

It may be time to reset your political clock

The times they are a changin'. Or at least they seem to be. To read Candi Cushman's cover story (Page 16) is to have a new appreciation for that old protest song.

Not too many years ago, it would have been inconceivable that African-Americans, once a reliable partner in the liberal political coalition, would be marching against another reliable partner in that coalition — the teachers' unions. Such is the dramatically rising dissatisfaction with the unions' stranglehold on public schools, whose dismal performances shortchange minority children.

There is no stronger symbol of this injustice than our nation's capital itself. Under the Bush administration, scholarships were established that allowed some of the children in poorly performing schools in Washington to transfer to private schools, where the children of the political elite attend — including the daughters of President Obama.

But the teachers' union hated those scholarships, and so when Democrats took over in 2009, Congress began phasing them out. Of course the media being the media, this atrocity was not deemed to be much of a story, although had it been President Bush ending the scholarships rather than instituting them, a scandal would have blown to life.

Besides the issue of public education, there is another indication that the political times are changing. More than 30 African-American candidates announced their intention to run for Congress this year — as conservative Republicans. Most of them are running in largely white districts, and a handful of these candidates have excellent prospects of winning.

This is a remarkable development, given that not a single black Republican holds a seat in Congress. Ironically, many of the black candidates this year were motivated by President Obama, even though they oppose his politics. They were encouraged that so many whites were willing to vote for Obama in 2008, and now might be the time for more African-Americans — even conservative ones — to enter the fray.

Princella Smith, a black candidate for an open congressional seat in Arkansas, told a reporter that “aside from the fact that I disagree fundamentally with all of his [Obama's] views, I am

proud of my nation for proving that we have the ability to do something like [elect a black president].”

Those Left-leaning political views of the president gave rise last year to the Tea Party movement, and the press was on the job fast, trying to sniff out racism, for what else could it be but that? Then, in the mother of all surprises, the press found black people at those rallies — not many, but there they were. One of them was Timothy Johnson, chairman of the Frederick Douglass Foundation, an organization of black conservatives who support free-market principles. He said, “I've been told I hate myself” for being who he is and believing what he believes, and showing up at those rallies.

Another is David Webb, a black conservative radio commentator who organized a Tea Party rally in New York City. He said that he's been asked how he can oppose a black brother — President Obama — but he says that other black leaders, though they play the part of loyalists in public, are also beginning to have their doubts. He wonders: “Why can't we speak openly and honestly if we disagree?”

Indeed it seems that the political pendulum is beginning to swing in a new direction in regard to race and politics, but there is a hard test ahead. Will conservatives, white as well as black, once they have the reins of political power handed to them, indeed work fearlessly for the political changes they are now only talking about? If they do, they will run a furious gauntlet of opposition by the mainstream press and the liberal elitist establishment.

But if they are willing do that, then we will know for certain that the times truly are a changin'. ●

Tom Minnery is the senior vice president of government and public policy at CitizenLink and the editor of Citizen. Send feedback to citizeneditor@family.org.

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