

AFTER TRAYVON, WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE? (Opinion, *The Community Informer*, Greenville, SC, July 31, 2013, 3B.)

After the looming dark cloud of the George Zimmerman verdict that happened on Saturday, July 13, protests and demonstrations began all across the country. More specifically, Greenville was one of those places where peaceful rallies took place.

From my understanding, the objective has been to make everyone aware that we continue to live in a world where our skin color remains to be judged instead of the content of our character, especially in the criminal justice system.

For this reason, the question now is: after all of the protests and demonstrations, where do we go from here?

I am reminded of the text from Matthew 5: 16, which says, "...Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven"(NRSV). In other words, how will this verse answer the ultimate question? First, in reference to light, Jesus was urging the people that they have the power to change the environment around them in order to build a community that included love, care, concern, and justice for all, despite the Roman government's oppressive and unjust system. Unfortunately, our government today operates no differently from the one that existed during Jesus' time. Tax cuts are favored toward the rich and powerful at the expense of everyone else, the doors to affordable education are slowly closing, and unemployment remains high in the Black community. Therefore, we need to wake up from our dark places of comfort, ignorance, and hopelessness and allow these issues to brighten our lights into doing something positive.

Since a number of us are not happy with the outcome of the verdict, we need to begin channeling our feelings to do meaningful, lasting work. For example, we can volunteer as a Big Brother or take on the task of mentoring a young man and educate him on how to survive and thrive as a Black man in the world.

In addition, if one is moved to birth a ministry in a church to meet this great need, then I would suggest discussing this with your pastor. Furthermore, we can study the laws, call, e-mail, write, or visit our elected officials to become aware of the policies that exist and participate in the voting process to our liking or disliking.

The church is needed now to not only speak truth to power, but to provide moral and spiritual guidance to rid our society from the clouds of racism.

Hence, my overall aim in writing here is for us to become educated and aware, to realize our God-given abilities to lead, and to remain encouraged that we all can work together to make this world a better place to live God's way.