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The Legacy of Jim Crow

By The Reverend D. D. Prather

BlackCommentator.com Guest Commentator

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It is interesting, although the laws of the infamous Jim Crow era have been virtually eradicated, resentment and legacy of such remain a pronounced part of the fabric of America through persons who maintain such thought. The remnants and residue of such attitudes have become more and more evident and blatant, in my opinion, since the United States elected our first president of African descent, President Obama.

The display of such feelings of bitterness are becoming common and in essence, I think, are a distraction to society's more pressing issues such as health care reform, poverty, economic confusion and other social issues that continue to beg resolution. Former President and humanitarian Jimmy Carter highlighted my thoughts with his observation of the outburst from the Congressman from South Carolina, who in the midst of a presidential address regarding health care said simply, "you lie!" President Carter articulated best that such outburst came from something deep within, which he attributed to Racism.

I submit and maintain that my fear and intuition lead me to believe that acts of the like happen frequently and as a matter of fact more so in small towns across the country outside of major cities, leaving those citizens who are mainly minorities most vulnerable to hate crimes. Such expressions of resentment as displayed by the Congressman from South Carolina, who refused to apologize to the Congress and just happened be in

public and on national television at prime time. This further leads me to another very important point that cannot be ignored. To add insult to injury, I was in disbelief that Fox affiliates nationwide refused to air the president's message regarding health care but rather aired the reality show "*So you think you can dance.*" Call me paranoid, but as an African American, an American and member of the free world I was insulted to the utmost. If it walks like a duck, quacks like a duck and acts like a duck, the odds are that it is probably a Duck!

The second instance that has gained national attention was the situation of an African-American woman in Clayton County, Georgia, who was simply trying to dine at a Cracker Barrel Restaurant and was literally beaten in broad daylight by a white man who felt disrespected. One would hasten to remember and cannot forget how in 1955, the then 14-year-old Emmett Till from Chicago was humiliated, murdered and disfigured because a white lady felt that she was disrespected. Till's mother insisted on a public funeral service, with an open casket so as to show the world the brutality of the killing: Till had been beaten and an eye gouged out, before he was shot through the head and thrown into the Tallahtachie River in Mississippi with a 70-pound cotton Gin fan tied to his body with barbed wire. 1955 versus 2009!

If I did not know any better I would think I was reading reports from the early 1900's. The message, however, is that just as the Jim Crow era and mindset have persons who maintain such legacy, so does Emmitt Till, social justice advocates and company. In 2009, I continue to plead that such actions are unacceptable and intolerable.

I stood in January in the nation's capitol to watch a high point in history usher in the light of a new time with the reality of the times of yore. I listened to the poetry of poets and cried their tears of both joy and sorrow. I dreamt with dreamers watching the reality of their dreams come to fruition. I watched artist place on canvass centuries of emotion that can only be painted. And then I finally listed to a country and a world come together in a common prayer that closes the Negro National Anthem, that begins with "GOD of our Weary Years, GOD of our Silent Tears." But there was also the simultaneous reality of those persons that perpetuate the philosophy and thought of the late Jim Crow that have to be whitewashed through the commonality of humanity.

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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