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BLACK  
C o m m e n t a t o r**  
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on issues affecting African Americans  
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**One Hundred Years Later**  
**By The Reverend D. D. Prather**  
**BlackCommentator.com Guest Commentator**

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In a modest room of a New York apartment one hundred years ago, a group of like minded progressive people met to form what would become the nation's largest, most influential civil rights and social justice organizations. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) as it would come to be known has, for the course of one hundred years, remained true to its founding principles. As declared in the mission statement, the purpose of the NAACP is "to ensure the political, educational, social and economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate racial hatred and racial discrimination."

Throughout this year of celebrating the founding anniversary, one would do well to reflect upon the last one hundred years and all the changes and progress that have been made. Conversely, one also must look and consider yet still more changes that must be made to move us in the direction of the beloved community.

I can not even conceptualize the racial climate that existed early in the 1900s. African Americans were still relatively fresh out of legal slavery and were trying to carve our rightful place in American society. It was a bold thing and took a tremendous amount of courage to challenge the status quo during such a time. Nevertheless, it was progressive-thinking change agents who recognized the need and sought to provide the solution.

In that the NAACP is a grass-roots organization, it continues to give birth to some of America's brightest and most forward-thinking leaders. With a commitment to intergenerational interaction, it has served, since its dawn, as a preparation ground for an immeasurable amount of young people. In comparison to 1909, these likewise are

the best of times yet they remain the worst of times. Being the case, such an august civil rights organization is warranted as much in 2009 as it was in 1909. While we cannot be legally lynched from a tree, we continue to be lynched politically, educationally, socially and economically. I am sure they never imagined that one hundred years later, almost to the date of its February founding, a black man would take an oath of office to the highest elected office in the land, because of their efforts.

The remarkable thing about time and its relationship to history is that they are panoramic in nature and by design allow us simultaneously to reflect upon the past and look toward and plan strategically for the future. As the NAACP and the country together celebrate the centennial anniversary, I continue to be inspired, encouraged and challenged by the historical precedence set and the future that is promised. I am forever proud to be affiliated, one hundred years later, as an active life member of an organization that continues to find hurts that need healing and problems that need solving. Perhaps the poet Robert Frost encompasses my sentiments best as he stopped by woods one evening, *"The woods are lovely, dark and deep, But [there are] promises to keep, and miles to go, before I sleep, and miles to go before I sleep."*

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**BlackCommentator.com** Guest Commentator, The Reverend D. D. Prather, is a noted Civil/Social Justice Activist, a native of Atlanta, Georgia and former National Member of the NAACP Board of Directors. Click [here](#) to contact the Reverend Prather.

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