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Southern Christian Leadership Conference
NATIONAL MAGAZINE

Nelson Mandela Memorial Issue



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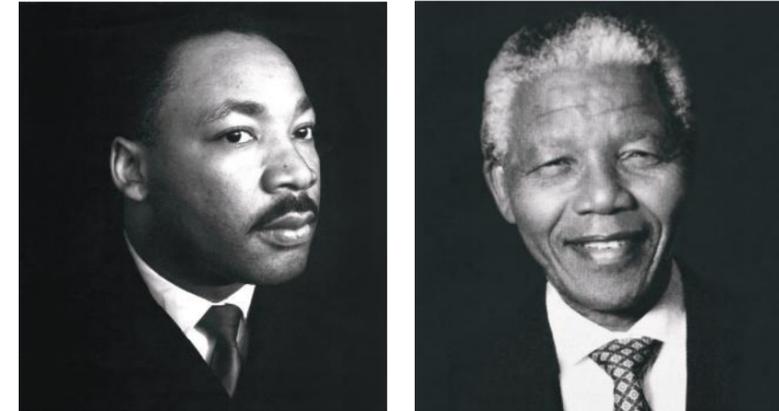


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Nelson Mandela Memorial Issue

Vol. 43 / No. 2

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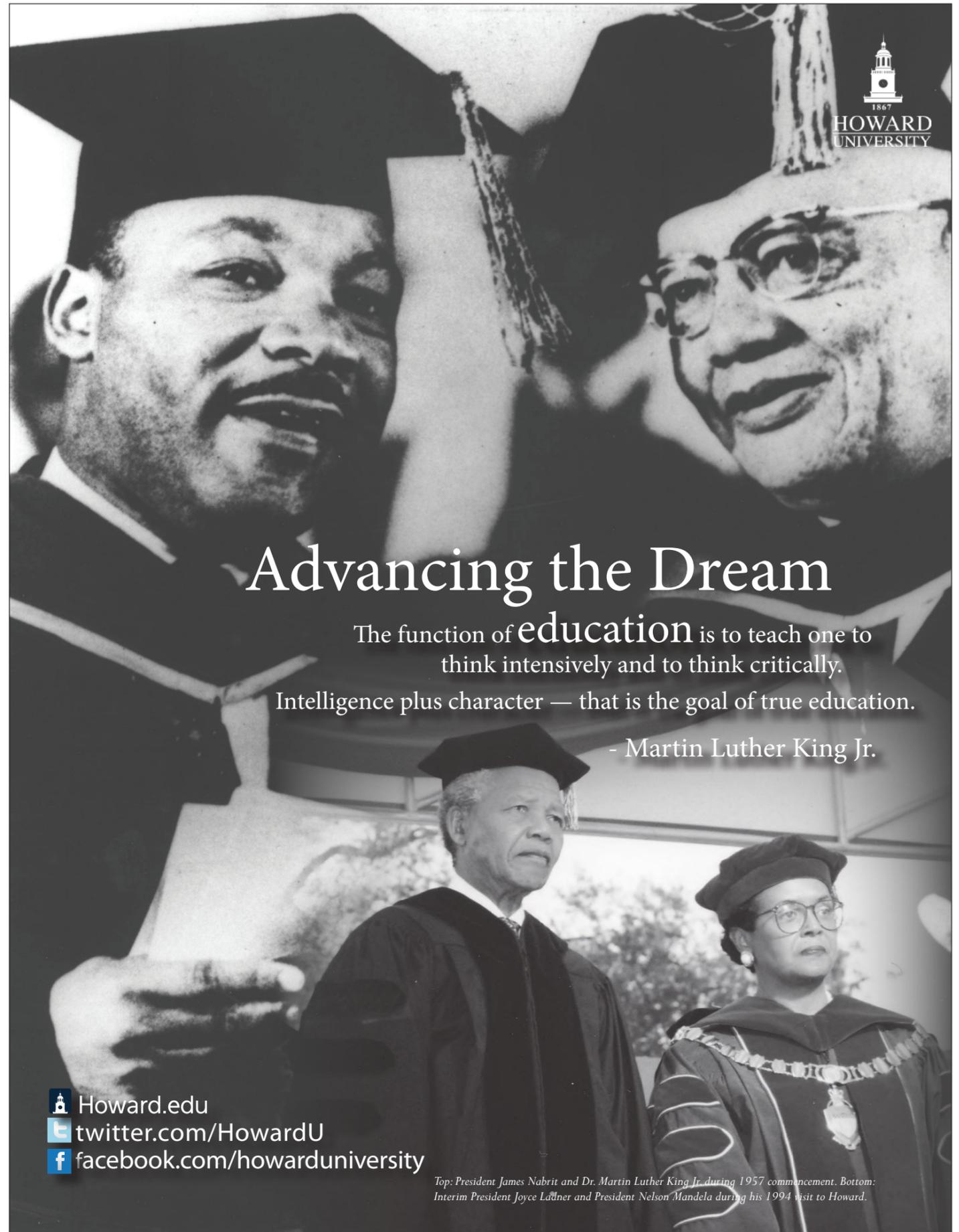
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- Martin Luther King Jr.

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Top: President James Nabrit and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. during 1957 commencement. Bottom: Interim President Joyce Lüdner and President Nelson Mandela during his 1994 visit to Howard.



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1968-1977



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1977-1997



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/ the president's corner

I, Steele Have a



BY CHARLES STEELE, JR., SCLC President & CEO



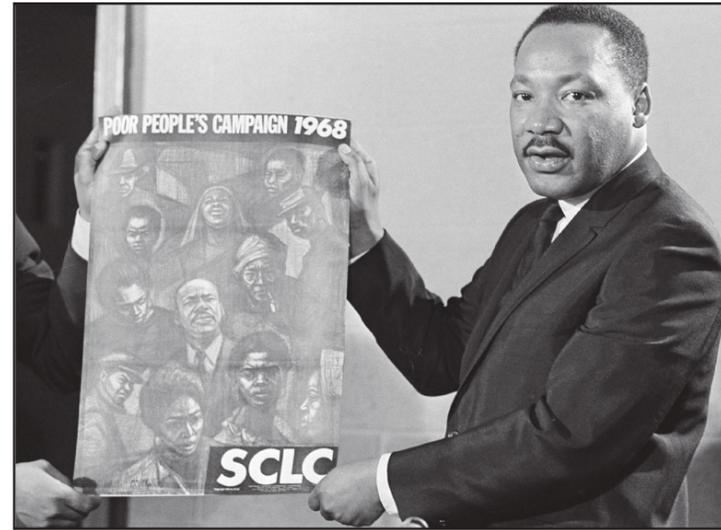
“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”

— Dr. King

Our cofounder, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. left a legacy that reaches international levels. His name is coveted in almost every country in the world. Dr. King is considered just as much a human rights leader internationally as he is a civil rights leader here in America. He is a leader whose efforts in civil rights expanded to human rights. Dr. King believed that civil rights and human rights went hand and hand. He led and took part in some of the most powerful movements in the world. He is recognized abroad for his belief and leadership that helped materialize the movement against the South African apartheid in the 1960's. Dr. King did not stop there. He is also recognized for his opposition to the Vietnam War in 1965. Dr. King became the face of a world-wide peace movement. Although many people view him as an American hero and leader, Dr. King's work and influence far exceeded the boundaries of the United States.

No matter where I go in the world, people love Dr. King and what he stood for. Why could people relate to a man so far away in another part of the world? It's because people all over felt the impact of Dr. King's work. He did not just make great speeches from a pulpit. Dr. King stood for equality and justice for all people across the world. He truly believed in his words "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere". There was no one better than Dr. King at intertwining civil rights and human rights together to create a non-violent international peace movement.

Who better than the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) cofounded by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to continue his work abroad. As SCLC President and CEO I have a responsibility to continue to expand the work of Dr. King in civil and human rights nationally and internationally. Therefore, SCLC has worked extremely hard to develop chapters and affiliates in Bethlehem, Israel and Derna, Israel. SCLC is also establishing chapters in Berlin, Germany. To fully expand the principles of the SCLC Non-violent



March 4, 1968, Dr. King promotes the Poor People's Campaign. Photo Credit, Horace Cort

Kingian Theory, SCLC teaches people all over the world on its principles. However, in order to change the world and ensure justice and equality for all, SCLC is re-establishing the Poor People's Campaign.

The Poor People's Campaign was organized in 1968 by Dr. King and the SCLC. This campaign was organized as a civil and human rights agenda to ensure that poor people of

all backgrounds would have a right to economic justice. Prior to 2018, the SCLC will be announcing the re-creation of the 3,000 person tent on the Washington Mall as a part of the 50th Anniversary of the SCLC Poor People's Campaign. I believe wholeheartedly in this campaign because there are so many people across the world suffering from poverty. According to the US Census Bureau, right here in the United States in 2012, 46.2 million people lived in poverty. Poverty in this country and abroad is a crisis. We cannot continue to let the scales of economic injustice continue to go unbalanced. More importantly, unchecked. Let's check the scales of economic injustice, let's balance the scales with job creation, better educational opportunities, schools, and better pay for qualified and dedicated teachers.

In order to ensure that our kids are receiving a proper education we must ensure that their nutritional needs are met. In 2012, according to the USDA, 15.9 million kids under the age of 18 in the United States live in households where they are unable to consistently access enough nutritious food for a healthy life. We cannot continue to let this trickle effect weigh down the scale of economic injustice. This is to serve notice about the SCLC Poor People's Campaign and it's re-enactment that SCLC will kick off in the coming weeks. Please join me and be a part of this historical movement as we work to even the scales of economic injustice. **Remember, mark your calendar for the SCLC re-enactment in 2018. To learn more please continue to check our website at www.nationalsclc.org.** SCLC



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BY CATHELEAN C. STEELE, Director, "Justice for Girls"

Hope for Their Future

With Springtime comes Women's History Month.

In reflecting upon the accomplishments of women present and past, I find myself thinking of our young girls. They are coming of age in challenging times that include the dynamics of social media and its own bar of social acceptance. As I allow myself to reflect on my years as a young girl, I remember my parents speaking of the changing times then—how we must adapt, and look for solutions in the new emerging world we faced.



The short of it: the world is always changing, and we are always adapting to that change.

I believe in youth and their ability to take on the world with all of its ever evolving challenges and opportunities. I also believe that we must find ways to help propel them to their greatness. Opportunity is not always equal because of circumstances of life. However, as mentors, our charge is to help equalize their opportunities.

As I mentor the young girls that come into my life through the "Justice for Girls" initiative, I teach them to cultivate their belief, their imagination, and their determination.

To believe that all things are possible gives youth the kind of confidence that can eliminate obstacles in their way, as they soar toward their goals. Belief is a product of thought. I was reading an article by Iyanla Vanzant where she wrote, "our thoughts are so powerful that they can influence what lies ahead".

Positive thoughts lead to powerful ideas—and productive individuals. If we believe that we can achieve our goals, we can. I remember, as some of you might remember, reading a book to my girls about a train that "believed he could". This is the kind of belief I want to instill in every young person, and especially every young girl that crosses my path.

However, without imagination, belief would be impossible. How can one believe in a life that they cannot imagine? Imagination is a mental image of what one desires his/her future to look like. Writing down goals and reading them daily helps spur the imagination. Mental imagery can then bring about the determination necessary to reach your goals, and ultimately, your full potential.

The most important of the three—belief, imagination, and determination—is by far, determination. Determination is the engine that drives us to success. Maybe the goal requires technological training, a Bachelor's degree, Master's degree, PhD, or an MD. Whatever the goal, it is determination that carries us to successful completion.

The interesting thing to me is that Life has a way of providing us all with new goals, once we have reached our initial goals. I enjoyed achieving my goal of becoming a public school educator—but now I have a new goal. Through "Justice for Girls", I along with other dedicated mentors, are looking to achieve the goal of providing young girls a life education, one that instills ideas that can build character and promise in every young girl entrusted to us.

We mentors are standing on our belief, our imagination, and our determination to do so. And, most certainly, we are standing on the shoulders of those who have gone before us.

As Maya Angelou has so aptly put it, "I love to see a young girl go out and grab the world by the lapel!"

I encourage, and urge you to join us at SCLC in the hope for their future—for their future becomes our very own... SCLC

Our "Justice for Girls" participants were empowered by hearing CHLOE' TAYLOR BROWN tell them, "When we save a girl we save generations, even nations."

Chloé Taylor Brown is the author of "Girl-Swag! A Global Girl's Curriculum for Personal Development and Lifestyle Enhancement" and a lifelong advocate for women and girls around the world.



DEDICATED MENTORS:

We are indebted to the testimony of LISA WILLIAMS, "Living Waters for Girls" and the power with which it launched "Justice for Girls" in Jan. 2013.



Our thanks to First Lady GAIL SUTTON at Jackson Memorial Baptist Church for the generous hosting and mentoring she provides "Justice for Girls".



We're asking the U.S. First Lady MICHELLE OBAMA to let "Justice for Girls" bring our young girls to visit with her, for her special mentoring moment.

"I love to see a young girl go out and grab the world by the lapel!"

— MAYA ANGELOU



"You don't become what you want, you become what you believe."

— OPRAH



XERNONA CLAYTON has been a "Justice for Girls" Official Champion from our inception, and speaks eloquently on the ever present need for mentoring and nurturing our young girls.

Lessons Learned When “Justice for Girls” Takes a Journey Through the Middle Passage

BY PAMELA A. BRIDGEMAN, Managing Consultant, “Justice for Girls”

The day was overcast and dreary. Later there would be laughter and squeals of delight for the girls and their chaperones as they took a journey down Sweet Auburn Avenue. They would be awed by the reflection pool at the King Memorial Center and inspired by what they learned at the Civil Rights Museum, the Martin Luther King, Jr. birth home, and listening to Dr. Charles Steele, Jr., President/CEO of SCLC. But at 9:00 am, the screening room at the Apex Museum was dimly lit and you could hear the steady drizzling of rain coming down outside as if to emphasize the somberness of the topic at hand.

A studied glance around the room revealed boredom; perhaps just disinterest. Maybe because the 5 year-olds to 11 year-olds couldn't conceptualize sex trafficking. How many of them had ever even had the “good touch, bad touch” conversation with their parents? And perhaps the 12 year-olds to 17 year-olds had never been exposed to the seriousness of the issue.

On the back bench a 14 year-old and a 16 year-old sat with their feet propped on it and scrolled through their Facebook™, Twitter™, and Instagram™ accounts even as the first speaker passionately warned of the dangers of social media. One even held up pictures of herself—one exposing extremely low cleavage and the other “twerking”—exactly the kind of images cautioned as putting a girl at highest risk. She argued that she didn't see the harm in what she does on social media despite what had been said by the speaker and corroborated by others in the room. Her friend snickering agreed.

At that point one of her peers, another 16 year-old, came to the front of the room. The fierce determination in her eyes and the sincerity in her voice drew the others in the room away from the distraction of the back bench. She described how she has become an advocate to end the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) after having done research for a role she played in a movie. Maybe because the word movie was used, the two cynical teenagers were unmoved if their whispering to and snapping pictures of each other is any indicator. It's disconcerting to note also, they failed to see the connection between the indicators of their risk for

exploitation and their disregard of the adult authority in the room, who had asked them to put away their phones. Sexual predators prey on teenagers made vulnerable through limited, corrupt, or non-existent adult influence in their lives. Sexual predators prey on teenagers who have no regard for authority.

Several speakers gave testimonials of overcoming sexual exploitation. Then each of them, including the “Justice for Girls” team, gave tips about what to do if the girls or their friends found themselves either at risk of or being abused. After viewing two brief movies about slavery in America and Sweet Auburn Avenue, the museum tour guide led the group to the Middle Passage exhibit room.

It took a moment to settle all the girls in one spot because some had wandered off to look at the artifacts associated with life on southern plantations—whip, chains, and other more mundane items. When they finally gathered around the first exhibit, the tour guide began the story. He talked about how mostly older adolescents and most of them females were either kidnapped or sold by tribal leaders. And horrifyingly, some were sold by their parents. He described how on the journey from West Africa to America the captors would often use the slaves for their sexual pleasure. He told them that once enslaved, masters would threaten and often would cause harm to the female slave's families if she didn't willingly submit to his sexual abuse.

The older girls stood wide-eyed, mouth agape, even the two which seemed unmoved earlier in the morning. Four 10 year-olds to 12 year-olds huddled together, each of their eyes shining with unshed tears. One of teenagers gasped and covered her mouth. Finally, they understood—abuse of authority, dysfunctional family, pimps, and johns. Sex trafficking is modern-day slavery. SCLC



Pamela A. Bridgeman, the managing consultant for SCLC's 'Justice for Girls' Initiative is a licensed clinical social worker. Her private practice, A Healing Journey Counseling and Consultation, is located in Cartersville, GA. www.pamelabridgeman.com

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“All life is interrelated. We are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied into a

single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.” – Dr. King

Nelson Mandela & Nonviolence



BY CARRIE L. WILLIAMS

Bernard LaFayette, Jr. and Nelson Mandela

*The Inescapable Network of Mutuality:
The Role of Nonviolence Through the Lives
of Nelson Mandela & Martin Luther King, Jr.
with Historical Recounts by Bernard LaFayette, Jr.*

Although they were an ocean and a continent apart during a time before the advent of the Internet, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and ANC Leader Nelson Mandela not only knew of one other, but were impacted by one another’s work in ways we are still asking questions about—particularly in the area of nonviolence.

In a recent SCLC in-depth interview, Dr. Bernard LaFayette, Jr. shared his personal experiences as a nonviolence education trainer in South Africa during the months leading up to presidential candidate Nelson Mandela’s historic election victory of 1994. He relayed his interactions with Mandela while Mandela was campaigning for President.

He also answered questions about Nelson Mandela and nonviolence. LaFayette, a prominent trainer in the area of nonviolence, and frequent lecturer at the University of Rhode Island’s Center for Nonviolence and Peace Studies, was Dr. King’s Program Administrator and lead Communications staffer at the time of King’s assassination.

“Although Mandela admired King,” reflected the veteran civil rights leader, “Mandela saw nonviolence as a method—not a way of life.”

LaFayette’s assessment is seconded by former Time Magazine editor Rick Stengel in a FAIR(Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting) article published January 2, 2014:

“One of the most interesting things he [Mandela] ever said to me was this idea of non-violence,” Stengel recalls. “Remember, we compare him to Gandhi, we compare him to Martin Luther King. He [Mandela] said: ‘I was not like them. For them, nonviolence was a principle. For me, it was a tactic. And when the tactic wasn’t working, I reversed it’ That’s a very important difference.”

Mandela’s words and actions captured one moment in time of South African history—the African National Congress

(ANC) last resort decision to use armed opposition against the white minority ruling government. That fateful decision, which many see as the ultimate cause of Mandela’s life imprisonment, came after decades of intentional nonviolence resistance lead by the ANC. [See Mandela’s Explanation for ANC Decision To Use Armed Force, p. 16, 2nd col.]

Did Mandela and other ANC leadership fail at nonviolence—or did nonviolence fail them? Or, is it that it would take an international, anti-apartheid movement of nonviolence itself, lead by Dr. King and others, continued over time, to bring to bear the freedom “solution” in South Africa? What if that only became possible out of the long suffering, nonviolent stance of a Nelson Mandela in jail for over twenty years?

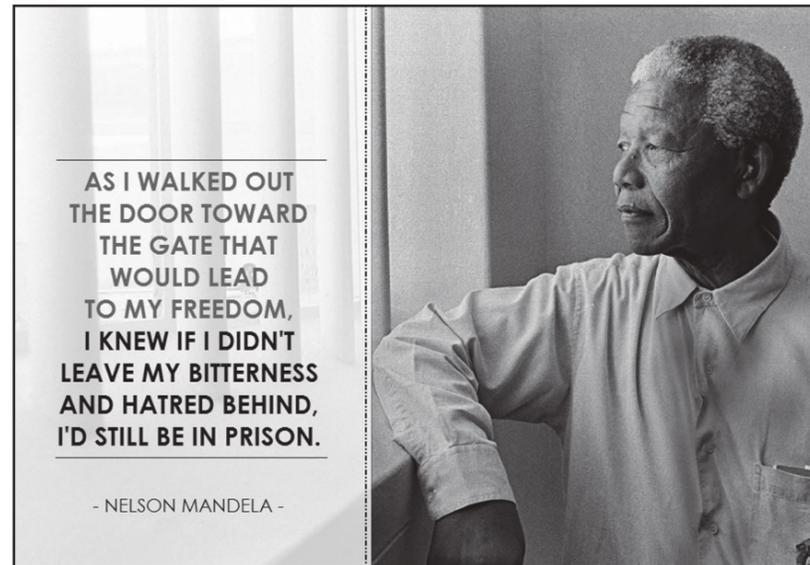
According to Dr. LaFayette, Dr. King himself spoke of—under extreme situations—putting aside temporarily his nonviolence methods to deal with a tyrannical force with the capability and intention of obliterating massive numbers of human lives. LaFayette remembers a speech Dr. King gave at the University of Chicago during the protest of the Vietnam War:

“Speaking to an audience that was a mixture of both whites and blacks, Dr. King was using a very graphic example to explain why he could not support the war in Vietnam. Dr. King said that if there was a scenario like in WWII, where a Hitler, entering into country after country, proceeded to carry out an extensive massacre of lives, he[King] would temporarily put aside his nonviolence method, and use force to prevent the massacre. Dr. King explained it would be ‘the lesser of two evils’, rather than stand by and allow such a massive number of innocent lives be destroyed. Dr. King told the college audience that he would then regroup, and resume strengthening his nonviolence methods. Since what was happening in Vietnam was not a ‘Hitler’ scenario, he [King]

feature

"We cannot allow his legacy, his memory, his meaning, to drift into the history books, to become a distant memory. He must be as real to people who never knew him, as real to children who cannot remember him, as real to grandchildren who are not yet born as he is to those of us who loved him."

—Bill Clinton, international memorial tribute concert in New York, Feb. 18, 2014



was against the U.S. being militarily involved in Vietnam."

"I believe Dr. King was trying to point out there might be times—extreme situations—when violent force becomes necessary. However, never was violence anything other than evil in Dr. King's eyes, even if a lesser one."

We may never know the full impact of King's nonviolence work on the country of South Africa—and we may never know the full impact of imprisoned Mandela's nonviolent resistance on the United States. What we do know with certainty is that Dr. King had a keen appreciation for Nelson Mandela and the freedom struggle in South Africa. Dr. Bernice King describes that extraordinary appreciation in her Huffington Post blog, "Honoring Mandela: A Better Man, Not A Bitter Man" in this way:

"My family's appreciation of Mr. Mandela dates back nearly a half century, long before millions knew who he was, when my father, Martin Luther King, Jr. was in London preparing for his acceptance of the Nobel Prize for Peace to occur three days later in Oslo, Norway. While in London, he delivered an address on the struggle against apartheid, in which he said, "Today great leaders—Nelson Mandela and Robert Sobukwe—are among the many hundreds wasting away in Robben Island prison." My father then went on to call for a "massive movement for economic sanctions," a call that my mother, Coretta Scott King repeatedly echoed in subsequent years during her efforts to build the anti-apartheid movement in the U.S."

The deep appreciation Nelson Mandela had for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the freedom struggle in the U.S. has been captured in innumerable accounts over the years. However, Mandela's appreciation is perhaps most poignantly captured by Mandela's own, "Free at last. Free at last." victory cry,

which he delivered to the world during his Inaugural speech in the presence of Dr. King's widow.

Regardless of the seeming differences in their perspectives and practices of nonviolence, the "inescapable network of mutuality" in King's and Mandela's lives is clear. Their freedom work of the twentieth century, through the spread and movement of nonviolent resistance, protest, and social change all over the world is the single garment of destiny we all are now wearing—into the twenty-first century.

Mandela's Explanation of ANC Decision to Use Armed Force

From Mandela's 1964 trial:

"Firstly, we believed that as a result of government policy, violence by the African people had become inevitable, and that unless responsible leadership was given to canalize and control the feelings of our people, there would be outbreaks of terrorism which would produce an intensity of bitterness and hostility between the various races of this country which is not produced even by war."

"Secondly, we felt that without violence, there would be no way open to the African people to succeed in their struggle against the principle of white supremacy. All lawful modes of expressing opposition to this principle had been closed by legislation, and we were placed in a position in which we had either to accept a permanent state of inferiority, or to defy the government. We chose to defy the law."

**Quote provided by FAIR article, Nov. 1, 2014, "Nelson Mandela 1918-2013: Remembering, or Not, A Revolutionary", by Peter Hart and Jim Naureckus*

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An SCLC Exclusive with Bernard LaFayette, Jr.

SCLC: Tell us about your experiences in South Africa as a nonviolence education trainer. Weren't things rather unstable in South Africa during that time?

LAFAYETTE: Yes, which is one of the major reasons why the nonviolence education was so critical. In the early 1990's, I was working for the King Center and Mrs. King. At that time, SCLC and the King Center worked hand-in-hand as two organizations with related functions, but separate capabilities.

We applied for, and received a United States Agency for International Development (USAID) grant to provide Non-Partisan Voter Education and Nonviolence Education Training to grassroots leaders in South Africa. In January 1994 we did two demonstration trainings in Johannesburg and Durban. After which 80 influence leaders were brought to Johannesburg for a ten day residential training. Although we received the grant monies in 1993, we weren't authorized to begin using them until 1994, which had us conducting this training just as the South African presidential election year was starting up.

SCLC: How was the nonviolence education set up?

LAFAYETTE: It was set up to help stop the deadly violence that was happening between various groups, and to help grassroots leaders register their people to become voters, in time for elections. To do this, it meant targeted selection of key grassroots leaders, who could go back to their groups, help organize, and spread the effort to register voters. The leaders came from various different parts of the country, including Cape Town, Durban, Port Elizabeth, and Johannesburg. In the first session, we had 70 leaders scheduled for a 10-day intensive, 15 hours a day nonviolence training class. We were able to hold the training in a hotel near Johannesburg.

SCLC: That sounds like a massive undertaking. How were you able to accomplish this?

LAFAYETTE: It took a team of us: Harold Sims, Board Member of the King Center; Dr. Mary Smith, educator in Miami, FL; and Charles Alphin, were a key member of the King Center team that conducted the training. Our South African host was Rev. Dr. Joseph Tshawane, President/Founder, King-Luthuli Transformation Centre, Johannesburg, South Africa. Charles was working at the King Center in the non-violence education and training program at that time. The concept was for the training to be "intense" such that the leaders could be saturated with the training, experiencing it



Bernard LaFayette, Jr.

and absorbing it as quickly as possible. Our goal was to have that training fused and consolidated in the minds and actions of these grassroots leaders. We created small groups for the leaders to work in. Together, they were tasked with solving problems and making presentations as teams. This was highly effective methodology in helping to break down the barriers of communication and hostilities they had been feeling towards one another.

SCLC: How did it turn out?

LAFAYETTE: The first day was a little touch and go. One of the groups that came—their leader insisted that they read their mission statement before the training started. It was a way to get their side recognized. There were six people in the group. Seeing this would create problems, I let them know, in front of the rest of the groups, that their mission statement was not on the agenda, and since time was of the essence, we would have to forego the reading of their mission statement. That resulted in four of the six leaving out of the training room. Realizing we were at a critical juncture, I told the remaining two leaders from the group that we were stopping the training, and would not resume until the two of them went after the others that had just left, and got them to return, by telling them what I had said. About 30 minutes later, all six returned. After that, the training went rather smoothly. Those 70 leaders were able to go back to their various groups. Ultimately, 300,000 South Africans received similar training and registered to vote, out of these efforts in nonviolence education training.

SCLC: How did you meet Nelson Mandela?

LAFAYETTE: Myself and others of our team were able to meet up with Mandela on the campaign trail, coincidentally. We were doing some technical assistance with the groups that had undergone the training.

SCLC: What was that like for you?

LAFAYETTE: It was a great honor. When he was told who I was and what we had been doing, he said to me, "I want you to bring as many young people to South Africa as you can to help us build this country." That struck a chord with me. Dr. King had told me, on the day he was killed, that the next steps in the Movement were to internationalize and institutionalize the Movement. Mandela's words were in sync with Dr. King's last words to me. *It is a moment I will never forget.* sclc

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His Day is Done – a tribute poem by **Maya Angelou** – for **Nelson Mandela**

*His day is done.
Is done.
The news came on the wings of a wind, reluctant to carry its burden.
Nelson Mandela's day is done.
The news, expected and still unwelcome, reached us in the United States, and suddenly our world became somber.
Our skies were leadened.*

*His day is done.
We see you, South African people standing speechless at the slamming of that final door through which no traveler returns.*

*Our spirits reach out to you Bantu, Zulu, Xhosa, Boer.
We think of you and your son of Africa, your father, your one more wonder of the world.*

We send our souls to you as you reflect upon your David armed with a mere stone, facing down the mighty Goliath.

Your man of strength, Gideon, emerging triumphant.

Although born into the brutal embrace of Apartheid, scarred by the savage atmosphere of racism, unjustly imprisoned in the bloody maws of South African dungeons.

Would the man survive? Could the man survive?

His answer strengthened men and women around the world.

In the Alamo, in San Antonio, Texas, on the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, in Chicago's Loop, in New Orleans' Mardi Gras, in New York City's Times Square, we watched as the hope of Africa sprang through the prison's doors.

His stupendous heart intact, his gargantuan will hale and hearty.

He had not been crippled by brutes, nor was his passion for the rights of human beings diminished by twenty-seven years of imprisonment.

Even here in America, we felt the cool, refreshing breeze of freedom.

When Nelson Mandela took the seat of Presidency in his country where formerly he was not even allowed to vote we were enlarged by tears of pride, as we saw Nelson Mandela's former prison guards invited, courteously, by him to watch from the front rows his inauguration.

We saw him accept the world's award in Norway with the grace and gratitude of the Solon in Ancient Roman Courts, and the confidence of African Chiefs from ancient royal stools.

No sun outlasts its sunset, but it will rise again and bring the dawn.

Yes, Mandela's day is done, yet we, his inheritors, will open the gates wider for reconciliation, and we will respond generously to the cries of Blacks and Whites, Asians, Hispanics, the poor who live piteously on the floor of our planet.

*He has offered us understanding.
We will not withhold forgiveness even from those who do not ask.
Nelson Mandela's day is done, we confess it in tearful voices, yet we lift our own to say thank you.*

Thank you our Gideon, thank you our David, our great courageous man.

We will not forget you, we will not dishonor you, we will remember and be glad that you lived among us, that you taught us, and that you loved us all. sclc

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A Father to Daughter Conversation

About Nelson & Martin By Carrie L. Williams

A unique opportunity came to me by way of reporting on this story (p. 14): a conversation with my father that I will remember for the rest of my life.

One of the things he recommended to me was that I include a short paragraph or two about what I saw in South Africa when I visited a couple years ago, and what the people on the street were saying about Mandela.” I had not even considered including my personal experience in South Africa into my writing. But, my dad had a point. My experience had been a powerful one—even spiritual. My thought at the time was, “We Americans have no concept of what diversity is” when I saw the myriad of native tribes, Asians, Indians, Europeans, Americans,



and Afrikaners. It was even more mind-boggling as I noticed how graphically, distinctly different the younger generations of each of these cultures were from the elders of the cultures they came from. The vibrancy, in the midst of wide extremes in socio-economic conditions amongst the cultures and peoples, was palpable: in a word, aliveness. What I heard about Mandela was a mixed bag. But, mainly what I heard was he was missed, that things weren't the same without his leadership at the head of the country. Yet, everyone had their opinions—and lots of them—about how the country should move forward. In a word—aliveness.

Then, as often is the case in conversations I have with my father, as we were getting to the end of our discussion about Mandela, and my writing, he saved his most profound advice for last. Having grown up watching my father preach, talking with my father about civil rights from the time I was a little girl, watching JFK's funeral with him and my mom on a black and white television at age five, what I heard him say next will stay with me forever:

“Jesus taught forgiveness as a religious tactic,” Dad offered, “and perhaps, to some extent, it served as a political tactic for him as well, with the Jewish society and Temple authorities.

“You can now see how Mandela, Gandhi, King, and Jesus all experienced suffering in the cause for their people.

“What's unique about Mandela, however, is the duration of his suffering. It is, perhaps, the longest recorded span of suffering of any leader for the people in our historical recollection.”

I cannot express enough my gratitude to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference leadership, and particularly to National Communications Director Maynard Eaton, for the honor and privilege it has been to write for this issue of the SCLC National Magazine. It has strengthened and deepened my commitment to the Movement—and my love for my father. *God bless us and keep us.* sclc

HIS WORDS GAVE US A VOICE

Eighty-five years ago, a man was born who would forever change the world. And with the time he spent on this Earth, his life and his words inspired many to not only do more, but also do better.

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BRAZIL: The Land of the Invisible Black Majority

“ I am an invisible man. No, I am not a spook like those who haunted Edgar Allan Poe; nor am I one of your Hollywood-movie ectoplasms. I am a man of substance, of flesh and bone, fiber and liquids—and I might even be said to possess a mind. I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me. ”

—Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*

WRITTEN BY MABLE IVORY
EDITED BY KUMI RAUF & PAULO ROGÉRIO NUNES

Brazil has the largest population of Afro-descendants in the world outside of Africa—101 million strong, more than double the size of the U.S. population of African-Americans (44 million). The Portuguese conducted the largest forced migration of Africans in the Triangular Slave Trade from Africa to Brazil, which started almost 100 years prior to the British importation of Africans to North America. For every 1 slave the British brought to North America, the Portuguese brought 10 slaves to Brazil.

However, this Black majority has very little visibility internationally and maintains a weak economic, social and political position domestically. It is perplexing to think that in Brazil, the 6th largest economy in the world (larger than the U.K. and Italy), a country with a statistical Black population majority, but only 15% are college graduates. According to Brazil's President, Dilma Rousseff, the face of poverty in Brazil is Black and female. In contrast, Blacks in the U.S. are a population minority, representing 14% of the population. However, Black Americans have about the same percentage representation for college graduates and members of congress as their population percentage: 14%. In the U.S. we have a Black president and a Black First Lady. In Bahia, the Brazilian state with the largest concentration of Black people in the country at 80%, there has never been a Black governor elected to office.

Why are Black folks in Brazil living on the margins of society, if they represent a population majority? Brazil recently became a democracy in 1985. Prior to 1985, Brazil was a very oppressive military dictatorship, supported by the U.S. government, where censorship was enforced and penalties were stiff for those who opposed the regime. In fact, conditions in Brazil were very much like that of apartheid

South Africa, where a White minority governed the country and maintained economic, political and social control under similar conditions.

Almost 30 years post democracy, and Black Brazilians find themselves underrepresented and dissatisfied with the slow pace of their progress as a community.

Margarete Carvalho, from UNEGRO: Union of Blacks for Equality and Strengthening the Fight (União de Negros pelo Igualdade para fortalecer a luta), speaks about the psychological hold that racism has placed on the Black community: “Although we have fought hard against racism—all of us from different generations in the movimento negro (Black movement), the racist ideology still informs Brazilian thought, our institutions, our political system, our way of teaching and our private life; everything. And the mechanics of racism is so sophisticated that it causes people to not even notice it.” Another educator from the Steve Biko Institute in Salvador da Bahia named Jucy Silva says, “Young people need opportunities, a healthy environment, love, leisure and respect of their culture and diversity. Instead, they receive exclusion.”

This culture of exclusion of Afro-descendants has made the value of a Black life in Brazil worthless. Between 1980 and 2010, over 1 million Black youths in Brazil have been killed by gun violence, whether it be at the hands of criminals, others in the community or the police. The death toll from this Black genocide in Brazil has exceeded the wars of Iraq, Afghanistan, Bosnia, Sudan and Rwanda combined. While Brazil might rank #1 in the world for homicides due to gun violence, it is clear that Black people in Brazil are getting killed at a significantly higher rate than Whites or other groups. According to the “Map of Violence” produced

by Brazil's Secretariat for the Promotion of Racial Equality (SEPPIR), while 2002 saw 26,951 Blacks killed by violence, in 2010 that amount was 34,983 - an increase of 29.8% in just eight years. On the other hand, the same period saw a 25.5% reduction in the deaths of Whites and Asians.

If we explore the culture of assimilation under the Portuguese slavemaster in Brazil, one will find that Portuguese slavemasters would often adopt their mulatto children into their family as well as marry a slave girl, thereby freeing her from slavery, but giving her second class status. Whereas the British slavemaster upheld a very clear segregation on ethnic lines, the Portuguese mixed and intermarried and created blended families. Therefore, a culture of segregation in the U.S. helped the Black community to unite and fight oppression and racism. On the other hand, in Brazil, a culture of intermixing persisted, blurring the lines of a Brazilian's racial identity. A Brazilian can choose to self-identify based on a myriad of factors, and there are over 200 classifications for a person's skin tone in Brazil. Thus, if a Brazilian has one drop of White blood, she can choose to identify as White. Moreover, Brazilians who identify as White or marry White think they will have more success socially and economically. Henceforth, while Brazil might be a nation in which 86% of its population has some African roots, this African history is not readily embraced or recognized, even with a law that was passed in 2003 forcing schools to teach the African history. Ask any Brazilian who identifies as White if Brazil is a country with a majority of Afro-descendants, and she will tell you that Brazilian people are all mixed and there is no White or Black, like in the United States.

Alicia Keys, Halle Berry and Mariah Carey can all self-identify as White, Moreno or Non-Black in Brazil. Brazilians would not view them as passing for White. Instead, because of their success and fame, these three artists would be expected to classify as White as well deny their Blackness. When Mariah Carey first rose to fame in the 90s, she did an interview in Brazil where she acknowledged she is bi-racial and has a Black father. There were many in the Brazilian community, who found it problematic that Mariah Carey would publicly discuss her Black heritage, given her enormous international success as a singer as well as her clear, European features. Unfortunately in Brazil, when one becomes successful and she still embraces her African heritage, it becomes a conflict with the social perception of Black, which is equated with being poor, subservient, uneducated, unimportant and mediocre.

So as Brazil seeks to maintain an international identity as a global leader with one of the world's most successful economies, the Afro-Brazilian population becomes marginalized and seen by the world in a limited context; that of a prostitute, a favela resident, a criminal, a servant, a samba dancer or a capoeirista. Not only do Afro-Brazilians have very little voice or visibility domestically, but they also have a very narrow identity globally.

Unlike the English speaking Black community in South Africa, who could build international bridges of support and advocacy for their struggle against apartheid, Afro-Brazilians speak Portuguese—the official language of only 9 nations in

the world; whereas 79 nations in the world have English as the official language. Thus, the Black population in Brazil has been unable to communicate with the world about its fight for racial equality and social inclusion. Instead, Afro-Brazilians have been subjugated by a media that seeks to make them invisible, by showing only Whites or lighter-skinned Brazilians. This absence of Black people in Brazilian media has given the false impression that Blacks in Brazil are a minority population, like Black Americans in the United States.

With the upcoming World Cup and 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio, we have a moment to create awareness for the voiceless and to advocate for social change. Marques Travae is an African-American from Detroit, who has lived in São Paulo for the last two years. Marques' English language blog, Black Women of Brazil (<http://blackwomenofbrazil.co/>) provides timely news, information and profiles of key community leaders and activists. Black Women of Brazil has reached over a 1 million people internationally and is helping to create a global platform for Black Brazilians to be seen and heard. “When I first began visiting Brazil, it became a little frustrating always trying to combat the stereotypes and general lack of information that Americans have about Brazil, particularly Afro-Brazilians,” says Travae. “There are so many dynamic Afro-Brazilians that the world knows nothing about. Black Women of Brazil is meant to be a showcase that allows the stories and voices of Black Brazil to speak for itself.” continues Travae.

By opening up the lines of communication and overcoming language barriers, we can make the struggle of Afro-Brazilians more visible and join together to empower their fight for justice and equality. **sclc**

Mable Ivory is the founder of Ivory Global Advisors and seeks to build bridges between Afro-descendants in the U.S. and Brazil. Kumi Rauf is the founder of I Love Being Black. Paulo Rogério Nunes is the founder of the Ethnic Media Institute in Salvador da Bahia, Brazil.



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The Legacy Continues



Scarlet Pressley-Brown

When Scarlet Pressley-Brown moved to Atlanta 25 years ago from South Carolina, she was looking for an opportunity to raise her two daughters in an empowering environment with unending opportunities.

Since then, the interim director of the SCLC/Women, Inc. has become an influential presence in a city known for its legacy and leaders.

“Service has become a way of life and I consider it a privilege and blessing to be able to help others less fortunate,” she said. “As a child, we were a family of little means, but were always taught to share. We were reminded that there was someone, somewhere with less, and someone somewhere with nothing. Giving back is important because I know for a fact my mom was telling the truth. If but for the Grace of God, that someone with nothing could very well have been me.”

Pressley-Brown became interim director of the SCLC/Women after the passing of founder Evelyn Gibson Lowery.

Mrs. Lowery’s legacy supports women daily and is building a foundation for girls to build confidence and expose them to opportunities. SCLC/Women hosts a mentoring program called Bridging the Gap for girls 8 to 18, and provides a Leadership Institute for girls 15 to 18 at Grady High School. They are mentored and tutored in finance, careers, nutrition, relationships, self-esteem and peer relations. And the Pampering for Peace program provides a safe and wholesome opportunity for victims of domestic violence to experience a moment of beauty and relaxation.

Pressley-Brown’s role on the board of the SCLC/Women is especially important because Mrs. Lowery asked her personally. *“To me that was such an incredible compliment that she would think of me as one who could be a part of her organization. Because of the things I knew she stood for, the history and the commitment to service, it was my privilege to become a part of the SCLC/Women, Inc.”*

“Today’s woman, paying attention and processing the vast amount of information available at our disposal, should put forth a concerted effort to ensure all women are aware of the power and potential of our gender. We are validated and confirmed to have the ability to affect change, create opportunity, and impact destiny. It’s imperative that we not take those talents and skill for granted; instead our responsibility is to maximize and capitalize on the possibilities.”

—Scarlet Pressley-Brown

On April 4, Mrs. Lowery’s signature event, the Drum Major for Justice Gala, was held for its 35th year to mark the day Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. was shot and killed in Memphis. But this year, the program honored Mrs. Lowery for her “tireless work and dedication to improving the quality of life for others,” Pressley-Brown said. “This was her night to take her rightful place on the throne and reign as the ultimate Drum Major for Justice.”

As the challenges for the African-American family and African-American women in particular continue, the SCLC/Women, Inc. continues to find ways to support legislative change.

She is also on the board of The Alliance Theater, Georgia Center for Child Advocacy and the Ron Clark Academy. She is a member of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, the Women’s Solidarity Society, Buckhead-Cascade Links Incorporated and other groups.

“I capitalize on my innate ability to manage many, manage much and move mountains,” she said. “Historically, that is what the matriarchs of my heritage did. So I feel blessed to have those traits and characteristics that were obviously a part of the make up of Evelyn Gibson Lowery, Harriett Tubman, Rosa Parks, Michelle Obama, Sybrina Fulton and dozens more. We do what we have to do.” sclc

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Vague Laws, Vague Results & Deadly Consequences



Nov. 4, 2012, Rainbow/PUSH Coalition press conference announcing Stand Your Ground (SYG) Lawsuit against the State of Georgia.

Photo by clyde@clyde_bradley@msn.com

BY ROBERT PATILLO

On March 30, 2012, Chris Johnson, who is black, and his girlfriend Ashley Danielle Knapp, who is white, were patrons at the “Corner Tavern” in Newnan, Georgia. During the evening Adam Lee Edmondson, who also is Caucasian, approached Ms. Knapp and made a rude gesture that led to a non-physical confrontation between Johnson and Edmondson that ended when Edmondson’s friends took him away from the area. The following night, March 31, 2012, while Ms. Knapp was again with Johnson when Edmondson approached Ms. Knapp again. Knapp told Mr. Edmondson several times to leave her alone but he refused.

Surveillance video from the Corner Tavern shows Johnson walking up to Mr. Edmondson and requesting that he leave Knapp alone. Mr. Edmondson refused to do so and made inflammatory statements that caused Mr. Johnson to strike him with his hand. Bystanders quickly intervened and separated the two men. After sometime had passed Mr. Edmondson pulled out a gun, reached around another patron, pointed the firearm into the chest of Chris Johnson and fired one shot killing Chris Johnson. Mr. Edmondson was arrested and charged with murder.

During his trial Mr. Edmondson invoked Stand Your Ground as his defense and the Jury found that despite Mr. Johnson not being armed, the confrontation being over, a cooling off period passing and the presence of security guards

to diffuse the situation that Mr. Edmondson was not guilty of murder under the Stand Your Ground law.

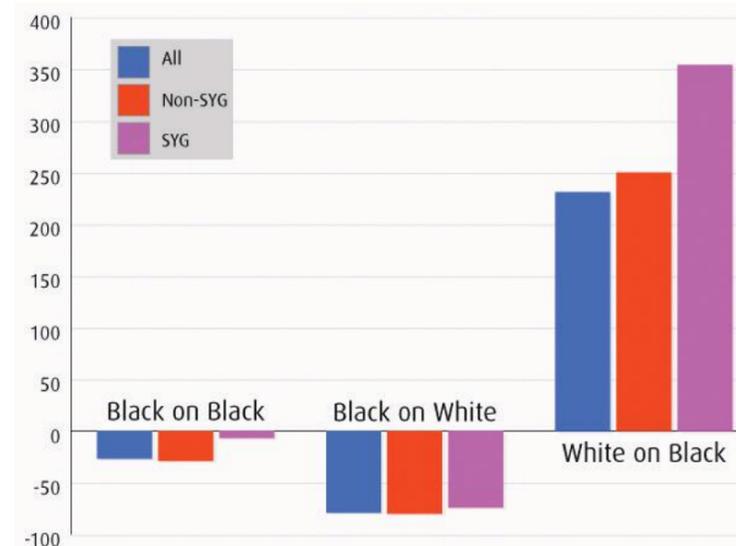
Stand Your Ground (SYG) laws are designed to short-circuit the checks and balances built into our criminal justice system. SYG laws are a solution in search of a problem and in fact create problems of their own. In the United States, the total number of justifiable homicides have steadily increased from 196 in 2005 to 278 in 2010, despite the fact that the total number of overall killings declined during the same period. It is not a coincidence that justifiable homicides began to rise at the same time that SYG laws began to proliferate.

A recent study suggests that these laws may lead to more deaths as opposed to saving any lives at all. According to a June 2013 study by Texas A&M, the rates of murder and non-negligent manslaughter increased by 8 percent in states with Stand Your Ground laws. That’s an additional 600 homicides per year in the states that have enacted such laws.

John Roman, a senior fellow at the Urban Institute’s Justice Policy Center, recently conducted a study examining racial disparity using FBI data on 43,500 homicides from 2005 to 2009 specifically looking at “justified” homicides. Roman found that the killings of black people by whites were more likely to be considered justified than the killings of white people by blacks.

Point blank, Stand Your Ground Laws have the effect of

Chart on right: The figures represent the percentage likelihood that killings will be found justifiable, compared to white-on-white killings.



allowing more black men to be killed and their killers to go free.

These laws found their genesis in the mid-part of the last decade when conservative groups such as the American Legislative Exchange Counsel (ALEC) and the National Rifle Association (NRA) lobbied states to expand their self-defense laws to cover activities outside of one’s home. In 2006, Georgia, codified its castle doctrine and doctrine of self-defense a new statutory scheme that abrogated the duty to retreat before using deadly force.

Traditionally, self-defense required that the victim must choose a safe retreat if available instead of resorting to deadly force unless they are at home. The rationale behind the common law is clear. If an intruder is within your home that victim has nowhere else to retreat to. Your home is your castle and thus you should have a right to defend yourself within its walls.

Stand Your Ground takes the common sense of the common law and expand it beyond all bounds of reason. By allowing individuals to use the same rules that apply within their homes to anywhere, they have taken away any mechanism for determining if there was an actual threat present.

In 1898, the Georgia Supreme Court outlined the rule for victims of attack, holding that there is no duty to retreat “if the circumstances are sufficient to excite the fears of a reasonable man that a felonious assault is about to be made upon him, and the slayer, who is free from blame, acts under the influence of such fears.”

SYG reduced this common law requirement to only the need for a “reasonable” belief. The act does not define what actions, circumstances or conditions would constitute a “reasonable” belief needed to trigger the use of deadly force. The act does not define what actions an individual may take to prevent another from using deadly force against them where the other is mistaken in their “reasonable belief” that force is needed.

We believe that Stand Your Ground Laws are not just nonsensical, amoral and unjust but also unconstitutional. The 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution the right to “Due Process” and “Equal Protection” under the law, we believe that Stand Your Ground violates both of these principles.

Due process requires two criteria. First is “Notice” (they have to tell you what the law is) and second is a “Hearing” (they have to give you the opportunity to contest your charges). In order for a law to satisfy the Notice requirement it must be sufficiently specific and understandable that a person of average intelligence knows what the parameters of the law are. If a law is not sufficiently specific it is unconstitutionally void for vagueness.

Stand Your Ground Laws do not give individuals fair notice of who it applies to nor what standards apply. A person has no way of knowing what actions will trigger a “reasonable belief” and thus comport their actions as to not trigger another’s right to use deadly force. Additionally, an individual seeking to stand their ground and assert self-defense has no way of knowing if their “reasonable belief” comports with the standards protected by the challenged law. In sum, you cannot have a speed limit of “Around 35 mph” or a law that says you “Probably can’t turn right on red.” Laws have to be clear and discernable. Stand Your Ground laws are neither and thus unconstitutional.

The formulation of public policy should be driven by data and the desire to preserve, or enhance, public safety. SYG laws defy statistical evidence. The public is less safe and less confident in law enforcement because of them. For these reasons we believe Stand Your Ground Laws cannot stand. SCLC



Robert Patillo has been featured in articles in the New York Times, Huffington Post and UK Daily Mailer to name a few. He has appeared on various television and radio programs including HuffingtonPost LIVE, CNN’s Newroom and as a guest analyst on 1380am WAOK as a legal analyst. As well as hosting a popular Youtube channel and website www.jobstjusticedreams.com.

Previously, Patillo has been a researcher and writer for Rev. Jesse L. Jackson’s Rainbow/PUSH Coalition, worked in the legal department for the Center for American Progress and interned for the Southern Education Foundation.

Patillo currently is chief attorney at The Patillo Law Group, LLC “A Christian Centered Law Practice” focusing on Civil Rights law.

Obama's "My Brother's Keeper" Initiative: Has he Come Full Circle?

BY HAZEL TRICE EDNEY, TriceEdneyWire.com

President Barack Obama appears to be finally making good on a long-standing promise that he made to Black leaders the evening before his first election. That promise was to try to "change this community."

Political observers have gasped at the frankness of his speech last week announcing the new "My Brother's Keeper" initiative to strengthen America's Black men and boys by forming a task force that will make recommendations on the investment of millions of dollars into organizations that serve men and boys of color. The initiatives will be financed by foundations and organizations already targeting this population.

"This is an issue of national importance—it's as important as any issue that I work on. It's an issue that goes to the very heart of why I ran for President—because if America stands for anything, it stands for the idea of opportunity for everybody; the notion that no matter who you are, or where you came from, or the circumstances into which you are born, if you work hard, if you take responsibility, then you can make it in this country," Obama said. "And that's the idea behind everything that I'll do this year, and for the rest of my presidency. Because at a time when the economy is growing, we've got to make sure that every American shares in that growth, not just a few."

Given grumbling from some that President Obama hasn't done enough specifically for the African-Americans who elected him, some political observers have now facetiously questioned whether he has finally become "The Black President".

Actually, President Obama's announcement appears strategically—and safely—placed within the second term of his presidency.

On Nov. 3, 2008, the eve of his first election, he said the following words to key Black leaders in an exclusive telephone conference:

"Everyone under the sound of my voice understands the struggles we face. Everyone understands the fierce urgency of now. You all know what's at stake in this election." Obama then listed a string of issues disparately faced by African-Americans, including the struggle to recruit good teachers, the struggle against under-funded schools, double-digit jobless rates and having to work two and three jobs to make ends meet. Those issues mirror the issues outlined in his introduction to "My Brother's Keeper" last week.

"I mention these issues because this community, our community, the African-American community, during these challenging times, suffers more than most in this country," he said in the 2008 call. "Double digit inflation, double digit unemployment, stagnant wages, our kids are more likely to drop out, more likely to be in jail, more likely to die. We're going to have to do better. And if we continue the momentum we've seen across this country over the last several weeks, we can do better...I'm convinced that not only are we going to change this country, but we're going to change this community," he said.

Now that Obama has been re-elected, some believe such programs as "My Brother's Keeper" the "Promise Zones" announced in January, and his recent White House meeting with Black leaders represent his coming full circle on that election-eve promise.

"The Lawyers' Committee commends President Obama for following through on his commitment to take bold and necessary actions in addressing decades-long issues facing communities of color, and for taking an inter-agency approach in tackling disparities and challenges in education, employment, health and nutrition, and related issues, particularly affecting African American and Hispanic boys and young men," said Lawyers' Committee President and Executive Director Barbara Arnwine, who was present at the White House during last week's announcement. "Creating pathways to success and fostering collaborative business and community relationships are indeed vital to this process."

Accolades are being heard from grassroots to Congress. "This



President Obama prepares for what he says will be a focus on men and boys of color "for the rest of my presidency."

unprecedented initiative will bring organizations together across public and private sectors to support young men of color in effective and innovative ways," said Congressional Black Caucus Chair Marcia L. Fudge. "Statistics show that African-American males have a greater risk of being in categories that prevent them from realizing their full potential, such as having higher incarceration and dropout rates. But we know this is neither due to a lack of ability nor a lack of will, but a lack of opportunity and support."

With an audience of dozens of African-American and Latino teens behind him and an East Room audience of mostly men in front of him, Obama outlined what "My Brother's Keeper" will do.

"After months of conversation with a wide range of people, we've pulled together private philanthropies and businesses, mayors, state and local leaders, faith leaders, nonprofits, all who are committed to creating more pathways to success. And we're committed to building on what works," he said.

In a nutshell, foundations will invest hundreds of millions of dollars over the next five years into programs that work to impact key areas of social development, such as "early child development and

school readiness, parenting and parent engagement, 3rd grade literacy, educational opportunity and school discipline reform, interactions with the criminal justice system ladders to jobs and economic opportunity and healthy families and communities".

The President pointed to statistics to illustrate the need for the initiative:

- "If you're African American, there's about a one in two chance you grow up without a father in your house...If you're Latino, you have about a one in four chance. We know that boys who grow up without a father are more likely to be poor, more likely to underperform in school."
- "As a Black student, you are far less likely than a White student to be able to read proficiently by the time you are in 4th grade. By the time you reach high school, you're far more likely to have been suspended or expelled. There's a higher chance you end up in the criminal justice system, and a far higher chance that you are the victim of a violent crime."
- "Fewer young black and Latino men participate in the labor force compared to young white men. And all of this translates into higher unemployment rates and poverty rates as adults."

Obama concluded, "And the worst part is we've become numb to these statistics. We're not surprised by them. We take them as the norm. We just assume this is an inevitable part of American life, instead of the outrage that it is. That's how we think about it. It's like a cultural backdrop for us—in movies and television. We just assume, of course, it's going to be like that. But these statistics should break our hearts. And they should compel us to act." sclc

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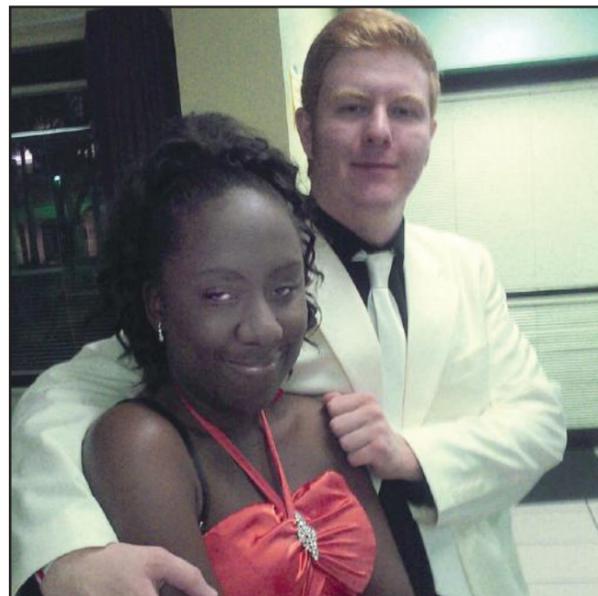
Interracial Relationship Triumphs in the Face of Silent Racism

BY RULONDA JABREY

Since the institution of slavery and Jim Crow, interracial relationships have been primarily taboo and in years prior, even forbidden. Numerous lynchings have occurred because of Black men just looking at White women! Billie Holiday's haunting, lyrical legend "Strange Fruit" tells the riveting, powerful tale of lynching in the American South during the 1940s. Sadly, not much has changed since that time. Southern trees used to bear strange fruit, but not anymore. Now, they bear "forbidden" fruit in the form of interracial dating. There are the forbidden fruit of white women, which black men pine over, coupled with the bittersweet fruit of black women, which white men lust after. On the surface, it seems as though no one cares who a person dates, so long as they fit the standard of a typical, normal relationship, according to the Black culture. However, once a person breaks out the "standard rules of dating," that's when people become uncomfortable and start to voice their opinions, most of which reveal their racist mentality, and such it was in my relationship with my best friend, and ex-boyfriend, Casey Crosby, who is a wonderfully gorgeous mix of Irish and Lebanese decent.

Initially, Casey and I met during Finals Week in the Spring of 2011, my freshman year at Palm Beach Atlantic University, in West Palm Beach, FL. At that time, Casey was a junior studying Biology, while I was studying English. I was first attracted to Casey because of his quirky nature (he always had a pencil in his ear) and the ease which with our conversations flowed. We would often transition from discussing our favorite literary authors to all things frivolous, like ninja vampires and superheroes. After the Spring semester ended, we became closer, corresponding via email throughout the summer, and began our relationship the following Fall semester. Casey and I were inseparable on campus, where the majority of the student population is White and, for the most part, accepting of our interracial relationship. Dr. Jenifer Elmore, a mutual professor-friend who taught both of us in the English department, was especially pleased when I told her we were dating. She once told me, "I applaud people who are in interracial relationships because they're taking a stand against racism, fighting it with love. That's so beautiful! I'm so happy that you and Casey are dating." Not everyone shared her enthusiasm though.

Away from the campus life—out in the "real world"—things were drastically different. Glares of merciless judgment followed us whenever we went, primarily from Black women! I couldn't, and still don't, understand it. It's as if they were nonverbally saying, "How dare you betray your sisters and your race by dating 'the enemy'! Are our men not good enough for you?" I felt that their piercing eyes, with hateful



Rulonda JaBrey and Casey Crosby

looks of disapproval, were lynching me and there was nothing I could do about it. Ironically, or maybe not, that's exactly what I did, even with my family members. My mother and stepfather had met Casey at the very end of my freshman year. They seemed to like him well enough and even said on several occasions that we were "perfect for each other," but behind closed doors, their true feelings emerged. My stepfather, especially, would make racial jokes about my relationship with Casey that were inappropriate and hurtful. As for my mother, she would conceal her disdain in the form of a seemingly innocent query. "Are you sure you don't want a Black man?" she'd often ask. After some time, I learned that silence was my best option when dealing with my parents and those who wanted me to defend my relationship because of their misunderstandings.

Entering into and thriving in an interracial relationship is by no means an easy feat, especially with racism in America. It doesn't take a genius to know that this silent war is far from destroyed, but I believe we are slowly getting there. One prominent man who is tangibly aiding in the silent war's destruction is Dr. Joseph Williams. Dr. Williams is currently working on a documentary titled Kolorstruck, in order to combat and change the way we contemplate and converse about the issue of race in America. I applaud Dr. Williams for his work and believe that if more people joined him combating the silent war of racism, then perhaps those who are in interracial relationships wouldn't have to fight so hard. **sclc**

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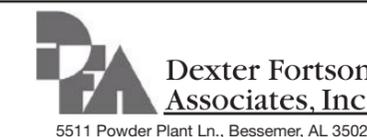
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