

Now the time has come By The Rev. Janai Robinson-Makarov

By this time, many immigrants who are not legal have been removed from our country.¹ By this time, there is a standard being built up very high on the Mexican border and other places where immigrants and refugees slip in through the cracks.² By this time, DACA is facing challenges, and many young immigrants who are here by or not by their decision to live in America are having to reconsider their dream.³ The push for whiteness-is-perfection has come back full circle since WWII.⁴ The sins of our past have become a beacon for the young and ignorant. If I were to explain it better, it would be a CD is being played and has been purposefully put on repeat and many in leadership are having a hard time stopping the disk.

What I am trying to say is that we are now in a time where details are coming through entertainment and what is the truth is what is temporarily in front of us. Humanity is proven to exist based on historical documents be it primitive or modern. We could not look back

¹ Apple Inc. (2016) News for Apple IOS (Version number 10.3.3) [Mobile Application software]. Retrieved from <http://apple.com>. Immigration.

² Apple Inc. (2016) News for Apple IOS (Version number 10.3.3) [Mobile Application software]. Retrieved from <http://apple.com>. US-Mexico Border Wall.

³ Apple Inc. (2016) News for Apple IOS (Version number 10.3.3) [Mobile Application software]. Retrieved from <http://apple.com>. DACA program.

⁴ Apple Inc. (2016) News for Apple IOS (Version number 10.3.3) [Mobile Application software]. Retrieved from <http://apple.com>. Charlottesville Protest.

in the past unless the history was written down so that we in the future can have a better one. It is a sin, Paul says, to remain in sin to receive grace and mercy.⁵ The mature Christian is one who faces his or her realities instead of keeping a turned back.

We all know that the more exclusive we become, the more we miss out on what is invaluable. Not one group of people have the answer just like one denomination does not have all the answers to who God is. God is a mystery. Psalm 111:10, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever.” My translation of this text is, “It is wrong to think that the only way to get to the top, is cutting off your neighbor.” Jesus did not take his life, nor did those who put him on the cross kill him, Jesus gave his life, and he carried the past, present, and future evil done by creation. His life was a gift to us.⁶

Now the time has come!⁷ How are we going to live a life of peace? Some respond to peace in silent protests, which later we will have our walk of peace, but another way is to speak up. Every one of us has a

⁵ Biblegateway. Com (2010) *Bible Gateway*. Grand Rapids, MI: HarperCollins Christian Publishing. Romans 6:1.

⁶ Biblegateway. Com (2010) *Bible Gateway*. Grand Rapids, MI: HarperCollins Christian Publishing. John 10:17.

⁷ *Now The Time Has Come* [Ringo Starr and producer Bruce Sugar]
<http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=XVLo1jliAU>

voice! I was a co-pastor at a decent sized former church, and when it came down to making decisions on how to inform or not inform the congregation, the reason was, “It will give the congregation too much power.” There is a fear of equipping, mobilizing, and setting people free with knowledge. It should not be. Yes, there is some wisdom for that, but I believe, a real leader or leadership team continues to grow through challenges by facing them rather than trying to avoid or craft ones, because whatever you avoid, will visit you again.

This former church's leadership was fully aware of its power and those who should not have power. Whatever you lead with around people determines the climate which produces a lifestyle of behaviors-people afraid of their own shadow or feeling like they cannot contribute or bring anything to the table. When you look at some of the Protestant paintings by the Cranach family, with Martin Luther, you will notice a round table and him talking to people.⁸ It was never about him, it was always about the people especially the poor. He shared Christ's love for them. He went astray in the end, got too zealous and

⁸ Cranach, Lucas the Elder, *Wittenberg Altarpiece Predella*, 1547. The Church of St. Mary. Wittenberg, Germany.

went off track, but that just reminds us that we are all broken vessels, and yet God still chooses to use us, his creation, as His mouthpiece.⁹

I was born and raised in Germany. I attended a German school till I was fourteen years old. My parents put me there because they felt God wanted me there, and for me to have a different experience than their upbringing. Now that I am older, it is interesting how my parents at times forget the decisions they have made, and how it does not always play out as they hoped. My outward appearance looks very African-American by color, facial features, and body type; but how I think, my perspectives, what I consider friendship or what I call leadership may be very different from the prejudice and assumptions that we all do of others with what we see on the surface.

I have learned that people behave the same way here as they do overseas. The structure or systems of those places may not be freeing situations, but they are a result of power and decisions made for or against certain people. The ones who have much do not know how to connect with people, or equalize the wealth so that everyone can have a

⁹ Brecht, Martin (1999) *Martin Luther The Preservation of the Church Vol 3 1532-1546*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

chance, instead their gifts bring fear that produces an atmosphere or a community of competition and privilege.

It was a shock to me to take note of the differences between overseas and the United States, but the little that I have learned about the United States, is that it is her duty to protect and to have an opened hand as a nation. People across the seas are looking at us for guidance. Yes they are! Whether we like it or not, people are risking their lives to live a life of peace and hope.

When we forget that, when we stop communication for example, like in a marriage, it can plant a seed of divorce, a sprouting of weeds that will choke out life connections that we need to stay viable and available to our local, national, and global sisters and brothers, for such a time as this. Whenever you take away something you better believe someone else is going to use it for their own means, and it is not always good. We want to avoid a *brother's keeper* syndrome and embrace that we are all part of this creation, we all are to take responsibility for our behaviors because, from birth to maturity we discover, our actions speak louder than words.¹⁰ Thank you.

¹⁰ Biblegateway. Com (2010) *Bible Gateway*. Grand Rapids, MI: HarperCollins Christian Publishing. Genesis 4:9-10

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