

POINT OF VIEW

Our View

Clinton earns respect, has ways to go

Finally, a president with some guts. Whatever your political affiliation — Democrat, Republican, Independent — or your ideological leanings — left-wing, right-wing, moderate, radical — you should respect President Clinton for trying to heal the racial divide.

He seems to be on track, forming a race panel to brainstorm solutions to the deepening divisions and visiting Africa in hopes of healing wounds and building better ties.

But let's not herald him as a saviour, he's merely doing what presidents should have begun decades ago: Take racism head on.

Unfortunately, however, steps taken to remedy past injustices are being repealed at a fast clip. Instead of being able to rely on affirmative action and race-based preference that fostered diversity and ensured minorities have an equal chance to get hired, we are fighting for their survival.

African-Americans were forcibly taken to a new land and a new life. It seems, the master-slave mentality hasn't waned.

In Las Vegas, where African Americans comprise 10 percent of the population, several Blacks have "made it." More are needed.

And while the city's ethnic and cultural diversity expands — which means a corresponding growth increase in the black community, — the citizens and this fact need to be acknowledged.

The head of our nation is moving in the right direction; now he must follow rhetoric with action.

Some among our ranks are turncoats and ignore or refute those African-Americans face injustices in this country.

Want proof?

Check the disproportionate numbers of Black men in prisons? Examine the disproportionate numbers of African-Americans in public housing? What about the numbers of African-Americans on state, city and county boards and how about the lack of support by whites for African-American businesses?

Injustices still exist and it finally seems we have a president willing to at least broach them.

Let us become united in a new wave of justice and equality, with a '60s touch of activism and carve out our piece of the pie and leave the crumbs alone.

WHERE KIDS LEARN ABOUT SEX...



DOWN TO BUSINESS

Failing to learn from past can doom the future

John William Templeton
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Down in a brush-filled valley in backwoods Georgia, a fox slunk up to an insightful and articulate rabbit. They had had a history together. The fox came; the rabbit outran him.

This time, the rabbit was so confident that she decided to have a conversation with her stalker.

"You know, Mr. Fox, you've killed a lot of rabbits, but I'm an open-minded animal, so I'm willing to see if we can stop all this."

The fox was stunned. His foil was right in front of his eyes, just inches from his claws. But he knew he couldn't outrun the rabbit. It was time to think quick and change strategy.

"You're right, Ms. Rabbit. We've done a lot of wrong to your species. So, I'm willing to put all that in the past if you will. Let's form an initiative on peace between the foxes and the rabbits.

"You can be the head of the committee. I'll get the dog, the wolf and the mountain lion to sit in with us too."

The fox could not believe his luck. The rabbit was pondering his offer.

"I don't know, Mr. Fox ..."

the rabbit said.

"Sister Rabbit, don't you think it's time to focus on the future?" the fox asked.

She relaxed, with a confused look on her face, and was about to say something when, the fox, swept forward with claws bared.

The rabbit's instincts took hold. She ducked, made a 180 degree turn on her back heels and was off into the brush.

Those who fail to learn from the past are condemned to repeat it.

Mr. Fox lay in the weeds. Once again, he had failed.

"Maybe I should have called it a task force," the fox said.

Like the rabbit, African-Americans are being told by the president of the United States and people like Ward Connerly that we need to stop dwelling on the past.

However, around the globe, we see the U.S. government demanding restitution for victims of institutional crimes. For example, the feds are currently threatening and sanctioning insurance companies and banks over the property rights of victims of World War II atrocities.

And thanks to Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., it is now enshrined in American law that a property owner can get restitution from whoever now owns a property that was taken illegally.

Under the Helms-Burton Act, one can sue and ban from U.S. territory anyone who owns properties seized by the Cuban government from Americans in the 1950s.

From Goree Island to the beaches of Hawaii, the United States and its individual states took the lives, the sweat, the blood and despite massive odds, the hard-won property, of the sons and daughters of Africa.

In addition, any one who dared to challenge it was usually shot. It was only in the mid-1960s, that there even arose the possibility of trying

White men for the murder of African-Americans. More than 5,000 lynching victims died during the 20th century, not during slavery.

Accordingly, the call to reopen the murder investigation into Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. must be the focus for a larger investigation.

The reason that a definitive answer has yet to be found to Dr. King's assassination is that we have not investigated the structure and people involved in maintaining racism.

Rather than getting caught in the molasses of the president's race initiative, or the confusion of James Earl Ray's claims, it's apparent America needs a "racism recovery" special prosecutor to look at all these various strands.

Most lynchings involved dozens of assailants, which means that upwards of 50,000 murder suspects have gotten

away. The recent Spike Lee documentary "Four Little Girls," although ignored by Hollywood, points out that at least four of the perpetrators of the Birmingham church bombing got away scot-free.

And since America doesn't want to pay reparations, we need a Helms-Burton act to seize any properties used to conduct slavery or return properties abandoned by Black families due to racist violence since the Emancipation Proclamation.

Otherwise, the foxes will just reinvent themselves and go on with business as usual. The people who perhaps killed King will even quote his speeches. In the meantime, we'll be wondering why we didn't make more progress. The answer will be that we had to spend our time eluding the fox, instead of caging it or killing it.

Remember, those who fail to learn from the past are condemned to repeat it.

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