

King was an activist

By Meloye
Micere Stewart
SPECIAL TO THE POST

As we move into the new year and ever closer to a new millennium, the words of Martin Luther King Jr. serve as a potent reminder of the work yet to be done: "In the future we must become intensive political activists. We must be guided in this direction because we need political strength more desperately than any other group in American society."

In his last book, "Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community," King wrote clearly and powerfully about the various challenges we face and directional paths the African American community must take in order to achieve full equality.

Since the heyday of the '60s, radical political activism in the black community has experienced a slow death. The "death" is evident in our lack of community participation, from voting to town meetings to parental involvement in the education of our children. The lack of participation from the so-called "Talented Tenth" is particularly disheartening and justifies Carter G. Woodson's assessment of the American educational system as one which miseducates black people. King wrote, "Education without social action is a one-sided value because it has no true power potential."

The lack of race consciousness for group empowerment is the very reason why W.E.B. DuBois renounced his conception of the "Talented Tenth." The noble idea that race leadership must be cultivated by

those of us best prepared to serve has been usurped by the individualistic pursuit of the "American Dream." In other words, those of us with skills, resources and college degrees who are simply working for personal gain — money, power and status — have not only missed the mark, but are selfishly sacrificing group progress. King writes, "We have been oppressed as a group and we must overcome that oppression as a group."

The cord struck which led more than a million black men to

Washington, D.C. last October is the same cord which led thousands to the same spot in 1963. Moving beyond the famous "I have a dream" speech, King wrote about the importance of group solidarity for group empowerment and placed responsibility in our own hands.

"There must be a climate of social pressure in the Negro community that scorns the Negro who will not pick up his citizenship rights and add his strength enthusiastically and voluntarily to the accumulation of power for himself and

his people."

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(Martin Luther King August 28, 1963)

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one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the
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- Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

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