

## Emotional Train Wrecks

Written by Jeffrey L. Boney

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Alright, I'm fresh off another trip to the 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual Leadership Conference (ALC) put on by the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation in Washington, D.C.

The Annual Legislative Conference brings together policy-makers, educators, business and industry leaders, celebrities, media, emerging leaders and everyday Americans to discuss and solve issues that are important to all Americans. The conference is recognized as one of the most important gatherings of African-American leaders in the nation.

One of the most impactful parts of the ALC this year to me was the Annual Prayer Breakfast. Bishop Noel Jones was the keynote speaker and delivered a stirring message that truly resonated with me. Bishop Jones spoke to the audience about the different level of gifts that God has bestowed upon us all and how many people operate contrary to their level of gifting. One of the key statements that Bishop Jones made was that, ***“We want to blame God for our situation, but God has given us free will. In the world, we want to make choices, but we don't want to deal with the consequences. The problem with man is that he wants to have the freedom to choose, but he doesn't want to deal with the consequences.”***

Bishop Jones dropped so much knowledge on us that he had my head spinning. My right-hand was about to go numb trying to keep up with all the knowledge he was giving us. As I looked around, I was looking to see who else was taking notes and I saw little to none doing so. Now, truthfully, I wasn't judging anyone because they weren't doing what I was doing. It did make me wonder, however, if the thousands of attendees at the prayer breakfast would remember the things that were being shared.

Having grown up in a black Baptist church as a teenager, I couldn't help but venture back in my mind to the typical black church experience, and the number of people that would only get engaged when the preacher started “whooping” and the organist or musicians would start playing music, stirring up the emotions of all in attendance. I used to do something as a

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teenager in church that I found funny at the time. I would ask attendees of the church service, what they got from the message and would typically get the same response. Most all of the people that I ask would hardly remember ANYTHING that the minister said, BUT they would say something to the fact that, ***“He sure did preach!”***

That is the same thing that I witnessed at the Prayer Breakfast at the ALC. Most folks were calm while the information was being shared, but quickly jumped to their feet and got emotionally hyped up when Bishop Jones began to “whoop” and when the organ started playing behind him. So, as I used to do as a teenager, I asked a few people outside the ballroom what they got from Bishop Jones’ message. And like clockwork, the same responses that I got as a teenager had nothing to do with the information, but the assurance that Bishop Jones ***“sure did preach!”***

Black folks LOVE to be entertained. And listen, I don’t believe there is anything wrong with being emotionally charged about things, but at what point do we as African-Americans stop being a reactionary people and start being a proactive, informed people?

I hear Black people, far too often, use excuse after excuse about how we need to be patient with Black people who aren’t “aware” of things that will help make their lives better. I, for one, am sick of it. True, there are many people that are uninformed and ignorant about things, but I don’t believe that is the case for the majority of Black people.

According to Merriam-Webster, the definition of ignorance is a lack of knowledge, education, or awareness. Ignorance is a temporary state of being for those who have access to information. Some people are ignorant of things because they have never been exposed to them or don’t have access to them. Others have access, but refuse to take advantage of that access to move from ignorant to informed. Many people take offense when you call someone ignorant, believing that you are meaning to degrade them or talk bad about them.

If someone is considered homeless, it’s because they are homeless. It is a fact. If someone is considered disabled, it’s because they are disabled. It is a fact. So, if someone is considered ignorant, it’s because they are ignorant. It is a fact.

Too many Black people rely on sheer emotion when it comes to dealing with simple and complex issues, particularly those that impact their daily lives. This reactionary response to

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these issues, lead to frustrations, disappointments and setbacks that could easily be avoided.

YOU MUST GET INVOLVED!

I'm not saying that you shouldn't be emotional, but what good does that emotion do for you when it comes to getting your business handled. Even entertainers get paid when they perform for their audiences, what do you get?

Don't be an emotional train wreck people. Stay on the right track and help someone else who may have fallen off the tracks to get back on before it's too late.

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