

SCLC looks forward to 'new day'

By George E. Curry
Special to Sentinel-Voice

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (NNPA) - SCLC President Charles Steele Jr., in a move to show that his efforts to revitalize Dr. Martin Luther King's old organization will not be limited by race or geography, outlined plans this week to be active as far away as China and as near as any city where a Black elected official turns his back on African-Americans.

Steele, a former Alabama state senator from Tuscaloosa, said the Atlanta-based Southern Christian Leadership Conference plans to build on Dr. King's legacy of non-violence by establishing conflict resolution centers in China, Cuba, Africa and other parts of the world.

He said Black elected officials walked through the doors opened by civil rights leaders. Alabama has the second-largest number of Black elected officials in the nation, trailing only Mississippi.

"I don't care if you went to Morehouse [College] or no house, whether you went to Yale or got your education



"Here we are in 2005, still marching, still demonstrating, still having to raise hell to get attention that we want to be free like everybody else."

— Charles Steele, Jr.
President SCLC

through the mail; you got to stand up and fight for the masses of the people," he said. "Here we are in 2005, still marching, still demonstrating, still having to raise hell to get attention that we want to be free like everybody else."

Steele saved his harshest remarks for Black officials who appear to have forgotten they owe a debt to those activists who came before them.

"We got some Black faces in some White places," he said. "You've got some Negroes playing the role of segregationists. We got some Negroes playing the role of the KKK. You got Black

elected officials not concerned about the electorate. You got economic opportunities in cities and Black folks are not getting anything. We got Black people in power. We'll march on you like we marched on 'Bull' Connor," he said, referring to Birmingham's segregationist public safety commissioner during the height of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s.

Steele continued, "We must send a mandate out today. We don't care if you're black, white, green or blue, if you're not going to get job for poor Whites and Black folk, get out of office."

Steele gave up public of-

rice to work full-time for SCLC. He took over as president and CEO last November after a tempestuous board meeting that saw the exits of stalwarts Fred Shuttlesworth, the leader of the Birmingham movement, and former president and King aide, Rev. Joseph Lowery. Finances were so limited that at one point last fall, the light and telephones were cut off at the headquarters.

"We were on life support, but we're not dead," Steele says to anyone who will listen. Although not where he would like for them to be, contributions have markedly increased and the organization is attracting broader support.

And some of the old wounds are beginning to mend. Shuttlesworth, Lowery and Martin Luther King III are all scheduled to participate in this week's convention, the first time SCLC has met here in 15 years. This year's theme is, "A New Day and a New Way."

Steele is seeking to provide both.

Some Black clergy embrace homosexuality

NEW YORK (AP) - The words that the Rev. James A. Forbes chose to share with the roomful of Black gay and lesbian faithful might have come straight from the civil rights struggles of the 1960s. Forbes reminded his listeners that discrimination has no place in this world and urged them to lay down the notion put forward by some Black ministers that they are less favored by God.

"Your job is to get up every day and be grateful to God for your DNA," Forbes said. "It took an artist divine to make this design!"

Forbes, senior minister at the Riverside Church, was

among several religious leaders and politicians who attended a revival meeting Sunday aimed at countering what organizers said was a surge in anti-gay rhetoric coming from pulpits in conservative parishes.

The program for the event bore the pictures of 10 Black men and women who were murdered, or severely injured, in recent years in attacks believed to have been motivated by hate for their sexual orientation.

Manhattan Borough President C. Virginia Fields likened the treatment of homosexuals today to the discrimination she faced grow-

ing up Black in the old South; Arun Gandhi, a grandson of Mohandas Gandhi, drew parallels to the repression once experienced by non-White citizens in South Africa.

Religious conservatives have chafed at similar comparisons between the gay rights movement, and civil rights struggles of the past.

The issue has been an especially sensitive one in some predominantly Black congregations, where pastors have maintained that homosexuality is a sin or a social disorder that should not be compared with race or ethnicity.

Last winter, hundreds of

Black clergy attended summits aimed at opposing gay marriage held in cities across the country. The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s youngest daughter even led a march through Atlanta to advocate a ban on gay marriage.

Speaking at the Riverside Church, the Rev. Cari Jackson of the Center of Spiritual Light said some conservative Black clergy had, perhaps unintentionally, incited hate against lesbians and gays by repeatedly condemning them as sinners.

"Like our slave ancestors," Jackson said, "we are being spiritually, psychologically and physically abused."

LAPD

(Continued from Page 3) Commission, "...Something went tragically wrong on that day, and we need to determine exactly what went wrong so that we don't have a repeat... incident.

The inquiry will include nationally recognized SWAT experts, Bratton said.

"Again, this was an awful tragedy for all concerned," the chief said. "I think it's incumbent on the department, to the best of our ability, to find out exactly what transpired on that day so that we can learn."

Bratton said he did not

believe any criminal charges would be filed against the 11 officers involved in the shootout, one of whom was wounded in the shoulder.

In the third case, Bratton said the LAPD filed administrative charges against six officers involved in the arrest of Stanley Miller, who was struck repeatedly with a flashlight following a pursuit on June 23, 2004.

Four of those officers were disciplined, while two opted for their cases to be heard before the police department's Board of Rights, Bratton said.

A hearing for Officer John Hatfield concluded yesterday, and a verdict from the board is expected soon, Bratton said.

Hatfield was the LAPD officer caught on tape hitting Miller 11 times in the upper body with a foot-long, two-pound flashlight while the 37-year-old suspect was pinned to the ground.

A hearing for Officer David Hale will be held later this year, Bratton said.

In response to the televised beating, the LAPD announced plans to equip its officers with lighter flash-

lights that cannot be used as weapons. The new flashlights are expected to be distributed to officers by the beginning of next year, Bratton said.

Miller filed a \$25 million claim against the city in July, alleging he suffered brain damage and other injuries during his arrest.

He was sentenced Dec. 8 to three years in state prison after pleading guilty to unlawful driving or taking of a vehicle and evading an officer.

Kevin Herrera writes for Wave Newspapers.

Black newspaper: Jakes snubbed us

By Maynard Eaton
Special to the Sentinel-Voice

ATLANTA (NNPA) - Talk is cheap, and apparently, so, too, is renowned television minister Bishop T.D. Jakes. In June, Jakes, who has been dubbed "America's Best Preacher" by *Time* magazine, pledged a partnership with the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA), a federation of more than 200 Black newspapers.

But when his MegaFest 2005, one of the largest religious conferences ever, rolls into Atlanta this week with an estimated 150,000 people in attendance, not one single dime will have been spent with Atlanta's Black Press.

"We got nothing; he's not spending anything with Black newspapers," says Cheryl Mainor, advertising and marketing director for *The Atlanta Voice*.

The appeals for advertising from the likes of robust publications such as the *Voice*, the *Atlanta Daily World*, the *Atlanta Inquirer* and the six other Black-owned metro Atlanta newspapers fell on deaf ears despite Jakes having said recently at the NNPA's Chicago convention, "Today is the beginning of a reconciliation between the Black church and the Black Press."

"I'm not surprised at anyone who gives lip service to supporting the African-American press financially. It's disheartening because the snub is coming from one of the most charismatic ministers to come along in my lifetime," says Jim Washington, publisher of the *Dallas Weekly* and president of *The Atlanta Voice*.

"We have a history of people who happen to look like us that support what we stand for, appreciate the service we provide and read our paper but who disappear when it comes down to putting their money where their mouth is. It's a legacy of ignorance."

While other media outlets — including Black-owned and Black-format radio — got paid for advertising; Black newspapers were only offered free tickets to MegaFest entertainment events in exchange for their advertising space.

NNPA President John Smith, publisher of the *Inquirer*, found that slight to be insulting both to his membership and, particularly, to his Atlanta contemporaries. He is fuming.

"As far as MegaFest is concerned they only come to us for PR, everything else is an afterthought," Smith complains. "For the most part, in a commercial venue and in terms of having a whole marketing plan for the Black entrepreneurs and business people, that is not happening. They come into our communities and, for the most part, they leave us as an economic island."


Smith also said that Bishop Jakes cannot pass the buck nor plead ignorance to this issue. "This has been brought to Bishop Jakes' attention. He is aware of it because I talked to him myself."

Maynard Eaton writes for Atlanta Voice.

Metro HYUNDAI

NEW AND USED CARS

\$500 DOWN
1 YEAR ON JOB
No Bankruptcy • No Repos
See Win Pearson
205-2979
Metro Hyundai
2025 E. Sahara Ave.

METRO

HYUNDAI