Fall October 28, 2012

Electing President Obama in 2012

Edward Earl Bell

Available at: https://works.bepress.com/edward_bell/34/
ELECTING PRESIDENT OBAMA IN 2012: 2008 WAS JUST A TEST!

Dr. Ed Bell

While we celebrated the 2008 election of President Obama, we in America felt a great sense of pride and respect for our country—and we still do! Our nation had risen above color and elected a black President. Obama had succeeded against all odds to beat out Hillary Clinton, a white female in the primaries—and ultimately John McCain in the General Election. We, in America, thought that racial discontent had evaporated and Americans were willing to live up to its moral obligation—that we are to be judged by the content of our character, rather than the color of our skin. Not too fast!

The Presidential campaign of 2008 with then Senator Obama and Senator Clinton was a hard-fought primary race. Racial tensions were the centerpiece of the process; the nation was embarking upon new grounds in deciding whether a black man or a white female would be President. Historically, white men have enjoyed the role of President of these United States! Therefore, it was the custom and the practice for men to occupy this office, especially white men.

The election of President Obama signaled, for some, a roaring declaration of post-racial attitudes and a positive movement towards equality and respect for one’s character. Racial progress was promoted and thrust into the fabric of America as a movement towards the betterment of humankind. We thought we had overcome. Not too fast!

Here we are in 2012—with another Presidential election! This election is more important than the 2008 election. President Obama is running against a white man; a privileged one—and one with a sense of entitlement to the Presidency. Now, the race is on! Running against a white female, Hillary Clinton or John McCain, did not measure up to running against Governor Romney—the ultimate centerpiece of white privilege. Some Americans are faced with deciding, not on facts, but on skin color whom to vote for in this election.

America is facing this interesting predicament. The audacity of President Obama to challenge the white elite for the office of President is overwhelming. Some Americans are faced with a generation of racism in their hearts; now they are being asked to decide who should be President. Theoretically speaking, Governor Romney’s family could have owned Obama’s family in slavery. Now, the descendant of a slave’s son is challenging the “master’s” son for the office of the President to live in the White House built by slaves.

Not to take away from the 2008 Election—it was a milestone, too. However, this 2012 Presidential election is another kind of truth-telling election—where you have a black man, father from Kenya, challenging a privileged white man. This election, in many ways, is the first election for President Obama; the 2008 election was indeed historical and significant. The 2012 election is the one that will send a message to freedom lovers, invoke the spirit of abolitionists, shake the graves of slaves, renew the spirit of progressives, and rally the call to conservatives that Americans can change for the better—that character and integrity should matter—rather than one’s skin color.

edbell1906@yahoo.com