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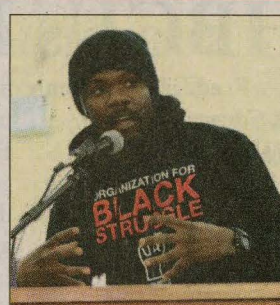
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**Special
Martin Luther King, Jr.
Commemorative
Supplement**

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The Seattle Medium

A Message From The People... To The People

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Church Leaders Cite Black Economic Empowerment As 2015 Goal

By Hazel Trice Edney

(Trice Edney Wire) – When Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated, he and other protestors had won passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Therefore, his agenda had turned toward the next major issue - economic empowerment for Black people.

Therefore, on April 3, 1968, planning a march on behalf of oppressed sanitation workers, Dr. King told preachers at the Mason Temple in Memphis, Tenn., "It's all right to talk about long white robes over yonder, in all of its symbolism. But ultimately people want some suits and dresses and shoes to wear down here!"

"It's all right to talk about streets flowing with milk and honey, but God has commanded us to be concerned about the slums down here, and his children who can't eat three square meals a day.

"It's all right to talk about the new Jerusalem, but one day, God's preacher must talk about the new New York, the new Atlanta, the new Philadelphia, the new Los Angeles, the new Memphis, Tennessee. This is what we have to do."

The next day, Dr. King was assassinated.

Nearly 47 years later as America celebrated the King birthday holiday this week, a group of church leaders appears to be carrying out this Black economic empowerment goal in earnest. Invited to speak to a recent gathering of pastors and leaders of the African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church, National Bankers Association President Michael Grant cited the words of human rights champion Paul Robeson:

"We realize that our future lies chiefly in our own hands," Grant quoted. "We know that neither institution nor friends can make a race stand unless it has strength in its own foundation; that races like individuals must stand or fall by their own merit; that to fully succeed they must practice the virtues of self-reliance, self-respect, industry, perseverance, and economy."

Grant continued in his own words: "We played a major role in growing America from a small colonial outpost to the greatest industrial giant the world has ever known. We don't have to argue about our ability to grow wealth. We have made everyone else rich, some filthy rich. Isn't it time that we finally make our efforts productive for ourselves?"

Grant was keynote speaker during a special session on "Economic Development through the Black Church" during the A.M.E. Church's 2nd District Mid-year Opening Plenary Session in Raleigh, N.C. late last year. His speech preceded a panel discussion that also included Marie Johns, former deputy administrator at the Small



National Bankers Association President Michael Grant, U.S. Black Chambers Inc. President Ron Busby, and A.M.E. board member, Rev. Jonathan Weaver discuss a new plan for economic development through the Black Church.

Business Administration; Ron Busby, president/CEO of the National Black Chambers Inc. and Rev. Jonathan Weaver, senior pastor of Greater Mt. Nebo A.M.E. Church in Bowie, Md., and board member of the A.M.E. organization that deals with economic growth and development projects.

Following the forum, Weaver says A.M.E. pastors, led by Bishop William P. DeVeaux, are now poised to carry out a specific plan that they hope will spread to other denominations and ultimately catch fire in other denominations and the Black community throughout 2015.

"Clearly where we are at this point is to actualize and implement what we discussed in Raleigh," said Weaver in an interview. "The whole thrust was how Black churches can help to empower Black businesses."

The starting plan, in a nutshell, is for churches located in the A.M.E. Second District - North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland and D.C. - to commit to the support of two Black-owned businesses. They are Thomas Morehead, president of a BMW dealership in Sterling, Va. and Donnell Thompson, co-founder/co-owner of RWDT Foods, Inc., a chain of restaurants based in N. Snellville, Ga.

AME church members buying from those two businesses will cause the churches to benefit from those sales; then identify other businesses in and around the states and "replicate this process", Weaver described. After tracking the sales, initiated by the churches, the hope is that other church districts will get involved and that the movement will spread to other businesses and other churches.

"And we certainly hope and pray that this will become a much larger Black faith effort and we will reach out to the Baptist community, the Church of God and Christ and the list goes on," Weaver said. "If we're able to affect a significant change in terms of relationship with Black businesses, can you imagine if we're able to boost their profit

margin and therefore they are going to have to hire more people and therefore they will be reaching back to the faith community. More people will have jobs, they will have better jobs; therefore there will be less frustration, economically, in our community."

So far, the congregations have been receptive to the idea, Weaver said. "Quite frankly, I've not met any resistance thus far."

In his speech, Grant reminded the audience that a legacy of Black economic develop was at the core of the founding of the A.M.E. Church.

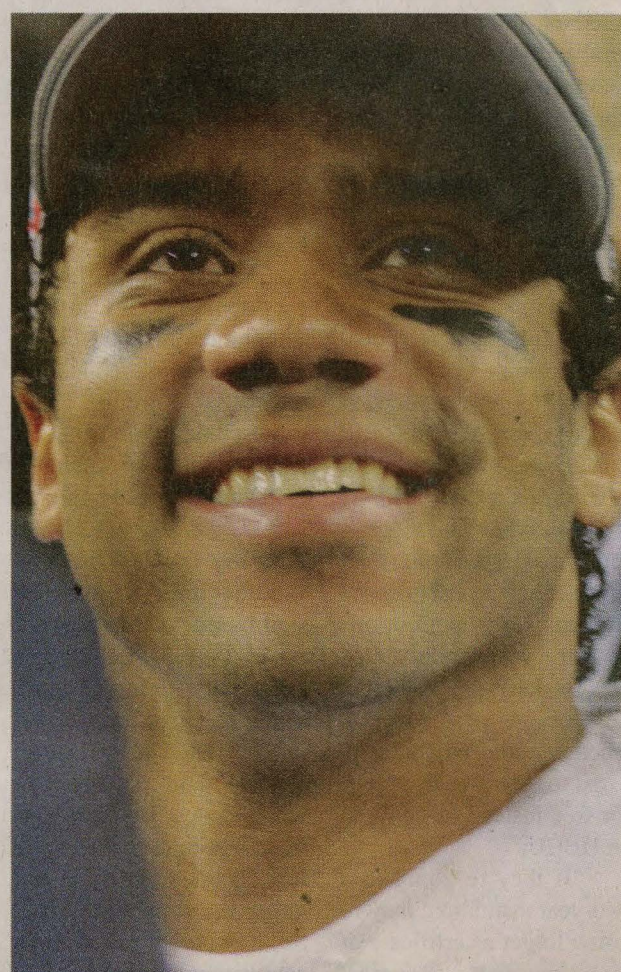
"I agree with that great A.M.E. historiographer, Dr. Dennis C. Dickerson, who said that the history of the African Methodist Episcopal Church - founded - by Bishop Richard Allen - reflects the black liberationist narrative of African - American history," Grant said. "Nearly eight decades before the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation, Allen, a free man, was already promoting Black economic development. So it is fitting that we come to his church today with an urgent message: The time for Americans of African descent to take our place at the roundtable of economic opportunity is now. With each passing day, the price of not having a well - thought out economic agenda for Black America continues to extract a toll and degrade our position in this country and throughout the diaspora."

Grant, who last year received the U. S. Department of Commerce's Lifetime Achievement Award for his Black business advocacy, ticked off statistics that undergird the need for an economic movement to support Black-owned businesses and Black-owned banks:

There are currently 1.9 million Black-owned businesses in America, but only about one in 20 have more than one employee and less than 2 percent have annual gross receipts of more than \$1,000,000.

In terms of relative wealth, White America is 20 times richer
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Seahawks Return To Superbowl With Miraculous Overtime Win Over Packers



Seattle Seahawk quarterback Russell Wilson threw four interceptions before leading the Seahawks to an overtime win over the Green Bay Packers in the NFC championship game last Sunday.

Receiver Jermaine Kearse caught a 35-yard touchdown pass from Seahawk quarterback Russell Wilson with 3:19 left in overtime as the Seahawks posted a 28-22 comeback victory over the Green Bay Packers in the NFC championship game last Sunday at CenturyLink Stadium.

The Seahawks, who struggled on offense throughout most of the game, trailed Green Bay 19 - 7 with just under four minutes left in the fourth quarter, when they put together a late game rally started by a 1-yard touchdown run by Wilson with 2:09 left. The touchdown was set up by passes by Wilson to receiver Doug Baldwin and running back Marshawn Lynch.

The Seahawks' then got another break, as receiver Chris Mathews recovered an onside kick on the ensuing kickoff at the 50 yard line. Lynch then put the Seahawks ahead for the first time in the game, as he scored on a 24-yard touchdown run. Wilson then connected with tight end Luke Wilson on a two-point conversion to give the Seahawks a 22-19 lead with 1:25 remaining.

Green Bay quarterback Aaron Rodgers led the Packers down field to set-up a 48 yard field goal by kicker Mason Crosby to tie the game at 22-22 and send the game into overtime.

In overtime, Seattle won the coin toss and won the game on Wilson's pass to Kearse.

Wilson threw four interceptions on the day, while Marshawn Lynch carried the ball 25 times for 157 yards.

The Seahawk defense came up big time and time again, as they forced the Packers to settle for four field goals prior to the late game rally, despite the Packers being in scoring positions numerous times throughout the day.

Seattle cornerback Richard Sherman and safety Earl Thomas both showed their grit as they both played through arm injuries that saw both of them literally playing with one arm.

The Seahawks will now face the New England Patriots in Super Bowl 49 on Feb. 1

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