

Movement organizers want lasting impact

By George Curry
Special to Sentinel-Voice

DALLAS - The Millions More Movement, to be highlighted by a huge gathering this Saturday on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., promises to come up with bold strategies to transform America by eliminating poverty and injustice.

Organizers recognize the limitations of previous efforts and say they are determined to help produce a lasting movement this time, not a one-day event (In the interest of full disclosure, I am scheduled to speak at the Millions More Movement on Saturday). Of course, we've heard similar promises before, only to be disappointed. Maybe this time will be different.

Leaders should take a look at what the Texas State Conference of NAACP Branches did last weekend in Dallas. They sponsored a program called "An Evening with George Curry and Company." My company was Dallas County Sheriff Lupe Valdez, Travis County Sheriff Gregory Hamilton and Diop Kamau (an ex-policeman formerly known as Don Jackson), executive director of the Police Complaint Center in Washington, D.C.

Gary L. Bledsoe, president of the NAACP state conference, and Bob Lydia, president of the Dallas branch, the host chapter, arranged for me to speak 15 minutes and then

moderate a conversation with my "company."

I've moderated countless debates, town hall meetings and panels, and few, if any, were as effective or informative as this one. What made it different was that rather than have panelists compete to see who could give the most colorful description of the problem, Bledsoe and Lydia insisted that after I presented a national overview of police misconduct, our conversation would focus on what could and should be done to address the problem.

A report by the Human Rights Report states:

"Police abuse remains one of the most serious and divisive human rights violations in the United States. The excessive use of force by police officers, including unjustified shootings, severe beatings, fatal choking, and rough treatment, persists because overwhelming barriers to accountability made it possible for officers who commit human rights violations to escape due punishment and often repeat their offenses."

Those words came to life when Kamau showed a videotape of his various investigations catching police in the act of racially



GEORGE CURRY

profiling drivers, telling lies and attempting to intimidate those asking questions about how to file a police complaint. In one scene, an officer demands to see the identification of a man who only asked questions about the process. When the man hesitated, the officer began reaching for his revolver.

Kamau's mistreatment at the hands of police was videotaped and shown all over the nation. An officer grabs him by the neck and crashes his head into a glass window.

I wanted to first focus on preventing police brutality, at least to the extent that we can. I pointed out to the audience, more than to my company on stage, that if a police officer requests to search an individual or his or her vehicle, the driver does not have to consent to the search.

Sheriff Valdez laughed.

She agreed that while that is true, she was quick to recommend that even if the officer proceeds with the search without permission, be cooperative. That doesn't mean people have to be powerless. Note the time and the officer's name and badge number, and later file a written complaint. If a particular of-

ficer keeps getting complained about, at least the administration would have been alerted that they have a problem officer.

Sheriff Hamilton argued that the only way to get rid of the problem is to fire abusive cops. But that is made difficult, Valdez said, because cops subscribe to a code of silence. "Cops don't rat on other cops," she explained.

But the problem is even deeper.

In 1992, Gannett News Service examined 100 civil lawsuits that had been filed against police officers in 22 states. In each instance, awards of \$100,000 or more were made to victims between 1986 and 1991; the total was nearly \$92 million. Of the 185 officers involved in the cases, no disciplinary action was taken against 160, eight were disciplined and 17 were promoted. In other words, a cop accused of police brutality was two times more likely to get promoted than disciplined.

Obviously, I can't recount the full discussion in this limited space. The discussion was videotaped by the Texas State Conference of NAACP Branches (1107 E. 11th Street, Suite A, Austin, Texas 78702, 512/322-0840).

There needs to be many more forward-looking conversations across the nation. And maybe the Millions More Movement can help facilitate that dialogue.

George E. Curry is editor-in-chief of the NNPA News Service.

Executive privilege, meet privileged executives

By James Clingman
Special to Sentinel-Voice

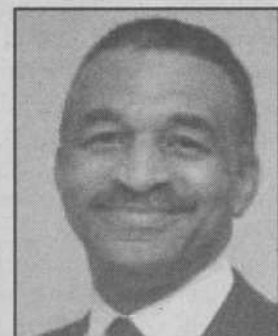
We have heard of executive privilege and have seen it in action several times, especially now that arrogance reigns in the White House. Our president exercises his executive privileges, and passes them on to his buddies in the private sector, as well. The attitudes and actions of privileged executives are in-your-face, I-don't-care-about-you, and you-can-kiss-my-assets, and-go-to-hell.

Current political policies are a death sentence to Black and poor people in this country. The president travels across the country talking about why we should support the war in Iraq as New Orleans, Biloxi, Gulfport, and Mobile drown — all the while, apparently, not believing that the majority of the population is telling him what he can do with his war. He finally "cuts his vacation short" and wants us to be impressed about it.

That's what Bush executive privilege is all about; and you thought it was simply about signing orders or withholding information from the public. This guy flies over the gulf

coast and then holds a press briefing telling us what we already know. In addition to rattling off the numbers of meals and other items he says will arrive in New Orleans, oh, about four days too late. He has to read everything he says, even his regrets and sympathies to families that have lost loved ones. I suppose his executive privilege dictates his reaction to the recent hurricane devastation. Seems to me, as I recall, it was a bit different when hurricanes hit his brother's state of Florida.

Executive privilege by privileged executives like Bush, Ken Lay, Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld and others is both appalling and enlightening. People in this country are on the brink of starvation and epidemic, wandering through the streets like Darfurians, Rwandans, and Haitians. (Hmmm, I wonder why all of those groups happen to be Black.) And Bush comes to the rescue four days late



JAMES CLINGMAN

seeking credit for doing what we pay him to do. The hugging and kissing photo opportunities were great.

Executive privilege supports lying, cheating, deceit, and arrogance of the highest degree. It allows the spending of a billion dollars per week on a stupid war, but not even a million per week on our own citizens who are stranded, stricken and suffering from Hurricane Katrina. Water, so plentiful in this country is not even available to those who desperately need it. Food, in this land of bounty, is scarce and in short supply for the children caught in this quagmire. Executive privilege allows "fly-overs" and shallow speeches. Privileged executives continue to watch the big board at the New York Stock Exchange and applaud after the day's trading is over, especially the oil and drug execs.

The juxtaposition of the tragedy along the gulf coast against multi-million dollar earn-

ing CEOs getting raises and making even more in Bush's compassionate economy suggests a decadent and Nero-like society teetering on the edge of destruction. All the signs are there. How we treat the least among us is the determining factor in whether we will be treated kindly. But we get the leadership we deserve, don't we?

George Bush and his men of ill repute are now in their second term. They have lied to us and caused untold numbers of people to be killed in their war, yet they are still in charge. They have not been indicted; Bush has not been impeached, as Clinton was for lying about an affair; and now another Bush waits in the wings to be crowned leader of this country. We get the leadership we deserve.

Executive privilege among privileged executives will be the ultimate demise of this country because as it says in Ecclesiastes 5:10, "Whoever loves money, never has money enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income" Many of our
(See Clingman, Page 14)

LaGrande

(Continued from Page 12)

marry and let pastors and deacons remain in leadership positions even though they are caught up in the sin of adultery or fornication. Priests and bishops remain in their official capacities even though they have been accused and some convicted of child molestation. The pastors don't teach their people to live out the tenet of the Bible that says if "God be lifted up I'll draw all men unto me." They don't promote biblical prayer, biblical fasting and the seeking of God's direction and wisdom with the fervor that they should.

When judgment comes, it sweeps over the whole land, so, yes, many innocent perish, but if they are saved they are just absent from the body and present with the Lord. God is trying to get our attention and wake us up.

All of the events that have happened are not common everyday events. We have seen whole cities destroyed in a matter of minutes, and God is trying to tell us something, but what is it going to take.

We are in the last days (Matthew 24), and God truly wants his people to stand out in awe and wonder.

In the past, because Christians are the salt of the earth, the Lord has held back his judgment just like in the book of Numbers, e.g. Numbers 1:20: Abraham interceded for the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, and God spared them for a minute. But he is tired of being ignored and put on the back burner. His word says that he is a jealous God, and there shall be no other Gods before him, and he is executing his wrath across the whole world

to let people know that he is real. In conclusion, the words excepts from a poem written by Judge R. Moore, "America the Beautiful"

You think that God's not angry,
That our land's a moral slum?
How much longer will He wait
Before His judgment comes?

How are we to face our God,
From Whom we cannot hide?
What then is left for us to do,
But stem this evil tide?

If we who are His children,
will humbly turn and pray;
Seek His holy face,
and mend our evil way;

Then God will hear from Heaven
And forgive us of our sins,
He'll heal our sickly land
And those who live within.
But, America the Beautiful,
If you don't then you will see,
A sad but Holy God
Withdraw His hand from Thee.

The name Katrina means "cleansing". People God wants us to clean up and get it right and don't get left behind. The fact of the matter is that we all have an appointment with God, Saved, unsaved, atheist, agnostic, Gentile, Jew, Male, Female, Christian, Mormon. When you go to your appointment, will you go to heaven or will you be relegated to hell? Don't Get Left Behind!