

EDITORIAL

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THANK YOU FOR READING THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

THIS WAY FOR BLACK EMPOWERMENT Taken for granted and a ride

BY DR. LENORA FULANI

The Pittsburgh Tribune-Review recently published an editorial entitled "Democrats on Notice" which reported on a wave of defections by Black leaders from the Democratic Party to the Republican Party.

The defections were reportedly sparked by arrogant exclamations from some Pittsburgh Democrats that Black voters would never leave the party. Not long afterwards, in the recent Allegheny County Commissioner elections -- which includes Pittsburgh -- control of the Commission changed hands from Democrat to Republican, reportedly based on a strong turnout of Black voters for Republican candidates.

As a longtime activist/critic of the multiple ways in which the Democratic Party takes Black votes for granted, I was glad to see this story told in the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review. Black voters had been the Democratic Party's most loyal constituency, but we have been shunted aside as the Clintonites have shamelessly and shrewdly played the "race card" by reinforcing the notion that white voters' interests conflict with those of Blacks and then trumpeting the "New Democrat" promise that Black concerns no longer carry weight in the party. All this while presuming that we will continue to vote Democrat because Blacks have nowhere else to go.

The Republicans, shrewd in their own ways, recognize the growing antagonism between Black voters and the Democratic Party, and seek to put themselves forward as the alternative. Insofar as Black leaders and voters are looking to re-

spond to the Democrats' manipulation of Black America -- support for Republican party candidates can be temporarily useful. However, I am concerned that we not end up manipulated by the Republican Party as well, which has played many "race cards" of its own and which, in my opinion, is not committed to addressing the concerns of Black America. We shouldn't go from being taken for granted to being taken for a ride.

Black leaders and voters do have, however, another alternative. It's becoming politically independent and aligning with the Reform Party. The Reform Party stands for the proposition that all Americans -- Black and white -- have been tragically manipulated by both parties. The two parties and the government they control have disempowered the voters and now determine policy on the basis of what's good for various special interests and not for the American people.

How must Black America respond to the arrogant disregard by the Democratic Party and the Johnny-come-lately approaches of the Republicans? By joining with the millions of other Americans who have also been disregarded by both parties to create a new party -- the Reform Party -- which believes that the political culture of racial manipulation must be replaced with political and fiscal reform that will pave the way for a democratized, inclusive and prosperous America.

Dr. Fulani is currently a leading activist in the Reform Party and chairs the Committee for a unified Independent Party. She can be reached at 800-288-3201 or at www.Fulani.org.

A Gore has been to New Hampshire already, defending free trade with China. Dick Gephardt has been to Iowa, supposedly searching for Congressional candidates for 1998.

Lamer Alexander called together his key fundraiser immediately after election day last November. Dan Quayle's visited Iowa, too. Pat Buchanan has already suggested he might run supporters on another ballot line next year.

In short, the next Presidential race has begun in earnest. It's time we got just as serious.

Reverend Jackson has issued the call for "the family" to assemble, on Saturday, 8/2, the final day of the first annual Rainbow/Push Coalition national convention.

From breakfast that morning, through a TownHall meeting,

RAINBOW PUSH COALITION

Vision 2000

through lunch-and beyond into the afternoon, if discussions warrent-Jesse wants to gather the family together to discuss the rainbow vision for 2000, the issues that are currently being ignored in American politics, and our thoughts on a course of action.

To run or not to run? That is obviously one of the key questions which you should help Rev. Jackson decide, in person.

What should our game plan be for 1998? What should we be doing as

the Democratic Party moves further to the right every day?

What must we do to protect "the least of these" in the emerging winner-take-all economy? What are the defining - and neglected - issues of the coming century?

The Rainbow/Push convention will be for four days - but you should at least be there for Saturday. If you were one of the rejected stones in '84 and '88, or if you wish you could have been, the Hilton Towers in Chicago on the second of August is

peerspectives

More science - the right kind

Following right along with the hope for effect of last week's citation of a number of brilliant (and ethical) African American Scientists, let us delve deeper into the nature of what is sometimes called the world's most prestigious discipline (after religion?).

Such an approach is especially relevant given the emphasis being placed on technology in today's world (and the future) and the educational directives that children should begin their preparation for science careers at the very earliest of grades. And that a parallel family support structure should proceed apace, this process ranging from a close interface with the child's school/teachers to home reinforcement; home work demands, availability of related literature. Subscriptions to science magazines.

Before I get further into this let me advise that I am well aware of the current turmoil and "reigning uncertainty" surrounding several north-east schools. This is far from being the first time that the predominately

minority education vehicle has encountered such a high level of turbulence nor is it the first time that the process has been demonstrated to be patently defective. What is new is the "Humboldt Elementary School" has been "blown up"; A term borrowed from eastern U.S. jurisdictions meaning every body has been fired, from principal and teachers to clerks and janitors. All to the outrage of most.

However, we will examine this volatile and complex issue in the Education Section a little later, right now, my phone lines and fax are backed up with protests, hurrahs, thinly - veiled threats to do bodily harm and other assorted and excited commentaries. A week or so of reflection should bring about a cooler and more constructive approach to a problem that has to be solved and very soon (as has been said before).

But, back to science. I am hearing from readers who say, "I saw your statistic; poll shows 68% of black

teenagers actually believe they could make a living as professional athletes". I cringe when I think of how much attention they are going to devote to acquiring the basic skills needed in a highly technical society. What can we do? What community organizations do we have that are capable of reaching them? It is ions do we have that are capable of reaching them? It is rather obvious that the schools are not. The churches?"

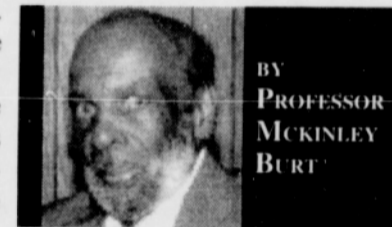
Other readers are asking how we can get many more creative and effective role models prominently displayed and publicized; often mentioned is the inspiring example of Lulu Stroud Johnson, a single black parent who keeps four daughters on a four-point grade average path that already has led two to university science majors and honors. And in addition this energetic and visionary mother co-chairs an organization dedicated to bring about more parental support directed at preparing our youth for this world of sci-

ence and technology. It's basic skills from day one and that school interface.

Ms Johnson, of course, is not by far the only dedicated and enthusiastic parent out there. And they have to have support - which they are not getting a lot of. Money, times, tutors and facilities are needed for junior science clubs, chemistry and biology equipment (which my peer groups had 60 years ago). This is what is needed, "not more basketball and pool table 'evening jails' to keep 'em off the streets", eastern journalists are saying.

And black fathers need to be doing what others are doing at their plants. Arranging with owners and managers to sponsor youth groups from their neighborhoods -- not only to be brought out to see the technology at work and be impressed with what education is required to operate it, but have the youth integrated into possible summer/evening or weekend job structures. Technicians to visit their schools.

Next we will get into the actual structure and exposition of the "Scientific Method."



BY PROFESSOR
MCKINLEY
BURT

Civil Rights Journal Lament for fallen warriors

BY BERNICE POWELL JACKSON

This year, 1997, is turning out to be a difficult one for me as we lose some of those warriors for justice whom I treasure and respect, those who have made so many contributions to the freedom and reclaiming of my people.

In March we lost Mac Charles Jones, long-time civil rights activist and Baptist pastor. Mac, a big man in stature, was big in heart as well, working as an agent of reconciliation while fearlessly facing down those who deny rights to any who are oppressed.

It was because of the trust that so many had in Mac that the story of the burned churches became known as he visited with local church pastors across the South to hear their stories on behalf of the National Council of Churches.

It was because of his dedication to

saving young people that Mac opened the doors of his church in Kansas City to gang members in 1993 so that there could be peace in neighborhoods across the nations.

Mac Charles Jones stood tall among human beings because he listened to the oppressed and the outcast and then fought side by side with them for their rights. So, he supported women called to the ministry in their struggle to become ordained. He supported gays and lesbians in their civil rights struggles. He supported gang members and poor people and, always, the struggles of his own people to be free.

James Washington was another man big in stature and big in heart. The preeminent African American church historian, Dr. Washington was a professor at Union Seminary in New York City and mentor to hundreds of young clergypersons

across the nation.

It was Jim Washington who edited the most extensive collection of the writings, speeches and sermons of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Recently he had edited a beautiful book of African American prayers, Conversations with God. An incredibly gifted teacher, Dr. Washington had done extensive research on religion and the civil rights movement.

Wayland Melton is not a name read in headlines. But Wayland Melton was one of my heroes. An Episcopal Priest, Fr. Melton committed his life to saving African American Children. Not only did he serve as a chaplain at Cincinnati's Children's Hospital Medical Center, but, as a single father, he adopted five children, earning him the Hamilton County Adoptive parent of the Year citation.

A gifted preacher and pastor, Fr. Melton most recently served as dean

of Philadelphia's Cathedral Church of the Savior.

Many, many people knew the name Samuel Proctor. A Baptist preacher par excellence, Dr. Proctor served for 20 years as pastor of Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem. A respected educator, he had also served as president of two black colleges and as a professor at several seminaries. Thousands of men and women in all walks of life were impacted by Dr. Proctor's legacy of commitment to young people and to the uplifting of African Americans. A wonderful example of old-fashioned values and leadership, Dr. Proctor's life was a sermon in practice.

The human race is enriched because these brothers lived. The African American race can be proud of each of them and I miss their brilliance, their leadership, their commitment every day.

Price applauds Clinton's race relations speech

BY NATIONAL URBAN LEAGUE

National Urban League President, Hugh B. Price praised President Clinton's San Diego address on race relations in America as "a very strong speech, rooted deeply in the President's experiences and belief system and a strong step forward."

In anticipation of the President's speech, Mr. Price outlined four crucial points that must be dealt with if the nation is to close its racial divide: First, Americans need help in seeing, understanding and accepting the nation's changing racial demographics. In today's speech, President Clinton emphasized this very point, noting that Hawaii and Cali-

fornia are examples of this. Already there is no racial majority in Hawaii; the same will be true in California within three years. Mr. Price firmly believes that the opportunity structure in higher education, employment and business must be inclusive.

"The President presented a strong defense of affirmative Action," said Price, "reminding the critics that even if it is reformed, it must continue to keep opportunities open to all our people."

The second of Mr. Price's crucial

points is police/civilian tensions, particularly the "profile stops" African-American men are confronted with across the nation. "We need appropriate policy changes to resolve this issue, discussion alone is not enough," Price said.

The third point is that of closing the ever-widening gap between the haves and have-nots. While the President did not address this directly, he did point out the importance of economic self-reliance.

Mr. Price's fourth point concerned strengthening the federal

government's ability to respond to issues involving race.

"We are pleased with the panel the President has assembled," said Price. "They are all serious, thoughtful and committed individuals. We are particularly encouraged by the appointments of John Hope Franklin and Nissan's Robert Thomas."

While Price salutes the President's initiatives, he is mindful that they are but a beginning.

"In resolving the issues of bigotry, we agree with the President that there is a need for dialogue, attention and action," said Price. "The speech is a solid step in the right direction, but beyond dialogue there must be action."

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