

Reverend urges Black newspapers to tell the truth

Special to Sentinel Voice

MONTEGO BAY, Jamaica—The National Newspaper Publishers Association began its first full day of activities during the 1998 Mid-Winter Workshop in Jamaica with a prayer breakfast dedicated to three late members: Ken Thomas, publisher of the Los Angeles Sentinel; Ibn Sharrief of the Tri-City Journal and Harriet Williams, wife of Jacksonville Advocate publisher, Isiah Williams, III.

Officiating over the program, which included renditions from Gary, Ind.-based singer and

saxophonist, Ernie Shelby, the Rev. Bobby Lee of the Metro Forum applauded the vision of president Dorothy R. Leavell and members.

"During the last two years of this conference our spirit has been different," he said. "And I think it's because we have publicly acknowledged God. I want to applaud Dorothy Leavell for allowing this to happen."

Keynote speaker, the Rev. Maurice Nutt of the St. Alphonsus "Rock" Church in St. Louis, Mo., described the relationship of the Black Press and the Black church.

"As Black publishers and Black preachers, we share a common mission. We share a common goal ... know that the heart of the Black Press was born out of the Black church," he said.

Focusing on the workshop's theme, "The Black Press: Paving the Path to a New Millennium," the reverend urged publishers "to speak truth to the people while paving the path to a new millennium."

Recalling the words of black poet Mari Evans that begin, "Speak the truth to the people," he challenged the Black Press that, "You are not

only decimating news but ... the gospel ... You know there is what my grandmother used to call ... the 'truth, truth.' The Black Press, you are called to always adamantly bring to our people the 'truth, truth.'

"We need to know our story. We do not all know our story. We have lived through centuries of deceptions and lies and we desperately need the 'truth, truth.' You have on your shoulders the blessing and the burden of speaking truth to our people, in season and out of season," he said.

Clyburn: transportation set-aside sets stage for fight

Special to Sentinel-Voice

Blacks should support his version of a bill reauthorizing the Inter-Modal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act, "ISTEA" because it contains approval for a set-aside program, Congressman James E. Clyburn (D-S.C.) told National Newspaper Publishers Association two weeks ago.

The congressman was a

keynote speaker, Jan. 23, at the association's 1998 Mid-Winter Workshop in Montego Bay, Jamaica.

"It is the only one that's got in it a reauthorization for the set-aside program, the biggest set-aside program, the biggest affirmative action program going in the country today," Clyburn said of the act which governs the interstate highway system act.

"By the year 2017, if we do not move now, Social Security is going to be in trouble."

— Congressman James E. Clyburn (D-S.C.)

"So those of you who are interested in whether or not we continue these concepts of set-asides should take a look at these highway deals because that is where we are going to win or lose it," Clyburn said.

The \$30 billion act also includes a \$900 million provision for restoring historic buildings. Some of the money will go to the 712 historic

buildings on the campuses of Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Clyburn said.

He also told publishers that he believed the government's projected budgetary surplus should be spent on saving the country's social security system, not on tax cuts.

"We are expecting for the next 10 years surpluses that could reach \$100 million a

year," Clyburn said. "The big fight over how to spend the surplus is going to boil down to a very partisan fight," he said, dismissing a Republican push for tax cuts, as "foolhardy."

Instead he advised that the government has to "save the Social Security system."

"By the year 2017, if we do not move now, Social Security is going to be in trouble," he said.

"We get very few phone calls from 65-year-olds asking about their social security, I get them from their children

wanting to know whether or not the system is going to allow them to continue their lifestyle or if they are going to have to take care of their mothers and fathers.

"We ought not to buy into this argument that we should change the social security system and go to a voluntary system. No 21-year-old thinks he or she is going to die. No 41-year-old is waiting on social security until he or she is 65. They need it for their mothers and fathers ... let's forget about privatizing Social Security," he said.

Business

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lending to low-income areas has decreased.

Although the conference stressed more diversity on Wall Street and in the banking community, having more diverse federal regulators would be a useful start. All regulators now come directly from the industries they regulate, with no previous experience in the needs of grass-roots communities. As Ludwig leaves as controller of currency, perhaps the Clinton administration will step outside the Wall Street orbit to select a replacement.

The task for blacks is to find a way to pool the capital

we already have access to, either as wages or pensions, so that funding for economic development and jobs can be channeled into our communities. Black companies on the public markets have found themselves ignored by the capital markets.

Black families have more than \$36 billion in disposable wealth to invest, but that money is not yet organized. Once it is, there will be no problem getting the barons of Wall Street to pay attention.

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