

# Proclaiming a Resurrection Faith for a Crucified People

**By the Honorable Walter E. Fauntroy**

Meeting in its Mid-Winter Session on Feb. 28, 1998, at the Howard University Divinity School in Washington, D.C., the National Black Leadership Roundtable (NBLR) set both the theme and the timetable for its non-partisan voter registration and get-out-the-vote (GOTV) campaign. This session was held jointly with the Assault On Illiteracy Process (AOIP) with which many Roundtable organizations are also affiliated. This exciting collaborative effort is targeted on 1998 elections where the African American vote has the potential for being the margin of victory for candidates for public office who support matters of importance to all African American citizens.

Last year, senior members of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) called upon their retired colleague and former chair of the CBC Braintrust on Black Voter Participation and Network Development, the Rev. Walter E. Fauntroy, to put together again the National Black Leadership Roundtable.

It is the national network vehicle of the caucus, which he founded and led during his 20-year tenure as a member of Congress.

Over 200 heads of national African American organizations, meeting on Sept. 13, 1997, at the Annual Congressional Black Caucus Week-end in Washington, D.C., resolved not only to re-establish the Roundtable, but to do so around a specific plan and timetable designed to do in 1998 what black voters did in 1986: remove a decisive number of persons from public office who had, by their actions, attempted to turn the clock back on policies that had begun to improve the quality of life for African American citizens.

Sensing that African Americans are in a mood to launch an effective counter-attack at the polls this year, Roundtable/AOIP leaders agreed upon three hot button issues around which to mobilize our voters for the Nov. 3, 1998, balloting, and upon a timetable for their voter education, voter registration and voter turn-out efforts.

### Timetable Highlights

The Roundtable plans to launch the year-long campaign on the Good Friday and Easter Weekend, noting that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. chose that time to launch the Birmingham Movement, which culminated in the Historic March on Washington in 1963 and later to passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. To launch this campaign that many feel will culminate in a massive march by African Americans on ballot boxes next Fall, the Roundtable leaders will turn to the heads of our historically black church denominations to kick the drive off with GIDEON ARMY RECRUITMENT DRIVES in connection with Good Friday and Easter Sunday Morning Services across the nation.

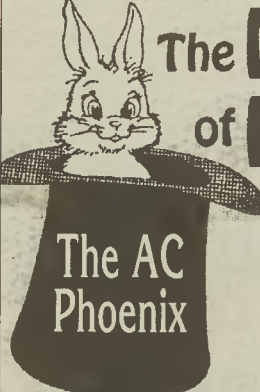
The denominational leaders of African American churches being asked to spearhead this part of the drive are Bishop Chandler D. Owens, presiding bishop of the Church of God in Christ, Inc.; Bishop Mckinley Young of the African Methodist Episcopal Church; Bishop Cecil Bishop, senior bishop of

the AME Zion Church; Bishop Nathaniel Linsey, senior bishop of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church; Dr. Henry J. Lyons, president of the National Baptist Convention U.S.A., Inc.; Dr. E. Edward Jones, president of the National Baptist Convention of America; Dr. Bennett W. Smith Sr., president of the Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc.; Bishop S.C. Madison, presiding bishop of the United House of Prayer For All People; and Minister Louis Farrakhan of the Nation of Islam.

A Gideon Soldier is one who will be willing to take the names of five persons who live on the block or in the apartment where he or she lives and do two things with them this year. First, assist them in becoming registered voters; and second, take them to the polls with them when they go to vote on election day. Thus we can reasonably expect that for every 100 members of our churches who join the Gideon Army, 500 African American voters will go to the polls on Nov. 3, 1998. The

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