

ARE BLACK CONSERVATIVES DELUSIONAL?

*By Gary James
GaryJoseJames@gmail.com*

Black conservatives continue to be the object of political scorn by Black elected officials, the civil rights leadership and the Black American community in general. The popular political rhetoric and conversation among virtually all sectors of the Black American community reference the “uncle Tom” stereotype in the context of Black conservatives.

For their part, Black conservatives in general seem to be oblivious to the practical political reality as it relates to their challenge to the community at large. Apparently, Black conservatives are preoccupied with the intellectual exercise of articulating and arguing their political positions and scoring brownie points, as opposed to advancing a coherent political, economic and social strategy the moves the community forward.

Obviously the comfort level associated with attractive careers, lucrative honoraria, and consultancy scenarios have a chilling effect on the grassroots spade work necessary to cultivate a sophisticated Black electorate. Disseminating glib articles, commentary and arguments promoting the merits of Republican conservatives Vs the demerits of Democratic liberalism is an obfuscation of responsibility to the real political education challenge commensurate with their status.

While many Black conservatives take pride in their capacity to turn a phrase, and in some cases defend the impossible, Black folk at large have basic questions that need to be addressed in a serious and comprehensive way. White conservatives are essentially social conservatives, notwithstanding their conservative values associated with the economy, domestic and international politics, the family and moral issues. Social conservatism is a euphemism for White supremacy, segregation and bigotry against Black Americans. Since White conservatism is perceived as a code word for White supremacy ideology, Black conservatives are locked into the political stereotype perception that cannot

be intellectually reconciled. Moreover, perception to a large extent is reality in electoral politics.

As a practical political matter it is virtually impossible to redefine Black conservatives outside of the “uncle Tom” stereotype because the word conservative has been politicized. Yet, Black conservatives continue marketing their brand of political participation in the framework of the Republican-conservative Vs the Democrat-liberal paradigm. Apparently, Black conservatives are delusional or in clinic denial relative to the effectiveness of their approach to political education and responsibility to be effective. Unfortunately, many Black conservatives have positioned themselves as elitists and are without open lines of communication at the grassroots level. Reverberating sound bites, and targeted cameo’s advancing the Black conservative position on the issues does not address the critical need for basic political organizing, voter education and registration.

The popular conservative Vs liberal political juxtaposition is too vague and politicized to inspire a meaningful and insightful broad based political education discourse in the Black community. Similar to Black Democratic-liberals, Black Republican-conservatives, essentially mimic the messages of their White partisan counterparts and simply add a dash of soul. The end result is that no credible recruitment and outreach efforts are undertaken, to compete with the diminishing returns of the electoral opposition. Hence, emerging generations of Black Americans remain disengaged, uninformed, uninspired and are joining the ranks of apathetic masses of disillusioned none voting citizens. Still, Black conservatives seem wedded to the soulful rendition of their paternal political mentor definitions and applications associated with participation in the electoral process.

Just as Black Democrats failed to redefine politics and the electoral process, beyond the conceptual framework of their White political organizers during the civil rights movement, Black Republicans have not redefined electoral politics since the dismantling of Reconstruction in the 19th century. As a consequence, despite the statutory and legislative victories of the respective civil rights movements of the 19th and 20th centuries Black folk remain the weakest in terms of political power as

compared to other “minority” communities in the 21st century.

Black conservatives are challenged to move beyond their respective political perch and formulate a paradigm shift capable of marketing the Republican Party in real-time. 21st century Black Republican politics must necessarily move beyond, traditional slogans, labels, code words and political rhetoric. There is a new demographic in Black America resulting from immigrants coming from Africa, the Americas and Caribbean who have no affinity to conventional and traditional political ideas and concepts. Specifically, the Democrat-liberal-progressive movement that trained, motivated and facilitated the Black community to infiltrate the party in order to break racial segregation in the 1960’s and 70’s has little if any political resonance with the new demographic.

Black Republicans are specifically challenged to develop a credible interface with the Black community and negotiate a new covenant with the respective echelons of the party leadership. In addition to engineering a new deal with the community and Republican Party leadership, the Black GOP must reconstitute the infrastructure in order for the party to be competitive in local politics. The ultimate responsibility to build the party at the grassroots rests among Black Republicans. The Republican Party leadership is not responsible for animating the Black community to the political wisdom of a bi-partisan electoral strategy as a vehicle to achieve Black political power.

New York State with its 5 to 1 registration plurality in favor of the Democratic Party presents an interesting example of the challenged faced by the Republican Party and Blacks in particular. Despite the numerical deficit in favor of Democrats, the Republican Party has been able to sustain a Governor for three terms and a Mayor for three terms. The Republican Party achieved this amazing political feat without the help of the Black vote. On the other side of the aisle the overwhelming 90 plus percent Black vote is marginalized among a plethora of political “minorities.” In fact the Black community has been eclipsed by the Hispanic community as the primary target group for outreach, by the Republican and Democratic Parties. According to recent reports the Hispanic

community now has the numerical advantage over Black Americans.

Now that Black Democrats are increasingly marginalized within electoral strategy and tactics, some astute political analysts suggest that Congressman Charles Rangel may be the last Black American to hold office in the coveted 15th Congressional District in Harlem. While some political analysts suggest that the Hispanic community may have the inside track to win the “Black” Congressional seat, others indicate that given the rate of gentrification in Harlem it’s a fluid situation. Therefore, Black Republicans have a unique political moment during this fleeting electoral opportunity. Accordingly, the 2004 Republican National Committee’s Presidential nomination may be the opportunity.

In the past New York was never targeted by the Republican National Congressional Committee (RNCC), for resources and technical assistance to GOP Congressional campaigns. However, the current political environment presents a win-win scenario for the Republican Party and the Black community, should they seize the time. Black Republicans must seize this unique opportunity to market the party in political terms that define and formulate the road to emancipation from political and economic bondage in the 21st century.