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## 'What are you willing to sacrifice?'

Dr. Bellamy delivers MLK Jr. prayer breakfast address, Rev. Covington urges community to put action to words

## BY TEVIN STINSON THE CHRONICLE

What are you willing to sacrifice?

That was the question Dr. Wes Bellamy raised at the Benton Convention Center during the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Prayer Breakfast on Monday, Jan. 21.

"I want you to understand that we are in very serious times. We are not in a time in which we can play around, mince our words, or pretend as if things will be okay if we keep on keeping on with a smile on our faces, things are going to work out. It's not going to do so if we do not work," Bellamy continued.

"...So I hope that we are here with our lunch pails packed and hard hats on because it is time to work not play."

A native of Atlanta, Ga. graduate of South Carolina State University, and Virginia State University, where he earned his masters and doctorate, those who know Dr. Bellamy well describe him as an educator who works to ensure that young people have the knowledge to move forward. As the youngest person ever elected to the Charlottesville. City . Council, Va. Bellamy's primary focus has been improving the lives of those who lack resources through various programs and initiatives. He is also credited for helping lead the City of Charlottesville through the deadly race riots in 2017. The riots broke out on August 11, 2017, when white nationalists opposed to the removal of a Confederate statue clashed with counter-protestors. Bellamy said while many people thought the Charlottesville Riots was an isolated incident, there are many other places throughout the country just like Charlottesville where individuals are willing to take extreme measures to stop change. As he stood before the diverse crowd of nearly 1,000 people from all walks of life during the annual King Day celebration hosted by The Chronicle and the



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Ministers' Conference of you give? Winston-Salem "That is only a question and that you can answer." Vicinity (MCWSV), After issuing his chal-Bellamy challenged everylenge, Bellamy said while one to make the necessary the fight to bring about sacrifices to fight for equi-

ty in our communities and

ensure Dr. King's legacy

day, David Duke and mem-

bers of the Ku Klux Klan

showed up with guns,

machetes and knives to

fight people holding

posters. He said on that

day, hundreds of counter-

protestors decided to make

a sacrifice and face the

white nationalists without

believed was theirs, their

city was changing, they lit-

erally drove a vehicle

through a group of peace-

ful protestors and killed

someone," he continued.

"Rest in Power to sister

Heather Heyer. Sacrifice.

She gave her life while

walking and standing up

for what's right. What will

"... Because what they

fear.

He said on that August

and message continues.

change on a grand scale is

change in our own lives and communities. He said we all have a different role to play in this movement.

He said, "... But before you can play any role, you're going to have to

us are willing to sacrifice our names in the paper or being acknowledged on Facebook or Twitter or Instagram to do the real work behind the scenes. I wonder what we are will-



Photos by Alphonso Abbott Jr. Dr. Wes Bellamy, city councilman in Charlottesville, VA, was the keynote speaker at the prayer breakfast on Jan. 21.

important, it is equally important that we make sacrifices to bring about determine and define what you are willing to sacrifice. ... I wonder if some of Pastor Tembila Covington,

ing to sacrifice."

Following his address,

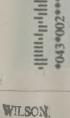
President of the Ministers' Conference of Winston-Salem and Vicinity, urged the community to put Bellamy's words into action. She said Bellamy's address goes hand in hand with the Ministers' Conference theme for the year, "Why We Can't Wait."

Photos by Alphonso Abbott Jr

"... Why we can't wait is because never is not an option. Why we can't wait is because we need to keep the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream alive. Why we can't wait is because we need to keep our dream alive," continued Covington. "... Why we can't wait is we need to believe as individuals and collaboratively that we are catalyst for change, even in this day.

• "... As Fannie Lou Hamer said, we need to take our power back. Sick and tired of being sick and tired is not enough and so we do not wait because never is not an option."





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