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LEADERS – What, Who, Why?

By RALPH MATTHEWS JR.

Leadership in Baltimore? Colored leaders? White leaders? Who are they? Are they competent? Have they helped or harmed this city?

Is William Boucher 3rd correct in stating that Baltimore's colored population has "failed to develop sufficient leadership?"

Is the Rev. Logan Kearse right in charging that colored people not born in Baltimore have faint hope of becoming leaders after settling here?

Is State Senator Verda Welcome right when she agrees with Mr. Boucher on the "lack" of minority leadership?

And what does the man in the street think about all this talk of leaders?

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THESE ARE some of the lively questions that came to surface following Mr. Boucher's lecture to a McCoy College class last Thursday.

And just who is William Boucher 3rd? He is director of the Greater Baltimore Committee.

What is the Greater Baltimore Committee? It is a private organization of 100 leading businessmen and industrialists in this city that concerns itself with Baltimore's progress and problems.

The Greater Baltimore Commitee is not for the average citizen. Membership for one year can cost a man up to $5,000. This group is big business all the way.

Therefore Mr. Boucher's comments on Baltimore's colored leadership prompted unusual interest among many residents. For one thing, it was one of the few times any white civic leader has openly raised this issue.

In the past, whites in influential positions have been more prone to ignore the colored community and stifle whatever leadership exists.

Daily newspaper reports on his speech left some Baltimoreans with the impression that Mr. Boucher was singling out colored leadership for mention.

The complete story is that Mr. Boucher not only deplored what he feels is the lack of colored leadership in this city but the incompetent leadership of the majority.

What Boucher really said:

Here is what Mr. Boucher told the AFRO this week on the subject of leadership:

"With few exceptions, Baltimore has not produced political leadership of a high caliber. We have a history of uninspired political leadership. Two exceptions to this would be Mayor James H. Preston many years ago and Tommy D'Alesandro at one point in his career."

Mr. Boucher criticized what he called the "inbred social and cultural leadership" of this city. This can be wealthy aristocrats, the Green Spring Valley gang, the Ruxton Clan, and similar in - groups.

Of such, he said: "I think it's a feeling among a lot of people that they know what's best for the city

Such attitudes by the city's traditionalists, Mr. Boucher felt, were responsible for much of Baltimore's lack of progress.

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HE CITED old - line leaders as not encouraging a balanced representation of citizens on the various committees concerned with the social and cultural problems of the city.

"There have been two few representatives from lower and middle-income levels, both white and colored," said Mr Boucher, "Along with a token representation by labor."

"I think it comes (this exclusion of certain groups) from the leadership proper role of minorities and their participation in community life."

Mr. Boucher also found the old-liners guilty of "failing to recognize the economic stake of the minorities in the community and with failing to realize the hidden talent available to help the community."

"This comes from two things: failure of the leadership to work with these people and the failure of minority groups to develop sufficient leadership."

* * *

THIS WAS the heart of Mr. Boucher's comment on colored leadership and it turned out that his ideas on leadership were a two - way street.

"The total community is at fault for creating the conditions which limited opportunity to colored people for many years and for still denying opportunities in many areas.

"The colored community has not utilized the opportunities that have existed.

"Granting discrimination's inhibiting effect, I still feel that there are people in the colored community who have developed sufficient economic independence to exert more community leadership than they have."

"Discriminatory practices have hindered, inhibited them surely but, for example, I think there are a lot of colored doctors in this community who've made a lot of money who should participate in community projects.

"A few years ago, I was trying to raise money for the Baltimore Symphony, a community cultural facility. I was unsuccessful in getting any financial assistance from the colored community. I don't say this without knowing that the Lyric at one time had a discriminatory policy . . .but nevertheless here was an opportunity to pitch in and help."

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FOLLOWING THIS comment, Mr. Boucher was asked what could he done if the issues he had raised, in fact existed?

He replied:

"This problem (of leadership) should not be taken out of its proper perspective. It is one of a great many the city has. You cannot separate minority problems, as to leadership, from problems of discriminatory practices in housing, education and employment.

"They're all tied together. You correct it (lack of leadership) two ways. You correct by correcting those problems just noted and you correct it by the kind of responses Mrs. Verda Welcome gave to my comments.

"She recognized this (lack of colored leadership) and wasn't defensive. The colored leadership is going to have to be positive, recognizing the total community's failings as well as the colored community's failings at the same time.

"I don't think anybody white or colored who is satisfied with their own leadership or assumption of responsibility is being realistic or doing the proper service to their own group or to the city.

"The solution to this problem rests with both the white and colored community."

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LEADERSHIP VARIES. I think we have such a thing as cultural leadership and there is political leadership such as is just now developing in the 4th district."

Mr. Boucher was asked if he thought the traditional resistance to colored people taking a part in Baltimore's civic concerns was really lessening.

He answered: "I think yes. It's not where it should be. Since World War II there's been an almost revolutionary change. We've a long way to go. There are still a lot of die - hards left.

"In my opinion, we've got to use all the arguments, the dollars and cents argument (for equality) as well as the moral argument."

And it was this dollars and cents argument with which Mr. Boucher concluded his remarks. "If you look at it from a dollars and cents viewpoint, the more jobs" for all, Mr. Boucher felt, the better business will be in Baltimore and the more progress will be made.

* * *

WHEN THE director of the Greater Baltimore Committee raised the question of colored leadership was he speaking for the city's business community,

Had the monied men finally discovered that 35 per cent of the city's population was colored and that unless these citizens participated fully in the total life of the city, Baltimore would never achieve greatness?

Mrs. Welcome agrees:

State Senator Verda Welcome responded to Mr. Boucher's ideas the next day. She agreed with him.

She said: "When any group is kept out of the mainstream of socio-economic and political activities this exclusion repeats itself on all levels. Even in the top level positions it seems that tokenism has been the usual practice.

"Colored leadership has not come of age," she continued, "simply, because we have been relegated to the least important position and limited opportunities in our society."

The Rev. I. Logan Kearse was next to be heard. His comment on leadership was in the form of a letter to a newspaper.

...and so did Rev. Kearse:

Said the pastor of Cornerstone Baptist Church: "Unfortunately, one is compelled to agree with Mr. Boucher. But explanations for this dearth of leadership seem to be in order.

"Our white leaders have selected colored leaders who have no following. Examples of this are evident in the appointments of colored people, meant by the "hierarchy" that kept other colored people from becoming leaders, the Rev. Mr. Kearse preferred to leave his phases to the reader's imagination.

When asked if he had any local newspaper in mind when he mentioned sensationalism, the Rev. Mr. Kearse said "I had no particular newspapers in mind, the Daily News in New York would be one."

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THE REV. Mr. Kearse thus agreed with Mr. Boucher, though giving different reasons. Mr. Boucher did not agree with the Rev. Mr. Kearse however. "His first premise is wrong," said the civic group leader when apprised of the pastor's statements.

What do other well - known Baltimoreans think about the leadership problem?

Templeton Comments

A STRONG note of dissent regarding Mr. Boucher's remarks and Mrs. Welcome's swift approval of same came from Dr. Furman L. Templeton, executive director of the Baltimore Urban League.

The Urban League official said, in part:

The newspapers reported William Boucher, executive director of the Greater Baltimore Committee, and Senator - elect Verda Welcome as agreeing on an alleged lack of colored leadership in Baltimore.

Fortunately, both pointed briefly to the denial of opportunities, as reflected in Baltimore's segregation patterns, as one reason for the leadership problem as they expressed it.

Neither Mrs. Welcome nor Mr. Boucher defined leadership and therein lies one basic weakness in their contention.

BOTH MR. BOUCHER and Mrs. Welcome, beside failing to recognize the factual existence of indigenous leadership, do not take into acount the truism that the colored leadership element has been forced to expend its energies in a guerilla war on discrimination and therefore has not been able to mount an organized drive that would demand recognition.

Unlike the circles in which Mr. Boucher moves and, to some extent, Mrs. Welcome moves, colored leadership has not seemed to exhibit middle-class values for the precise reason that they and their followers have been denied middle - class opportunities and middle - class incomes.

". . . The quantity and quality of colored leadership is and always will be directly related to the politics of social change until the intergroup relations pattern in this city permits it to be a functioning part of the total community.

Baltimore must drop its parochial adherence to the doctrine of gradualism and proceed forthwith to make equality of opportunity a reality. In doing so, it will discover that there is a body of colored leadership immediately available to help effect the change."

Leaders need more than 1-hour for lunch

DR. G. JAMES FLEMING, director of Morgan State College's Political Institute, said:

"I would agree with Mr. Boucher but one of the things that has always stung me is that all of Baltimore may be chastised on the lack of leadership. I seem to see a rather thin reservoir of leadership in Baltimore city regardless of race.

"Most times when you are looking for political leaders you find the best-suited people are not residents of the city.

"For a long time I do not think the power structure was too anxious for colored people to participate at the leadership level. It was also too embarrassing for people on either side to sit down and talk.

"That is one reason why a public accomodations measure is so important. One does not lead in a vacuum. For most of the past years, white and colored people couldn't be together They could not sit or eat or meet in most places.

"There's a limit to the amount of leadership you can expect from the people who are the lowest rung of the economic ladder. I do not mean here how much money colored people make but I am referring to the quality and status of the jobs.

"Those who participate in mid-levels of leadership are invariably in the kind of jobs which permit them to spend more than an hour for lunch. When you're serving on boards and committees you have to have the kind of jobs that permit you to take the time which involvement in civic and public affairs calls for.

"ONE THING that has dulled and discouraged colored leaders in this and other communities is the fact that the white power structure has most of the time repudiated colored leadership by ignoring it.

"For example there isn't a single improvement in race relations that has been recently achieved as result of sit - ins, demonstrations and picketing, that had not been advocated for many years earlier by colored leaders.

No one listened to them. It took direct, overt action.

"For years colored leadership petitioned, recommended, and advised peacefully to no avail.

"And as they failed even their own people refused to take them seriously. All Baltimore needs a shot of adrenalin so far as leadership is concerned. Colored Baltimoreans, too, need to look forward and take hold of every opportunity to take part in the total life of the city."

Muslim says 'he's doing us a favor!'

To get the broadest possible view of local leadership, from political expert Birch or Dr. Fleming, the AFRO then went to Black Muslim Leader Isaiah Karriem, minister of the local temple of this controversial religious group.

* * *

MINISTER KARRIEM SAID: "Frankly, I do not feel our present leadership is adequate. They've been dragging their feet on conomic unity, they have not taken an interest in the masses of people. As a result, our people are many years behind economically, politically. These leaders do not have the true spirit which would enlighten our people as to the changes which are taking place in the world.

"In many cases, they are aiding our enemies in keeping our people a subjected people. This, by not providing the necessities of life as other dark nations are doing throughout the world.

"Leaders of the people do not wait for a hand - out from other people. A leader is supposed not to seek a job but to make jobs for his own people.

"I don't know all the leaders of this city among our people. I haven't yet seen a leader that had his people at heart enough where he would go all out to establish businesses and enterprises for the masses of people, excepting Elijah Muhammad, but then he's a national leader.

"Until our people set aside their petty differences and unite for one common cause and lift up the masses our enemies in keeping our people. It is useless to ask the government for anything."

Minister Karriem was asked if he had any comment on what prompted Mr. Boucher's remarks.

He said: "The white man knows the conditions his father placed our people in, he knows he had deprived them of the knowledge of self.

"Actually, he's doing us a favor. It should awake our people to the knowledge that they must do something for themselves. He would, of course, be doing us a greater favor by giving back that which he took from us in the first place and not force hypocritical integration on a few of our people."

Leaders are leaders, not race labels:

FROM MINISTER KARRIEM, who believes in separation of the races, the AFRO went to a human relations executive who favors an integrated society.

* * *

MISS RUTH FEGLEY, director of Baltimore Fellowship House which promotes inter - group harmony in this city, said: "This leadership question always discourages me because it implies the continuation of a "colored" community and a "white" community - two communites instead of one total community.

"I would hope that by now there would be more enlightened and forward - looking people beginning to think in this latter term.

"I cannot accept the custom of using a racial or religious tag front of the word leadership is essential to the growth of a community and will agree that leadership is essential to the growth of a community and that more individuals should be seeking ways to serve and share responsibilites as well as reap benefits from gains achieved.

"So in line with the general question, I admit that the number of colored people who are in roles of active leadership in our total community life falls far short of the number who are capable and yet fail to fulfill their complete potential."

The same people all the time:

MRS. CARRIE B. RAMSAY, long an outspoken Baltimorean on causes ranging from sane nuclear policy to equal rights for women and minority groups and a rising Republican political figure, said:

"I would be agreed that there is not a sufficiency of colored leadership. One reason is that people tend not to venture out, they feel more secure in

(Continued on Page 31)

"THIS POLICE BRUTALITY ISSUE" — This was a subject with which Milton Wiggins, 25, of Baltimore felt local leaders were not deeply enough concerned.

"LEADERS? WHO'VE WE GOT?" — Teddy Epps, 25- year-old Baltimorean now in the Manpower Act training program, gives AFRO writer Ralph Matthews Jr. (back to the camera) his views on the city's leadership in no uncertain terms.

"MILITANT" — Miss Alvidene Richardson, 19, of Cherry Hill, a statistical clerk at Spring Groce Hospital, says AFRO provides leadership but wants to see it fight even harder!