

Dr. Martin Luther King preached non-violence and conflict resolution: How would you apply his teachings to address crime in The Bahamas?

Submitted by: Lizinga Rolle

Jordan Prince William High School

2nd Place Finisher

People killing, people dying
Children hurting hear them crying
Can you practice what you preach?
And would you turn the other cheek
Father, Father, Father help us
Send some guidance from above
'Cause people got me, got me questioning
Where is the love?

- *Black-eyed Peas*

Crime, a seemingly invincible and invisible god roams everywhere. He lives in every continent, even here in the Bahamas. He brings sin, grief, and pain and turns joy and laughter into tears and sadness. He makes the rich poor and pulls the mighty and proud to the ground. He does not care about one's status or wealth. He reigns supreme. He exists because we, as a people, have allowed him to. The monster Crime lives because we have failed to love. We have become full of greed, envy, lust, wrath, pride and gluttony -- deadly sins that now reside inside of us. To destroy the monster that we have allowed in our nations, we must apply Dr. King's philosophy to achieve a better world. We must deal with the problem to save the people! In using King's, positive non-violent methods, we will not only help our brothers, but we also will eradicate Crime, the product of our sins.

Non-violence refers to the doctrine, policy, or practice of rejecting aggression. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. spoke about non-violence and the need for men to act in unity and love towards one another. I believe that in order to reject aggression we must heed Dr. King's words and follow in his legendary footsteps. I believe that by doing this we can stamp out the violence in our Bahamas.

Firstly, I believe that we, like Dr King states, must first be concerned about producing a better world. He envisioned a bright future, one where violence is nonexistent. In the same way, I have a dream of a better, safer Bahamas. I have a dream of going back to the time in which my parents and grandparents lived when one could leave one's door open and expect 'nothing gone.' I have a dream of days when children can roam freely without being victims of stray bullets, like the 18 year-old senior student

who died after being shot while waiting on a bus in the heart of the city. Dr. King in his address said that he was concerned about justice and truth. We must also be concerned about these lofty ideals; we must strive to create a Bahamas that is just and fair to Bahamians and non-Bahamians alike. We must strive to build a Bahamas where there is no prejudice or difference between persons. A person's status, name or family history should not determine how he is treated. We are all equal. The same God has created us equally. We must therefore make every effort to be true to one another as brothers and sisters.

Dr. King explains that if we are not concerned about our country how can we stop the violence within it? "And when one is concerned about these, he can never advocate violence." We are promoting the violence when we do not love. "Where is the love?" Love does not avenge wrongs.

Dr. King's speech clearly highlights that revenge is never the answer. "Darkness cannot put out darkness. Only light can do that." By avenging someone's death we are only creating a bigger problem, or a vicious cycle. Think about it, you may kill me for revenge, but you have created a situation for someone else who in mourning may also avenge my death. Maya Angelou in one of her famous poems, '*Still I Rise*', says, "You may shoot me with your words, you may cut me with your eyes, you may kill me with your hatefulness, but still, like air, I'll rise." We must learn to resolve our conflicts passively and learn to 'forgive and forget'. We must rise up to the cry of Dr. King – a cry that reaches from the grave and tells us to love, like little gods, stronger than the god of Crime.

Dr. King teaches us that we can't murder murder, truth or hate. But why should we? We are only making ourselves exactly who they are; we are creating the problem that they have caused. Why shouldn't we be different and create a Bahamas that is better for our children's children and their children? As a people we should learn that by committing these crimes we are only making it difficult for our brothers and sisters who are scared to leave home, because they do not know what crime lies ahead as they turn through corners, or even sit at home because they do not know what criminals are capable of.

Our optimism and encouragement to make The Bahamas a better place should be our priority. We should be concerned for one another and our country's future. We must also be able to forgive and help one another. Had we done this, the four lives that were lost due to crime within the past ten days would have been saved. We should strive to make the dark clouds of crime and hatred vanish from our Bahamas. I, like Dr King, believe that only love can 'take away' the crime wave that has swept into our once tranquil country and raped our nation of sons and daughters, rich, poor, young, old, black and white, ALL gone too soon. 'Where do we go from here?' I proclaim that we go: Forward, upward, onward together spreading and showing love, until we can reach the day, a crime free day when The Bahamas will be free from the shackles of crime – 'Free at last, Free at last, Thank God Almighty The Bahamas is free at last.'

