

Why I'm running for Baptist State Convention

By Rev. Philip Davis
SPECIAL TO THE POST

You may have already heard that I have decided to allow my name to be placed in nomination for the office of First Vice-President, at our upcoming State Convention, November 11-13, 1996. The election of officers will take place on Tuesday, November 12, at 10:20 a.m. for the Office of President and at 3:15 for all others, including First Vice-President.

Let me tell you why I decided to seek this office. Many of you may not know that I have never been a part of any "political agenda." I have been asked to address the Carolina Conservative Baptist Meeting on October 22, 1996. I plan to do so and would be more than willing to address the Friends of Missions, if invited. It was at the request of several pastors and Directors of Missions across the state that I agreed to allow my name to be placed in nomination. The requests were based on the fact that as pastor of Nations Ford Baptist Church, I have led our congregation to be one of the top five churches in baptisms, in each of the past five years. In addition, we have led the state in earning discipleship course credits and diplomas in the area of Evangelism for two years and have ranked 12th in the entire SBC. The point that I am making is that I have one agenda, and that is to lead our great state convention to a Spiritual Awakening, a revival of love, unity and true brotherhood. I desire to see churches across our state unite against the real enemy which seems to be tearing us apart. While bite and devour one another, the enemies of intolerance, hatred, racism, classism, sexism, immorality, drug abuse, child molestation and a host of other family destroying vices are ripping apart our churches both urban and rural.

Friends, I believe that God wants us to change our focus from being exclusive, controlling and bitter to a new vision of hope, restoration and reconciliation. Perhaps I am naive, but I don't understand why conserv-

atives would need to control the convention. I certainly don't understand why moderates must elect our nominees to at least two of these three offices to continue control of the convention for the future." I was under the impression that the convention belonged to the churches and that the churches belonged to our Lord Jesus Christ, thus the convention belongs to Christ. He is the only person who should be in control.

I don't understand the attempt to unseat a President who is a "capable and pleasant President who has shown a great deal of good will and cooperative endeavor, which is praiseworthy." I also don't understand why more ethnic and minority leadership is not included on the staff of our state convention, the agencies and boards of our institutions, including the General Board.

I believe that it is time for a change in our convention. It is time for us to move into the 21st century with fresh new ideas and a renewed commitment to model effective evangelism and servant-leadership. The days of back room politics, fear propaganda and control techniques are over. This is a time to start fresh, with diversity of races, inclusion of the language and ethnic churches of our state and most of all a revival of love and unity.

I believe we can and should be open to those who may differ with us, as long as we agree on Jesus Christ. Our former president, Dr. Alfred Ayscue, stated in his address to 1994 convention, where I also preached the convention sermon, "There is no second class Baptist in North Carolina, be they male or female, clergy or laity, members of a small church or a part of a mega-congregation. Elitism and judgmental spirit have no place among us. The Baptist House in North Carolina must remain expansive enough to shelter all members of the "Baptist family," and I wholeheartedly agree. I am allowing my name to be placed in nomination in order to break through the elitism and prove to the nation that North Carolina Baptists are people of good will.

I believe that I can help our state convention and serve as a "peacemaker" for Jesus and for our churches. I have worked with men such as Dr. Roy Smith, Dr. Ron

Pinkerton, Bill Poe, Dr. Mike Steen and Eddie Griggs as well as with Dr. Wayne Poplin, Kelvin Smith, Alan Blume and George Mathis. I respect and believe I have earned the respect of the people with whom I have worked over the years.

My commitment to you will be the same that I ask of you and anyone else; namely, I commit to serve you with fairness, openness and honesty. I have no grudges, no ax to grind, and no political agenda. I have only a deep desire to serve our state convention and to help move us into the 21st Century without the baggage of infighting and bickering, but with a vision of renewal and a vision of seeing lost humanity saved by the grace of



Almighty God.

My friend and co-laborer, the issue is bigger than a label of conservative or moderate, liberal or fundamentalist. The issue is bigger than who is going to control. The issue is, will we as God's people in North Carolina, humble ourselves, seek His face, turn from our wicked ways and pray. God has promised that if we would do these things He would hear from Heaven, forgive our sins and would heal our land. I believe that the time for healing in our convention is now!

If you believe like I do, that it is time for a change and that we can change and that the future will be brighter for North Carolina Baptists, then I solicit your support and vote on November 12, in Greensboro.

I will be happy to answer any of your questions, and I am open to your suggestions. Please give me a call at 704-522-6480 or send me a fax at 704-522-8937.

Thank you and I look forward to seeing you on November 12. May the grace of God abound toward you!

The Rev. Philip Davis is pastor of Nations Ford Baptist Church in Charlotte and a candidate for first vice president of the Baptist State Convention.

Creek isn't as innocent as it appears

Letters to The Post

The writer is former medical director of the Neighborhood Health Center/Alexander Street Center.

Re: Kids Page article (Oct. 3, page 14A) "Creek provides summer playground:"

While I understand your good intentions for these photographs, I am moved to relive some serious problems with this seemingly quiet creek.

I worked at the Alexander Street Center in the Neighborhood Health Center for 17 1/2 years. During those long years, one of my deep concerns and fears was that little kids would fall in this creek and drown...then wash away.

The creek bed was then cleaned up and the wall for re-enforcement was installed. However, the water still rises some 7-8 feet above its normal peaceful level with heavy rain with powerful rippling of the stream.

Providing more public and safe water recreation for the public housing sector would be a nice follow-up series for The Post. Oh, by the way, three of my patients drowned in this creek further upstream several years ago during one of the heavy rain storms when their car was washed up the creek.

I suggest that your writers and your readers visit this area with it rains heavy to get a different picture.

MELVIN T. PINN JR MD.
Charlotte

What's on your mind?

Send your comments to The Charlotte Post, P.O. Box 30144, Charlotte, N.C. 28230 or fax (704) 342-2160. You can also use E-mail charpost@clt.mindspring.com. All correspondence must include a daytime telephone number for verification.

Self-determination, black nationalism

By Conrad Worrill
SPECIAL TO THE POST

Throughout the history of the black movement in America there has always been a stream of black leadership that has advocated a strategy of self-determination as the foundation for organizing and achieving freedom, justice, liberation, independence and power.

This stream of the black movement in America is called black nationalism. Black nationalism is a tradition that emerged in the early 19th century among those African leaders who understood the need for African people in America to develop a national entity as the only solution for African people in America, Latin America or the Caribbean.

These 19th century black nationalist leaders such as Denmark Vesey, Nat Turner, David Walker, Henry Highland Garnet, James T. Holly, Martin Delany, Pap Singleton, Edwin McCabe, and Henry McNeal Turner understood that African people in America were a "nation within a nation" and should organize to collectively struggle for the liberation of African people throughout the world.

Self-determination simply means that African people in America should determine our own destiny without the interference of others. And black nationalism seeks to bring about the complete independence of African people in this country with the aim of making us consciously involved in controlling our own communities.

CONRAD WORRILL is national chairman of the National Black United Front in Chicago.

Just how much is a dead child's life really worth?

By Dennis Schatzman
SPECIAL TO THE POST

The late 18th century poet Samuel Johnson once said "If a person says he's doing something not because of the money involved; but for the principle of the thing; it's the money!"

Which brings me to the subject at hand: How much are the civil trial plaintiffs going to get O.J. Simpson for in this latest "murder" trial? Lawyers for the plaintiffs, the families of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Lyle Goldman, said recently that the punitive and compensatory damages is worth somewhere around \$50 million. This seems rather peculiar since it was the Goldmans who have publicly stated that their civil action against Simpson had nothing to do with money.

Lack of candor aside, the action is about money, and we all know it. Since many of us believe that the fix is already on this one (the plaintiffs have the right judge, the right courtroom and the right amount of mass media and talk show host support) the only question remains: How much is the loss of loved ones actually worth?

That was the question I posed to a charter member of the American Academy of Economic and Financial Experts I met with in Las Vegas last month. He responded by giving me the Winter 1995 edition of the Academy-published Journal of

\$50 million sought in O.J. Simpson case is way too much

Legal Economics which contained two very interesting and revealing articles on that very subject written by some economists who very likely may be called as expert witnesses in this wrongful death suit.

In the first article, "The Investment Approach to Parental Loss in the Death of a Child," economists Thomas R. Ireland and John Ward of the University of Missouri-Kansas City, explain that "when parents decide to have a child, they are, in large part, valuing the anticipated benefits from that child more than the financial costs they expect to bear on behalf of the child." They argue that if a child is born and lives to be 19 years old, it is anticipated that a parent or parents have invested about \$10,000 per year for the care and upkeep of that child at a financial benefit of \$5,208 per year. If a child "is wrongfully killed" at that age or younger, the parent(s) loss of future benefits, both financial and emotional is far greater than if the child lives to - say - age 58.

Ireland and Ward estimate that the earlier a child is wrongfully killed, the greater the financial loss to parents. They cite, for example, that if a child is born in 1977 and dies wrong-

fully the next year, based upon parental "investment" of \$10,000 at a real 3 percent rate of return (estimated at \$17,024) the net loss to the parents is \$242,303. If the child is killed at age 9, at the same rate of investment, the net loss to the parents is reduced to \$173,296. Similarly, if the child dies at age 18, the net loss is reduced to \$120,360.

Now let's take a look at Goldman and Brown Simpson. What would their deaths be worth financially to their parents at the age that they were wrongfully killed, according to Ireland and Ward? These experts say that a 25-year-old wrongfully killed would be financially worth \$87,913 to the parents of a waiter who makes barely more than minimum wage plus tips.

Brown Simpson, who lived to be age 35, would have cost her parents \$51,791 in lost financial benefits. Had each of them lived to be age 58 before they were killed, they would have both been worth just \$22. That's right. Twenty-two dollars.

That is, assuming that they both worked all of their lives at the same rate of current pay. With Goldman, it's hard to measure. One can guess that the



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a sales girl) it is harder to measure.

Enter economists James Cieka and Seth Epstein of DePaul University in Chicago. Although they correctly deduce, in their article, "The Use of Value of Life Estimates in Wrongful Death Matters," that "no amount of compensation" emotionally satisfies a grieving parent, they also argue that a person's life "must have a finite value because people are quite willing to assume small risks of death for some amount of compensation."

If O.J. Simpson did indeed kill Brown Simpson and Goldman, one can argue that they did take a risk in living with (in Brown Simpson's case) and cavorting with (in Goldman's case) a person who was a "jealous" and "abusive" man.

Cieka and Epstein say that "people with larger incomes have a greater value of life than poorer people, and awards based on the value of life may lead to granting richer people

more compensation for the lost joy of living than poor people." Therefore, they say, "the value of life is larger when income is larger."

What does that mean in the case at hand? Although Brown Simpson worked barely more than a decent paycheck in all her life, she did bring O.J. into the family. The defendant, in turn put the Brown family in the Hertz Rent-a-Car business and paid for the education of Brown Simpson's other sisters. He even loaned Denise Brown \$5,000 just a few weeks after she says she saw O.J. beat Nicole after a long night of rowdy drinking.

In a civil case like the one currently underway, it is clear to me that O.J. Simpson will lose and some compensation will be granted. It will not be \$50 million as the plaintiffs envision, but it will be something. At least it shouldn't be, according to the experts. In granting an award in a wrongful death suit, there is no attempt to make a victim or dependents whole; it is simply a recognition that everyone wrongfully killed is entitled to be compensated equal to the value of a statistical life. Assuming, of course, that Simpson is "liable" in the wrongful death of the Brown and Goldman children.

DENNIS SCHATZMAN is a former Los Angeles Sentinel reporter and journalism professor.

The anger that binds us together rips us apart

Bernice P. Jackson



A few months ago a pastor wrote me about the anger he sees in the world around him. And he is right - it seems that anger boils beneath the surface of so many people and bubbles out sometimes at unexpected moments. Sorrowfully, anger may be the common denominator for many in our world today.

On our highways, angry and impatient drivers blow their horns, shouting and making obscene gestures at each other, sometimes running each other off the road, sometimes even attacking and shooting one another. In our work places, angry workers increasingly are resorting to guns and violence to resolve their conflicts and disap-

pointments - postal workers killing other postal workers, factory workers killing those who fired them, even law firms and professional workers killing former colleagues. In our homes, angry husbands beat their wives and angry mothers kill their crying children. In our schools, where once anger led to fist fights, we now find even small children using guns.

We find anger all around us. At airports and train stations, angry passengers make unreasonable demands upon workers. Angry parents make unreasonable demands upon teachers, who are angry themselves. Voters are angry with government and politicians are angry with each other. We even find anger in our churches and mosques, with angry people feuding with each other, bringing their anger inside houses of worship.

There is the anger which rich people and even some middle class people feel against the poor, whom they charge with being lazy and irresponsible. There is the anger which poor people have as they see a society obsessed with material wealth while ignoring their needs for the necessities of life - jobs, housing and food.

Then there is the anger which widens the gap between white Americans and people of color. People of color are angry at the treatment we have received for the last 500 years in this nation. Whites are angry because they believe that people of color have taken their jobs and college placements because of affirmative action.

Why are we so angry in this country? There are many reasons, of course. Some of it has to do with the pace in which we live today - always rushing, sel-

dom taking time to talk to a neighbor over a fence or to someone else waiting for a bus. Some of it has to do with our placing the accumulation of material wealth above human relationships and our greed and unwillingness to share with others. Some of it has to do with the scapegoating of people of color and the poor - blaming affirmative action instead of looking at the real problems of lack of jobs for unskilled and blue collar workers, for example.

Some of it has to do with the fact that we as a nation have never had real, honest conversation about race and racism and what it is doing to us all. We have built our national house on sand, on myths and half-truths about how this nation has grown to be what it is. We have never acknowledged the sins committed against native American people or African

American people or other people of color as we have taken our place in this country.

We have never had real, honest conversation about economic justice issues - about why there are hundreds of thousands of homeless people, about why millions of jobs have left our borders, about why the rich are getting richer while the poor are getting poorer.

We have been alienated from each other and we have been separated from our Creator. My prayer - is that we can reach beyond the anger to conversation and beyond the conversation to repentance and reconciliation and healing. That is our only chance for survival. That is our only hope for a future.

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