

Point of View

Sentinel Editorial

The ancient Romans had a god named Janus. He was considered the god of doors and gates and, because a person symbolically passes through a door when he enters something new, Janus became the god of the beginning of things. Thus, January, the first month of our calendar year, was named for him.

The most significant fact about this god, however, is that he was depicted as having two faces, one looking forward and the other looking backward. This seems especially appropriate in terms of the beginning of a new year, for it is a time to look back in retrospect over the past year, to assess where we have been and what we have accomplished. It is also a time to look forward to the new year that lies ahead, to make plans and set goals for ourselves.

Shakespeare put it another way, when he wrote, "What is past is prologue." Certainly, what has happened in the past has great bearing on the present and the future.

Therefore, on this New Years Day let us each a Janus be. Let each of us look back at 1989 and take stock of what the year meant to us. What mistakes did we make? How could we have made it better? What did we learn from it? What did we accomplish? What did we do, of which we can be proud? And most of all, what and how did we give of ourselves to others and to our community?

Then let us look forward to this new year of 1990. Let us face it with hope and strong purpose. Let us set goals for personal and community progress. Let us all plan to make it the very best year that we can for ourselves and our fellowman.

With dedication toward these principles, the staff of the Las Vegas Sentinel-Voice sends to each of you its Best Wishes for a Happy, Peaceful and Prosperous New Year.

United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

BY Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

Southern Conference Movement: 50 Years of Struggle

December 1989 marked the 51st anniversary of the founding of the "Southern Conference Movement" for racial and economic justice which was initiated in Birmingham, Alabama. The history of the freedom and justice movements in this nation is extremely important. We must not allow this history to get lost.

It was in 1938 that 1,500 people from across the South, African American and Anglo American, dared to come to the heart of Dixieland to form a multi-racial social action, regional organization known as the Southern Conference for Human Welfare (SCHW). At the time of this meeting, Birmingham was a literal racist police state which forbade under the law African Americans and Anglo Americans from even being in the same room together no matter what the purpose or

auspices of the gathering. There were many labor organizers who also dared to attend the founding meeting of Southern Conference for Human Welfare. This organization mobilized around the quest for a true democracy in the South by challenging the vestiges of Jim Crow racism.

Out of the Southern Conference for Human Welfare movement, grew the Southern Conference Educational Found (SCEF) in 1948 which worked for over 25 years in the deep South to bring movement activists together to support "people's movements" in the South for racial, labor and human rights. One of the important historical understandings of the freedom movement in this country has been a "continuity" of the evolution of multiracial

See Journal, Page 12

The views expressed on these editorial pages are those of the artists and authors indicated. Only the one depicted as the Sentinel-Voice editorial represents this publication.

To Be Equal

End Of An Amazing Year

by John E. Jacob

1989 will go down as one of those extraordinary years marked by history-making events.

This was the year that saw the crumbling of the post-war world order, the domino-like fall of communist dictatorships in eastern Europe, and the effective end of the nearly half-century-long Cold War.



John E. Jacob

In the United States itself, it was a year that saw the end of the Reagan Administration and its replacement by a self-styled "kinder, gentler" mode of governing.

The historians of the future

will most likely not find today's America much gentler or kinder, for America has not yet replaced the Reagan legacy with affirmative, positive programs that deal constructively with our problems. But they will note some important events that have significance for the future.

The capture of the Supreme Court by hard-line Reaganites, for example, was confirmed by important decisions that dealt crippling blows to local set-aside programs for minority contractors, to affirmative action programs, and to women's right to make decisions about their own bodies.

And the year saw too many ugly racial incidents that prove we are far from being a color blind society and that racism lives on in subtle practices of discrimination and in the violence of the vicious.

There were plenty of other negatives for African Americans in 1989, such as

See JACOB, Page 12

The Bush Administration: End Of Year Assessment

by Norman Hill

A year ago, it seemed that George Bush might bring into the White House a more positive approach to civil rights than that of Ronald Reagan, who tried to impede rather than assist the freedom struggle of blacks and other minorities.

Bush's now-famous promise of a "kinder, gentler America" during the 1988 presidential campaign led

equality.

But President Bush has not, so far, fulfilled the promises of candidate or President-elect Bush in any meaningful way. William Lucas, his first choice to be Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights, had no background in civil rights law and no litigation experience. He clearly did not have the qualifications to assume the most important civil rights post in the federal

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many to hope for an improvement over Reagan's philosophy of helping the privileged while leaving the underprivileged to fend for themselves. And after winning the election, Bush pledged that he would work to achieve Martin Luther King's dream of racial

government. Fortunately, the Senate Judiciary Committee killed the nomination. We hope that the President's next nominee will be an attorney who combines a firm commitment to civil rights, independence of judgement, and the substantive abilities

See Hill, Page 12

Political Points

By

Assemblyman
Wendell P. Williams

Political Empowerment For The 90's



During the Reconstruction era when the African-American population numbered between five and six million, some twenty-two African-Americans represented them in the U.S. Congress. From 1901 to 1929, despite a doubling of the number of African-Americans, not a single African-American sat in the nation's highest legislative tribunal.

When Oscar DePriest took his seat on April 15, 1930 as the first African-American Congressman in the 20th century, he spoke of political empowerment. He was elected to the Seventy-first, Seventy-second and Seventy-third Congresses.

DePriest was shaped in the crucible of Chicago politics. His first public office was that of County Commissioner which he held from 1904, to 1908. He also served as a member of the Chicago City Council and as a member of the Illinois Commerce Commission.

Throughout his career whenever questioned as to what should be the greatest responsibility of the African-American population, his instant response was always of political empowerment. "We must study political organization to learn our rights under federal and state constitutions, and to view campaign activity as a public duty," was DePriest's constant slogan.

As the eighties come to a close, there are indications the African-American political scope is growing significantly nationwide.

In 1988, the number of African-American elected officials rose 5.8% to a record high 7,226. This is an increase of 397 from 1987's total 6,829.

For about the last 20 years, the numbers have increased steadily; however over the past few years the

rate of growth had begun to decline. In 1985 the numbers increased 6.1% that percentage of increase dropped to 4% in 1986 and decreased again in 1987 to 2.2%. The 5.8% in 1988 broke the previous trend.

Even with the increase of African-Americans elected to political offices, progress will be made very slowly unless every citizen adapts the mentality to some degree that political to some degree that political inclusion is public duty. And that political inclusion is mandatory if one wishes to be an active and legitimate participant in the ongoing process called life.

Elected officials are usually as politically strong as the political strength of the people that they represent. We must move far beyond just registering voters on election day. We must move to understanding the political process and work with it when it's correct, and move to change it when it's incorrect. This must involve everyone on an ongoing basis.

1990 presents the important challenge of the census. 1991 reapportionment and local elections and 1992 brings another national election. We must work for empowerment not. Let's move.

POINT OF VIEW: "One of the most basic weapons in the fight for social justice will be the cumulative political power of the Negro. I can foresee the Negro vote becoming consistently the decisive vote in national elections"

--Dr. Martin L. King Jr., 1963

POINT IN HISTORY: Dec. 30, 1892, Dr. Miles V. Lynk, physician, published the first African-American Medical Journal.

EXTRA POINT: Coming to town sat. Feb. 3rd -- The Harlem spiritual Ensemble -- 386-6211.