

For years and years I have heard it said, that when a person's journey nears its end, it's not uncommon, for them to return home and finish it where it all began. If that's true, it appears to apply to me. Although I was born in Phoenix Arizona, I experienced my development years, junior high, high school and undergraduate college years in Kansas. Because I spent those super critical education and training that resulted in my acquiring the political skills I employed to initiate the Affirmative Action Enforcement Policies that changed America's culture for the better for ever in Kansas.

Therefore, since it my initiative broke the lock and tore down the door that barred from experiences full citizenship in every segment of the nation's public, private and independent economies, and since we're only half way there, in spite of the fact that in the past three decades America's women and racial minorities have achieved beyond anyone's expectation we're only halfway there and still have a very long way to go.

The year was 1969 and I was 45 years of age when I signed and issued the order that jump-started the Federal governments and thus the nation's Affirmative Action Enforcement Policy. Thirty-three years have past since that day, and I am now 78 years of age. Be that as it may I am not through yet. And I am inspired to stay the course to the very end of my journey. Why? Because the vision that possessed me when I stepped out on that very thin legal limb, and launched the equal opportunity enforcement movement has achieved its objective in my time. Thus, I lived to witness and experience the change that over the past 3 decades forced America to begin living up to its commitment to be the land of liberty, where freedom and justice rained down like a mighty never ending unstoppable river.

Today 33 years after the fact, the record clearly shows, that women, African American's and other racial minorities are indeed national security assets, assets, that undergird the national welfare beyond one's ability to define. Because that's a fact, and because the quest for parity as to economic equity, and social justice is still well beyond our reach, age (78) notwithstanding am not through yet.

Because I am not through yet, I need a vehicle to sponsor my effort and a location to establish it. I have already established the vehicle. It's a 501-C-3, Non-profit Foundation that I have named FRIENDS' OF AMERICA'S FUTURE. Its mission, goals, and objectives is to keep America, FREE, STRONG, SECURE, STABLE, PROSPEROUS AND ASSURED OF A PROMISING FUTURE.

To achieve those objective America must maintain, a workforce that can continue to support an economy that world class and second to none. However, to accomplish that our 50 states and various territories must up-grade and continue to maintain education and training systems, that are world class and second to none also.

What that last paragraph means is this. The 9/11 terrorist Attack on the home land, was -----by its self. However, the defeating Iraq's Sodom Hussein Regime, simply added increased chaos to a mountain of hate, that the world held in check for America. Now its out of the closet, and occupying center stage, at the world's forum, the United Nation's

Washington and make the presentation involving your Holly Springs, Mississippi Renaissance Village Development Project.

However, CME has greatly increased the stakes or enrich the value of its response. What I mean is this. Since the CME is having a major annual conference in Memphis, Tennessee, May 1 to 3, its leadership has extended a invitation to President Bush to address their conference during this crucial period.

An estimated 400 CME Denomination leaders, Bishops, Presiding Elders, Ministers and Lay Leaders will attend that meeting. These religious leaders preside over congregations located in the 31 states where the majority of the nation's African American Citizens reside.

Secretary Paige, if there is such a thing as a quality religious audience, I have just described one. So, it behooves me to stress this hard reality. As we both are aware, the president is trying mightily to reach out to the Black Community in an effort to smooth the troubled waters between him and that segment of our society. The CME invitation is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for a Republican Administration to do just that. By accepting this unprecedented invitation, the President would position his Administration to offer assistance to a National Black Church Denomination, with a membership in excess of a million. Mr. Secretary, it doesn't get much better than that.

Permit me to explain precisely what I mean. In the mid-90s, the CME Denomination, created its own national CDC. Employing its own financial and land resources, the religious organization launched its own faith-based economic development, enhanced education, and training initiatives. Here, it is important to bear in mind two things. Once, the group does “not need instructions” as to how to jump-start such efforts. Hence, it jump started the process independent of government backing, and has stayed the course from the mid-90s to the present without such backing. And, make no mistake about the sky is the limit with no more than mere ad quite support form the government to complete the various projects they have on the drawing board. Two, thus, it is equipped to show other religious denominations how the process works, thereby serving as a potent demonstration project.

Clearly, then, I not only respectfully, but also passionately, believe President Bush should waste no time in accepting CME’s invitation to speak to its conferees. It will provide him with a rare opportunity to he spells out the mission, goals, policies and objectives of the Administration’s Faith-Based Initiative. Equally important, He’ll be addressing an audience most receptive to this message. That is to say, he’ll be addressing a National Black Religious gathering, filled with attendees, who have concerned hearts, open minds,. sympathetic hears, and positive attitudes toward his proposals.

Given that I haven’t said it yet, I’ll say it now. Mr. Secretary, if there is any such thing as common ground, involving the policies of the Bush Administration, the Black Church Community, and the President’s Faith-Based Initiative, this is it.

As you perhaps recognize, I served as a presidential appointee in the past four Republican Administrations. Thus, I have experienced the perpetual fire drill, the constant full court press, and the never-ending frustrations and emotional struggles associated with effectively overseeing a huge Federal bureaucracy such as yours on the national front. If I can be of any assistance regarding this or any other matter, don't hesitate to call me.

You are having a positive impact on America's educational industry, systems, etc. Kudos on a job well done. Keep up the good work. My prayers are with you. Hang in there.

Respectfully

Arthur A. Fletcher

PS. May 1 through 3 is just around the corner. So time is of the essence in pulling off the CME event. With the Cincinnati race riot still fresh in everyone's mind and the possibility of a long hot summer, filled with racial strife, in every major inner city in the land, it is all the more reason we should work tirelessly to make it happen anyway.

In other words, if one of the goals of the Bush Administration is to develop a promising connection and establish a positive relationship in the nation's Black Church Community, it doesn't get much better than this one.

That's why I am thoroughly convinced that the invitation in question represents a super, major brake-through opportunity for the Bush Administration to accomplish that objective. Not only that, if his policy-makers and Public Affairs Team, stay on message and manage the opportunity properly, the following will happen. The impact of this one appearance will penetrate deep into the general population, church-going and non-church-going families, to mention a few members of the public at large.

There are three overriding reasons we should go beyond the call of duty to make sure the President participates in this event. First, the recent disheartening Cincinnati racial disaster has the potential of occurring all over the country on his watch. Second, the event itself is a marvelous opportunity for President Bush to demonstrate that he is America's President—that he is President of all the people, African Americans and the like. Third, it is an opportunity to show that he's doing his utmost, as the country's Commander and Chief, to bridge the gap between the races and pull the nation together.

Please note that I feel so strongly about this that I am willing to put my current projects on the back burner. In other words, I am ready and willing to devote a hundred percent

of my time not only to making sure the President participates in the event in question, but also to ensure that it is a whopping success.

Stated differently and on a more personal note, I'll soon turn 77, Dec. 22, 2001 to be exact. I'm a member of the WW-II Generation, serving in Patton's 3<sup>rd</sup> Army. I experienced my so-called day in the sun in the 60s through the 80s. I have come to grips with my mortality. My minutes, hours, days, weeks, months and, to say nothing of years, are in short supply. And I know full well that, when the final hour comes, no amount of money, wealth, fame or glory will buy me another second. From now until the to the end of my journey in this life, I have resolved to treat each of my awaking moments as a priceless jewel.

Having said that, I am completely committed to using every ounce of energy in me and what little time I have left on this earth to help the Bush Administration and the CME/CDC come together, find common ground, and work for the good of the nation as a whole—particularly, the Black Community.

And so, I'll close with this modest request. Please call me the very moment you finish reading and digesting this letter. I would appreciate that very, very much. In fact, I would welcome an opportunity to meet with you in person. For your information, I reside at 516 G Street Southwest. I can literally walk to your office in about 10 minutes. My phone number is 202-554-0573.