

# Editorials

## Survival Is Still Black Priority

"Wealth is power and power equals freedom in all its forms." These were the words of journalist Tony Brown as he addressed the N.C. Black Leadership Caucus conference in Charlotte last weekend. Speaking at Johnson C. Smith University, Brown added that blacks spend less than seven percent of their money with black-owned businesses.

The seven percent Mr. Brown mentioned is of some \$200 billion other speakers at the conference stated that American blacks spend each year. A theme echoed throughout the three-day session, was that to achieve economic and political independence blacks must spend more of their money with black-owned businesses.

Brown's remarks were a part of his "Buy Freedom" self-help program begun in October of 1985. The program calls upon black Americans to spend half of their money with black-owned businesses and the other half with businesses that have equal opportunity hiring and promotional policies.

The U.S. Investment Company, another economic self-help plan, was also presented at the meeting by its leaders, Parren Mitchell, a Democrat and U.S. Congressman for Maryland, and U.S. House Delegate Walter Fauntroy, (D-DC). The company sells shares for the minimum sum of \$12 per share. The money reportedly will be used as a venture capital fund to help start new black-owned businesses, the expansion of existing black businesses, and some foreign investments in businesses to aid blacks primarily in Southern Africa.

The investment company was referred to as part of the Black Leadership Family Plan as adopted last March by the Black Leadership Roundtable and the Black Leadership Forum. Both groups are reportedly composed of leaders of the nation's largest civil rights organizations.

There was a consensus at the Caucus conference, its 10th anniversary convention, that these kinds of economic self-help ideas are needed if blacks are to achieve some measure of economic and political power in America.

While we can agree in principle with the intent of these self-help programs, there are some valid questions in terms of self-help for whom? As it is with some government and private programs designed to help different groups of people, the people at the bottom end of the economic and political ladder too often are left out, if not by design, then simply by the failure of the trickle-down theory; that is, the benefits don't reach the very poor at the bottom.

### Less Assets

For example, a recently released first-ever assessment of wealth in America by the Census Bureau, reports that the typical black family has less than one-tenth the assets of a white family. The study found that black households had a median net worth of only \$3,397 in late 1984, compared to \$39,135 for the typical white family. In fact, the study concluded that nearly

one-third of all black families, 30.5 percent, reported owning no assets or having a negative net worth. Furthermore, over half of all black families, 54 percent, had assets of less than \$5,000. By comparison, 11 percent of all white families had no assets or a negative net worth, and 26 percent owned less than \$5,000 in assets.

The Census study states, too, that equity in a home accounted for approximately 40 percent of the net worth of American families, 17 percent was in savings account deposits and seven percent in mutual funds and corporate stock. Thus, it appears that the prosperity that President Reagan has talked about in America has not trickled down to most black families, the nation's farmers, inner-city dwellers--black, white, and Hispanic--the latter of which has median net worth assets about 59 percent above that of blacks.

With this depressing state of black America-household median net worth of only \$3,397, 30.5 percent with no assets or a negative net worth, and 54 percent of black households having assets of less than \$5,000 - we are talking in practical terms, about only 15.5 percent of black households that can presumably afford to make even a minimum long term investment in the U.S. Investment Company's economic self-help program.

### Fundamental Facts

On Tony Brown's "Buy Freedom" buy-black theme, we have to recognize that fundamental facts account largely for blacks spending only seven percent of this reported \$200 billion yearly. First, black-owned businesses are a long way from having in their stock the vast majority of the consumer products that black households need or want. For example, the City of Charlotte has two or three black-owned automobile dealerships, more than most cities even twice the size of Charlotte have, yet it is impractical to assume or expect blacks to purchase a model or auto brand not of their choice simply to support a black-owned business. Likewise, the majority of white auto buyers would buy from or not buy from a black-owned auto dealer based on his auto preference and could care less about who owns the dealership.

On the other hand, again using Charlotte as an example, small black-owned convenient grocery stores in predominantly black neighborhoods get about 99 percent of their business from black consumers. Yet in the overall grocery sales, the larger supermarkets which attract more black consumers to its larger inventory stores get a bigger share of the black buyers' dollars.

Therefore, those who release data indicating where and how black consumers spend their dollars need to go beyond the broad statistical data sheet to see what is really occurring and thus will realize that blacks as a group, still have to use most of their resources for survival, not investment.

"BLACKS' RETICENCE TO SEIZE THE INITIATIVE TO ORGANIZE THEIR COMMUNITIES" SAID DOUGLAS G. GLASGOW, DEAN OF HOWARD UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK, IS A MAJOR FACTOR AND AN IMPORTANT FACTOR CONTRIBUTING TO OUR COMMUNITIES' UNDEVELOPED STATUS"

- POLITICAN
- BUSINESS MAN
- DOCTORS
- LAWYERS
- ARTISTS
- TEACHERS
- MINISTERS
- WORKERS
- COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS
- SOCIAL WORKERS
- FRATERNAL GROUPS
- FINANCE
- COMPUTER SCIENCE
- INSTITUTION ADMINISTRATION
- ENGINEERING
- PLANNING
- ARCHITECTURE
- BLACK PRESS



### Scope

## Black Politicians Owe Support

By Sabrina Johnson  
Special To The Post

The black media and black politicians; a long standing relationship where there is little respect for the media by the politicians. Black politicians are an unusual animal. They bask in the glory of political success and reap its immense benefits. However, there is a grave tendency to cover up or overlook the true source of their glory.

A question most politicians and leaders find difficult to answer is "Where did you get your first political support?" Most will mumble and fumble their way through the answer, trying to conceal the beginning, middle and ending source of support. A few brave, proud souls will answer "the black media and my church."

In the black community the church has long been viewed as the power seat of the infrastructure within the society. Since the Reconstruction, the church had educated, cultivated, and supported its members and surrounding communities. Early black leaders realized that to grow in strength, the strength must be gotten



Sabrina

within the realms of the church.

The beginnings of the black media found its place among this infrastructure. Early newspapers and chronicles found themselves reporting on and covering church news. Foremost because church news was community news in a large sense. Leaders and politicians took advantage of this captive audience to voice their opinions and gain support. Thoughts were since the newspaper or chronicle reached a target market, why not cash in on saturating that market? Thus there is power in numbers.

As time passed, with the expansion of the media to radio and television, more and more looked to the black media as their launching pad. Just about every black leader or politician can attribute a major part of his or her success to the black media.

Bringing this history lesson to relevance, look at the local black and white leaders and politicians. Nearly each one sought the support and coverage of the black media to give their "campaigns" the strong push needed to "win." Democrats and Republicans alike understand the power of the press particularly the black press. Why? Because the black vote is the key in an election or support.

The black vote or support is the shoulder upon which everyone stands. Its movement affects everyone. In the words of Rev. Jesse Jackson, "When the black vote moves, all move."

How does one reach the black vote? Through the black media. Why? Because blacks listen to and read more black media sources than other sources. How? Blacks are more likely to read and listen to what is produced by blacks and believe it than other media sources. The black vote is extremely important and the black media is the best vehicle for reaching such a market. Can this be proven? Certainly. Local, state, regional, and national leaders and politicians (black and white) have actively in the past and are in the present working through this avenue to secure that segment of the society support.

The Rev. Jesse Jackson made the nation and world take note of the tremendous power the black vote holds. The national Rainbow Coalition, Inc. started its campaign within the framework of the black media.

Without the influence of the black media, where would black leaders and politicians be today? Very difficult to find.

Organizations hold conferences with seminar topics like political empowerment - unity means power, plans for progressive change and economic empowerment. It is wonderful to talk about the topics, but if the messages do not reach the general populations, what good is done? Talking and not doing do not add up! A 30-second interview on the 11 o'clock news on the success of the conference does not generate the kind of impact needed to

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### Miller Says:

## Excellent Performance: Tomorrow's Job Security

By Sherman N. Miller  
Special To The Post

World market forces have reshaped America's steel, textile, shoe, and automobile industries and they are currently altering our energy and computer industries. Since America's business leaders are being forced to direct the exodus of hundreds of thousands of jobs, they must find ways to encourage non-performers to leave and to motivate the remaining workforce to the pursuit of excellence in a low promotion potential environment.

At first glance, management is trapped in a quandary. Yet segmenting employees on the basis of their performance level and understanding these groups' value system can offer some routes to achieving these counterpoised objectives.

Charles M. Futrell and A. Parasuraman offer some insight on the values of high and low performers in their article, "The Relationship of Satisfaction and Performance to Salesforce Turnover," which was published in the fall of 1984 issue of the Journal of Marketing. "Most companies invest funds to



Sherman

reduce turnover through improving working environments, work satisfaction, etc. According to our results, such measures would have significantly less influence on high performers than on the low performers."

These chaps also argue that "our results also indicate that it may be possible to differentially impact the turnover of high and low performers by emphasizing certain facts of salespeople's satisfaction."

Futrell and Parasuraman see reducing overall personnel turnover as an insignificant objective. They

contend that, "A sales manager should implement a strategy designed to reduce turnover among high performers and dismiss the poor performers." Since many companies are eliminating operations, these chaps' comments highlight the fact that companies must find ways to keep high performers, who have been passed over for higher promotions, from despairing and falling into the non-performers' ranks.

Jay W. Lorsch and Haruo Takagi in their article, "Keeping Managers Off the Shelf," in the July-August 1986 issue of the Harvard Business Review see mainstream assignments early in one's career as the undergird of later life commitment to the company. They offer two factors that must be addressed if American companies hope to keep their promotionally peaked managers productive--"First is candor about a person's career prospects," they write. "The second important factor is challenging job assignments."

Lorsch and Takagi believe that "candor helps people face and accept the reality that they are not going to

advance further." These chaps also offer ways that peaked employees' talents may be used in a very productive manner. A few of these ideas are:

- Continue to provide plateaued managers meaningful assignments that allow them to use their unique skills;

- Have senior executives recognize and reward the professional contributions of plateaued managers;

- Give managers as much autonomy as possible to do their jobs, beyond their jobs.

I believe that many Americans will have to recognize that their careers have plateaued but their continued contributions will become a necessity for their company to survive in our new world market. In the long run, I also think minority group people will benefit from the current corporate streamlining because companies are being forced to give all their employees meaningful jobs.

In retrospect I see an excellent job performance as tomorrow's job security no matter where one happens to be on the upward mobility ladder.

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