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Happy Birthday Nelson Mandela

Literally millions of people on each continent throughout the world paused on July 18, 2011 to recognize and to celebrate the birthday of the living legend, Nelson Mandela. As an African American, I personally joined the ranks of the African National Congress more than 40 years ago while I was a younger Black community activist and organizer for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and the United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice. Today, at the wisdom age of 93, Nelson Mandela still stands tall as a living symbol of the triumph of the long protracted struggle of humanity for freedom, justice and equality.

We celebrate the birth and continuing leadership of one of the world's greatest freedom fighters. Nelson Mandela is a father, grandfather and a serious family man. Even during his long unjust imprisonment for over 27 years, he never lost his sense of perspective about the importance of his family and the leadership of the ANC investing the spirit and ideology of the freedom struggle in the youth of South Africa. The youth of the ANC, who later would rise up in such an irrepressible unity and focus that caused even the rigid foundations of apartheid to collapse and fall. Mandela embodies what it means to be an African transformation visionary who not only fought hard and long to free South Africa from the ruthless apartheid regime, but also who became the first Black President of South

EDUCATION SERVICES

Benjamin F. Chavis Jr.



Africa with a universal sense of global dignity, integrity and respect.

I believe today that the first Black President of the United States of America, President Barack H. Obama can also learn from the legacy of Nelson

how to unite a divided nation in order to summon a common, inclusive, transformative and participatory agenda that takes the nation forward in the face of fierce “reactionary” head winds that are determined to take the nation backwards.

The current divisive debate in the United States on increasing the national debt limit to avoid economic default and catastrophe is yet another classic example of politicians putting their narrow political and economic views over the common good for the nation. But, some would join me

crying out for a better way of life in America. Neither South Africa or the United States is perfect, but both nations are still evolving and it will take strong leadership to lead both nations in the broader context of the global community to achieve greater progress for all of humanity. The global economy needs global leadership that views and values diversity, but bonds and binds the global community together with the best of governmental, as well as grass roots, leadership and empowerment for all.

In my last face to face private visit with Nelson Mandela and Russell Simmons in southern Africa, we discussed how important it was for the diamond industry and other extractive industries to invest in the empowerment of Africa. Shortly thereafter and taking the wisdom of Mandela seriously, Russell, I and others from the industry established the Diamond Empowerment Fund (DEF) to provide financial support for the higher education of young African leaders from diamond producing nations in Africa. Business leaders and government leaders can and should do so much more. Africans can learn from us, but equally important, there is so much we can learn from Africans. We are working now in South Africa and Botswana. Soon we will be in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). We are advocating concern about all the minerals and

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Mandela. When Mandela became President of South Africa, it was not an easy task. It was difficult and trying on every issue because of the history of racial oppression and economic exploitation. But, Mandela rose to the occasion with a masterful astuteness that even brought his political opponents to see and value his inclusive vision for a “new” South Africa. Yes, there are vast differences between the United States and South Africa. My point, however, is that President Obama has a similar trial and tribulation that Mandela had:

in saying that this was exactly why the majority of people who voted in the United States elected President Barack Obama to rise to every occasion to help the nation move forward and not backward. President Obama, like President Mandela in the past, will have to transcend the retrenchment boundaries of partisan politics toward a “new” America that cares more about all its people without the stagnate lethargy of the status quo elite who have little or no concern for the downtrodden and marginalized masses of people who are

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Michele Bachmann: What is She Saying?

As you probably have read in press accounts and seen on TV, Michele Bachmann, the Republican Congressional Representative from Minnesota, has declared that she is running for president. Michele has stumbled several times out of the gate, on her road to the White House, but don't tell her that. Bachmann's “American Girl” dazzling looks and her status as the “darling of the Tea Party Movement” seems to be keeping her in good stead with her vocal constituency, and may be adding to her “teflonness,” similar to the Ronald Reagan phenomena. You remember the “Gipper”? The more he stumbled and bumbled; the more they loved him. All he had to do was hang his head sheepishly, give an aww shucks face and America forgave his missteps.

Bachmann, who announced her candidacy in Iowa at the end of June, according to Florida's St. Petersburg Times' fact-checking Web site, politifact.com, has not gotten it right at least 19 times in recent statements. The Congresswoman's inaccuracy quotient includes a statement about how many barrels of oil President Obama released from oil reserves. Bachmann claimed the President released all of the oil reserve to abate escalating prices at the pump, when in reality the President approved a release of a

WESTCHESTER COUNTY

Linda Tarrant-Reid

mere 4 percent of the oil in storage. Bachmann also got it wrong when she told conservative Iowan conference attendees that Obama's administration had only issued one drilling permit since he came into office. The fact is that before the Gulf oil spill, the Obama Administration had issued 217 drilling permits, after the spill and

their spelling not mine. Did she read the preamble? Her people say that she only signed the “candidate vow” page, so does that mean she didn't read the whole document? That's a problem. But the bigger problem is surely the words on the first page of the marriage pact; that were subsequently deleted when the blogosphere went wild, which stated:

“Slavery had a disastrous impact on African-American families, yet sadly a child born into slavery in 1860 was more likely to be raised

are still struggling against the residual effects of slavery four hundred years later. Anyone with just a little bit of knowledge about slavery knows that the families of the enslaved were deliberately wrenched apart by slaveholders to erode family support and destroy the kinship networks that made Black people strong. It was essential to the success of the British Mercantile Empire that slave families – men, women and children – be separated and distributed to far flung plantations throughout the colonies, in order to serve as the backbone of their well-developed economic system. Enslaved women were repeatedly raped and impregnated by the white slave owners creating a bastardized family unit, into which more enslaved children were born.

I don't think Bachmann's team did their homework or, maybe, it just doesn't matter to her campaign what African American voters think of her and her views. After all, she's not really going after the Black vote anyway. And that's why it's important for voters to pay very close attention to each of the candidates in the Presidential race and in all of the races for those seeking political office, because what they are saying ultimately mirrors their beliefs.

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with new regulations in place; the Administration announced that they had granted more than 35 shallow-water permits, and since the moratorium on issuing deep-water well permits was lifted in October, 2010, seven have been approved.

For me, Michele Bachmann's most egregious gaffe was when she signed the The Marriage Vow: A Declaration of Dependence upon Marriage and Family to get the support of Bob Vander Plaats' group, THE FAMILY LEADER,

by his mother and father in a two-parent household than was an African-American baby born after the election of the USA's first African-American President.”

Oh my goodness! In order to slam the first Black President of the United States of America, this conservative Christian organization took slavery, the vilest institution that was ever propagated in the USA, and twisted the facts to make slavery a family-friendly experience for enslaved Africans. Not so for Black Americans who

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