

Forum

How To Become The Education President

Bill Clinton's commitment to education reform suggests that he will want to earn the title "the education president."

He can win that title by targeting disadvantaged students with policies and resources that help them to academic excellence.

His Administration should expend federal education funding, and shift priorities so that the children at greater risk of failure get whatever assistance they need to excel in school.

But one of the most important things the new President can do for education won't cost a dime.

The presidency has often been called a "bully pulpit" for focusing people's attention on issues. That bully pulpit now can be a vehicle to help change people's thinking about education.

Instead of peddling bromides like "choice," as his predecessors did, the President should use the prestige of his office to change the underlying concepts that doom American education to failure.

We are locked into a traditional — and wrong — way of thinking that says some children are born smart, some dumb, and the rest between, and nothing can change that.

But in fact every normal child has the mental capacity to learn and to excel academically.

As Dr. Jeff Howard, of the influential Efficacy Institute, has consistently pointed out — most recently in the Urban League's publication, "State of Black America, 1993 — the belief in the false ideal of innate ability has been a deterrent to educating all of our children.

Dr. Howard challenges the myth that intelligence is innate and controls people's development.

He shows how it leads to assessing intelligence in very young children and then using those assessments to determine how much education they are capable of absorbing.

Then we track those youngsters throughout their school careers. Some are placed in "gifted" classes where they are challenged to develop further and faster, and others are

dumped in "slow" classes, where their supposed lack of ability becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

In a society where racial discrimination is an every-day fact of life, it's not too hard to figure out who gets onto the accelerated track and who gets dumped.

Since children are led to believe in the same intelligence myth as their elders, those in "gifted" classes come to think they are smart and those in "slow" classes believe they just can't learn.

But in fact, all children are born with the intelligence to develop and to "get smart."

Dr. Hoard says that development is a process that adults have the power to manage, and if managed correctly, all children can develop the ability to perform at a high academic level.

TO BE EQUAL

By JOHN E. JACOB



He says that if children think they can learn, they will work hard at it and will learn, or, as he says, "get smart."

Helping children believe in themselves can't be, as it sometimes is, a "feelgood" process of pumping up their self-esteem. Rather, it is communicating to them the idea that schoolwork is important, that we know they can do it, and that we will help them to succeed.

As children see their effective efforts pay off, they will be willing to take on more challenging assignments, and each new success pushes the boundaries of their accomplishment further.

What does this have to do with the "education president?"

Mr. Clinton should use the White House as a bully pulpit to destroy the myth of innate intelligence and to get Americans to believe that all of our children can learn.

By doing that, he can change the damaging thinking that prevents so many of our people from mastering what they need to know to survive in this new Information Age.

African-American Economic Empowerment

One of the highest priorities now facing the African-American community is the necessity to define explicitly long-term economic empowerment goals and to develop and implement a strategic plan to effectively reach those goals. One matter that has caused great concern had been a lack of a concerted national effort to really deal responsibly to the economic injustices of American racism.

There is no magic formula to economic development. During the last thirty years there have been numerous efforts by civil rights and other organizations to launch various economic development projects and programs at the local and regional levels. But the truth is that most if not all of those efforts have been too limited in scope and with too short of a time line. The reality is that there has not been an effective long-term economic development strategy that has involved massive numbers of African-Americans since the time of Marcus Garvey.

Again, this is not to belittle the good work of many organizations that are presently attempting to make a contribution toward the economic uplift of the African-American community. The point here is to simply state the obvious: "All of the present efforts

within and external to the African-American community to enhance overall economic empowerment appear to be insufficient to meet the economic needs of the African-American community." While there are increasing examples of tremendous individual economic success or in some cases the success of African-American owned companies, there is still a growing economic disparity between the majority of African-Americans and other Americans who have not had to endure the vestiges of abject racial discrimination and economic exploitation. To be sure, we are not advancing a justification for "hand-outs from the table of the wealthy." To the contrary, we are emphasizing what we believe will be a major responsibility for the future of the Civil Rights Movement.

Economic justice must be demanded, yet, we must do more than just make a rhetorical demand for economic progress. Institutionalized poverty is a moral insult amidst a society where economic opportunity is mitigated by race and class. 1993 needs to be a year of sober

reflection and strategic planning by all communities seeking a greater sense of economic justice. In particular, the African-American community and all those national and local organizations working to enhance the condition of the people most marginalized and exploited must band together like before.

As more and more predictions are being made concerning an early upswing in the economy of the United States, will the economic lot of the African-American community also improve? History has shown that the socioeconomic conditions of the African-American community have not always improved at the pace of economic growth for the nation as a whole. The trickle down theory has not worked to the benefit of the majority of thirty million African Americans.

First, African-Americans must invest in the uplift of the community not for the short term but for the long term development goals of the entire community. The economic infrastructure of the African-American has to be lit-

erally reconstructed to meet the new demands of the present historical moment

Some of those who are advising President-elect Clinton on economic matters have routinely referred to investment as "clearing some thing that will add to the economy's ability to produce later on," rather than "contributing to the economy." But what those who would economically discriminate against the African-American community do not fully understand is that the spending of the African-American community is more than a 300 billion dollar a year economic force in the nation's economy.

The problem in "spending" is not the same thing as "investing." We must invest not just in banks and other financial institutions. Our highest priority ought to be to invest all that we can in our youth: financially, educationally and spiritually. What are our long term economic goals and how are we going to achieve those goals? These are the questions that must be answered if we are to begin to realize the dream of true African-American economic empowerment.

CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

By BENJAMIN F. CHAVIS, JR.



Doonesbury

BY G.B. TRUDEAU

LOOK DA SORRY TO EVER GO INTERRUPT THEN TO FOLKS BUT MY WE JUST GOT ANOTHER FASCINATING LETTER IN

LISTEN TO THIS DEAR GUYS DO YOU EVER CUT AWAY FROM AN ONGOING STORY TO COMMENT ON A BREAKING NEWS EVENT? SINCERELY, M.T. LONG BEACH

DEAR M.T.: NO WAY! WE WOULD NEVER COMPROMISE THE PACING AND STRUCTURE OF A PLOT LINE JUST TO COMMENT ON SOME TOPICAL EVENT, UNLESS, OF COURSE, IT WERE UNIQUELY OUTRAGEOUS...

COVER-UP? WHAT COVER-UP?

HATE PACKING. GOTTA DO IT BUT HATE IT!

OKAY, WHERE IS IT? LEFT IT RIGHT HERE IN MY OFFICE...

DAMN... DON'T WANNA LEAVE WITHOUT IT...

BAR! YOU SEEN MY HONOR? UM... NO. NOT SINCE CHRISTMAS EVE

MR. PRESIDENT, WE'RE TAKING A LOT OF HITS OVER THE MISSING PAGES OF YOUR DIARY...

WE NEED TO DEVELOP A PLAUSIBLE RATIONALE FOR WHY WE'VE WITHHELD KEY SECTIONS FROM THE SPECIAL PROSECUTOR.

HOW ABOUT IF WE SAY "HEY, GOTTA GET THOSE PAGES BEHIND US, WHY THEY'RE MISSING."

BUT THAT DOESN'T EXPLAIN WHY THEY'RE MISSING.

THE DOG ATE THEM? NO, MILLIE'S A WRITER HERSELF. NO ONE'D BELIEVE IT.

SIR, WE HAD ANOTHER REQUEST FROM JUDGE WAINSBOROUGH TO GO, HEY, BUSH, OUT OF LOOP!

NOT GONNA DO IT. WON'T GIVEN HIM THAT PROSECUTING GUY. ALL HE NEEDS OUT OF LOOP!

LISTEN TO THESE EXCERPTS FROM MY DIARY: "NOV. 24, 1987, WENT TO MEETING. COVER-UP THING DISCUSSED. BUT WASN'T PAYING ATTENTION. SAME AS IF NOT REALLY THERE."

AND HOW ABOUT THIS: "NOV. 25, 1987, JUST REMEMBERED I HEARD NOTHING AT JAN. 7, 1986, MEETING WHEN REAGAN TOLD US HE FAVORED ARMS FOR HOSTAGES..."

NOW! ENOUGH SAID, SIR!

MUST HAVE BEEN OUT TAKING A WHIZ OF SOMETHING

AMONG THE MANY QUESTIONS THAT MR. BUSH'S CHRISTMAS COVER-UP PROSECUTOR ASKED: "DID THE PRESIDENT PARDON MR. WEINBERGER TO AVOID HAVING TO TESTIFY ABOUT HIS OWN ROLE IN IRANGATE?"

AND WHY DID MR. BUSH WAIT YEARS TO PRODUCE NOTES HE CLAIMED HE NEVER HAD? WHY DO ENTIRE SECTIONS APPEAR TO BE MISSING? WERE THE TRANSCRIPTS "EDITED" BEFORE THEY WERE TURNED OVER?

WHETHER OR NOT THESE QUESTIONS ARE EVER FULLY ANSWERED, ONE THING HAS NOW BECOME CLEAR: GEORGE BUSH WILL BE REMEMBERED AS THE PRESIDENT WHO COVERED UP THE IRANGATE SCANDAL...

LONG AFTER HIS MILITARY ADVENTURES HAVE BEEN FORGOTTEN!

SO WHAT'S THE DEAL, GRIFFIN? INDICTMENT CITY? DON'T WANT TO DO THE GRAND JURY THING, NOT DIGNIFIED.

YOU MAY NOT HAVE ANY CHOICE, SIR. YOU'RE BEING INVESTIGATED BY THE SPECIAL PROSECUTOR FOR ILLEGALLY WITHHOLDING DOCUMENTS. HE COULD MAKE IT STICK...

SIGH... MAYBE I SHOULD JUST PARDON MYSELF. CONSTITUTION ALLOWS IT. COULD BE THE WAY TO GO...

YES! YES! PLEASE! PLEASE!

NOW, NOW, DON'T GET GREEDY, HE'S DONE ENOUGH FOR US



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Pay Tribute to
MARSHALL LUTHER KING JR.
 at
WINSTON-SALEM STATE UNIVERSITY
January 14, 1993
 7:00 p.m.
 Unity March
 7:30 p.m.
 Commemoration
 & Candlelight Service
 K.R. Williams Auditorium
 featuring
 Delores "D" Smith
 President/CEO, W-S Urban League