

OPINION

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Candidates Should Address Global Poverty

Raise the issue to make a difference

BY JUDGE GREG MATHIS

The race for the white house is a crowded one—both the Democrats and Republicans have several candidates all of whom jockeying for a shot at their party's nomination. In such a packed field, it is hard to discern what the issues are. We've heard candidates on both sides discuss immigration reform, school improvement, urban poverty and more. All are important issues that should be addressed. One hot topic,



however, has not been top of mind with the candidates: global poverty.

With technology connecting the world in ways most of us couldn't imagine just a generation ago, more and more people are realizing the hardships that many of the world's citizens face on a daily basis. And many of us are realizing that, on a planet full of riches, such poverty is unacceptable.

The U.S. has a responsibility to take the lead on addressing global poverty. What better way to shed a spotlight on the issue than to use the highly visible presidential elections as a platform? U2 singer and

activist Bono and former Senate leaders Bill Frist (R-Tenn.) and Tom Daschle (D-S.D.) started the campaign as a perfect forum for addressing world poverty. And so should you. Daschle and Frist have joined

Individuals will be asked to contact the presidential candidates and question them on their plans for fighting global poverty and disease. This grassroots campaign hopes

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Bono's ONE campaign to fight global poverty and will travel the country to talk with voters and urge them to focus the 2008 candidates on a plan that will combat extreme poverty and disease in the world's poorest countries.

to broaden the presidential debates, going beyond the urban and domestic issues to include global challenges and possible solutions. While many African-American readers may not be familiar with Bono's music, his interest and passion for

ending world poverty has reached almost legendary status.

Through ONE and other initiatives, Bono has used music and his celebrity to discuss AIDS, malaria prevention, clean water systems and more in African nations. We, as African-Americans, can take a page from Bono's book and show more interest and concern for our ancestral continent.

We should be ashamed that Bono and other white celebrities have more passion for and knowledge of the birthplace of our ancestors than many of us do. While most blacks don't have the wealth to travel to the 'motherland,' it doesn't stop us from educating ourselves about the struggles of our brothers and sisters abroad.

Once we're educated about those challenges, we can begin to make a difference.

As candidates pass through your state, raising funds and awareness, organize rallies or letter writing campaigns to the media that will raise the issue and put the candidate on the hot seat to take a firm stance. Let them know you will only vote for a candidate with a comprehensive plan to end urban poverty as well as extreme global poverty. These elections are being watched world-wide; let's make them mean something.

Judge Greg Mathis is national vice president of Rainbow PUSH and a national board member of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

World's Poor Won't All Fit Here

Powerful engines drive immigration

BY WILLIAM A. COLLINS

There are several powerful engines driving the juggernaut of increased immigration: Corporations, unions, previous immigrants and compassionate churches and non-profits. These groups are all well organized.

Those opposing increased immigration are low-skill workers whose wages are driven down, high-skill workers who have been replaced by other cheaper, specially imported high-skill workers; local officials and institutions left holding the bag for immigrant health care and social services; and armies of ordinary citizens who feel that America's traditional life and culture are being undermined by the current influx. Not only are these forces weakly organized, but they are often accused of bigotry.

Environmental groups are left on the fence. They're well aware that importing destitute folks from impoverished lands into our wasteful American culture is a big problem. Such settlers quickly add to global warming and further swell a population that already stresses our nation's resources. Nonetheless, many environmentalists remain silent for fear of being labeled racist and of watching their organizations' membership dwindle.

Among the immigration supporters, corporations naturally crave cheap labor.

Conversely, the unions normally worry about saving all those jobs and civilized pay scales.

For the older immigrant community, a pro-immigration stance is understandable: Let's bring over as many kin and comrades as possible. Life is a lot better here, and the more of us there are, the more political influence we'll wield.

Compassionate organizations, in turn, see the painful personal suffering among immigrants and plead for the government to offer Christ-like relief: Let's make them legal to pursue openly their virtuous hard-working ways.

We average citizens favor immigration for our own purposes. First, we can get a cheap home health aide for Aunt Edna. Then there's the guy who knocks on our door with a cut rate for mowing the lawn. Laying the patio comes cheap too. Some cities welcome these workers; others chafe.

And so with all this (corporate in particular) political pressure, we may one day actually get a new law. The ill-fated proposal by the U.S. House of Representatives still promises to greatly increase our population. It provides Amnesty Lite for current illegals, some 12 million. In the past, such amnesties have also spurred a new flood of undocumented border crossers, each hoping to be on U.S. soil when the next opening comes along.

The current stalled bill also would create a "temporary worker" program. Folks would be invited to cross the border legally—no coyotes needed—to work here for two years, and then go home. Right! But no migrant worth his heritage would ever go back home. He'd simply disappear into a city and become yet another illegal.

Let's also be mindful that the world still has a couple of billion poor folk who would prefer to live here rather than wherever they are now. Worse luck, they won't all fit. Better, we construct a foreign policy to help them improve life at home instead of an immigration policy that tempts them to risk all by trying to come to the United States.

William A. Collins is a former state representative and former mayor of Norwalk, Conn.

Is the NAACP a 'Dinosaur'?

Making the civil rights group more relevant

BY WILLIAM REED

The venerable National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is taking it on the chin nowadays.

The NAACP's stellar legacy has fallen on hard times and questions abound if they can endure. Lack of money and



If the majority of African Americans sit on the sidelines while the historical group ceases to exist, it would be a shame.

membership has resulted in the 98-year-old organization reducing staff and shutting down regional offices.

The embattled group is out of favor with broad segments of black Americans.

Michel Massie, chairman of the black conservative group Project 21, claims the NAACP is "a dinosaur" that needs to "come to grips with the fact that America has changed" since the 1960s civil rights movement. A Black Nationalist said on "The Blacklist," "They have truly lost their way and have failed. They are people who would go to great lengths to insure

that the status quo remains."

Be either they "establishment" backers or bashers, neither segment is giving the NAACP the love it needs. But, NAACP Chairman Julian Bond has appealed to the public for help.

In an interview with The Black Press News Service Bond said the group has, "asked our regular supporters to redouble their contributions" and is "asking anyone who has benefited from the work of the NAACP to 'show some love' by putting a check in the mail and becoming a member."

Bond also said he has "called upon our board members and SCF Trustees

historical group ceases to exist, it would be a shame.

Core supporters of the NAACP will come together in Detroit for their 98th annual convention July 7-12. The theme is will be "Power Beyond Measure" and will include a "funeral" for the "N-word."

Is the NAACP still relevant in black life? Undoubtedly it is. And, as soon as it moves away from partisan politics and back to the basis of addressing black and civil rights issues, the more relevant in black life it will be.

In 1999, the NAACP introduced the "Knock Across America" campaign during which its members were asked to go door to door to get at least 10 neighbors to join. If the NAACP got 1 million new and paying members by year's end, they'd have a \$30 million cash flow and be able to bring back workers and forcefully get back to the basis of their business.

For those concerned about this icon, for a \$30 annual fee, they can receive a bimonthly magazine on civil rights and participate in local branch activities, including elections.

For information on NAACP fundraising call toll free, 1-877-NAACP98. Or write NAACP National Headquarters 4805 Mt. Hope Drive, Baltimore, MD 21215.

William Reed is President and Chief Executive Officer of Black Press International and publisher of the "Who's Who in Black Corporate America Register."

Letters to the Editor

Dignity for All

As communities of faith, we uphold the inherent worth, rights and dignity of all people. Faith communities have a long tradition of providing hospitality, safe haven and sanctuary to those who are threatened and in fear. We stand in solidarity with the most vulnerable in our midst, particularly immigrants whose lives are being torn apart by raids and deportations.

In particular, we are united in our support of the individuals and families affected by the ICE raid at the Del Monte Fresh Foods plant on June 12, in north Portland.

We denounce this raid and all ICE actions locally and nationally that have trampled on the rights of working people. We denounce the tearing apart of parents from their children, the disruption to the fabric of our communities, and the creation of fear, hate and divisions that such raids engender. We denounce the hypocrisy of a system that relies on immigrants to bring food to our tables, yet criminalizes these men and women as they simply work to provide for their families.

We are called by our faith to respond to these injustices. We call for an immediate moratorium on all raids and deportations. We demand that our legislators propose and enact real, humane, and just immigration reform that addresses the economic causes of global migration. This reform must protect the rights of all workers, uphold families, provide a fair opportunity to our immigrant

brothers and sisters to work and live among us, and provide a path to citizenship for those who desire it. Finally, we call on our spiritual, political and community leaders to build bridges of understanding between communities and across borders, and to reject the racism inherent in our nation's current immigration policies.

We will work together to open our hearts and our doors to those who are suffering. Our faith and love know no borders.

American Friends Service Committee; Augustana Lutheran Church; Bridgeport United Church of Christ; Church of St. Anne; David A. Leslie, executive director, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon; First Unitarian Church; Fr. Armando López, Ascension Catholic Church; Fr. Charles Lienert, St. Andrew Catholic Church; Holy Redeemer Catholic Church; Ainsworth United Church of Christ Justice Commission; Metanoia Peace Community; Ascension Catholic Church Social Action Committee; St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church; Downtown Chapel of Saint Vincent de Paul Catholic Parish; The Rev. Caroline J. Litzenger, St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church; The Rev. Dana Worsnop, Atkinson Memorial Church, Unitarian Universalist; The Rev. Deacon Marla McGarry-Lawrence, St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church; The Rev. John S. Scannell, rector, St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal; The Rev. Lynne Smouse López, pastor, Ainsworth United Church of Christ.

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