

National Heal America Campaign Promotes Racial Harmony This Memorial Day

Community activists who are part of the National Heal America Campaign Collaborative are marking Memorial Day as a second “A Time of Love and Reconciliation” opportunity. As part of a yearlong campaign, the collaborative is spreading the word about a 2008 congressional apology for slavery and Jim Crow policies and calling on African-Americans to practice forgiveness and reconciliation.

“Memorial Day began as a way to respect soldiers who fought and died for the Union and an end to chattel slavery during the Civil War,” says Ted Hayes, a community activist and homeless advocate in Los Angeles. “I can think of no better time to also remember that our nation as a whole has come so far from the days of chattel slavery and Jim Crowism. Too many people don’t realize the progress America has made toward racial reconciliation, and these days of healing are meant to enlighten them so that we can move on, and our society can achieve even greater things.”

Organizers of National Heal America include Hayes; the Rev. C.L. Bryant, a minister, talk radio host and producer of the Runaway Slave documentary; Mike Siegel, an author, lecturer, attorney and talk radio host, and other civil rights activists.

The original “A Time of Love and Reconciliation,” held April 3, 2017, featured talk show hosts across the nation reading and discussing House Resolution 194—a congressional apology for chattel slavery and Jim Crow policies approved by Congress on July 29, 2008.

This time, organizers are asking radio and television hosts to

use the passage of this resolution—and a similar one passed by the Senate—as a tool to discuss how the government and the nation are seeking to atone for and move past the racial sins of previous generations and allow old wounds to heal.

The next observance will be June 19, known as Juneteenth, the anniversary of the date when slaves in Texas finally learned of the end of the Civil War and their emancipation. The yearlong campaign culminates April 4, 2018, the 50th anniversary of the death of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Hayes emphasizes that the campaign is not about continuing white guilt.

“The congressional apology and our calling attention to it now is not meant to further castigate guilt upon white citizens,” he adds. “Instead, it is a wonderful opportunity for blacks to practice the first principles of Judaic-Christian salvation by forgiving those asking for and seeking reconciliation. Since this offer of reconciliation from the federal government has gone largely unnoticed, black citizens were divested of the chance to practice the saving grace Jesus Christ preached. Our campaign is making up for this lost opportunity.” {eo}