Given Dr. King's model of love overcoming fear and violence, how can we strengthen our communities?

By

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As citizens of the greatness, most economically astute nation in the world, we should adopt the ideas of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as our own ideals. Then we could and would become a “beloved community.” Non-violence is the answer to the crucial, political, and moral questions of our time. It is our responsibility to overcome oppression without resorting to violence. “Mankind must evolve for all human conflict a method which rejects revenge, aggression, and retaliation. The foundation of such a method is love.” Spoken by Dr. King on December 11, 1964, these words illustrate the true meaning of “agape” love. This is the type of love that we as people working on our jobs, living in our homes, and thriving in our communities with our neighbors must use as our only source of conflict resolution. When we as individuals, as communities, and as a nation can equip ourselves with “agape” love, we will become even stronger, and be continuously productive. We will not be easily defeated by drugs, underemployment and self-centeredness. There is strength in unity, and it is love that unites our minds and fulfills our purposes. Our efforts at all times must be concentrated on love and saturated
with love.

Agape is the understanding, creative, redemptive good will for all men. Theologians define it as: the love of God working in the minds of men. It is unconditional and expects nothing in return. When communities can love on this level, people will begin to reach out to one another- not because they are likable or please others, but because someone genuinely cares for them. When communities use love as the motive to resolve poverty, with workable solutions for better jobs, better living facilities, adequate health care, and effective educational strategies, then positive results will follow. A famous quote says “if you are not part of the solution, then you are part of the problem.” How many times have we said, “It’s not my problem?” It has become too easy to say, “This is not my problem.” With “agape” love, it does become our personal problem and our responsibility to lovingly seek resolutions.

Dr. King believed deeply in the teachings of Mohandas K. Gandhi. His non-violent stance in all his operations was a living testimony to the fact that love will always conquer evil. We too must adopt these ideals and help our communities overcome fear and violence with individual and collective attitudes of love. We must live this philosophy when faced with any destructive encounters and transform our anger, grief, and hopelessness into a binding respect for each other. Jesse Jackson once said, “Never look down on anyone, unless you are willing to help him up.”

As love drives our outreach, there will be positive results for what is done. Our motivation must genuine and must not be one of profit, or self gratification. While being positive and productive, we must also be visible so others can see the love that we have for them. One way is to partner with existing non-profit groups, or conduct
neighborhood food drives. Another is to join neighbor-watch groups or even become involved in tutoring a child in your home, community center or church. You may have to start small, but just start somewhere. The underserved in our communities have no hands but our hands. Those who live in fear have no voices but our voices. We must be the rocks that cry out and bring forth peaceful solutions to those hurting and in need. We must expose problems that plague our communities, and we must align ours thoughts and immerse our resolutions in love.

President John F. Kenney reminded us that, “Mankind must put an end to war or war will put an end to mankind.” Our Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. lived, preached, marched, and died because he believed only nonviolence had the power to break the cycle of violence and create lasting peace through reconciliation. Who are we to choose to do any less?

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