### 8 / May 24, 2007

## **GUEST EDITORIAL Priorities on** back burner

Priorities are the issues that are placed above or come before other matters because they are more important, more urgent, more necessary. Our so-called domestic priorities are not being treated with the urgency that they deserve.

The American people have spoken, both with the midterm election of 2006 and recent polls, telling Congress and President Bush that our focus needs to shift - now. Thousands of lives, hundreds of billions of dollars, and countless legislative hours are going toward a war of choice overseas, while priorities at home - and in some cases, abroad - sit on the back burner.

For those of you familiar and unfamiliar with the kitchen, let me explain something. The pots that you put on the back burner are the dishes that you have decided are done. The back burner just keeps them warm. Right now, America's priorities, African-American's priorities, are on the back burner.

We are not done raising the minimum wage and helping millions of working class Americans across the nation. We are not done addressing the ballooning healthcare crisis and insuring the 45 million Americans without access to quality care. We are not done helping the still-unsettled victims of Hurricane Katrina and other natural disasters.

And we're not done with the issue that we have spent significant resources on: the war in Iraq. A supplemental spending bill must still be passed: one that sets deadlines for withdrawal of our troops from Iraq while making sure that they have what they need until we can bring them home.

The American people have spoken, and Congress is listening. Right now, we cannot adequately respond to domestic issues and situations because our military resources are stretched too thin. We will not allow President Bush to ignore your voices.

Some people will say that the timetable and the supplemental spending bill send signals to the troops that we do not support them, that we are willing to sacrifice their safety and well-being for political gain. And they are absolutely and unequivocally wrong. The safety and security of our troops and the citizens of this great nation are the number one priorities of Congress. For too long, this war has not had adequate congressional oversight, and that is changing - now. We have put a stop payment on the President's blank check, and we are doing everything we can to bring our troops home to their families, as soon as, and in the safest manner, possible.

We have to hold President Bush accountable for this war. As the situation escalates in Iraq, we have to work together to secure our brave troops and our nation. We have to tell President Bush and his Republican friends in Congress that our priorities can no longer be ignored.

We are currently spending about \$10 billion a month, about \$2.5 billion a week and \$12 million an hour in Iraq. If you do the math, that is \$200,000 dollars of your tax money that we send to Iraq every minute.

This is unacceptable without some sort of oversight, some sort of timetable set for the war. Congress is working on your behalf to bring this war to an end. Continue to let your voices be heard because, together, we can bring our troops home and work on our priorities.

Guest Editorialist is Democratic U.S. Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr. from Illinois.

#### The LAS VEGAS SENTINEL-VOICE



# Falwell's irreverent racism

#### By George E Curry Special to Sentinel-Voice

When people die, even the racist ones, there is an inexplicable rush to trumpet the good in that person, even where none exists from a public policy perspective. The most recent example is Jerry Falwell, one of the godfathers of the religious right.

Like many southern White ministers, Falwell didn't sit on the sidelines at the outset of the modern Civil Rights Movement, he joined the opposition.

"Decades before the forces that now make up the Christian right declared their culture war, Falwell was a rabid segregationist who railed against the Civil Rights Movement from the pulpit of the abandoned backwater bottling plant he converted into Thomas Road Baptist Church," Max Blumenthal writes in an insightful article in The Nation magazine.

"This opening episode of Falwell's life, studiously overlooked by his friends, naively unacknowledged by many of his chroniclers, and puzzlingly and glaringly omitted in the obituaries of the Washington Post and New York Times, is essential to understanding his historical significance in galvanizing the Christian right. Indeed, it was race - not abortion or the attendant suite of that propelled Falwell and his evangelical allies into politi-



GEORGE E. CURRY cal activism."

Four years after the Supreme Court's Brown v. Board of Education outlawing segregated public schools, Falwell gave a speech titled, "Segregation or Integration."

His message was unmistakably clear: "If Chief Justice Warren and his associates had known God's word and had desired to do the Lord's will, I am quite confident that the 1954 decision would never have been made. The facilities should be separate. When God has drawn the line of distinction, we should not attempt to cross that line."

The argument that God ordained segregation and White supremacy was advanced by many southern White ministers. We should not forget that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from Birmingham Jail" was written to his colleagues of the cloth.

The letter, written April 16, 1963, said, in part: "I have been disappointed with the church ... When I was suddenly catapulted into the

in Montgomery, Alabama, a few years ago, I felt we would be supported by the [W]hite church. I felt the [W]hite ministers, priests, and rabbis of the South would be among our strongest allies.

"Instead, some have been outright opponents, refusing to understand the freedom movement and misrepresenting its leaders; all too many others have been more cautious than courageous and have remained silent behind the anesthetizing security of stained-glass windows."

Jerry Falwell was not silent behind his stained-glass windows.

He said, "The true Negro does not want integration ... he realizes his potential is far better among his own race."

As usual, Falwell was wrong. Autherine Lucy, a "true Negro," applied to and was accepted as a student at the University of Alabama.

leadership of the bus protest Once the university discovered she was an African-American, however, officials said state law prevented her from enrolling. With the legendary Thurgood Marshall as her attorney, she sued and gained admission. When she arrived in February 1956, a mob threw eggs at her and issued death threats. The university expelled her, purportedly for her own safety.

The following year, nine Black students attempted to desegregate the all-White Central High School. Segregationist Gov. Orval Faubus deployed the Arkansas National Guard to prevent the Little Rock Nine from attending the school. A federal judge overruled Faubus and ordered the students admitted. When the Black students reported to class, a mob formed and President Dwight Eisenhower dispatched the Army's elite 101st Airborne Division to Little Rock. The (See Curry, Page 9)

