

As King Encouraged, America Must Face Her Flaws

The church also must address activities that cripple our communities

BY REV. DR. NAJUMA SMITH-POLLARD
Contributing Writer

In Dr. Martin Luther King's posthumously published essay, "A Testament of Hope," he wrote

"It is forcing America to face all its interrelated flaws-racism, poverty, militarism and materialism."

In the past seven years, like it or not, our nation has had to face all its interrelated flaws - racism, poverty, militarism and materialism; and sexism, as represented by the wave of #s from #TrayvonMartin to #Metoo.

Those who have used their privilege to silence, repress and even oppress black and brown men and women, immigrants, LG-BTQ, and other vulnerable people groups, are feeling the pinch and pressure



Dr. Najuma Smith-Pollard

from activists and everyday people determined to force America to take a deep look within her soul and change. To be sure, change will be slow and difficult; but it will come.

I don't often indulge in the "what if" question, but "if" Dr. King were alive, I do believe the present climate would be welcomed, because he understood the value and consequence of "Speaking Truth to Power."

The unpleasant realities that are being exposed today, in ways in which we have not seen in decades, is making America face her interrelated flaws. Moreover, in facing those flaws, we the people are equally challenged to speak up, speak out, stand up, stand for, or stand against; but what we cannot allow our response to be, is deafening silence. The same kind of deafening silence that allows those 'interrelated flaws' to flourish.

It is reported that for

2017, one of the words researched most online was "complicit." Silence is complicit behavior that will not be tolerated. Corporations, celebrities, major athletes, and politicians are all fair game for exposure if they are complicit in times like these.

This too includes the church! As we reflect on the legacy of Dr. King, it is my hope the present climate spurs a revival of the church's voice; where it has gone silent and become complicit.

We cannot raise the horn for Jesus, then sing loud, "We shall Overcome," but only whisper about racism, poverty, sexism, militarism of the police and materialism that is crippling our communities. There is a balance the church must find or develop in order to maintain its relevance and righteousness.

This was King's charge when he launched the Poor People's Campaign in 1968. Today, I am encouraged by the number of faith-led movements on the rise to force America to face her flaws; one in particular is the new Poor Peoples Campaign, presently, reignited by faith leaders across the country.

It will not be King's campaign, it will be ours; our responsibility, our voice, our time to make

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America Face all its inter-related flaws...and change.
The Rev. Dr. Najuma

Smith-Pollard is the founder and senior pastor of

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