Just Thinking About VIOLENCE

In the midst daily incidents of violence, we are reminded that violence fueled by acts of hate are on the rise as evidenced by the burning of three historic Black Churches in Louisiana, the shooting of 30 people in one day in Chicago and the assassination of Nipsey Hussle. The usual feeling of safety in worship was shattered by the brutal murder of the 9 members of Mother Emanuel AME Church and the four worshippers who survived a gunman's rampage. during a weekly Bible study.

Since that gunman professed to be "card carrying” member of a faith group, we are dismayed, bewildered and challenged to understand, yet we are called to forgive and minister to those who choose violence as a means of handling frustrations. The Social Action Commission (SAC) of the African Methodist Episcopal Church is concerned about the ongoing, persistent growth of violence in our nation and world and works with partners, in collaborations and networks to enact good policy, and diminish the root cause - racism - which seems to underly many of these acts.

The temptation is to become numb to the social, economic, and political violence that we see in our cities, small towns, and across the nation everyday. But we are a people of hope, called to stand when it is not politically correct, so we activate the Spirit of the Church of Allen and call upon all people of good will to organize local “Stop The Violence, Start The Healing” Ministries. Healing will require attention to the spiritual, economic, political, physical and mental wellness approach. It will require taking seriously the partnerships that currently exist and the openness to add new stakeholders to the solution teams.

If we are going to stop the violence and start the healing of our cities and nations it will require a spiritual, economic, political and mental health approach. It will require building partnerships between faith communities, foundations, medical schools, hospitals, mental health professionals and local and national political structures. It requires the power of the strong spokesperson/proclaimer and the persistence of the "average" person who God will use to make the difference.

The Social Action Commission Of The African Methodist Episcopal Church calls for the coordinated push from the federal departments responsible for identifying and acting upon any root cause that threatens the sanctity of this nation - and this wave of violence does that. We believe that the Congressional Black Caucus, the strongest in its history with 55 members who lead key committees and sub-committees can and should call for public testimony, conduct hearings across the nation to hear from those affected, and create the policy environment to reverse and create equitable, inclusive and sustainable solutions.

During this season of Presidential Primaries, we must inquire about the candidates approach to stop violence in our communities and start their healing. The same must be directed to candidates of the US Senate, gubernatorial posts, and state legislative bodies. Leaders of civic and civil rights organizations must be held accountable for moving beyond proclamation to action. Finally, recognizing that violent words are the seeds of violent deeds, we call upon the President Of the United States. and all those leaders who use words that inspire violence, to learn how to disagree on policies without being destructively disagreeable.
The AME Church's position was affirmed by the delegates to the 50th session of the General Conference in 2016. Our focus is unwavering and our commitment to justice and serving the wider community continues in our 204th year of social witness and struggle against oppression in any form.