

COGIC Bishop: Juneteenth Shouldn't Be 'Weaponized,' but Celebrated by All

History books show that President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, declaring "that all persons held as slaves" within the rebellious states "are, and henceforward shall be free." It's the reason that all people in America—not just African Americans—should celebrate Juneteenth today (June 19) with joy and gratitude to God.

But few may be aware of the fact that some slaves, many of them in Texas, did not receive word for another two years that they were freed by Lincoln's bold act. The Civil War raged on for two more years after the Emancipation Proclamation was signed.

During a recent interview on Charisma News with Pastor John Amanchukwu, Bishop Patrick Wooden Sr. of the Upper Room Church of Christ in Raleigh, North Carolina, says that while Lincoln's declaration might have taken place in 1863, everyone should mark and celebrate the date in 1865 when "all of the slaves were free."

"Until all of us are free, none of us are free," Wooden tells Amanchukwu, a contributor for TPUSA Faith. "At that time, of course, they didn't have television and they didn't have radio or the internet, so the word got to them—about 250,000 people—when it got to them, two years later.

"About 2,000 troops had to show up and to give them the word to places like the Galveston Bay area," Wooden adds. "And to know that many people were freed during that time, I think it is worth celebrating, worth noting. We lost over 600,000 lives in the civil war to slavery. Half of those lives were fighting to end it, so I don't think we celebrate this enough—the

blood, the treasure and all that was spent to bring that wicked practice to a close.”

Wooden even praises President Joe Biden’s efforts in June 2021 to recognize Juneteenth as a federal holiday.

And, Wooden says, the church too should recognize this hallowed day, although it should not be more celebrated than Jesus Himself.

“It’s not the birth of Jesus, and it’s not Christ dying on the cross,” he says. “But as people of African descent, I think it’s celebratory to recognize those last African Americans who didn’t know they were free. I think it also should be celebrated in a manner that doesn’t divide us. I think Caucasian brothers and sisters should join in this celebration, because they also died [in the Civil War]. Their blood was shed on the battlefield to help free African Americans from enslavement.”

Juneteenth indeed is cause for joy and celebration, but Amanchukwu asks Wooden if he believes the federal holiday is being weaponized by groups such as Black Lives Matter to further accelerate racial tensions in America and to keep Blacks marginalized in the past.

“What’s sad is that today, everything now has become racial,” Wooden says. “Everything now is about race. What happened with Juneteenth is a historical fact. It should be dealt with as such. But to use it as a wedge issue, the way BLM used it—and by the way, aren’t you glad that we’re part of a church at least on a local level who was never fooled by BLM?

“We never put Black Lives Matter slogans up, even though Black lives do matter,” he says. “But then so do white lives, blue lives, all lives. We weren’t fooled by that organization. And, we warned you that this organization was not what it was cracked up to be. They told the people what they were all about. It certainly wasn’t for the welfare of African

Americans.

“That President Biden signed it into law, I applaud him for that,” Wooden says. “I don’t necessarily applaud his motives. It was done as a wedge issue. It was done to say, look, this particular party, the Democrats, are for Blacks getting ahead, whereas the other party wasn’t. But I think it has gotten lost that Martin Luther King’s birthday celebration was signed into law by Republican Ronald Reagan. So, it should not be a wedge issue. It should not be, now that it’s a law, where the majority of the citizens of our country feel no need to celebrate at all and the minorities shouldn’t use it to throw it into the majority person’s face. It’s part of American history, as it should be. We should make sure that it celebrates America and the greatness of Americans.”

For the rest of this compelling interview with Bishop Patrick Wooden Sr., [click here](#). You won’t want to miss it. {eo}

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