

P E R S P E C T I V E S

By Professor McKinley Burt



BY PROFESSOR MCKINLEY BURT

What Is a "Good Faith Effort"?

We often hear that phrase, a "good faith effort" as having been made by someone or another--or by a particular organization. But, just what, exactly, does it mean? Under some circumstances we feel that we know very well the extent of the implied commitment--to deliver, to expedite, to discharge a debt, or whatever. For instance, we often have it from the United States Government, "backed by the full-faith and credit of [the government]."

But, today, I would lead us into another area for assessment of this ubiquitous term. While I've been writing this current series on "Minority Business" (concluded this week on Business Page), I find myself returning to frequent thoughts concerning the level of commitment--and, indeed, the sincerity--of many of the African Americans who make such a noisy and highly-publicized case for an immediate and massive escalation of the minority business effort (seldom accompanied by action, let alone a structured plan for implementation).

In the immediate case, my reflections are prompted by a recent column of Tony Brown, the well-known

black television commentator and publisher of "Tony Brown's Journal". Here, he took to task some of the most halloved and respected echelons of the black leadership hierarchy. Specifically, he furnished the following quotes of William Reed, a columnist for the Black-owned Washington, D.C. newspaper, Capital Spotlight.

"The Congressional Black Caucus weekend is the most glaring evidence of a two-decade-old saga of ineptness, mismanagement, lack of accountability and vision of our so-called

"After 20 years of CBC weekends, the most obvious evidence of Black leadership having been on Capitol Hill are thousands of Scotch bottles, a slew of chicken bones and a host of white merchants rushing to the bank to deposit the one-half billion dollars they receive each year from CBC hotel rentals and the sale of Scotch and hot buffalo wings."

"This is one of those 150 annual get-togethers where middle-class Blacks are spending 3 billion dollars with white people while discussing how bad off we are and blaming racism for it. I, of course, have proposed that all Black groups cancel their 1992 meetings and

use the \$3 billion as a capital formation fund to rebuild our community."

"I think this position is well taken, a rather succinct assessment, right to the "inept" point--and every bit as caustic a presentation as I would have made (smiles). Further, I think it is a logic that could be applied to this microcosm, Portland, Oregon. We know that I have made this case a number of times, not only in articles and in speeches--but, going so far as to design and implement university classes incorporating both the standard business and legal structures of enterprise, but also the real-time experiences of successful entrepreneurs.

So what is that can be done--that isn't being done--that must be done? Never in history has the race3 had so many college graduates, so many blacks in experience-gaining positions in management, technology and the financial interface. But it would seem that it was the lesser educated and exposed blacks of yesteryear who had the drive, ambition and motivation to successfully launch many viable business enterprises. What do you think is the answer? Write us here at the paper; we'd like to hear from you!

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...And Justice For All

by Angelique Sanders



The War in Iraq: Russian Roulette for Soldiers

Scenario: You're at home, and someone breaks in. Before you can react, the intruder grabs your son and puts a gun to his head. Your son has no choice in the matter, nor do you. The man declares his intention of playing Russian Roulette with your son, and he pulls the trigger...

How different is this scenario from all the young men who are being drafted to spill their blood for what our political leaders like to hype as "fighting for your country"? Thank you, Uncle Sam, but I'd only fight for moral causes; I would not accept taxpayers' money only to go and fight for oil. Assuredly, I'd rather spend my money on inflated gasoline prices than on enlisting America's youth on a potential death mission (by the way, we're spending one and a half BILLION dollars per MONTH on the war in Iraq).

Bush, would America's fists still be in Iraq if you and your family were in the army? It must be fairly simple to send people you've never even met, to face their death for...um...oil. The biggest price you might have to pay for this war is hiring another secretary to send off letters of condolence to griev-

ing families and friends of soldiers.

Even if the troops aren't killed in Iraq, what must the experience of war do to their psyche? I saw a car accident once, and the memory of the victim's body has never left me. One can only imagine what permanent emotional damage will result from experiencing massive legalized murder; Vietnam's scars have not yet healed.

I think "America First, Politicians Last", an absolutist organization working toward the preservation of the Bill of Rights, said it best: "Support laws that will force the politicians to behave like law-abiding citizens." It seems ironic to me that we continually elect elitist that wave at starving people from their limousines, and consider it "getting in touch with the people" (then, of course, they return to their expansive California dude ranches, or White House residence that has more bathrooms than I have total rooms). And then we're all shocked when they cut Social Security and Medicare, and give the rich folk tax breaks.

Most political systems in this world attempt to shorten the gap between rich and poor; meanwhile, the

U.S. is losing its middle class populas (some end up in the throes of starvation; some find a ridiculous niche in capitalist America and invent a cheesier macaroni or an easy-lift chair and are "set" for life).

Most other governments fund college-level education (in fact, the Soviet Union PAYS qualified students to attend college); most DO NOT pay their farmers to NOT grow crops (our government was caught doing this a couple years ago, because they didn't want a surplus--why couldn't surplus food be sold or given to other countries, or to the food bank?); most wouldn't pay \$10,000 for a disposable military seat (yes, again, credit our government with that scandal); and most political systems do not sport such a terrifying deficit.

I also suspect few countries, besides the U.S. of A., would permit someone like former K.K.K. leader David Duke to run for office.

Thumbs up to the woman at Saturday's "No Blood for Oil" rally with the sign that read: "Deficit? Sell the White House!" **Next week:** an overview of all Portland's recent rallies

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There Is No Choice! Vote No on Ballot Measure 11

by Professor McKinley Burt

The ballot title is "School Choice System, Tax Credit for Education Outside Public Schools." This measure, which would AMEND THE OREGON CONSTITUTION, submits a somewhat harmless-sounding question in the voters' pamphlet: "Should Constitution provide choice of public schools, tax credit for education outside public schools, voter approval of certain education laws?"

It is the position of the Observer newspaper, this writer, and a host of concerned citizens and organizations that the passage of this ill-conceived measure would constitute an unmitigated disaster for Oregon's educational system. It is almost inconceivable that at a time when both the education hierarchy, parents, and other interests are making yeoman efforts to solve the existing problems of the system, a massive assault would be launched by a coalition of narrowly-focused special interest groups.

The "Oregonians for Education Choice" group presents a number of "carrots" in their campaign to slip this measure through, but deliberately fail to examine the devastating disruptions and chaos these proposals would

fail to bring about:

"What is the Educational Choice Initiative? It is an amendment to Oregon's Constitution to be voted on in 1990. The initiative allows families to choose what schools their children attend. Open enrollment will allow families to choose between government schools, even if the schools are in other school districts. A basic education tax credit will provide a state income tax credit for K-12 education expenses in alternative schools. The tax credit will pay up to \$2,500 per student by 1992.

Why do we need choice? Our government school system is failing, producing unqualified graduates despite increases in spending. Choice provide these benefits:

- If a school isn't right for your family, you'll be able to choose and afford alternative schools.
- Schools that must compete will improve or lose students.
- Different schools can cater to different needs or values.
- Families will be more involved, becoming active choosers and consumers of education."

Of all that has been written in opposition to this measure--Oregonian Newspaper, Oregon Education Association,

Oregon School Board's Association--we think the position of the "Rainbow Coalition" sums it up rather well:

"But statewide Ballot Measure #11, up for vote on November 6, is not really choice for parents. It is choice for schools to cream the crop of academically and athletically successful, cheaper-to-educate kids. It's a choice only for a few parents who can afford the money up-front, the transportation costs, and who can sell their children to the chosen school.

"...the most selective, academically elite private schools would remain selective and elite, the only difference being that parents of their students would suddenly get a nice tax break." (Eugene Register-Guard, August 16, 1990

The vast majority of poor, working class, racial minority, immigrant, disabled, special needs, costly kids would be left behind in financially drained schools. \$80 million would immediately leave the Oregon public school fund to go to church schools, even without any transfer of kids. Inner city and rural safety net districts would be hardest hit, as money, teachers, and programs follow the outflow of children."

Vote No on 11!

NPBC To Hold Annual Banquet

North Portland Bible College holds its second fall banquet--Friday evening, November 2, 1990. In the "Great Hall" of the Westminster Presbyterian Church--1624 N.E. Hancock.

The theme for this year's enriching banquet is "a backward glance, a forward look". Mr. David Shaw of Pasco, Washington will be the guest speaker. Donations are \$15.00.

The purpose of the banquet is to supplement NPBC's building fund.

Tickets may be purchased by contacting the following persons/places: NPBC (Berean Bible Church) - 288-2919, Alberta Phillip (CWAC) - 282-1316, Lillian Jenkins (Eve) - 285-0089 and Rev. Don Fraizer (Mt. Sinai Community Church) -282-6773.

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