



## A Challenge to the Nation

*(Part 1 written early Thursday)*

I had decided to remain silent and ride this one out. The fire in my heart like Jeremiah began to burn. The wanton murder of Alton Sterling in Baton Rouge and Philando Castile in Minnesota has spurred righteous indignation. The weak insipid response of the President was disappointing to say the least. His speech writers really got it wrong this time. To say this is not about race but an American problem is to diminish what most African-Americans experience on a day-to-day basis as being simply routine. Mr. President I respectfully ask how can you say in one breath this is not racial and proceed to give a litany of racial disparities that involved African-Americans and end with the tired phrase "*all life matters ?*" In context there is a disconnect between what you are saying and Black life "*that really matters.*" You proceeded to address the bias in the minds of Police Officers and on and on with useless tired rhetoric that failed to deal with a systemic problem, namely, institutionalized racism at its best. I am not blaming, but rather challenging you as leader to assist us in finding a way out of this morass

What prevents you during the end of your second term from issuing a Moratorium on the killing and decimation of Black lives by racist bad cops? No all cops are not bad. There are many exceptions to the ones who have participated in the killing of Black men like animals within the last five (5) years. Six decades ago I marched against segregation so we could live in a nation without fear. Today when a cop blue lights you, most of us are almost gripped by fear of the unknown. A personal friend of mine told me that a cop stopped his son who was licensed to carry a weapon. He told the cop that he had a weapon. The cop told him to retrieve the weapon. He refused and told the cop where it was. His refusal saved his life. The cop in a laughing manner told him that had he reached for the weapon it would have been his life. That kind of behavior is all too often frequent and must be reported and never tolerated.

Mr. President We prevail upon you to issue such a Moratorium. We have male sons who are at risk for simply doing nothing offensive. I painfully watched the time spent by Congressional spokespersons attempting to push further in an investigation of Hillary Clinton over the email controversy. What a waste as FBI Director James Comey responded with integrity to worthless questions in an attempt to frame one person for

purely political reasons. It is reprehensible to waste taxpayers' money. I care about issues that have moral dimensions such as health care, gun reform, the economy and the spiritual life of a decadent nation. I am almost ashamed of a nation I am trying to love. The wanton taking of Black life must stop now or we may find ourselves in a precarious situation with those who are supposed to protect and serve all citizens. The infrastructure of this nation was built upon the blood and sweat of many African-Americans who longed for an inclusive nation under God with liberty and justice for all.

*(Part 2 written Friday morning after the Dallas encounter)*

I woke up numb and in disbelief after hearing the news about the unfortunate death of Dallas law enforcement officers protecting the rights of persons to engage in peaceful protests. We must pray and support their grieving families. Violence is not the way. Two things came to mind. First, the words of Jesus to Peter...*"Put up your sword...he who lives by the sword dies by the sword-* **St. John 18:11v.** Second, the words of



James Russell Lowell protesting America's war with Mexico wrote: - *"Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide. In the strife of truth with falsehood, for the good or evil side. Though the cause of evil prosper, Yet the truth alone is strong; Though her portion be the scaffold, and upon the throne be wrong; Yet that scaffold sways the future, and behind the dim unknown, Standeth God within the shadow, Keeping watch above His own."*

The purpose of a protest is to call attention to an injustice or wrong and demand that justice be done. Martin Luther King Jr., combined the love ethic of Jesus with the passive resistance of Gandhi and formed a potent weapon that eventually brought this nation to its knees regarding segregation. The world has changed. Is it too late for a respectful dialogue between law enforcement officers and specific communities that seeks God's wisdom in each of us? The media in their attempts to get ratings must exercise responsible ethical judgment in reporting in order not to shape public opinion in a negative way.

This is not a time to place blame. We are all guilty before God for much of what is happening. The Faith Community must be rebuked for spending too much time with a

faith that produces only religious piety and emotional fits within the inner walls of a sanctuary preying on the emotions of desperate people, but no energy for transformation of the community. God forbid! Prayer and action must be combined. I challenge clergy to leave the safe havens of their sanctuary and get on the streets where our youth are being demonized and shaped for better or worse.

There are no easy answers to the prevention of violence toward the marginalized and those sworn to protect. Bridges are better than Walls. One day I walked into a Community Police station here in Fairfax County Virginia and shared with the officers my gratitude for their excellent policing. After two decades I see them as highly competent. I informed them that I served as a consultant to police on affirmative action under the late Police Chief Odell Sylvester of Berkeley, who was Assistant Police Chief of Oakland at the time. The training must come at the Academy level before officers are placed on the street. Try building bridges with police and watch the change. With all of our angst *"Except the Lord keep the city the watchmen waketh but in vain."* Psalm 127:1

The ancient word holds true: *"Righteousness exalts a nation, but Sin is a reproach to any people."* Proverbs 13: 34 Follow my web/blog at [www.theagora.net](http://www.theagora.net) (look for Public square) "where truth is spoken and never compromised. Dr. Leonard Lovett