

Be the Movement!

Written by Jeffrey L. Boney
Friday, 30 March 2012 14:41



It has been roughly a whole month since the senseless execution of young Trayvon Martin.

There have been rallies held all over the United States and people have been speaking up and speaking out.

People of all races have been wearing hoodies and packing skittles around to show their solidarity and express their support for Trayvon Martin and his family.

But I wonder if this will be just another passing moment for many in the struggle to deal with the ugly truths of the many social ills that plague us.

It often amazes me how people choose to get down with movements and fads, especially those that they believe are a matter of injustice. For many, they become more followers than true believers or people that desire the movement.

When the iPod and iPad hit the scene everybody wanted one. Same with other material possessions, people want to be the first to get it.

For instance, I was at one of the Houston rallies for Trayvon Martin recently and I don't know if

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what I witnessed by one individual was sad or troubling.

One of the organizers on stage had encouraged the crowd to yell, "Justice for Trayvon Martin," when prompted to do so.

There were hundreds of people in attendance, but what caught my attention was when one of the attendees near me started screaming "Justice for Trayvon Martin," they looked to another attendee to their left and asked "Say man, who is Trayvon Martin and what did he do?"

Are you kidding me?

Passion for something is cool, but knowledge about something is even cooler.

It is not good enough to simply follow a movement; you must understand the movement and be a part of the movement, or at least aware of what it is.

Being a history buff, I was intrigued to read up on how being free from the oppression and having the right to vote is what everybody wanted and wanted to be first in line to get.

Now, we find ourselves reacting to laws that impact us.

Isn't it interesting people, that every major decision that impacted black people in this country was instituted or changed through laws and the courts?

The 13th Amendment, Dred Scott, the Constitution, the Civil Rights Act, the Voting Rights Act, Jim Crow, sharecropping, poll taxes; you name it, a law has impacted us.

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Abolitionists, lawyers, elected officials and freedom fighters, all found themselves on the side of getting the “laws” changed in order to help our people.

Fast forward to modern day and you see us fighting against unjust laws such as the Voting Rights Act and we realize that these laws were thought of, introduced and passed by those that have the power to make laws that apply to everyone.

One of the “laws” at the center of the Trayvon Martin case is the “Stand Your Ground” law. This law, that has variations in 21 different states, was passed by elected officials that you chose to vote for or chose not to vote for.

In essence, your non-vote was really a vote in the favor of the person that won and against the person that lost, because you did nothing to influence the outcome.

We need to stop saying stuff like, “I don’t vote, because they are going to do what they want anyway.” Of course they are going to do what they want if you don’t care enough to know who are in these offices making these decisions on your lives and only speaking up when it impacts you or something you are passionate about.

It is time out for political, social and economic apathy amongst black people. If you are an adult and you are apathetic, your children are going to be apathetic. If you aren’t involved in the political process, chances are your children won’t be. If you don’t know the law, then your children won’t know the law. If you choose to be a victim of the ignorance of being unaware of the law, your children will as well.

Remember though, ignorance is no excuse for the law.

Get up and vote!

No, I take that back, don’t just vote, know who and what you are voting for.

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