

Dr. Hosea L. Williams Speaks at Marriott

by Mattie Ann Callier-Spears

Monday, January 11, 1988, will always be a high point in my life, because I got to meet one of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s soldiers.

The Bonneville Power Administration's EEO office sponsored a Martin Luther King, Jr., program at the plush and elegant Marriott Hotel in downtown Portland. The theme was: "Ending the Violence of Poverty, Hunger, Apartheid, War, and Terrorism Through Creative Nonviolent Actions".

There were two programs: one in the morning at 9:30 to 11:00 a.m., and then an afternoon program at 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. The morning session was open to the public and was very sparsely attended. On-the-other-hand, the afternoon session which was open to the BPA employees and employers, was well attended. Both sessions were enjoyed by all in attendance.

Dr. Hosea L. Williams is a very dynamic speaker. You are spell-bound and speechless because of the content of his rendition.

The Timesound Ensemble, directed by Mr. Ken Berry, presented musical selections representative of the theme. The voices and musicians featured in the group were Tracey Clay, Tyfani Osborne, Mattie Spears, Danny Osborne and Ken Berry.

Representative Margaret Carter, President of the Regional Council of Blacks in Government, was a part of the program. She remarked that "We should remember that the struggle is not over. We must embrace one another through these trying times. Yesterday we watched as time changed and change is still taking place. Don't give up! If we unite, we can stand and we will be heard."

When Dr. Hosea L. Williams went to be with Dr. King and his movement, he had just left a U.S. Government position as a research chemist. He had decided that after 12 years he had been allowed to reach a certain level and was not going to be allowed to move any higher than he had already risen. He got tired of all the bowing and weaving. He as a fighter; not one to just sit back and take and take and take — whatever they wanted you to have.

These are excerpts from his message: "Dr. King means a lot to me. He is not my God, but I found God in him. I have trouble with this King Holiday. Why trouble? Because I feel that if we are going to use this time to raise money in our stores and commercial endeavors, then we are celebrating King's Birthday for all the wrong reasons. King does not need to be recognized on his birthday; but, the world needs to be recognized and all of its problems. The poverty, the crime, the mothers with no food to feed their children, the elderly with not enough money to meet their medical needs, and so on and so on it goes.

"When I was in the White House, working as a voice of the people, I was told by the President that I could speak up and tell him when he was doing something wrong towards the people. Well, one day I told him that the Black people saw him as the devil with big horns sticking up from his head, blocking all the attempts and strides of the Black communities. The President turned and looked at me, as others in the room smiled or just laughed right out loud. The next thing you know, I was out of the White House. I guess that was too much voice; but, it was what they wanted said, and I presented it as I saw it and heard it. Before this had happened, I remember the occasion when I asked President Reagan to make King's birthday a holiday. The answer was "NO!" Carter wasn't any better and he was more closely related to King than Reagan was, and his answer was the same: "NO!"



Dr. Hosea L. Williams

"I came up on a plantation. When I was 19 years old, I was fighting in a war (World War II). I was taught to hate, and kill or be killed. Then, here I am trying to follow a man who preaches and teaches nothing but peace and love. Do you know that for a long time when I first reached Alabama to join King's group, King did not even meet me or see me, because I couldn't believe the things I was seeing him do — letting people spit on him, letting people push him down (and he kept getting up and marching on) and all kinds of things. Not this boy!

"When I finally joined the group there was Andrew Young, Jesse Jackson, Ralph Abernathy and two others. We were a group to be reckoned with. This small-framed man orchestrated Williams, Abernathy, Jackson and Young — laid out a plan before us; and he got us to work together for a common cause.

"King was not a very big person. He was a small-framed, frail man with

a big heart and genuine love.

"This nation of ours is engaged in a war right now. The war is not a Black war, but an American war.

"All the garbage we threw out of the South wound up here in the Northwest. Right now we are working in Forsythe County trying to overturn this archaic concept of theirs: that no Blacks can live or work in their county.

"Right now, you know what I worry about? I worry about my grandchildren. We have become so complacent and apathetic about everything.

"Do you know that 30% of this nation is Black and 70% of the prisons is Black? Yes! We do have a problem and it is solvable; but, we must work together. I is so sad to go to the prisons and see so many of our young Black males corralled and controlled. Do you know that we are just where they (white Neo-Fascists) want us? This is truly sad. The struggle is still on; but, the struggle won't always be an uphill struggle.

"All across the country we use King's Birthday to raise money when we should be using this time to rededicate ourselves to his dream. As long as there is an American that is not free, we are not free. No matter whether it's Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Indians, Mexican, White or Black — we are all a part of the American family. We need to help one another.

"When I gave up my job as research chemist to follow King, he taught me love. Do you realize that the more you love others and help others — the more love will come back to you. You receive an escalation of hatred from violence.

"The movement is not dead. Right now our country is in great turmoil. Forsythe County is very, very bad. Idaho and parts of Southern Oregon are bad. As long as we have hatred and violence being practiced as it is being done in Forsythe County, there is still a lot of work to be done.

"Do you realize that we are not as free as we were 100 years ago. At that time, we had six Lieutenant Governors and two Senators. Study your history so you can see from whence we've come to our present day situation.

"Martin Luther King, Jr. totally believed in peace. Don't allow all what he did and his death to be in vain. Don't get too comfortable. Remember your past. The future of our young people is left up to us. If we don't teach them about what went on in our past and the struggles we had to endure, they will not understand the fight and what we're up against — and will be — unless things change for the better. It cannot happen if you sit by and say that 'I've got mine, now you get yours' or 'What you expect me to do?' There is so much that can be done. But, we have to protect our children's minds before the system gets to them.

"I want to make it plain. I love America and all the people that dwell therein.

"I thank God for Dr. King. You see, King had truly conquered the fear of death and was truly able to love people. This small, frail, quiet man made my belly flutter like a leaf on a tree when he went to this slum and encountered these ruffians. Or, the time when we arrived at an airport and a limousine was there to pick us up. We looked around and did not see Dr. King. When we got to the church we discovered that Dr. King had ridden in a limo. When the deacon in his old beat-up car, when he could have ridden in a limo. When asked why he chose to travel in that manner, his response was, "I must always live among the people I profess to love."

"Join us in a rededication of his dream and never give up, for we are a great people."



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