



**WITNESS
FOR JUSTICE**

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Confronting Racism, Extreme Materialism, and Militarism

Velda Love

Minister for Racial Justice

"We as a nation must undergo a radical revolution of values ... When machines and computers, profit motives and property rights, are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, extreme materialism, and militarism are incapable of being conquered." - Martin Luther King, Jr. April 4, 1967

On April 4, 1967, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. preached at Riverside Church in New York City. I recently reread the transcript and listened to "[Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence](#)". The words and phrases King spoke in 1967 bears striking similarities we continue to witness and experience from our current administration residing in Washington D.C. The persistent extremist rhetoric and legislative actions enacted by the current president and his administration continues to echo King's warning of the giant triplets *Racism, Extreme Materialism, and Militarism*.

Racism is at the root and heart of the decisions made by the current administration threatening the viability of black and brown citizens to thrive and contribute to mainstream society. A careful reading, understanding, and analysis of [Project 2025](#) by many see the cuts to education funding in general, including providing meals and afterschool programs as a threat to poor communities of color. Economically poor communities with chronically underfunded schools are at risk based on the racial makeup of the school. A recent news story stated, "The schools with more students of color get lower funding than the ones that are 100 percent or 95 percent white."



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Extreme materialism and [corporate greed](#) occur when government entities, business owners, and corporate executives devalue human life to make huge profits. An example of extreme materialism results in racialized disenfranchisement and occurs when poor communities are targeted by profit seeking businesses and companies who intentionally use contaminated toxic dumpsites to construct homes, schools, and recreational spaces. The contaminated air and water filters into homes, grocery stores, playgrounds, and schools affecting families, food, the health of children, and public areas. The impacts resulting in higher proportions of health crises in communities of color are a result of the current administrations eliminating the federal oversight bodies that ensure public safety and wellbeing—the Environmental Protection Agency, Food and Drug Administration, and Health and Human Services.

Militarism in the United States is based on the historical strategy to maintain colonialism's political and economic power by using [extreme tactics of violence against citizens within the U.S.](#) The use of violence by the current administration is used as a means of social control.

Surveillance is another method. State and local police are presently equipped with technology, military style weapons, and drones and tanks used to discourage, destabilize, and dismantle resistance activism.

“And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

This text from the Old Testament prophet Micah 6:8 is a call to continue reading and listening to the prophetic words of King. Examine the parallels in his analysis of our country's backward moving trajectory towards further racial and economic oppression, and removal of our immigrant siblings. Our response cannot be a silent retreat into the comfortability of our personal spaces. Christians must respond to the call of God and engage in eradicat-

ing and dismantling racism, extreme materialism, and militarism. Become active in collective liberation and grassroots movements, network with community organizations and develop strategies for mobilizing, educating, and restructuring society to benefit all of its citizens. [Together we can build a Just World for All. Remain engaged with resources from the UCC Public Policy and Advocacy office in Washington D.C.](#) ***This is what the Lord requires.***

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The Rev. Velda Love serves as the Minister for Racial Justice in the National Setting of the United Church of Christ.

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