Ooowee! What a Forum,' Use of Deadly Force!

Ooowee !

I'm still speechless and at a loss for words as I sit behind this sacred desk, asking the Lord to order my fingers as I attempt to share what jumped off at the Use of Deadly Force Community Forum/Dialogue last Thursday, Dec. 6, at the Greater Abyssinia Baptist Church.

Rushing from conducting a Memorial Service of yet another young Black male, gunned down from the mean streets of the drug life, I wanted to rush home and change out of my bishop's robe, but, not having time to do so, I realized what went down at this intense meeting, and how the Lord used me to deal with so many spirits of anger, grief and sadness with unanswered questions. I was happy that I came still in bishop's robe, the outward dress of the whole Armour of God, and still prayed up from the intense and sad memorial service of the twenty-one-year-old male.

This forum was called to order by my dear friend, Blaine A. Griffin, Executive Director of the Community Relations Board, who sponsored this forum, and in a nice yet clear way explained to an intense crowd the purpose of the forum.

Martin Flask, Safety Director, gave a few remarks as he prepared the way for Chief of Police, Michael McGrath , to speak. 'Lord Have Mercy!'

I went to the Forum to listen and learn the facts, but quickly I learned that the Chief of Police knew no more than I did or most of the others in the intense crowd. Before the floor was opened

up for individuals in the crowd to take the mic and ask questions, a question was yelled out from someone in the audience. When the chief tried to answer the question, Blaine Griffin jumped in to ask the chief to continue with his remarks, reminding the crowd the floor would be opened up and whoever wanted to come up would be able to do so at that time. The chief repeated what everyone had heard on the news, when a woman behind me said to the person sitting next to her, "Honey, what they having this meeting for if he don't know nothing?"

When Mr. Griffin finally stated the mic was opened for questions, first from the family on both sides of the deceased who were killed in the shooting, something like a sharp pain hit me in my side and I knew it was the Lord directing me to go to that mic and be used to direct those that would be coming up to ask questions. Those at the table thought I was up to ask a question, yet I was ordered by God to be a power of peace in the midst of a storm.

As I kept those in line in order and calming their spirit, I could see the first family member of the woman killed in the car had beautiful children with her. The older woman was shaking as she waited to ask her question. She said she felt faint and quickly I asked the man behind her if he could go find water for her. He quickly came back with bottled water which she drank and shared with her kids. When she got through asking her questions to the chief and making her comments in anger, I now realized that the chief needed water as well. I felt sorry for him, hoping that someone would get him some water, too. The chief could not answer the older woman's questions or many of the others.

Ooowee ! Thank God for the Mayor! He got there late and was rushing, I'm sure, from a previous appointment, but he was the water that the Chief of Police needed.

You know my dear Friend Aretha Franklin said a great singer must know his or her audience before they hit the stage. Mayor Frank Jackson knew what was sitting before him before he arrived, and he was ready to deal and he kept it real. He set a few people straight and told another individual who was trying to push his business/company that he was not at this meeting for that.

As the chief continued to "try" and answer questions, all of sudden a group of individuals yelled, "No Justice, No Peace." Ooowee ! Had I been the pastor of this church I would have quickly took the mic and told these individuals I would have no more of that. Even though we all know there was no justice in what went down with this deadly shooting, this meeting was about keeping the PEACE, not only in the HOOD, but also in this meeting. Yelling "No Justice, No

Peace," every time these individuals they didn't like what they heard only added wood to an almost out of control fire. Black on Black crimes and killings are at their worst, and all of the funerals I've conducted and individuals I've visited at hospitals have, in ninety-nine percent of the cases, been victims of Black on Black Crime. There is NO JUSTICE and should be NO PEACE until we as a BLACK PEOPLE get that under control.

Directing each individual to the mic, rubbing them on the back and calming their spirit, I told the Muslim brother, "now don't get to the mic and start preaching, brother just ask a question." He goes to the mic, ask a question, goes completely off, turns the mic around to those in attendance and does exactly what I asked him not to do starts running his mouth off as if he called the meeting himself. Ooowee ! Mr. Griffin sets him straight as he directed him to turn the mic around and talk to the chief.

Ooowee ! What a meeting! If there is to be another forum on the shooting, I suggest the following:

1. The chief, and whoever else, come prepared with the facts to those without the facts.

2. Ask individuals to ask questions to get the facts and hopefully not vent. For this type of meeting, I strongly suggest that questions are written out with someone who can read to stand at the mike and ask the questions.

3. Instruct the Black on Black activists of men and women to not add fuel to the fire, but to add a sense of calmness, not only by their positive presence, but also by their discipline.

4. Have a proper sound system so that everyone in the room can hear through the system.

5. Have water for those on the head table who are under a lot of HEAT.

6. And make me the sergeant of arms to make sure all the rules are "Cut-Throat Clear," ‘cause

I'm used to this type of intense crowd from working with intense, grass root ministries. Ooowee! What a meeting!