

EDITORIAL

Monday, Reverend Jesse L. Jackson spoke at the Park Avenue Synagogue. Following are excerpted remarks from his speech.

"In the name of religion, there is talk of a Christian culture, a Christian nation. Yet we know that the greatness of America is its ecumenical character and commitment to religious tolerance. Let us remember that the concept of a Christian coalition is not 9

new. In slavery times, the economic forces rationalized slavery by saying that African descendants were three-fifths human. Their pseudo-scientists, predecessors of Charles Murray, rationalized slavery arguing that Blacks had a small Cephalic index, that our brains were smaller. The Christian Coalition rationalized their support of these forces by saying that we were the cursed descendants of Ham...Germany had a Christian Coalition. It betrayed the character of the faith with silence or complicity as the notion that the Jews killed Jesus became fuel for Fuhrer, killing without conscience as people prayed in schools and churches while

NATIONAL RAINBOW COALITION

The Christian Coalition

the trains rolled. Only a few brave souls defied the 'big lie.'

"Often, forces have appropriated the name 'Christian' but lack the character of the faith. Theirs' is a spirit of retribution and selfishness that goes against the teachings of the church. An authentic Christian Coalition must be measured by the character of our faith, not by the appropriation of our name. The character of the Christian faith will make America better. The character of our faith has always obligated us to fight racism, anti-semitism, fascism and homophobia, to fight for the rights of

working people and, indeed, to reach out to the least of these.

"In 1954, the Supreme Court ruled that we must have equal protection under the law and to integrate our schools. Many of the Christian Coalition chose private Christian academies over sharing and building culturally-diverse public schools. In 1963, Dr. King's letter from a Birmingham jail was written to the Christian Coalition. A group of white ministers challenged his right to be in Birmingham and the moral substance of that mission..."

"Where there is religious perse-

cution, next comes anesthesia of the conscience, from whence so often follows ethnic cleansing and other forms of brutal acts of inhumanity. And so we must take this critical opportunity now offered to us by the rise of the polarizing right-wing in our nation to renew our covenant with each other and with our faiths...The new right-wing may have temporarily captured the political center, but we are concerned with maintaining the moral center. If this were Germany, we would call it racism. Here, we call it conservatism. And it provides a cover for a public policy of scapegoating, exclusion and distrust.

"The election returns of November 8th were not a mandate to increase the number of poor children or frighten us into a more racially-polarized society. The forces of racism and intolerance are heading downhill like a truck with no brakes-gaining speed and losing control. We have an obligation to take responsibility for speaking the truth about these issues--because the truth is the only brake that can stop this truck's dangerous momentum."

perspectives

Art Of "Blaming The Victim" Reaches New Heights

How desperate were the Republicans for a victory last month? Let's put it this way. Their political strategists figured that if six years earlier the Bush campaign people could come up with the black crime issue wrapped in a single package (Willie Horton) as a lead pipe cinch to win an election, then, surely several hundred thousand black would be a more-than-successful budget issue (welfare and other income security payments to the poor).

As I have indicated in recent articles, this approach (attack) has been collateralized by assaults on



By Professor Mckinley Burt

the I.Q. of blacks and their ability to grasp modern civilization. But, it being the case that 'a rose by any other name smells as sweet', I have also delineated a parallel "white welfare" structure supported by the taxpayers (including African Americans).

This system was comprised of, first, the leading multinational corporations in agriculture and food processing to the tune of hundreds of billions each year. And in addition to these direct subsidies, there were myriad 'dole-outs' by congressmen to their biggest campaign contributors.

Now, in some other universe, this situation would be hilarious because the "Solomon Plan" (R.N.Y.), described as 'a radical restructuring' by the most conservative of Republicans, contemplates "a reduction of welfare and almost all other programs for the poor by a total of \$150 billion over the next five years. But please note that while this cut will be absolutely devastating for the poor, in the same time frame, the multinational's "welfare" will be \$3 trillion (5 years multiplied by 600 billion per year, and just for agriculture).

You will note that we haven't even mentioned the trillions in welfare gotten away with by the "Savings and Loan" people during the 1980's, and we could go on ad infinitum just listing the rascals reported by Senator Proxmire in his

weekly "Golden Fleece Award"... billions upon billions paid to defense contractors by the Pentagon: \$600 wrenches and \$800 toilet seats. Boy, those colored people on welfare ought to be ashamed, they might drive this nation to economic ruin. Whites support their habits.

But wait a minute, why does everyone keep saying "those colored people" on the dole? Aren't there any whites who are down on their luck? What about the timber industry, all the industry lay-offs and restructuring? Must not be any. The Newspapers and television

(including Portland) seldom show any but African Americans receiving services. A number of whites have written me about this ugly racist skewing of demographics, including a former student of mine who manages a local social agency. "It makes it difficult for both the providers (whose allocations or contributions are way down), and for truly needy white clients who are often confronted with steely stares and disbelief."

Perhaps worst of all is the fact of an increasing reduction of the standard of living of those African Americans who have worked, scraped and sacrificed to escape the most immediate ghetto, only to find that the white public authorities (city and county) have raised the "Black Skin Tax" astronomically. Back on August 18, the Oregonian carried an article on page A3 which also appeared in the New York Times: "Analysis Finds Suburban Taxes Penalize Blacks." It may be surprising to some (but not to me), that most of this rip off occurs in the North.

This is a cruel and unexcusable burden to place on the backs of hundreds of thousands of law abiding, tax-paying, loyal citizens who, among other things, will be the first laid off in economic downturns and who are salvaged by other versions of the "Black Skin Tax". More revelations next week on the real estate hustle and other thefts practiced by that great mass of "decent, law-abiding, long-suffering middle class whose standard of living has been reduced by black "loafers" (Try 'victims').

CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

Out Of Sight Will Not Be Out Of Mind

BY BERNICE POWELL JACKSON

Newt Gingrich's term as Speaker of the House of Representatives is off to a frightening start. His call for the use of orphanages to reduce the welfare rolls should be a wake-up call and a call to action for each and every one of us. His plan gives new meaning to the old joke about the person who shows up on your doorstep and says, "I'm from the government and I'm here to help you."

Mr. Gingrich has proposed allowing states to end payments to unmarried mothers under 21 and to then use those funds for a "boarding school or a group home" where children of jobless mothers might be placed. He then suggested that Mrs. Clinton, who had criticized this plan as "unbelievable and absurd," watch Boystown, the sentimental movie of nearly six decades ago.

Mr. Gingrich is by no means the only person advocating this "put them away" mentality. This summer we watched the sad case of 11-year-old Robert Sandifer unfold in Chicago, when he killed a teenage girl and then

was killed himself by other teens. The Chicago district attorney suggested that there were other children, even as young as eight, who were involved in violence and that the problem is that we have no way to lock them up at that age. Locking up 8 year olds is not the solution. Neither is sending the children of jobless single mothers to orphanages. Putting people out of sight is not going to put them out of mind. The lives of our children are too important for such political rhetoric and partisan politics.

The lives of our children are too important to leave them to the government. Remember that famous line "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country." We must re-create that attitude in our communities. National Urban League President Hugh Price has been advocating a fund whereby those who have can give - \$500 or \$1,000 a year to save our youth. William Belton, a prisoner in Sing-Sing, has written me suggesting that every African American - young or old, wealthy or poor, even those in prison should give to a fund for our youth. We must raise dollars from our own communities for our youth.

But the lives of our children are too important for the government not to provide funds as well. Many of the problems our youth face today revolve around the scarcity of jobs in our communities. Our government has yet to develop a comprehensive strategy for dealing with the enormous changes in the job market over the past decade, as we transform from an industrial economy into a service and information economy. The large-scale reduction of blue-collar unskilled jobs has had enormous impact on communities of color. Putting people to work cleaning up parks and flipping hamburgers is not a long-term solution for supporting families.

Families need other kinds of support as well - from government and from people. The children involved in the violence or facing neglect or abuse are children of families in crisis. They are children of families who don't know how to be families. We need programs to help families learn how to be families. We need people in our communities to help families learn how to be families.

The lives of our children are too important for us all not to be in-

olved, directly and personally. That's what Kent and Carmen Amos did in Washington, D.C. nearly 15 years ago. They started inviting the children of their community into their own home at night for dinner and conversation and study sessions. Their numbers grew to 20 or 25 a night and in 10 years their extended family grew to 100 young people, 35 of whom have already graduated from college and another 28 of whom are attending college.

That extended family concept has grown into the Urban Family Institute, organized by the Amoses to facilitate safe environments for every child, to change the process that creates and perpetuates destructive behavior and to provide a framework for community-wide nurturing. Extending the family. That's what our grandmothers and great-grandmothers did before us. That's what we can do again. That's what government needs to help communities find ways to do. Orphanages and prisons for children are not the answer. Extending the family is - we must keep our children in our sight and in our mind all the time.

Letter To The Editor

Send your letters to the Editor to:
Editor, PO Box 3137, Portland, OR 97208

The Destiny Of The Race Is In Our Hands

As I reflect retrospectively about the arduous task of organizing the National State of the Race Conference (SORC) held in Baltimore November 17-20, and contemplate prospectively the potential impact of the SORC, I am convinced that as Africans in America we must face one fundamental fact: the destiny of the race is in our hands.

In spite of the State of Emergency afflicting the masses of African people in this country and throughout the Pan-African world, we must find the resolve to rise above our circumstances to rescue and restore the race. Without that sense of resolve the SORC would not have occurred.

The SORC was an event that was necessary, an essential coming together at a crucial moment in the life and times of Africans in this hostile nation. As I recounted in an earlier article, the SORC did not become a reality because we had the money or the staff to make it happen. Indeed, organizing the SORC seemed to be an impossible undertaking given our lack of resources and staff. However, we were not deterred. As organizers we saw what needed to be done and launched out on faith. The

overwhelming success of the SORC is a testimony of faith, tenacity and will.

As African people we are called upon to discover within ourselves that same faith, tenacity and will as we struggle to reconstruct the Black community into the 21st century. We must take responsibility for ourselves, our people, the black Nation and the Pan-African world. We must find the resolve to be self-initiating, self-reliant and self-determining. We must organize ourselves, our collective intellect, energy and resources to regain our place in the forefront of human history. In spite of the horrible and debilitating crises we face as Africans in America and the world, we must have the faith (Imani) that ultimately we will be victorious.

As the SORC unfolded in Baltimore it was clear, to all who would allow themselves to feel, listen and learn, where the source of our collective will as an African people is to be found. The source of our strength and power is in our culture and spirituality. There was a spirit and power at the SORC that was nourished by the emphasis on African culture and spirituality at the conference. It was this emphasis on culture and spirituality which so infused the participants with enthusiasm for the work

and filled the participants with the thirst for fellowship, bonding and community that all of the mistakes and problems of the conference became inconsequential.

The African nation was cherishing a friendly union with itself. By the time we reached the celebration of Pan-African World Culture on Saturday evening and concluded with the Spiritual Celebration on Sunday morning the whole conference was on a cultural and spiritual high that was incredible. The ancestors, and the God(s) of our "weary years" and "silent tears," the God(s) of our legacy of historical achievement were with us.

And, so it must be as we move forward with the formidable task of raising up a race battered by the holocaust of enslavement and brutalized by centuries of oppression under a global system of white supremacy. Culture is the repository of our historical memory of ourselves in all of its fullness - the tragedies and triumphs - and the foundation for our future development as a race. And, our African culture is at once a reflection of and source of our spirituality and an African people. It is in our culture and spirituality that is to be found the moral codes that should

guide our behavior toward each other and the world. It is in our culture and spirituality that is to be found the historical examples of courage, resistance and victorious struggles that can and must serve as the source of inspiration in the trying moments of our sojourn on this planet. It is in our culture and spirituality that is to be found the faith to face adversity and not be turned around; the faith to confront disaster and not be overcome by apathy and inaction; the faith to see in the impossible the prospects of possibility.

It is with that faith, a faith grounded/rooted in our African culture and spirituality that we must proceed with the awesome task of restoring the race. It is that faith which you must feel in your heart and soul as we tackle this enormous task. It is this faith, with its capacity to inspire vision, love, hope, compassion, commitment, dedication, energy and righteous work, which must become contagious in African communities in this country and the Pan-African world. It is this faith that will give African people the will to win.

Persons interested in participating in the follow-up to the SORC should call: 410-383-9555 or write SORC c/o NBUF, 50 Park Place #938, Newark, NJ 07102.

The Portland Observer

(USPS 959-680)

OREGON'S OLDEST AFRICAN AMERICAN PUBLICATION
Established in 1970 by Alfred L. Henderson

Joyce Washington--Publisher

The PORTLAND OBSERVER is located at

4747 NE Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.

Portland, Oregon 97211

503-288-0033 • Fax 503-288-0015

Deadline for all submitted materials:

Articles: Friday, 5:00 pm Ads: Monday Noon

POSTMASTER: Send Address Changes to: Portland Observer,
P.O. Box 3137, Portland, OR 97208.

Second Class postage paid at Portland, Oregon.

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Subscriptions: \$30.00 per year.

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