

The Changing Face of African-American Politics

By Tony Brown

Let me congratulate The Heritage Foundation for its third annual commemoration of Black History Month. It is significant that a conservative think tank is addressing the concept of multiculturalism.

And I think it is important for a number of reasons. I think it is important because to do so is an implicit and tacit admission that we all share time and space. Blacks are not going to leave America and blacks cannot survive without relating to people from other groups. I hope that at some point in the future all of us in America come to our common senses and understand that whether we like it or not, we are going to have to relate to one another.

And based on that statement, I would like to offer a premise with regard to the conservative community, the white community, and the black community. We should, as Americans, focus on those things that we have in common. The things that we do not have in common frequently are the results of a unique background or circumstances beyond our control. We should not expect all Americans to be Americans in the same way, but we should expect all Americans to adhere to a fundamental set of values and a philosophy that means that whatever we do as individuals or as respective groups is good for the whole. It is absolutely impossible, ladies and gentlemen, for black people to be white. Many of us have tried that for centuries—it just didn't work. You must forgive us if we are now learning to like ourselves. You must also forgive us if some of us have become extremists in that pursuit. Some of us have become the exact problem we are trying to alleviate.

Accurate History Needed. Instead of making history a human history, some people in the black community want to make white history a black history. White history is wrong because it is not human history. And black history, without the inclusion of people from all groups, is just as wrong. But accurate history is not wrong. And accurate history is not politically correct. Those whites, particularly the many conservatives who feel the need to distort human history in the name of defending or assailing political correctness, are making the same mistake as a hyper-black nationalist who simply wants history to reflect only the accomplishments of black people. And we could make this analogy with almost any issue in this society.

We are not going to win a race confrontation. We are not going to win a gender confrontation. There will never be a victor. And we can see exactly what has happened to this country as a result of this focus, this intra-American focus, in which we feel it is obligatory to compete with one another.

How did you feel as an American when our President and the captains of capitalism from the big three in Detroit went to Japan asking the Japanese for quotas, affirmative action, and guaranteed outcomes? I was embarrassed. I wasn't embarrassed because I am black. I was embarrassed because I am an American.

I do not believe that our economic woes are the result of what the Japanese are doing. The Japanese are doing what Americans should be doing. The Japanese are looking out for the Japanese

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He spoke at The Heritage Foundation on February 3, 1992, as part of a lecture series observing Black History Month. His lecture is adapted from his book, *No White Lies, No Black Lies, Only the Truth*.

ISSN 0272-1155. ©1992 by The Heritage Foundation.

and they are looking out for Japan. And if Americans don't adopt the same attitude, Americans are going to be working exclusively for people from all over the world, transferring our wealth. Right before you today you see the working middle-class becoming the working poor and the working poor becoming the homeless. And we are in a recession that will guarantee you a lower standard of living, and when the recession is over your standard of living will be at a lower level because capital will still be scarce, because America is not producing. There is no real mystery to what our problem is. Our problem is we are not doing what the Germans and the Japanese are doing.

Our schools do not work. Someone assaulted me on an upcoming show on TBS—the entire panel, thirteen very prominent black people—when I introduced a fact that comes from a RAND Corporation study by a James Smith, the Senior Economist, that 75 percent of black males earn a middle-class income. These black professionals have bought in so much to the victimization syndrome that any good news, any statistical fact that black men are not being exterminated, completely upsets their agenda. Therefore, the panel had to attack me, not having any other fact. They said, “He doesn't know anything about research.” I said, “Well, what about the fact that black men between 1988 and 1990 increased in college admission by 6.8 percent?” They called this also a misstatement of fact. “Well, what about the fact that 50 percent of blacks who earn over \$50,000 are growing at a faster rate than whites who earn over \$50,000?” That also was deemed statistically invalid by the panel.

Ladies and gentlemen, the problem is not black and white. The problem has a lot to do with being human. I am not an integrationist and I do not believe in integration. I believe in desegregation. The way integration is practiced in America means the cultural annihilation of people of African descent. And I am not interested in being culturally annihilated.

Dumb Idea. I think one of the dumbest ideas we have ever had is busing. You get this little black child up really early in the morning, put him on a yellow bus, ship him across town to sit next to these superior Europeans so these good white genes will jump into the little dummy's body and he will learn to read, write, and count. Well, let me tell you what is really dumb about busing. Busing is dumb because only 16 percent of white people finish college, while 46 percent of Asian-Americans finish college. So, if you want to bus Tony Brown, you can bus me to Chinatown!

In the black community we pay inordinate attention to white people. We talk about them in the morning, during lunch, during sex, before we go to bed: all we discuss is white people. White people do not deserve the status we give them. They do not control our lives.

And the real threat of black, middle-class people telling young blacks and especially black males that they are becoming extinct, which is in violation of and belies all statistical fact in the first place, is the psychological crippling such claims cause. We make whites look all-powerful, as though it doesn't matter what you do as a black person, whites are not going to let you succeed. Therefore, we predict and we create the young blacks' disaster.

Ladies and gentlemen, white people are not in control of black people. No one is in control of anyone who is in control of his own destiny and his own mind. Just take a good look at Europe. When people in Europe decided to overthrow Communism, they did it. They did not do it with an army. They did not do it with military force. They did it because the Europeans changed.

On December 1, 1955, an angel named Rosa Parks would not surrender her seat to a white man on a segregated bus in Montgomery, Alabama. When Rosa Parks sat down, we stood up all over America with a new sense of consciousness. And what did we learn on December 1, 1955? We learned that there had been plenty of room in the front of the bus all along. All we ever had to do was to get up and move.

New Consciousness. Now let me take you, if I may, to Japan. There is an island off of Japan inhabited exclusively by hundreds of thousands of monkeys. At one time, not one monkey on that island had ever washed his or her food before eating it. One morning a monkey washed her food, another monkey saw her and then there were two—you know, monkey see, monkey do. Then it got to 48, and grew exponentially to 99 monkeys. When the 100th monkey washed his food, simultaneously every monkey on that island washed his or her food before eating it, because when the 100th monkey was reached, a critical mass of consciousness was reached in the monkey population.

Ladies and gentlemen, on December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks was the 100th monkey. Prior to that date, black consciousness accepted segregation. We accepted back doors. We accepted separate neighborhoods. We accepted separate schools. We accepted ignorance. But, on that December 1st, this wonderful woman, the Secretary of the Montgomery NAACP, decided she would no longer accept it. And she symbolized our elevation in consciousness. When she sat down we stood up with a new sense of understanding and awareness of ourselves.

And as a result of that new consciousness, we rewrote American history. No civil rights bill gave us the right to live in a neighborhood. No civil rights bill gave us the right to go to school where we wanted. No civil rights gave us the rights that we have now, they simply documented the fact that African-Americans had changed, because we had changed internally.

Now here we are ladies and gentlemen, in 1992, with this consciousness—which I call civil rights—that Rosa Parks ushered in. We, as African-Americans, are still holding on to a consciousness of civil rights. We have won the civil rights battle, thanks to the NAACP, the Urban League, the Martin Luther Kings and the Fanny Lou Hamers, and the unsung black men and women of the South who stood against water hoses and dogs. We now have rights. We do not need a movement to live next to white people or to go to school with white people. We need a consciousness of freedom, justice, and equality. We need a consciousness and an elevation in our consciousness. We need a new 100 monkeys.

Preparing to be Competitive. We need a consciousness that will tell us we now must be prepared to be competitive in the American society; that we cannot depend on the largess of a group of people to give us affirmative action programs, quotas, or to set us aside; that we go to the finest schools in this country. We have a legacy equal to any other group in this country; if they can do it, we can do it. If a Korean or Vietnamese can come here in 1979 not speaking one word of English and get seven degrees from MIT in seven years, an African can do the same thing. If we can dominate football and basketball, we can dominate Wall Street, we can dominate the Physics department and we can dominate the Law School. We can dominate any area of American society, but we cannot do it unless we elevate our consciousness to one of competition, not to one of waiting for our status to be changed when someone else's attitude towards us changes.

We have now lost a generation of young blacks with this nonsense of integration, assimilation—believing that if whites get to know us they will give us what they have and our status will change. That is foolish, ladies and gentlemen. You ask White America if they are going to give Black America affirmative action. People do not give. If you want something, you and your friends in a culturally diverse society are going to have to organize in such a way that you can create your own wealth. Is it not a better option for black people to concentrate on creating the best schools they can and then let whites go to court and sue them to be bussed into their neighborhoods?

We African-Americans earn \$300 billion a year—we spend only 6.6 percent of our money with one another and the other almost 95 percent outside of our community—and are 12 percent of the population. That \$300 billion is equal to the Gross National Product of the 13th richest na-

tion in the world and equal to the Gross National Product of Canada or Australia. With that money we buy 18 percent of the orange juice, 20 percent of the rice, 26 percent of Cadillac cars, and 99 percent of Florsheim shoes. Some 10 percent of us travel exclusively by airplane, black teens buy 40 percent of all records purchased in America, and blacks between 12 and 24 purchase over 50 percent of all tickets to movie theaters. We are 12 percent of the population and we drink 20 percent of the Scotch whiskey. Ladies and gentlemen, if you took blacks out of America, Wall Street would collapse last week. No, we are not poor; no, we are not a minority. We are a cultural economic market that has been trained to behave as a poor minority.

Being Proud. The United States of America has a parallel. We won World War II, and afterward attributed this victory to some magnificence in the American character—some superiority that we knew more about everything than the rest of the world. All we had to do was to get out with a free trade policy and anything you put out with “Made in the USA” on it would automatically outsell anything made in Japan. I don’t know if you remember that forty years ago we used to laugh at “Made in Japan.” We used to buy Japanese-made dolls and the eyes were crossed, the arms fell off. We laughed at them, didn’t we? We don’t laugh at them today, do we? Because, as Mr. Morita, the Chairman of the Board of Sony, said, “As a Japanese I was so offended that the world laughed at the products made by my people, and I was so proud of what I was that I was determined to set up a company that would produce the best goods in the world.” And he did it. He didn’t do it because the Japanese are superior, he did it because he was proud of being a Japanese.

And ladies and gentlemen, if you are not proud of what you are, you are not going to produce. How can a people who are spending 95 percent of their money with somebody else, as black people in America do, expect to be equal to another group. You earn \$100 dollars a week and I earn a \$100 a week. You give me 95 of your dollars. I’m living on \$195 and you’re living on \$5. How can your house be as big as mine? How can your car be as new as mine? How, even, can your I.Q. be as high as mine? You cannot give someone 95 percent of your money and be equal.

I am not against the Japanese. Please do not interpret the next remark as Japanese bashing; it is not. I am not interested in blaming the Japanese for our problems, because the Japanese are not responsible for our problems. But how can you as Americans spend, between 1980 and 1990, one-half trillion dollars, transfer the capital to Japan, over-spend in your own country, under-save, and expect to be equal in living standards to the Japanese? There is no math there. And there is no way in the world you can drive a Toyota and expect to go to Detroit and get a job making American cars. You can’t do that. Now, that is not against the Japanese—that is not anti-Japanese. But it is the reality of the situation.

The Europeans have no problem with the 17 percent ceiling on Japanese car imports. The Japanese have accepted it. They now have almost one-third share and are now talking about 50 percent share of the American market.

According to one study, every time an American buys a Japanese car, one white auto-worker loses his job and four black auto-workers lose theirs. Now, you don’t have to drive an American car. You may need that special micro-compressor that is in the car so that when you back up it does it automatically; that is wonderful. But how often do you use it? And you do need a car to get to work and back home, don’t you?

I talked last night with one of my relatives who made a strong case for the fact that she would never buy an American car. She said that the Japanese make the best cars in the world. I said, “Wonderful. I hope you got a good one, because it will be the last car you will be able to buy.” Because, ladies and gentlemen, we will not be able to buy any kind of car in the next decade or so.

This is not anti-Japanese. You make the same analogy with black America. How can black America spend 95 percent of its money with whites and blame whites for 100 percent of their problems when the only color of freedom in America is green? This is not boycotting another group. This is simply making sure that your group is taken care of. Americans cannot have it both ways and black Americans cannot have it both ways. You cannot export your wealth and expect equality. And ladies and gentlemen, that is a lesson I think we are all going to learn.

And in this country we are going to turn to one another. You may not like me and I may not particularly care for you, but you and I are all we've got. We don't have to hold hands and get together in some phony relationship, but we have to, as Americans, combine and use our resources.

Affirmative Action. Within the black community I would like to make a case for black people adopting an affirmative action program. Now, I know we talk about affirmative action. And I'm sure many of you here at The Heritage Foundation don't like the concept of affirmative action, so before I discuss what it is, let me describe an example.

You've seen the National Basketball League when they draft their new players. What team in the League gets the best new player? The worst team. Why do you allow the worst team in the League to get the best new player? Because you want the worst team in the League to be stronger, therefore to overall improve the competitiveness of the League, do you not? You don't want the best team to score 500 points and the worst team to score 6. 500 to 6 is not a good game, but a 123-124 game, triple over-time, just before you finish your Budweiser is fantastic, isn't it? We like competition. And when there is competition, more people watch or more spectators go to the stadium. The more of us who watch, the higher the television revenues and gate receipts; therefore, the more money the owners make; the more money the owners make, the more money they can pay the players. So, it is a win-win situation, is it not? Spectators win. Owners win. TV wins. The players win. And it only works because we strengthen the worst team in the League.

Now, let's look at America. Let's look at the black community. What is the worst team in the league? The so-called black under-class. What is the best team in the league? Blacks like me, the so-called middle-class. Roughly 30 percent of us control 80 percent of the wealth in the black community. All of us are very well educated. All of us have some level of affluence—30 percent of us. Now, in America today, what team in the league do we strengthen with affirmative action in the black community? We strengthen the best team in the league.

It is the Tony Browns that get the assistance. It is the black middle-class that gets the money to go to the best schools. It is the black middle-class that gets the grants, not the poor blacks. Now, the black middle-class makes the case on behalf of the poor blacks. We put out all of the statistics. Blacks don't eat. Blacks have more AIDS. You've heard all of these negative statistics that describe the black community. Then we ask for relief for the black community. But the relief doesn't go to the poor black community, it goes to the black middle-class. This is called bait and switch. See, you go to the doctor, he diagnoses you with pneumonia and gives me the shot.

Now, I am for affirmative action. I am for the black community practicing affirmative action. But Tony Brown does not need your help. I never did need it. I have never in my life received welfare, although I was born poor. I have never in my life received any type of scholarship. Never in my life have I been on any social program or any other kind of program. I was going to make it from the day I was born. And there are a lot of black folks who are in the same category. As a matter of fact, there are many black people a lot better off than I am. So, it is not a matter of all of us needing somebody to help them make it.

All of us who are black have been historically discriminated against and are discriminated against today. And we do need laws to make the playing field level. We do need the protection of the law to guarantee us the right to compete. But that is all we need, because we are already wealthy.

Let me describe what wealth is. I was in church once when I was a little boy and the preacher said, "Jesus said the poor will always be with us." It bothered me because it seemed that Jesus—my main man—had a cavalier attitude toward poverty. But after reflection and years and years of thinking about it, I've come to the following conclusion. What Jesus knew so well was the nature of human beings, that human beings would create poverty. Therefore, there would always be in the human group a group without, because those of us with wealth tend not to be concerned about those without. Now, if you look very carefully, in order to be poor, poverty has to be manufactured, because God did not create poor people and nature does not create poor people. People create poor people.

Three Kinds of Wealth. Now, how do you create poor people or poverty? You create it by depriving people of wealth. What is wealth? Wealth comes in three forms. First, it is financial wealth, very common-sensical.

The second form of wealth is your social capital. That is, your ability to socially engineer your way through society, to be sophisticated enough, for example, to know that when you have a job interview you get there fifteen minutes early, you wear your best suit and tie, you clean your nails, you use your best standard dialect and you put your best foot forward. That is your social capital. You learned that informally through your socialization, or as we call it, your assimilation process.

What is your third form and your greatest form of wealth? Your human capital. Your human capital is the totality of your education and the information you have received as a result of working on the job, i.e., your training.

Now, if you have enough information, human capital, and social capital or sophistication, is not financial capital inevitable? It does not matter if you have a business and you go bankrupt financially. If you have enough human and social capital, you can regain another fortune. So, if you deprive a group of people of human and social capital, is not poverty inevitable? Why is it, ladies and gentlemen, that we had, in spite of the black middle-class (a \$50,000 group growing faster than whites), in spite of black men (three-quarters earning middle-class income), in spite of the fact that blacks are now in visible government positions (the Colin Powells and the Clarence Thomases), and in spite of the fact that black men and women are achieving things we never dreamed of achieving — how is that possible that at the lower end of the income level they are in a more deleterious situation than they were twenty or thirty years ago?

There has to be a human reason for it. And the reason that the numbers of blacks in the so-called under-class are there and growing is because they are deprived of social and human capital. And where does the transfer come from for poor blacks? It doesn't come from the white community, because usually whites don't want to live with blacks. It has to come from middle-class blacks.

And how could the transfer take place, when since 1954 when blacks heard that they could go to school and live in white neighborhoods they almost lost their minds and ran away from every poor black person in America. The first ones out of town were the ones who could rent a moving van. We left all of the poor blacks behind.

The poor blacks are now are cut off from all middle-class people. They are cut off from their inter-generational value transfer. I am the result of black people who were not rich in financial

wealth, but were fabulously wealthy in social and human capital. This is why I now have financial capital. I would have been in the slums myself if I had not had relationships with Reverend Woods at the church or Mrs. Norman who taught me English or Mr. Barnes or the people in my life who shaped me. If I had been cut off from them, I would be saying, "Yo, bro!", and "I can't make it because white people won't let me," and "If you study you are a sissy." I would have the same nonsensical values that they have, because no one told me better. And no one in my group had ever been a conspicuous role model for me modeling my own life. The bottom line, ladies and gentlemen, is that if we want affirmative action, the black middle-class is going to have to practice it first. The black middle-class is going to have build bridges to the poor blacks. White people cannot transfer values to blacks because they don't have status in the black community and they don't have credibility. Only the black middle-class has the credibility and the status to transfer the values to the poor black that we need.

Developing Higher Expectations. They are not poor because they are not smart. Here is a young, black rap artist—who can't read his name—who can memorize nineteen volumes of rap lyrics, but if Shakespeare were in bed with him he wouldn't know who he was. Still, you can't say he is not intelligent.

Here is a young drug dealer on the corner, sixteen years old. He's got 500 clients. He has all of the transactions in his head. He knows what brand of death they buy, how much they owe him. He can multiply it in about two seconds. You can't say he is not smart. He is doing the wrong thing with his talents. And that will only change when we change his values, but White America cannot give Black America values. The black middle-class, ladies and gentlemen, with the phenomenal wealth we have first must practice affirmative action in our neighborhoods.

Second, the black middle-class must decide to be competitive. We go to the same law schools. We go to the same engineering schools. We go to the same medical schools. Why can we not compete with whites and Asians who go to the same schools? Why do we not decide to dominate certain economic and intellectual sectors of this society the way other people do? We do not need anybody's permission to be successful; we are already wealthy. All we need to do is to develop in our minds the higher expectations of ourselves and understand our background and our legacy and act upon it.

The bottom line, ladies and gentlemen, is that we need in America to have an affirmative action program for all people who are needy. And if you want to target affirmative action to women and blacks and so-called minorities, an idea that I don't like, then only give help to the professionals in those groups who have been historically discriminated against if they study in an area that is of strategic need to our industrial policy—if we ever adopt one. In other words, if we need 2,900 bio-physicists, only give blacks and women and Hispanics affirmative action programs if they will study to become bio-physicists. Do not give them scholarships to become lawyers. We don't have enough of those bright people in the strategic areas in which we need them. So, if we are going to have an affirmative action program, and we should have one, why not steer these people toward the areas that can be of benefit to our overall national competitiveness?

There is no pay-off in generation after generation of one group demanding that another group repay it for slavery over and over again. There is no incentive. But there is an incentive if I can tell you that we now have 500 black physicists who are going to have a tremendous breakthrough in computer chips, who are going to make specific contributions to this society. Of course you would buy into it. And the same for women, Hispanics, and other minorities.

Let us look at the reality. In the year 2000, we are going to have a work force that is over 50 percent female and non-white. That is a fact. There will only be 15 percent of new workers be-

tween 1986 and the year 2000 who are white males, not because we don't like them, but because they have had a low birth rate. And if we in this country do not turn to this major labor resource and develop it, then this nation cannot become competitive again. That is not begging anybody to like anyone. It is simply acknowledging the reality. Those of us in these minority groups have a tremendous window of opportunity. If we are equipped, we should take advantage of the opportunity, demanding guarantees and security and protection of the law, to avoid discrimination based on sex or gender or background, but at the same time make up our minds to be competitive.

In order to do these things we have to change our attitudes. To hold on to the way we are doing things seems contradictory, because the way we are doing things is not working. This country is not working; some of its parts do not add up right. We have too much wealth and too much brain power to be in the position we are in.

Economic Problem. Our problem is not racial. Our problem, fundamentally, is economic. And when we solve the economic part of this equation, the race part of it will take care of itself, because people who are equal have the right to be with one another or they have the option not to be with one another.

People who are poor don't have any options at all. If you elect to live in a white neighborhood, and you can afford it, fine. But, if you can't afford it, it doesn't matter where you want to live; it doesn't matter how many laws are on the books.

The black community holds 350 conventions each summer. We spend \$16 billion in hotels owned by whites, discussing white racism and black poverty. The entire foreign aid budget of America is only \$16 billion, which is one percent of the GNP.

Middle-class members of the black community come here to Washington every September 15th to the Congressional Black Caucus legislative weekend. In five days we spend one-half billion dollars. We spend \$100 million a day at the Hilton Hotel and other white firms. At the midnight fashion show, which is the best attended event, we are sitting at \$10,000 tables, the first 5,000 of them who could get in. Another 5,000 are in the next room watching on television. We are wearing \$10,000 dresses, eating buffalo wings, drinking Scotch whiskey, and doing the Electric Slide. And the speaker gets up and does the obligatory speech about what white people, conservatives, and the Republicans won't do for us.

We do it over and over and over again. We meet one year and spend \$16 billion to plan next year's meeting. If we were to cancel the black convention one year, take \$3 billion of the \$16 billion and create a capital formation fund, the interest on the \$16 billion divided into units of \$20 million each would give us 20 hotels, one in each of the major markets in America. Presently, blacks do not own one major hotel in America.

We don't need to ask anybody's permission to do that. All we need is for black people like me—the black middle-class—to decide to cancel a meeting for five days and to put the money in a bank. Simple. Of course, nobody's going to do it, because then we would have to do something, rather than to be professional victims of what whites won't do for us.

I don't expect whites to do anything for blacks because they are not black. It is up to us to do it for ourselves. God has blessed us. He has given us wealth. He has given us a phenomenal background. The only reason we could be supplicant to another group is if we don't have enough self-respect to believe in ourselves.

And you don't have self-respect if you do not know who you are. So, I would like to ask you learned ladies and gentlemen here at The Heritage Foundation three American history questions. Please keep in mind that these are *American* history questions. 1) Name three African-American

heroes of the American Revolutionary War. 2) What African-American laid out our nation's capitol? 3) Who chopped down the cherry tree and could not tell a lie? Now, if you only got number three correct, you probably received an A in high school history.

Black Accomplishments. I love America. I love America because I know America's history. I know that a black man named Crispus Attucks who the first American to die in the Revolutionary War. I know that our nation's capitol was laid out by a young, black, scientific genius named Benjamin Bannacker who memorized the plans for Washington when Pierre L'Enfant became upset with Jefferson and took the plans back to France. I know the Dr. Daniel Hale Williams performed the first successful open-heart surgery in Chicago in 1893. I know that Garrett A. Morgan invented the electric traffic signal not to stop black cars or black people in black cars, but so we could all have a system of street safety. And Hank Aaron is not the all-time black home run hitter in baseball; Hank Aaron is THE all-time home run hitter in baseball. And let us refer back to our glorious victory in Desert Storm. What were we rushing to our troops? Gas masks—invented by a black inventor named Garrett A. Morgan. I am very proud to be an American. I am very proud of what my people have done to make this land what it is. Therefore, I know as an American that I can succeed in America.

Ladies and gentlemen, freedom is internal. Another group cannot give you freedom because another group does not possess freedom to give. Anybody who is going to be free and competitive must make this decision and we must change in this country. Blacks don't need to change, Whites don't need to change, Yellows or Browns or Reds don't need to change: All of us need to change. We need to stop this nonsense of having a confrontational relationship with one another—labor v. management, Blacks v. Whites, Women v. Men, Rich people v. Poor people. There will be no victory in this. The world is watching us go down the tube. With all of the resources we have, we are practicing some form of internal genocide on our own economy and on our own social order. It is absolute nonsense and it defies all logic.

Now, if I may, I would like to tell you why I became a Republican. It is not true, as reported, that I switched from the Democratic Party to the Republican Party. I was an independent for twenty years. I became a Republican in a moment of understanding who I was. And, I have come to the conclusion that the Democratic party—God bless it—which at one time during the Roosevelt and Johnson Administrations had so many great programs and so many good ideas, has run out of both. The only hope for this country is through a philosophy primarily held by those who are called Republicans, which does not include the David Dukes and barely includes the Pat Buchanans, who say they are involved in a test for the soul of the party when in effect they are involved in taking the party back 100 years, if not 400 years, to notions that will not produce anything in this country but racial antagonism and class struggle.

You can't rule America from the fringes. You rule America from the middle. You cannot be an extremist—you can't be a white one, you can't be a black one, you can't be a liberal one, you can't be a conservative one. You have got to please and meet the needs of our population, and our population is somewhere in the middle. And our population is hurting.

It is not about coming up with "America First"—a 1939-1940 slogan that denoted isolation and racism. The Republican Party's best hope is that it sticks to the fundamental principles that created it on May 9, 1854, in Ripon, Wisconsin. The Republican Party was founded to stop the forward and westward advance of slavery in America. The Republican Party is responsible for the Twelfth, Thirteenth, and Fourteenth Amendments that freed slaves, gave them the right to vote, and gave them citizenship.

Blacks, out of gratitude to Abraham Lincoln and the Republican Party, elected Republicans during Reconstruction, roughly between 1867 and 1877. We gave gratitude to the Republican

Party for letting us in, giving us the right to vote, and letting us be a part of the political process. But, it was a tactical error, because we were purged from the Republican Party in the early 1930s, coinciding with Roosevelt and the New Deal, which blacks embraced.

So, we were one hundred percent Republican prior to 1936. Between 1936 and 1964 we voted 35 percent Republican and 65 percent Democrat. And we were lavishly rewarded as a community because we were smart enough to be the swing vote. You can't elect someone if you are 10 percent of the population. Let's get the math straight. Blacks cannot elect a President. Blacks can be the swing vote and decide who gets elected.

Changing from Within. And politics is about power—group power. If your group is not using its power intelligently, your group cannot have power. And if your group is powerless, it cannot have freedom in any of its manifest forms—economic, social, political, or educational. So, how do you get freedom? You understand that since 1966, and thanks to Lyndon Johnson, who did more for blacks than any other President, blacks have overwhelmingly voted for Democrats.

Today, to blacks who ask me, "Tony, why did you join the Republican Party?" I say, "You will tell me first why are you a Democrat." When we were told that blacks during segregation could not go into buildings or go to school where we wanted or couldn't live in certain neighborhoods, we didn't accept it, we changed it. Are we as African-Americans going to sit back and let the Republican Party be an all-white party? How can we criticize the Republican Party if we don't get in it and change it?

Martin Luther King and the blacks in Mississippi and Alabama infiltrated and demanded that they have a presence in the Democratic party, which changed the party. We cannot have a two-party system unless some of us who are black go into both parties. And I will say this to Republicans who want the black vote or a part of the black vote. You can't get the black vote unless you get black Republicans to help black people understand what being a Republican is. And if you are black and you are a Republican, you must talk to black people and meet the needs of our community. If we do that, blacks will want to be Republican, because our people are very smart. They know when they are being had, and they know when you are their friend. You can't fool them with these phony dialogues—PC v. something else—and debates over whether quotas work or don't work. The people you're talking about don't get quotas anyway. It is nothing but a game you and I play with one another, handing each other position papers. Nothing ever happens for the folks who matter. So, we are all caught up in all of this dialogue. Who is the new black leader? Nobody is the black leader; but some blacks get to the television camera quicker than other ones.

So don't worry about who you can talk to in the black community. If you are conservative, you believe in a good country and a competitive society and an educated society, don't you? And so do black people. If you are a white conservative, you believe in a low crime rate, and so do black people.

For an example, suppose, as I have proposed, that any person released from prison or put on parole had to have a literacy reading level. The black community rightfully laments the fact that 60 percent of the prison population is made up of black men, and that more black men are in prison than in college. It costs more money to keep someone in prison for a year than it does to send him to college. There is no positive result when a guy sits in a for cell five or ten years and comes out just as illiterate as he was when he went in, which is partly why he went in the first place.

I know conservatives would embrace this idea because it makes sense, and blacks would certainly embrace it, because you are rehabilitating a certain segment of our population. Our men

are needed—not in jail, they are needed out here to head families. But, they must be rehabilitated. They must develop social and human capital. So, while they are locked up, why not turn the jails into schools?

The biggest complaint in the black community is that we don't get enough law enforcement. We are the ones who are victims of violence, not white people. There is hardly any violent crime from blacks to whites, and whites are talking about being afraid of black people. Black people are not harming white people, they're harming black people. Black people are the ones who need protection. You live in one of these poor neighborhoods and call the police—they don't even respond.

Welfare's Perverse Effects. Yes, we need strong law enforcement. Of course blacks are against crime. And God? We've got a corner on God. We are American values. We gave America its music and we gave America much of its value system. Don't preach to us about values. You know why we don't have men in the home? Because the government decided to be the surrogate father, and devised welfare programs to run the black man out of the home. Then you come along twenty years later and do statistics on the fact that there are no black men there. We don't want to be manless. There's no benefit in this system to a woman raising children, because women don't earn enough money. They're discriminated against. If we had equal income, it wouldn't matter. But we don't, and we need two people in the home. We need a man there. We can't get a man there if he's unemployed. And he's going to be unemployed, ladies and gentlemen, unless he's educated.

Nothing I have said is applicable only to black Americans. Everything I have said is applicable to all Americans. If you are an American you must have enough pride in this country to understand that you live in the greatest country in the world, in spite of its warts, in spite of its problems—this is the greatest system we've ever known. But we bought too much in the 1980s—we're over our heads in debt. In a perverse way, I'm glad. If we don't get back to economics and making this country economically strong, we're not going to be a viable player anywhere in this world. So, it makes sense, then, for us to reinvest in educating people in this country.

In New York City I had this debate with some of the people on that panel that I told you about—some of the black, middle-class people who were saying that the only problem in education is that there is not enough money, and because of racism, blacks do not get enough money.

Do you know that in New York City more money is spent per student than any state in the Union, with the exception of New Jersey? And do you know that it gets the lowest return of any state in the country other than New Jersey? Some 80 percent of the students in New York—high school seniors—cannot answer the following question: If one inch on a map equals 250 miles, how many miles does ten inches equal? Eighty percent of them cannot figure that out. New York City hires more school supervisors than the country of France, and the state of New York hires more school supervisors than the continent of Europe. Japanese students have one-half the computers that American students have. But the Japanese go to school more days than Americans.

It's values, ladies and gentlemen. I heard Paul Tsongas discussing education during the debates, and he was talking about values. He said, "I taught in Ethiopia—out in the mud, very poor Ethiopians. But, they learned faster than Americans because they valued education."

I come from a black generation that was told that this is an unfair country—and it is if you're black or a woman or belong to certain other groups—and that the only way you were going to make it was to be better than your competition. And I give that advice to young blacks. The reason that the generation after me is doing so poorly is that no one told them that. They were told that they had died and gone to Heaven and they had been assimilated. They didn't have to be black anymore.

We are a spiritual people and we are not a violent people. We have some people in our community, particularly young, black men, who are using violence to express a loss of faith in themselves and their values. If they had the correct values, they would know that there is no pay-off in violence.

Opportunity and Challenge. I would like to say in closing that all of us have a tremendous opportunity. As liberals, conservatives, Republicans, Democrats, women, men, whatever group we belong to, we must understand that we must preserve our uniqueness, because our uniqueness is what God created. But, we must understand that this uniqueness must blend into the whole; and, it must come together synergistically to make the entire group or the unit—America and the world—a better place in which to live. Many of us will not get that message, but we will begin to understand it, because we are in for such bad economic times and the American psyche not used to bad times—particularly this generation. We are going to have to come together. We are not going to have to speeches and pass out pamphlets. We are going to do it, ladies and gentlemen, because we have to do it.

And I would like to leave you with a challenge, and this challenge comes from a poem called "In Flanders Fields." It is about a graveyard in France in which many of the American dead are buried. And the poem was written to remind those Americans who came back from that great war of the tremendous sacrifice that those dead men made. It goes like this:

To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies blow
In Flanders fields.

