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PERSPECTIVE

H. LeBaron Taylor: In Memoriam

When H. LeBaron Taylor died on July 19, the Joint Center lost a friend, board member, and loyal supporter. LeBaron will be missed in many ways. As president of the Joint Center, I had grown to rely on his accessibility and advice. In addition, we will no longer benefit from his leadership of the board's Communications and Marketing Committee and his phenomenal fundraising skills. However, we will continue to benefit from his legacy as a visionary, a marketing genius, and a very generous human being.

LeBaron made his mark as a corporate executive. He was the senior vice president of corporate affairs for Sony Music Entertainment Corporation and vice president of Sony Software. With an engineering degree from Wayne State University in Detroit, he launched his career as a radio technician and later as a very popular disc jockey at Detroit's WCHB radio station. He helped found Ric Tic Records, which was later sold to Motown, and went on to become an executive at Atlantic Records.

LeBaron first joined CBS Records (now the Sony Music Entertainment Company) in 1974. During his career, he was a mentor to many in the entertainment industry. He helped to set current music industry standards, and was viewed by many as having defined black music in the early 1970s. Under his leadership, CBS Records' Black Music Marketing became the model for the entire industry. LeBaron also was a member of the Business Policy Review Council and a member of the Executive Leadership Council. *Ebony* magazine recognized him as one of the top 50 black corporate executives in the nation.

Despite his success, LeBaron always found time to lend his leadership to other organizations. For example, he served as chairman and chief executive officer of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Inc. and he was a member of the board of directors of the Rhythm and Blues Foundation, the NAACP Special Contributions Fund, the Thurgood Marshall Scholarship Fund, the International Amateur Athletic Association, Inc., and the T.J. Martell Foundation for Leukemia, Cancer, and AIDS Research.

And of course, he will always be remembered for his public service and corporate statesmanship. LeBaron was known for providing big-name entertainers for many benefit concerts that raised millions for causes that have provided education, housing, and other support for those in need. He was committed to a diverse array of causes that remain at the forefront of the black struggle. He received the NAACP Corporate Image Award and the Chairman's Humanitarian Award from TransAfrica Forum. He was presented the highest public service honors of the National Urban League, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change, the National Urban Coalition, the National Association of Black Owned Broadcasters, Operation PUSH, and the National Council of Negro Women. And

LeBaron and Sony Music are the only two-time recipients of the Congressional Black Caucus Chair Award.

LeBaron was also a valued brother in the Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity (the Boulé), the nation's oldest and most prestigious association of distinguished African American professionals and scholars. On August 2, 2000, the fraternity honored him posthumously with its Grand Sire Archon Exemplary Service Award. The award was presented to his wife, Dr. Kay Lovelace Taylor, and his two children, Tiffany and Eric, at the Sigma Pi Phi Grand Boulé in Minneapolis. ■

PRESIDENT



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Bush and Gore at the NAACP

The Presidential Candidates of the Two Major Parties Spoke at the Annual Convention of the Nation's Oldest Civil Rights Organization

Texas Governor George W. Bush and Vice President Al Gore came to Baltimore on different days in July to address members of the NAACP at their annual convention as the race for the White House began to heat up. Gore had spoken to the body on other occasions, but this was Bush's first time. The speeches were contrasts in tone and emphasis. Bush acknowledged the estrangement between the GOP and the NAACP, and spoke of the fact that racism still exists. He discussed how a Bush administration would approach education, housing, and healthcare, and he advocated government support of charitable organizations and faith-based institutions as a means of addressing social concerns. Gore was more specific than Bush about his positions on a broader range of issues. Gore made clear that he opposes school vouchers and privatizing Social Security, and he vowed to support affirmative action, the minimum wage, and efforts to address the AIDS pandemic. Below are side-by-side excerpts of their speeches.

Governor George W. Bush
NAACP Annual Convention
July 10, 2000

Thank you for the generous introduction. I'm pleased to be here. I'm also reminded of what the great Jackie Robinson once said when President Kennedy did something that upset him. Robinson said that he was sure the President was a "fine man"—but he reserved the right to change his opinion. For those who support me—I see one or two here—I hope you won't change your opinion. For those who don't, I hope you take Jackie's position as your own and give me the chance to tell you what is in my heart.

The history of the Republican Party and the NAACP has not been one of regular partnership. But our nation is harmed when we let our differences separate us and divide us. ... I am here today because I believe there is much we can do together to advance racial harmony and economic opportunity. ...

This is a great moment of national prosperity. But many still live in prosperity's shadow. The same economy that is a miracle for millions is a mystery to millions as well. From the beginning of this campaign, I have said that prosperity must have a purpose. The purpose of prosperity is to ensure that the American Dream touches every willing heart. We cannot afford to have an America segregated by class, by race or by aspiration. America must close the gap of hope between communities of prosperity and communities of poverty.

We have seen what happens when African American citizens have the opportunity they have earned and the respect they deserve. Men and women once victimized by Jim Crow have risen to leadership in the halls of Congress. Professionals and entrepreneurs have built a successful, growing African American middle class.

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Vice President Al Gore
NAACP Convention
July 12, 2000

I am a member of the NAACP. It's good to be home... . I'm running for president because I want to fight for you. I want to help those who have not had their fair share of justice, opportunity, equality and the American dream. We've got to move forward together. I want to serve the people, not the powerful. I want to take on the special interests on behalf of working families... .

I believe that it is time to invest in people. I pledge to you that I will bring about, as president, with your help, a continuation of the economic plan that has been good for our people. I don't want to go back to the giant deficits that are caused by focusing on massive tax cuts for the wealthy. I want tax cuts that are targeted to the people who need them, that are affordable, that are focused on education and healthcare and childcare and raising children and strengthening families.

I believe we need more empowerment zones so that we can lift up the communities that have not shared in this prosperity yet... . I want a specific program to clean up contaminated brownfields, good properties in good locations that need to be cleaned up and used to attract new jobs... . I am against raising the retirement age and cutting benefits to the seniors who deserve the help that Social Security and Medicare provide. I am opposed to privatizing Social Security and diverting the money into the stock market... .

I think it's time to start treating our teachers like the professionals they are, and reduce the class size, and modernize the schools, and put more money along with new accountability and reform into our public schools. And I'm against draining money away in the form of vouchers that offer a false promise because they don't pay the tuition, they

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Governor George W. Bush
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It must be our goal to expand this opportunity—to make it as broad and diverse as America itself. And this begins with enforcing our civil rights laws. Discrimination is still a reality, even when it takes different forms. Instead of Jim Crow, there is racial redlining and profiling. Instead of separate but equal, there is separate and forgotten. Strong civil rights enforcement will be a cornerstone of my administration.

I will confront another form of bias—the soft bigotry of low expectations in education... . There is a tremendous gap of achievement between rich and poor, white and minority. This, too, leaves a divided society. And whatever the cause, the effect is discrimination. My friend Phyllis Hunter, a teacher in Texas, calls reading the new civil right. Equality in our country will remain a distant dream until every child, of every background, has a chance to learn and strive and rise in the world. No child in America should be segregated by low expectations, imprisoned by illiteracy, abandoned to frustration and the darkness of self-doubt.

And there is reason for optimism. A great movement of education reform has begun in this country, built on clear principles: Raise the bar of standards. Give schools the flexibility to meet them. Measure progress. Insist on results. Blow the whistle on failure. Provide parents with options to increase their influence. And don't leave any child behind. I believe in these principles. I have seen them turn around troubled schools in my state... .

We can make the same kind of progress at the national level. A central part of my agenda is changing Title One to close the achievement gap. All students will be tested. Low-performing schools will have three years to produce results. If they do not, then these resources will go directly to the parents... .

Education is the essential beginning—but we must go further... . We must put government squarely on the side of opportunity... . Lincoln argued that every poor man should have a chance. Through the Homestead Act, he gave countless Americans a piece of land, a start in life. I have proposed a New Prosperity Initiative that reflects the spirit of Lincoln's reforms—a plan to remove obstacles on the road to the middle class. Instead of helping people cope with their need, we will help them move beyond it. We must provide a Family Health Credit that covers 90 percent of the cost of a basic health policy for low-income families.

We must make it possible for more people to become homeowners, to own a part of the American Dream. So we'll allow low-income families to use up to a year's worth of Section 8 rental payments to make a down payment on their own home—then use five years of those payments to help with the mortgage. We'll start an American Dream Down Payment Fund, matching individual savings for the down payment on a home. Behind all these proposals is a simple belief: I believe in private property... .

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Vice President Al Gore
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just give the illusion, and they actually divert money from the public schools... . School buildings in many places are falling down around the students and the teachers... .

In order to have a strong America, we also need to have a healthy America. It is unconscionable that we have 44 million of our citizens who don't have healthcare in the midst of the greatest prosperity we've ever had. I make you this commitment: You elect me president, I'll make sure that every child in America has full health care within the next four years. And then we'll move step by step toward universal health insurance for all of our people. Your health should not depend on your wealth... .

I believe that it is time to improve the Medicare program by adding a prescription drug benefit for our seniors and giving them the help they need to buy their medicine so they can follow doctor's orders... . We need a real patients' bill of rights, and we need to make it the law of the land... . And one thing that I have learned long since is that our entire world needs to get up and get moving and confront this AIDS pandemic, especially on the continent of Africa. It is a horrific challenge to our conscience, to our souls. We have to solve it... .

You know from a hard history and a long struggle that talk is cheap. It's deeds that matter... . Talk doesn't cost much. The true test is standing up to those who say they want to eliminate affirmative action. I will defend affirmative action because it is still needed in this country... . The average African American family wealth in America is 11 percent of the average majority wealth in this country. Same for Hispanic families, roughly one-tenth. Family wealth is a category that measures the accumulated effect of many generations of prejudice and diminished opportunity, things that don't change overnight, unless we decide we're going to change them.

If that young entrepreneur from an African American community cannot get access to capital, cannot find ways to get over that hurdle that has been placed there by history, then who is hurt? That young entrepreneur is hurt because his dreams have been crushed... . But he's not the only one who is hurt. What about all the jobs that he would create? What about the economic strength of the community? I tell you, affirmative action is good for the United States of America, good for our economy, good for our future, and good for all of our people. And I will fight for it.

Talk doesn't cost much. The true test is whether you are for an increase in the minimum wage. I am for an increase in the minimum wage for those who most need the help... . Talk doesn't cost much. The true test is standing up to those who don't recognize the need to invest more in our schools, and instead proffer the illusion that you can drain money away from them and not pay the price. Talk doesn't cost much. The true test is joining our battle to ban racial

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Building Bridges Across Race Lines

To Combat the Impact of Discrimination, NABRE, a New Program of the Joint Center, Will Help Nurture Racial and Ethnic Diversity

by Michael R. Wenger

A federal panel cites the New York City Police Department for the improper use of racial profiling against both blacks and Hispanics. African American Secret Service agents accuse their superiors of racial prejudice. A Muslim woman loses her job at a Pittsburgh bank for covering her head with a scarf. A group of Oglala Sioux girls is singled out at a South Dakota basketball tournament and forced to disrobe to prove their gender. This is but a sampling of race-related episodes reported in newspapers during a one-week period in June of this year.

Add to this the plethora of prominent corporations that have been accused in recent years of maintaining a “concrete” ceiling for employees of color; retail sales clerks accused of harassing shoppers who are not white; television networks that have to be pressured into realistically portraying people of African, Hispanic, and Asian heritages; and public schools in predominantly white neighborhoods that have more highly qualified teachers, provide better materials, and offer a better learning environment than those in predominantly nonwhite neighborhoods. The picture that emerges is not encouraging. On the street or on the job, at the shopping mall, in school, and in the media, racial discrimination—in both blatant and subtle ways—remains a reality of everyday life in the United States. Thirty-seven years after Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., spoke of his dreams, the current situation is enough to make one wonder if we’ll ever reach the day when people will be judged by the content of their character rather than by the color of their skin.

But in this troubling sea of continuing racial discrimination, there are islands of hope where people are toiling, often unnoticed, to foster racial justice, bridge racial divisions, and build diverse and inclusive communities. In neighborhoods, schools, houses of worship, and workplaces—through dialogues, joint community improvement projects, and a host of other activities—people are trying to help us live up to the American creed that “we are all created equal.” They are trying to help us understand each other better and to value the racial and ethnic diversity that defines our nation. Many of these people and their activities have been identified in recent years by President Clinton’s Initiative on Race and by several organizations.

- Bridge Builders in Memphis brings together high school students from diverse backgrounds and trains them in leadership, human relations, and civic responsibility, helping them to see beyond the traditional barriers of race, religion, culture, and class.

- At their 1997 General Assembly, Unitarian Universalist delegates voted to become an antiracist multicultural association.
- The Multicultural Resource Center in Oregon fosters understanding, acceptance, and constructive relations among people of many different cultures. It endorses policies, curricula, attitudes, and behaviors that encourage people from all ethnic and cultural groups to be proud of and maintain their cultural backgrounds.
- In Minnesota, Cultural Diversity Resources has developed several programs to reach out into the community and improve attitudes and behaviors, helping to eliminate fears and misunderstanding among culturally and ethnically diverse groups.

To cultivate and nurture the leaders of these and many other activities, the Joint Center, in collaboration with Fisk University’s Race Relations Institute, has created NABRE (pronounced like “neighbor”), a Network of Alliances Bridging Race and Ethnicity in communities across the country. NABRE will help address the desperate need to bridge the racial and ethnic divisions in our society. The program will provide a vehicle to local leaders to share what works with other groups, enabling them to learn from each other’s experiences in confronting common challenges, to support and sustain each other through the peaks and valleys of racial healing activities, to expand and broaden the base of support for their programs, and to inspire and recruit new leaders in communities throughout the country. Initiated with a grant from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, planning for NABRE has been guided by a committee led by the Joint Center and the Race Relations Institute and composed of 13 other prominent organizations dedicated to racial understanding and equity.

These organizations recognize that by facilitating communication among local leaders, NABRE will help them overcome the daunting obstacles they confront. These include lack of resources, inadequate public awareness and support, and isolation in their own communities from neighbors who do not recognize racial divisions or understand the need for healing them. Another obstacle is the leaders’ inability to communicate with those in other communities engaged in similar activities and with whom they might share valuable lessons. A final obstacle is the inability of programs to assess their impact on the community and to know if they are achieving their goals.

Youth NABRE, a companion network for youth activities, will link about 50 youth-oriented diversity activities

NABRE

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that have been funded by the Lucent Technologies Foundation under the Lucent Links program, a partnership between the foundation and the National Conference for Community and Justice. The Foundation also is supporting Youth NABRE.

Reaching Out Online

From mail surveys to in-depth interviews with local leaders, as well as the monthly deliberations of the planning committee, we identified key features that NABRE will offer. NABRE's signature feature will be its interactive section on the Joint Center's website. Planned for an October 2000 launch, NABRE will initially offer an online directory of organizations and their activities organized by geographic region and type of activity. An online listing of additional resources for each issue, as well as "lessons learned" from organizations' experiences, will also be provided. Leaders actively promoting racial equity and racial healing will find specialized information, including surveys, relevant articles, and important news. An array of information on racial issues will be available to the general public. The Planning Committee members and select organizations fostering racial bridge-building will be linked to NABRE. An exciting interactive feature for NABRE members will be the members-only online seminars, chat rooms, indexed message board, and access to customized data.

Many questions in the field of racial and ethnic healing remain unanswered. Questions on how to maintain strong, positive leadership, how to generate public support, and how to choose an appropriate model for dialogue are of particular concern. NABRE, especially in response to requests from its members, will examine such issues with the hope that thoughtful examination of these issues can yield new ideas and insights. The findings will be disseminated both online and in print, and NABRE will ensure that local leaders fully understand and can make use of the findings.

Workshops and Self-Assessment Tools

There is compelling anecdotal evidence that programs in communities as diverse as Clarksburg, West Virginia, and San Francisco, California, are narrowing racial and ethnic divisions. But most leaders lack the necessary tools to assess what works best and why or to measure progress, especially in the majority community. In many cases, the very definition of success is unclear. Should success be defined as changing the heart of one person, or must institutional or systemic change occur? To help answer this question, the Joint Center will work with NABRE and Youth NABRE members to design self-assessment tools. It will also provide guidance in their use and application and offer opportunities for leaders to discuss evaluation concepts with each other.

Communication among leaders must occur not only electronically and on paper, but also face-to-face. NABRE plans to hold regional workshops and national conferences as well as forums. The workshops will be designed to enrich the experiences and networking capacities of NABRE

members. Participants will meet counterparts from other communities, share information and inspiration, and build a common commitment to racial/ethnic understanding.

Fisk University's Race Relations Institute regularly convenes in Nashville, Tennessee, to bring together international scholars and thinkers on racial issues. At least biannually, NABRE will convene conferences in conjunction with the Institute so that scholars and local practitioners can benefit from one another's work. Some conferences will be held online, and all conference outcomes will be posted online and distributed to NABRE members.

In cooperation with other organizations, especially those that are members of our Planning Committee, NABRE will convene a series of sector-specific, national "how-to" forums. The business, labor, religion, higher education, public education, government, and media sectors have already been identified. At each forum, 15 to 25 leaders will discuss the ways their industry sectors can help bridge racial and ethnic divisions and develop action-oriented recommendations for their peers. The results of each forum will be published in a how-to booklet and released electronically.

NABRE will assist leaders of community-based programs to find appropriate additional resources for continuing and expanding their work. These resources may include potential financial supporters, training, and technical assistance providers. Many local practitioners do not have access to the Internet nor the resources to obtain such access. NABRE will seek support from corporations and foundations for seed money to assist members with the purchase or upgrading of computers and other tools for gaining access to the Internet and to other organizations.

Preparing to Launch

Youth NABRE will be launched later this summer. In September, a series of monthly seminars on racial issues and monthly chat rooms on lessons learned from local activities will begin. NABRE, which has received support from the Joyce Foundation, the Kovler Foundation, Mitsubishi Motors of America, Inc., the Ford Motor Company, and DaimlerChrysler Corporation, will be launched in the fall with approximately 120 charter members.

Interest in the network has already been expressed by leaders from countries such as England, South Africa, Australia, and Brazil—nations confronting racial divisions inside their own borders. Once NABRE is established nationally, we plan to seek ways to link community-based racial healing and equity projects and their leaders in selected countries worldwide.

To focus national and local attention on NABRE and Youth NABRE members, a promotional campaign will feature public service announcements, an online newsletter, an annual awards program to recognize exemplary programs undertaken by members and their leaders, a speaker's bureau, and a proactive outreach effort to churches and schools and business, civic, and community organizations.

Together, NABRE and Youth NABRE will cultivate and nurture local leaders as they build and sustain alliances that transcend artificial barriers of race and ethnicity in all sectors of civil society. ■

Colin Powell: Build Kids Not Jails

The Former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Calls on the Nation's Governors to Work More Closely With America's Promise

In honoring the Joint Center's 30th Anniversary, FOCUS is featuring a series of articles that touch on social and economic issues covered by the magazine over the years. The welfare of at-risk youth is one such issue still with us today. At the Joint Center's annual dinner on March 11, 1997, General Colin Powell spoke of the launching of America's Promise, a venture devoted to ensuring that all of America's children reach their full potential. In his remarks, published in the April 1997 issue of FOCUS, he said: "I submit to you that there is nothing that requires our attention more than saving our children black and white. That is why for the next phase of my life I have committed myself to trying to make a difference in the lives of young people, through the Presidents' Summit for America's Future [April 27 to 29, 1997], and in other ways leveraging the talent, wealth, wisdom, leadership, and management experience that exists in American society to direct it toward the problems of America's youth. At that summit, and the program that will grow out of it, we will be asking all Americans to do more corporate America, nonprofit America, religious America, communities, and individuals... ." This year, on July 9, Powell offered an assessment of America's Promise after its first three years in an address at the annual meeting of the National Governors' Association. He exhorted the governors to join in a closer partnership with the program and "to build our kids and stop building jails."

You know, when we had the summit meeting in Philadelphia three years ago, it was an exciting moment when we brought all of our living presidents together,... and we had 30 governors there, thousands of delegates from across America... . But when that summit meeting was over, everybody went their separate ways and it was our challenge at this new organizational headquarters called America's Promise to make something happen... . It became clear to me early on that one group of leaders perhaps were more key than any others were going to be—the governors of America... . Governors are close to the people and see these problems every day—governors who, in this rather successful economic period that we are enjoying, have money, surpluses, resources that you can apply to these problems... .

We are living in historic times where we've defeated communism and fascism. It is our system of democracy and the free enterprise system that is fueling the world. It is our strength that gives hope to the rest of the world. But the rest of the world is looking to us not only for the manifestation of our strength. Does that wealth, does that success affect all Americans, especially those who have been left out of the American dream so far and especially those who are most vulnerable, our children?

With all of our success, with all of our wealth, most of you [governors] have been building jails. The government's

been building jails to put two million Americans in. Children don't start out on their way to jail. They start out in life with a sound body and a healthy mind. All they really need are people in their lives who will point them in the right direction... . Children need to see the right kinds of adults in their lives, and if the parents and the family are having difficulty or aren't up to the task or don't exist, we owe these children mentors, coaches, people who will get in their lives and begin to turn them around. We've got to make sure our children have safe places to grow and learn, a healthy start in life, and that gives them the character they need... .

Then from character you've got to move to give them the competence they need. So all of our children have to acquire that marketable skill... . You've got to start it early... by impressing on them the need to learn the English language and to read and to write and to speak it well and learn math and science. Expose them to the workplace early so they understand the demands of this 21st century economy... . Our children are going to be fighting for jobs that require a higher level of education... . We've got to make sure that no kid is left on the wrong side of that digital divide or in a condition of digital apartheid... . And it's time they learn early that in the act of giving to someone else you get so much more back in return. Those are the simple elements of America's Promise and the crusade is growing... .

We are very, very pleased with the progress that America's Promise has had over the last three years. We now have hundreds of communities of promise. We are now doing something with every state. But we don't need hundreds of communities of promise, we need thousands of communities of promise...everywhere where some child is in need... .

The pitch I give to corporate leaders is, hey, listen...I want you to be deeply and personally involved, because it is not charity, it is investment. You're investing not only in the future of the country, you're investing in the future of your company. You're investing in your future employees, your future workers. You're investing in the society from which you draw a profit. You either invest in these young people now, turn them on to a brighter future, or we'll tax you later to build those jails... . The solutions to our drug problem, to our teenage pregnancy problem, to our youth violence problem is getting into the lives of youngsters early, with their families, with their communities... .

Every one of these kids is a gift from God, not only to their parents but to the community, to the nation and to our future. And so this crusade will continue. I'm sticking with it. I want all of the governors here to stick with it... . We have nothing more important in America to do than to build our kids and stop building jails. ■

Governor George W. Bush
Continued from page 4

Education helps the young. Empowerment lifts the able. But there are those who need much more—children without role models, young people captured by gangs or addiction or despair. ...

In city after city, for the suffering and the hurting, the most hopeful passageway is the door to the house of God. We are going to extend the role and reach of charities and churches, synagogues and mosques, mentors and community healers, in our society. As President, I intend to rally these armies of compassion in the neighborhoods of America. I will lift the regulations that hamper private and faith-based programs. I will involve them in after-school programs, maternity group homes, drug treatment, prison ministries. I have laid out specific incentives to encourage an outpouring of giving in America. ...

I'm not calling for government to step back from its responsibilities, but to share them. We'll always need government to raise and distribute funds, monitor success and set standards. But we also need what no government can provide: the power of compassion and prayer and love. These are some of my goals for America—to help make opportunity not only a hope and a promise, but a living reality.

The NAACP and the GOP have not always been allies. But recognizing our past and confronting the future with a common vision, I believe we can find common ground. This will not be easy work. But a philosopher once advised: When given a choice, prefer the hard. We will prefer the hard because only the hard will achieve the good. That is my commitment. That is our opportunity. Thank you. ■

Vice President Al Gore
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profiling, speaking out and acting. And as president, I will end racial profiling in the United States of America. I'll make the DWB [driving while black or brown] offense obsolete in America... .

Talk doesn't cost much. The true test is to come here to Baltimore and vow to appoint a Supreme Court that lives up to the legacy of this city's greatest son, Thurgood Marshall, and interprets the Constitution in the way our founders intended it to be interpreted, not to give a commitment to the far right wing to stack that court, because stacking the court would threaten civil rights and threaten the fundamental guarantees of liberty in this country... .

I'm not asking you to read my lips, I'm asking you to read my heart and watch my feet and watch the work of my hands when joined with yours... . Let's fight together. Let's struggle together. Allow yourselves to believe that we can do the right thing and be the better for it. Let's make this country what it is intended to be. Let's rise above our differences. Let's establish respect for difference... . Let's make the march that will take us to the mountaintop of justice and prosperity and progress and freedom for all of the people of the United States of America. I want your help. I want to fight for you. I want to fight for your families and the future of America.

God bless you and thank you. ■

**Washington, DC
Combined Federal Campaign Kick-Off**

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TRENDLETTER

POLITICAL REPORT

by Zachery Williams

Drug Resistant Tuberculosis Raising Worldwide Concern

A new report released March 24th by the World Health Organization indicates that deadly strains of drug-resistant tuberculosis are on the rise in both poor and wealthy nations. At great risk are victims of HIV/AIDS in Africa and residents of low-income communities in the United States. Worldwide, TB strains have emerged that are resistant to at least four of the five common antibiotics used to treat the disease. A multiple-drug-resistant strain of TB killed about 500 people in New York City in the early 1990s and cost \$1 billion to suppress. Drug resistance can develop in cases when patients receive the wrong antibiotics, when drug supply is unreliable, or when patients cease taking their medication because they believe that their condition is improving. Some cases are fatal, while others can only be cured through treatments 100 times more expensive than standard TB treatments.

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Poor monitoring, interrupted treatment courses, and reliance on expired or counterfeit drugs are contributing to the disease's growing transmission rates. Unlike AIDS or malaria, TB can be spread quickly and without intimate contact—transmitting even through the air we breathe by something as simple as a single cough. The disease remains dormant in otherwise healthy people until the warning signs appear, including the coughing up of blood.

The standard international TB control strategy is DOTS (Directly Observed Treatment Short Course). Where DOTS has been consistently used, cure rates for TB have reached 95 percent in cases amenable to drug treatment. Researchers have identified nine target areas as potential danger zones for drug-resistant TB in the countries of Estonia, Latvia, Russia, China, India, Iran, and Mozambique. Most cases of TB in the U.S. and Western Europe appear among impoverished recent immigrants, AIDS patients, cancer patients, drug addicts, and other individuals with suppressed immune systems. Already in the United States and much of Western Europe, the cost of curing one case can reach as high as \$250,000.

During the 18th and 19th centuries, tuberculosis, known then as "consumption," was one of the world's most deadly diseases. With the discovery of antibiotics after World War II, TB was nearly conquered, but it has re-emerged as one of the world's

most dangerous diseases due largely to the AIDS epidemic. The link with HIV/AIDS is due to immune system weakness. Individuals who are HIV positive are 30 times more likely than others to get sick with TB once infected. Those who have TB can infect another 10 to 15 people in only one year. As the immediate cause of death, TB now accounts for one third of AIDS deaths worldwide, making it the greatest killer of people with the HIV virus. TB kills more individuals than either AIDS or malaria. It is estimated that eight million people are affected each year. Two million of these people die, over half of them young women and over 100,000 of them children.

World Health officials are asking for \$700 million to combat the disease in poor countries. Recently, the U.S. doubled its foreign aid grants for TB control, raising the amount to \$22 million. The international medical community's urgent requests to raise money are motivated by the fear that an explosion of cases in the developing world trigger an epidemic of divergent strains. These strains would become incurable, highly contagious, and eventually spread more rapidly among populations in western industrialized nations.

A.M.E Church Elects Female Bishop

On July 11, 2000, the African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church elected the Rev. Dr. Vashti M.

McKenzie, pastor of Payne Memorial A.M.E Church in Baltimore, Maryland, to be the first female bishop in the denomination's history. The election took place at the A.M.E Church's quadrennial General Conference in Cincinnati, with 1,876 delegates voting. McKenzie becomes one of 20 bishops in the church body's governing hierarchy. The 213-year-old A.M.E Church is the nation's oldest black denomination. Speaking to supporters in her acceptance speech, McKenzie said, "Because of God's favor, the stained glass ceiling has been pierced and broken . . . I stand on the shoulders of women who could not be here, but nevertheless fought."

This historic election occurred about a month after the Southern Baptist Convention's decision to include a provision in their statement of faith that limits the office of pastor to men.

McKenzie is a native of Baltimore, Maryland, and a member of that city's Murphy family, whose patriarch was John Murphy, founder of the 108-year-old Afro-American newspaper chain. McKenzie holds a masters in divinity from Howard University and received a doctor of ministry degree from United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio. During her six-year tenure at the 101-year-old congregation of Payne Memorial A.M.E Church in Baltimore, she tripled its membership, bringing it to 1,400. She also incorporated 15 new ministries that seek to address the social and economic needs of the surrounding community, including a rites-of-passage ministry for boys and girls, job training and computer classes, and fellowship ministries for both singles and married couples. The church has placed 550 people in jobs.

At the beginning of this year's A.M.E General Conference, two women were among 42 candidates in the running for the four vacated

bishop positions. Those two women were McKenzie and Reverend Carolyn Tyler Guidry, who is a presiding elder and supervises 19 A.M.E churches in the Los Angeles area. The first woman ordained as a church elder in 1977, Guidry ran unsuccessfully for bishop at the 1996 General Conference, and she has long been an advocate for expanding opportunities for female leaders within the church. Membership in the A.M.E. church is estimated to be about 70 percent female. This was McKenzie's first bid for a bishop's post. Bishops are elected once every four years by delegates to the national conference.

Before her election took place, a resolution was presented at the conference which would have required the election of a woman for at least one of the bishop positions. A group of A.M.E activists proposed the resolution requesting that the Episcopal Committee, the body that oversees the election of bishops, ensure that at least one woman would be elected bishop. Its opening lines read: "In this, the first General Conference of the new century and the new millennium, we are called to remember that African Methodism was born as a protest against injustice, and we as heirs of this great tradition call for an end to gender bias in the hierarchy of our Church... We do this in the name of God in whom there is no East nor West, North nor South, male nor female." The resolution was co-authored by Dr. Jayme Coleman-Williams and Reverend Susan Blair, head of the Women in Ministry organization of the A.M.E church. Coleman-Williams was the first woman elected as one of the church's 13 general officers serving in administrative positions.

But in a vote of 716 to 667, the delegates voted the resolution down. Proponents had argued that the

African Methodist Episcopal Church, like other religious denominations, has historically been male-dominated and that no significant attempts had been made to include women in positions of authority. Critics charged that the resolution represented a form of favoritism and, ironically, likened it to a preference or set-aside. Coleman-Williams believes nevertheless "that the rejection of the Resolution" actually "sensitized the delegates and served as a catalyst that made McKenzie's election possible."

After her election, McKenzie attended the culmination ceremony where newly elected bishops are consecrated and given their assignments. Each of the A.M.E bishops governs a different district within the church body during the four-year intervals between conferences. McKenzie was placed in charge of the 18th district of the church, which includes African churches in Mozambique, Lesotho, Botswana, and Swaziland. Her headquarters will be in Maseru, Lesotho, an independent mountain kingdom surrounded by South Africa. The overseas assignment is not surprising. It is customary for first-time bishops to be given international assignments, generally in Africa and the Caribbean.

The African Methodist Episcopal Church was established in 1787 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Its main founder and first active bishop, Richard Allen, led a protest against racial discrimination encountered by blacks worshiping in Philadelphia's St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church. Allen founded the A.M.E. church as a part of that protest. Since then the church has steadily grown in size and stature. Today, it has a membership of approximately 2.3 million in congregations throughout the United States, Canada, South America, England, the West Indies, and Africa. ■

ECONOMIC REPORT

by Margaret C. Simms

A Slowdown in the Housing Market?

In its attempts to slow down the economy, the Federal Reserve Board has raised the federal funds rate six times in the past twelve months (this is the rate at which banks can borrow from district Federal Reserve Banks). The rate increases have begun to have their intended effect in terms of higher interest rates for businesses and consumers and slower overall rates of economic growth. Among the sectors where rate adjustments are most likely to have impact is the housing market.

Home ownership is often viewed as the “first rung” on the wealth accumulation ladder. In fact, home equity is the only form of significant wealth that many U.S. households possess (see March 2000 *FOCUS* Economic Report). Since housing is a long-term investment, decisions to purchase homes are not made lightly and are heavily affected by interest rates and employment prospects. Not only do prospective home buyers examine these variables, but so do mortgage lenders. During the economic expansion of the 1990s, the combination of low unemployment and relatively low interest rates put home ownership within the reach of many individuals and families not previously considered able to afford it.

The economic slowdown, however, may be putting the brakes on expansion in home ownership. Information from the Federal Reserve Board’s Summary of Commentary on Economic Conditions by Federal Reserve

Districts, commonly known as the “Beige Book,” indicates that, over the last year, home sales decreased in more than half of the Federal Reserve Districts. There was considerable variation among regions, with continued strong sales markets in the upper Midwest and Northeast, slowdowns in the Mid-Atlantic and parts of the Midwest, and a mixed picture in the South and West. A number of districts reported that higher interest rates had a negative impact on first-time home buyers and other families looking for moderately priced homes. They are also having an effect on homeowners looking to move up to more expensive housing because homeowners are afraid they cannot sell their existing home (or service a larger mortgage at a higher interest rate).

While many observers have focused on the impact of the current slowdown on the housing market, two recent reports suggest that the booming economy of the past decade did little to improve relative conditions for minority households and may even have contributed to worsening conditions for the poor.

Large Gaps Remain in Home Ownership

The Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard University issued its annual State of the Nation’s Housing in June. The good news was the fact that housing sales continued to be brisk in 1999, even though interest rates rose a full percentage-point over the year. Single-family housing construction was at a 20-year high, and sales of existing houses continued at a strong pace. More home buyers relied on adjustable rate mortgages (21 percent in 1999 versus 12 percent in 1998) which softened the blow of the mortgage rate increase.

Although the strong economy pushed homeownership rates to 66.8 percent in 1999, there is a disparity of about 26 percentage points between white and minority homeowners. This gap persisted even though the number of minority households is growing faster than the number of white households, making them a bigger share of the target market. Lenders have adapted some of their approval processes and their mortgage instruments to provide greater access to home ownership, enabling more low-to-moderate income buyers to take advantage of this new and growing market.

Minorities will comprise an even larger share of the housing market over the coming decades, constituting approximately two-thirds of the net growth in households. This fact, along with federal regulations specifying attention to minorities, makes primary and secondary mortgage lenders more attentive to African American, Hispanic, and Asian American home buyers. Since minorities have tended to have less income and wealth than whites, some mortgage lenders tend to equate “minority” with “low-income.” Therefore, many minority communities are receiving attention from subprime lenders, those lenders who make loans to borrowers with a bad credit history at higher than regular market rates.

According to the Harvard report, the share of all home-purchase loans in metropolitan areas originated by subprime lenders grew from one to five percent between 1993 and 1998. The growth was much higher in low-income and minority neighborhoods, with an increase from 2 to 12 percent. These lenders had nearly one-half of the refinancing market in these communities. While subprime lenders may be providing services to many who could not otherwise get

credit, there is some indication that a significant proportion of their customers could have qualified for credit in the prime lending market. Prime lenders are becoming aware of this qualified subgroup as they look to expand their customer base in the coming decade. As minorities become a larger share of the housing market, it will be interesting to see if the competition between prime and subprime lenders works to the benefit of these households.

Crisis in Housing Affordability

While the housing market has made room for more minorities and lower-income buyers over the past decade, the rental market has deteriorated significantly during the same period. According to a study released in March 2000 by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), *Rental Housing Assistance: The Worsening Crisis*, in spite of the economic growth of the 1990s, an increasing number of families are in "worst case" situa-

Families with Worst-Case Needs...

- are renters;
- do not receive housing assistance from any government program;
- have incomes below 50 percent of local-area median family income;
- pay more than half of their incomes for rent and utilities or live in severely substandard housing.

tions—paying excessive rents or living in severely inadequate housing (see sidebar). In 1997, there were 5.4 million families living in these conditions, including about one million Hispanic households and 1.1 million African American households. This represented a 45 percent increase for Hispanics and a 13 percent increase for African Americans between 1991 and 1997. Increases were much higher for households with children (74 and 31 percent, respectively).

The shrinking stock of affordable housing is directly linked to the movement of private owners out of

housing-subsidy programs, Congressional failure to approve new rental vouchers, and the demolition of public housing (without replacement for severely inadequate units destroyed). The HUD report calls for support of programs to reverse those trends.

For further information on the housing reports, visit www.gsd.harvard.edu/jcenter (State of the Nation's Housing: 2000) or www.huduser.org:80/publications (Rental Housing Assistance: The Worsening Crisis). ■

Women in Business Development Trade Mission

The U.S. Department of Commerce will conduct a Women in Business Development Trade Mission to Cairo, Egypt; Nairobi, Kenya; and Johannesburg, South Africa, October 1-7, 2000. Marjory B. Searing, Acting Assistant Secretary and Director General for the U.S. Commercial Service, will lead the mission which will offer businesses an opportunity to explore these three African markets, all of which are currently being transformed by privatization. The delegation will also participate in The Global Summit of Women 2000: Africa, to be held in Johannesburg on October 5 and 6. The Summit will bring together women-owned busi-

nesses and professional and entrepreneurial women leaders to explore ways to increase the participation of women in the global marketplace.

The Department of Commerce will handle the logistics of the trade mission and participating firms will benefit from the following features:

- Individualized private meetings with prospective clients;
- In-depth market briefings;
- Market assessment of their product and services potential;
- In-country publicity;
- Pre-screened one-on-one appointments with prospective business contacts tailored to the firms'

requirements and market strategies in each country;

- Online promotion of firms on the Department's virtual trade show website; and
- Full logistical support (including in-country transportation, hospitality events, and reduced hotel rates).

Participation is not limited to women-owned and -managed businesses, and those who join the trade mission may opt to participate in one or more of the three stops. For more information, contact Grace Wiggins by telephone (202) 482-6482, fax (202) 482-0687, or e-mail at grace.wiggins@mail.doc.gov.