National Roundup

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) - While many national organizations were busy jumping on the Reagan bandwagon - after the election - some prominent black spokespersons and union leaders still remained critical and suspicious of the President-elect's strategy for A New Beginning Remember Nixon's "Bring Us Together"???????

"The only winners in the election," said Kenneth T. Blaylock, president of the American Federation of Government Employees, "were the forces of fear and reaction. Clearly, the electorate responded to the negative

appeals - fear, doubt and uncertainty.

The appeal of the billion-dollar corporate blitz that dominated the media, the negative zeal of groups like the moral majority and others have badly damaged the American electoral process. Instead of picking candidates who offer constructive solutions to problems, American voters seemed to fall prey to the strident zealots who dominated the entire cam-

"For federal employees, regardless of the outcome of the presidential" race, the future would have been difficult. However, comparing the principles, performance and platforms of the two candidates, it is clear that times will be more difficult under the new administration than they were . under the old

"Naturally, we extend to President-elect Reagan our traditional offer to assist him in the difficult task of governing this country. As the workers who make the system go, we are intimately familiar with the ptifalls and the problems in government. We know that Mr. Reagan, like President Carter before him, will find there is an immense difference between watching and doing when it comes to running this complex government.

"Staunch, experienced leaders of Senate and House committees who fell (in the election) will not be soon replaced. Their absence will be quickly

The Rev. Lowery and the Rev. Kelly M. Smith, head of the National Conference of Black Churchmen, were key conveners of the session, along with Rev. Benjamin Hooks, president of the NAACP, and the Rev. Waker E. Fauntroy, congressional delegate and representative of the Congressional Black Caucus. The Rev. Fauntroy proposed development of a nationwide church network to support legislative political goals.

At a hastily called news conference at the National Press Club, the Revs. Jesse Jackson and William H. Borders joined Democratic Congressional Black Caucus leaders in declaring, "We're on the defensive, but we are not in exile - we must stand up and resist" as a result of the

election of President-elect Reagan.

Jackson called for recreation of the old Civil Rights Coalition of Blacks, Browns, unions and women to testify at congressional hearings, stage protest marches, increase voter registration and conduct economic boycotts to back up demands.

The only problem was that the "new coalition" leaders appeared to depend upon the predominantly white media to transmit their proposals to their followers instead of organizing to deliver their messages directly

While some black leaders were criticizing the Reagan election, others (including some of the same leaders) were claiming credit for the margin of Reagan's victory because of the heavy black voter turnout . . . You figure

Eddie Williams, director of the Joint Center for Political Studies, issued a statement declaring that "an overwhelming majority of blacks who voted supported President Jimmy Carter, but blacks appear to have given Ronald Reagan sufficient votes in several closely contested southern states to provide him with a margin of victory . . .

While strong (black) support for Carter was nationwide, in at least two

By Larry Still and Art Carter

and painfully felt, perhaps even in the next few weeks during the lame duck

We thought you ought to hear an honest opinion for now . . .

However, Jacob Clayman, president of the National Council of Senior Citizens declared: "The officers and members of the General Board. wish to extend our sincere congratulations to you (President-elect Reagan) on your election to office . . .

"As a national organization representing millions of older people, we look forward to working with you on the many problems facing today's elderly. Among the most serious problems are inadequate income, lack of decent, affordable housing and transportation services, the high cost of medical care and prescription drugs, and skyrocketing energy prices.

"We would welcome an opportunity to meet with you and members of your administration to explore the ways in which the federal government can provide the assistance needed to solve these problems, and to enable older people to stay in the mainstream of American life.

"You may be assured of the full cooperation of our organization in all of your efforts towards that end, and of our support for all programs that will result in a better life for the elderly Clayman added:

"Although we have been critical of many of the past positions taken on senior issues by Mr. Reagan, we have been encouraged by recent statements that he has made. Chief among these are statements in support of the social security system, and his promise to strengthen and preserve the integrity of the system We are also encouraged by the position taken by the Republican platform in support of Medicare, and approve the platform pledge to expand the program to include home health services and other alternatives to institutionalization . . .

Black church leaders have also proposed a meeting with President Reagan to develop a "moral initiative" which will press for human rights. Approximately 30 ministers from 18 states and D.C. met in Washington recently "to cogitate, meditate and plan ways to facilitate the role of the black church in the crisis facing black people in this country," according to Rev. Joseph E. Lowery, president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, founded by the late Dr. Martin L. King Jr.

southern states, Arkansas and Tennessee, it appears that Reagan won enough black votes to provide his margin of victory, according to the Joint Center report. Apparently these voters were also responsible for the loss of liberal Democratic governors in those states - a dubious honor, we think However, Williams admitted "In a landslide presidential election, such as that achieved by Governor Reagan, the black vote has little direct impact on the outcome . . . Moreover, pecularities in black voting behavior often suggest important trends for the future.!!!"

The JCPS estimated that 40 percent of the 17 million eligible black voters went to the polls, compared to the about 52 percent for the nation as a whole, but the NAACP released statements saying that "as many as 65-70 percent of all registered black voters took part in the election.

"No other single interest group, including the elderly and women, demonstrated the great strides that blacks showed in realizing their full voting potential. These gains are especially important, since most political observers had expected a continuation of the downward trend that had been. evidenced over the past 15 years," the Rev. Hooks declared.

After checking with the almost 200 branches involved in voter registration, "We discovered that we had managed to raise the number of blacks registered to almost 11.5 million or 67 percent of black eligibles. This represents the highest percentage of blacks registered in our history, and is even better than the 63.8 percent registered among the 133 million white digibles," Hooks reported.

But, the NAACP did not report on how this high percentage of black eligibles actually voted since it is a non-partisan organization. A closer analysis of the results could show that millions of black voters who have been the bulwark of the Democratic party organization in the past, may have been part of the "crossover" vote which put Reagan in office.

Another surprising factor in analyzing the results, was the 1,327 delegates to the Independent National Black Political Party founding convention in Philadelphia about a month after the national election. Although the group did not complete the charter, hundreds of Democratic and Republican leaders were present along with the traditional independents. "The umbrella was wide enough to cover everyone from

(Continued on Page 22)



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