

EDITORIALS

An Education Summit With Substance

BY REP. AUGUSTUS HAWKINS
Guest Editorial

Less than two months ago, President Bush convened a national summit on education. It was an excellent opportunity for the administration and state leaders to discuss cost-effective and exemplary programs, which could be repeated throughout our nation's schools. Unfortunately, the education summit can only be termed as an exercise of wasted opportunities.

In a sense, the president's desire to stage a summit was commendable, because I believe he is earnest in wanting to improve education. But the summit turned into more of a public relations extravaganza, rather than a braintrust which could lead to solutions. Fear of being identified with spending money on education blinded many of the participants and doomed any constructive effort from the start. The Bush summit's conclusions became mired in generalities, lofty goals without requiring resources, and the same tired exhortations about education.

Because of the disappointing result of the Bush summit, I have begun to mobilize the beginning of an effort, which will lead to a real education summit. This past week, I held an education symposium on Capitol Hill to discuss the future of education in America. Unlike the politicized education carnival held by the president, this was an information-gathering process, with a high degree of substance, that may lead to a larger summit-like meeting of the minds, possibly next year. It basically helped my Committee on Education and Labor to assess if our nation is on the right track, relative to education reform.

Only a week before my symposium, the administration was rattled by a group of business

leaders who suggested that the White House was on the wrong track regarding education funding issues. The president's domestic policy advisor, Roger B. Porter, addressed a number of business leaders on the subject of education. He recanted those same Bush themes that school improvement can be achieved without spending more money. This statement ignited a strong reaction from the crowd of business leaders, including Owen Butler, board chairman of the Committee for Economic Development, an organization comprised of more than 200 business executives and educators. He stated, "The administration is saying: We won't give more money to education, but we don't mind if you do." This is not the kind of federal leadership we need."

Butler was one of the prominent participants at my education symposium, where he once again expressed the importance of investing more money in cost-effective federal education programs. Other participants included a number of education association officials, researchers, and advocates, who support a significant federal role in education.

What we need at the next education summit is something closer to the education symposium, and the annual National Conference on Educating Black Children, which has been held in Hunt Valley, Md. the past four years. These are working, results-oriented sessions, involving people who are not only advocates for education, but are fanatics. They care deeply about the future of our children. That is what we need at the next education summit—more advocates, and fewer grandstanders. American education, and the children of this nation, will be the ultimate winners from this team effort.

Roweave Tax Blanket

There is an old tale about the young pioneer who was ready to earn his place among the elders. Taking only the clothes on his back, his knife and blanket, his first was to successfully carve a life in the wilderness for one year.

Living off the land, the boy grew into a man. Soon, his blanket stretched only to his chest. Since it was long enough on the bottom, he reasoned, he could cut off six inches and sew it to the top.

Unfortunately, some tax writers are employing this same faulty reasoning as they search for new revenues to cover burgeoning deficits or fund new services in federal, state and local budgets. This year, new taxes or tax increases are being considered by Congress, state legislatures, county commissions and city councils.

But what types of taxes should be implemented to address the fiscal demands, and who will bear their burden? These should be the first questions in any serious consideration of new tax initiatives.

The Tax Foundation in Washington, D.C. recently released a comprehensive analysis of how our tax burden is distributed, titled "Tax Burden By Income Class 1986-87."

The report found that the overall tax system is roughly proportional—the percentage of income accounted for by taxes is approximately the same for all in-

come levels—except for families in the lowest (less than \$10,000) and highest (over \$90,000) income brackets. These families pay a disproportionately larger percentage of their income in taxes, but for different reasons.

Federal taxes, levied mainly on the individual and corporate income and on payroll, place a heavier burden on the highest income group, the study showed. State and local government collections tend to rely primarily on general sales, consumer excise and property taxes and place a heavier burden on the lowest income families.

The Tax Foundation study points out that consumer excise taxes on tobacco products and alcoholic beverages, for example, place an extremely disproportionate burden on the lowest-income families. The burden imposed by the alcoholic beverage excise tax is almost five times greater and the tobacco products tax burden over 22 times greater for the lowest-income class than for the highest. With sales and gasoline taxes, these four taxes alone absorb almost 10 percent of the income of the lowest income families but less than two percent of the highest income class.

Tax analysts agree that excise taxes are regressive, yet they remain a popular revenue source because they are easier to pass. But is it good policy?

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

OPEN LETTER

Dear Attorney General
Dear Atty. Gen. Thornburg:
On behalf of the North
Carolina State Conference
of Branches of the NAACP, I
want to convey to you our
concern that North Carolina
has failed to reach an
equitable settlement with
the black Agricultural
Mechanics Service agents.
The discriminatory practice
of paying blacks less for the
same work than it paid
whites is compounded by
"stare waiting" on the
issue of settlement. With
the ruling of the U.S.
Supreme Court settlement

should have proceeded the settlement process as quickly. It is a miscarriage of justice that the state continues to drag out this case.
Given the relative ages of the black agents another few years of senseless haggling with guarantee that many of them will never live to spend any settlement money. The suspicion grows that this is indeed the state's strategy of the State. Punish those who had the audacity to challenge the discriminatory practices of the State, by dragging out



NNPA FEATURE

COPING

by

Dr. Charles W. Faulkner



THE MISUSE OF RELIGION

Jim and Tammy Bakker are not the only people who abuse religion. At the trial of Oliver North, months ago, an interesting, though not unusual, abuse of religion was made.

Here is the situation. The trial, which was held in Washington, D.C., had a jury of 12 African-American men and women. At the end of the trial, when the prosecuting attorney and the defense attorney made their final arguments, both attorneys began their arguments with an unusual emotional appeal to the jury. They quoted words from the Bible. When the trial was completed and the verdict was in, the jury foreman said that she knew that the two attorneys, both white, were trying to manipulate the jurors by appealing to their emotional feelings about God. The attorneys seemed to believe that the black jurors were "brainwashed" by religion.

The attorneys obviously believed that the religiously inspired jurors would find a guilty man innocent simply because the jurors believed deeply in religion—even if he was guilty. The fact is that this tactic actually works, often. Advertisers regularly use a biblical symbol, such as a cross, to convince people to buy a certain product. If a milk company puts the picture of a cross on its milk cartons, they will sell far more cartons of milk than will the company that does not use the symbol of the cross in its advertisements.

Religion, like other similar endeavors, has the capability of brainwashing people and causing them to sometimes make irrational decisions. They might think, "If it has God's approval, it must be okay." The symbol of the cross implies that God approves of the product or, even, wants people to buy it. Thus, blacks are often used simply because of their deep feelings for religion.

"God will make a way, somehow." This very popular expression is often interpreted to mean that God is like a superparent who protects His children no matter what troubles they encounter. The relationship of most people to God is parent-child. With the individual being the child.

On the surface, this relationship seems okay. However, in practice, it tends to make people become dependent upon a supernatural spirit. A childlike adult is not likely to make it in this tough society. Some people even plan, in advance, to commit a sin "knowing" that they can ask the Lord for forgiveness later.

When people expect God to plan their lives for them, and protect them, they tend to lose their motivation to guide and control their own lives.

A friend once said, "What goes around, comes around." God will punish the evildoers. I said to him, "Don't hold your breath and expect someone else to do your dirty work. If you want someone to be punished, you had better do it yourself."

Vantage Point

BY RON DANIELS
JACKSON'S PRESIDENTIAL BIDS
PAVE THE WAY FOR VICTORIES ON
NOV. 7

As the election returns rolled in on Tuesday, Nov. 7, it became clear that African-American politicians were posting unprecedented victories in cities like New York, New Haven, Durham, Seattle and in the state of Virginia. David Dinkins would be elected the first African-American mayor of the nation's largest city and Doug Wilder would become the first elected black governor in American history.

But while the air was filled with euphoria, particularly among African-Americans, a curious phenomenon was unfolding. Numerous journalists, analysts, opinion molders and party pundits were having a different celebration. They were hailing what they perceived to be the demise of Jesse L. Jackson as the pre-eminent black political leader on the national scene. Jesse Jackson was declared the "big loser" on Nov. 7.

Commentators virtually rejoiced in the victories of Norman Rice of Seattle, John Daniels of New Haven and of course Dinkins and Wilder. They were anointed the "new breed" of "moderate" and responsible "mainstream" black politicians who could appeal to and gain substantial white votes. Their elevation to public office, so some analysts reasoned, meant the inevitable decline of the liberal-progressive style and substance of the Jackson factor in American politics. What this gleeful exercise in wishful thinking ignored, however, was the fact that the Jackson factor contributed mightily to the impressive results on Nov. 7. Far from diminishing Jackson's stature, the election results enhanced Jesse Jackson's standing as a pioneer who paved the way and opened the door to broader dimensions of political power and influence.

In both the 1984 and 1988 campaigns, Jesse Jackson repeatedly stated that one of the goals of his presidential bids was to increase voter registration and to inspire increasing numbers of African-Americans to seek public office at all levels. Jackson put forth the vision of a Rainbow Coalition and projected a platform based on "common ground" issues as the vehicles to victory for black and progressive politicians. And though Jesse's Rainbow was derided in '84 as a rainbow with only one stripe, in 1988 there was no question but that rainbow politics had arrived.

The '88 campaign set the tone, staked out the issues, and helped to create a mindset that it is possible for African-American

candidates to receive substantial support among white voters. It is useful to recall that of the nearly seven million votes which Jesse Jackson won in 1988, nearly three million were white votes. Jackson did extremely well in Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Washington state, Oregon and Idaho. He scored victories in Michigan and Vermont, the whitest state in the nation. Jesse Jackson clearly demonstrated that it was possible for a black candidate to receive sizeable support in areas with minuscule black and minority populations.

Jesse Jackson also won the state of Virginia and the city of New York, thereby strengthening the prospects for Dinkins and Wilder in 1989. Especially in New York City, it was Jesse Jackson's '88 campaign which provided the cement which bound together the coalition which would eventually carry David Dinkins to victory. After a demoralizing failure in 1985, it was Jesse Jackson who urged blacks and Latinos to forget their past differences and join with labor, the Irish and other ethnic groups to forge a formidable coalition for change. When Jackson carried New York City during the '88 Democratic primary, he made believers out of disbelievers. It was on that night that the coalition was convinced that it was possible to dump Koch and win the office of mayor.

These reminders are important, not because it is necessary to glorify the accomplishments of Jesse Jackson, but because there are always forces within the media, the party establishment and the power structure which seek to separate us from our history. Much of the media is hostile to Jesse Jackson because he won big in 1988 despite their persistent negative predictions to the contrary. And there are forces within the Democratic Party, particularly the Southern-based Democratic Leadership Conference, who fear Jackson's brand of liberal-progressive politics. These forces would like a more moderate and mild-mannered type of mainstream black leadership to emerge. Jesse Jackson refuses to be sufficiently accommodating.

So while African-Americans can legitimately applaud the outcome of the Nov. 7 election, we need to guard against the dangers of media manipulation, divide and conquer and the old game of we'll pick your leaders for you. When we decide to demote Jesse Jackson we'll let America know. For now, let's give him his proper. Jesse Jackson's campaigns paved the way for the successes on Nov. 7.

Watch TV With
Your Children
Tonight!

BIBLE THOUGHT

If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me. These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

John 14:23-28

Tony Brown's Column

SUCCESS AND ETHICS ARE TWO DIFFERENT THINGS
In this column, I'm going to philosophically disagree with a good friend who is black, a journalist and just as committed to the advancement of black people as I am. Therefore, I want to present my argument in as palatable a manner as possible.

Our difference revolves specifically around the role that Bryant Gumbel plays (or does not play) in black community activities. He is reported to pride himself on being "colorless" and is widely perceived by blacks like me as a "reluctant African-American" and absent from any meaningful role in our struggle.



BROWN

"On the racial issue, Bryant Gumbel works mightily at being non-threatening to whites and barely recognizable to blacks," wrote Les Payne, Pulitzer Prize winner and an editor at New York Newsway.

One can certainly take exception to that statement by pointing out that he does his job well. As a matter of fact, my journalist friend wrote, "He is commanding, informed and prodigious. That to me is a black standard."

That to me is a white standard. For a successful black person to focus on no more than success as defined by a people and a society that, for example, brag when only 70 percent of white do not vote (meaning that only 30 percent did) for a black candidate and believes that blacks fail because they are lazy is a failure of personal ethics.

Let's suppose that a black person becomes the most famous black person and the highest-paid person ever (\$10 million a year) and refuses to support the institutions that provide a survival foundation for blacks—black colleges, churches, social, cultural, civic and youth groups.

Instead, his allegiance is to a "colorless" persona, like, for example, a 24-year-old black man who wrote in the New York Times that he had a white girlfriend, spoke like white people, liked country music and had no affinity for the plight of the black community.

Suppose, assuming that his success is the black standard of success as my friend suggests, 100 other blacks became "successful" and made \$10 million each. And they all remained physically and psychologically separated from black people.

What would change? One hundred black people would be better off and their resources would be used to spiritually and financially support everyone but black people. Eventually, they would even destroy themselves.

Black separatism from other blacks is a delusion—the same delusion the black man in the Times suffers from and the same one that drives a "colorless" Bryant Gumbel. No, my friend, one Gumbel is too many and his standard of "color" is a fatal dose.

And how "colorless" do you think Bryant Gumbel will be on the streets of Bensonhurst or Howard Beach? Do you believe that his salary or exposure to five million people every morning or his multimillion-dollar salary will make him "colorless" to a lynch mob or stop a sick bigot (a redundant expression) from pulling the trigger on the first black face he sees?

The black community can, and will, prosper without benign Negroes—it always has. But let's not confuse an absence of ethical values with success.

"Tony Brown's Journal" TV series can be seen on public television Saturday on Channel 4 at 1:30 p.m. Please consult listings.

A DIFFERENT VOICE

BY DOROTHY SHAW-THOMPSON

Parents and concerned citizens often ask how it is possible for African-American children to sit in the classrooms of America (where they believe equality of opportunity is present) and not do as well as children of other races. Why, they ask, are our kids more likely to fail, more likely to be placed in special classes, more likely to be suspended or expelled than other children? Could it be that our children are slower, more behaviorally handicapped, etc.? It must be the parents' fault.

Of course you know by now what my answer is: a resounding no! Am I slow, do I have difficulty reading the statistics? Or am I just a stubborn person who refuses to accept the obvious? Neither of the above. The truth is that I have been privileged to experience life at a time when education was segregated. I also have been privileged to be born into a race of people who have started and sustained civilization wherever we have been present, despite what appears to be insurmountable odds. In addition, I have been privileged to have as role models and supporters individuals in my family and life who taught me to look under rocks, behind closed doors and to the highest sky for answers to complexities in my life and in the lives of others. I also have been blessed with an educational experience and training that has taught me to understand individuals, social systems and spiritual and non-spiritual truths.

The classrooms of America do not operate in isolation from the larger society. Adults and young people enter classrooms with the voices of the world echoing in their brains. A society that does not value a people because of their skin color, economic category and cultural perspective does not change because classroom doors are shut. When children of African descent enter classrooms they are viewed with a different perspective than children of other races. If they don't know their ABCs on the first day of school or if they can't add that one and one are two, they are perceived to be slow, possibly handicapped, etc. Many of these kids fail their first experience in school not because they are slow but because they are perceived to be slow. Sometimes even if they learn these "required facts" it is still recommended that they be retained "because after all it took them a year." Doesn't that prove something? No!!! The children who know their ABCs and number facts have been rehearsing since they were two or so. Who, if anybody, is perhaps slow here? In addition, we know that there are no givens in terms of development and neither educators nor psychologists know everything. There are innumerable personalities who were labeled slow and mentally retarded by our educational system who have been successful adults. It is said that Nelson Rockefeller wrote a book he was unable to read. Therefore, we have to understand that labels, whether or not they are educational or behaviorally applied, are perceptions, even if they "look" to be true.

The process in a school system of educational exchange
(See VOICE, P. 12)

Be A
Good Sport!