

Point of View

United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

BY Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

'THE BROWNING OF AMERICA'

Soon and very soon, Anglo or white Americans numerically will become a minority group in the United States of America. This prediction is based on current domestic patterns and rates of birth and immigration. **TIME MAGAZINE** in a cover story titled "America's Changing Colors" stated, "in the 21st Century -- and that's not far off -- racial and ethnic groups in the U.S. will outnumber whites for the first time. The browning of America will alter everything in society, from politics and education to industry, values and culture."

While it is not yet clear how the structures and values of American society will be changed in the future as the result of the United States becoming a non white majority nation, it is clear that change will occur. A change in the percentage of the proportion of the racial and ethnic population of this nation does not automatically mean an increase in the degree of political and economic empowerment of racial and ethnic communities in the nation.

For **TIME MAGAZINE** to do such an extensive cover story on this subject, it indicates the increasing concern and in some corners, increasing anxiety about these dramatic demographic changes in every section of the country. There are those who are fearful and there are those who are hopeful. Our point is to emphasize the opportunities that these inevitable changes will provide. This nation will have a greater opportunity to become more multi-racial and multi-cultural. This should be seen as a blessing rather than a curse.

Another opportunity is that

the movement and struggle for racial justice for all people should have a higher national priority. Thus, at a time now when overt racism and racial violence is still increasing across the nation, there must be a greater attention given now to challenging all forms of racism and racial discrimination. If not, then this society is in for the most difficult period in its history.

Today, already one out of every four persons in the U.S. defines himself or herself as being non white. Soon more than half of all the persons in the nation will be non white. For example, by the year 2020, the non white population of the U.S. will have doubled to more than 115 million persons.

We would issue a caution, however, concerning the possibility of deliberate efforts of the power forces of this society orchestrating racial and ethnic conflicts in order to insure that those in power stay in power in the future. Will the United States be faced with a situation similar to what is now happening in the Soviet Union in regard to inter-ethnic conflict? Will the U.S. institute or legislate apartheid-like measures to insure white minority economic control? Or will this nation provide leadership before the global community in its redistribution of power and wealth to serve the ends of justice and human dignity? We all should be involved in answering these questions.

In the final analyses the "browning of America" is more than a question of numbers and percentages. It is rather an ultimate question of justice, fairness, freedom and morality. We see the "browning of America" as a blessing in a colorful disguise.

POLITICAL POINTS

By

Assemblyman

Wendell P. Williams

WE MUST BOLDLY DEMAND THE HELP OUR PEOPLE NEED

In this political year of 1990, the deliberations and actions of all African-American decision-makers should be inspired by the unprecedented dramatic message from the masses who have thus far turned out to participate in the electoral process. African-American leaders who are involved in shaping our policies and legislation must understand that the votes and hopes of the people constitute a mandate for a new onslaught toward victory.

This is not a time to settle for well-managed, moderate measures that are acceptable to mainstream politicians. We must not be guilty of unpardonable sins of omission. At this pivotal point in history, not to be bold will constitute a betrayal to our people.

Too many major problems have lingered too long. Urgent action is needed on several issues that are critical.

Massive long-term commitment in the nature of a Marshall Plan is needed. To save this generation of African-American youth we must dedicate ourselves to an effort to launch penetrating strong programs which reflect our understanding of this very clear and present emergency.

But this bold thrust must also be a long-term agenda spread over the life-span of an entire generation. Our goal should be, in one generation, to eradicate the bulk of the problems related to inadequate education systems, inadequate job training and employment, homelessness, racial barriers to business opportunities, and all discriminatory obstacles to full political participation and empowerment.

And on the national level, the Bush Administration needs to be made aware of the critical shortages that the



Assemblyman Williams

American people are experiencing in their everyday lives. The quality of life for the average American worker has eroded during the Reagan years. The consequences of the Reagan Administration's tunnel vision employment policies have resulted in not only expanding the underclass in America, but also more importantly, have accelerated America's slide down from the position as the world's leading industrial nation, to something less.

We must be bold enough to prove that politics can be an arena for moral struggle. By acting together we can push back the walls against hope and lift the ceiling off of dreams. We do have a choice to act or not to act, and we who would dare to be leaders must choose and choose wisely and choose now.

When we demand and fight against injustice, when we demand and fight for equality, when we demand and fight for peace, we represent the best in America. We speak not for special interest but for the common good. It's our choice, it's our challenge. We must never surrender.

POINT OF VIEW: "A man who does not think and plan ahead will find trouble at his door." - Confucius

EXTRA POINT: - Celebrate the birthday - A Life of Malcolm X - on May 19th at the African-American Summit.

POINTS IN HISTORY: - 19 years ago on April 28th, Samuel Lee Gravely was appointed the first African-American Admiral in U.S. Naval history.

146 years ago on April 29th, Macon B. Allen and Robert Morris, Jr. became the first African-Americans to practice law.

To Be Equal

PUTTING BLACK YOUTH ON THE COLLEGE TRACK

By John E. Jacob

Finally, some long overdue good news about African American college attendance rates.

The U.S. Department of



John E. Jacob

Education says that black enrollment in independent colleges and universities rose seven percent between 1986 and 1988. That follows a 5½ percent drop between 1982 and 1986.

Whether the rise represents a new, upward trend in African American college enrollment, or just a blip on the longer-term downward trend line remains to be seen.

And it remains to be seen whether institutions reporting higher African American enrollments will ensure that those young people do well in college and graduate. Too often institutions work harder to recruit entering freshmen than to making sure they graduate.

But I'm optimistic for a number of reasons, especially the fact that the rise in enrollments has been most striking in the historically black colleges and universities -- institutions known for combining quality education with a nurturing environment that helps students reach their full potential.

If I'm right, then we can finally reverse the decline in African American college attendance that's occurred despite the big jump in the numbers of blacks graduating from high school.

Heavy federal budget cuts

in student aid and work-study programs helped account for that troubling decline. Those cuts, and the federal policy shift from aid to loans, have not been reversed, but the numbers are getting better.

Why? My guess is that the African American community's concerns about

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education and the tremendous efforts made by individuals and community-based groups are beginning to pay off.

The word has reached our young people that they can't get very far without staying in school to get the skills they'll need in a very competitive job market.

Community institutions are providing after-school study centers, counseling that raises aspirations, and other assistance to help young people stay on the right track.

While the highly-vaunted school reform movement has largely bypassed inner city schools, such community involvement has begun to pay off in positive changes.

Some programs implemented as part of the National Urban League's Education Initiative, for example, have reduced dropout rates, while others have helped local colleges to guarantee freshmen places for local high school graduates.

Another example of grassroots involvement is the growth of mentoring.

Last month, The Commonwealth Fund released the results of a nationwide survey of high school students and their mentors that indicated the great impact the practice has had.

Students said that their mentor's advice was important to them in making

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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.

Keep Hope Alive

STOP THE VIOLENCE