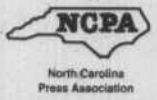
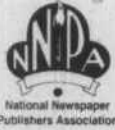


OPINION

Editorial Columns

THE CHRONICLE

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Principles are no good unless put to work

Kudos, once again, Ben Piggott. His business idea to help young people in Happy Hill is innovative and relevant. It's good to see such a good thing come out of Kwanzaa. While many of us now celebrate the African-American holiday, far too many of us get bogged down in the music and dancing of the Kwanzaa rather than the principles behind the holiday. If the principles are not put into practice, then what good is the holiday? African Americans can eat, laugh and be merry at any time throughout the year.

Are we getting the full benefit out of the holiday when many of our black-owned businesses continue to close because we don't support them? Are the principles of Kwanzaa really worth anything if we continue to let issues of class and economics divide us?

Diversity?

President-elect George W. Bush appointed another African American to his cabinet last week. Rod Paige, a former Houston School Board member, is expected to make dramatic changes in the educational system. Paige, like other black Bush appointees, Condie Rice and retired Army Gen. Colin Powell, is a Republican. Therefore, Bush's cabinet is not as diverse as his supporters claim it is. The three black cabinet members are different from the white cabinet members in skin color only. The three have views that are obviously opposite from the views of the vast majority of African Americans in this country. If Bush's black cabinet members are not willing to take our side on issues that are important to us, then what difference does it make to the African-American community that his cabinet has a little color?

Achieving equity

The school system deserves an A for effort. The conference held early this week for teachers and principals at Equity-Plus schools is one of several ways school system officials are trying to close the achievement gap. The conference gave educators from elementary, middle and high schools a day to tell one another what has worked, and not worked, for them in the past. We applaud the school system for also landing red-hot motivational speaker Mychal Wynn, who is booked solid throughout the year. Wynn is an in-your-face type of speaker, which may explain his popularity. Wynn prides himself on being honest and upfront with his fellow educators. Wynn is so bold that some school systems may shy away from him; thankfully this one didn't. The teachers, principals and administrators who genuinely applauded Wynn — even when his critical words were directed at them — deserve a hearty round of applause themselves.



What blacks expect from Bush



Asa Spaulding
Guest Column

As a youngster, among the things my parents taught me was that "you should do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Like many of their other teachings,

I took them literally until I became old enough to decide for myself which of their teachings made sense to me.

For the past eight years, this country has enjoyed a period of general economic prosperity. While it is inappropriate to attribute our economic prosperity directly to the policies of the Clinton-Gore administration, it is entirely fair that they take credit for any successes occurring on their watch. Conversely, it would also be expected that they would take responsibility for any negative circumstances that may have arisen since January 1993.

Most African Americans have felt comfortable with Bill Clinton's leadership. We have only to look at his resounding victory in 1996, with more than 85 percent of the black vote, to confirm this. In the 2000 election, Black America said it wanted more of the same by casting in excess of 90 percent of its vote for the Gore-Lieberman ticket.

We are now within three weeks of the inauguration of a new president. At noon on Jan. 20, George Walker Bush, a

Republican, will become the 43rd president of the United States. This will mark the end of an eight-year control of The White House by the Democrat Party. While the U.S. Senate will be evenly split, 50-50, and the Republicans will have a slim five-person margin in the U.S. House, it is certain that governance will not be business-as-usual.

It is impossible to predict at this juncture what can be expected from a Bush-Cheney administration. Political analysts, spin doctors, and others, including Bush operatives, have talked about what they think will happen. Even President-elect Bush, himself, has talked about "compassionate conservatism," and "bipartisan cooperation." But with a Congress so evenly divided and no guarantee of party loyalty, it is virtually impossible to predict what sort of political landscape will exist, and thus, what legislation will be enacted, or even what strategies or tactics the Bush-Cheney administration will use, and how successful they will be. In short, we all have to wait and see.

But what of Black America? What should Black America expect from the Bush-Cheney administration? In other words, is it reasonable or realistic to expect that Bush-Cheney will create or support any special initiatives to address our continuing concerns? After all, only about 8 percent of the black vote went to George W. Bush. There is no doubt that African Americans will benefit from any improvements in Social Security,

prescription drug coverage, and any other new and improved entitlements available to all U.S. citizens. But should we expect any special considerations?

What have we done to earn the right to have such expectations? Black leaders, including Jesse Jackson, Al Sharpton, and Kweisi Mfume, have shown little contrition.

Rev. Jackson's position is still that "dubya's" election was illegitimate.

It seems to me that the best that we should hope for is that George W. Bush and Dick Cheney and their cohorts are genuine and sincere when they talk about "building bridges" and "bipartisan cooperation." We must hope that they are willing to look beyond the 2000 election (and how we voted) to bring about positive changes and racial reconciliation.

The "onus" is on us, too. We must be prepared and willing to give the new administration a chance. Rome wasn't built in a

day. One way to facilitate this process is to tell our "leaders" to stop all of their divisive rhetoric and work on being more conciliatory. It doesn't mean, for example, that we have to discontinue our various demonstrations. But, it does mean that we need to move away from inflammatory rhetoric and highly partisan causes.

One thing is certain, the Bush-Cheney administration will be in office for four years — until Jan. 20, 2005. How we conduct ourselves during this period will determine in large measure how we fare.

We also need to realize that four years could easily turn out to be eight years. Even a 95 percent black vote for a Bush opponent in 2004 will not necessarily bring about a defeat in his quest for a second term.

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VOICES FROM THE COMMUNITY... Why did you decide to ring in 2001 in church?



Deneia Bryant

"Because in the millennium everyone needs to know the Lord. He is the one who is going to help you accomplish things, so why not bring in the new year with the Lord in church."



Showanda Wright

"I'd just rather bring in the new year here, rather than at a nightclub or a party."



Jameka Wilks

"You can go to a club anytime. I think for the new year, it's better to be in church."