

DIVERSITY COLUMN

Live Your Dreams

My heart aches for the many families who have lost children and loved ones to

senseless violence perpetrated by criminals, persons with mental health issues, family members and the police. My heart and mind register concern regarding the small world

view of some gun owners, lobbyists, and the NRA when they speak as if they have the right to measure the profits of their sales and coffers against the human rights and dreams of those beleaguered by their guns – as if the 2nd amendment has a stronger right than the right to live and let live.

On the recent anniversary of the celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., I was moved to think about the dreams of these victims and families of those whose lives have been taken by violence and despair. The realization that rests in my spirit is that dreams die because their life blood is spilled on far too many streets, too many floors of emergency rooms, down the drains of hopelessness and despair. As I reflect on these lost lives and those dreams that have been lost, I ask



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myself where the dream Dr. King spoke of has gone (www.aspenideas.org/I-Have-A-Dream). This question was called to mind by a poem authored by the renowned poet and writer, Langston Hughes, called “A Dream Deferred:”

*What happens to a dream deferred?
Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun,
or fester like a sore and then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar like syrupy sweet?
Maybe it just sags like a heavy load
or does it explode?*

The response to this dire question was answered in a sermon preached on a recent Sunday morning by my pastor Bishop Walter Scott Thomas Sr. He addressed a vital question: Where are the dream nurturers? – people who push you and stand behind you to motivate, encourage and strengthen you as you pursue the vibrant dreams which have been the foundation of our society and will continue to build individual lives? If we are lured into the malaise of the current societal situation, we might think we have more dream killers than dream nurturers, more oppressors than supporters, people who measure us by how we look, where we come from, and the color of our skin. This can cause us to ask ourselves: how far have we really come, and where are we heading?

These questions could seem all the more perplexing given the political polarization we find so prevalent in our day. However, I refuse to allow cynicism to overcome my optimism and faith – faith which is

based on just how far prayer has brought us as a people, all the while facing the challenges of multiple levels of systemic racism, classism, sexism and other isms. Prayer keeps hope alive and sustains life; prayer creates hope and helps to buoy faith.

This is not the time to give in to divisive politics and fear, or to lobbyists with deep pockets. This is the time to enter the prayer rooms of faith and lift up this country and its leaders, asking for direction and guidance such that dreams are no longer deferred, but flourish for everyone. For a simple time of refreshment, take some time to view an example of a dream realized (<http://www.creationsummit.com/video/Susan-Boyle.htm>), and watch the movie *War Room*, which demonstrates in a real way how significant and sustaining prayer is and continues to be.

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