

Bush: GOP must work to appeal to Blacks

DETROIT (AP) - President Bush acknowledged on Friday that "the Republican Party has got a lot of work to do" to gain the support of Black voters and suggested that the Democratic Party is taking them for granted.

"I know plenty of politicians assume they have your vote," the president told the National Urban League. "But do they earn it and do they deserve it?"

Bush's remarks came as a new poll showed overwhelming support for John Kerry among Black voters. The poll also showed Blacks have yet to entirely warm up to the presumptive Democratic nominee.

The president's speech followed his refusal to address the NAACP, whose chairman, Julian Bond, has condemned the adminis-

tration's policies on education, the economy and the war in Iraq and has urged high Black voter turnout to defeat Bush.

Bush pointed to the fact that Blacks such as national security adviser Condoleezza Rice and Secretary of State Colin Powell are key members of his administration. To periodic smatterings of applause from the Black audience, he asserted that his prescription of tax relief, education reform and compassionate conservatism is doing far more than the traditional programs of Democrats to address the nation's ills that hit particularly hard at Blacks.

"Has class warfare or higher taxes ever created decent jobs in the inner city?" Bush asked. "Are you satisfied with the same answers on crime, excuses for drugs



President Bush addressed the National Urban League on Friday at their annual national convention. This year the event was held in Detroit.

and blindness to the problem of the family?"

Also Friday, the Pentagon released newly discovered payroll records from Bush's 1972 service in the Alabama National Guard. But the records shed no new light on whether the future president drilled with the Alabama unit during July, August and Sep-

tember of 1972.

During his speech, Bush invited Blacks to "take a look at my agenda" of boosting small businesses, demanding high standards in the nation's public schools and defending "the institutions of marriage and family."

He proposed an initiative that seeks to expand business

ownership among minorities by creating one-stop centers for business training, counseling, financing and contracting.

"Is it a good thing for the African-American community to be represented mainly by one political party?" the president asked. "How is it possible to gain political leverage if the party is never forced to compete?"

Bush drew on a line from a former Illinois state legislator who once said, "Blacks are gagging on the donkey but not yet ready to swallow the elephant," references to the symbols of the Democratic and Republican parties respectively.

Repeating a line that is part of his stump speech to Republican crowds, Bush declared, "I'm here to ask for your vote." The line drew

weak applause from the Urban League audience.

"I know, I know, I know," Bush added. "The Republican Party has got a lot of work to do. I understand that," prompting laughter and louder applause and apparently provoking a vigorous nod of the head from the Rev. Jesse Jackson who was sitting in the crowd.

"You didn't need to nod your head that hard, Jesse," Bush said, triggering more laughter.

After the speech, Jackson said that Bush "has done some gestures, but he talked to us, not with us."

He cited cuts in after-school programs and reduced support for police departments resulting in substantial layoffs.

Jackson said he told the (See Bush, Page 5)

Prominent Baltimore pastor challenges AME compatriots

By Christopher Jack Hill
Special to Sentinel-Voice
BALTIMORE (NNPA) - The Rev. Dr. Frank Madison Reid III shocked the African Methodist Episcopal Church last week with the uncovering of his controversial book titled, "Up from Slavery: A Wake Up Call for the African Methodist Episcopal Church."

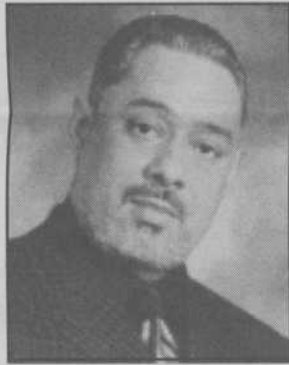
Reid, pastor of the Bethel AME Church in Baltimore and a syndicated TV evangelist, launched the book during the Quadrennial AME General Conference in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Reid, who for years has been critical of the church's process, which he calls a bureaucracy, became more vocal leading up to the conference in Indiana.

In "Up From Slavery," Reid criticized the church, calling for its focus on growth and development of faith rather than financial gain and bureaucracy.

Reid used story-telling methods and examples of unethical practices by individuals of the church during his younger years.

"I discovered a religious bureaucracy that was selfish, bloated, self-serving and had little concern for the development of the local church, pastor and laypersons," stated Reid.



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— Rev. Dr. Frank Madison Reid III

Conference members say the book took the church by surprise, but reactions to its contents were swift.

"The book went a little too far, but there are some undeniable truths," said one conference attendee, who preferred to be unnamed.

But AME officials say this book exudes criticism on a whole new level.

"It seemed as if Reid was slamming the AME church, but the slamming was valid, and it raised the consciousness of the people," said Joseph Taylor, a conference observer from the sixth district.

But one church leader called this unanticipated book a "masterpiece that swivels the consciousness of the church and its organization" which Reid describes as a "demonic spirit that has run using bureaucracy."

Though reactions to the book are mixed, many agree the book is one of the most critical challenges to the

AME church in the history of the denomination.

Released just days after the withdrawal of his candidacy for bishop, the book has sparked speculation among church leaders and conference observers about Reid's reason for not running.

Reid was almost guaranteed one of the seven available seats and if elected, he would have become a third-generation bishop.

Reid explained his reasons for withdrawing in the book saying, he did not want to "bow down to a system that lost its dynamic mission."

He went on to say that the church had lost touch with the original mission of Richard Allen, who founded the AME denomination in 1787.

Contrary to some claims, the book is not a precursor to his leaving the (See AME, Page 5)

All-White Florida jury supports bias complaint by Black cops

By K. Chandler
Special to Sentinel-Voice

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (NNPA) - After deliberating for nearly 17 hours over the course of two days, an all-White jury recently determined that the City of West Palm Beach Police Department had indeed discriminated against three Black police officers during former chief Ric Bradshaw's tenure.

Presided over by Circuit Court Judge Diana Lewis, the civil trial was the culmination of a four-year-old lawsuit brought by five Black plaintiffs, including Calvin Bryant, Phillip Williams, Richard Pleasant, Robert Garrett and Anthony Ellis, who had a combined total of 92 years in law enforcement.

Bryant was awarded the largest amount, \$65,000 — \$55,000 for back-wages and \$10,000 for pain and suffering. Pleasant was granted \$20,000 for emotional duress, and Williams was awarded \$2,000 in back-wages and \$5,000 for mental anguish. The discrimination claims of Garrett and Ellis were found to be unsubstantiated.

The lawsuit, which followed a 1999 EEOC complaint, alleged the officers were denied promotions and premium overtime assignments, as well as subjected to unwarranted internal affairs investigations (IA) and disciplinary actions that were tantamount to retaliation for having filed the lawsuit.

During closing arguments, Stacy Strolla, attorney for the plaintiffs, stated that from the

day the officers started they were welcomed by being called the "affirmative action group," and "dumb Black men." And it's still going on today, she noted, referring to an incident that occurred during a morning briefing in which Sgt. Don Wesson picked up a magic marker from the chalk board, and when it wouldn't write, said sarcastically, "Just like a Black — don't work when you want it to."

With respect to disciplinary actions and overtime assignments, Strolla said her clients weren't even "playing in the same ballgame" with the rest of their colleagues on the department.

By way of example she pointed to Bryant. The 59-year-old lieutenant was fired six months before he was due to retire for refusing to answer a question during an IA investigation regarding the distribution of confiscated

cigarettes to employees, which was deemed to be a violation of the department's standard operating procedures (SOP).

"Every witness spoke of past practices within the department sanctioning the distribution of cigarettes," said Strolla, noting that it only became a problem after Bryant filed EEOC charges in May of 1999. "Chief Bradshaw thought if he could take Bryant out the rest would fall into line — It didn't happen."

According to Strolla, Officer Phillip Williams also became the subject of an IA investigation after he left his car unattended at an apartment complex with the front door ajar following the end of his shift at the Palm Beach Mall where he was working a security detail. "To 'teach' him a lesson, his Lieutenant gets into the car, drives off and later calls it negligence."

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