

Forum

Apologizing: Popular With Nations

If Bill Clinton really wants history to proclaim him one of the great presidents of this nation, he can realize that ambition by continuing the great movement toward freedom, justice and equality "moved" by Abraham Lincoln and "seconded" by Lyndon Johnson.



MINORITY REPORT

By JAMES E. ALSBROOK, Ph.D.

Lincoln in 1863 issued the Emancipation Proclamation that freed the hundreds of thousands of slaves in the rebelling states. This was the first national legal action in a movement to abolish slavery throughout the United States. This was the first "strike" toward counting slavery "out."

About 100 years later in the nineteen-sixties, Johnson threw the second strike in "counting out" slavery and its abhorrent remnants. Johnson supervised and engineered the passage of civil rights laws guaranteeing black people equality in public accommodations, voting, educational opportunity, employment opportunity, property purchasing and in other crucial areas.

These laws constituted the second step upward for black people and were the second strike in "counting out" the ogre of race discrimination that plagues black people today.

The third strike can be thrown by Clinton, the upcoming "pitcher" in the White House. Clinton, like Johnson and the liberal Jimmy Carter, is a southern white man whose ancestors propagated or at least tolerated slavery and witnessed its insidious, contagious, inter-generational damages over many years.

Clinton is an intelligent, sensitive southerner socialized by his local culture and historic tradition that deliberately enforced black subordination and humiliation. Because of this cultural and political heritage, he possesses special insights and a special legacy that give him the moral and ethical authority to seek forgiveness from Black people for the 373-year-old sin of slavery and racial discrimination along with their unavoidable afterbirth of social problems and behavioral monstrosities.

Bill Clinton, leader of the United States, could take his cue from Pope John Paul, leader of hundreds of millions of Catholics on all continents, who two years ago visited the slave-holding pens of West Africa and the

Cape Verde Islands. The Pope apologized, expressing deep regret that slavery existed and was tolerated. His message, he said, was "no" to discrimination of every kind, "no" to more slavery of man by man, no more forms of vio-

lence that undermine people's dignity, no more denial of the rights of God over man."

Leaders of various big nations and others have apologized for various crimes recently, including murder, rape, war mongering and other offenses. Some examples:

** President F.W. de Klerk of South Africa apologized to the African National Congress for the injustices of apartheid and white-minority rule, saying democracy will come faster.

** Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu apologized to Southeast Asian countries for Japan's pillaging and murdering during W.W. II.

** Darryl Gates, former head of Los Angeles police, apologized in a television interview for the beating of Rodney King last April.

** Mikhail Gorbachev, before being deposed, apologized to Japan for deaths of many prisoners of war who died in Siberian Labor camps during W.W.II

** Japanese Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa apologized for Japan's forcing tens of thousands of Korean women to have sex with Japanese soldiers during W.W. II

** The American and Canadian governments apologized for the internment of thousands of Japanese during W.W.II Benefits averaged about \$20,000 per person. Many nations have apologized for various crimes recently.

A national apology to black Americans is long overdue. Clinton should apologize. As an opinion leader, Clinton imparts credibility when expressing his ideas and values. As a role model, Clinton attracts followers and imitators in word and deed. As an authority figure, Clinton utters words that are respected.

His apology would help purge and cleanse the soul of this racist nation.

The Fire Of Racism In Tampa

Tragically and sadly, on the first day of 1993 our nation witnessed another brutal reminder of how dangerous the virus of racism continues to infect the total life of our society. In Tampa, Florida, the New Year's Day racially motivated attack and burning of Mr. Christopher Wilson, a 31-year-old African American, by a group of white supremacists exposes the chilling reality and madness of American racism.



CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

By BENJAMIN F. CHAVIS, JR.

On a day that millions of people throughout the nation watched various football games on television where young African American athletes along with others exhibited racial inclusiveness within the spirit of national sports competition, and innocent African American is kidnapped from a shopping center in Tampa, beaten mercilessly, and then set afire and left to die an agonizing death. Thanks be to God that Wilson did not die but managed to crawl on the ground until he found help.

A note that was actually left at the scene of the barbarity read, "One less nigger" and was signed "KKK." Amidst all of the national celebrations of the life and ministry of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, the attack and burning of Christopher Wilson demands a renewed commitment to the civil rights struggle that Dr. King's entire life epitomized.

It is historically important to note that while the 1993 King celebrations are being held, the nation is also viewing the inauguration of William Jefferson Clinton as President of the United States of America. The New Clinton/Gore Administration is going to have a major responsibility as a first order to challenge the increasing incidents of racist violence sweeping across the nation. Already there appears to be another "backlash" emerging to the stated commitments of Clinton/Gore to having a more racially inclusive Administration in Washington, D.C.

While three of Wilson's assailants have been arrested and charged with kidnapping, attempted murder and robbery, it still remains to be seen what quality of justice will ultimately be rendered in the courts of Florida in this case. The U.S. Department of Justice should also become involved in this matter because it is clear case of the criminal viola-

tions of Wilson's civil rights. During the past 12 years, under the Reagan/Bush era, federal authorities were not aggressive in intervening in the growing number of these types of cases.

The Florida Department of Law Enforcement

has released statistics that confirm that Tampa Bay area has one of the state's largest percentages of racial and hate related crimes. While the Tampa Bay area is only approximately 13% of Florida's population, over 25% of the state's hate and racial crimes have occurred in Tampa. The fire of racism in Tampa, however, has been kindled by a nation that refuses to demand racial justice for all people. The drowning of Haitian refugees off the coast of Florida because of a racist immigration policy is directly related to the racist burning of Christopher Wilson. Tolerance of one form of racism only leads to the perpetuation of other manifestations of racism.

We remember that it was also in Tampa, several years ago, where an African American baseball star was brutally beaten by six white police officers after being stopped for alleged traffic violation. Dwight Gooden of the New York Mets was a victim of a racially motivated attack by Tampa police officers.

The future stability of democracy in the United States hinges in part on how effectively racism is eradicated, especially in its institutionalized formation. Somehow the message has got to be sent to the rigid forces of racism that this society will no longer tolerate ideology and behavior. Christopher Wilson was set afire by those who believe that such acts are now once again socially tolerable. Silence in the face of this heinous crime is itself a mandate for recurrence.

As Christopher Wilson attempts to recover his life from the beating and fire in Tampa, may we all recommit ourselves to reawakening a national movement of all peoples unified in the demand for freedom and justice for everybody.

Doonesbury

BY G.B. TRUDEAU

JUSTICE? YOU'RE GOING TO JUSTICE?
YOU'RE NOT ANGRY, LACEY?

ANGRY? HEAVENS NO, DEAR! WHY WOULD I BE ANGRY? IT'S TIME YOU STOPPED WORKING FOR THE COMMITTEE! WHAT POST HAVE THEY OFFERED YOU?

WELL, IT HASN'T BEEN ANNOUNCED YET, SO YOU CAN'T TELL ANYONE, BUT I'M GOING TO BE DEPUTY ASSISTANT TO THE ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL!

GRACIOUS, DEAR! YOU'LL BE ABSOLUTELY DRIPPING WITH POWER!
UM... I GUESS SO, BUT I'LL STILL BE DRIVING MY OLD BATTERED YOYO.

SO WHO'S YOUR FAIRY GODMOTHER OVER AT JUSTICE, DEAR?
THE ATTORNEY GENERAL HERSELF, I THINK. ZOE BAIRD AND I WERE IN THE SAME LAW SCHOOL CLASS.

NO! HOW DELICIOUS-FUL! THE OLD GIRL NETWORK!
I'M MEETING WITH HER TODAY. IT'S WEIRD, I'VE HARDLY SEEN ANY OF MY CLASSMATES SINCE GRADUATING...

THE THING I REMEMBER MOST ABOUT LAW SCHOOL WAS BEING WORRIED. MY WHOLE LAST YEAR, I WAS CONSTANTLY WORRIED ABOUT... WELL...

ABOUT WHAT? THE BAR?
NO, A WEIGHT PROBLEM. THAT'S ODD, WHY WASN'T I WORRIED ABOUT THE BAR?

SO HOW'VE YOU BEEN, JOANIE?
EXCITED!

I CAN'T BEGIN TO TELL YOU WHAT IT MEANS TO ME TO SERVE WITH THIS ADMINISTRATION, MADAM ATTORNEY GENERAL!

PLEASE, JOANIE, CALL ME ZOE.
UM... OKAY, ZOE. SORRY, I GUESS I'M FEELING A LITTLE INTIMIDATED.

JOANIE, I'M JUST YOUR OLD CLASSMATE.
YEAH, BUT YOU WERE ON THE GRADUATION COMMITTEE! EVERYONE LIKED YOU BEST! DID I JUST SAY THAT?

SO, JOANIE, YOU STILL HEAR FROM GINNY?
OH, ALL THE TIME!

SHE STILL SEEMING THAT JERK? WHAT WAS HIS NAME, CLEM?
CLYDE. YES, SHE'S STILL SEEING HIM. SHE HAS TO. SHE MARRIED HIM.

NO! RE-MEMBER WHEN HE SHOWED UP STONED FOR OUR GRADUATION?
HEE, HEE, YEAH! WHAT A DAY! RE-MEMBER OUR GRADUATION SPEAKER?

UM... NO.
WELL, ME NEITHER. BUT I'LL BET SHE WAS INSPIRING!

HOW ABOUT WOODROW? WHAT'S HE BEEN UP TO?
STILL ON THE HILL. STILL NOT GETTING IT. HE'S LEADING THE SAVE-BOB-PAKWOOD MOVEMENT.

HEE, HEE! PERFECT! YOU KNOW, ODDLY ENOUGH, I'VE MISSED HIM. I'VE MISSED A LOT OF THE OLD CLASS.
YEAH... ME, TOO.

AND THEN, AFTER CARTER LOST, I LEFT PUBLIC SERVICE AND WENT INTO PRIVATE LAW...
... AND ENDED UP HEADING THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT AT AETNA INSURANCE.
AND NOW THIS! QUITE A JOURNEY, ZOE!

HOW ABOUT YOU, JOANIE? WHERE DO YOU WANT TO BE? WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO IN THIS JOB?
IF I COULD CHOOSE? I'D GO AFTER ABUSES IN THE INSURANCE INDUSTRY.

THE INSUR...? UM... WELL, IF THERE'S A CASE TO BE MADE, THEN, UM...
MADE YA BINK. I'M OPEN TO ANYTHING, BOSS.

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