

# Point of View

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## TO BE EQUAL

# AFTER THE ELECTION

By John E. Jacob

There's a strange notion floating around that the end of the election campaign means returning to business as usual.

But I believe it marks the start of a new era in which America will have to pull its collective head out of the sand and begin to attack the stubborn problems that threaten our future.

At the top of the list of those problems is racial divisiveness.

Few could take comfort from the way the subject was handled during the campaign — the candidates all but ran away from it.

All of them said the right things about how we need to make our diversity a strength, but you could count the number of times they went beyond that

on the fingers of one hand.

In the third presidential debate, a question about minorities and women in decision-making posts was answered in a similar fashion by all of the candidates.

They talked at length about the women they have appointed, but very little was said about the need for greater representation of minorities and African Ameri-

cans in key government posts.

Clearly, the candidates were more concerned about the white suburban vote than they were with the inner city black vote. And if you look at it only from the angle of electoral politics, that tilt makes sense.

You have to get elected before you can govern, but unless you govern well you're unlikely to get re-elected.

So the president-elect has to hit the ground running once he is inaugurated, and that means making key decisions right now. Not just personnel decisions, but also the policy choices he and we will live with the next four years.

Many African Americans are looking to the president-elect for reassurances that the next four years will not be a repeat of the last dozen years when our role in government was drastically reduced and our interests ignored.

What kind of reassurance?

For starters, the president-elect should nominate his Cabinet early on, and it should be made up of people with a track record of advocating policies that help people out of poverty.

African Americans and other minorities should be included in the Cabinet, and not just for positions traditionally associated with their concerns, such as Secretary of Health and Human Resources, or Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

The African American community has a wealth of talented people able and willing to serve in top posts that affect national defense, international relations, the law, and business.

A new Administration could send a strong signal that it really intends to honor America's diversity by appointing a Cabinet that truly reflects that diversity.



JOHN E. JACOB

A second reassurance can come from involvement with the African American community — meeting with black congress persons to get their ideas about policy, initiating an open door policy of consulting with community leaders, and visiting inner city neighborhoods to demonstrate concern with conditions there.

Third, the president-elect should back the Urban League's call for a Marshall Plan for America, and explain to the nation how targeting economic and human resource investments on those most in need will benefit the entire nation.

Finally, he should use the tremendous media interest in his plans as a "bully pulpit" to spotlight America's racial problems and to mobilize citizens of all races to live together in harmony.

And that includes publicly recognizing the continuing effects of racism and its poisonous influence on our lives.

Those steps would go a long way toward reassuring African Americans that the future will be better than the past, and it will help to replace racial divisiveness with hope for a better future.



## POLITICAL POINTS

By Assemblyman Wendell P. Williams



### ...And Divided We Fall!

Since the beginning of mankind, one of the most reliable tactics that has been used to separate people; is to "divide and conquer." Regardless if it is just two people or an army of people, once someone finds a way to wedge between them, they then become vulnerable. Yes, they become more liable to attack.

Its like the family that was sitting at the dinner table night after night going through one squabble after another. Finally, the very next evening the father brought to the table a bundle of twigs. He then, as the family members watched; tied string around each end of the twigs, binding them together. He then passed the bundle of tied twigs around the table to each family member and challenged them to break the twigs. Not one single person could break the sticks. When the bundle got back around to the father, he untied the twigs and then asked the family members to again try to break the sticks. This time every single family member was able to break the sticks very easily. They all looked at each other and from that point on, the fighting at the home stopped. From that day on,

that family understood what it means when one says United We Stand, and Divided We Fall.

However, in too many cases, groups and communities that have good intentions and just causes, crumble because they allow people of ill will to wedge between them by pitting them against each other. And please never forget that those who come between united groups with the intentions of separating them, do not have the best interest of the people they claim to help, in mind. Never.

In the African-American community, this practice of divide and conquer has been around since the shameful days of slavery. House servants were generally much better off than field hands. Being nearer to the master's kitchen, they often ate better and the white family's cast-off clothing usually became theirs. The living quarters for favored servants were far more comfortable than the masses. The privileges enjoyed by house slaves created between domestic servants and field hands, a large degree of suspicions and envy. Thus, obviously causing division and separation between all of them.

Hundreds of years later, we see today that nothing has

changed. There are still those who would rather try to find people in our communities and convince them to turn on their own brothers and sisters. Convince them to turn on their own future - the children. Promising them that if they turn on their own community, then they'll qualify to be a "house servant." It's that age-old divide and conquer game.

In fact it happened right here in Las Vegas just last week. Because the Las Vegas-Clark County Library District refused to deal with the people who have shown for years, that they have major concerns; they are now attempting to divide and conquer the African-American community by trying to convince members of the community to join in with them and help them ignore the will of people. Divide people who in many cases, are friends, when in fact they care nothing about their recruits either.

Last summer, members of the West Las Vegas Library community suggested to the Library board the idea of formulating an advisory board with the intent of expanding communications between taxpayers and library officials. The board made no efforts to fill that request.



Assemblyman  
Wendell P. Williams

However, not that citizens are at the point of no return, the board chairperson, Diana Wilson, and library director Charles Hunsberger are busy contacting other members of the African-American community to join with them and their long history of neglect and disrespect to the patrons of the West Las Vegas Branch. As if the fast growing number of people who have a list of unanswered questions will somehow disappear.

Ms. Wilson and Mr. Hunsberger should remember that whether they try to ignore the will of the people or if they put all of their hopes in their new "Dream Team," the masses and the issue will not be turned around.

I am also confident that the people who are being asked to go against their own people will reject this slave master mentality request and join instead with the people who need them - the children. In fact the children will be watching you.

Who knows, these same children will probably learn first hand the true meaning of - United We Stand and Divided We Fall!

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Betty Brown, *President & Publisher*  
Lee Brown, *General Manager / Editor*  
Ramon Savoy, *Advertising & Marketing Dir.*  
Lourdes Cordero-Brown, *Office Mgr.*  
William G. Ramirez, *Assistant to the Editor*  
Willis Brown, *Production*  
Ulysses Palrose, *Distribution*  
Don Snook, *Graphics*

**Contributing Writers:**  
Assemblyman Wendell P. Williams  
Ray E. Willis (CCSD)  
Rev. Jesse Scott (NAACP)  
James S. Tate, Jr., M.D. (NAARPR)  
R. K. Brown  
Gwen Walker  
Kimberly Bailey

Members:  
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(608) 238-7550

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