

FORUM

Don't forget the life and legacy of Malcolm X at 50th memorial



Ron Daniels
Guest Columnist

The 50th anniversary of Bloody Sunday, the Selma-to-Montgomery March, and the passage of the historic Voting Rights Act of 1965 and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s role in these events is correctly capturing the imagination of Black America.

But, there is another set of events that should also receive attention of our people. 2015 marks the 50th memorial of the assassination of Malcolm X, and it is also the year of his 90th birthday.

It seems odd that very little attention is being devoted to the anniversary dates of the life and legacy of such an extraordinary leader. It is as if Black America is gripped by a case of historical amnesia.

This is not the first time for such a lapse of memory.

February 21, 1990, more than 3,000 people jammed into the Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem for the 25th memorial of the assassination of El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz, Malcolm X. Another 1,000 or more gathered in the street to watch the program on a television monitor, hastily positioned in a church window to accommodate the outside audience. Inside the church, C-SPAN broadcast live ringing tributes to the life and legacy of our "Black Shining Prince."

Poets and political activists Haki Madhubuti and Sonia Sanchez; the Honorable Percy Sutton, confidant of Malcolm and the family lawyer; New York Councilman Al Vann; Preston Wilcox, director of AFRAM and facilitator of the Malcolm X Lovers Network, were among the notable leaders offering tributes.

The evening climaxed with an electrifying oration by Dr. James Turner, chairman of the Africana Studies and Research Center at Cornell University and mentee of Malcolm.

The audience rose for a prolonged rousing ovation as Dr. Turner proclaimed, "Malcolm, we will never forget you!"

Dr. Betty Shabazz, who had never attended a memorial on the anniversary of the assassination of her husband, was visibly moved by the tremendous outpouring of admiration, love and affection for one of the greatest leaders in the history of Africans Americans in America.

The commemoration was hosted by the Rev. Dr. Calvin O. Butts, senior pastor of Abyssinian, and I had the honor of serving as moderator of this memorable occasion.

But, the process of uplifting Malcolm did not end there. May 19th of that year hundreds of people from around the country gathered in Omaha, Nebraska, Malcolm's birthplace, for a National Ceremony to celebrate his 65th birthday. Dr. Maulana Karenga, Dick Gregory,



Sonia Sanchez, Haki Madhubuti, Dr. James Turner and scores of other activists and luminaries were in the company of Dr. Betty Shabazz and family members as the highly acclaimed actor Avery Brooks read a Proclamation declaring, May 19 the birthday of Malcolm X, a National African American Day of Commemoration - as an act of Kujichagulia, Self-Determination!

1990 was "The Year of Malcolm X," an incredible season of uplifting and celebrating Malcolm's life and legacy to inspire continued resistance and struggle for freedom and self-determination for Africans in America and the Black world.

But, this magnificent season of celebrating Malcolm did not occur by accident; it was the outcome of a conscious strategy, a calculated plan devised by a group of lead-

ers determined not to let the legacy of Malcolm be the victim of "historical amnesia."

Martin Luther King and Malcolm X are unquestionably the seminal leaders of the civil rights/human rights, Black Power, Nationalist/Pan-Africanist era that transformed the status of Africans in America.

But, Martin has always been more palatable to the power elite, much of White America and the more conciliatory elements in Black America.

In a choice between Martin and Malcolm, it is clear that the power elite preferred Martin. Hence, Martin has been sanitized and elevated while Malcolm has largely been ignored, except in those periods when his devotees have refused to allow his contribution to be relegated to irrelevance.

As the 25th anniversary of the assassination of Malcolm X and his 65th birthday approached in 1990, Martin was ascendant and celebrated, and justifiably so, as a seminal leader.

But, Malcolm was not seen on par with Martin in the popular consciousness. His legacy languished on the margins of memory of a young generation of Africans in America, progressive youth/young people and much of Black America.

It was against this backdrop that a formation called the African American Progressive Action Network (AAPAN) resolved that 1990 should

be declared "The Year of Malcolm X." AAPAN created a National Malcolm X Commemoration Commission, with Dr. James Turner as Co-Chairman, to coordinate the campaign.

The goal was not to denigrate Martin Luther King but to seize upon the occasion of the 25th Anniversary of the assassination of Malcolm and his 65th birthday to wage a campaign to elevate his profile beyond the true believers to a new generation of young activists.

The campaign was highly successful. For years, the symbol X signified young people's identification with Malcolm. Indeed, in 2005, on the occasion of the 40th memorial of Malcolm's assassination, another massive commemoration was held at Abyssinian Baptist Church.

The current lack of major national recognition of the 50th memorial suggests the need for yet another campaign to prevent Malcolm's memory from being relegated to relative obscurity.

We must never forget Malcolm! Hence the utter necessity to utilize the balance of this year, particularly May 19, his 90th birthday, to once again elevate Malcolm to his rightful place in the pantheon of esteemed ancestors - one of the greatest African leaders of all time!

Dr. Ron Daniels is President of the Institute of the Black World 21st Century.

The African-American family will be extinct without action

Dr. Steven Davidson

Guest Columnist

African Americans represent 14 percent of or in the nation. They are growing 38 percent of the prison system. More than half of the African-American males do not graduate from high school. Nearly 80 percent of those below the poverty level abandon their children. While the rate of African-American women having children is in decline, 71 percent of children are in families headed by a single parent. There are more children born out of wedlock than to wedded couples. These and other similar statistics present a dire picture of the African American family for the future.

Our sisters and daughters struggle to find acceptable mates. Too many of our young men are unemployable and in the pipeline to prison. Single mothers are courageous, but they didn't conceive themselves. Fifty years after Civil and Voting Rights legislation, the evidence indicates we are more homicidal, sociopath-

ic and psychopathic than ever. I was a proponent of that until I did the research. No way! If the broken family was in the 20 percent range 50 years ago, how can we be in the 70 percent range today with all of the advances. School is free, and we won't go. Something different is at work.

What is clear is the level of denial, projection and blame on others and marginalizing the serious nature of our condition. These will never allow us to heal. There was a time when cancer was unspeakable, and what about AIDS? These are well-publicized and confronted illnesses. Public issues must be confronted publicly.

The time for mere talk and 1960s approaches is not our perspective. Consider 70 percent of broken African-American families with black males absorbing violent and vile music daily.

More than 50 percent do not graduate from high school. They are not employable.

Many replicate the condition producing an ever-increasing pipeline of crime and prison. This is why the African-American fatherless home and prison rates keep soaring. Their condi-

tion is also fertile for potential terrorists. Now, you can understand in part why local police departments - as witnessed - in Ferguson are equipped with military hardware.

We know the root cause. Both history and truth reveals what's necessary.

Let's face the facts, and let's employ what made it possible to survive through slavery, Jim Crow and unabated discrimination. It's our only hope.

One of the nation's top writers on contemporary Christian issues, Dr. Steven B. Davidson is author of the Christ-based Series, and founder of an organization devoted to Christian counseling and education (A3CEES).

He developed a national crisis fact-sheet and framework to address the challenge.

A Return To Him town hall will be held at the New Beginnings Church in Lewisville, Texas on Wednesday, Feb. 25. His national ministry also has a website to support the initiative with the National Crisis fact sheet, and numerous resources.

For more details, visit www.cbcentral.info or www.returntohim.info.

A rematch is scheduled for Tuesday, Nov. 8, 2016



James J. Hawkins

Guest Columnist

A Nov. 8, 2016 rematch is scheduled for Tuesday morning!

THE PROBLEMS:

Our opposition is still mostly lifelong extreme conservatives, but some of our former progressive people have become so comfortable with their new "temporary" friends, jobs and salaries that they have become ice cold.

Many of us progressives took our defeat in the 2014 mid-term election just as hard as losing a close family member.

We experienced denial, anger, bargaining, depression then acceptance commonly known as the five stages of grief.

I went through anger, depression and bargaining. I stopped reading, listening to and watching anything that had to do with politics for about seven weeks. I did not write about or discuss the elections.

I foolishly hoped that only the people who did not take the time to vote would suffer at the hands of the people they allowed to be elected.

[In the stages of grief.] We assemble at church to say goodbye to our loved one, the choir sings the final song, the minister gives the eulogy and benediction, we go to the grave site; wipe our tears for the last time, then to a fellowship hall to share a celebratory family meal with friends.

The fifth stage of grief

is acceptance, which will allow us go on with our lives. Some people take a long time to reach this stage, so we must be patient and accept their timeline. If we try too hard to rush them, we may lose them.

equal protection and voting rights.

Will you please join me and other freedom fighters in going back to work?

To be successful in this our third Reconstruction, we must make the best use of one hour (60 minutes).



Their personalities play a small part, but their occupations are a large factor in deciding when they step back into the movement.

It took me, a retired teacher, seven weeks dwelling on the negative before I got back involved in the movement. My son, a sixth-year social studies teacher, had to have a lesson plan ready the very next day.

Most of us are now ready to fight again for the civil rights we gained during our second Reconstruction in the 1960s. The issues are still equal rights, equal pay,

Please spend only five minutes discussing the problem and 55 minutes working on solutions.

Psalm 30:5 "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning."

James J. Hawkins is a retired vocational education teacher, past president of the New Hanover County NAACP, N.C. A&T State University alumni, member of friends of Abraham Galloway and author of the book "What We Blacks Need To Do" To comment or order a copy of his book, please e-mail him at jhan606@gmail.com.