**Dr. Rev. Charles A. Tillman, Sr.**

Black Ministries Facilitator

Reflections on Martin Luther King Jr., Holiday:

As we prepare to celebrate another Dr. Martin Luther King Holiday, I thought it might be good to reflect on what the day means to me.

I was born to a working class family in upstate New York during the turbulent 60’s. My parents had migrated from the State of Mississippi in search of the American Dream. My mother, who went to be with the Lord in 2012, told me that she wanted her children to have a chance in life. My parents chose a city where they were able to get good blue collar jobs, they could buy a home and their children could get a good education. We were able to achieve this in Syracuse, New York.

Due to my parents’ willingness to go on an “Abram like” sojourn, my siblings and I reaped the benefits of their wise choice. Did my parents encounter racism? Yes! Have my siblings’ and I encountered racism? Yes! But we’ve experienced countless opportunities and experiences that would never have come our way had our folks stayed in the oppressive State of Mississippi. My parents ultimately divorced and a step-father came in the picture. There were nine of us in this blended family. Out of the seven children my mother bore, three completed technical certificates or Associate degrees, three have earned Master’s degrees, while all have earned some post-secondary education. All have gone on to leave their mark on the society, purchase homes, hold respectable jobs, operate businesses and make a difference in the world.

*We, as leaders and members of the Church of the living God, must lead the way in building a society that encourages, embraces and values racial and cultural diversity. As Christians, Christ Himself admonishes us, “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.” (Luke 10:27). ML King Holiday is a great time to attend events that promote racial harmony and understanding.”*

I thank God for the Church of the Nazarene. And I thank God for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.!