

## COMMENTARY

# The biblical parable of the talents, economic style

By James Clingman, Jr.  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

God gave Black people 500 billion talents; he gave Hispanic people 350 billion talents; he gave Asian people 225 billion talents. He left us alone for one year and then returned to see what we had done with our talents.

God asked the Asian people, "What have you done with your resources?" The Asians replied, "We created many businesses and purchased many franchises. We used our resources to assist our families and our Asian friends, helping them to get into business as well."

The Asians continued, "Lord, we knew that with 225 billion talents we could generate even more talents by pooling what we had and working together toward a common economic goal. We have doubled the amount you awarded us. We now have 550 billion talents. And to top it all off, our restaurants are going strong; everybody loves our food!"

The Lord said, "Well done, my good and faithful servants. I will make you rulers over many things."

God then asked the Hispanic people what they had done with their inheritance. They gleefully replied, "Lord, you are really going

to be proud of us. Upon receipt of our talents we went to work right away and formed our own bank. We have one in Florida that ranks among the largest in all the land. And, you know what else? The interest we are making will more than double the amount of talents you gave us."

As God nodded approvingly, the Hispanic people couldn't wait to continue. "We opened fast food shops and sidewalk stands. We sold fruit, enchiladas, and tacos. We supported Hispanic doctors, lawyers, accountants, and all the Hispanic businesses we could find. If a certain business did not exist in our community, we pooled our resources and started it. We have done very well, Lord, especially considering the short time we have been in this land." And God said, "Well done, my good and faithful servants. I will make you rulers over many things."

Since God had given the most talents to his chosen people—Black people—he couldn't wait to hear what they had done with their 500 billion talents. Like a doting father, he proudly asked them, "What have you done with your inheritance?"

After turning their music down in order to hear what God was saying, the Black people

waved their hands in the air (like they just didn't care) and shouted, "Lord, we just threw the party of the century, and it was all good! Look at those bad rides parked outside. We bought them from the German people and the Japanese people. Wouldn't you agree, Lord, that we did good deeds by helping to make them wealthy?"

Even God looked perplexed. He asked if there was anything else the Black people wanted to report. "Oh yeah," they replied. "You haven't heard the half of it, Lord. We're the most charitable people on earth. We spent 95 percent of all you gave us with businesses other than our own. We helped everyone. We didn't discriminate and we didn't play-a-hate."

Then one of the Black leaders spoke up. "You know how we like nice clothes, Lord. So after the party we went out and bought all of the latest styles with all of the right labels. You know what I'm saying? We just had to have it; we couldn't wait. Check us out."

Now the Lord was quite concerned about His people and their attitude regarding their talents. Continuing to probe and expecting to hear something that would make Him proud, God pleaded, "Surely you have done something with your inheritance to generate

more talents for yourselves?"

The Black people looked around at one another, and one of their "leaders" stepped forward to sum things up. "Lord we have the finest cars, we eat and drink only top shelf, and we meet in the most elaborate hotels. Our children have several pairs of the latest gym shoes, we make the baddest videos and we can throw down—I mean dance—with the best of them. Even better than that, we have good jobs to earn back our 500 billion talents next year, and we will again be able to help all the other inhabitants of this land."

Sadly, God looked at his people and said, "With what you have done with your talents, you may as well have buried them in the ground. Because of your slothfulness and lack of good stewardship, I will give your future talents to those who have the least. You have gravely disappointed me by not adhering to one of my most important admonishments: To whom much is given, much is expected."

James Clingman, Jr. is the founder and executive director of the Greater Cincinnati African-American Chamber of Commerce and author of the new book, *Economic Empowerment or Economic Enslavement - We have a choice.*

## Trent Lott morally unfit to weigh in on impeachment

By Earl Ofari Hutchinson  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

When once asked about desegregation in his home state of Mississippi, Republican Senate Majority leader Trent Lott said, "It just happened one day, and we moved on."

While many Whites in Mississippi did move on, the question is, did Lott?

The one-time congressional aide to staunch segregationist Congressman William Colmer has emerged as the major player in the southern Republican's drive to dump Clinton.

He has badgered and cajoled the Senate to bring the impeachment charges against Clinton to a speedy trial. He has lectured Democrats that they should be offended by Clinton's conduct.

Yet, Lott may be more than just a Republican conservative indignant at Clinton's moral misbehavior.

He may be considered a southern politician who has cozied up to race baiters and

segregationists. The list of Lott's dubious political ties and actions call into serious question his political and moral fitness to judge Clinton.

The list of his close ties includes the Council of Conservative Citizens. This updated version of the old White Citizens Council issued "A Call to White Americans," demanding that Whites uphold the "The traditions of the White South."

It also champions the Confederate flag, promotes neo-KKKer David Duke, hails former segregationist Georgia governor Lester Maddox as a hero and has web site links to many of the farthest-out right wing groups in the nation.

When asked by the media about his speeches to the CCC, Lott feigned amnesia. When pressed further he claimed that the speeches may have been given years ago when he was a member of the House. They weren't.

He gave the speeches to the CCC national conference in 1992 and a local CCC conference in 1995. He was a senator both years. When the truth was pointed out to him he refused to comment.

There may be even more to Lott's involvement with this group than is known, if so, he needs to come clean with the public. But, even if he doesn't, his past statements and actions show that he has often marched in step with the bitterest of enemies of civil rights and civil liberties and those who hate Clinton for supporting those issues.

He has supported tax breaks for Bob Jones University and other segregated schools, and he has called Jocelyn Elders and David Satcher, Clinton's nominees for Surgeon-General and both African-Americans, unfit.

In the Senate, he declined to co-sponsor the Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 1997 and the Employment Non-Discrimination Act in 1998. The Human Rights Campaign, a public

advocacy group that monitors congressional legislation, has given Lott a zero rating the last three years for his votes on civil and human rights legislation.

The Southern House Republicans shoved through impeachment as part of their grand strategy to roll back civil rights, further gut social programs and seize the White House in 2000. Lott is determined to finish their job in the Senate by convicting Clinton, or failing that, ramming through a crippling censure resolution to discredit him and paralyze the Democratic presidential campaign next year.

But Lott has dirtied his political hands by cavorting with race baiting groups such as the CCC. This hardly makes him fit to debate and vote on the conviction of Clinton. We should let him know that. E-mail him at: senatorlott@lott.senate.gov, fax: (202) 224-2262 or call: (202) 224-6253.

Earl Ofari Hutchinson is the author of "The Crisis in Black and Black."

## Charles Cobb civil rights legend in King vain

By Bernice Powell Jackson  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

A few weeks ago I was listening to Talk of the Nation on National Public Radio and they were talking about heroes. Many of the people who called in were lamenting that there are so few heroes today or that our heroes are often found to be flawed.

Well, all human beings are less than perfect but at this time of celebrating one American hero, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., I am reminded that I have been privileged to know and work with some real heroes in my lifetime.

One of them we lost in the past few days. Like Dr. King he was an important part of the struggle of African-Americans to be free. But, alas, his name is not as well known. But he was a hero just the same. His name was Charles Earl Cobb, Sr.

Dr. Cobb was the first Executive Director of the Commission for Racial Justice of the United Church of Christ, the position which

I now hold. The title only begins to tell the story of Charles Cobb.

Born in Durham, N.C., he saw his parents, particularly his mother, fight for justice as a small child. Indeed, he often told how she fought Duke University as it bought up the land of the black folks nearby when it was expanding. He attended North Carolina College for Negroes (now North Carolina Central) and then Howard University Divinity School and Boston University School of Theology.

He pastored small churches in Kentucky and Massachusetts and then went to St. John's Congregational in Springfield, Mass., in the 1950's. There he took on the police department because of its treatment of black citizens and the education department because of its treatment of black children and finally challenged the power structure by running for mayor himself. He lost that race but the black community won by virtue of its new-

found political clout and its newly-organized people.

Indeed, strategic political skills and organizational capabilities were two of the gifts that Charles Cobb used on behalf of his people throughout his life. Not long after he ran for mayor, he was called to the position which he held for 20 years at the Commission for Racial Justice. There he confronted the churches, particularly the United Church of Christ, with their participation in racism and challenged them to work to end all forms of injustice.

He challenged the criminal justice system's inequities and promoted programs for the African-American family. He started a scholarship fund which resulted in thousands of young black people receiving a college education. The Commission for Racial Justice hired community organizers who worked in communities across the country, helping people to challenge all kinds of racism.

### Century

(Continued from Page 12)

the steps necessary to achieve this essential goal. In fact, Black America needs an Economic Think Tank that focuses on nothing else but the economic empowerment and well being of African people in the U.S. and the world.

Finally, it is absolutely essential that Blacks in America utilize the political process in its broadest dimensions to relentlessly and unapologetically promote and defend the interests of the National Black community. The critical imperative in this vital area is to construct a political mechanism, a Third Force not tied to the Democratic or Republican Party, which can deliver on that promise. In this arena as in all others, the message to Blacks in America is the same—we must be prepared to compete in the 21st century or perish.

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