

**Breakfast Summit Conference
On Black Economic Development**

Monday, January 17, 2000

Pinecrest Villa (formerly Hampton Hall) 4453 Richardson Road

Montgomery, Alabama, 36108

Theme: "Blacks' New Mission For The New Millennium"

Program

Prayer.....Rev. John Alford
Pastor, Mt. Gillard Baptist Church

SelectionNegro National Anthem - Congregation

Opening StatementThe Honorable Mayor Bobby Bright
Mayor, City of Montgomery

Introduction of Panel.....Ms. Cubie Rae Gilmer
Editor: The Westside Weekly & Montgomery Entertainment Magazine

Topics Open For Discussion

"Do Black Businesses in Montgomery Need A Black Chamber of Commerce?"

8-A Contracts, Grants, Set-A-Sides and Loans for Black Businesses"

"Advantages of Modern Technology Computer-Oneline-Web-Site-Internet, ect"

Making Government Agencies (City, County, State, National) Accountable To Black Businesses"

"The Black Consumer Supporting Black Businesses"

"Making Corporate America Accountable to Black Economic Development"

"Do Boycotts & Picket Signs Still Work Today"?

Guest Panelist

Mrs. Arlinda Knight.....Director of Minority Business Development Center

Councilman Tracy Larkin.....Councilman - District 3

Councilman James Knucles.....Councilman - District 4

Councilman Terance Dawson.....Councilman - District 5

Councilman Willie Cook.....Councilman - District 6

State Rep. John Knight

State Rep. Thad McClammy

Kevin Elkins.....Radio Talk Show Host & Owner of Computer Business

Rev. John L. Alford.....Pastor of Mt. Gillard Baptist Church

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**Opening Statement by: Rev. Al Dixon,
Chairman of the Committee for Black Economic Development**

Theme: "Blacks' New Mission For The New Millennium"

Our Breakfast Summit Conference" today, January 17, 2000, the day that we're celebrating Dr. Martin Luther King's Birthday, is focused on "Keeping the Dream Alive" and working productively in the lives of Black Alabamians each day of the year, rather than on Dr. King's birthday only.

According to Rev. Al Dixon "Keeping the Dream Alive" can best be accomplished by keeping our communities alive, our black men alive, our black businesses alive, and the lives of our people spiritually enriched and economically secure".

This year 2000 our theme is, "Blacks' New Mission For The New Millennium." A mission that will make economic justice a reality.

The Breakfast Summit Conference will focus on such topics as "Do Black Businesses in Montgomery Need A Black Chamber of Commerce?", "8-A Contracts, Grants, Set-A-Sides and Loans for Black Businesses," "Advantages of Modern Technology Computer-Online-Web-Site-Internet, ect", "Making Government Agencies (City, County, State, National) Accountable To Black Businesses", "The Black Consumer Supporting Black Businesses", "Making Corporate America Accountable to Black Economic Development," and "Do Boycotts & Picket Signs Still Work Today"?

This must be accomplish by whatever means necessary. To accomplish economic justice by "Whatever means necessary," shall consist of, but not limited to, challenging and holding accountable governmental agencies (city, state, county and federal) and corporate America as well, in our efforts to penetrate the economic mainstream and get a fair share of the wealth/dollars in this country, and survive as Black businesses.

Blacks Patronizing Black Businesses

We've heard the story, time and time again, about the Black woman, while explaining her reason for patronizing the White iceman, rather than buying ice from a Black man, made the statement, "I know the price is the same, and the bags are the same size, but the White man's ice is colder."

Last year, 1991, Black Americans earned more than 300 billion dollars. Unfortunately, however, 95 percent of that figure was spent with White-owned businesses. Which means, consequently, we employ thousands of Whites, and unemploy ourselves. They take our money and help their own people by hiring their mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, friends, neighbors and foreigners.

Now the Orientals and other foreigners are doing the same thing. They're coming to the States, going into business even before they learn to speak English. We're Making them rich, and they take the money and help the rest of their families get to the States, who in turn, start a business in the next block. Or in many instances, they take some of the jobs we might have had.

Everyone has found out just how weak, jealous and divided we are as a race of people, but us.

The most successful boycott ever initiated in America is the boycott that Blacks have launched against Black businesses by not shopping with them.

"The Re-investment Act" of Financial Institutions

The Re-investment Act is a mandate from the US Government setting forth certain requirements for financial institutions and is a reciprocal concept that if followed, would play a major role in Black Economic Development.

In the first place, however, most Blacks don't know about it. Secondly, the U.S. Government's monitoring procedure is limited and ineffective.

For example, there are stipulations relative to Banks making loans to Blacks. It is not unusual to see major construction in the White community, and a sign displayed indicating the name of the bank financing the project. But when is the last time, or first time for that matter, have we witnessed a major Black project financed by one of Montgomery's banks?

And while the Re-investment Act addresses, or requires financial institutions to appoint a Black on their Advisory Board, the banks in Montgomery that have conformed to the request, have made certain that their appointees are Blacks who have "arrived" and could care less about the bank lending money to Black entrepreneurs - or maybe a better statement is, "Most of them are financially secure, who, in many instances have moved out of the Black neighborhood and are not interested in seeing it developed.

While many loans to Blacks are refused based on their credit, it is important to point out here, that the Credit Bureau is owned and controlled by Whites.

Black Elected Officials' Role In Black Economic Development

Blacks who are elected to City, County, State and Federal positions, many of which are involved in structuring the operating budgets for those municipalities, have very little knowledge, and no concern about where those dollars are spent, nor have they made efforts to make certain that Black businesses get a portion of those budgets. They have, consequently allowed these governmental agencies to spend their budgets for goods and services with White-owned, already established businesses.

Many of them are in a position to, not only know about the budget, but they should have some knowledge of grants, loans, set-a-sides, proposal writing, and should develop some method to make Blacks aware of the budgets, the amount of the budget, and specify as near as possible, the goods and services the budget will be spent for.

It is important for elected officials to make efforts to influence mandates to do business with Black-owned businesses.

Aside from the fact that Blacks are unaware of what contracts, grants, set-a-sides and loans are available, they don't know where they are, or how to go about getting them.

Traditionally, elected officials have placed emphasis on installing street lights, developing a park for recreation, installing a stop sign in their districts, helping to fund various programs for some specific schools, agencies and community projects.

All of these activities are important and serve a well-needed purpose.

Unfortunately, however, most of them haven't broadened their scope of activities to include strengthening Black entrepreneurs and developing the Black community economically, where we can provide jobs for ourselves, rather than depend upon the system.

"Making Corporate America Accountable To Black Economic Development"

One of the greatest programs ever devised was when the NAACP came up with the "Fair Share Plan." It was a potentially effective concept that made Corporate America reciprocally accountable, based on the percentage of Black business they enjoyed.

For example, if a major White-owned business enjoyed 40 percent of their patronage from Blacks, then 40 percent of the monies allocated for attorneys, should be spent with Black attorneys. Likewise, if monies were allocated for contractors, then 40 percent of that money should be spent with Black contractors, etc. We believe that businesses or corporations that have become financially successful from the patronage of Black consumers must be sympathetic with, and accountable to the community from which their profits are generated and must return some of those profits back into the community to help build it economically.

Traditionally, these companies have taken money out of the Black community, and have refused to put any portions of their profits back into the community from which their profits were generated.

The Ministers' Role In Black Economic Development

Aside from the fact that the minister is anointed, rather than appointed, his status as a Black leader should rank number one (1) in the community. For regardless to who our leaders are in the Black Community, they belong to some church, and are under the spiritual guidance of the Black minister.

The Church is a common ground, where members from various walks of life meet for a common cause, and is without a doubt the best source by which to convey a message to a cross-section of influential individuals, who in turn may pass it on to others.

Secondly, the minister has a built-in audience, and unlike any other leader, speaks to them in person on a weekly, and sometimes bi-weekly basis.

Thirdly, the minister's credibility is sanctioned from a spiritual perspective, therefore church members and townspeople respect and accept his statements, opinion and announcements as "official."

Because of these factors the minister can be the most effective mechanism as it relates to educating Black people economically.

The "Minority" Melting Pot

Someone once said, "No pain, No gain," but Blacks have suffered pain, inflicted upon them by 'ole Massa's whip while helping to build this country during slavery, and have been drafted to fight in every war to protect this country, but there was no gain.

A few gains were made only when Blacks realized that freedom was not free, and even though we had paid our dues by building and protecting this Country, it would be necessary to initiate a movement, known as the "Civil Rights Movement", consisted of marching, sit-in demonstrations, boycotts freedom rides and a host of other activities, that resulted in a few provisions granted by the Government, earmarked for "Minorities."

But that seemingly bit of progress was short-lived, for gradually other nationalities began to flood this Country, none of which having paid any dues as far as being enslaved to build it, or going to war to protect it, but as minorities they were entitled to the same benefits as Blacks.

The category labeled, "Minority," that basically meant Blacks initially, is now broadened to include:

- "Black American", which includes persons having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa.
- "Hispanic Americans", which includes persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish or Portuguese culture or origin, regardless of race.
- "Native Americans", which includes persons who are American Indians, Eskimos, Aleuts, or Native Hawaiians.
- "Asian-Pacific Americans", which includes persons whose origins are from Japan, China, Taiwan, Korea, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, the Philippines, Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Trust Territories of the Pacific, and the Northern Marianas.
- "Asian-Indian Americans", which includes persons whose origins are from India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh; and
- Females of the above groups plus Caucasian females.

With a "Minority" Melting Pot of that magnitude Blacks are still at the bottom of the barrel when it comes to benefits that are available for minorities.