds up a chair shortly after a fight broke out in the audience at the Second Annual Vibe Awards.

The incident was sparked as Snoop Dogg and Vibe magazine founder Quincy Jones were about to give Dre a lifetime achievement award. A man later identified as Jimmy James Johnson approached Dre, who was seated at a table in front of the stage, and appeared to ask for an autograph before punching the veteran hitmaker, police said.

People began shoving, chairs were thrown and punches flew. Some in the audience of about 1,000 scurried for the exits. Alicia Keys, the night's top winner with awards for artist of the year and best R&B song, was among those who fled.

Johnson was dragged away by security staff, but then suffered a serious stab

wound when he was attacked by a number of people, including Buck, whose real name is David Darnell Brown, according to police. He is signed to Dr. Dre's record label as part of the G-Unit clique, which was named best group by the music magazine.

"Brown is clearly depicted (on vid-

Johnson, 26, was in stable condition at a hospital.

"It is unfortunate that an event so many people worked very hard to create has been tainted by the actions of a few individuals," Kenard Gibbs, president of Vibe, said in a statement.

Many in the constantly feuding rap



An audience member holds up a chair shortly after a fight broke out in the audience at the Second Annual Vibe Awards.

cotape) as holding a knife after the assault and is one of a number of fight participants that was pepper-sprayed by officers in their attempt to stop this fight, Police Chief James Butts told a news conference. "We're asking Mr. David Darnell Brown to surrender himself to police."

community speculated that longtime Dre antagonist Suge Knight, who attended the awards, arranged for Dre to get punched. Suge and Dre started the legendary Death Row record label together in the late 1980s, then had a bitter separation over money and the vio-

lence that has surrounded Knight during his 15 years in the music business.

Knight denied any involvement in the attack on Dre.

"One thing about me, if I do something, I'm taking responsibility," Knight told reporters after the show. "I'm not an idiot. See, an idiot would go out there and do stuff."

Buck, a native of Nashville, Tenn., is a member of superstar 50 Cent's G-Unit posse. He released his debut solo album, "Straight Outta Ca\$hville," in August, and it debuted at No. 3 on the Billboard charts.

For those who listen to Buck and G-Unit's hardcore rhymes, it's no surprise that Buck would spring to the defense of his godfather Dre, one of the architects of gangsta rap. And although there were metal detectors at the door, performers aren't typically searched when they enter an awards show.

It wasn't the first hip-hop awards show to be interrupted by violence: The 2000 Source Awards were marred by fights - and then got their highest TV ratings ever.

After the Vibe fracas was squelched Monday night, the taping continued. The show, broadcast Tuesday night on UPN, was seamlessly edited to remove any trace of the attack.

"They can't stop me. I don't care," Dre said on television as he accepted his award, showing no signs of injury.

# Minority Voice OP

Because whatever happens to America happens to Black America first....

## No Exit in Black: Trapped by the Economy and Politics

By Dr. Marcellus Andrews, Ph.D.



The just concluded presidential election was all about Iraq, with the state of the economy lagging in importance while questions about poverty, economic inequality and

racial justice languished in the shadows. As always, the concerns of black people were invisible to the parties and to white America. Black American voters were again caught in a vise between the vengeful white nationalist conservatism of the Republicans and an increasingly indifferent business liberalism of the Democrats.

But one gets the sense that black America is at a breaking point in matters of politics. The old alliance between blacks and the Democrats is about to end while the war between blacks and conservatives is going to get much worse. Most of all, the unique solidarity between the black middle class and the black poor will soon end as the pressure of economic survival turns former allies into enemies. Poor black people are about to become the victims of a great political betrayal that is as predictable as it is awful. This betrayal is due to the unyielding logic of modern economic life, which has slowly but inexorably destroyed the basis for black unity. A brief assessment of our current economic predicament shows why the old forms of black unity cannot endure.

The Republican Party, that peculiar union of fundamentalist capitalists and fundamentalist Christians, is all about cutting the size of government through low taxes and fewer regulations, includ-

ing public action to counter the outcomes of private racial discrimination in the economy or other parts of the private sector. Republicans have done a brilliant job of building an alliance between capitalists and racists that does not rely on government power to promote racial segregation or racial inequality. Instead, the leading sectors of conservative America have relied on the typical mechanisms of economic inequality and social class to sustain racial hierarchies in America, allowing them to champion competition, choice and individual rights in the face of persistent racial disparities in economic outcomes.

Modern America is, according to Republicans, a place where the economic fortunes of different groups reflects the cultural and intellectual capital that these groups bring to an impartial competitive marketplace, which assigns value to people on the basis of what they do rather than what they are. So, according to this view of things, black people are poorer than other folks because, well, they are just not as smart or as industrious as other people. Poverty and racial inequality are not due to discrimination, but rather mean that black people should imitate the culture of successful groups if they want to get ahead. This hoary "culturalist" stance on racial inequality is an electoral winner for free market advocates who oppose most forms of redistribution as well as white nationalists who are loathe to support blacks who they view as biologically and morally inferior.

Can blacks appeal to American liberals and progressives for support in their drive for real equal opportunity? Not really. The Democratic Party has largely abandoned its concern with the needs of poor and badly schooled Americans of all colors in the modern, technology driven global economy in favor of a program of business liberalism that is largely indifferent to black interests.

The harsh reality of American eco-

nomie life is that the blue-collar road to the middle class has collapsed in the face of a world economy dominated by trade and technology. A large fraction of the American work force have been stranded in the declining sectors of the American economy, even as their luckier counterparts in the growing sector are experiencing a sustained economic boom. The majority of black American workers have been stranded on the wrong side of the economic divide between skilled and unskilled labor, a far larger fraction than among the white majority. Even skilled workers face job and employment threats from trade and technology, so they are in no mood to help people in even greater need than themselves.

Black Americans need government help more than whites in order to achieve a middle class standard of living, which in America, means their claims fall on deaf or hostile ears. The Republicans argue against Big Government help for anybody, thereby ensuring that poor people stay poor forever. Every time that a conservative claims that "people can spend their money better than government can," he or she is also saying that poor people are on their own because right wing government is not about to offer them a bridge from the broken blue collar economy to the growing part of the global economy. Even educational reform is a fraud, since most dollars for schools come from local districts which depend on local and state tax monies that reflect yawning disparities across class and color lines. Small government conservatism, as a practical matter, means that poor people will be locked out of educational opportunity for as long as the right is in power.

The Democrats are not much better. The Democrats' business liberalism promotes the well being of the middle class majority by increasing the competitiveness of the business sector in a hyper-competitive world. For example, Democratic sup-



port for cutting the cost of health care for families and businesses is perfectly sensible and should be applauded, especially when compared to the Republicans' limited initiatives that leave too many people without insurance. The same is true of Democratic proposals to reduce the burden of college tuition and housing on family budgets, which use various tax incentives and subsidies to help people pay for the goods that they need.

Do the Democrats have a program to create genuine equal opportunity for education, health care and life chances in America? No. Middle America is far more interested in shoring up schools, medical care and life chances for them and their children than they are in creating real fairness for all. In this divided society where a sizeable group of poor and working class

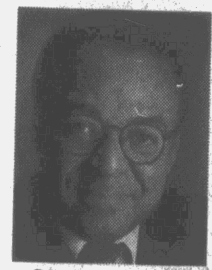
people simply cannot make it on their own, an insecure middle class is not about to spend money on other people, particularly if they are black.

The Democrats have no reason to champion real equal opportunity because it is expensive and would take at least a generation to achieve. The problem with the Democrats is that they do not have a common program of economic reconstruction that can unite the poor and the middle class. The fact that there are millions of people who cannot make it on their own, no matter how hard they try, will not convince Middle America to help out their struggling countrymen unless they see something in it for themselves. This sense of looking out for number one is not just selfishness or even racism, but is also rooted in the politics of economic survival.

So why do black people stay with the Democrats, even if the party has no real program for creating genuine equal opportunity that can command enough support from Middle America to counter opposition from free market conservatives and their racist allies? A different politics of survival: the black middle class needs the Democrats to protect them from white nationalist animus, while the working class and poor black majority are just holding on for dear life. Black America is in an existential bind between a party that will tolerate their presence so long as they support business liberals and the fierce white nationalist wing of the Republican Party bent on pushing blacks back into society's

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## How President Bush improved his black vote since 2000



Clarence Page

for his Democratic opponent.

In a black vote that surged upward about 25 percent from 2000 to 13.2 million voters, 11 percent of it went to

Bush, compared to a paltry 8 percent in 2000.

But the real cost to Sen. John Kerry appeared in key battleground states like Ohio, where Bush received an impressive 16 percent of the black vote, 7 points more than he received in 2000.

And in Florida, where 13 percent of the black vote went to Bush, almost twice the 7 percent he received there four years ago.

And in Pennsylvania, which Kerry won, Bush nevertheless took 16 percent of the black vote, up from 7 percent in 2000.

And in Georgia (12 percent, up from 7 percent in 2000), North Caro-

lina (14 percent, up from 9 percent) and his home state of Texas (16 percent, up from 5 percent).

Since African-Americans are the Democratic Party's most loyal major ethnic or racial group, that's a lot of Kerry's political base that jumped the fence.

Many of those fence jumpers appear to be new voters, part of Bush political adviser Karl Rowe's success in mobilizing the 4 million evangelical Christians who reportedly stayed home in 2000. The "moral values" issue, however you define it, that emerged surprisingly in exit polls as a bigger concern for voters than any other issue, including Iraq and the economy, apparently proved to be a

big draw for black Bush voters, too.

A recent poll by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, a Washington-based think tank specializing in black issues, forecast a surprisingly large black turnout for Bush. It also found that pro-Bush blacks were more likely than Kerry supporters to be regular churchgoers, over age 50, opposed to gay marriage and not as worried about where their next dollar would come from.

If the Supreme Court put Bush in the White House in 2000," David Bositis, the Joint Center's senior political analyst, observed, "the Massachusetts Supreme Court (which upheld gay marriage in that state) probably put him back in the White House in 2004."

Yet, it also is instructive to note how quickly same-sex civil unions, a radical idea just a few short years ago, have become the new politically safe alternative position for candidates of both parties. Even President Bush endorsed civil unions, "if that's what the states want to do," in an October interview on ABC's Good Morning America, disagreeing with his own party's platform.

Despondent Democrats should take heart from that shift as they wonder where and how they lost their mojo: Most Americans eventually grow more comfortable with new frontiers of freedom and equality, but you can't push them too fast.

So, take heart, dear Democrats: Come in, come in off that ledge. Please step away from that circular firing squad. All is not lost.

Yours is a party that once indisputably held the moral high ground in the minds of most American voters, and you can seize it again.

First, you've got to stop letting the other party do a better job of defining your "moral values" than you do of defining theirs.

You're not likely to win over many hard-core liberal-haters, but you can win back many of the persuadable, middle-of-the-road independents who see themselves as the people who President Clinton said "work hard and play by the rules."

Their moral values question, for example, the withholding of full funding for educational reforms (like "No

Child Left Behind") to help fund tax breaks for wealthy corporations.

Their moral values agree that when a senior citizen has to choose between paying for her prescription medicine and paying her rent, it makes all of our lives poorer, as Illinois Senator-elect Barack Obama told the Democratic National Convention.

"No, people don't expect government to solve all their problems," Obama said. "But they sense, deep in their bones, that with just a change in priorities, we can make sure that every child in America has a decent shot at life, and that the doors of opportunity remain open to all. They know we can do better. And they want that choice."

Yes, not every American voter shares those moral values. But, as conservative author Phyllis Schlafly wrote in the year of Barry Goldwater's disastrous loss 40 years ago, all of us deserve to have the choice, not just an echo.

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## Which Side Is God On?



Rev. Jesse Jackson

DID GOD VOTE REPUBLICAN?

You'd think so if you listen to some of the evangelical supporters of George Bush.

Regular churchgoers voted dramatically Republican in the election. 20% of the voters identified "morals" as their major concern and voted overwhelmingly for George Bush. (Whereas those who named the economy and jobs or Iraq as their lead concerns voted three to one for Kerry). Bush charged John Kerry, a religious, practicing Catholic, with representing Hollywood values. And many voters believed in Bush because he said he straightened himself out by taking Jesus into his life, and because he uses the imagery and language of evangelicals - "the culture of life" - through his speeches. Democrats, Republican operatives charged, are simply divorced from the values of mainstream, religious America.

But Republicans have no monopoly on religion or on faith. And Republican policies often seem a far divorce from the moral teachings of the Bible. The Bible tells us we'll be measured by how we treat the least of these. But under this president, poverty is rising. Childhood poverty is up. Poor children grow with inadequate nutrition, no health insurance, no preschool. Mr. Bush's policies of top-end tax cuts and cuts in support for the poor only make things worse.

Jesus was born in a manger, not in a mansion. He had a manger-view of the world, not a mansion-down view. Jesus taught that a rich man was as likely to get into the Kingdom as a camel through the eye of a needle. This is not exactly a widespread sentiment at the Republican National convention.

He urged his followers to beware of worldly goods, to simplify their lives and follow him. He instructed them to serve the poor, not neglect them. Jesus taught us to love every child, to rise above

the divisions of race or tribe or religion. When the men gathered to stone a prostitute, he challenged them. Who amongst you, he asked, can throw the first stone? He asked us to stand with the weak, the ill, the stranger in a foreign land. The Good Samaritan stops for the wounded man on the Jericho Road, stopping to aid someone from another tribe, even when his own tribesman cross to the other side of the road to pass him by. We are called on to be our brothers' keeper. The division politics practiced in the last election, the appeals to our fear of the other contrast starkly with those teachings.

Not does George Bush's rollback of environmental regulations reflect well. The Bible teaches that nature is God's creation. We may use it for a while, but we have no ownership of it. We are as stewards to the bounty that God has created. We should be working to preserve it, not rolling back regulations to poison our air, neglect our seas and turn a blind eye to a global warming that may threaten all of God's creation.

Finally, Jesus was a man of peace. He came as the Messiah when people were expecting, praying for, a mighty warrior that might deliver them from their oppressors. Instead, God brought them a baby, wrapped in the manger. Jesus taught the power of love, hope and charity - not of weapons. He delivered them by sacrificing himself that they may be free.

His teachings are a far remove from George Bush's war of choice in Iraq, the euphemism used to describe an aggressive war on a country that posed no threat to us. The Pope has harshly criticized Bush's war; the U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan has called it illegal.

Democrats, particularly those like Senator Kerry who serve in the Senate a long time, do fall into the trap often of talking about plans and programs, not right and wrong. They talk policy, not values. Not surprising, the Democrats who have fared well politically - Jimmy Carter, Bill Clinton - have been raised in the church and are comfortable with the teachings of the Bible. Americans sensibly want their leaders to have a strong moral grounding as they meet the challenges yet to come.

But God is not a political animal. The Bible tells us to tell a tree by the fruit it bears, not the bark it wears. Christ warns against hypocrisy - the public display of faith without a true heart or without deeds of faith.

Conservatives now suggest that God is on the side of Republicans at home and America abroad. That Bush is right to suggest that he has a mission from above in the war on terror. This gets the stakes exactly wrong. It isn't a

question of whether God is on America's side. The question is whether America is on God's side. And as war rages in Iraq and children go hungry in the richest nation on earth, the question should sober the political operatives who see God as a political weapon rather than an abiding guide.

## Might We Sacrifice the Ram in the Thicket Instead?

So says Mr. Bill Cosby, "God is tired of you, and so am I!" excerpt from (Theodore Shaw, Washington Post, May 27, 2004 "Beyond What Bill Cosby Said").

That Mr. Cosby is on a personal mission is to put it mildly. He has, in fact, launched an atomic bomb knowing but not caring who amongst us will be burned by its searing heat.

Launching his words in missile style formation, while traveling through our communities holding town hall style meetings, his is an in your face effort to save our children from the sacrificial altar he hints that we've fashioned for them here in America. On the matter of travel, I understand that his next stop is Douglass High School, Atlanta, Georgia on November 18, 2004.

If Cosby is accurate in his charges then we've been negligent to the extreme of detaching this gentle millionaire giant from his pleasure of golfing and from his well appointed poetic perch in the Berkshire Mountains of Massachusetts. We've pissed him off is what we have done. He wants to know how can poor Black folks justify spending \$200.00 for a pair of sneakers yet NOTHING for the educational package Hooked on Phonics or anything remotely similar. Not that how any parent spends their money, government stipend or through 40 hours of labor intense sweat, is any of his business - yet it's what some spend money on that defies sensible thinking to him. Warranting that the sneaker charge is true, are some of us guilty child sacrifice to the Baal god lord consumerism and other lesser but as morally draining ones?

Cosby's unbridled anger has no less arrested the attention of the Media, Paula Zahn in particular. Attention that allows nay sayers to replace Clarence Thomas and elect Cosby as the winner of "the new race traitor who's airing our dirty laundry award." Clearly Cosby is no more a race traitor than Farkhan is a Bush confidant. Besides whom better than Cosby to give his beloved people a good tongue-lashing. I can think of right much else he could be doing with his time and money; neglect of the poor, however, is obviously not one of them.

(Let us forget, Sodom's sin was pride, self-sufficiency and that it neglected the poor

Ezekiel 16: 43-63, Genesis 18:20 and 19:4-1)

Cosby while on CNN Paula Zahn Now, Thursday, November 11, 2004, asks the lot of poor Black America: "How long are you going to whisper about a small pox epidemic in your apartment when the bodies are coming out in sheets?" The epidemic to which he's referring (per transcript records), that Blacks make up 65% of the prison population can neither read nor write and are thus termed illiterate. Add to that the issue of black teen pregnancy being disproportionately high considering that Blacks in general are only 13% of the total population. To that he adds, "We're off the board [with these figures]." (Paula Zahn Now, Interview with Bill Cosby, Transcript November 11, 2004).

In this fight, Cosby is leaving no stone unturned. He's calling on politicians, communities, and especially parents and families. Although accused of using back biting techniques to drive his point, he promises that we ain't seen nothing yet! No doubt with his money and clout, in White America and as Black America's beloved Heathcliff Huxtable, might there be forced house cleaning in the near future? All dust balls and cobwebs of immorality out, out, out! I find myself just as anxious as I am scared that he's gonna denounce our most revered institutions as the greatest eminent front there ever was. Remember, he said we ain't seen nothing yet! Should he start asking the question (Where's the money?), you can be rest assured that we're about to witness a modern turning over of the tables in the synagogues... OOPS. Don't know about you but I'm looking for a bomb shelter lay-a-way plan at this writing.

However unthinkable the practices of child sacrifice it is not new... rarely discussed, but not new. Evidence of its ancient practice was found some time ago in a place called Carthage. There bones of children and animals were discovered at a Phoenician altar or so called Tophet. Old Testament scripture records that parents made their children pass through the fire in worship of the Baal gods Molech and Chemosh at such places, 1 Kings 11:5-8, for such favors as good crops, rain, fortune, health, and to rid themselves of bad luck. Some women actually breed children for this purpose. In 2 Kings, 23:8-

10, King Josiah dismantled the altar of sacrifice in the Valley of Ben of Hinnom.

Child sacrifice can also manifest itself through instances of unrepentant generational sin. The problems associated with this can be so strong that one must break all ties of iniquity coming down the family lines ten generations backwards and ten generations forward (Richard Ing, Spiritual Warfare, Whitaker House, 1996). Biblically speaking the matter must be attended to either before the fourth generation or immediately following it. See Nehemiah 1:4-9; Jeremiah 14:20 and Daniel 9:1-21. More importantly, it's not only that the origins of generational sin stops and begins with the Clergy, but it is also of discussion amongst Child Psychologists whose research points to heredity and family experience in addition to community as the contributing factors to the moral issues of children. (John Santrock, Children, 1997).

In the absence of solid parental values and moral framing, of which Cosby speaks, can we then attribute the unnatural systemic occurrences of delinquency, pregnancy, lack of educational attainment, lack of self respect in the absence of respect, poverty, through the roof rates of incarceration to the sacrifice of Biblical origins? If such events are happening who's gaining the return or rewards? Is it possible that the reward be discourse and failure for the unsuspecting subscribers to this madness?

I recall reading last year, that a thirteen year old child begged a teacher to go get a knife and kill him. In this instance I, for one, am led to think that this was a third or fourth generation baby whose sins of the family had completely claimed his soul. Was the child aware perhaps, on some other plane of thought, that his death would meet the sacrificial requirements that would allow his family to go on existing? Might we sacrifice not our children, but the ram in the thicket instead? I remain Yours in the struggle,

Susie Clemons, opinionsandtalk@yahoo.com  
Lamentations 5: 1-21  
Remember, O LORD, what is come upon us: consider, and behold our reproach. (2.) Our inheritance is turned to strangers, our houses to aliens. (3.) We are orphans and fatherless, our mothers are as widows. (4.) We have drunken our water

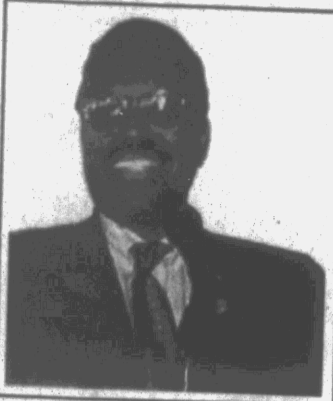


Susie Clemons

for money; our wood is sold unto us. (5.) Our necks are under persecution: we labour, and have no rest. (6.) We have given the hand to the Egyptians, and to the Assyrians, to be satisfied with bread. (7.) Our fathers have sinned, and are not; and we have borne their iniquities. (8.) Servants have ruled over us: there is none that doth deliver us out of their hand. (9.) We gat our bread with the peril of our lives because of the sword of the wilderness. (10.) Our skin was black like an oven because of the terrible famine. (11.) They ravished the women in Zion, and the maids in the cities of Judah. 12: Princes are hanged up by their hand: the faces of elders were not honoured. 13: They took the young men to grind, and the children fell under the wood. 14: The elders have ceased from the gate, the young men from their music. 15: The joy of our heart is ceased; our dance is turned into mourning. 16: The crown is fallen from our head: woe unto us, that we have sinned! 17: For this our heart is faint: for these things our eyes are dim. 18: Because of the mountain of Zion, which is desolate, the foxes walk upon it. 19: Thou, O LORD, remainest for ever; thy throne from generation to generation. 20: Wherefore dost thou forget us for ever, and forsake us so long time? 21: Turn thou us unto thee, O LORD, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old. 22: But thou hast utterly rejected us; thou art very wrath against us.

## It's About The Reds and The Blues

# The balance of power in racial and sectional politics



By Alton H. Maddox, Jr.

After listening to Black leaders, elected officials and political pundits engage in a post-election analysis of the 2004 presidential campaign, it is now clear that these persons neither understand the nature of the political process nor its aims and goals. Their call now is for a political summit to figure out what went wrong. Speaking for the "Founding Fathers," nothing went wrong except the participation of Blacks in the electoral process. These political science neophytes lack a fundamental knowledge of constitutional history. It is for this reason

that Blacks have been unable to fashion a political strategy and are simply relying, instead, on political tactics like voter registration and voter turnout to achieve political power. This is like relying on strong backs rather than strong minds to achieve wealth in an information age. Blacks must jettison plantation politics.

References to Thomas Jefferson as the "first Negro president" and Bill Clinton as the "first Black president" illustrate the problem that Blacks have failed to address. Slave power, an oxymoron, and Black power, respectively, accounted for their political ascendancy. Balance of power is an ancient concept in international relations and relates to the distribution of power.

When the "Founding Fathers" met secretly in Philadelphia in 1787, the equitable distribution of political power was a matter of great concern in merging thirteen nations under one umbrella. This was a novel approach for Europeans in fashioning a representative government. Federalism was copied from the Iroquois Confederacy.

Jefferson became the third president of the United States thanks to the "three-fifths" provision of the Constitution. In order for the rural nations of the

slaveholding states to merge with the populous nations of the North, and maintain parity, the rural nations invoked the balance of power concept to protect their ideas and interests.

An Electoral College would be established to decide the presidential election. This institution was foreign to European politics. Instead, it was copied from the "savages." The League of the Iroquois' Grand Council was the model for the establishment of the Electoral College even though the Iroquois failed to acknowledge a Supreme commander.

The Electoral College, which is based on the three-fifths principle of the Constitution and is affirmative action for rural counties, offends the "one person, one vote" principle. It is rooted in the design for the perpetual enslavement of Africans. While our ancestors were forbidden from exercising the franchise, the slaveholders' political power was enhanced in the House of Representatives by one-third and, concomitantly, their electoral votes.

After the Civil War, the rubber, politically, hit the highway. In 1868, Gen. Ulysses S. Grant won the presidency. His razor-thin margin of victory was only 310,000 votes. Southern Blacks, with federal protection, cast 500,000 votes

for him. Afterwards, the white Democrats and Republicans alike agreed that it was never the intention of the Founding Fathers Blacks to decide a presidential election in an evenly divided nation.

Eight years later, the Tilden-Hayes Compromise arose after the intimidation of Black voters and the suppression of the Black vote to ensure that it would never be leveraged to decide the outcome of another presidential election. The exercise of Black power is a constitutional no-no.

For white supremacists, this compromise came in the nick of time. The next three presidential elections would be decided by less than 1 percent of the vote. A margin of 3 percent would decide the following two presidential elections. During this twenty-year period, the KKK would stake out polling places to ensure that the original intent of the Constitution would be honored. The doctrine of stare decisis sustains the doctrine of original intent.

After Richard Nixon lost to John Kennedy in 1960 by a margin of less than 1 percent, with the Black vote providing the margin of victory for Kennedy, Nixon went into virtual political exile to fashion a Southern strat-

egy, which called for, once again, a solid South which had emerged after the Civil War. This time, the Republican Party would be the beneficiary and history is repeating itself like from 1800 to the Civil War and from 1876 to 1965.

Bill Clinton seized the presidency in 1992 with 43 percent of the popular vote. Bush 41 received 38 percent of the popular vote and Ross Perot received 19 percent. Black provided the margin of victory for Bill Clinton. This why whites call Clinton, "the First Black President." Similarly, the three-fifths proviso of the Constitution put Thomas Jefferson into the White House in 1800 and allowed Jeffersonians to dominate the federal government up until the Civil War.

Both white Republicans and white Democrats still agree that it was never the intention of the Founding Fathers for descendants of enslaved Africans to decide presidential elections. The original intent of the Constitution was constructed in the Dred Scott decision. The framers of the Constitution never intended for Blacks to be members of the political community.

Even though the Republican Party benefited handsomely from the Black vote after the Civil War, white Republicans agreed with white Democrats that the Black voting bloc must be suppressed by withdrawing federal protection in the South. Whites of different political stripes would adhere to the will of their ancestors.

The issue in 2004 is not the preference of anyone party or another. It is about Blacks, participating in the political process. The three-fifths provision,

designed to keep Blacks in bondage, is still wreaking havoc on descendants of enslaved Africans notwithstanding the strictures of the Thirteenth Amendment, which prohibits all badges of slavery. The Black vote is devalued like many African currencies are and the income of Blacks is only three-fifths of whites.

Any real Black leadership would boldly and vociferously demand that the entire Constitution be scrapped. Blacks, women, white indentured servants and white males without property were barred from the 1787 Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia and the Constitution and its amendments were not ratified by the popular vote.

Since the 1787 Constitutional Convention, the United States has been divided into Jeffersonian America (red) and Hamiltonian America (blue). This division has produced many close presidential elections. Blacks on the other hand fail to fit comfortably in either political camp. The Black reaction has been bloc voting which, unwittingly and unconsciously, has upset the balance of political power in the United States.

As imbalancers, Blacks pose a grave threat to national security and the preservation of the status quo. Bush 43's under the radar mandate is to correct this political threat since Blacks have refused the command to evenly divide their vote and maintain the status quo like behavior that is being exhibited in the Latino community. In the final analysis, the Constitution is about allowing those who own the United States to govern it.

See: Legal Briefs at [www.reinstatetonmaddox.com](http://www.reinstatetonmaddox.com)

## Tuskegee Airmen Mark 60th Anniversary

By Bruce Smith



Singer Lena Horne poses with cadets at the Tuskegee Airbase in Tuskegee, Ala., in 1945

In an era of Jim Crow when the Army brass didn't think they were capable of flying, a group of pilots changed the way the military looked at blacks. The Tuskegee Airmen, their ranks thinning as the World War II fighter pilots age, hold a reunion in South Carolina that begins Friday.

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the creation in 1944 of the advanced combat training program for the black airmen at a small Army Air Force base in Walterboro, S.C.

The program had started three years earlier in Tuskegee, Ala. In all, almost 1,000 pilots would be trained, 450 deployed overseas and 150 would lose their lives in training or combat.

The pilots deployed to North Africa and Europe flew support missions including strafing enemy ammunition dumps, rail lines and highways. Later, the airmen flew escort for bombers.

Including ground support personnel, there were about 14,000 Tuskegee Airmen, said 85-year-old Hiram E. Little, Sr., a retired school-teacher from Atlanta.

To the military, the program at first was simply "an experiment to prove the Negro could not fly and fight," said Herbert Carter, of Tuskegee, who went on to a 25-year career in the military.

"We were just determined that all we wanted was an opportunity," he says.

But even after the pilots of the first squadron were trained, the Army delayed deploying the unit for months.

"No commander from Burma to England wanted this all-black squadron," said Carter, 85. "They said it would create problems. They were firmly convinced no white personnel would take orders from black officers. The Negro press and other organizations and sympathizers brought pressure on the War Department to do something about this unit."

The airmen then proved they could handle anything asked of them.

None of the bombers escorted by Tuskegee Airmen fighters were lost

during World War II, although 66 of the fighter pilots lost their lives and 33 other fighter pilots were shot down and taken prisoner, Carter said.

At war's end, the airmen returned to a nation where little had changed.

"We were not so naive as to think America was going to change that much," he said. "When we returned after V-E Day things were as biased and racist as they were before World War II."

It wasn't until the late 1970s that the airmen began to receive recognition for what they had done.

Now, through conventions and meetings, the group wants to pass its story to future generations. People with an interest in the history and in getting young people involved in aviation can join the airmen.

"The Buffalo Soldiers were with Teddy Roosevelt in the late 1800s but their organization is still living," Little said. "We're trying to bring new people in as we die there will be someone to keep the Tuskegee Airmen go-

ing for the future."

The reunion, which runs through Sunday, will include a breakfast, banquet and visits with school children in Columbia. The airmen will also appear at the Celebrate Freedom Festival air show in Camden, S.C.

Looking back, Carter says he feels sorry for those officers all those years ago who could not see beyond the color of a soldier's skin. He said he feels "pure pity for the people who are so biased and prejudiced in their ways that they can't accept a person on their own individual merits."

Little says the airmen helped open doors for those who followed.

"We are proud of the fact that maybe the record those pilots made overseas paved the way for the young people of all races who volunteer for military service," he said.

Bruce Smith writes for the AP

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# ODB passes away in New York recording studio

by Charles E. Rogers  
Special to the MVoice

NEW YORK, NY - Most of us knew him as Ol Dirty Bastard, Dirt McGirt, Big Baby Jesus or simply ODB, a founding member of hip-hop's famous Wu-Tang Clan, and later a solo rap star in his own right. But to his mother Cherry Jones, 35-year-old Russell Jones, who suddenly collapsed and died in a New York City recording studio on November 13th, he was simply "Rusty," her adored son whom despite highly publicized run-ins with the law, drug problems and several

outrageous public displays, she loved unconditionally. "This evening I received a phone call that is every mother's worst dream," Mrs. Jones stated the night she was told of her son's death. "He was the kindest most generous soul on earth and I appreciate all of the support and prayers that I have received. "Russell," his grieving mother added, "was more than a rapper. He was a loving father, brother, uncle and most of all "my son."

Jones had complained of chest pains before collapsing at the Manhattan studio, according to a statement from Roc-A-Fella Records, the Jay-Z/Damon Dash-owned label he signed with last

year; and for whom he was in the process of recording a new comeback album at the time of his death.

The life of Russell Tyrone Jones began in Brooklyn, New York, in 1969. He grew up in Brooklyn's Fort Greene section as a welfare child. Growing up he hung out with his cousins Robert Diggs and Gary Grice, sharing a love of rap music and kung-fu movies.

Their obsessions with hip-hop and kung-fu morphed into the founding of the Wu-Tang Clan, and renaming themselves "Dirty Bastard, the RZA, and the Genius, respectively. The Wu grew into an innovatively structured hip-hop col-



**ODB aka Russell Tyrone Jones**  
lective designed to hit big and then spin off as many solo careers for its members as possible.

Buoyed by the RZA's production genius and a number of strong personalities, the Wu-Tang Clan's first album, "Enter the Wu-Tang (36 Chambers)," was released at the end of 1993 and became one of the most influential rap albums of the decade.

Earlier that year, ODB had been convicted of second-degree assault in New York, the only violent offense ever proven against him. However, trouble caught up with him again in 1994 when he was shot in the stomach by another rapper in the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn following a street argument. After surviving the attack, he got on with his life.

After a long hiatus from the Wu-Tang Clan, with his offbeat, unorthodox delivery, ODB parlayed his talents into a successful solo career, releasing several hit singles. His first solo release, 1995's "Return to the 36 Chambers," demonstrated that he could easily hold his own, showcasing his semi-crazed, no-holds-barred delivery and concepts.

After working with a number of other artists including Busta Rhymes and Mariah Carey, Dirty returned in 1999 with a new chapter of his quirky magic and unmistakably unique charisma.

The 1970s-Black-exploitation-film-style video for the smash hit "Got Your Money" is arguably his best-known and appreciated solo single. Produced by the Neptunes, ODB's ruckus raps and syncopated singing over the song's booming bass line and handclaps, and a sexy

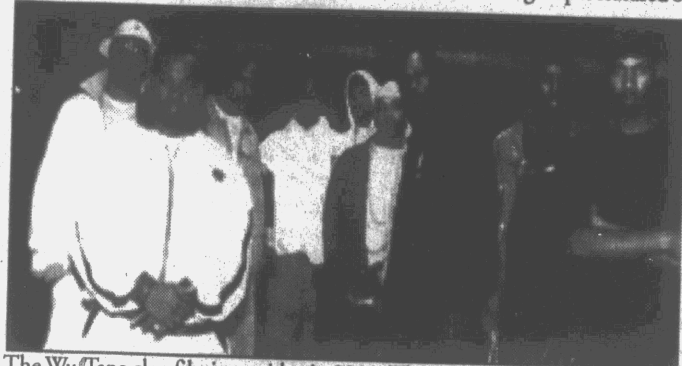
female-sung chorus, made it a classic ODB hit.

Although his career often soared, unfortunately Jones, the father of seven children, was frequently in trouble with the law, mostly for drug possession. Perhaps his most infamous public display happened in February 1998, when he rushed the stage at the Grammy Awards and grabbed the microphone from singer Shawn Colvin as she accepted an award. ODB was apparently upset over losing the Best Rap Album Grammy to Puff Daddy.

Later that year, he was wounded in

den and tragic death of our brother and friend, Russell Jones, Ol Dirty Bastard," said Roc-A-Fella CEO Damon Dash. "Russell inspired all of us with his spirit, wit and tremendous heart. He will be missed dearly, and our thoughts, prayers and deepest condolences go out to his wonderful family. The world has lost a great talent. We mourn the loss of our friend."

Another ironic aspect of ODB's death was that this summer, the Wu-Tang Clan reunited after a 10-year split, with all of its principal members. Along with ODB, the group is featured on the



The Wu-Tang clan filming a video in 2000. The rap group launched the careers of O.D.B., Method Man, RZA and Ghostface Killah.

a shooting during a robbery in his apartment.

In 2001 he was sentenced to two to four years in prison for drug possession, plus two concurrent years for escaping from a rehab clinic. He was released in 2003 and immediately signed with Roc-A-Fella records, for which he'd been at work on the above-mentioned comeback album before he died.

Ironically, Jones's 36th birthday would have been on Monday, November 15th.

"All of us in the Roc-A-Fella family are shocked and saddened by the sud-

## Groups partner to address incarcerated women's health issue

By Roderick C. Willis  
BALTIMORE, MD - The fastest growing segment of the U.S. prison population is women. A recent government report cited that the incarceration rate for women increased almost twice that of men.

There were 101,179 women in prison in 2003, 3.6 percent more than in 2002, the Justice Department reported. This marks the first time that the women's prison population has topped 100,000 and continues a trend of rapid growth.

Overall, men are still have the greater likelihood to be in jail or in prison, and African-American men are more likely than any other group to be incarcerated.

By the end of 2003, U.S. prisons held 1,368,866 men, according to the Bureau of Justice. That total was 2 percent more than in 2002, and translates into one in every 109 U.S. men in prison.

The report cites the fact that longer sentences, especially for drug crimes, plus fewer prisoners granted parole or probation, are the main reasons for the expanding prison population.

The number of women in prison has grown 48 percent since 1995, when the figure was 68,468. The male prison population has grown 29 percent over that time, from 1,057,406. Year by year, the number of women incarcerated grew an average of 5 percent compared with an average annual increase of 3.3 percent for men.

"It coincides exactly with the inception of the war on drugs in the 1980s and continuing into the 1990s," said Marc Maurer, assistant director of the Sentencing Project, which advocates alter-

natives to long prison sentences.

Alfreda Robinson is executive director of the National Women's Prison Project. This advocacy group has developed programs to assist women to make the transition from incarceration to "living on the outside." With its national office in Baltimore, the organization has taken on the task of sensitizing the public on the issues of women who are incarcerated and the adverse impact female incarceration has on families.

On Nov. 18, the National Women's Prison Project will hold a Thanksgiving luncheon for women recently released from state or federal prisons, at 2215 Greenmont Ave.

"It is important that women returning home from prison reconnect with friends and family and have a support group to help them transition back into the community," said Robinson. "The luncheon is our way of fellowshiping and giving thanks to God for the opportunity to make things right this time around. We will have a guest speaker, Minister Lorraine Heigh, from Calvary Baptist Church. We will also have guest musicians and great food, so we encourage women returning home and supporters to attend."

Two local groups address the need of incarcerated women in Maryland. National Women's Prison Project has recently formed a strategic partnership with Baltimore Area Health Center. "The strategic partnership will go into prisons help educate women who are incarcerated on health issues," said Kim Williams, executive director of BAHEC. "We will also develop programming to assist women and their families live healthier lifestyles and reduce preventable diseases. Baltimore and Baltimore County have been declared as having health disparities as it relates to the number of African-American physicians and the access to affordable health services."

Roderick C. Willis writes for the Afro American Newspaper

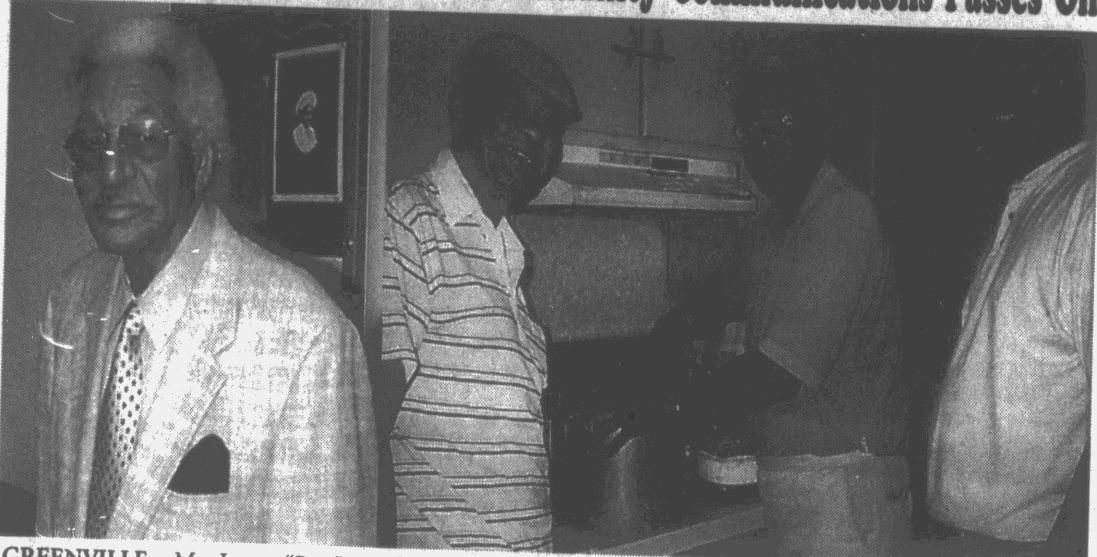
The power of words is immense. A well-chosen word has often sufficed to stop a flying army, to change defeat into victory and to save an empire.  
-Emile de Girardin

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## Pete Hagan: Community Member of "Fleetway Cleaners Think Tank..." the Cornerstone Of Community Communications Passes On...



GREENVILLE - Mr. James "Pete" Hagains, Sr. entered eternal rest on Monday, November 15, 2004 at his home at 200 South Memorial Drive.

Born August 9, 1927, he was a member of Sycamore Hill Baptist Church where he served as an usher, sung in the male chorus and was an avid student of the Bible and love his Sunday school class. He served honorably in the U.S. Navy during World War II as a young man and was honorably discharged December 21, 1945. Pete worked for many years in the banking industry where he did various jobs. He retired from BB&T. Some of his civic involvements included being one of the first "ruff & ready" volunteer fireman in the city of Greenville; A civil right activist during the turbulent years of school desegregation; served one term as Presi-

dent of Eppes Alumni Association and a member of the Sertoma Club at the time of his death. A self-professed chef he had a passion for cooking. He loved cooking at home and relished the opportunity to put on display his culinary skills at his church whenever he was needed. His parents Jonah and Cora Hagains, a sister Elizabeth Hagains Cherry and two brothers William and Lawrence Hagains, preceded James in death.

"Pete" leaves to cherish his memories... his wife of 55 years, Eleanor Cherry Hagains of the home; daughter Patricia Ebron of Bloomfield, New Jersey; four sons, Deacon James "Jimmy" (Peggie) Hagains and Pastor Jay (Debbie) Hagains both of Greenville, NC, Jeffery (Sharon) Hagains, Jace Hagains both of Atlanta, Ga., a brother, Russell Alien of Chicago, IL, and

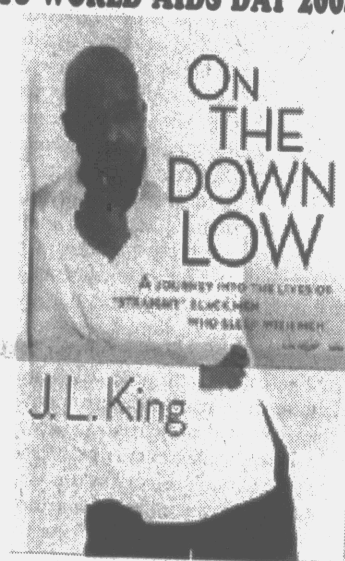
a beloved sister Gladys Hagains Clark of Greenville, NC and devoted friend Deacon JJ Brown of Ayden, NC, sister-in-law Virginia Hagains of Greenville, NC; brother-in-law, John Singleton of Conway, SC; twelve grandchildren; four great grandchildren and host of nephews, nieces and cousins. Three special friends, Joe Louis Daniels of Scotland Neck, NC, James Anderson of Greenville, NC and Sue Creech of Greenville, NC.

## PICASSO AND ECU PRESENTS WORLD AIDS DAY 2004

GREENVILLE - Due to the constant increase of HIV cases among youth and young adults in Eastern North Carolina and the current phenomenon of the "Down Low" population, the Pitt County AIDS Service Organization and East Carolina University is collaborating to present a special World AIDS Day 2004.

This event, featuring renowned author and speaker J. L. King, will be held at ECU's Hendrix Theater on Wednesday, December 1, 2004 at 7:00 pm. In addition to Mr. King's appearance, there will be a youth presentation, panel discussion, door prizes, and free onsite, confidential HIV testing.

Do your part in the global fight against HIV and AIDS by joining us for this spectacular event. For more information, contact Shanae Couch at (252) 830-1660 or Hope McPhatter at (252) 328-6794. For



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# No Exit: Trapped by the Economy and Politics

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basement. White nationalists in America are convinced that black people are an inferior sub-race that could never rise above a lowly station without help from misguided liberals. But the black middle class believes that the only way it can resist the onslaught of white nationalism is to make common cause with the Democrats by offering to deliver the votes of the black poor to the ballot box.

Of course, black people are in a terrible bargaining position vis-à-vis the parties. The Democrats can plausibly insist that black people fold some of their interests under the party's general program - and shut up about whatever else they need - in exchange for limited protection from racist bullies. Republican entreaties for black support are cruel jokes since the right has no intention of dealing with the economic sources of black distress, nor do they intend to exchange their white nationalist coalition partners for a smaller, poorer and darker group that does not command the respect of a large portion of the white population. President Bush's appeals to blacks to vote Republican amount to a vicious mockery of a people caught between an indifferent liberal protector and an eager conservative assailant.

## The Cosby Dilemma

There are two ways out of this trap: either black people themselves must come up with a program of national economic policy that creates equal opportunity under modern global capitalism or else find a way to expand the size of the black middle class without government help. There is rather little chance that black Americans will be able to craft a program of opportunity and economic renewal that will command the assent of enough white people to become the agenda for the nation. A new program of growth with equality is hard enough for the richest and most powerful segments of American liberalism, much less a group pushed to the wall by the economy on one side and malignant conservatism on the other. While the emergence of Barack Obama suggests that a growing portion of non-black America might be willing to listen to public policy proposals from an African face, it will be some time before Senator Obama or someone else presents a comprehensive program to the nation.

That leaves the road of self-reliance as the sole road to black economic development in these times of economic change and right wing assault. But the black community is no more immune to internal class conflict than the larger American society, particularly when economic survival is at stake.

When Bill Cosby lambasted what he described as "a culture of victimhood" and the failure of black America to take responsibility for its actions, he made national headlines and spurred the usual round of pundit debates. The real story behind the Cosby uproar is not what he said, but what it reflects about black America, which is witnessing the fraying of a historic bond between the black middle class and the black poor. His sentiments reflect the breakdown of a bond between middle class and poor black people being torn apart by the economic reality that the well-educated are riding high while the poor black folks are battered by the US economy's turn against poorly educated workers.

The hard truth of our time is that the economic needs of poor black people are much closer to those of other poor Americans than they are to those of middle class blacks. Poor blacks, like all poor people in America, need an immense array of social goods and services that they cannot pay for - from health care and education to safe streets and housing. Middle class blacks, like all middle class Americans, want high quality public services balanced against low taxes in a society of self-reliant individuals.

Middle class black people support greater degrees of regulation and redistribution in economic life because they are poorer than whites and are still subject to discrimination. But the black middle class does not need or want government to the same degree as poor blacks because they are no longer trapped in the basement of the American job market. Many middle class black people are no more interested in paying taxes to support poor people than their white counterparts, not least because they see themselves as proof that hard work and perseverance in the face of white nationalism can pay off in still all-too-racist America.

Bill Cosby's complaint about poor black people, unfair as it is, is nonetheless the view of many middle class black people who see poverty as a trap made worse by self-destructive behavior. Very few members of the black middle class suggest that poor black people have only themselves to blame for their trouble: the quiet daily war against discrimination prevents them from falling into that mindset.

Some people will say that the black

middle class's slow abandonment of the black poor is a sell out to white America, the act of selfish Uncle Toms who have forgotten what it is like to suffer as racial and class outcasts in this society. Nothing could be further from the truth or more irrelevant. Black middle class abandonment of the black poor is perfectly consistent with a strong sense of racial pride that nonetheless blames poor black people for making their bad situation worse. It is perfectly possible for middle class blacks to be angry at conservative white people and poor black people at the same time.

## The Revenge of the Black Middle Class

### The New Washington Solution

Can the black middle class survive without a political alliance with the black poor? Can they survive without the Democratic Party? Perhaps. Middle class black Americans could, if they choose, create a culture of academic and commercial achievement and success based on a shared understanding of the black American experience that thrives in the face of white nationalist assault. Indeed, the marriage of conservatism and racism that is the modern Republican Party might recommend just such a strategy provided that the concept of racial solidarity undergoes a subtle shift along lines suggested by Cosby's complaint.

Suppose that black American middle class families begin an aggressive intellectual and cultural movement that sees learning, savings, competition and development as the primary weapons in the war against white nationalism. Imagine a situation where black Americans not only accept the marriage of free market conservatism and white nationalism as a fact of American life, but as an assault that must be resisted through independent development rather than relying on American liberals. Suppose that the number and density of middle class blacks has reached critical mass so that they are able to sustain independent institutions - schools, media, publishing, churches, businesses - that can support a vibrant, diverse, but defiantly black intellectual and cultural universe capable of sturdy interaction with the wider world. This black world would be able to insulate black children from the noxious influence of white nationalism over schooling, media and character formation - perhaps by insisting on a high degree of racial segregation in housing, schooling and inter-personal association, perhaps by the evolution of communities that are racially diverse but which share a common and positive view of black intellect and ability.

These communities would also develop mechanisms for controlling children - particularly young men - whose unruly behavior threatens to disrupt the teaching and learning process. The creation of middle class communities of color that believe in black achievement, and that deliberately set themselves against the larger white nationalist project of American conservatism as well as the fecklessness of liberalism, would allow for the emergence of strong norms of individual responsibility to self and community that make it easier for these mini-societies to promote character formation. This world would, in time, be able to build up black social capital so that succeeding generations of black children would acquire the tools for success in academic and economic competition, including access to pools of financial and cultural capital that permit them to succeed in broadly multicultural environments.

This new, assertive black America

would be a relatively small population of ten to twelve million were it to magically congeal instantaneously, but would be a political force in regions with large black populations to the extent that its interests in economic growth, competition, knowledge and public policy converged with those of other groups. For example, a diverse but cohesive, assertive, achievement oriented and self-reliant black community of 300,000 in New York City could tip the balance of power in that kaleidoscopic city of warring tribes, using its growing financial, cultural and political influence to shape public discourse on everything from tax policy to the arts.

The key point here is that a middle class black community intent on establishing and expanding its place in the world would be in a position to translate its current advantages, meager though these may be when compared to whites, into an engine for growth if it redefines its mission from one of defending its poorer cousins to one of aggressive accumulation and competition. A community whose ethos is founded on achievement and competition will, like the nation as a whole, see failure as an individual matter linked to particular choices if it has the means to prepare its children to compete in the wider world. Persons who fail in school, or who make bad choices that result in material poverty, would no longer be able to "blame the white man" for their troubles, but would instead have to accept responsibility for their mistakes. One hopes that this black middle class community is sufficiently fair-minded to give people who fail another chance, though a harsh rugged individualism is not inconceivable. In any case, once the community is able to establish a common culture of success, failure would be seen as the exception rather than as the norm.

Note that this sort of community does not rely on affirmative action to achieve wealth and power. American white nationalists, for all their hostility, are not about to reinstate literal apartheid, which is extremely expensive and economically inefficient. The free market partners of white nationalists within the Republican Party go along with obsessive racism because they want the votes of racists in order to keep taxes down. There is no way that a business oriented white capitalist class is going to use government policy to reinstate affirmative action for incompetent whites over competent blacks in a global economy that severely punishes inefficiency with bankruptcy and unemployment. Blacks who succeed, and who are able to establish a common culture of success in regions of the country, will be in a position to compete with whites, and, more importantly, just might be able to break up the agreement between free market capitalists and racists regarding the political utility of racism. If affirmative action disappeared, and blacks were excluded from elite universities and from high paying jobs by virtue of "color blind" admissions and hiring criteria, one can still imagine a situation where the temporary fall off in black representation would be followed by a resurgence powered by very skilled, very elegant and very angry people.

It is important to emphasize that what we will call the "New Washington" solution of black middle class development (in honor of, and irony about, the legacy

of Booker T. Washington) is, by its nature, a program of economic and cultural development that is in stark opposition to the marriage of conservatives and racists that defines the Republican Party. The whole point of the New Washington solution is to gather together the economic and cultural resources of black people of moderate means to build a self-sustaining culture of achievement motivated by a profound historical sense of grievance against white conservatism as well as black failure.

The emergence of an assertive black middle class in response to the victory of the right in American politics will bring a very heavy price in terms of national unity. The New Washington solution is, by its very nature, based on the perception that the United States is so tainted by race hatred that black self-sufficiency is the only way for people of African descent to survive. The New Washington solution would not be a liberal program - in large part because it is would grow out of the failure of liberal politics to create a genuine post-racial society. Instead, the New Washington movement would be a sophisticated, multi-generational, non and even anti-governmental movement aimed at creating a secure place for black Americans, and those who would band together with them, to live, work and grow.

If all this sounds a bit of paranoid, it should: the program outlined here is a riff on that of the Nation of Islam, stripped of its cultish nonsense, its racism, its sexism and homophobia. It retains two things from the outlook of the Nation of Islam: first, a deep belief that politics is a dead end for black development in America precisely because blacks will never be accepted as genuine equals, and second, a permanent antagonism to the dominant political and cultural discourse of the United States so long as these are organized around commitments to white supremacy in daily life. Needless to say, this stance will lead to even greater fragmentation of American life by reducing the possibility of a shared sense of American nationalism. The New Washington solution, born out of the victory of white conservatism and the weakness of egalitarianism, represents the emergence of intransigent, post-liberal black nationalism at the heart of the republic that ultimately turns its back on Martin Luther King's dream of a "beloved community".

## The Wretched of the Nation

What would become of poor black people who were abandoned by their former middle class partners? They would slip further into the shadows of American life, suffering ever greater poverty, sickness and early death like their white, brown and yellow counterparts. If they struck out at middle class blacks in the usual way that poor people strike at society - through crime - they would find themselves assailed by a rainbow coalition of middle class folks insisting on "law and order." Indeed, one can imagine a situation where the New Washington solution would lead to ever more punitive approaches to crime and punishment once the black middle class stopped tying the fate of the black poor to the nation's history of slavery and apartheid. Sympathy would shrivel still more for the poor and social outcasts, with no segment of the middle class coming to

the defense of those in society's basement. The United States would become an even meaner place than it is now.

An ascendant, angry, confident and successful black population in a cold war with conservative America; the abandonment of the black poor by the black middle class; a permanent war of words and images, and maybe worse, between successful blacks and whites who waited too long to jettison their racist partners or who treated blacks like permanent junior partners. This is the bitter legacy that two decades of conservative victory and liberal dithering has in store for America. The

racist right and the feckless left are not remotely ready to reap the harvest of what they have sown.

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